



2023 National Biosecurity Forum

Communique

5 April 2023

Canberra, Australia



Introduction

Since the last National Biosecurity Forum in 2021, the biosecurity system has continued to shift, and risks have increased in complexity. This is driven by factors such as the pandemic, climate change, increasing trade and travel and changes in land use and behaviour.

The forum is an important opportunity to discuss both the risks and the opportunities. It strengthens the ties between governments, industry, and the community.

We need our biosecurity system to keep pace with not only the needs of today but to be prepared for the threats of tomorrow. A significant part of this is developing strong partnerships overseas, with states and territories, with industry and with community groups.

Forum summary

The 2023 National Biosecurity Forum was held on Wednesday 5 April 2023. It brought key stakeholders together from across the country as well as international participants.

It was hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on behalf of the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC).

The forum was held in-person for the first time in three years and featured both in-person and online participation. Over 130 people met face-to-face, and around 500 online, to discuss the challenges and opportunities for Australia's biosecurity system.

Participants covered a broad range of sectors and industries including trade, plant, animal, education, research and government.

Renowned media figure Richard Morecroft facilitated the forum which started with Ngunnawal Traditional Custodian, Wally Bell, providing a Welcome to Country.

Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, addressed participants and spoke of the challenges we face and the focus for government to enable a strong biosecurity system into the future.

The forum structure included four sessions with a mix of presentations and panel discussions from experts representing government, industry, education and research sectors.

Participants had the opportunity to ask questions of panellists throughout the day.

Key topics of discussion

Key topics emerging in discussions throughout the day included:

- New opportunities and challenges
 - Biosecurity: a national approach
 - Panel: Biosecurity, what's on the horizon?
 - Panel: Biosecurity before the Australian border
 - Panel: Foot-and-mouth disease – a national response
- Integration supported by technology, research and data
 - Co-designing Australia's future-focused traceability system
 - Integrated digital biosecurity systems
 - Panel: Technology and industry co-design
 - An innovation showcase for in-person participants to learn more about new technology being explored to manage biosecurity challenges and risks
- Stronger partnerships and a shared biosecurity culture
 - The National Biosecurity System: a collective vision for our future
 - Panel: Changing behaviour and fostering a shared biosecurity culture
 - A NZ perspective from Biosecurity New Zealand
 - Panel: Strengthening and expanding networks with stakeholders at the local, regional, national, and international level
- Natural pathways and invasive species
 - Panel: Climate change impacts – how do we get ready for changes to natural pathways and invasive species distribution?
 - Panel: Addressing the impacts of invasive species on biodiversity

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Secretary Andrew Metcalfe AO closed the forum.

Engagement

Mentimeter activity

At the beginning of the forum a short engagement activity told us:

- Where people were joining from
- What participants were hoping to get out of the forum – some examples included updates on research and biosecurity, future direction, how we can improve, a greater understanding of how we fit into the broader system, innovative ways of thinking about and working in biosecurity
- People's biggest concerns – (most prominent) include invasive species, foot-and-mouth disease, a changing environment, funding and resources
- The biggest opportunities – (most prominent) include collaboration, education, technology, public awareness and coordination

- How people would describe Australia’s biosecurity system in one word – (most prominent) include complex, evolving, essential and disjointed.

Resources

Read the [full program and access other resources from the event](#).

Australian Biosecurity Awards

The 2022 [Australian Biosecurity Awards](#) winners were announced at a dinner the night before the forum. Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, provided the opening address for the ceremony and presented the awards.

Ten winners were recognised across eight categories, representing the government, community, research, environment and education sectors.

Learn more

Visit the [department’s website](#) to learn more about the forum.

[Subscribe](#) to receive updates on future forum events.

Event photos



Image 1: Panellists including Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Mark Schipp, Chief Plant Protection Officer Dr Gabrielle Vivian-Smith, Acting First Assistant Secretary – Biosecurity Animal Division Dr Brant Smith, and Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer Dr Bertie Hennecke.



Image 2: Panellists including Tina Hutchison, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Stuart Anderson, Biosecurity New Zealand, and Sal Milici, Freight & Trade Alliance and the Australian Peak Shippers Association.



Image 3: Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.