

National Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Expert Group Meeting 5 Communiqué

The National Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Expert Group (expert group) was established by the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) in March 2015 as a recommendation from the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) Implementation Taskforce. The role of the group is to develop, harmonise and maintain the national capability and capacity to prepare for the response to biosecurity emergencies. Three specialist task groups were also established under the group to focus on different elements of preparedness (resourcing, training and evaluation/lessons management) identified by the IGAB (Schedule 7), and they are chaired by members of the Expert Group.

The expert group reports to NBC and is currently chaired by Dr Lloyd Klumpp, the Tasmanian NBC representative.

To provide for common understanding of preparedness targets the group coordinated a national agreement entitled the *Strategic Position for Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness*. This document was endorsed by the NBC in November 2015.

Progress Update

Meeting five of the expert group was held in Darwin, Northern Territory on 29-30 June 2016. The meeting included some professional development activities for members including briefings by the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre, Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) and NTs Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

Key matters considered during the meeting were:

- Progress relating to the transition of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) into a cross-sectoral resource for plant and animal biosecurity responses, which is currently scheduled to take effect from 1 July 2017. National consultation has occurred to identify underpinning priorities for its purpose and structure which will be presented to NBC in the coming months.
- Progress of all specialist task groups, in particular the Training Specialist Task Group, who are coordinating a national project to develop training and assessment materials for the national biosecurity response qualifications.
- Outcomes from the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed Review 2015.
- Biosecurity exercises across all jurisdictions and findings that have relevance at the national level. The group discussed ways to capture upcoming exercises and their outcomes, which varies significantly between jurisdictions.
- How environmental biosecurity responses may be different to agricultural sectors and how the group will address this topic in their 2016-17 work plan.
- The reinvigoration of the biosecurity knowledge base and how to progress the work over 2016-17.

Outcomes:

- The expert group endorsed a 12 month forward meeting calendar to accommodate specialist task group work plans, as well as coordinate with NBC activities
- The expert group agreed to develop an Environmental Biosecurity Discussion Paper, to be presented to the NBC in December 2016.
- The expert group endorsed the roadmap, expert group terms of reference and work plans for 2016-17 and agreed to present them to the NBC at the 13 July 2016 meeting for endorsement.



Expert Group Members looking at new NAQS rapid diagnostics capabilities from the Developing Northern Australian White Paper 2015



Expert Group members talking about deployment at the National Critical Care Trauma Response Centre, Darwin.

The next meeting of the expert group will be held in Tasmania on 29-30 November 2016.