# 2021 National Biosecurity Forum

Session 3: Shared responsibility and partnerships

(Duration 1 hour 22 mins 38 secs)

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## Introduction

This is the transcript of the National Biosecurity Forum, session 3, presented by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

## Transcript

[Session begins]

Richard Morecroft: Welcome back to the National Biosecurity Forum 2021 and thank you for joining us on day two. I'm Richard Morecroft. I'm delighted to be back as your facilitator for today's very impressive line-up after yesterday's excellent presentations and panel discussions and a big thank you to everybody who took part in yesterday's activities. I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands upon which we meet and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging; and I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

Well, yesterday we heard presentations from some of our most prominent members of the biosecurity community, learning about positive movements in preparing for our nation's future and managing biosecurity risks. We covered some fascinating ground ranging from looking to the future with a vision for Australia's biosecurity system, through preparedness for a major biosecurity threat, to establishing what perhaps could be called a new normal for biosecurity, especially when it comes to emergency responses.

And so to today, well, very shortly we will have an address from Andrew Metcalfe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. And then this will be followed by two sessions. First of all, biosecurity's shared responsibilities and partnerships and then the intriguing area of science and innovation in this space. So that's this morning. And then the day will wrap up with a Q and A session this afternoon showcasing the 2021 Australian Biosecurity Award winners who were announced yesterday and what an exciting afternoon that was. And it'll be a wonderful opportunity this afternoon to hear more about their outstanding efforts from them. So please do make sure you join us if you can for that session. But now it is time to welcome Andrew Metcalfe to open today's part of the National Biosecurity Forum. Over to you, Andrew.

Andrew Metcalfe: Well, thank you very much, Richard and it's great to be here today. Can I join you in an Acknowledgement of Country? And I'd particularly like to acknowledge that we are meeting today here, those of us here in Canberra, on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people and acknowledge Country in their language (Acknowledgement of Country in Ngunnawal language). This is Ngunnawal Country, today we are meeting together on Ngunnawal country. We acknowledge and pay respects to the elders. And I extend that recognition to the Traditional Custodians right across Australia where we live and work and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and our communities.

Well, welcome everyone to day two of the National Biosecurity Forum and thank you so much for joining us for what will shape up to be a very exciting program. My department has the great privilege, the great responsibility of enhancing Australia's agriculture environment, heritage and water, both now and into the future, for generations upon generations of Australians to come. Personally as the Secretary of the department and with that, I become the Director of Biosecurity for Australia as well. As a person who grew up in country Queensland in Toowoomba, the ability to undertake our job, working with so many different people and for me, a lifetime of connection with the land, with our agriculture and with our extraordinary environment with our biodiversity. So the department I lead has got an extraordinary purpose and we are all committed to doing the very best we can for now and for the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, the factors shaping our future have never been as fast moving or interconnected. We're more closely linked to the rest of the world than we ever have been before through evolving supply chains, through trade and technology and natural pathways. And our biosecurity system is integral to protecting our farming industries, our agricultural businesses and our environment from the increasing risk of exotic pests and diseases. These shifts bring opportunities and implications, especially for our biosecurity system. So I'm, as a Director of Biosecurity, really excited to see the discussions from this national forum. And I thank each and every one of you, our over a thousand attendees, for joining us here today. I'd also like to pass on my congratulations to the recipients of the 2021 Australian Biosecurity Awards and the Biosecurity Commendation Certificates announced yesterday. This year's winners have demonstrated, amongst other things, the importance of collaboration, perhaps even more special because of the difficult and trying circumstances that we've all been living and working through because of the pandemic. Some of our winners have dedicated their careers to scientific research or educating the next generation of biosecurity aware Australians through mentoring, communication activities, and leadership. So thank you to all of our winners for your valuable contributions to Australia's biosecurity.

And I'd also like to just briefly share my thoughts on the discussions held yesterday. In the morning, of course, we heard from my colleague, Andrew Tongue, from our department and his peer, Malcolm Letts from Biosecurity Queensland, speaking on the Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030 roadmap and our collective efforts for national biosecurity. Dr Jo Coombe gave us insights into the antimicrobial stewardship research, development and extension strategy and stewardship program supporting great work. The discussions on the changing landscape and the risk profile for our biosecurity efforts and how we are positioning our emergency response capability and early detection approaches in Northern Australia to manage threats more effectively, rounded out a great day's work.

And as we move into day two of the forum, we begin today with a focus on the shared responsibility for biosecurity across governments, industry and research sectors. We recently conducted some research around biosecurity awareness and Richard Keane will open the session to share insights from this and how this informs our communication and engagement activities. Our New Zealand colleagues have done some great work with an independent biosecurity band project, This is us or Ko Tātou, which they will share this project and their learnings along the way with us as well. Partnerships with industry are a key focus for us and we are pleased to have Joanne Elliott from Kmart join us today to share her perspective, their perspectives around the new pilot that we have underway looking at streamlining the regulatory process for importers while meeting our strict national biosecurity requirements.

And in the final session of the forum for 2021, science and innovation will take the focus. Our speakers and panellists will share their successes with a range of innovative technologies that have impacts on wildlife conservation, detecting priority pests and estimating the exposure risks to new pests and diseases in Australia and New Zealand. And finally, today I encourage you to join us for the second part of the Australian Biosecurity Awards. Our winners will be on from 3:00 PM, Canberra Local Time, for a Q and A session to share their stories and answer your questions. So everyone, thank you again for joining us. Enjoy the forum and continue to make your great contributions to Australia's biosecurity.

Richard Morecroft: Well, thank you very much indeed, Andrew. And the department certainly has a very comprehensive and targeted program, including of course its focus on delivering a strong biosecurity program. And I'm looking forward to our discussions and presentations today in exactly that direction. And we thought we might just quickly do a little Mentimeter test to be able to get you into action with Mentimeter, because in fact in our next session, there are going to be some Mentimeter questions involved, but a very straightforward one. And the Mentimeter question now, as you can see on your screen, is what area of biosecurity are you most interested in?

And already we're starting to get a diversity of interesting responses. It's great to see so many people from different elements of the biosecurity affected areas. We've got everything from and I'm just trying to read some of those, everything from biodiversity conservation through to trade, which was the first answer which came up on the screen. Exotic disease. Preparedness is a very big word there and of course there was an extensive amount of discussion yesterday about the issue of preparedness. So we can see simply from that wonderful word cloud of Mentimeter responses, the depth and breadth of interest and focus from you, our participants in this discussion, watching and listening to our forum today. So thank you very much for that involvement. And we'll use Mentimeter perhaps from time to time as we move through our forum presentations and discussions today.

But let's move straight now into our third session of this forum. And this one has the theme of shared responsibility and partnerships, because biosecurity is, of course, everyone's responsibility. We have an outstanding line-up of speakers who will explore this vital aspect and they include Richard Keane, who will, in just a few moments, take us through recent research findings for biosecurity awareness and how this is supporting work for a biosecurity brand; Tim Fraser, who'll be joining us from New Zealand and he will share insights and learnings into their campaign, This is us; and to close our first round of presentations, Leanne Herrick and Joanne Elliot will outline a new pilot underway with industry for imported cargo.

Now, as I mentioned, our first presentation in this session is from Richard Keane, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Analytics and Innovation branch at the department. And Richard is going to talk about recent biosecurity research outcomes. So a warm welcome and over to you, Richard.

Richard Keane: Thank you very much, Richard. Appreciate the introduction. And also thank you to the secretary for opening day two of our session. My name's Richard Keane, I'm in the Analytics and Innovation branch at the department. And today we're going to be talking to you about some biosecurity research and work that we've done. Just interesting, seeing the Mentimeter responses there from the audience. And later on, we are going to ask you a series of questions, and it'll be interesting to see what your thoughts are on that. So stay tuned.

Earlier this year, between May and July, we ran a series of sessions and surveys and interviews with a select number of individuals. It was assisted by Instinct and Reason, a delivery partner, to try and get an understanding of biosecurity awareness and what it means for us, especially in this COVID environment. Just looking on the first slide there. Oh, here we go. Jumping around. We explored six key areas with our interviews and surveys over that period of time, looking at things like what does biosecurity mean in terms of those individual groups; what's the impact and the understanding that it has there; the risks and consequences of a biosecurity breach in Australia. Who is responsible for biosecurity in Australia? Is it the Australian Government? Is it Department of Agriculture? Is it a collective response? And some of the sort of memorable biosecurity messages that individuals have picked up, especially on their return into Australia, but also in other areas. During COVID lockdown, we've seen a surge in, especially in sea containers and international mail, a lot of online shopping. So there's a lot of messaging and information that's got out through there. And lastly, we've looked at imagery and things that have associated strongly with the group with biosecurity. My favourite is the detector dogs, but I know there's a range of other things as well that people have been drawn to.

With the groups that were interviewed, we went through about seven different cohorts and on the screen there, you can see we've got a range. At number one, there is our audience who probably least understand biosecurity or have a general understanding through to number five, the most experienced. In our cohort there, we have temporary residents and international students. Their responses show that they were more worried about just complying in general with Australian Government requirements so that they don't get in trouble. Next up, we had our culturally and linguistically diverse audience. And maybe it's because it's English as a second language. There's also a number of cultural factors that took into account their responses. Their focus tended to be on biosecurity in general.

Then we had, as I mentioned before, our international shoppers, which has surged during COVID. A lot of people have been making use of that avenue and it was more just around general biosecurity themes and responsibilities. As we go down towards the bottom of the screen there, you can see our more savvy responses or more mature responses, especially people who have come back into Australia during the COVID period. So with our international travellers and audience there, they strongly associated with the term quarantine, probably because they had to spend a couple of weeks in quarantine before they could formally settle into Australia. And then unsurprisingly at the highest level, there is our farmers, as well as biosecurity experts, who tended to have, I guess, more of a focus on the environmental consequences as well as agricultural impact that pests and diseases can have through a breach.

When we talk about the responses so far, it showed a general theme that everyone recognised that there was a responsibility in keeping Australia safe and strong. The main themes were focused on security and protection and the other concepts were also around protecting livelihoods, protecting plants, as well as controlling what comes in and out of the country.

Just moving on to the next slide. If we just have a look at, I guess, the last five or six years, no surprises there on the left. We see that there's a general understanding, but limited at the same time of biosecurity. Little knowledge about what to do, who to contact if there is an incursion or an issue there. Through to, I guess, the COVID period, which sort of impacted on everyone broadly there. So attitude shifted towards understanding that everyone has a responsibility to biosecurity. We have a unique environment and we can play a role, whether it's through online shopping, through it's what we bring back into Australia through international travel or other avenues as well.

Moving forward there and looking at where we see ourselves going from 2021 onwards and hopefully as we emerge out of this COVID lockdown and environment, we're focused on getting that balance between positive and negative messages as well to people. Everyone is quite understanding of what their requirements are, but there's opportunities to provide targeted messages to audience, whether it be around cultural festivals, whether it be around, I guess, the general brand and building that sort of awareness through international travel coming back into Australia or through other traditional avenues of social media and general communication, especially at the airport. So lots of opportunities there. And I also am looking forward to our next speaker. I know our colleagues over in New Zealand have been doing a lot of work on brand research and defining a general sort of set of imagery and information that resonates quite well with their audience. And that's one of the key things that we'll be focusing on.

We did mention the Mentimeter and just before we go across to that, I just want everyone to have a bit of a look here at this slide. And when we talk about biosecurity need states, a lot of the responses from those audiences that came through was focusing on the need to connect, understand, have that general understanding of a brand security protection. What are the controls in place and what are the responses that we have? And what can they do as individuals and what are we doing as an Australian government, as well as working with industry and other partners? So just looking at that slide there, we're going to go up and ask a couple of questions. When we were looking at those needs states, the first question is, on a scale of one to five, how well do these need states reflect our state of biosecurity? So remember, we're talking about security, protection, maintaining our way of life, wellbeing and control. Getting some interesting responses already. We're going to test you after this with another question, just to see if you've got any ideas in the audience there as well around your thoughts on biosecurity. That's quite interesting there on the themes.

Richard Morecroft: So the very large proportion, the yellow scale there, is that a surprising result for you or would that be what you would anticipate?

Richard Keane: It's what I was hoping for, Richard, but I guess it also depends on our audience. We've got quite a few people that have a lot of interest in biosecurity and work at the Australian border, so that's quite pleasing.

Richard Morecroft: Any other particular, either surprises or reassurances in those responses?

Richard Keane: I would say we're on the right track in terms of the work that we need to do, and the messaging that we need to get out to the Australian audience. As I said, COVID's been a very busy period. A lot of people are aware of biosecurity and their requirements, but it shows that there is still those opportunities for targeted messaging, provided we sort of identify areas of high risk or areas of interest, especially with our farmers and other key industries there.

I think we've got a second question that we are now going to put everyone under the pump and noting what we had on the slide there, if you want to use any of those responses, feel free to do that. But what word would you say best describes biosecurity? Again, we had security, protection, way of life, wellbeing, control, but if there are other things that you think of. And noting our responses before, that was quite good, especially on trade, wasn't it?

Richard Morecroft: Misunderstood. That's an interesting and very strong and important response.

Richard Keane: It is. It is. I guess what it also is showing in this information age, where we have an abundance of information coming out through a variety of channels, people want information that's tailored and applicable to them, whether they be just individuals, mums and dads travelling, whether it be certain industries, imports, exports. And now that the border is reopening as well, what does it mean for you now that aviation is, is up and running?

Richard Morecroft: I also noticed the word confidence in there, which is probably important in terms of being able to reflect a national state of mind, that you can be confident in the risk management that biosecurity provides.

Richard Keane: That's correct. Pests and diseases or any sort of incursion into Australia would have a massive impact, not only financially, but on our way of life. So what the audience there is showing, they want to have confidence that the department is working with industry and with the Australian people and also as a whole government approach to biosecurity. So quite interesting responses there.

Richard Keane: So we also do a lot of targeted campaigns over a period of about three to four months. The, the one that's up on the screen there is focused on African swine fever. We used a series of channels, social media, our overseas network and counsellors, as well as information on inflight magazines and for returning travellers as well on the importance and being aware of African swine fever and the impact it can have. And you can see down the bottom left there, we also factored in our cultural and linguistically diverse audience. Not everyone speaks English, it's important to have that in languages that people understand and can get the message through. So that worked over a period of about three months and had a wide range and response from people. And it worked very, very well. I should add, and we did talk about it a bit before, but we also make sure that we are data driven and using information based on, whether it be cultural events, whether it be compliance issues or high risk areas of imports and exports, to make sure that we target our information to people rather than just doing sort of blanket approaches. But that worked exceptionally well.

And just on the next screen there, there's a couple of others that we've done during the COVID period, again, for about a three to four month period blended social media campaign. We targeted mainly pet owners and gardeners, making sure people are aware of their responsibility. For example, bringing pet food can have diseases and African swine fever again. Also from the gardener's side, looking at succulents, looking at seeds and making sure that individuals are aware of the requirements. During that period, it only went for a couple of months, had quite a wide range of audience that was reached. It was over half a million viewers, so that was excellent. And we also use things like Facebook to get that information out. So, very successful. And again, just shows the way that we're sort of trying to target information to remind individuals as well and get out there.

We also do a lot of other pieces of media. And I note on day one, we had our Deputy Secretary, Andrew Tongue, presenting and talking through about biosecurity. And on our podcast, Andrew Tongue features there in, in the latest podcast. That said, my favourite is still one of our other ones that we did on detector dogs. I'm sorry, Andrew, but it's also just showing how we're trying to get out to audiences in a timeframe. Not everyone may be able to scroll through the internet and have a read, but you can download the podcast and listen in your own time. So a lot of information there that we're able to get out.

And on the left there, we've run a series of webinars since July this year, which has been very successful. The department has had a wide range of presenters, not only from within DAWE, but also across industry and states and territories. And we continue to run those. And I would encourage anyone who hasn't, I'll show you the website address in a minute, if you've got any other ideas, we're always welcome new ideas or information, how we can channel that through to you to help build that confidence as we saw on the Mentimeter, but also to get information out, particularly mindful too of out in the regions and rural and remote areas as well. Certain information for you might be different to in the Metro regions or including our overseas audience, people coming back to Australia. So we want to make sure that we target and getting that information out as much as possible.

And before I hand back to Richard, it would be remiss me not to do a bit of advertising on our new biosecurity website, which has been up and running since July. You'll see there on the screen, there's the link as well as the email address. And while we're talking about biosecurity being everyone's responsibility, we couldn't do this without you, whether it be industry, whether it be Australian people, our whole government partners. So we welcome any input in what we can do to not only building a biosecurity brand that everyone knows and understands, but also for the work that we can do out there for the Australian audience. So thank you all for your time today. I appreciate it. I'll be back on the panel shortly, but I'll hand over to Richard.

Richard Morecroft: Thank you very much indeed, Richard. And well, many important facets of biosecurity understanding there, including some very interesting findings, as I'm sure you'd have noted about the impact of COVID and the time of COVID on biosecurity awareness and research, so thank you very much to Richard for that. And as Richard mentioned, he will be joining us for the panel discussion very shortly. And on that note, please don't forget, as so many of you did yesterday, to send in your questions that you can then put to our presenters and you can start sending those questions anytime you like now, obviously relating to Richard's presentation. And then as the other presentations come up in a minute or two's time, as you are listening, please do use the Q and A box on your screen to be able to send us some questions and then we will try to pass on as many as possible of those questions to our panellists. And again, it can be very helpful, as a number of you did yesterday, if you can identify who it was from the presenters that you would like to be able to put that question to.

So now it's time to emphasise the value of our Australasian connection now, because joining us from New Zealand is Tim Fraser, the Manager of Partnership and Engagement for Biosecurity New Zealand. Tim is going to take us through New Zealand's experience with brand promotion activities for the Ko Tātou This is us campaign, and this should provide some really intriguing insights to support the work the department is doing in the brand space. So welcome to Australia and welcome to the forum, Tim.

Tim Fraser: (Maori language) mate. That's, welcome to the biosecurity family. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to present to the Australian National Biosecurity Forum. Just wanted to start off, (Maori language). So what that was is that it was acknowledging and recognising the manner of our treaty partner, of the Māori language and calling out to everybody. And I was also acknowledging the mountain that shelters me, the river that has nourished me and the place where I live, which was the South Island, Te Waipounamu and where I now live, which is in the Wairarapa, which is the lower part of the North Island. And I also acknowledge the spiritual and ancestral landmarks of Ponatahi, which is the place in the Wairarapa that I live.

I'm delighted to be telling you about Ko Tātou This Is Us. It's a program that has been going for quite some time. And I was, in a past life, I was actually responsible for bringing this to fruition. Over the next 15 minutes, I want to take you through the development of the program, of the Ko Tātou program and it's New Zealand's independent biosecurity brand and story. And I also want to provide you with a bit of a snapshot in terms of how the program has developed in the wild, in terms of community collaborations and also a specific biosecurity business collaboration called the business pledge. And also what I want to share, which I'm sure Richard will be really interested in, some of the lessons that we've learned along the way. So Ko Tātou This Is Us is about building a biosecurity team of five million. Now I know that you've probably heard this from New Zealand's COVID response, but we got there first. And also I can say that with a reasonable degree of confidence, given that my director was responsible for developing the initial COVID messaging and the agency that was involved in that also helped produce the Ko Tātou story and brand.

But look, its genesis really started back in 2016 with Biosecurity 2025, which was the biosecurity systems strategy. It was a strategy that was developed extensively by system participants. There were a huge number of organisations, individuals and Māori community and businesses that were actively involved in its development. One of the key pillars of that strategy was about building a biosecurity team of 5 million. We wanted to create a movement and that's the critical bit, is that that's where we really started from is rather than building a brand, we actually wanted to create a movement. And that would be about creating a collective effort across the country, aiming to make sure that all New Zealanders were aware of the importance of biosecurity and to get them involved in pest and disease management. It was designed to align all actions and activities by individuals, businesses, hapū iwi communities and encourage further action.

The movement was to show all New Zealanders that they are essential in helping strengthen our biosecurity system and every small action was going to lead towards better biosecurity actions and was valuable. Those small actions, collectively and cumulatively, are incredibly valuable. And it was also about developing a shared story. And I think that's what I sort of struggle with when we talk about a brand versus a story and Ko Tātou This Is Us is actually about a shared story that reflects a shared responsibility and partnership approach to biosecurity risk management. So we focused on a few areas. We focused on awareness and knowledge building, we focused on articulating appropriate biosecurity behaviours and actions that could connect, we looked at driving collaboration of partnership programs, we developed... And congratulations to the biosecurity award winners. We have a similar program and it is a premier event in the calendar. And we've got one of those too and then also was the Ko Tātou story or brand. The key thing is that... And Richard, what I find really interesting is that what you were talking about and what your research showed is that we are actually all on exactly the same journey and our key task in building this brand Ko Tātou This Is Us was actually about how do we make an emotional connection for people to biosecurity?

So we undertook a bit of research. And there's two figures that I thought or we all thought that stood out. And this was really to baseline what New Zealanders thought, where it landed. And top number there, 96%. Ninety-six per cent of New Zealanders agree it's very important to protect New Zealand from unwanted pests, weeds and diseases. Well, that's telling you something that everybody's in there. Now, this bit of research was done back in 2016, 17, but I want you to go to the bottom number, 2%. Two per cent of New Zealanders mention personal consequences for their lives when asked about the likely impacts of a biosecurity breach. In other words, biosecurity is out there. It's actually somebody else's problem and it will impact others. And that was the Delta that we really wanted to try and close and bring biosecurity kind of to people's lives in a way that they can connect and understand.

We actually did a little bit of research. I've got another program called On Farm Biosecurity Behaviour Change to try and shift attitude and culture behind the farm gate. And we just completed a bit of research there. And again, a similar kind of story, is that, sorry, 62% of farmers broadly feel that biosecurity is important for the protection of their farm, their livelihood and the wider New Zealand industry. And then a further 20% to a lesser extent. So that's what? 82% are kind of in the zone going, "This is actually really important." But what we found is that there was a gap between the behavioural intent and the cultural norms and this speaks to that sort of emotion or that connecting emotively. So for example, 73% of our farmers felt that they are role modelling the correct behaviours most of the time without fail. And yet our research showed that less than 25% of farmers are currently performing the specific sort of targeted behaviours that we've identified to get a shift in attitude and culture. So again, there's quite an interesting Delta and Ko Tātou is a mechanism, a program, a way of working and thinking that can help us shift that Delta.

So what is Ko Tātou This Is Us? It's, as I said, an independent brand to connect biosecurity system participants, communities, Māori Iwi. It had a couple of objectives. One was unifying and connecting and the other one was to tell the story of why New Zealanders should care about biosecurity and what we stand to lose. And there was a conscious decision to shift away from trying to explain what biosecurity is, to a shift into creating an emotional connection about protecting the things that New Zealanders value. And so what we actually ended up coming up, there was some sub campaigns that came out and it was about protect the... So there was a thing around food, and biosecurity protects deliciousness. Then we used people who were in the outdoors, there was a little campaign around mountain biking and it was biosecurity protects the Woohoo, you know, when you're sort of roaring down a mountain slope. And you can imagine that the mountain slope with trees and bush, similar to what's behind me now, that could be denuded. So that's what our brand was about.

Now, Ko Tātou This Is Us, the actual imagery is actually related to what Aotearoa, what New Zealand looks like. Everybody, every single Homo sapien that has landed on these shores came from the sea. And this is the site that they saw. And the Rakiura or Stewart Island is at the bottom of the South Island. The T of Tātou, that's actually Aoraki or Mount Cook. And then if you go into the This Is Us, the us is in the central part of the North Island, that's Ruapehu, one of our main volcanic areas.

So what it was is that it's actually showing that we come to this land, and this is saying, this is us. And it was stepping away from, again, the sense of having to name biosecurity. But again, creating an evocative, this is why it's important. This is what it protects. So what I want to do is I want to show you a short clip. This was the TV advert that launched the Ko Tātou campaign. So I'll turn it over to the techos and then I'll come back to sharing.

Voiceover: Dear Aotearoa, dear home, with every turn of the tide, every seam of the seasons, look around at all we have, this plentiful way of life. This place is more than the setting of my story. I was grown on its meat and milk, healed by its plants. My hands have dug (Māori language) from its soil, my feet (Māori language) from the sand. This fragile place is all we've got. It's vulnerable to pests and diseases, so we must guard as if our way of life depends on it, because it does. As my last sunset creeps over the edge of our precious island, I'll be asking one thing of you, look after it, protect it. (Māori language) This is us.

Tim Fraser: I wanted to acknowledge the primary actor there is a kuia from Aoraki, (Māori language) Aoraki in the Tāmaki Makaurau area, the Auckland area, woman called Ti Hay. She is the genuine article and her story was woven into that little advert. And we were absolutely delighted to make it with her.

What I wanted to do was to take you into the journey of when we took Ko Tātou out into the wild. And so I want to talk to you about the biosecurity business pledge. So this slide here shows you in summary, what businesses have pledged to do in the biosecurity space. It was launched in 2020 and then COVID hit. And then late last year, we really got this program up and cranking and it is now sitting at members of over 120... Well, we've got 120 members who have signed up to the biosecurity business pledge and it's made up of individual companies of industry groupings. And it covers the sort of supply chain across from the exporters, importers and primary sector in terms of growers. And also importantly, it includes some of the supermarkets, it includes a significant insurance company. So it's actually covering the whole kind of biosecurity system. So what it's trying to do is, it's a program that was initiated by business for business. So this came out of the Ko Tātou program and Biosecurity New Zealand is an active supporter and participant in this. And what businesses were looking for is that they were looking for better access to biosecurity intelligence, to having house rules discussions with Biosecurity New Zealand. But we're also looking to find a way to support each other and build their own confidence and confidence in and across biosecurity.

I'm going to say, it has proven to be an absolutely extraordinary program. We've just finished a three day, I'll call it a zooey, which is a Zoom huey, similar to what you are running here, not as flash though. And what we found is the engagement and the enthusiasm was, well, just hit it out of the park. And one of the key outtakes that I took was that, businesses light bulb moment was that businesses are actually impacted by other businesses. So in other words, the supply chain, if you've got somebody who is not doing good better biosecurity practice, that actually creates a significant risk for your business. And that was a bit of a light bulb moment for people. It's a pre-competitive, so it's a very open and sharing environment.

We've held webinars and the webinars have enabled and allowed members to share their biosecurity journey and experience. So we've had some that have shared, a port company shared a simulation exercise, a BMSB simulation exercise and walked the members through what happened. There was quite a lot of learning for them, but what was really good is that they gave us the unadulterated version of how they went about it and what happened and the lessons learned. And it was just, the membership just lit up. There was also one of our most active members, Auckland Airport, they've developed a whole biosecurity induction program for their Portside employees and they have willingly shared that across the membership. And that's actually been taken up by quite a few. And what we've been finding is that members have been bringing their own supply chains into the program.

We've also set up a program, the business pledge program, it has a steering group and it's established three work streams. One is to develop... Well, it's actually a work stream around building biosecurity toolkit. One is around stakeholder engagement collateral to get consistency around messaging and understanding. And the other one is governance and key performance indicators based around a dashboard reporting. And this is effectively for the top table. And again, one of the things that we are really mindful of is that it's important to bring chief executives, chief operating officers and the like, along in the journey as well, because quite often, biosecurity is left as an operational issue and not brought up to the board table. And we are also interested in looking at kind of hard wiring biosecurity through the provision of policies and procurement causes and the like.

So that's the business pledge. We have a community collaboration, again, that was what we've managed to do is bring a whole raft of players and communities together around the concept of biosecurity. It's not an organisation or institution, it's a series of networks. Really happy to take questions on that. This is actually an absolute exemplar on how we bring biosecurity or Ko Tātou This Is Us alive. Look, what we wanted to do is, we're going to run to the lessons actually, is that what we found is that A, we were too ambitious in terms of trying to create a movement and most importantly, we actually focused on our external partners and partnerships and we left Biosecurity New Zealand behind. And so Biosecurity New Zealand and the people within the organisation didn't feel any sense of ownership. So what we are actually working on now is that we are actually looking at how we build that connection into Biosecurity New Zealand. And we see that as being Ko Tātou, our narrative going forward is that we're the conductors, we are the connectors and we are the champions. So I'm sorry I had to race through all of that. I lost track of time.

Richard Morecroft: Thank you very much, indeed, Tim, for that presentation, and very good to hear about building a movement as you were emphasising and the brand promotion experience in your campaign, Ko Tātou. And really there are many learnings there as we look for pathways to build a brand space here as well. So thank you very much indeed for that presentation. And of course, Tim's going to be joining us very shortly for the discussion panel. And a reminder once again, we'd love to have your questions. We've got quite a number that have come in already for Richard, but if you have questions for Tim, please do start sending those to us now so that we can put them to Tim during the discussion panel coming up shortly.

But next, we have a joint presentation on a pilot trial, looking at taking a partnership approach with industry. Leanne Herrick is the Principal Director, Industry Partnerships and Engagement within the Biosecurity Operations Division of the department. And Joanne Elliot is ISC manager for Kmart. And they're going to explore the approaches and the opportunities for reducing the red tape and the biosecurity regulatory costs for big importers. And of course, specifically we will hear the experience from Kmart. So over first of all, to Leanne Herrick.

Leanne Herrick: Yeah. Thank you very much. Hello everyone, and I'm delighted to be here today to present on a trial program the department's running aimed at better managing biosecurity risk associated with imported cargo. I'm very excited about this work, but as I only have a short time to take you through it, I'll try and curb my enthusiasm and keep to my time limit, but obviously happy to take questions in the panel discussion afterwards. I'm also coming to you from Northern New South Wales on the coast. The reception isn't great, so hopefully this all goes smoothly. And I do have the tech team who are helping me out by moving slides.

So let me start with some context first. Over the course of this forum, you've heard about the importance of biosecurity and the increasing challenges facing our national biosecurity system: changing global trade patterns, consumer purchasing habits due to COVID, new infrastructure development across Asia and the Pacific such as development road initiative are bringing a greater array of pests and diseases closer to our shores; and this creates a lot of issues for us and for maintaining our biosecurity integrity. Businesses had to adjust to this changing landscape, including disruptions to supply, shipping and labour forces and the Australian Government also needs to adjust. We can't keep doing the way that we've always done things and nor can we just simply throw extra resources at the border. We are regulators, but we need to work in genuine partnerships with industry and other stakeholders to design a more efficient and future oriented system. We see this trial as an opportunity to do just that. If successful, it'll result in green lane channels for participating importers subject to a level of system-based insurance and verification and reduced border congestion for others.

The trial's focus is on testing the ability to manage biosecurity risks using importer's own systems and supply chain controls. After all, they know more about what is happening across their supply chains that we will ever know and are more likely to be aware of trade related changes that may have biosecurity implications well before us and have more capacity to influence. If successful, this approach will also have deregulation benefits for importers, saving them time and money from having to manipulate their data assistance and re provide to government. In the slide there, I've mentioned the three sort of key elements we're hoping to achieve. One is demonstration, that importers can actually manage the biosecurity risk across their supply chains; that their approach can be scalable across their business and to other businesses or other supply chains; and also there's capacity for business to government data sharing. A key element of this whole approach is the collaboration between the department, the importers themselves, and also PricewaterhouseCoopers.

We selected pilot participants for their different business operations, the supply chains that they're involved in, the import pathways and obviously their compliance record. We were looking for people or for businesses with a strong track record in compliance. We have four pilots underway under this trial. The first is with Kmart and you'll hear from Joanne later about her business experience with this. Our second is with FTO Food Solutions, that import food ingredients, additives and seafood. Beckton Dickinson is the third, and they import medical equipment and diagnostic kits. And the fourth is Stora Enso, that import wood products. We are looking to do three further pilots. At this stage, I can't name the participants because we haven't got their agreement to do so, but I expect to name them shortly.

The key thing for us, the starting point was to actually understand the whole end-to-end supply chain for these importers. So we went on this, what we call a journey mapping, to actually understand what process and systems and controls that they had in place, what controls they had to meet for potentially other regulators or other entities, particularly some of the requirements they may have to meet for their client base and that includes adherence to industry standards, et cetera. We also wanted to assess that the risk right across that supply chain and the maturity of the importers systems and controls across the biosecurity continuum. And the final phase was really just to then say, "Okay, on face value this all looks really good, now let's test to see if it actually works." And for three, the pilots were in that phase three, that monitoring and evaluation and the fourth one, we expect to move to that phase by the end of this month.

So what does that journey look like? Don't panic. This is not for people to sort of try and read. It's purely for some illustration purposes to show the depth and the breadth of the work. We've focused on commercial cargo consignments, full container load and air cargo. And we've actually mapped the whole process of the cargo flow from product selection, procurement, inland freight, treatment, consolidation, transport to the port of export, to logistics on arrival in Australia. And we've also looked at all the importer controls, the documentation, the systems, the processes, the supplier contracts, the product and container inspection procedures they have in place and any auditing arrangements they do themselves or are subject to. We then cross that over with biosecurity requirements and trigger points and as I said before, any other requirements they had to meet for other regulatory or client based schemes. So this was really for us to completely understand where there were opportunities and where there were gaps, where there were sort of areas that we needed to explore it a little bit further. And also, what could we actually look at to move towards a new style of arrangement with these particular importers? It's also to make sure that we had quite a bit of rigour to the process so that if anybody sort of asked us about how we went about this process, they could see that it was quite robust and defensible.

And together we identified a range of areas for improvement and gaps and on both sides, not just for the importer, but also for the department, to do things a little bit differently. And a couple of the importers have already taken these ideas on board and are actually looking to make changes to their systems. It was also quite interesting that a few of the importers thought they had great visibility on their particular process and found that actually, no, there was some areas that they need to focus on.

Observations to date. I'm not going to read the slide because this will go out to you, but essentially what we found was the importers have well established, well-documented controls, which we're not recognising or leveraging; and there's no incentive to maintain a strong compliance record because each consignment is treated the same. On the left hand side of your screen, I've also included a couple of quotes that we had from different importers. And the one that really sort of hit me, I think, was one importer said he was observing the biosecurity as extremely important, and he said, "I want our products on the shelves, not on social media," in terms of having some sort of outbreak. They don't want to be the source of an outbreak.

So this is just to give you a quick breakdown of next steps and in terms of where we feel that these new arrangements will be developed and the timeframes. But I think more importantly, conscious of the time, I would like to hand over to Joanne Elliot, who will actually tell you what it was like to go through this process from a business perspective and what the outcomes they're looking for. So thank you, Richard. I'll hand over to Joanne.

Joanne Elliot: Thank you, Leanne. And I'd also like to extend our thanks to the department for allowing Kmart to be part of this pilot program. Just as some background information, Kmart's one of the biggest importers of containerized cargo into Australia. Our volume increases every year, particularly in the last 12 months when we've added nearly a hundred stores to our network. We ship into four ports into Australia and two into New Zealand and we have sourcing and supply chain offices in Shanghai, Hong Kong, India and Bangladesh. Just in case you didn't know, Australians love Kmart. They love all of our products, but in particular, our home ware products. So you probably see them on social media how much they love them. This is great for our business, however, from a broader clearance perspective, it means we have an ever increasing number of products that require biosecurity action, whether that's lodging documents with the department or having containers inspected upon arrival. This is absolutely where our bottleneck occurs. And this is both from Kmart processing internally perspective and also the department who then have to assess those lodgements.

I have several members of my team whose only job is to lodge documents in the cold system. With our large volume, they're often sifting through hundreds of pages of documents to find the right information and then match it up with the related treatment or declaration document. Personally, I don't know how they do it. I'm grateful that they do, but it would drive me crazy. With our increasing volume, it's not sustainable and the process is becoming disproportionate to the rest of the import process. Kmart's a trusted trader with Australian border force and I guess over the years, I've often wished that there was a similar project with a pilot with a department of agriculture that we could be part of that would provide some benefits to us. So we were very excited to be part of the pilot and we were quick to put our hands up to be part of it.

So over the last four or five months, to Leanne's point, we've taken the teams through our end-to-end supply chain process, we've mapped all that out, and over the last couple months we've been providing then additional information, I guess, to show that the things that we have said is happening are actually happening. We're providing additional information, additional documents, such as container checklists and photos of container packing and unpacking. Thankfully so far, I think one of the landings is things are happening the way we thought they were, so that was a good thing. Obviously there are some small gaps that we need to plug, but we are working with the team to do that.

Some of the benefits, I guess, we are really hoping to see from this is, the obvious things like reduced administrative workload, reduced costs, less entries that we have to lodge and improved availability of stock on arrival. I'm sure there's probably not too many people on this call that haven't been impacted by shipping issues. We've got stock delayed at origin on the water, so we want to make sure that once those containers arrive, that we can get them into our warehouses and get that stock out onto shelves quickly. Reduced inconsistencies, we hope to sort of deal with that. Leanne mentioned, we can have the same product going into four different ports and often have different outcomes that they get. Each port gets inspected or documents get assessed and we can have various directions for the same order, same product. So that can be frustrating. So it would be good to reduce those inconsistencies. And we've got these resources that are very admin, heavy workload; it'd be really great to use those resources to actually help us be more compliant, if that's possible. So to be working with the Department of Agriculture, our suppliers, our 3PLs, our warehouses here in Australia, to be more proactive and educate those people as to what we require and how we can do that better.

I'd say our experience with the pilot's been really positive. Working with the team's been great, both the department and the PwC teams. It's been a really smooth process and it's refreshing that the department are also open to identifying gaps in their own processes, which I think Leanne mentioned, which has been really good. So we look forward to some really positive outcomes hopefully early in the next year.

Richard Morecroft: Well, thank you. Thank you, Joanne and Leanne for your insights into a range of all of those practicalities, but particularly interesting to hear about the cost reductions when it comes to regulations, not to mention that process of minimising red tape, when of course it's appropriate and possible to do so. So we've had some wonderful presentations this morning and now, as we did yesterday, there is a chance to hear from our presenters and for them to respond to some of the questions that you have sent in. So we'll gather for a panel discussion now with Richard Keane, Tim Fraser, Leanne Herrick and Joanne Elliot. And some of your questions, as I say, have been coming in. Thank you. And I'll begin with a question for Richard Keane. So I shall turn and find that question. And Richard, the question is, "Is anything being done to raise the awareness in the community of not planting imported planting material sold as food in the supermarket, either fresh things like garlic, for example, or dried seeds?"

Richard Keane: Thanks, Richard. Yes, there is. I think we mentioned in the presentation earlier, we're always looking at different ways to communicate and get information out to people. There is also a lot of end use diversion that we need to make sure that we get the messaging out. We recently had an issue with prawns where we made sure that we were out there and communicating not only with the industry, but people that were affected with it. And we also look at different ways that we can get that message out. So whether that be through online social media, digital signage and other ways that we can do including popups, if you're searching for things online to bring into Australia. So I would call it a blended approach. We could always do better. We could always improve as well in terms of how we do that, but that's why we're out here today presenting. And I did mention again, the biosecurity government website. If anyone else has any other ideas or any other information as well, we'd certainly welcome input there too. Thank you, Richard.

Richard Morecroft: Thank you, Richard. And we're going to come to Tim Fraser now and it must be said from the comments we've been receiving, Tim, people just love and very much appreciate that television commercial which he showed us. A really beautiful piece of work. A couple of the questions have said, "applauded for this advert." But I'm going to read you the other question that's come in at the moment, which is, "Are businesses in New Zealand supported with standards and guidelines on how they can integrate biosecurity practices into their organisational structures and processes, perhaps in a similar manner to work health and safety?" What do you reckon, Tim?

Tim Fraser: Yeah. Thank you, Richard. Supported to integrate into business. So there's certainly guidance provided on the MPI website, but actually the question hits on exactly what the business pledge program has set out to do, which is to work with businesses and develop their own set of tools and guidances that they can collectively share. So there's nothing standardised and that's a work in progress, but it's certainly not... When I say standardised, it's not from a Biosecurity New Zealand perspective, but I think the question is based around businesses working together to support their biosecurity awareness and proactive behaviours.

Richard Morecroft: Thank you, Tim. We're going to go to Leanne now. And Leanne, the question for you was, how is this approach different to current approved arrangements and compliance agreements? Where are the points of difference?

Leanne Herrick: The main point of difference is that we're actually using the importer's own systems and we're getting them to demonstrate how they could achieve the biosecurity outcome that we are looking for. The other style of arrangements and agreements, it's more or less us setting the requirements and then checking that the importers are meeting them. This is more about us saying, "This is the outcome that we want. How can you achieve this," and then leaving it to them to actually meet that.

Richard Morecroft: And so let's go to Joanne perhaps to bounce off that thought. And let's ask you Joanne, if we may, can you say what perhaps the biggest learning for Kmart from this pilot so far has actually been?

Joanne Elliot: I would say just identifying our end-to-end process and seeing where the department fits in. And some of the steps within that process that we can use, to Leanne's point, to show that we're being compliant rather than the really admin heavy process that we have at the border. I would say that would definitely be the biggest learning we've had so far.

Richard Morecroft: Thank you very much, indeed. Now back to you, Richard, we've got another question that's come through here. I'll just turn to read this. Is there a program that you are working on to incorporate delivering to international students, backpackers and so on as we prepare to open our borders and how can we participate to fan out the message to those people? The questioner acknowledges there are some programs available, but suggests that they're not well directed to the audience.

Richard Keane: Thanks, Richard. Look, first of all, they're reopening the border, especially with aviation travel. I'm sure everyone's looking forward to that. And it's quite an exciting time as well as international students and other cohorts being able to sort of come back into Australia. So we've already started our messaging that's going out there and we are looking at some of the traditional signages at the airport, as well as through our colleagues overseas through the various missions. We're also looking, I mentioned before, about the popups and other information there that we can get out. We're also looking to leverage off other different ways, community leaders, getting information out to people not only here in Australia, but also overseas. We do have our podcasts and webinars in terms of information there. And as we saw with the examples around African swine fever and some of the other targeted messages that went out on bringing seeds and succulent into Australia, we're able to sort of target our messaging out to people. We're also got coming out shortly, I believe, a podcast in Cantonese that will be tailored to that audience. Again, there are a multitude of ways that we can communicate with people. If anyone has any other input or suggestions, we would welcome that through the biosecurity website. So thank you, Richard.

Richard Morecroft: So this is a great opportunity to go back to you, Tim Fraser, because in fact, there was a question which had come in on our messaging here for you, Tim. So again, I'm going to lean and read the question, because the question was, I'm interested in your learnings, which you didn't have much time to talk through at the end of your presentation. What did you mean by taking more time to bring Biosecurity New Zealand along with you? We are interested in building a biosecurity movement in Australia as well. So Tim, what's your take on that in terms of the learnings that you wanted to share?

Tim Fraser: We started out too big. We actually had a very, we had a highly audacious, big goal to create a movement and what we really needed to do... We didn't necessarily spend the time bringing our operations people along on the journey, our frontline staff. We didn't necessarily take Ministry for Primary Industries internally, the organisation, along on the journey. We went through the processes of consultation and discussion, but we were more focused on, I guess, I'm going to be really honest, on the sparkles and rainbows rather than the actual, how do we shift the culture? How do we shift the attitude internally? And what that is is that it's shifting from being a scientific evidence... Well, science and evidence, absolutely critical, but in readiness and response in particular, we know that we go in and we can take a very strong viewpoint and leave people behind. And biosecurity is about people, and people impact biosecurity. So we needed to bring the people along on the journey. I guess that's... I could speak quite a bit, but I'm aware of the time.

Richard Morecroft: No, look, thank you very much, Tim. That's a great response to the question. And of course, thank you to the person who sent that question. Joanne, can we come back to you for a moment? And can I ask you what you are seeing as perhaps the key benefits for business from this pilot, certainly from a Kmart perspective, but would you be prepared to comment more broadly on what you see from a business point of view the benefits can be?

Joanne Elliot: As I think I mentioned before, having our team members be able to spend time educating our origin teams, our suppliers, our 3PLs and our buying and merchandise teams here, educating them on what products they're importing, kind of reminding them that they're not just buyers, they're actually importers, I think really will... Kmart's reputation is really important to us and we want to make sure we are being compliant. So I think being able to use those resources just to be better at it, I guess, rather than just an admin-centric role. And obviously there's the reduced costs that at the moment we're incurring to get products through the border and really the speed to market. So whilst at the moment we've got the Eastern, New South Wales and Victoria being impacted by store closures, but we've got our Western Australian stores that are begging for stock at the moment. So to have containers that are still held when they arrive, because we've got to do so much admin work to get them cleared, both our side and the department side, if they could be ready, if those containers could be cleared as soon as they arrive, that means a lot for our business to get stock onto shelves.

Richard Morecroft: Great. Thank you very much, Joanne. Another question now for you, Richard and the questioner asks, getting our message out nationally is not just the responsibility of the Commonwealth. Can you tell us how you think we should or could be working together across government industry and the community to coordinate our biosecurity messaging and education?

Richard Keane: Thanks, Richard.

Richard Morecroft: Big question.

Richard Keane: It is a big question and it's a real challenge for us. We're on that journey in terms of communicating and getting out to industry, state and territory governments and trying to get that information channelled. I think just hearing from Joanne there before, you can see that there's regional differences in terms of information and processes. So making sure that we are getting out there and understanding what it is that are the challenges, how they could be communicated, what changes may need to happen from a biosecurity space, whether we're bringing goods and items in, how they're being processed at the border through to that flow into the states and territories.

We also just heard from Tim talking about the branding and getting that sort of information and bringing people along for the journey. And this is part of that. It's not just about what does biosecurity mean, it is, how does that translate to everyone, whether you're in the Metro region, in the regional areas. So we're just starting that process. We are going to be going out widely for consultation, engagement and input. And I know we had Malcolm Letts and Andrew Tongue on yesterday talking about the national biosecurity committee and avenues there. They are formal governance processes, but there are also other avenues as well for people to have their input. Again, biosecurity.gov.au. If you've got any input or suggestions, we're open to that as we go through this process and we look forward to being in touch with everyone over the coming months on this biosecurity journey. Thank you, Richard.

Richard Morecroft: Well, let's hope that communication happens. That will certainly be very beneficial, in fact, very mutually beneficial as that process continues. Tim, we've had another question come in for you, so I'll just put that to you now. Can you share how you are supported by biosecurity champions, how you identified who they are and the value and the outcomes?

Tim Fraser: Yes. We've got a few biosecurity champions and they pop up all over the place. And what we do actively is get alongside them and support them through various means. But one in particular is a, I'm going to do a shout out, is a chap called Graham Marshall, who was previously a commercial manager for Tauranga Port. He was very, very keen on biosecurity and through various conversations with him, he was very vocal in wanting Tauranga to be the biosecurity capital for New Zealand. And he actively recruited other people to join in the program and he presented and he talked and to the extent that I've now got him as part of one of our programs as being an ambassador, a biosecurity ambassador in which he supports us in building further biosecurity regional collaborations.

Richard Morecroft: Thank you very much, indeed, Tim. Now, a very brief, final question to you, Richard and that is really, do you have different strategies for different audiences?

Richard Keane: We do, Richard. Thank you for the question and noting the time. We do. We look at our cohorts, whether it be international students, our travellers, our farmers. Going out to industry, state and territory governments, we try and get that blend. We also look at new ways. I didn't mention before animations. We've got some new releases and information out there. So certainly a lot of different ways that we can get the information out through formal and new channels. So thank you, Richard.

Richard Morecroft: Thank you, Richard. And indeed, once again, thank you to all of our panellists. And now I would once again like to pause this session as today is Remembrance Day, a day of national commemoration. And on this day at 11 o'clock, Australians pause in silence for a minute to remember the bravery and sacrifice of the men and women who lost their lives while serving Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. So please join us now in a minute silence.

[Session ends]