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MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

M E D I A R E L E A S E

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New research to strengthen biosecurity safeguards

New research work will further strengthen Australia's safeguards against the incursion of exotic disease or pests.

A new national Centre of Excellence for Risk Analysis is to be established at the University of Melbourne, the Australian Government announced today.

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran, said the centre would become a major contributor to risk analysis, especially in the fight to maintain Australia's 'clean green' biosecurity status.

The centre would also contribute heavily in the areas of human health, business, ecology and social science, he said.

Mr McGauran said the centre would be led by Professor Mark Burgman, one of Australia's leading environmental risk experts.

"Of the 11 quality submissions to host the centre received from a call for expressions of interest, the University of Melbourne was chosen in a process managed by the Australian Bureau of Rural Sciences," he said.

"The objective of the centre is to research and build state-of-the-art risk analysis methods, and develop risk interpretation tools.

"The early focus of the centre will be on biosecurity risks, but its work will be far-reaching across many government services.

"The centre's research will be used, not only to develop analytical tools, but also to communicate findings in a way that improves the understanding of all stakeholders, including the Australian people, of how risk analysis is undertaken.

"This will be a vital contribution on matters such as applications to import foods to Australia," he said.

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