

# Environmental Biosecurity Interdepartmental Group

## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

Invasive species are one of the priority issues impacting on our flora, fauna and their unique habitats. Environmental biosecurity seeks to identify and manage the threats and impacts to our environment, cultural values and social amenity posed by both exotic and established invasive pests, weeds and diseases. Addressing the threats posed by invasive species will deliver biodiversity conservation objectives.

Environmental biosecurity sits across both agriculture and environment portfolios, with the connected nature of the work encompassing areas such as:

- national environmental biosecurity strategy and policy frameworks
- biosecurity measures, preparedness, surveillance, and response
- trade and regulating imports from outside Australia including assessment of risks and unregulated pathways (*Biosecurity Act 2015*)
- prevention of new invasive species establishing (introductions and establishments) with a focus on the National Priority List of Exotic Environmental Pests, Weeds and Diseases (EEPL)
- management of the Live Import List under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- provide leadership on national policy development for -pests, weeds and diseases that threaten agricultural, natural, cultural values
- threat abatement plans, strategies and advice to mitigate impacts including listed key threatening processes
- national co-ordination, research, development and extension activities
- commitment to meaningful connections with First Nations people to achieve better policy outcomes
- Australia's international obligations including those under the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service.

Reflecting this, the Environmental Biosecurity Interdepartmental Group (EBIG) has been established to ensure a whole-of-government approach on environmental biosecurity matters, and to better understand and identify opportunities to work together to support ongoing collaboration between the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

The EBIG will contribute towards recommendation 7 of the *2017 Priorities for Australia's Biosecurity System* report aimed at strengthening the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB).

*Recommendation 7: Jurisdictions should institute formal arrangements between agriculture and environment agencies, including through memoranda of understanding, to define the objectives of cooperation, leading and support roles, information flows, resources and deliverables.*

### Roles and responsibilities

In relation to environmental biosecurity, the EBIG will:

- share and discuss current and emerging issues and related matters relevant to both portfolios
- consider how to jointly progress strategic policy agendas

- discuss, develop and/or provide coordinated input into relevant policy initiatives
- consider appropriate advice to government including relevant collective committees (such as Environment and Invasives Committee)
- support cross-portfolio communication and help ensure consistency in the communication of Australian Government policy
- seek to maximise benefits through joint efforts, and identify and address gaps
- consider, and make recommendations if required on, additional mechanisms to ensure strengthened engagement and policy arrangements between the two portfolios

### **Membership**

Membership of the EBIG will consist of representatives from both DAFF and DCCEEW who have policy and program responsibility for matters relating to environmental biosecurity. Core membership will consist of SES representatives or equivalent from:

- Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity Division's Environmental Biosecurity Office (DAFF)
- Biodiversity Division (DCCEEW), including the Threatened Species Commissioner Branch
- International Environment, Reef and Oceans Division (DCCEEW), including the Oceans and Wildlife Branch

Additional attendees may be invited, based on the expected focus of discussion at meetings.

### **Chair**

The Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer (ACEBO) (DAFF) will chair the EBIG.

### **Meeting arrangements**

Meetings will be held quarterly at a time to be agreed upon by the membership. Ad hoc meetings can be called by the Chair or members through the Chair. It is expected that EBIG will meet four times per year.

Secretariat support for the EBIG will be provided by the Environmental Biosecurity Office (DAFF). Formal meeting papers will not be provided except on an as required basis.

An agenda will be provided three days prior to the meeting. A meeting record will be provided no later than 10 business days following each meeting.

### **Reporting**

EBIG members are responsible for briefing upwards on meeting discussions and outcomes to their respective Executive.

A summary of EBIG meetings – appropriate for provision to external stakeholders - will be prepared at the end of each financial year.

### **Working Group**

A Working Group has been established to provide advice and support to EBIG members and to progress work on joint initiatives. The working group will meet on an as needs basis and will be co-chaired by representatives from both departments.