

# Green Triangle Regional Plantation Committee Inc.

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IGAB Review Secretariat  
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## **Green Triangle Regional Plantations Committee (GTRPC) submission to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) Draft Report review**

The Green Triangle Regional Plantations Committee (GTRPC) represents the major forestry plantation growers within the Green Triangle region of SW Victoria and SE South Australia. The total forestry plantation resource within the Green Triangle exceeds 355 000 ha, which constitutes around 17% of Australia's total plantation forestry resource. The plantation forestry industry and the secondary industries which depend upon it are a vital component of this region's economy - based on a November 2015 survey there are more than 3460 direct forest industry jobs within the region (Green Triangle Forest Industry Facts, GTRPC, December 2015). Our region provides a substantial proportion of the timber products needed for housing in the major capital cities of Australia, as well as providing substantial volumes of wood fibre for export. The health of this industry is underpinned by maintaining healthy and productive plantations – including successfully managing biosecurity risks to minimize the impact of plant diseases on the pine and eucalypt plantations of the region.

The RPC and the Australian Forest Products Association have been represented at a meeting with Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) in preparation for PIRSA submission to the IGAB review, but the RPC wishes to independently make the following points to the IGAB review committee:

- 1) It is important to be very clear on who is responsible for what in the “shared responsibility” model.
- 2) The inclusion of key stakeholders is vital. Stakeholders which can be potentially overlooked, as they do not necessarily have strong linkage with the primary industry sector, are:
  - a) Local government, who are on the ground in managing potential vectors near ports and who have a major stake through social amenity plantings
  - b) Environmental agencies and non-government organisations – Australia has made a massive investment in the environment over many years and biosecurity breaches potentially threaten this major investment
  - c) The tourism industry, which arguably is a key beneficiary of Australia's natural environment, and which is also a risk make through the movement of visitors into these environments
  - d) The building and pest extermination industries, which can be seriously impacted by the establishment of new pests of timber-in-service
  - e) The horticulture industry

- 3) The environment and social amenity sectors are under-represented in decision making processes given the very substantial value of their assets, as is forestry to a lesser extent. There is a natural fit between protecting these assets (environmental, social amenity) from pest incursions and also protecting the forest industry. Decision making around surveillance, early detection and eradication need to include these sectors to a greater extent (Myrtle rust and Giant Pine Scale are both examples). With this in mind we support the establishment of a Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer within the Australian Government environmental department (pg. 68 of the draft report).
- 4) Funding for improved biocontrol for these natural assets could potentially be bolstered by the suggested incoming passenger charge, similar to that which is applied in New Zealand – this way some of the risk makers (visitors to Australia who are potential vectors for pests/diseases) and the risk eradication beneficiaries (tourists who come in part to experience our natural environment) are charged for the risk they produce and the benefit they receive. It also has the additional benefit of publicising that we care for our special and unique environment to new arrivals in the country.
- 5) There is a need for increased transparency in the decision making processes around pest incursions, in particular the decisions made around what strategies and tactics to take. In the case of the recent giant pine scale incursion confidentiality in the decision making processes was maintained despite their being widespread publicity about the scale – the reason is still unclear, but arguably it inhibited good decision making and certainly inhibited industry buy in to the tactics adopted.
- 6) There is a need for biosecurity decision making which includes the evaluation of the social and environmental benefits as well as the more obvious production benefits, and there is a need to strengthen cost benefit analysis for some of the less main stream sectors such as forestry, horticulture and building industries.

If you have any further enquiries regarding this submission please feel free to get in contact us.

Yours sincerely,

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