



# **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES/DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON BIOSECURITY REPORT**

## **CHAPTER 2 - KNOWING AND OWNING OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Shared responsibility and Biosecurity Roundtables

The National Biosecurity Committee (NBC), assisted by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and state and territory governments, holds a series of jurisdictional Biosecurity Roundtables culminating in a National Biosecurity Forum each year.

The purpose of the jurisdictional roundtables is to enable stakeholders and government agencies to discuss issues, hear views and provide their perspectives and expertise on biosecurity-related issues facing their region. The National Biosecurity Forum provides an opportunity for Commonwealth, state and territory governments to come together with industry and other stakeholders to discuss biosecurity issues raised at the roundtables on a national scale. For example, the 2016 National Biosecurity Forum allowed open discussion and consultation on a range of biosecurity issues including the roles and responsibilities of participants within the biosecurity system and understanding what is meant by the term “shared responsibility”, which was raised at several roundtables.

Participants use these roundtable events to:

- build relationships
- demonstrate a commitment to open and honest engagement
- educate and inform others about current and future biosecurity challenges
- provide the opportunity to network and explore ideas about the future direction of biosecurity
- discuss governments’ biosecurity commitments and activities
- discuss issues specific to stakeholder groups.

The NBC has agreed to the development of a biosecurity narrative to improve community understanding and acceptance of the biosecurity system. The need for a narrative was identified at the 2016 roundtables and national forum, as well as through the 2016 social attitudes survey. However, it is intended to:

- outline why biosecurity is pivotal in maintaining the competitiveness of Australia’s agricultural industry and enhancing our favourable animal and plant health status
- stress the importance of looking after biosecurity for Australia’s environment, economy and our way of life
- outline the potential impacts of foreign pests and diseases spreading throughout Australia
- define the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the biosecurity system
- be used as a basis for engagement and the development of products that better articulate the importance of biosecurity and the roles and responsibilities of participants within the national biosecurity system.

The National Communication Network (NCN), state and territory governments and non-government stakeholders will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the articulation of roles and responsibilities within the narrative, including during their participation in the 2017 Biosecurity Roundtables and National Biosecurity Forum.

### Risk creators and risk beneficiaries

The draft IGAB report suggests that the use of language such as ‘risk creators’ and ‘risk beneficiaries’ can be divisive, with the view that it may be more appropriate to recognise all stakeholders that interact with the system as ‘participants’ (page 10 of the draft report). However, it is important to create a distinction amongst participants as there are those who contribute to the risk in a particular circumstance and are arguably better placed than ‘risk beneficiaries’ and other participants in the biosecurity system to modify behaviour to reduce biosecurity risks. They are also best placed to make contributions to the biosecurity system commensurate to the level of risk they are responsible for creating. The greater the risk the greater the contribution – conversely, where a risk may be effectively mitigated their contribution may be reduced.

The work on shared responsibility within the biosecurity system, such as the development of a national statement of intent and the biosecurity narrative, could provide an opportunity to emphasise the variety of roles and responsibilities within the national biosecurity system, which are not restricted to ‘risk creators’ or ‘risk beneficiaries’.

### ***Feedback request 1 - The Review Panel seeks feedback on the draft roles and responsibilities of national biosecurity system participants.***

It is suggested that a clearer distinction be made within the report between peak/representative industry bodies and individual businesses in Australia. These two categories of industry organisations have distinct roles and responsibilities within the national biosecurity system. Perhaps this could be addressed by identifying peak industry bodies as a subset of the industry category. This same principle also applies to the distinction between community groups and individual members of the community.

Industry and community groups have leadership, advocacy, information-sharing and regulatory roles. On the other hand, individual businesses and individual members of the community are responsible for being aware of and complying with their obligations, as well as notifying relevant authorities in a timely manner of unusual or high risk activities that have the potential to compromise or threaten Australia’s biosecurity system. In regards to the general community, it may also be worth mentioning the additional roles and responsibilities of community members who are landholders from those of the general community (i.e. non-landholders).

It is suggested that the item under the Australian Government’s responsibility ‘managing pests and diseases on land under its responsibility’ is replaced with ‘*managing and eradicating pests and diseases in areas of Commonwealth responsibility*’, as this better reflects the Commonwealth’s role and also covers pests and diseases in water under the Commonwealth’s responsibility.

It is suggested that research organisations, such as the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

(CSIRO), universities and private consulting agencies, are given explicit roles and responsibilities as participants within the national biosecurity system.

It is also noted that the table is largely focused on the land-based management of pests and diseases. The table could be expanded to also take into account biosecurity in the context of aquatic systems and cover roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of environmental biosecurity risks, such as the protection of native and/or threatened species.

It is suggested that the general community's obligation to have '*awareness of Australia's biosecurity requirements*' is replaced with '*awareness of and compliance with Australia's biosecurity requirements*'. It is important that every person is not only aware of, but also complies with, their obligations under the biosecurity system.

**Recommendation 1 - The NBC and the proposed Industry and Community Advisory Committee, through an open, transparent and collaborative process, should lead the development of a draft National Statement of Intent for public consultation that outlines:**

- a vision, goal and objectives for the national biosecurity system
- principles for managing biosecurity
- the meaning and application of 'shared responsibility'
- the roles, responsibilities and commitments of participants, including accountability measures
- governance arrangements for the national biosecurity system.

**The process should involve government (including local government), industry and the community.**

The development of a national statement of intent on biosecurity endorsed by all governments, industry and the community would be a significant undertaking. However, it would provide an opportunity to create meaningful and beneficial connections between these sectors as well as raise awareness of the type and magnitude of issues faced by all contributors to the biosecurity system.

Careful consideration would be required as to how to effectively engage with industry and the community in developing this statement (i.e. how to access sufficient breadth and depth of knowledge of the biosecurity system and ensure inclusiveness).

The Panel may wish to consider the need for an agreed definition of 'biosecurity', including what is and is not within the scope of biosecurity. Such a definition may facilitate greater understanding of the concept of biosecurity and assist in identifying and dividing the roles and responsibilities within the biosecurity system.

### **CHAPTER 3 - MARKET ACCESS IS KEY**

**Feedback request 2 - The Review Panel seeks feedback on the total effort and costs associated with demonstrating area freedom by jurisdictions, and the value of that trade.**

CEBRA, operating through a Commonwealth grant to the University of Melbourne, is delivering the *Value of Australia's Biosecurity System* project. It is expected that this project should, over time, improve our understanding of the total effort and costs associated with

maintaining the biosecurity system, such as demonstrating area freedom and the associated value of that activity.

A recent study by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) estimated the value of Australia's biosecurity system 'at the farm gate'. ABARES is currently working on a separate project to estimate the total market value of biosecurity, covering primary industries, exotic pests, diseases and weeds and consumers of agricultural products. It will estimate the total market value of the biosecurity system to the whole community as the change in total economic surplus (or welfare) directly attributed to the biosecurity system. It will provide key economic input into the CEBRA project mentioned above.

**Recommendation 3 - IGAB2 should strengthen consideration of market access requirements within the next NBC work program.**

Market access is a broad concept which consists of a number of international trade-related variables, most of which are unrelated to biosecurity. For this reason, the Panel may wish to consider explicitly restricting the scope of this recommendation to market access, as an outcome and consideration within the national biosecurity system.

It should be noted that ABARES recently commenced a market access project that estimates the costs and benefits of alternative ways of complying with phytosanitary requirements, enabling a comparison to be made of the area freedom approach against other treatment measures for different regions, products and markets.

**Recommendation 4 - Jurisdictions' biosecurity surveillance activities should include pests and diseases that pose the greatest threat to our export markets.**

The IGAB already requires the implementation of a reporting and assurance system that analyses and provides appropriate evidence to demonstrate Australia's pest and disease status and to underpin market access. It should be noted that market access is only one consideration which contributes to determining surveillance priorities, with biosecurity risks being the primary consideration.

**Recommendation 5 - States and territories should utilise (or adapt) the dispute resolution process agreed by ministers in 2012 and include the key elements of that in IGAB2.**

The Panel may wish to consider that the inclusion of additional requirements under the IGAB may make it more difficult to make changes to the resolution process, if required in the future. Furthermore, it is unclear what benefits there would be in including the already agreed dispute resolution process into the IGAB. Instead, it is suggested that the Panel may wish to give further consideration to the workability of the current agreed dispute resolution process, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and acceptable to all jurisdictions.

**CHAPTER 4 - STRONGER ENVIRONMENTAL BIOSECURITY**

**Recommendation 7 - IGAB2 should include an explicit commitment by jurisdictions to support financially, decisions agreed to under NEBRA, but look to put in place systems that ensure decisions are evidence-based and transparent, in keeping with best risk**

**management principles, and that give confidence to governments and the community that funds are being committed wisely and appropriately.**

The Panel may wish to consider whether an explicit commitment to support the NEBRA in the IGAB would achieve its desired objectives. The IGAB is not a legally binding or enforceable document and, while it is acknowledged that the NEBRA is a government-only deed, it may be confusing to stakeholders if only the NEBRA was explicitly referenced in the IGAB.

The IGAB Review Panel may wish to explicitly make a reference to the NEBRA Review and consult with KPMG, which is responsible for undertaking the review of the NEBRA, before finalising any recommendations relating to the NEBRA. It is understood that the NEBRA Review will be presented to the Australian agriculture ministers' forum (AGMIN) in mid-2017.

It is suggested that the IGAB Review Panel consider the potential benefits of a single deed approach, rather than the current arrangement of multiple deeds which apply for different types of pest incursions. A single deed could be an alternative to the three current deeds and the two proposed deeds for aquatic animals and weeds and operate as a master deed and set out arrangements for the main phases of any response as well as a consistent governance structure. The specific requirements for different sectors/types of pests and diseases could be addressed as Schedules to the main deed, which would also set out the individualised funding arrangements and specialised requirements for specific types of responses. This would ensure that all responses could be captured by the cost-sharing arrangements, while still providing for individualised arrangements specific and suited to particular sectors, parties and requirements.

A single deed could have the benefit of reducing gaps, duplication and uncertainty. However, there are likely to be significant barriers to implementing a single deed, including a reluctance by parties to agree to universal terms, where these are different to those set out in the existing deeds. The draft IGAB review report acknowledges the current gaps in relation to the absence of response agreements for weeds and aquatic pests. However, there are other gaps that are not addressed through either existing or proposed response deeds or the draft review report, such as in relation to pastures and hay, and which provide additional impetus for the development of a single deed.

**Recommendation 8 - Jurisdictions should institute formal arrangements between agriculture and environment agencies to define the objectives of cooperation, leading and support roles, information flows, resources and deliverables. The Australian Government agriculture and environment departments should enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, modelled on those with health and immigration agencies.**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Departments of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Environment and Energy could have a number of benefits including:

- providing a formal mechanism to improve collaboration and engagement between the two departments
- promoting environmental biosecurity
- facilitating formal networks for information and data sharing
- guiding joint investment in environmental biosecurity research and innovation
- providing a mechanism to focus efforts to secure additional funds and resources for environmental biosecurity
- developing systems and procedures across the two departments to streamline functions and decision-making processes to support work between the two agencies on interactions

between the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The Panel may wish to consider whether an MoU, or an alternative mechanism, is the most effective method for improving collaboration and cooperation between the two departments.

**Recommendation 9 - The IGAB should make clearer commitments to environmental biosecurity and include:**

- **the principle of ecologically sustainable development**
- **acknowledgement of Australia's international responsibilities under the Convention on Biological Diversity**
- **a program of work to determine, plan and prepare for national priority pests and diseases impacting the environment and native species**
- **a focus on environment and community as well as industry partnerships**
- **invertebrate transmitted diseases as well as animal diseases.**

Inclusion of specific requirements relating to environmental biosecurity into the IGAB could result in an undue level of detail in the IGAB, which is intended to be a high level agreement. A similar level of detail would, arguably, also be required to be included in relation to non-environmental plant and animal biosecurity considerations.

The Panel may instead wish to consider a new Schedule to the IGAB covering environmental biosecurity. This new Schedule could identify environmental biosecurity as a priority reform area and facilitate the development of a coordinated national work program for environmental biosecurity across departments, relevant committees and jurisdictions. This would also ensure that governments were more accountable for their activities in relation to environmental biosecurity.

It is suggested that such a Schedule would focus on issues directly relating to environmental biosecurity, leaving non-biosecurity related environmental outcomes, such as ecological sustainability, to other existing mechanisms. Also, as Australia is party to a number of treaties relating to the environment and biosecurity it may not be appropriate to specifically identify the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) or any individual treaties in the IGAB. An alternative approach could be to indicate that the proposed Schedule reflect the obligations under international agreements, such as the CBD.

It should also be noted that the Commonwealth is currently undertaking a comprehensive stocktake of its environmental biosecurity activities. This stocktake is intended to support the identification of gaps and inform the development of a work program on the management of environmental biosecurity issues within the national biosecurity system.

The Commonwealth's work program on environmental biosecurity is also likely to be updated based on the Australian Government's forthcoming response to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee report on Environmental Biosecurity, which is expected to be tabled in Parliament in 2017.

Other work currently being undertaken by the Commonwealth includes the establishment of an environmental biosecurity stakeholder forum, which is an advisory forum intended to facilitate engagement between the Commonwealth and environmental biosecurity

stakeholders. The first meeting of the forum was held in October 2016, with two fora planned for 2017.

**Recommendation 10 - The Australian Government should establish the senior, expert position of Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer within the environment department. A less preferred option is to house the position in the agriculture department. The position should report on the effectiveness of Australia’s environmental biosecurity arrangements and achievements. Reports should be made publicly available.**

A Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer could duplicate the existing roles of the Director of Biosecurity and the Inspector-General of Biosecurity, which already involve reporting on the effectiveness of Australia’s biosecurity arrangements, including environmental biosecurity matters.

It is suggested that the Panel consider alternative approaches to the establishment of the position of Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer that utilise existing structures, systems, resources and processes. It is possible that improving the integration of environmental biosecurity issues into the existing national biosecurity system would be a more effective use of limited resources and improve the sharing of information, technologies and expertise with other sectors. The establishment of a new senior position and the personnel and structures that would be necessary to support that position, would be a resource-intensive process and may not necessarily achieve improved outcomes in relation to environmental biosecurity.

The Panel may also wish to consider whether basing a Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer in the Department of the Environment and Energy would limit the Officer’s ability to influence and instruct the operations of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The Department of the Environment and Energy has a critical role to play in the management of environmental biosecurity. However, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources retains overall responsibility for the national biosecurity system and it is arguable that considerations regarding environmental impacts of pests and diseases should inherently be addressed within that system.

It is also suggested that the Panel consider this issue from the perspective of the states and territories, including what arrangements could be put in place within the jurisdictions, or nationally, to ensure greater collaboration, cooperation and accountability at all levels of government in relation to environmental biosecurity.

**Recommendation 11 - The NBC should establish and resource a new Environmental Biosecurity Committee (EBC), comprising government and external environment biosecurity experts and representatives from both the animal and plant sectoral committees of the NBC, to support the role of the Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer. The role of the EBC should be reviewed following its work to prioritise national biosecurity risks impacting the environment.**

Environmental biosecurity has previously been the responsibility of a separate sectoral committee that covered the full spectrum of biosecurity risks (plant, animal and invertebrate) to the environment. However, this approach was found to dilute the focus and capability of the overall system when other sectoral committees were dealing with equivalent issues from production and human health perspectives. In 2011, responsibilities for environmental biosecurity were integrated within all sectoral committees to ensure environmental



considerations were embedded in all national biosecurity decision-making processes. This enables biosecurity risks to be dealt with seamlessly. Reversing this decision risks the same problems arising, as well as creating gaps or duplicating existing work, due to the fact that environmental biosecurity cannot be considered in isolation.

The Panel may wish to consider the option of establishing a time-limited expert group or taskforce on environmental biosecurity, which could collaborate with the four existing sectoral committees. This body could be responsible for implementing the proposed IGAB Schedule on environmental biosecurity. This group could also have a role in auditing and strengthening the existing sub-committee structure to enhance their effectiveness in managing environmental biosecurity issues.

The Panel may also wish to consider whether biosecurity agencies in all jurisdictions have the necessary tools or resources to adequately deal with environmental biosecurity issues, even where they have been identified as a priority.

**Recommendation 12 - Greater and explicit roles should be developed for AHA and PHA in environmental biosecurity, instituted through amended constitutions and expanded board expertise.**

The expansion of AHA and PHA's role in relation to environmental biosecurity may require further consideration, particular in regards to its practical feasibility. Traditionally, environmental biosecurity, by being classified a public good, has been funded entirely by government. Consequently, any expansion in AHA and PHA's role may require additional government funding which may result in reducing funding for other aspects of the biosecurity system.

It is noted that in 2008, NBC agreed that the roles and responsibilities of the former environmental biosecurity committee would be re-allocated to the other sectoral committees under the NBC (NBC meeting 8, item 3.1).

## **CHAPTER 5 - BUILDING THE NATIONAL SYSTEM**

**Recommendation 13 - Jurisdictions should adopt a systematic approach to determine and plan for national priority animal, plant and environmental pests and diseases.**

The Animal Health Committee (AHC) has a long established list of notifiable animal diseases, which is based in part on reporting obligations to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). This information is available from: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/notifiable#national-list-of-notifiable-diseases-of-bees-at-november-2015>. The process, identified on page 43 of the draft IGAB review report, is the process that has long been adopted by AHC. This national list of notifiable animal diseases is reviewed every two years.

The Plant Health Committee (PHC) has similarly produced the National Priority Plant Pest (NPPPP) list, under the auspices of the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper commitment to biosecurity surveillance and analysis. The NPPP is available from: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/plant>.

Similarly, a priority list has also been developed in relation to marine pests and work is underway through the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (IPAC) to develop a priority list of pest animals of national significance.

Also, as mentioned in the draft report, ABARES has commenced a project to identify potential invasive species with predominantly environmental impacts, expected for publication in 2017.

The development of an environment priority pest list presents significant challenges in identifying and applying consistent criteria, due to the difficulty in accurately assessing environmental value. However, this is not insurmountable.

The Panel may also wish to consider the benefits of a single list of priority pests and diseases covering all sectors. However, it should be noted that the existing process for developing priority pests and diseases is driven by the unique requirements of each sector, for example international obligations under the OIE. As an alternative, it may be sufficient that all existing priority lists are consolidated in a centralised location to ensure greater accessibility. This may also make it easier to identify any gaps and make connections between pests and diseases in different sectors.

As part of this recommendation, it is suggested that the Panel give consideration to established pests and diseases and other biosecurity risks that affect social amenities, including infrastructure and tourism.

The Panel is also asked to consider adoption of a strategic approach to prioritisation of biosecurity risks, by focusing not only on priority pests and diseases but also the management of information and knowledge, transmission pathways, system performance and governance needed to build that system (refer Table 11: proposed priority reform areas). It is possible that identification and management of the pathways for the transmission of pests and diseases into Australia would be a more efficient expenditure of limited resources.

It should also be noted that pests or diseases not included on a priority list are not ignored and that most of our efforts in biosecurity aim to detect and respond to any and all biosecurity threats.

**Recommendation 14 - The NBC should lead five-yearly national-level risk prioritisation for emerging animal, plant and environmental risks and pathways, in partnership with system participants, reporting to AGSOC and AGMIN.**

Within the animal sector, regular fore-sighting and horizon scanning activities are being undertaken to identify and track emerging diseases. This intelligence is shared with jurisdictions through AHC, although it is acknowledged that information sharing could be improved. In the context of the plant and environmental sectors, a systematic process for national prioritisation of emerging risks is not currently in place.

The implementation of the *Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper* includes the development of the biosecurity integrated information system (BIIS). This system will improve the ability to quickly identify biosecurity risks. However, full implementation of this capability will require contribution and support from all jurisdictions.

## **CHAPTER 6 - RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

**Recommendation 15 - The sectoral committees of the NBC, with the endorsement of the NBC, should develop an agreed set of National Biosecurity R&I Priorities, in consultation with system participants and in line with the agreed national priority pests and diseases. Priorities at a sectoral and cross-sectoral level need to be considered. The priorities should be developed within two years of the final IGAB review report, and should be reviewed every five years.**

The NBC has agreed to the development of an agreed set of national biosecurity research, development and extension (RD&E) priorities. This is currently being developed and provides an opportunity for the identification and prosecution of a common set of biosecurity RD&E priorities by all jurisdictions and research bodies.

The National Plant Biosecurity RD&E Implementation Committee (NPBRDEIC), chaired by Plant Health Australia (PHA), is developing plant RD&E priorities. The NPBRDEIC was established under the IGAB and reports to the Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC) research and innovation committee. It is suggested that this work would benefit from stronger governance links between this group and NBC, which could be a function of PHC.

**Feedback request 3 - The Review Panel seeks feedback on the following options for a new entity for cross-sectoral biosecurity R&I:**

- **Option 1: Establishing a new stand-alone entity for cross-sectoral biosecurity R&I.**
- **Option 2: Addressing cross-sectoral biosecurity R&I within an existing RDC (for example, the Rural Industries RDC).**

**The Panel also seeks feedback on the funding options and would welcome alternative suggestions.**

Currently, there are animal, plant and environment biosecurity RD&E strategies, along with a number of sector-specific industry RD&E strategies, which outline a nationally agreed view of RD&E priorities and approaches. All jurisdictions, together with RD&E funders and research agencies, play a role in delivering biosecurity RD&E. AHA, PHA and Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) are also key coordinators in their respective fields and these roles could be expanded, if deemed necessary.

The creation of a new for cross-sectoral biosecurity RD&E organisation could undermine this established structure, duplicate administration costs for existing structures and divert funding being spent on research priorities. It also risks weakening the level of cross-sectoral collaboration with and between existing research organisations.

It is also unlikely that a single RDC would meet the requirements of the diverse (geographically and in terms of their priorities) range of stakeholders involved in biosecurity (Commonwealth and state and territory governments, industry and the general community).

Funding agreements with the current RDCs allow the minister to advise them of the government's RD&E priorities. This is in addition to the biosecurity RD&E deliverables under the *Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper*. There may be scope to provide more specific

and focused guidance about biosecurity priorities to RDCs, both formally and informally. However, ultimately RDC priorities reflect a trade-off between all parties and priorities.

An alternate approach could be to ensure greater collaboration, information and research sharing between cross-sectoral RD&E bodies and identification of cross-sectoral connections. For example, the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) will undertake research, development and extension activities aimed at the management of invasive pest species. CISS will build on the work of the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre and collaborate with government, industry, business and universities to counteract the impact of invasive species through improvements to the control and management of invasive pest species. The RD&E priorities for CISS will be consistent with the priorities identified through IPAC.

#### New incoming passenger fee

The draft review report suggests the introduction of a new incoming passenger charge to fund cross-sectoral biosecurity research and innovation. In Australia, the current charge point for international passengers is the Passenger Movement Charge. The Passenger Movement Charge replaced the previous departure tax in 1995. Since its introduction, increases to the charge have been linked to recovering the cost of customs, immigration and quarantine processing of passengers entering and leaving Australia, as well as tourism promotion. The fees collected from the Passenger Movement Charge are paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and are therefore not directly linked to funding biosecurity activities. In comparison, New Zealand's levy on incoming passengers is specifically linked to recovering the full cost of border clearance activities, including biosecurity, customs and other regulatory services. However, it is not used to fund onshore biosecurity activities.

There are a number of important administrative and legal considerations associated with implementing any charges on inbound passengers that would need to be considered if a passenger-focused mechanism were to be pursued. Additionally, there is already a planned increase in the Passenger Movement Charge from \$55 to \$60 from 1 July 2017 and it is then unlikely to be increased again for five years from 1 July 2017.<sup>1</sup>

### **CHAPTER 7 - STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE**

**Recommendation 17 - First Ministers should, within IGAB2, identify lead ministers and agencies for biosecurity (assumed to be agriculture or primary industries) and require supporting whole-of-government arrangements to be in place, including through memoranda of understanding.**

The IGAB was originally drafted intentionally without identifying lead ministers and agencies responsible for biosecurity. Retention of this approach would avoid the need to amend the IGAB if and when agencies and positions are re-assigned.

The adoption of a whole-of-government approach to biosecurity could result in positive outcomes for biosecurity. However, this is a matter to be determined by each jurisdiction.

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<sup>1</sup> *Passenger Movement Charge Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2016.*

**Recommendation 18 - First Ministers should formally establish the NBC and articulate its Terms of Reference in the IGAB.**

NBC has been in existence since 2008 and is referenced in the IGAB. It is questionable whether re-establishing NBC a decade after its inception would provide sufficient benefits to its efficacy. The Panel is requested to provide additional clarification on the rationale for recommending that First Ministers re-establish NBC.

NBC's current Terms of Reference were endorsed by AGSOC. The articulation of NBC's Terms of Reference in the IGAB could result in reducing the flexibility of the NBC to respond to shifting demands. Ideally, Terms of Reference should be able to be reviewed and amended as required.

**Recommendation 19 - The NBC should include the CEO of the Australian Local Government Association, and the New Zealand Government be invited to include a representative.**

The New Zealand Government, represented by the New Zealand Government Ministry for Primary Industries, has joined NBC as a full member and attended the NBC meeting held in February 2017.

In 1999, Australian and New Zealand ministers established the Consultative Group on Biosecurity Cooperation (CGBC), under the terms of the Australia – New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement. The CGBC provides the impetus and direction for harmonising animal and plant health measures affecting trade between the two countries, including:

- overseeing the work of technical working groups on animal and plant biosecurity on specific tasks within their field of expertise
- reviewing reports and provide advice on biosecurity matters to Australian and New Zealand ministers.

The IGAB Review Panel may also wish to consider opportunities to improve engagement with Commonwealth, state and territory Environment ministers and senior officials, in a similar way to that of AGSOC and AGMIN. This would ensure improved coverage and consideration of environmental issues and increased engagement with environmental agencies and stakeholders.

**Feedback request 4 - The Review Panel seeks feedback on the proposed Terms of Reference for the NBC.**

Noting the comments in relation to recommendation 18, the Panel may wish to consider the following amendments to the proposed Terms of Reference for NBC:

- Dot point one - include a reference to AGSOC, as per the current Terms of Reference.
- Dot point three - amend "*coordinating biosecurity investment in the national interest*" to "*agreeing principles underpinning biosecurity investment in the national interest*". This amendment would more accurately reflect the NBC's role in biosecurity investment.
- The sentence in the paragraph below the dot points – delete the statement "*New Zealand will be invited to send a representative to NBC meetings*". New Zealand is already identified as a member of NBC earlier in that paragraph.

As mentioned in response to recommendation 19 above, the Panel, in developing draft Terms of Reference for NBC, may also wish to consider strategies and systems to improve engagement with environment ministers and departments.

**Recommendation 20 - The NBC should adopt a sub-committee structure that aligns with the revised national biosecurity system objectives and national reform priorities in the IGAB. All NBC working groups and expert groups should be task-specific and, wherever possible, time-limited.**

The NBC sectoral committee structure should align with its revised priorities. However, the Panel may wish to consider options for achieving this outcome within the current sectoral committee structure, which comprises:

- Animal Health Committee (AHC)
- Plant Health Committee (PHC)
- Marine Pest Sectoral Committee (MPSC)
- Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (IPAC).

The Panel may wish to consider whether the roles and responsibilities of these sectoral committees should be reviewed to ensure that their focus is on biosecurity reform priority areas.

NBC could undertake a review of its work plan, and those of its sectoral committees have to ensure that efforts are focused on effective management of biosecurity priority reform areas and ensuring that environmental pests and diseases are adequately captured within the remit of all of these committees.

In regards to the proposed change in the names of PHC and AHC to the Plant Biosecurity Committee and Animal Biosecurity Committee, clarification is sought from the Panel as to whether this is simply a change in the name of the committees, or whether this is intended to change the remit and function of the committees. Further explanation is also sought in relation to the division of responsibility between the proposed committees, for example, in relation to responsibility for weeds and tramp ants. It should be noted that currently, AHC and PHC have a broader remit than biosecurity and that if their focus was limited to biosecurity then new committees would be required to be established to take over this aspect of the committees' non-biosecurity related work.

In regards to the proposed disbanding of IPAC, it should be noted that IPAC is currently responsible for:

- Bringing together common policy and technical expertise under one decision making body.
- Reflecting closely the way plant and animal pests are considered at a state and territory level. Policy for pest and weed management is often situated in the same business unit at state level, separate from animal and plant health officers.
- Providing a forum for the states and territories to discuss issues that might not be prioritised at the other sectoral committees – for instance interstate trade and spread of invasive species.
- A significant workload that is still progressing – for example, coordinating biocontrol activities and testing pests under the established pests and diseases of national significance (EPDNS) framework.
- Biological control, which is an area that particular benefits from animals and plants being considered together, as to do otherwise may result in inconsistency across the

animal and plant sectors. The removal of IPAC would also result in biocontrol needing to compete within the already high workloads of AHC and PHC in delivering their own work on diseases and pests.

The yet-to-be established CISS is unlikely to provide an appropriate alternative for IPAC. Biosecurity policy decisions cannot be delegated to private entities such as the CISS, which will have no authority to represent industry or government on these issues. CISS will be an RD&E organisation that provides valuable input to policy development, but will not have authority to make policy decisions. However, CISS may have a role in implementing agreed government policy. Delegating these kinds of activities to CISS would also require project funding, which would either reduce funding for other RD&E priorities or have to be offset against another program. There could also be a conflict of interest in an organisation taking carriage of government priorities that is also in the business of seeking funding from governments for their projects.

The Panel is also asked to provide additional explanation and justification for the removal of the MPSC. The MPSC has an important role developing and coordinating the implementation of harmonised, national arrangements to identify, minimise and address the pest risk to Australia's marine environment and associated industries and plays an advocacy role within Government for highlighting the impact of marine pests on Australia's marine environment and associated industry.

A replacement of MPSC with an environmental biosecurity committee could result in a loss of expertise in relation to identification of marine pest risks and minimising the impact of marine pests on Australia's marine environment and associated industry. This would require marine pests to be addressed separately by a new sub-committee, which would defeat the purpose of consolidating the existing committee-structure. The marine pest sector and the environmental biosecurity sector would arguably have very distinct stakeholders and interests, which are not common to both groups. Subsequently, there are unlikely to be significant efficiencies associated with merging these two areas.

The NBC uses task specific work groups when required. For example, the National Biosecurity Information Governance Expert Group (NBIGEG) is an NBC expert group that works on:

- Developing and recommending NBC policies, operational procedures and governance arrangements for the national management and sharing of data consistent with IGAB Schedule 3
- Consulting and liaising with other relevant groups and organisations, sectoral committees and other relevant government agencies
- Developing and endorsing nationally consistent minimum data quality standards to enable use by all jurisdictions and sectors as the basis for data collection, sharing and use
- Promoting consistency between jurisdictions, sectoral committees and industry based biosecurity information management activities, including procedures for monitoring progress.

**Recommendation 21 - The NBC should take steps to increase its public profile and openness, including establishing a stand-alone website. The website could be maintained by, but be separate from, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, and could accommodate and centralise all information on the NBC, its**

**committees, and their activities. Key policy frameworks, agreements and reports of the NBC should be made publicly available on the site.**

The NBC could improve its transparency and engagement with industry and the general community, including through the publication of more information on its website. The Commonwealth will continue work with NBC to increase the committee's public profile and engagement.

**Recommendation 24 - The NBC should report annually to AGMIN on its progress of priority reform areas. The NBC's work program and annual report should be made publicly available upon ministerial consideration.**

This already occurs. Schedule 1 of the IGAB requires NBC to provide an annual report on implementation activities carried out under the IGAB to AGSOC and the Commonwealth, state and territory agriculture ministers (AGMIN). NBC provided a report for AGSOC's consideration at its the November 2016 meeting.

The Panel may wish to consider reporting mechanisms that better keep Commonwealth, state and territory environment ministers and senior officials informed on NBC's progress.

**Recommendation 25 - AGSOC should establish, as a priority, an Industry and Community Advisory Committee to provide advice to the NBC on key policies and reforms.**

In regards to the establishment of the proposed Industry and Community Advisory Committee, further consideration may be required in regards to the membership and terms of reference of such a committee.

Many of the key strategies and frameworks developed and endorsed by NBC are already subject to extensive public consultation, as well as targeted consultation with relevant interest groups, as appropriate. Formalising a single industry and community consultation body risks the potential for vested interests of committee members, not targeting consultation to relevant bodies and experts and the committee not accurately representing the views of the broader industry or the community.

NBC had previously established an advisory Stakeholder Engagement and Consultative Group. The role of this Group was not intended to act as a substitute to governments undertaking stakeholder engagement, rather it provided a mechanism to test that a proposed engagement approach would target the right people, was tailored to the needs of the intended audience and was timely. Feedback from group members indicated that this group was not very effective due to sometimes significant differences between stakeholders, their areas of interest and lack of participation outside of their individual areas of interest – therefore the decision was taken to disband the Group as part of the decision to wind up all of the existing IGAB Schedule working groups in March 2015.

The Biosecurity Roundtables, by being open to a broad range of government, industry and community stakeholders, could provide an alternative mechanism to promote stakeholder engagement, in addition to existing government consultation requirements in policy development. Furthermore, targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders, as required, on



specific issues may be a more efficient and effective means of engaging with industry and the community on biosecurity-related issues.

**Recommendation 26 - The NBC should convene a dedicated annual national Biosecurity Roundtable for AHA and PHA members to provide direct input to the NBC.**

Further consideration is required as to whether a dedicated Biosecurity Roundtable for AHA and PHA members is warranted and cost-effective. AHA and PHA are observers on NBC. This provides these organisations with first-hand exposure to the discussions held in NBC, as well as providing them an opportunity to contribute to discussions, as required. AHA and PHA also host a number of fora annually, which are attended by the Australian and state and territory governments, who are members of AHA and PHA. AHA and PHA are also invited to participate in the jurisdictional Biosecurity Roundtables and the National Biosecurity Forum.

**CHAPTER 8 - FUNDING OUR NATIONAL SYSTEM**

Over the last three years, NBC has overseen the delivery of a national biosecurity investment stocktake. The purpose of this stocktake is to review biosecurity expenditure by Australian, state and territory governments. NBC is expected to review the first three years of the biosecurity funding stocktake later in 2017 with a view to assessing its results, benefits generated by the work and improvements for the future. The need for comprehensive and clear data must be considered alongside the administrative burden of completing the stocktake for all participants. The success of the stocktake is subject to all parties being prepared, resourced and willing to provide the necessary information to a specified level of detail. Continuing and potentially expanding the stocktake will only be useful if parties can do so practically and efficiently.

**Recommendation 27 - The NBC and the Industry and Community Advisory Committee, in consultation with other key stakeholders, should revise the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities to enable its practical application.**

The existing National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities was designed to reflect recognised best practice approaches to cost-sharing, including the New South Wales Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approach outlined by the review panel.

The Commonwealth considers clarification of the framework, including in relation to cross-sharing arrangements, eligibility for funding and assessment criteria, would improve the consistency of its application by jurisdictions and likely create benefits for other participants in the biosecurity system. For example, the framework highlights the considerations for assessing a funding mechanism as practical, equitable, non-distortionary/efficient and cost-effective, but does not define these terms. This leaves the framework susceptible to variable interpretation and inconsistent implementation across jurisdictions.

The framework also outlines potential funding mechanisms that were identified through an initial application of the principles to biosecurity responses. This is not an exhaustive or detailed list and may draw attention away from the process for considering who should pay and the most effective mechanism for collecting payment.

All jurisdictions are facing fiscal restrictions and have to manage competing demands on their budgets, which can impact their capacity to effectively prevent, prepare, detect, respond and

manage biosecurity risks. However, ongoing collaboration and co-investment in Australia's national biosecurity system is critical to, and underpins, its success. Ensuring mechanisms are in place to allow all stakeholders to contribute to biosecurity actions in line with their responsibilities is important. This also means all jurisdictions must commit to the investment needed to undertake their roles and responsibilities in ensuring efficient and effective management of the national biosecurity system. Consideration could be given to incorporating a transparent funding profile in a revised IGAB. A national investment strategy would contribute to the effective and transparent allocation of funding and resources across jurisdictions and system participants.

**Recommendation 28 - The NBC, with key industry and non-government partners, should agree uniform and fully inclusive categories of funding activity for the national biosecurity system.**

While the current categories distinguish investment along the invasion curve, they do not capture the type or purpose of expenditure. As such, the investment categories and, therefore, the investment stocktake, do not reflect the full picture of biosecurity investment. For example, state and territory governments have significant responsibilities as landholders for managing established pests and diseases, which requires investment. Under the current categories, this expenditure is not distinguishable from other activities related to the management of established pests and diseases, such as research and development.

That being said, the diverse range of activities undertaken throughout the biosecurity system (offshore, at the border, onshore and to facilitate exports), presents a significant challenge to developing a one size fits all categorisation approach. Also, categories of funding activity are only useful if adequate information can be collected and all relevant stakeholders are committed to providing this information.

In 2017, the NBC will review the national biosecurity investment stocktake, which has been trialled for the last three years. This review will include an analysis of data categorisation.

**Recommendation 29 - The IGAB should include an ongoing commitment to the funding stocktake, with governments publicly reporting their expenditure and the high-level stocktake results under uniform and fully inclusive categories.**

Buy-in and participation by state and territory governments is essential for the implementation of a national investment stocktake. A commitment to the investment stocktake as part of Schedule 2 of the IGAB could assist this.

**Recommendation 31 - The Risk Return Resource Allocation model should be extended to include all jurisdictions and their investments, with the Australian Government providing assistance to jurisdictions to build national capacity.**

Extending the Risk Return Resource Allocation (RRRA) model to include all jurisdictions would not require fundamental change to the existing model. However, it would require work to refine the post-border components of the model.

**Feedback request 5 - The Review Panel seeks feedback on the following options to ensure a more rapid-response to an exotic pest or disease incursion:**

- **Option 1: Cost-sharing arrangements should provide for four weeks of monitoring, assessment and preliminary control strategies, while an overall assessment is conducted on the possibility of successful eradication.**
- **Option 2: Cost-sharing arrangements should include a default funding arrangement for when decisions cannot be quickly reached about the success or otherwise of an eradication program.**

The Australian, state and territory governments together have a responsibility to ensure that detections of pests and diseases are managed as quickly and effectively as possible – irrespective of any cost-sharing decisions that may otherwise be made under a response deed. All jurisdictions have the necessary legislative powers and expertise to immediately commence response proceedings, with negotiations regarding cost-sharing arrangements able to occur in parallel. Therefore, the existence or expediency of decisions made under cost-sharing arrangements should not affect the timeliness of a biosecurity response to an exotic pest or disease incursion.

It should also be noted that, on occasion, exotic pest or disease incursions are, by choice, addressed without activating an emergency response deed. However, where there is a decision to activate an emergency response deed later, there are options for the state or territory government to seek reimbursement for expenses incurred. It should also be noted that individual jurisdictions may decide to not respond to a pest or disease incursion – even where cost sharing may be available under a response deed. It is the responsibility of each jurisdiction to manage a pest or disease incursion as they deem appropriate.

It is also up to individual jurisdictions to implement the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities, or a revised framework, to ensure adequate and appropriate cost sharing measures are in place in their jurisdiction to support biosecurity activities.

There is a risk that implementation of the proposed options could result in perverse outcomes. For example, it is possible that option one could encourage jurisdictions to take four weeks to complete an assessment of the incursion, regardless of the actual time that would normally be required, to ensure that the full amount of funding is received. On the other hand, option two could encourage jurisdictions to rapidly come to the conclusion that pests or diseases are not eradicable to avoid the default cost-sharing arrangements, where a comprehensive consideration may have resulted in a different conclusion.

Additionally, the Australian government has a range of mechanisms in place to assist in responses to pest and disease incursions, including:

- \$8 million for the Immediate Assistance Fund (IAF), under the *Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper*, which supports the deployment of and access to national and international experts and specialised equipment required for pest and disease eradication.
- \$50 million over four years from 1 July 2015 under the *Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper* to support nationally significant agricultural and environmental pest and disease eradication programmes and enhanced response capability.
- Stronger Biosecurity and Quarantine Initiative (SBQI), which provides early assistance to state and territory governments.

**Recommendation 33 - The emergency response deeds for aquatic animals and exotic production weeds should be finalised within 12 months.**

The development of emergency response deeds for weeds and aquatic animals have commenced and are being progressed by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The completion of these deeds requires the participation and agreement of all relevant governments and industry. While timely completion and enactment is sought, this is subject to the agreement of all of the relevant parties and is, therefore, outside the control of signatories to the IGAB.

**Recommendation 34 - State and territory governments should review their biosecurity cost-recovery arrangements to ensure they are consistent, appropriate and transparent.**

In 2016, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources undertook a comprehensive review of its cost-recovery arrangements. State and territory governments are also encouraged to undertake regular reviews of their cost-recovery arrangements to ensure that they are consistent, appropriate and transparent.

There is an opportunity for governments to explore options to further reduce/manage future expenditure and hence cost recovery or funding requirements. Community participation is already an important element of awareness raising and surveillance in biosecurity, with residents in potentially infected/infested areas required to report the existence of pests or risky behaviour and thereby contribute to containing the spread of the incursion. However, there are opportunities to increase community involvement (voluntary in surveillance and control), including through the use of information and communication technology (photos sent to specialists for identification of possible pests). An example of this is the Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG), which is a mechanism utilised by the Western Australian Government that enables landholders and communities to develop a coordinated approach for declared pest management in their area. A voluntary workforce makes a significant contribution in various other areas of Australian society, such as firefighting and lifesaving.

**Recommendation 35 - All levels of government could help meet their budgetary challenges by reviewing biosecurity levies and rates/charges currently or potentially applying to system participants. These should be commensurate with agreed national cost sharing principles, which the Review Panel considers should be reviewed.**

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources introduced a streamlined process for activating or amending emergency response levies in November 2015 and undertakes regular reviews of its biosecurity fees and charges.

## **CHAPTER 9 - MEASURING SYSTEM PERFORMANCE**

**Recommendation 36 - The NBC should establish a time-limited task group to progress development of a performance framework and performance measures for the national biosecurity system.**

The outcomes of the *Health of Australia's Biosecurity System* and *Value of Australia's Biosecurity System* projects being delivered in collaboration with CEBRA will inform the development of a national biosecurity performance framework and measures. Establishing a time-limited task group to progress this body of work may cause some duplication given that the *Health of Australia's Biosecurity System* project seeks to address some of the same activities.

It is suggested that the development of a national performance framework could build on the outputs of the CEBRA projects as the basis for further work on measuring the performance of the biosecurity system. In the longer term, the Panel may wish to consider the usefulness of a State of Australia's Biosecurity System report, which, like the *State of the Environment* report, would provide regular information on a range of measures relating to the performance of the national biosecurity system.

**Recommendation 37 - The Australian Government should facilitate development of an integrated, national biosecurity information system to provide a common platform for all jurisdictions to share and access biosecurity data and information in the national interest.**

The Panel may wish to consider replacing the wording of this recommendation with “*The Australian Government should facilitate the development of a common information architecture framework (including data sharing protocols, standards and authority protocols) for all jurisdictions to share and access biosecurity data and information in the national interest.*”

The current wording implies the development of a technological solution and could be interpreted as recommending the development of a platform where all biosecurity data is stored and accessible by the Australian and state and territory governments. The BIIS will improve the collection and collation and analysis of information. However, it is not intended that BIIS be a repository for all biosecurity data across Australia. For this reason, it is suggested that the draft report avoid using the language of “common platform”.

**Recommendation 38 - Data and knowledge sharing should be a core commitment of jurisdictions under the IGAB. Minimum standards and specifications should be agreed for data sets.**

Data and knowledge sharing is already a core commitment under the IGAB. Work is currently being progressed on the development of minimum standards and specifications for datasets as part of the NBIGEG work plan under IGAB Schedule 3.

**Recommendation 39 - The Australian Government should establish, within the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, a dedicated National Biosecurity Intelligence Unit, to coordinate and provide advice to the NBC, AGSOC and AGMIN on biosecurity intelligence covering emerging risks and pathways, and international and domestic pest and disease detection.**

It should be noted that the Australian Government's investment under the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper to biosecurity surveillance and analysis includes funding to enhance intelligence and analytics capability.

The Commonwealth already has arrangements in place to coordinate and provide advice to NBC and other committees, on emerging risks, pathways and detection. Further information is sought from the Panel on how a dedicated National Biosecurity Intelligence Unit would effectively and efficiently address identified shortcomings of and improvements to the current system.

## **CHAPTER 10 - A FUTURE SYSTEM, A FUTURE IGAB**

### **Recommendation 40 - Jurisdictions should adopt the proposed new priority reform areas and associated work program for IGAB2, and amend the IGAB in line with proposed revisions.**

The Schedules are an effective mechanism to focus attention and resources, guiding both funding and prioritisation of work across the national biosecurity system. However, it is arguable that in the current Schedules are too high level and do not contain sufficiently clear or measurable commitments and objectives.

The Panel may wish to consider the following suggestions for amending the IGAB:

- The removal of the engagement and communications Schedule (Schedule 6). While this remains a critical aspect of the shared responsibility model for management of the national biosecurity system, this could be better addressed in the form of a policy statement. It is important that the principles guiding communication and engagement within the biosecurity system continue to be complied with by all participants in the biosecurity system.
- The removal of the established pests and diseases Schedule (Schedule 5). The removal of this Schedule would demonstrate the significant progress that has been made on tackling the issue of established pests and diseases, including the development of the EPDNS framework, which was endorsed by NBC in July 2016. Whilst removal of the Schedule is indicative of progress in the area of established pests and diseases, this would not amount to an intention that research and work on established pests and diseases should be discontinued.
- Revision and retention of the following Schedules:
  - Governance and administration arrangements (Schedule 1)
  - Investment and decision-making (Schedule 2)
    - This Schedule is increasingly important to ensure efficient and effective utilisation of resources within a generally constrained fiscal climate. It is recommended that this Schedule be reviewed following the NBC's decision on the assessment of the national biosecurity stocktake investment.
  - Biosecurity information governance (Schedule 3)
    - Information and data sharing, interoperability and integrated systems continue to be a priority area within biosecurity.
  - Surveillance and diagnostics (Schedule 4)
    - It is important that there is better utilisation of cross-sectoral and industry surveillance programs.
  - Emergency preparedness and response (Schedule 7)
    - It seems that the emphasis on 'preparedness' for biosecurity incidents has been relegated from a complete schedule to part of one of the outcomes under the priority reform area of 'national priority pests and diseases'. While the relevant outputs to this describes plans and arrangements, there is no reference to the efforts required to activate and implement these plans and arrangements during a biosecurity incident.
    - The Commonwealth, state and territory governments have been moving towards increasing the emphasis on 'preparing for the response and recovery from biosecurity incidents'. Recovery from biosecurity incidents is being actively pursued by agencies and was one of the eleven themes of the

- Matthews' review<sup>2</sup> and was again identified and documented as a finding of Exercise Odyssey.
- Australia's emergency response and preparedness systems remain a work in progress, continually refined through practical application during responses and through training exercises. Despite these systems being in place, there remains considerable work to be undertaken to develop response and preparedness systems that are capable of being adapted to different incursions.
  - o Biosecurity research, development and extension (Schedule 8)
    - This remains a critical aspect of achieving and maintaining a high quality, risk and science based biosecurity system.

In addition to these existing Schedules, the Panel may wish to consider a new Schedule to address environmental biosecurity issues, which could include the requirement for work to be undertaken on the prioritisation of environmental pests and diseases and compliance with Australia's international obligations.

More information is sought on the benefits of the proposed method for consolidation of the existing Schedules. The Panel may wish to consider an approach that retains many of the current Schedules, subject to review to ensure clarity and the measurability of commitments. Work on revising the Schedules could also be accompanied by corresponding amendments to the NBC work plan, to better reflect the biosecurity priority reform areas.

It is noted that Tasmania did not sign the original IGAB due to concerns with section 7.19, which suggested that the Australian Government had the power to override state and territory controls on interstate trade where a measure is scientifically unjustified and/or unnecessarily trade restrictive. This clause has never been triggered. For this reason, the Panel may wish to consider the benefits of removing this disputed clause in the IGAB to facilitate all states and territories formally signing the IGAB.

The inclusion of a list in the IGAB of the agreed national biosecurity frameworks/policies/procedures used by the parties, as proposed in the draft IGAB review report, could result in the IGAB becoming quickly out-of-date with the development of any new policies/frameworks or procedures. By remaining a high level and long term agreement, the IGAB could be more adaptable and able to accommodate change, without the requirement for frequent amendment.

#### **Additional comments:**

It is noted that the draft IGAB report makes no reference to CEBRA, other than in the context of the ongoing health and value of Australia's biosecurity projects. However, CEBRA is involved a wide range of biosecurity research, which would be relevant for consideration under the Review. CEBRA was established by the Commonwealth ten years ago to focus on biosecurity. The Australian Government injects almost \$2 million into CEBRA annually and it is now a joint undertaking with the New Zealand Government.

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<sup>2</sup> Ken Matthews AO, 'A review of Australia's preparedness for the threat of foot-and-mouth disease' (2011) produced for the then Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The IGAB Review Panel may wish to consider the potential benefits of building stronger ties and joint research and innovation exercises between all jurisdictions, including New Zealand. CEBRA provides an important bridge to New Zealand. New Zealand's biosecurity regulator and inspectorate, the Ministry for Primary Industries, faces many biosecurity challenges that are similar to those faced by Australian jurisdictions. Although New Zealand examples are cited in the report where relevant and in the proposed composition of the NBC (p. 70), there is no scrutiny of the potential benefits of increasing joint research efforts in terms of:

- a) sharing expertise,
- b) developing solutions to jointly recognised problems
- c) sharing data of common interest.

CEBRA provides a working example of the benefits and challenges arising from such an undertaking.

The Panel should also note the practical benefits to the Commonwealth that have arisen from CEBRA and its outcome-focused operating model. CEBRA projects continue to provide substantial material benefit in terms of the efficiency of biosecurity regulation, as well as the timeliness and therefore effectiveness, of intervention. Examples include the International Biosecurity Intelligence System (IBIS), which helps identify biosecurity threats before they reach our shores and the risk-based sampling principles that underpin the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' Compliance Based Inspection Scheme (CBIS), which automatically focuses inspection effort on to pathways that have higher biosecurity risk. CEBRA's work was instrumental in the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources reducing the number of unnecessary inspections of air cans and courier documents and has provided considerable support in planning and preparation for potential outbreaks of significant animal diseases.



## GLOSSARY

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
AGMIN	Agriculture Ministers’ Forum
AGSOC	Agriculture Senior Officials’ Committee
AHA	Animal Health Australia
AHC	Animal Health Committee
Biosecurity Act	<i>Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth)</i>
BIIS	Biosecurity Integrated Information System
CEBRA	Centre of Excellence in Biosecurity Risk Analysis
CGBC	Consultative Group on Biosecurity Cooperation
CISS	Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</i>
EPDNS	Established Pests and Diseases of National Significance
EPPRD	Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed
IAF	Immediate Access Fund
IGAB	Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity
IPAC	Invasive Plants and Animals Committee
IPART	Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPSC	Marine Pest Sectoral Committee
MYEFO	Mid-year Economic and Fiscal Outlook
NBC	National Biosecurity Committee
NBIGEG	National Biosecurity Information Governance Expert Group
NCN	National Communication Network
NEBRA	National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement
NPBRDEIC	National Plant Biosecurity Research Development and Extension Implementation Committee
NPPP	National Priority Plant Pest
OIE	World Organization for Animal Health
PHA	Plant Health Australia
RBG	Recognised Biosecurity Group
PHC	Plant Health Committee
RDC	Rural Research and Development Corporations
RD&E	Research, development and extension
RIFA	Red Imported Fire Ant
RRRA	Risk Return and Resource Allocation
WHA	Wildlife Health Australia