

## **Aust. Govt. Discussion Paper “ Modernising Australia’s approach to managing established pests & diseases of national significance”**

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Congratulations to the authors of the discussion paper for highlighting the issues for the way forward on managing Australia’s established pests & diseases. The outcomes will not only be important for policy and institutional change but will influence the ongoing global success of our agribusiness and related industries.

NOTE :the focus is on ‘modernisation – established pests & diseases of national significance.’ – the link with diseases is noted and although there are some synergies, the operation policies in some cases could have a varied impact; eg (Johnes).

### **Comments**

#### Introduction & Background – Points 2 & 3

- Note –outcome of COAG agreement on biosecurity is to establish a national framework for managing established pests & diseases.
  - Support 4 dot point themes on page 1
  - Note outcome for Dept to determine which pests & diseases (P&Ds) are nationally significant
  - Note outcomes will be reflected in the revised Pest Animal and Aust. Weeds Strategies.
- Note ‘ overabundant wildlife or native species are outside the scope of the discussion paper – However Farmer Organisations should press for the development of a paper on these issues.
- Support the ‘ biosecurity continuum ‘ – an integrated approach including the points listed . However success will clearly depend on VG & effective engagement models.
- Note – primary responsibility rests with the landholder ( public & private) and only a coordinated approach is likely to achieve a good result – *agreed!*
- To maximising investment returns across the biosecurity continuum – Government should build on the WoNs model including using a new Taskforce structure and recognise the roles that landcare and the Victorian Weed Model used by the Vic. Blackberry Taskforce can play .
  - A priority list for border security is a must – eg: the National Blackberry TF (NBT) did identify tropical Rubus species that would be as devastating to our tropical Parks and rainforests as the European Rubus has been to our southern landscape!
  - Re – eradication – we do have some very effective models for managing national disease programs (including funding) which have worked.
  - **Perhaps the most progressive steps that this review should consider is the use of new technology - remote sensing, satellite & digital mapping. This should be coordinated nationally ( incl. funding) to maximise consistency and efficiencies. This knowledge can be used for a range of beneficial outcomes that would take this program into a new world .**

- The action curve for pest management still has merit and the asset – based protection is a very sound principle. However regional models with improved integration of benefits including commercial from landscapes ( public & private) should be considered.

### 3. Framework

- Policy Principles
  - Support shared responsibility and a Govt role in market failure.
  - Support effective enforcement models including entry programs with costs against the property!.
  - Support new innovative R & D that use global technology to deliver long term cost effective outcomes . ( biological agents, gene tech etc)

Qs – 1 & 2 – support noting comments – perhaps Policy could include consideration to establish a National P&D Advisory Committee

- Support the proposed national interest test for selection P&Ds – The WoNs process appeared to be a VG model.
  - The 7 dot points for consideration of national criteria - to be trimmed to 5.

Qs – 3, 4 & 5 - P&Ds are generally around for the long term so support ongoing listing - However there should be a review process – note reviews can be costly so perhaps suggest every 10 years.

- Government Roles
  - Delete ‘ only’ 2<sup>nd</sup> dot re; enforcement ! reads better and appropriate to support sustained collective action.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> dot – re: developing partnerships – support the Victorian “Community Weed Model’ and landcare ‘ on ground’ group action programs.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> dot ‘facilitate coordinated policy across jurisdictions – This is a must and also needed at regional and local levels!
  - Support 11 dot points and particularly the point to work with industry and landholder groups
- Industry & Community Groups
  - Support 7 dot points but emphasise the importance of support for National and State Taskforces where appropriate and the role they play in ‘coordination ‘.
- Landholders
  - Note that all Governments adopt a much stronger focus on ‘biodiversity’ regulation and often pest regulations are ignored !
- Risk Creators – this section may need to be workshopped but certainly needs support.

Qs 6 & 7 – support the roles outlined with comments above for ‘ management of established P&Ds.

- What would Change
  - Institutional changes as discussed supported by community and industry would be a new approach and could deliver very effective outcomes and with appropriate coordination at lower costs.
  - The market driven approach must also apply to public land and parks as is often the case budgets are a barrier to implementation outcomes . Multiple landuse outcomes including commercial (tourism , wood products) would provide funds and incentives for improved management. Various models could be developed and trialled with regional support.
  - Support 4 dot points as outlined but re: research; Government does have responsibility to support long term research!
  
- Benefits of Coordinated Approach
  - Support the proposed outcomes as outlined in 4 dot points but recommend an effective community structure support at national, state and local levels is needed.

Qs – 8. – a strong commitment by the Federal Govt to this new approach and supported States through COAG

9. – best implementation will occur with the appropriate funded models supported by demonstrable outcomes.

10. – as member of a Farmer Organisation, landcare and a WoNs TF I will continue to support policy, links with industry, leadership and regional and local 'on ground' implementation.

- Case Studies
  - An excellent cross section of successful case studies .
  - Note changes proposed by dairy industry to Johnes's control will need support by appropriate communication and PR .
  - Highlights the importance of Public Relations and Communication and perhaps overlooked in this paper.
  - Perhaps the role of Landcare could have been considered in the Case Studies.
  
- Note – appendix of WoNs and a review probably is needed !

An excellent discussion paper and look forward to progressing implementation.