



April 2024

## Protecting Australia from hitchhiker pests

Australia has a strong biosecurity system in place to prevent the entry and establishment of pests that could threaten our agricultural industries, economy, environment and way of life.

But some serious pests, known as hitchhiker pests, have a specific biology or behaviour that enables them to associate with goods or conveyances, survive the extended journey to Australia, and then actively disperse into the environment. Unfortunately, we are seeing an increase in movement of these pests globally. An outbreak of a hitchhiker pest in Australia could cause serious damage to our agricultural industries and environment, costing us billions of dollars.

### Cost over 20 years to eradicate Australia's top 5 priority hitchhiker pests



← Khapra beetle - **\$15.5 billion**

← Red imported fire ant - **\$8.5 billion**

← Asian honey bee - **\$0.7 billion**



← Asian spongy moth - **\$1.7 billion**

Giant African snail - **\$1.5 billion**



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## The Hitchhiker Pest Program

The Hitchhiker Pest Program aims to address the risk of hitchhiker pests that can be carried via sea containers, their cargoes and associated packaging.

Around 2.5 million sea containers arrive in Australia each year. Due to this significant volume, it is not feasible to inspect all sea containers on arrival. Instead, the Hitchhiker Pest Program aims to better manage the threat of hitchhiker pests by targeting sea containers that present the highest risk. It also aims to deliver faster and safer clearance of lower risk sea containers.

The program is being delivered over four years (2021-2025).

### Program benefits

The Hitchhiker Pest Program aims to deliver:



#### Reduced risk arriving at the border

Reduced resource effort at the border & faster border clearance



#### Intervention targeted at the highest risk

Enhanced biosecurity controls, ICT systems & data capture to target intervention at the highest risk



#### Co-regulatory arrangements

Enable re-allocation of biosecurity officers to highest risk & rapid & cost-effective management of risk through efficiencies in operations & systems

### Program projects and focus areas

**The Hitchhiker Pest Program encompasses 26 projects across 3 focus areas, as well as enabling projects**



#### Expanded use of offshore controls

3 projects including the Sea Container Design Improvement project



#### Targeted onshore risk intervention & surveillance

4 projects including the Hitchhiker Risk & Control Framework project



#### Partnerships with industry, government & researchers

12 projects including the Hitchhiker Pest Survey project



#### Enabling

7 projects including the Container Data project

### More information

Web [agriculture.gov.au/campaigns/hitchhiker-pests](http://agriculture.gov.au/campaigns/hitchhiker-pests)

Email [plantstakeholders@aff.gov.au](mailto:plantstakeholders@aff.gov.au)

**Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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