

CHAIRPERSON ADDRESS

PHA 24th General Meeting

22 May 2025

Now in our 25th year, PHA continues to stand at the forefront of Australia's plant biosecurity system, ensuring Australia's agricultural industry remains prepared, connected, and resilient. This past year, we've continued to evolve and grow alongside the challenges and opportunities that define our environment.

Our biosecurity landscape continues to be complex, with rising pest threats, changing climatic conditions, and evolving international trade requirements. In response, PHA has remained committed to delivering high-value outcomes through leadership, agility, and collaboration.

This focus is reflected in the achievements and progress detailed in the Mid-Year Performance Report (MYPR) released earlier this year. This report is an important checkpoint on our delivery against the current Annual Operational Plan (AOP) to ensure we are delivering against our Strategic Plan. Some of the key achievements include:

- enhancing national response preparedness, including delivering simulation exercises for Oriental fruit fly and industry liaison training workshops across multiple states
- launching major digital surveillance upgrades, notably the new Data Sharing Container in AUSPestCheck® and significant enhancements to the Australian Plant Pest Database (APPD) and the Pest and Disease Image Library (PaDIL)
- strengthening biosecurity through updated industry plans and partnerships, such as finalising biosecurity plans for the apple and pear, citrus, and sugarcane industries, and securing funding and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for bees, cotton, mango, and vegetable biosecurity programs
- delivering high-impact communication and engagement to ensure our Members are informed
- implementing operational excellence initiatives, including the rollout of a new Enterprise Resource Planning solution to enable rapid decision-making and provide accurate and timely financial reports.

Looking ahead, the 2025–26 Annual Operational Plan sets a clear roadmap aligned with our Strategic Plan. Most of you would have seen the draft AOP at the March webinar. Thank you to those Members who provided feedback during the consultation period. This feedback was incorporated into the revised AOP. The AOP builds on our three pillars: Respond Effectively, Strengthen Partnerships, Enhance Integration, and includes two operational enablers: Governance and Administration, and Communication and Engagement.

Major initiatives under our three Strategic Priorities for the year ahead include:

- implementing the 2025 review of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed
- working with Members to improve risk-mitigation by developing plans that prioritise biosecurity risks and provide a framework for preparedness and
- advancing the integration of our digital systems to create efficiencies for biosecurity practitioners by facilitating knowledge transfer and decision-making in early detection and market access

After careful consideration including CPI and rising operational costs, a 3.5% increase in Member subscriptions is proposed. This increase would mean an increase of \$34,347 across our three membership categories, bringing total subscription funding to \$3.069M which equates to 18% of PHA's income. PHA is also forecast to receive \$13.166M in non-subscription project funding, making up 79% of our total income. This allows us to remain responsive and maintain surge capacity for high-priority activities.

In addition, the constitution supports that Directors decide the annual subscription of Associate Members:

15.5 Associate Members

The Annual Subscription of an Associate Member shall be determined by the Directors from time to time.

Similarly for the minimum subscription amount:

Minimum Subscription means the minimum Annual Subscription determined by the Directors from time to time.

Associate Member subscriptions were first increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 at Board Meeting 57 in September 2010 as advised at the May 2011 General Meeting. And were last increased from \$2,000 to \$2,100 at Board Meeting 110 in February 2023 as advised at the May 2023 General Meeting. There has been no increase to the minimum subscription amount since inception. These subscription amounts were discussed at Board Meeting 118 held in February of this year, and following careful consideration an increase to the minimum subscription from \$1,500 to \$1,600 was approved; and an increase to the Associate Member annual subscription from \$2,100 to \$2,200 was approved. We appreciate the support from all our Members and note this modest increase to Associate Members and minimum subscriptions.

As always, we maintain a strong Member-first ethos. Our rotating Board meetings keep us connected to regional plant biosecurity priorities and provide additional opportunities for us to connect with our Members in these locations.

Director appointments occur biannually and at PHA's Annual General Meeting scheduled for November 2025, the terms of four PHA Directors will expire. To select new Board members, Clause 24 of the Constitution requires the establishment of a Board Selection Committee chaired by the Chair or another PHA Director, appointed by the Board. Mr Jolyon Burnett has been appointed as Chair for this upcoming process. The Board Selection Committee is comprised of representatives from the Australian Government, the State/Territory Governments and two Industry Members approved in writing by all Government and Plant Industry Members respectively. Government representatives for the committee were agreed to by the National Biosecurity Committee and the Industry representatives, finalised through nominations and a vote. Non-Executive Director applications are now open and close on Monday, 2 June. Full details on the vacancies and the selection process can be found in the [Careers Hub](#) section of the PHA website and is promoted via the PHA social media channels. Please feel free to share this opportunity with your networks.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank the PHA team for their work in delivering this General Meeting, the Government and Plant Industry Forums, Members Forum, and the EPPRD Signatories Meeting. Your dedication ensures PHA remains the trusted national coordinator of plant biosecurity and delivers real value across government, industry, and the community.

Thank you all for your continued support, insights, and collaboration. I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual General Meeting in Canberra in November.