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Australia grants $6.4M for critical biosecurity R&D to protect agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors

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The government of Australia will invest $6.4 million over three years in the University of Melbourne to continue collaborative biosecurity research that is vital to the nation's agricultural, fisheries, and forestry industries.

Over the next three years, the University of Melbourne will host the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA) program, which strengthens the nation's defences against increasing biosecurity threats.

The Government will invest around $2 million annually in CEBRA to benefit trade, agriculture, the environment and community through:

- development of advanced monitoring or detection toolsÂ
- predictive modelling to assess and mitigate threats before they arriveÂ
- research that informs regulatory decision-making, ensuring cost-effective and informed policiesÂ
- ensuring the latest scientific findings are integrated into policy and operational on-ground decision-making.

CEBRA conducts collaborative research to strengthen government biosecurity efforts, providing evidence-based insights that shape risk analysis, regulatory interventions, inspections and surveillance.

Strengthening research is part of national and departmental commitments outlined in the DAFF Biosecurity 2030 Roadmap and the National Biosecurity Strategy and National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Julie Collins MP said, "The rise in threats from plant pests, diseases and invasive species is being driven by a variety of factors such as a changing climate, expansion of trade, increased tourism and shifts in land use patterns. Effectively managing these growing pressures calls for innovative solutions to biosecurity risks underpinned by quality research. Whether it be modelling frameworks designed to assist with policy formation and response strategies for emergency animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease, or automated image analysis to identify the biofouling risks of vessels, CEBRAâ??s work is integral to protecting Australia from all manner of diseases, plant pests and invasive species.â?•