# AQUAPLAN 2022-2027 - Progress Report 2 2024

## Progress snapshot

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity status (total 28 activities)** | | | |
| **Yet to commence** | **In-progress** | **Complete** | **On-hold** |
| 9 | 14 | 4 | 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:** Program schedule prepared by steering group comprising representatives from the Australian Barramundi Farmers Association, the Australian Prawn Farmers Association and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Four webinars have been held thus far and recordings are available – refer to the [AQUAPLAN webinar series](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/aquatic/aquaplan) for information. |
| 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:** DAFF has prepared a project plan. |

### Objective 2 Enterprise and regional biosecurity

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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:** Representatives from the Australian, state and territory governments are developing a project plan in collaboration with the Australian freshwater native finfish industry. |
| 2.2 | Enterprise biosecurity plan implementation support program. | In-progress. | **Expected outcome:** Farm managers have worked with subject-matter experts to refine their biosecurity plan and solve challenges in implementing the plan. **Progress:** Project underway with the barramundi industry. See [FRDC project 2023-046](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2023-046). |
| 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: Consultation is underway with the abalone, prawn and oyster industries, and state and territory governments, to better understand industry’s translocation needs and goals. Based on these discussions, prioritised, productive and focussed work plans will be developed for each sector.** A presentation on progress to date was given at [Seafood Directions](https://www.seafooddirections.com.au/) in September 2024. |
| 2.5 | Review current approaches for managing ornamental fish in Australia. | In progress. | **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:** The [Environment and Invasives Committee](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/pest-animals-and-weeds/eic) is developing a new strategic plan for the management of freshwater pests in Australia. This new strategy will supersede ‘A strategic approach to the management of ornamental fish in Australia’. However, the scope will be broader than just ornamental fish. Government aquatic animal health representatives will consider if another approach is required to support the sound management of aquatic animal health risks associated with ornamental fish. |
| 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** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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:** **A national aquatic animal disease surveillance strategy was developed through a collaborative process, overseen by an industry-government steering group. The strategy was endorsed by industry peak bodies and governments through the** [sub-committee on aquatic animal health](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/aquatic/committees) **in September 2024. The strategy will be sent to government Chief Veterinary Officers for their endorsement through** [animal health committee](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/health/committees/ahc) **in mid-October 2024.** |
| 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:** Activity progressing through [FRDC project 2019-193](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2019-193). **Australia’s passive surveillance system for white spot disease was quantitively evaluated using scenario tree modelling.** A second case study on *megalocytiviruses* is expected to be complete by early 2025. |

### Objective 4 Diagnostic capability

| **Activity** | **Short title** | **Status** | **Expected outcome and progress** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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:** Activity progressing through [FRDC project 2023-006](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2023-006). Stakeholder consultation on the project began in June 2024. |
| 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:** National technical guidelines will be developed to align with the validation dossier requirements of WOAH. |
| 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:** 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** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/aquatic/emergency/national-priority-aquatic-animal-disease-list). |
| 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: Priority disease action plans are being drafted for Megalocytivirus pagrus 1, infectious salmon anaemia and withering syndrome. Industry and governments have jointly developed the draft M. pagrus 1 action plan, which will be used as a model for development of the other action plans.** |
| 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:**  Two exercises have been held through the [national simulation exercise program](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/aquatic/aquaplan/national-simulation-exercises). Exercise FlyWheel (2023) was held collaboration with the [barramundi industry](https://abfa.org.au/) and Exercise Black Tiger (2024) was held in collaboration with [prawn industry](https://apfa.com.au/). Each exercise 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. It 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!). 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** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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. | Complete. | **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:** This project helped maintain permitted treatment options in aquaculture and progress new minor use permits for priority treatment gaps. A business plan was developed in consultation with stakeholders to support ongoing national coordination. Refer to [FRDC project 2020-094](https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2020-094). A news article on the project is available at: [Streamlined process improves access to aquaculture medicines (FRDC 2023)](https://www.frdc.com.au/streamlined-process-improves-access-aquaculture-medicines?_cldee=tUc0jQapFLnkeo2HD0EOb_SvLvtqgJ3v0-tukZf1ptwWJ4kZI2X91tzJ74aYE0vA&recipientid=contact-ab5e32c98416ec119431000d3ae012a4-691b5218c1cc4da88d06a553731452e9&esid=0df3a87a-3ec7-ed11-b4b3-002248148e6c). |
| 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** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7.1 | Research priority setting, engagement, and communication. | Complete. | **Expected outcome:** An efficient research priority setting, engagement and communication process is collaboratively developed. **Progress:** The FRDC Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity Coordination Program have collaboratively developed and implemented a new process for setting priorities. |
| 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:** A webinar series is delivered for Australia’s aquatic animal health community that provides meaningful engagement and extension opportunities for AQUAPLAN activities. **Progress:** Webinar recordings are available to view on the AQUAPLAN GovTEAMS. To access the recordings, contact [aquaplan@aff.gov.au](mailto:aquaplan@aff.gov.au). |