



Gavin Pearce MP
Federal Member for Braddon

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Productivity Commission confirms biosecurity levy is bad policy

A report by the Productivity Commission has confirmed what the Liberal/National Coalition has been saying from the outset: That the Albanese government's proposed Biosecurity Protection Levy is a deeply flawed policy littered with a suite of issues.

In May's Federal Budget, the Treasurer Jim Chalmers announced an extra \$1 billion over four years to strengthen Australia's biosecurity measures. The funding will be partially raised by a biosecurity protection levy on farmers, fishers and foresters equivalent to 10 per cent of industry-led agricultural levies from July next year.

Federal Member for Braddon, Gavin Pearce MP, said his position on the levy had been consistent since it was announced in May.

"Since the announcement, I've been of the opinion that the tax unfairly targeted farmers," Mr Pearce said.

"Like everyone, farmers are struggling through this cost-of-living crisis and they will be left with no choice but to pass on the cost of this extra financial burden. What this will ultimately mean is even higher prices at the checkout. Australians just can't afford that, and the fault lies directly at the feet of the Albanese government."

"And we need to be clear, this is not about farmers not wanting to pay more, or farmers refusing to accept the need for greater biosecurity protection. This is purely about the construct of bad policy.

"The Productivity Commission's *Towards Leviathan? Industry levies in Australia* research paper, has confirmed our position. A lot of red flags about the policy's design, including equitability, accountability, efficiency and a lack of clear links to outcomes valued by industry have been raised by this independent organisation."

"Farmers' concerns have been justified and I now call on the government to pause their implementation timeline of 1 July next year. This was never a realistic implementation date given the size and complexity of the policy."

"The protection of Australia's crucial agriculture sector against any form of biosecurity threat is essential. As the agriculture sector continues to grow, so does the importance of having robust, thorough and efficient biosecurity measures. Maintaining our clean, fresh and disease-free status is key to ensuring our farmers can continue their World's-Best-Practice work. It's up to government to support that, not threaten it with bad policy."

"I call on the Albanese government to pause the implementation timeline and to work with industry, rather than bullying them into be complicit in the rollout of flawed policy."

<https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/industry-levies/industry-levies.pdf>

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