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National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (SEQ) Steering Committee
Risk Management Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee)
Monday 26 September 2022
Brisbane, Queensland
(Held by videoconference)

MINUTES – MEETING 9

ATTENDANCE

Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alan Millis, Chair• Irene Sitton, Independent expert• Wendy Craik, Chair, Steering Committee• Tim Farry, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, QLD• Jo Laduzko, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Commonwealth Government
Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eddie Jebreen, Director, FAST• Brett Turville, Director Operations• Scott Charlton, Department of Primary Industries, NSW
Presenters/Observers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graeme Dudgeon, General Manager• Becca Hobbs, Director Business Services• Andrew Langford, Director Strategy and Science• Barry Cooper, Manager Operations• Dan Smith, Program Manager• Lynda Bauer, Manager Policy FAST• Kerri Nobbs
A/Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heather Jablonski (NRIFAEP)

Agenda Item 1 – Introduction

The ninth meeting of the Risk Management Sub-Committee (RMSC) was opened by the Chair at 12.04pm (AEST). The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting, noting Scott Charlton as an apology.

The Chair acknowledged the retirement of John Robertson and welcomed Tim Farry to the meeting as the ongoing Queensland representative on the RMSC.

The agenda was confirmed with no changes. The Minutes of the March 2022 meeting, which were circulated on 11 May 2022, were confirmed by the members.

Members noted all actions had been completed or would be covered in this meeting's agenda.

The Sub-Committee:

- **CONFIRMED** the agenda as previously circulated.
- **APPROVED** the minutes of Meeting 8.
- **NOTED** that all actions had been completed or were covered in this agenda.

Agenda Item 2 – Terms of Reference

The Chair noted that the annual review of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the RMSC by the Steering Committee was now overdue. The ToR were emailed to members requesting comments. Comments that were received have been collated with minor changes from the previous version.

The following changes to the ToR were proposed:

- new clause 3.2 to ensure transparency in dealings of the RMSC with the Program, other government departments or external parties
- change to clause 5.1 regarding what happens when someone retires, to make it practical
- change to Appendix A to reflect the provisions in clause 4.1 (iii).

Discussions were held around a current KPMG Review. It was clarified that this is a strategic operational review with a focus on performance management reporting.

Irene Sitton advised that the current term for members has expired, and this was the last meeting under the current appointment.

Given the co-dependency of the Program and FAST and the scope for another member on the RMSC, it was suggested to include a member who is also a member of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' (DAF) Audit and Risk Committee. This will be taken to the next Steering Committee Meeting in November 2022.

The following updates to the ToR were requested by members:

- front page: update the date to reflect the current updates
- clause 5.1: deletion of the words 'of membership' in the first line
- appendix A:
 - First External member Source of Appointment should read: 'Non-government: specialist risk management practitioner nominated by the Program or other source and appointed by the Steering Committee
 - Third External member Source of Appointment should read: 'Person with risk management skills relevant to the Program, appointed by the Steering Committee

The Sub-Committee:

- **DISCUSSED and ENDORSED** the amended version of the ToR for submission to the Steering Committee for approval.

Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
1.	Proposal for additional member to the RMSC who is also a member of the DAF A&RC.	Chair	Nov 2022	In progress
2.	Provide amended RMSC ToR to the Steering Committee for approval.	Secretariat / Chair	Nov 2022	In progress

Agenda Item 3 – Risk Management Policy and Plan & RMSC Governance

The Chair advised that the Terms of Reference (ToR) require the Steering Committee to review the Program’s Risk Management Plan annually and the Risk Management Policy every two years, and suggested that as these documents have now been combined, they should be reviewed annually. The last review was July 2020.

The Program has undertaken a review of the documents and the draft was issued for comments. The comments have been collated and presented for discussion.

Discussions were held regarding reporting for FAST. Graeme Dudgeon advised that both the Program and FAST will internally report to the Audit and Risk Committee and the new Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO). Both the Program and FAST will be represented as one. However, this committee is focused on the Eradication Program but has FAST as a set of dependencies.

To allay future risks, further negotiation is required in relation to this year’s funding and the sharing of responsibilities in the course of the transition of suppression and certain other responsibilities from the Program to FAST as recommended by the 2021 Strategic Review.

Discussions were held around compliance capacity. Wendy Craik advised that the Review Report clearly stated that by the end of the transition year the compliance and responsiveness would be part of the Queensland activity, and that this had been accepted by the jurisdictions.

The Sub-Committee noted that irrespective of funding, the Program will need to be clear on the compliance-related risks related to:

- issues that could occur if compliance was moved to the department and the Program becomes a client of BQ, with potential for a reduction of focus due to competing priorities
- responsiveness to public reports
- who funds what in the transition year
- status of delivery capability and plans by the end of the transition year.

The Sub-Committee discussed the revised RMSC Policy and Plan. The document was referred back to the Program for updating as detailed at Action Item 3. Once the requested changes have been made the updated document will be sent to the RMSC Chair for final review / endorsement for submission to the Steering Committee.

The Sub-Committee acknowledged that this will be a holding document and it will need to be reviewed when the future is known.

The Sub-Committee

- **DISCUSSED and ENDORSED** the RMSC Policy and Plan, subject to requested changes, for submission to the NRIFAEP Steering Committee.

Action items	Responsibility	Target	Status
3.	Update the RMSC Policy and Plan	Program	Nov 22 In Progress
4.	Updated RMSC Policy and Plan to be forwarded to the RMSC Chair for final review prior to being submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.	Secretariat	Nov 22 In Progress

Agenda Item 4 – General Manager’s Update

Graeme Dudgeon advised that if the Program can implement Option A against the Review Recommendations the Program should be able to eradicate fire ants. The current challenge is for the Program to prove that it is achievable. The Program needs to be sure that the eradication is working to a level that the Program can be confident that areas have been cleared and start to move East.

The current spreading of fire ants is not just natural spread but is also by human assisted movement.

Stepping up to do Option A is a three-year journey. Currently the Program is behind schedule due to:

- logistics, availability and supply of bait, vehicles and helicopters required to undertake treatment
- increasing the workforce at the rate required for the ramp up
- information systems for supply chain management
- uncertainty around funding.

The Program is quickly becoming independent with its own Human Resource, Finance and Procurement teams to accommodate the ramp up. Budget discussions will continue around inflation of prices on vehicles, fuel and contractor costs and the impacts on the Program.

KPMG are currently conducting a review of the Program’s operations at the request of the DAF Director-General. The review will determine major opportunities for efficiencies and different business models that might be best suited to the Program scale-up. The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) is also conducting a performance audit on the Management of Invasive Plants and Animals across Queensland. The QAO Report will be tabled in Parliament.

The Program is currently undertaking a feasibility study around the use of drones in relation to remote sensing surveillance.

The Program is updating the current Work Plan which will be circulated as an Out-of-Session (OoS) paper to Steering Committee Members for endorsement.

The Sub-Committee:

- **NOTED** the Program update regarding operational activities and response to the Strategic Review.

Action items	Responsibility	Target	Status
5.	Updated Work Plan with changes to the budget to be circulated as an OoS Paper to the Steering Committee.	Policy / Secretariat	Oct 2022 In Progress

Agenda Item 5 – Impacts of COVID-19 and Emerging Biosecurity threats on Program

Graeme Dudgeon advised members that COVID-19 is currently not impacting on the Program’s ability to deliver. There is also currently no direct impact caused by any other biosecurity threats to the

Program. Members were advised, however, that if there was an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease or lumpy skin disease in the country there would be the potential for significant pressure on the Program. Discussions were held around adding this threat to the Risk Register.

The Sub-Committee:

- **NOTED** the update in relation to COVID-19 and the possible impacts on the Program from emerging biosecurity threats

Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
6.	Add 'Pressure to deliver Program should a significant incursion of a biosecurity threat occur in Queensland' to the Risk Register.	Program	Oct 2022	In Progress

Agenda Item 6 – Business Improvement Register – Risks and Issues Status

Andrew Langford advised members that the risk registers developed in 2021 were complex and expansive and have been simplified, with approximately ten strategic risks identified. The earlier registers also contained a lot of duplication which has now been incorporated into other risks. The Chair advised that some of the risks previously included, and their controls need to be retained and captured in the new structure. The Risks continue and if the controls and mitigations of the risks are not maintained the consequences may still occur.

Irene Sitton advised that the Workplace Health and Safety Risk had been closed which cannot occur for a Program of this scale. There were a number of recommendations from the Strategic Review that should also be included in the Risk Register to form an alignment between the Strategic Review and the Risk Register. Tim Farry suggested that the closed items on the Risk Register be updated to reflect the treatment actions that were undertaken to enable those risks to be under control.

The Chair requested members to send their comments on the updated Risk Register to the Secretariat for the Program’s revision and updating.

Discussions were held regarding reporting arrangements. The Chair requested, and the Sub-Committee agreed, that a summary of the Risk Register, detailing new risks identified as high or extreme and any additions, deletions or changes, be provided to members each quarter.

The Sub-Committee:

- **DISCUSSED** and **NOTED** the Risk Register as provided at Attachments A and B.
- **DISCUSSED** and **AGREED** that the Quarterly risk reporting requirements will remain as is.

Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
7.	Comments to be sent to the Secretariat regarding the revised Risk Register.	Members	31 Oct 2022	In Progress
8.	Risk Register summary including changes and additions or deletions to be provided to the Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis.	Program	Oct 2022	In Progress

Agenda Item 7 – Implementation of Strategic Review Recommendations

Andrew Langford advised members that the Program is drafting a four-year Response Plan 2023-2027 following the recommendations under Option A in the Strategic Review, for the Minister’s consideration.

Discussions were held regarding the following Review Recommendations that the proposed Response Plan does not align to:

- # 6 – The Program will continue to survey treated areas to provide a proof-of-freedom. If the risk assessment for re-occurrence is high, checks would extend out using combined remote surveillance and sniffer dogs.
- # 11 – The Program is hoping to build in-house capacity, which is currently outsourced, to reduce Program costs.
- # 18 - If the Program becomes a client of other compliance bodies it becomes a priority issue. What are the opportunities with industry? Discussion around changing the model and how we work with all tiers of government and the private sector to provide value.

The Sub-Committee requested the inclusion of 'compliance' in the milestone timeline diagram provided at Attachment B.

The Sub-Committee:

- **NOTED** the 27 recommendations from the Independent Strategic Review 2021, as provided as Attachment A.
- **NOTED** the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program is currently drafting a response plan 2023-27 for Ministerial consideration based on a strategic review 2023-32 endorsed by the Steering Committee, provided at Attachment B, and requested the inclusion of a compliance milestone in the timeline diagram.
- **NOTED** the Strategic Review recommendations that the Response Plan 2023-27 does not align to, and the reasoning.

Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
9.	Inclusion of a compliance milestone in the timeline diagram, provided at Attachment B in the paper pack.		Oct 2022	In Progress

Agenda Item 8 – Future of the Program – Funded / Unfunded

Graeme Dudgeon advised members that the current committed funding is less than planned. However, there has been good support for the bringing forward of funds. The ability to scale up has been limited while the Program is building capacity. The Program is currently working within the tolerances of the plan under Option A of the Strategic Review.

Discussions were held regarding support from local government councils and the LGAQ.

The Sub-Committee:

- **NOTED** the update on the Future of the Program – funded / unfunded.

Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
	Nil			

Agenda Item 9 – Program Scale-Up

Dan Smith advised members that the Program will need to go to market to seek project management experts to help with the scale-up. A broader risk of the scale-up is the Program's capacity to deliver on targets, including our external suppliers being able to provide the levels of product required for business continuity.

Currently the Program has been fortunate that the suppliers have been warehousing the required products at no charge. However, with the volumes required in the scale-up this may become an issue. The Program currently does not have a logistics and supply function. The Program will need to be

proactive in its approach for goods and services. The IT system capability should be added to the Risk Register.

Discussions were held in relation to the corporate services functions that will also need to be increased to assist with the scale-up of the core business. Further discussions were held around recruiting for supply and logistics and whether this service should be outsourced.

The Sub-Committee:

- **NOTED** the update on the Program’s Ramp Up.

Action items	Responsibility	Target	Status
Nil.			

Agenda Item 10 – Queensland’s Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce

Lynda Bauer advised members that the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) will be partnering with stakeholders to undertake proactive treatment and surveillance activities.

FAST will operate separately but work closely with the Program. However, from the public’s point of view the Program and FAST will be seen as one body. FAST has been seeking voluntary support from stakeholders. The Gold Coast City Council is willing to undertake treatment. FAST has also been approached by the Ipswich and Brisbane City Councils willing to undertake proactive treatments.

Currently, a high risk for FAST is the overwhelming response from stakeholders while continuing to onboard and build capacity in the team. Two stakeholder engagement officers have commenced, an additional two positions are in the recruitment process.

FAST is participating in monitoring and evaluation meetings to look at the different data, regarding surveillance and treatment, that may be collected and the value it provides.

Decisions on the responsibilities and funding between the Program and FAST in the transition year will be discussed further at the next NRIFAEP Steering Committee Meeting being held in November 2022.

The Sub-Committee:

- **NOTED** the included advice on previously identified risks
- **NOTED** from a Program perspective the most notable outstanding risk lies with expectations of ‘Transition from Program to the Taskforce’.

Action items	Responsibility	Target	Status
Nil.			

Agenda Item 11 – Other Business

The Chair summarised the meeting, including the actions and decisions made.

The next meeting is to be held in March 2023.

The Chair closed the meeting at 3.00pm AEST.

The National Fire Ant Eradication Program is a nationally cost-shared program funded by all Australian territories and governments, and the federal government, delivered by Biosecurity Queensland.



Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries
and Regions



**Department of
Primary Industries**



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development