



Niall Blair

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Lands and Water

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW ERA FOR BIOSECURITY: NSW LEADS THE NATION

Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water Niall Blair said today's passage of the *Biosecurity Bill 2015* through the NSW Parliament signals a new era for preventing, managing and eradicating pests, weeds and diseases in NSW.

The *Biosecurity Bill 2015* provides this state with a modern, sophisticated piece of legislation that looks to the future by backing our industries and our farmers.

“Strong biosecurity and paddock-to-plate food systems – and our reputation for high-quality, safe and disease-free food and fibre – are the competitive advantage of our primary industries sector, and it's crucial these are protected,” Mr Blair said.

“This legislation bolsters those biosecurity measures – ensuring they remain the best in the world and continue to protect our \$12 billion primary industries sector, the backbone of our regional communities.”

This legislation will assist the state to respond to possible future exotic disease outbreaks like foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), which could cost the Australian economy up to \$50 billion and reduce NSW's gross domestic product by about \$6 billion.

The NSW Government has consulted heavily with industry during the development of this Bill, which reinforces the principle that biosecurity is everyone's responsibility.

The Bill represents the first step in improving and modernising the management of biosecurity in NSW – the NSW Government will now work with industry and other stakeholders as the regulations, which support the Bill, are developed.

The Bill includes a range of measures, including:

- A high-risk category that acknowledges the severe consequences of some pests and diseases (such as FMD, Parthenium weed, cattle tick)
- Tough emergency powers that allow the State to take swift action to respond to potential biosecurity threats to the economy, environment and industry
- A General Biosecurity Duty that requires people who deal with biosecurity risks to take reasonable steps to manage them
- Nationally consistent approaches to managing emergency situation.