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Australia delivers first ever sustainable biosecurity funding in the 2023-24 Budget

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Australian agriculture has triggered a new era BY including a Sustainable Biosecurity Funding model, in its 2023-24 Budget and is the first ever model in the nation.

More than $1 billion of additional funding has been allocated to biosecurity, including $845 million to support operations across the country, protecting our valuable agriculture sector.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt outlined the key components of the new model, stating that "this Budget delivers new biosecurity funding totalling more than $1 billion over the next four years, with more than $260 million guaranteed every year after that. We will introduce a new cost recovery charge of 40 cents per item on low value ($1000 or less) goods imported into Australia by sea".

â??From July 1 2024 the costs of these biosecurity clearances will be recovered, to deal with the growing biosecurity risk from incoming parcels and similar items. This fairer system is expected to recover more than $27 million, although it is a small impost on individual items. This is on top of increasing import fees and charges from the 1st of July 2023. This will ensure importers contribute more fairly by meeting the real cost of biosecurity clearance. These increases to fees and charges for importers are expected to contribute an extra $45 million to our biosecurity efforts" Minister Watt added.

The Australian government is ensuring that the Importersâ?? fees will be reviewed and adjusted annually, and the department will work with industry to make sure our charging models are fit for purpose and as part of this, will look at other options

including a possible future import or container levy.

To help meet the costs of sustainably funding our biosecurity system, the government will introduce a small Biosecurity Protection Levy on agricultural producers starting on 1st July 2024. This will amount to an additional 10% of the existing levies. It would translate to only 50 cents a head for cattle producers and one fifth of a cent per kilogram of apples or 7 cents a tonne of sugarcane. It will mean that producers will contribute 6 per cent of overall funding for the biosecurity system that is so important to their livelihoods, according to Minister Watt, who emphasized that increased funding will result in tangible outcomes.

Furthermore, Australia is investing $145 million over three years in a Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing System. Biosecurity funding package to foster the Indigenous Biosecurity Ranger program. This will keep Indigenous rangers on the front lines of biosecurity in Northern Australia, helping to detect exotic weeds, pests and diseases before they establish.