



**Gavin Pearce MP**  
Federal Member for Braddon

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### **Weeds and pests cost farmers billions, reinforces need for container levy**

A report released by ABARES this week has highlighted that weeds and pests are costing farmers \$5.3 billion a year through management and production loss.

National Farmers' Federation CEO Tony Mahar said this extraordinary figure once again showed farmers were already doing the bulk of the heavy lifting in Australia's biosecurity system.

"Australian farmers already directly carry the significant cost of biosecurity failures, both at the time of incursion and for years following. It forms a major component of their cost base and has a material impact on their businesses," Mr Mahar said.

The ABARES report comes against the backdrop of the Government's Biosecurity Protection Levy, which is being rushed into implementation by 1 July next year.

"The argument that the Biosecurity Protection Levy would see producers pay just a small fraction of additional costs completely overlooks these billions farmers already pay along the biosecurity continuum, in addition to other significant contributions they make to proactive biosecurity activities."

The sector has told the Government its key concern with the new producer Levy is the apparent abandonment of a Container Levy policy on importers.

"Review after review has recommended a Container Levy on risk creators such as importers as an effective and efficient means of ensuring risks creators help fund additional and proactive biosecurity activities," Mr Mahar said.

"The ABARES report clearly demonstrates why this is important.

"We have made clear to the Government during conversations about the Biosecurity Protection Levy that the sector expects that the Container Levy be put in place - or the reasons explained why it will not be implemented, be made public."

**ENDS**