



2017 Environmental Biosecurity Roundtable

Australian Capital Territory Summary Report

Thank you for attending the 2017 National Biosecurity Environmental Biosecurity Roundtable held in Canberra, ACT on Thursday 29 June 2017.

This event was hosted by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of the Environment and Energy. The roundtable was the first of two environmental roundtables to be held in 2017, with the second on 16 November 2017 in Sydney.

What we heard from participants

- We need to define roles and responsibilities within the notion of ‘shared responsibility’ and encourage leadership and accountability.
- We need to increase the resonance of biosecurity in the community.
- There would be value in exploring how we can educate and involve more recreation and volunteer groups (bushwalking clubs, Landcare groups etc.) in monitoring and surveillance activities.
- Prevention and early detection of biosecurity threats is key.
- The workshop and discussion time was useful and participants would like more interactive sessions in future events.

Host Josephine Laduzko, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources began proceedings by providing the official welcome and Acknowledgement of Country. Action items from the previous forum were reviewed and it was noted that most were completed and that there were two outstanding (ongoing) items, these included: providing contact details for forum participants wishing to contribute to national tramp ant management activities, and for participants to nominate exotic plant species for inclusion in ABARES’ exotic species threat assessment project.

The terms of reference (TOR) for the roundtable process were then put forward to attendees to vote upon. The TOR were voted in with a majority yes vote.

A biosecurity system overview was presented by Josephine Laduzko, Paul Murphy, (Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environment and Energy), and Andrew Cox (CEO, Invasive Species Council). The presentations explained the roles of each organisation in biosecurity and touched on the challenges of prioritising pests and managing biosecurity risk in an environment where pressures are increasing and resources are limited. These challenges included how to better engage the public and peri urban sector in biosecurity and create the social licence needed for large-scale responses.

Elyse Herralld-Woods, A/g Director at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources provided an update on environmental biosecurity work being undertaken by the department. This included the Australian Government’s response to the Senate Committee Report on the Inquiry into Environmental Biosecurity, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) review and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) review. The Australian Government response to the Senate Committee Report is available at agriculture.gov.au.

An update was also provided on the national environmental biosecurity stocktake, which is being coordinated by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The information collected from



the stocktake will result in the development of a report on environmental biosecurity work being undertaken by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, and inform future work programs for environmental biosecurity. It was agreed that a high level summary of the findings of the national environmental biosecurity stocktake would be provided at the next Environmental Biosecurity Roundtable, to be held in Sydney on 16 November 2017.

Karina Keast, Director at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources facilitated the first morning workshop which focussed on 'encouraging community reporting' in biosecurity. Participants discussed barriers that may stop a person from reporting a biosecurity incident and what could be done to overcome this. Ideas from this exercise fell into a few main categories, which included:

- leveraging the passion of recreation and volunteer groups that are regular users of the environment to encourage a greater awareness and reporting
- increasing advertising campaigns to educate and inform the public
- targeting messages to individual audiences
- making it easier to report, and
- ensuring that reporting is followed up with feedback.

Andreas Glanznig, CEO at the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) explained the role of the new centre, including its priorities and future focus. The centre will be working on projects across all points of the invasion curve and aims to encourage efficient, community-led management of invasive species. Highlights of future work include working on a shared approach to manage deer, pathway risk analysis to target illegal online traders and work involving E-DNA technology. Mr Glanznig also touched on achievements of the Invasive Animals CRC, which included a successful rabbit biocontrol strategy and feral pig bait research with the United States.

The second morning workshop was about the National Environment and Community Biosecurity RD&E strategy and was facilitated by Dr Andy Sheppard, Senior Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO. Dr Sheppard noted that many sectoral groups were involved in developing the strategy. He talked about the goals of the strategy and recommendations for its implementation. Opportunities to explore links with other programs and learn from other strategies were raised, including linkages to the National Landcare Program.

Following lunch, Milena Rafic, Assistant Director at the Department of the Environment and Energy facilitated a discussion on 'how to better communicate and engage on environmental biosecurity'. Suggestions from the discussions around the room included:

- utilising existing networks that we have access to and those of NGOs
- carefully managing relationships and building trust
- building incentives to participate
- exploring corporate stewardship (for example BHP, Chevron), and
- properly resourcing communication so that we are successful.

The last presentation was by Karina Keast who talked about the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) and its role in biosecurity responses for environmental pests. Ms Keast noted that the NEBRA has been activated several times since it was signed in 2012 and that it is currently being reviewed by an independent consultant and the department. Early feedback from the review has called for greater transparency and broader involvement of environmental groups.



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and Water Resources**



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Rachel Melland, President of the Australasian Council of Weed Societies provided the event wrap-up and thanked the hosts for a successful roundtable. Dr Melland reflected that the notion of shared responsibility in environmental biosecurity can only be successful when key roles and responsibilities are defined and organisations involved show leadership.

Next steps...

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of the Environment and Energy would like to thank everyone who participated in the Environmental Biosecurity Roundtable in Canberra for their time and contributions. The discussions and ideas from the Roundtable will feed into the Sydney Environmental Biosecurity Roundtable on 16 November as well as the National Biosecurity Committee.

**We value your feedback – if you have suggestions about this Roundtable or the 16 November
Environmental Biosecurity Roundtable please contact us at
biosecurityroundtable@agriculture.gov.au.**