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National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (SEQ) Steering Committee
Friday 16 December 2022
Teleconference
(AEST) 9.30am – 10.30am

ATTENDANCE

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| Attendees | Wendy Craik, Chair Jo Laduzko, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth) Scott Charlton, Department of Primary Industries (NSW) Nigel Ainsworth, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (VIC) Marcelle O'Brien, Department of Natural Resources and Environment (TAS) Claire Morton, Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (NT) Mike Richards, External Financial Consultant Miles Dixon, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (ACT) Malcolm Letts, Deputy Director-General/Chief Biosecurity Officer, Biosecurity Queensland, (DAF) |
| Observers | Lance Perry, Program Executive, NRIFAEP Andrew Langford, Director, NRIFAEP Tom Roberts, DAF QLD Tanya Grigg, DAF QLD Carmel Kerwick, DAF QLD Kerri Nobbs, DAF QLD |
| Secretariat | Heather Jablonski, Policy Officer, Biosecurity Queensland |
| Apologies | John van Schagen, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA) Rae Burrows, Department of Natural Resources and Environment (TAS) Nathan Rhodes, Department of Primary Industries and Regions (SA) Elissa Van Oosterhout, DPI, NSW Eddie Jebreen, Director, FAST Simon Barry, DAF QLD |

The meeting opened at 9.30am (AEST).



MAIN DISCUSSION

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The objectives of the extraordinary meeting were confirmed to discuss the Response Plan, Governance Plan and Proof of Freedom Strategy provided by the Program and the review of remote sensing surveillance. The meeting also needed to decide the Steering Committee's response to Queensland's Strategic Review recommendations responses and the subject of regulatory change.

Governance Plan

Members advised that they were happy to endorse the Governance Plan with minor editorial changes. Members will provide requested changes via email for the Program to include.

Proof of Freedom Strategy

Members discussed the updated Proof of Freedom Strategy (POF) and how the RIFA strategy differs from the Electric Ant strategy. It was noted that the Program was considering providing the POF to the Queensland Department of Environmental Science for review. However, Wendy Craik suggested that the document should also be independently reviewed by David Pearce MD of CIE. Lance Perry advised that enquiries into the appointment of a single source supplier have commenced. Jo Laduzko advised that she would provide the document to colleagues within ABARES for their review.

Marcelle O'Brien commented that the simulation figures did not account for human-assisted movement and was advised that the POF was based on natural movement. It was requested that the document clearly state the assumptions and analysis to provide transparency.

Members were requested to provide any further updates via email to the Program.

Remote Sensing Surveillance (RSS) Review

Wendy Craik asked when the Steering Committee is likely to receive the report on the RSS review. Lance Perry advised that the report was currently with Outline Global for their response. It is hoped that this will be received by the end of January 2023, after which time the findings would be provided to members once the other aspects of the report were finalised.

Lance Perry clarified that the Program is not abandoning RSS. However, is seeking a response to critical questions to confirm the effectiveness and efficiencies of RSS to the Program. Members questioned whether this impacted the finalisation of the budget. Lance advised that the budget had been finalised with human surveillance figures and as a result there was not an impact and RSS would only be reinstated in the circumstance of a positive cost benefit analysis.

The Chair advised that Outline Global have offered to do a presentation workshop with the Steering Committee, if required.

The Chair indicated that the SC needed to record its response to Queensland's responses to the recommendations contained in the Strategic Review. All members agreed to note the responses, further advising that this did not necessarily mean they agreed with those responses.



Response Plan

Members thanked the Program for the work undertaken on the Response Plan. Members discussed the financial data within the document and requested updates to the Strategic Risk Register. Discussions continued in relation to compliance, the General Biosecurity Obligation and enforcement options. Jo Laduzko suggested that including the compliance framework detailing processes would be useful.

The Chair requested further comments be provided via email to the Program prior to the Christmas closure.

Regulatory change

The value of a change in regulations to make it clear that property owners are now responsible for removing fire ants from their property was discussed, including the pros and cons of taking a strong formal compliance approach versus a supportive facilitating approach. No formal conclusion was reached on this issue.

Members discussed providing the documents to AgSOC and agreed the Response Plan, Proof of Freedom Strategy, Governance Plan and a summary of the Remote Sensing Surveillance Review given the prior investment and reliance on it., be provided.

The Steering Committee:

- **DISCUSSED and ENDORSED** the Governance Plan after minor editorial changes have been completed.
- **DISCUSSED** the Proof of Freedom Strategy.
- **DISCUSSED** the review of the Remote Sensing Surveillance.
- **NOTED** Queensland's responses to the recommendations of the Strategic Review.
- **DISCUSSED** the Response Plan.
- **AGREED** that the documents be provided to AGSOC.

| Action items | | Responsibility | Target | Status |
|--------------|--|----------------|--------|--------|
| 1. | Engage David Pearce from CIE to independently review the Proof of Freedom Strategy | Program | Jan-23 | Open |

The meeting closed 10.43am (AEST).