



MEDIA RELEASE

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MAHER TAKES UP NATIONAL FERAL PIG FIGHT

Experienced agribusiness leader, John Maher, has been confirmed as the Chair of the Steering Group leading the development of the National Feral Pig Action Plan.

As Chair, Mr Maher will play an active role working with program coordinator, Dr Heather Channon, and a wide range of stakeholders to deliver a preliminary National Feral Pig Action Plan to the Federal Department of Agriculture by January 2021. The \$1.4 million Federal Government initiative, overseen by Australian Pork Ltd, is developing a national framework for feral pig management.

APL CEO, Margo Andrae, said Mr Maher's involvement was a coup for the program.

"John is highly regarded for his significant leadership and governance skills, built over more than 25 years in high-level executive roles across Australian agribusiness," Ms Andrae said.

"John's experience with major rural agencies and recently as Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) Group CEO, reflects the scope of National Feral Pig Action Plan. Farmers, traditional owners, environmental managers and regional communities are united in the fight against feral pigs."

"Feral pigs cost Australian agriculture more than \$100 million a year and wild populations in Asia and Europe have spread African swine fever across national borders, killing millions of domestic pigs. A large-scale outbreak of ASF in Australia could cost nearly \$2 billion over five years."

Mr Maher served as ILSC Group CEO from June 2016 to September 2019, leading a major company transformation while overseeing the management of 2.5 million hectares of land, mainly for agricultural and tourism purposes. He gained a high profile in Australian agribusiness during his nine-year tenure as Managing Director and CEO of Ruralco Holdings, which was preceded by senior roles at Wesfarmers and AWB, where he led the Landmark business (now Nutrien).

Dr Channon said she was looking forward to drawing on Mr Maher's experience working with landholders, especially in remote parts of northern Australia where feral pigs are most prevalent.

"Modelling indicates there could be up to 24 million feral pigs in Australia, covering 45 per cent of the national landmass," she said.

"The National Feral Pig Action Plan is bringing together industry, governments, researchers, local communities and other stakeholders to deliver a national approach to feral pig management, so John's strategic leadership skills and regional awareness will be extremely valuable."

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Mr Maher, who currently serves as a director on several agribusiness boards, said he identified strongly with the objectives of the project.

“I’m passionate about the people, industries and environmental future of rural and regional Australia,” he said.

“I’m excited to play this leadership role to better manage feral pigs through coordinated and consolidated national planning. Feral pig populations have wreaked horrific damage across the country at a high cost to industries like red meat and cropping for too long,” Mr Maher said.

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