**Expressions of Interest**

**Pasture dieback research, development and adoption projects**

**Summary and scope**

Pasture dieback is a condition in Qld and NSW caused by the pasture mealybug, which kills grass pastures and causes significant productivity losses to livestock producers in affected areas.   A recent science forum on pasture dieback identified a range of research areas for future investment. Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) from organisations (or partnerships of organisations) to co-invest and/or participate in research, development and adoption projects in the following areas identified at the forum.

***Controlling the pasture mealybug***

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Strategies – Develop IPM strategies that integrate multiple pasture mealybug control methods, to reduce the severity and impact of pasture dieback on-farm.

Beneficial Insects – Understand the distribution and role of beneficial insects in controlling the pasture mealybug

Entomopathogens – Identify (new and existing), evaluate and develop entomopathogens (viruses, nematodes, fungi) for the control of the pasture mealybug

Endophytes – Identify, evaluate and develop endophytes (fungal and/or bacterial) of tropical pastures as a strategy for mitigating the effects of the pasture mealybug

Attract and Kill Strategies – Evaluate pheromones and commercially available odours as attractants that might be deployed in systems to manage or control the pasture mealybug

Other – Develop a strategy to determine the feasibility of using sterile insect technology or endosymbiont disruption technology for controlling the pasture mealybug

***Understanding the pasture mealybug***

Climatic Modelling – Determine the potential distribution of pasture dieback across Australia via climatic modelling

Mealybug Origins and Taxonomy – Validate the origins of the pasture mealybug, confirm the taxonomy, and assess the Qld and NSW population structure

Dieback Mapping – Utilise satellite data to determine areas affected by pasture dieback and estimate extent of dieback across Qld and NSW

Viruses - Clarify the role of plant viruses in pasture dieback

***Managing the pasture mealybug***

Varietal Development – Identify, evaluate and develop new varieties of tropical pasture species that are resistant to the pasture mealybug

Grazing Management – Investigate the effect of different grazing management practices (e.g. timing, intensity, etc.) on pasture dieback

Pasture Management – Investigate the utility of break crops (annual forage or grain crops) and cool temperate (C3) grasses in mitigating the effects of pasture dieback

Managing for Recovery – Determine methods to facilitate natural recovery and understand the economics of different management approaches

Fenceline Effect – Investigate the ‘fenceline effect’ to improve understanding of why pasture dieback occurs and whether grazing management can play a role in controlling it.

***Funding***

MLA is seeking to identify potential partners with the capacity to co-invest in dieback R&D via the MLA Donor Company (MDC). Significant funding is available via the MDC which can invest at a ratio of 40:60 (MLA: Applicant) with access fees of 8% (primary producer) or 12% (other organisations) subsequently deducted.

A project that is currently underway that addresses one of the pasture dieback research areas may be eligible for expansion in scale or scope to leverage MDC funding. Commonwealth funding is not eligible to be matched by the MDC.

As part of the EOI submissions, organisations must provide an indicative (non-binding) budget, including the scale of funding available to co-invest via the MDC.

Limited levy funding is available to fund new projects under this EOI.

***Confidentiality***

By submitting an EOI, the applicant will disclose information to MLA’s employees, agents, contractors and advisors, for the purposes of the EOI process and any legal or MLA policy requirement.

Applicants must identify any confidential information that should be protected, with adequate justification.

Confidential IP should not be divulged by the applicant as part of the EOI process.

***Submissions***

Submissions should use the EOI submission form contained on the following pages.

The EOI submission must be lodged electronically to tenders@mla.com.au.

Submissions close **5:00pm (AEST) Friday 10th October, 2025**.

***Further Information***

A copy of the Proceedings of the Pasture Dieback Science Forum can be provided on request.

For any questions regarding this EOI, please contact:

Dr Ross Mann: [rmann@mla.com.au](https://mlaus-my.sharepoint.com/personal/apeake_mla_com_au/Documents/Documents/Proposals/Dieback%20proposals/Dieback%20R%26D%20EOI%20Sep_Oct%202025/rmann%40mla.com.au)

Dr Allan Peake: apeake@mla.com.au

**Expressions of Interest – SUBMISSION FORM**

**Pasture dieback research, development and adoption projects**

**Business Name**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** |  |
| **ABN** |  |
| **Street Address** |  |

**Name of Applicant**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** |  |
| **Phone Number** |  |
| **Email Address** |  |

**Authorised Person (Signatory) In submitting this form, I warrant:**

(a) I have the authorisation to make this warranty on behalf of the Applicant Organisation.

(b) in relation to any personal information provided to MLA in this application, before providing any personal information to MLA, notified all individuals to whom the personal information relates that it will be disclosing their personal information to MLA for the purposes of this application/ the project and obtained any required consent to such disclosure; and (ii) provided those individuals with information about where they may find [MLA's Privacy policy.](https://www.mla.com.au/general/privacy/)

Name:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

**Dieback R&D investment category**

*Please state which of the above dieback investment categories the EOI aims to address. e.g. “Controlling the pasture mealybug: Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Strategies”*

**Background and Value Proposition (1/2 page maximum)**

*Explain the problem facing red meat producers and what is the value proposition of the project. Consider the following questions:*

* *What is the issue and potential solution? i.e. what makes your proposed project useful to red meat producers?*
* *What is the pathway to adoption? i.e. what will the project (or follow up projects) ultimately produce as a tool / intervention / strategy that would be benefit red meat producers?*
* *Which specific regions or agro-climatic zones is it relevant to? i.e. are there any climatic or other factors that would prevent universal uptake of the proposed new tool / intervention / strategy across QLD and NSW? If so, define the likely region(s) where it would be relevant.*
* *How much is the tool / intervention / strategy likely to cost producers to use, and what economic return could they realistically expect if the project concept is successful?*

**Activities (200 words maximum)**

*Outline the intended activities to address the problem, including project duration. Where appropriate, include numbers detailing how many times you intend to conduct an activity (e.g. Conduct 3 workshops in southern Qld to demonstrate and educate producers on potential control strategies). Activities from anywhere along the research, development, extension and adoption pipeline are eligible.*

**Objectives (200 words maximum)**

*Outline the projects objectives. Use verbs when starting objectives e.g. Determine, Develop, Evaluate. Objectives should be achievable within the life of the project using the proposed resources available.*

**Outputs (100 words maximum):**

*What tangible outputs will be delivered by the project? i.e. producer-relevant best practice guide, decision support tool, training packages, workshops, technical report, new technologies (e.g. varieties, endophytes, beneficial insects), scientific paper.*

**Safety or Regulatory Issues**

*Outline any potential safety or regulatory issues e.g. Insecticide evaluations will require approval from the APVMA as usage is off-label.*

**Indicative Budget and Project Duration**

*Outline a total indicative budget with a breakdown for salaries, operating and assets required to conduct the proposed project (AUD, Excl. GST), and the anticipated time frame for the project.*

*Specify separately the funds to be provided by the applicant, levy funds required, and funds to be supplied by the MLA Donor Company.*

*Staff on-costs and reasonable organisational overheads may be included as cash contributions within MDC project budgets. Detailed information on preparing project budgets is available in the* [*MDC Project Application Guidelines (2025)*](https://www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/research-and-development/documents/funding-oportunities/mla-project-funding-application-guidelines_2025.docx)