# AQUAPLAN 2022-2027 - Progress Report 1 2024

## Progress snapshot

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| **Activity status (total 28 activities)** |
| **Yet to commence** | **In-progress** | **Complete** | **On-hold** |
| 11 | 14 | 2 | 1 |

## Progress Update

### Objective 1 Border biosecurity and trade

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1 | Two-way engagement on import policy and decision-making processes. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** Increased stakeholder understanding of, and engagement with, import policy setting processes, including risk analyses.**Progress:** The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has drafted a program schedule in consultation with industry representatives from the Australian Barramundi Farmers Association and the Australian Prawn Farmers Association. |
| 1.2 | R&D strategic priorities for aquatic risk analyses and import policies. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Strategic research priorities are identified to address significant gaps in aquatic animal health knowledge to inform import biosecurity policies.**Progress:** To be informed by activity 1.1. |
| 1.3 | Strategic approach to meet technical requirements and support market access. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** A strategic approach to address technical market access opportunities and vulnerabilities is developed collaboratively by industries and governments.**Progress:** The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has prepared a project plan. |

### Objective 2 Enterprise and regional biosecurity

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
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| 2.1 | Enterprise biosecurity plan writing workshops. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** Workshop attendees have developed or refined an enterprise biosecurity plan that is specific to their business.**Progress:** Included in the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation November 2022 Investment Opportunities and Open call for R&D. |
| 2.2 | Enterprise biosecurity plan implementation support program. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Farm managers have worked with subject matter experts to refine their biosecurity plan and solve challenges in implementing the plan.**Progress:** To be informed by activity 2.1. |
| 2.3 | Evaluating and improving enterprise biosecurity plans. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Farm managers and other interested industry members have been trained in tools to evaluate the effectiveness of their biosecurity plan and improve and adapt the plan over time to meet changing risks.**Progress:** To be informed by activities 2.1 and 2.2. |
| 2.4 | Translocation of broodstock and genetic material. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** Opportunities, needs, and barriers to domestic translocation of high value animals and genetic material have been clarified, and options for developing a national approach to domestic translocation have been identified.**Progress:** An industry-government workshop was held on 5 July 2023 in Cairns, Qld. A project plan has been developed by a project manager funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) to address recommendations arising from the workshop.  |
| 2.5 | Review current approaches for managing ornamental fish in Australia. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Aquatic animal health issues are considered in the review of the ‘strategic approach to the management of ornamental fish in Australia’ and where appropriate, the strategy is revised to support sound management of aquatic animal health risks associated with ornamental fish.**Progress:** Yet to be commenced. |
| 2.6 | National ornamental fish communication campaign. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Target stakeholder groups have an increased understanding of the disease risks posed by ornamental fish species in Australia and have the information available to help them take greater responsibility for effectively managing those risks.**Progress:** Yet to be commenced. |

### Objective 3 Surveillance

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
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| 3.1 | National surveillance strategy. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** A national surveillance strategy is developed that guides how investors in aquatic animal health surveillance will strengthen the system and address changing needs and technologies.**Progress:** An industry-government writing group has been established to guide drafting of the strategy. A draft strategy has been prepared based on the discussion paper provided to industry and governments, and its collated responses, and is continuing to be refined. |
| 3.2 | Sector-specific surveillance plans. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Interested industry sectors have identified and prioritised their surveillance objectives (including data sharing) in cooperation with governments and have a plan for how they will achieve these.**Progress:** To be informed by activity 3.1. |
| 3.3 | Sensitivity of the passive surveillance system. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** The sensitivity of passive surveillance is quantified for an example sector and disease as a pilot study, and strengths and weaknesses of the system are identified.**Progress:** Two aquatic animal disease agents of trade and biosecurity significance – white spot syndrome virus and megalocytiviruses – will be evaluated as case studies using scenario tree modelling. Refer to [FRDC project 2019-193](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2019-193). |

### Objective 4 Diagnostic capability

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
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| 4.1 | Assess the future needs of Australia’s diagnostic system. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** The capability and capacity of Australia’s diagnostic system for aquatic animal diseases is assessed and the future needs of its end-users and service providers are identified.**Progress:** A project proposal to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation has been assessed in consultation with the Sub-Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (SCAAH).  |
| 4.2 | Technical guidelines for validation of aquatic animal disease diagnostic tests. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** National technical guidelines for validation of aquatic animal disease molecular diagnostic tests are developed.**Progress:** A team of experts has been formed to draft the technical guidelines. A draft is expected to be available for review in January 2024. |
| 4.3 | Diagnostic accuracy studies for priority aquatic animal diseases. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** The validation status of priority aquatic animal disease diagnostic tests is identified, and diagnostic accuracy studies are conducted for prioritised tests.**Progress:** A project plan is being developed by the CSIRO Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness in consultation with key collaborators. |
| 4.4 | Novel and emerging diagnostic methods. | On hold. | **Expected outcome:** New and emerging diagnostic methods are prioritised for further assessment based on their suitability to address the needs of Australia’s aquatic animal health management system, and where warranted, national guidelines are developed for their evaluation, interpretation, and use.**Progress:** A literature review of novel and emerging diagnostic methods is on hold. Awaiting further resources to continue.  |
| 4.5 | Improve Neptune and its database. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Neptune’s database is enhanced to incorporate additional content and is promoted within the aquatic animal health community to increase access and contributions to its resources.**Progress:** Yet to be commenced. For information on Neptune visit the [Diagnostic capability and resources](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/aquatic/diagnostic-capability-and-resources) page.  |

### Objective 5 Emergency preparedness

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
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| 5.1 | National priority aquatic animal disease list. | Complete. | **Expected outcome:** Priority aquatic animal diseases have been identified and agreed by industry and governments. A priority disease list has been developed.**Progress:** The national priority aquatic animal disease was endorsed by aquatic animal industries and governments in June 2023. The final endorsed list is available on the department’s website. |
| 5.2 | Biosecurity action plans for priority aquatic animal diseases. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** Biosecurity action plans have been collaboratively developed for each priority disease, and gaps identified where resources need to be applied to improve preparedness or risk mitigation.**Progress:** A biosecurity action plan template has been developed. The first 4 action plans are expected to be drafted by June 2024. |
| 5.3 | Sector-specific simulation exercises. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** A series of sector-specific simulation exercises have tested existing contingency planning arrangements and identified opportunities to strengthen arrangements.**Progress:**  A [national simulation exercise program](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/aquatic/aquaplan/national-simulation-exercises) has been established. Exercise FlyWheel (2023) was the first simulation exercise conducted under the program. It was in held collaboration with the [barramundi industry](https://abfa.org.au/). It aimed to test the technical response arrangements for an exotic disease outbreak. Refer to [FRDC project 2021-048](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2021-048). |
| 5.4 | New or revised contingency planning arrangements. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** A work plan to review and revise existing AQUAVETPLAN manuals and develop new manuals or guidance documents (where they are prioritised) is developed and delivered.**Progress:** To be informed by activity 5.3. |
| 5.5 | Practical disease investigation guidelines for new and emerging diseases. | Complete. | **Expected outcome:** Practical disease investigation guidelines are developed that outline the investigation process for new and emerging aquatic animal diseases.**Progress:** The ‘Outbreak!’ handbook presents guidelines to use in the event of a disease outbreak in aquatic animals including finfish, molluscs and crustaceans. Helps stakeholders understand if a disease event is an outbreak, what may be causing the disease, what controls to apply and ideally, how to prevent future outbreaks.The handbook and its associated e-learning modules are available to view and download from the [Agriculture Victoria website](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/aquatic-animal-diseases/outbreak%21). Refer to [FRDC project 2021-061](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2021-061). |

### Objective 6 Veterinary medicines

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
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| 6.1 | Understand existing veterinary medicine use. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** A cross-sectoral survey is undertaken to better understand veterinary medicine use and priorities across the aquaculture industry.**Progress:** Yet to be commenced. |
| 6.2 | Aquatic animal minor use permit applications. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** A nationally coordinated approach to facilitate applications for aquatic animal minor use permit applications to the APVMA and to maintain existing permits and registrations.**Progress:** The project secured funding for 2 minor use permit (MUP) projects in 2022 and 3 MUP projects in 2023. It has successfully helped to renew another 32 MUPs, reducing loss of access for industry. It has decreased duplication of MUPs through increased data sharing and prioritisation of MUP projects that improve access for multiple industries and uses. Industry guidelines on available MUPs and registrations have been distributed nationally. A business plan is being developed in consultation with stakeholders to support ongoing national coordination.Refer to [FRDC project 2020-094](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2020-094). |
| 6.3 | Establish antimicrobial resistance baselines for aquaculture sectors. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Baseline AMR data is established for interested sectors within the Australian aquaculture industry. The importance and key benefits of AMR surveillance in aquaculture are communicated with industry in an effective and collaborative manner.**Progress:** Yet to be commenced. |

### Objective 7 Research and innovation

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
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| 7.1 | Research priority setting, engagement, and communication. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** An efficient research priority setting, engagement and communication process is collaboratively developed.**Progress:** A project plan is being drafted by the activity lead (FRDC Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity Coordination Program). |
| 7.2 | Extension and adoption of aquatic animal health research. | Yet to commence. | **Expected outcome:** Barriers to and opportunities for extension and adoption inform research development and extension system improvements that ensure that research is not considered complete until it is extended by end-users, and opportunities for adoption identified, maximising return on investment.**Progress:** Yet to be commenced. |
| 7.3 | AQUAPLAN webinar series. | In progress. | **Expected outcome:** An efficient research priority setting, engagement and communication process is collaboratively developed.**Progress:** A project plan is being drafted by the activity lead (FRDC Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity Coordination Program). |