



# A NATIONAL BIOSECURITY AUTHORITY

## The Greens' plan for protecting biosecurity

Expert. Independent. Transparent.

Invasive species and pests pose a serious threat to our agriculture sector and ecosystems. The Greens will establish an independent National Biosecurity Authority to protect our precious environment, and prevent damage by invasive species and pests.

As an island nation, Australia has an enormous range of unique ecosystems and habitats that are vulnerable to invasive species and pests. These can cause untold damage to human health, agriculture and the environment. Climate change and increased trade are increasing the risks to our biosecurity. The Greens have a comprehensive plan for biosecurity, to protect our environment, health, and ensure a sustainable agriculture sector.

The Greens will invest **\$202.5m over four years**, including establishing:

- **A National Biosecurity Agency** as an independent, national regulator for biosecurity.
- **A National Biosecurity Commission** of independent experts to provide advice on biosecurity issues.
- **A Centre for Invasive Species Solutions**, to develop new pest management tools and strategies through research and development.
- **Environment Health Australia**, a national body to improve coordination and collaboration between community, government, research and business stakeholders on approaches to reduce environmental harm from invasive species.
- An **immediate, targeted eradication program** against Yellow Crazy Ants in Queensland's Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Greens will also develop:

- **An invasive species plan**, with targets to reduce invasive species, at a cost of \$8m over four years.
- **An island biosecurity strategy**, to protect untouched islands, at a cost of \$20m over four years.

### > WHY WE NEED STRONGER BIOSECURITY

Australia's natural biosecurity advantage has helped protect our communities from many diseases and pests that can cause illness, or damage our environment and agriculture. Stronger biosecurity will ensure our farmers can continue to access export markets with their clean produce, and use fewer

chemicals to control pests and diseases. The impact of pests on food security and agricultural productivity is estimated at more than \$1 billion a year.

Stopping the incursion of exotic pests and diseases is also critical to conserving our unique environment and wildlife. Protecting biosecurity can prevent further extinctions, and make it easier for threatened species to adapt to climate change.<sup>1</sup>

### > BUILDING ON EXPERT ADVICE

Both the expert Beale Review and the extensive Senate inquiry into Australia's environmental biosecurity have recommended improvements to how we protect Australia's biosecurity. The Greens will build on that advice, implementing key recommendations from both inquiries, ensuring that Australia has a strong, independent biosecurity system to protect our agriculture sector, environment, and health.

### > A NATIONAL BIOSECURITY AUTHORITY

As recommended by the Beale Review, the National Biosecurity Authority will incorporate existing biosecurity functions in government. It will also receive additional resourcing, to ensure that it can recruit the necessary expertise to boost national capacity across the board, particularly in relation to environmental biosecurity matters.

It will administer biosecurity legislation, including:

- Import permit decisions and assessments, and pre- and post-border entry of goods entering Australia
- Certifying Australian exports
- Management of quarantine facilities
- Coordinating of monitoring and surveillance of national priority exotic pests and diseases.
- Supporting the work of the National Biosecurity Commission.

<sup>1</sup> [Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre](#).

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An independent, expert-based panel, the National Biosecurity Commission, will make science-based biosecurity determinations.

## > A MAJOR UPDATE OF OUR BIOSECURITY PROTECTIONS

The Greens will implement recommendations from the Senate inquiry into Australia's biosecurity, for a thorough overhaul of our biosecurity protections. Working with state and territory governments, the Greens will improve biosecurity regulations and protections. This will cost **\$23.9m over four years**.

## > BETTER RESEARCH AND COORDINATION

Australia has major pest animal outbreaks, including mouse plagues, higher rabbit numbers, larger carp populations and increasing numbers of wild dogs and pigs.<sup>2</sup> The Greens will fully fund a Centre for Invasive Species Solutions, to ensure effective, collaborative research, and help develop long term solutions to the challenges posed by invasive species.

We also need a more coordinated approach to biosecurity across Australia, including between different levels of government, community, research and industry sectors. A dedicated Environment Health Australia will work to improve coordination between different sectors, and support industry-government partnerships.

The Greens will provide **\$113.4m over four years**, to establish these key bodies.

## > AN INVASIVE SPECIES PLAN

The Greens will provide **\$8m over four years** for a national invasive species plan. This will include specific policies, and a specific approach to reduce risks from exotic pests, and measures to reduce the movement within Australia of exotic species.

The Greens will also provide **\$20m over four years** to protect untouched islands from biosecurity threats. This will ensure that some of the last remaining undamaged ecosystems are preserved, and help restore islands where invasive species are already established.

## > ACTION ON YELLOW CRAZY ANTS

The Greens will take immediate action on eradicating Yellow Crazy Ants near the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) in Queensland. This area is a major tourist drawcard for Far North Queensland, and the longer we delay action, the further incursion will spread.

The Greens will provide \$17.5 million over the next 4 years to fund the community-based eradication proposal from the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

This commitment would ensure that the first 3 year stage of the program can commence immediately, with funding certainty. Ongoing funding would be \$2.5 million per year until the project is complete. Other parties have promised to some funding for the WTWHA infestation, but **none have committed full funding** so the work can begin immediately.

## > OUR COMMITMENT TO BIOSECURITY

Over several terms in government, both the old parties ignored the long standing advice that Australia needs an independent regulator for oversight and administration of our biosecurity system. The Greens have a clear plan for biosecurity.

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<sup>2</sup> [Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre](#).