



## Supporting the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program



\$40.6 million

Northern Australia's coastline is sparsely populated and large areas are remote and difficult to access. It is also one of the highest natural risk pathways for biosecurity incursions, which puts continuous pressure on Australia's biosecurity system.

The essential partnership with First Nations people through the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program provides vital surveillance needed for the early detection of biosecurity threats along the northern Australian coastline. In addition to protecting us at the biosecurity frontline, the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program provides skills, employment and economic opportunities on Country for First Nations people in remote and regional communities.

The Australian Government is investing ongoing, sustainable funding in the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program, reversing the funding cliff that would have ended the program on 30 June 2023 and securing a vital part of the biosecurity system to protect our north.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is being funded directly to deliver this valuable support for frontline biosecurity surveillance.

### What's in this year's Budget

The Australian Government is supporting the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program with \$40.6 million over 4 years from 2023-24 and ongoing funding of \$12 million per year from 2027-28 to sustainably fund the program and cement an essential partnership with First Nations people to protect our long northern coastline from biosecurity risks.

#### Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Package

The Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program is a critical part of the biosecurity system. Key elements include:

- continuation of fee-for-service arrangements with up to 65 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Ranger Groups
- initiatives to increase biosecurity capability of Indigenous Rangers and communities

- delivery of biosecurity education and support materials for Indigenous Rangers, schools and northern Australian communities
- biosecurity traineeships for First Nations people to help build biosecurity capacity across northern Australia.

## Why this is important

Northern Australia is a frontline for disease threats such as foot-and-mouth disease, African swine fever, lumpy skin disease, oriental fruit fly, citrus canker and Asian green mussel. Due to our close proximity to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, along with prevailing sea and wind conditions, these biosecurity risks are mere kilometres from Australia's border.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on Country know and understand their Country. Their expert knowledge of the plants and animals in their communities is critical to the success of the program.

Indigenous Rangers in these communities form a key part of frontline monitoring, detection and response activities, protecting our agricultural industries and unique biodiversity and ecosystems from unwanted pests and diseases, before they can become established.

The Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program also delivers highly valuable assurance data to support our overseas agricultural export status.

The program is an important contributor to a long-term sustainable and strengthened biosecurity system, and helps maintain Australia's strong biosecurity status with its surveillance capability across northern Australia.

The program assists in:

- collecting data on areas of pest freedom, which enhances and preserves our disease-free status and access to trade
- providing cost-effective surveillance for early detection and eradication of threats in high-risk areas
- strengthening surveillance with unique traditional knowledge and skills to develop biosecurity risk profiles
- delivering timely recording and reporting of biosecurity surveillance information.

## How much this will cost

	2023-24 \$m	2024-25 \$m	2025-26 \$m	2026-27 \$m	TOTAL \$m
<b>Continuation of the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program</b>					
Continuation of the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program	8.319	10.551	9.714	11.990	40.574
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8.319</b>	<b>10.551</b>	<b>9.714</b>	<b>11.990</b>	<b>40.574</b>

## More information

For more information about the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program, visit [agriculture.gov.au](https://agriculture.gov.au)

For more information about the 2023–24 Budget visit [budget.gov.au](https://budget.gov.au)

