

Notes from the Chair

The Marine Pest Sectoral Committee (MPSC) held its eighth meeting in Canberra in October 2014, preceded by the Industry Consultation Day.

I would like to extend my thanks to all who participated in both meetings. The Industry Consultation Day was extremely valuable and provided an opportunity to discuss key issues with our industry partners and to bring their ideas on a range of important issues to the MPSC meeting the following day.

At this meeting, we progressed some of the high priority activities from our 2014-15 strategic work plan, including endorsement of the Australian Priority Marine Pest List Criteria and a decision to conduct biennial strategic reviews of the committee's functions and processes.

This was my first time as Chair, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MPSC members, observers, industry representatives and the secretariat for the productive and constructive MPSC sessions. I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

Dr Robyn Martin
Chair MPSC08

Industry Consultation Day —29 October 2014

The Industry Consultation Day was held on 29 October 2014.

The discussions throughout the day emphasised the importance of industry consultation and engagement to ensure policies and programs are implementable and understandable. MPSC members took this opportunity to underline their

commitment to ensure as many MPSC papers are available to industry as possible.

A highlight of the day was a panel discussion, led by Sue Fryda-Blackwell (Ports Australia) and Stephen Elford (Australian Shipping Association), on industry concerns around marine pest risks and their management. Key points raised included future industry predictions, including the forecast that Australia's trade is expected to grow by 129% by 2025, nearly double the rate of world trade growth; the commissioning and use of large vessels and the upcoming trend of on-water cargo transfers; and the diversity of stakeholders that are involved in the management of biofouling and ballast water, which can include agents and contractors as well as ship owners and masters

The day also included two presentations from governments. The Department of Agriculture gave an overview of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) implementation and industry consultation. The implementation of the IGAB is overseen by the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC). The presentation included an update from NBC on their efforts to improve stakeholder consultation.

IGAB is an agreement between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments developed to improve the national biosecurity systems by identifying the roles and responsibilities of governments and outlining the priority areas for collaboration to minimise the impact of pests and diseases.

IGAB can be viewed online here:
<http://www.coag.gov.au/node/47>

The Western Australian Department of Fisheries gave a presentation on two recent marine pest-related projects. The first of these was the guidance statement for in-water treatment of vessels. The guidance statement was released in August 2014 by the WA Department of Fisheries, and includes information regarding in-water treatment technologies and the circumstances under which a vessel can be cleaned in-water. The second item was the new online biofouling risk assessment tool, 'Vessel Check'. Vessel Check provides a biofouling risk score as well as situation-specific advice on how to reduce biofouling for international vessel movements to Western Australia. Following this presentation, other members indicated that they were looking into the adoption of similar risk assessment tools for their jurisdiction.

The WA risk assessment tool is available at the following address:
<https://vesselcheck.fish.wa.gov.au/>.

MPSC08 Meeting Notes —30 October 2014

Jurisdictional 'round up'

Jurisdictional highlights

Key marine pest biosecurity activities reported at MPSC08 included:

- NSW DPI Marine Ecosystems unit has re-surveyed a number of known affected NSW estuaries for *Caulerpa taxifolia* to monitor population changes. In the surveyed estuaries, no substantial changes have been observed.
- NSW Aquatic Biosecurity unit continues to progress the five year review of the 2009 'Control Plan for the noxious marine alga *Caulerpa taxifolia*'. A draft revised Control Plan will be developed during 2014/15, with a view to finalise post stakeholder consultation during 2015.

- The Victorian Environment Protection (Ships' Ballast Water) Regulations 2006 have a sunset clause that will come into effect in May 2016. The Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) are considering options for a review of the regulations, with a view to commencing work on the review this year.
- The monitoring program for Darwin Harbour and marinas, which focuses on assessment of growth on hard substrates in areas of high vessel traffic continued. The program also includes the Gove and Groote Eylandt harbours.
- Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is currently undertaking further sampling, including plankton tows, at Hay Point in response to a recent detection of Asian green mussels on a vessel. All samples collected so far have tested negative.

New Legislation in Jurisdictions

Several jurisdictions are introducing new legislation that will have impacts on the marine pest biosecurity sector.

Queensland

Queensland Parliament passed *the Biosecurity Act 2014* on 6 March 2014. The Act will change the way that the State and local governments, industry and the community manage any biosecurity threats, including marine pest species, ensuring consistency with national priorities.

The Act is risk based and allows an officer to act, even when a threat cannot be immediately identified or is not specifically listed. Officers will be able to apply the precautionary principle which allows powers to be exercised where serious or irreversible damage is possible, but the scientific knowledge is incomplete. The use of these powers will generally depend on the formation of reasonable belief by an officer about the seriousness of the risk.

Shared responsibility is a key element of the Act and is a significant shift away from the traditional role of the government being primarily responsible for biosecurity management towards those who 'own' the risk – managing and minimising it themselves. A general biosecurity obligation is included in the Act and it requires that everyone who deals with biosecurity matters or carries out an activity which poses a biosecurity risk, will have an obligation to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise that risk.

New South Wales

Currently, biosecurity in NSW is managed through multiple Acts, supporting regulation and legal instruments. The New South Wales Biosecurity Bill 2014 aims to replace much of this with a comprehensive framework to manage risks across the biosecurity spectrum.

The Bill will have broad application and apply to all land and waters within the State. It will also have extraterritorial application insofar as the legislative powers of the State apply.

There are a number of aquatic pests listed in the Bill as prohibited matter, as well as freshwater weeds and diseases of aquatic animals. Aquatic pests cover marine and freshwater finfish, marine invertebrates, and marine plants. The prohibited matter list presently covers a variety of aquatic pests, some of which are recognised nationally as aquatic pests, for example Black Striped Mussel, Asian Green Mussel, Chinese Mitten Crab, Northern Pacific Seastar, and Colonial Seasquirt.

The Bill was introduced to the NSW Legislative Council on 6 November 2014 but has not yet been debated. If passed the Bill is intended to commence in late 2015.

Legislation will be developed throughout 2015 in consultation with stakeholders and is intended to commence at the same time as the Biosecurity Bill.

Victoria

Victoria's planned Invasive Species Control Bill 2014, which would have considered risks posed by marine invasive species, did not achieve

ascend in the 2010-2014 parliament. The future of any new legislation for the management of invasive species will be a decision for the incoming Government.

Review of the MPSC

During the meeting, members discussed the importance of ensuring that MPSC is always meeting its objectives and terms of reference. To ensure that the Committee remains effective and efficient members agreed that MPSC and its Standard Operating Guidelines should be subject to a biennial review against the committee's objectives and terms of reference. This will comprise a major agenda item every fourth MPSC meeting, commencing at MPSC09. During the discussion, MPSC members agreed that stakeholder input to this biennial review would be greatly valued. More information on how stakeholders can be involved will be available in the lead up to MPSC09.

MPSC high priority work items

There has been good progress on a number of MPSCS high priority work items.

- **Australian Priority Marine Pests List (APMPL)**

MPSC endorsed the new Australian Priority Marine Pest List Criteria. This work has taken considerable time and effort from the Committee, and the Chair expressed thanks to everyone who worked on the Criteria with particular thanks to the previous South Australian member – Michael Sierp – for his leadership in completing this task. The Criteria will now be provided to NBC for endorsement, following which MPSC will apply the Criteria to develop a new Australian Priority Marine Pest List (to replace the Consultative Committee on Introduced Marine Pest Emergencies Trigger List).

- **National Marine Pest Biosecurity Strategy Development**

MPSC noted the work that had been undertaken to date on the development of

the National Marine Pest Biosecurity Strategy and the Chair expressed thanks to Peter Wilkinson, from the Australian Government, for leading this task. MPSC agreed that further work was needed to ensure that the Strategy was outcome focused and would provide guidance for national leadership to support stakeholders working together to prevent the impacts of introduced marine pests. Stakeholder consultation on the draft Strategy will likely be sought in late 2015.

- **Freshwater Invertebrate Pests**
At NBC 18 (7 August 2014) it was decided that the Vertebrate Pest Committee (VPC) and Australian Weeds Committee (AWC) would be amalgamated and replaced with the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (IPAC). It was also decided that the scope for the new committee would include freshwater invertebrates. As such the Freshwater Invertebrate Pests Subcommittee under MPSC was stood down. The Chair thanked the members of this group for their involvement.

International Biosecurity Intelligence System (IBIS)

MPSC members were introduced to a new intelligence gathering and analysis tool for biosecurity issues. IBIS is an open source tool that locates relevant online articles and conversations on a daily basis. An IBIS platform

for marine pests is currently being developed. Further information regarding IBIS can be found at <http://biointel.org/>.

The development of IBIS has been a collaborative research project between the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA), the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries.

Update on activities in the aquarium sector

The National Freshwater Fish Working Group met in August 2014. An ornamental fish risk assessment tool is currently being trialed on 138 grey list species. The aim of the trial is to identify possible improvements to ensure confidence in the tool for its application to assess the full grey list ornamental fish species.

The third tranche of the noxious fish list has been endorsed for inclusion in the national noxious fish list and states/territories relevant noxious fish legislation. Further information is available on the Australian Government Department of the Environment website:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-trade/exotics/exotic-fish-trade>.

Upcoming MPSC meetings

The next MPSC meeting (MPSC09) will be held in May 2015 in New Zealand.

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