



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry**

# National Policy on Regulated Non-Quarantine Pests



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### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas, and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries, and forestry industries.

### Version control

This policy was endorsed by the Plant Health Committee on 10 December 2025.

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# Introduction

## Policy objectives and scope

This policy sets a national framework for regulating non-quarantine pests on plants intended for planting. A regulated non-quarantine pest (RNQP) is a pest whose presence on plants affects the intended use of those plants, resulting in an economically unacceptable impact, and which is therefore regulated within the importing jurisdiction (IPPC 2024).

Plants for planting include seeds, bulbs, pollen, tubers, and propagative material – which may be whole plants or parts of plants (IPPC 2021a). This policy outlines the objectives of an RNQP classification and the requirements for implementing RNQP programs.

This policy aims to:

- clarify the requirements for RNQPs and the official control of those pests on the plants for planting pathway in Australia to ensure consistency with international standards and obligations
- identify suitable RNQPs in Australia and support development of RNQP programs to manage those pests
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government, state and territory governments (jurisdictions), and industry stakeholders in implementing RNQP programs (see Table 2)
- defend Australia's regulatory position and interests regarding RNQPs.

This Policy is in effect following consultation with government and industry. Any future proposals for amendment should be directed to the department at [nationalpestpolicy@aff.gov.au](mailto:nationalpestpolicy@aff.gov.au).

## Policy context

Australia benefits significantly from global trade in plants and strong biosecurity protections. Australia's trade and biosecurity advantages are in part facilitated by multilateral engagement through the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), which has established standards for mutual understanding of concepts relating to plant protection and trade in plants. These standards form the foundation for Australia's trade negotiations, including our requests to export plants and our responses to other countries' requests to export plants to Australia.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) represents the Australian Government as the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO). Under IPPC rules, the NPPO is responsible for overseeing plant protection matters within the country. This document provides guidance to the Australian Government, jurisdictions and industry stakeholders on the consistent application of the IPPC's concept of an RNQP, as outlined in [ISPM 16 – Regulated non-quarantine pests: concept and application](#). It aims to ensure that Australia's regulation of non-quarantine pests is internationally justifiable and defensible, particularly in relation to import conditions into Australia.

An RNQP is a status assigned at the national level (IPPC 2021a). The department assigns an RNQP status on a pest after assessing its status in each jurisdiction. An RNQP status does not preclude the

use of regional differences in pest status to protect the biosecurity and advance the trade interests of individual jurisdictions.

## Regulated non-quarantine pests

### Definition

An RNQP has the following characteristics:

- It is a non-quarantine pest – this means it is already present (IPPC 2022) and may be widespread in Australia.
- Its presence in specific plants for planting causes an economically unacceptable impact on the intended use of those plants.
- Feasible and effective measures are available to prevent or suppress its presence on or in specific plants for planting.

These characteristics are consistent with the RNQP definition described in [ISPM 5 – Glossary of phytosanitary terms](#).

The term ‘regulated’ refers to official control, as defined by the IPPC:

The active enforcement of mandatory phytosanitary regulations and the application of mandatory phytosanitary procedures with the objective of eradication or containment of quarantine pests or for the management of regulated non-quarantine pests (IPPC 2024)

The official control principles derived from ISPM requirements (IPPC 2021b) that apply to an RNQP include mandatory measures, government authorisation and technical justification (see [Official Control of Plant Quarantine Pests: National Policy 2025](#)). Learn more about submitting an RNQP application in the *Regulated Non-Quarantine Pests Application Guidelines*.

### Purpose and requirements

Managing a pest as an RNQP allows the department to regulate the pest’s entry into the country to:

- provide additional biosecurity protection to plants, from increased pest risk, including from endemic pests
- maintain clean planting material and support pest suppression efforts
- maintain profitability for growers through healthy crop yields and reduced pest management costs.

The department can only regulate an RNQP when it is associated with the specified plants for planting pathway. While the pest may be present on other pathways, it will not be regulated as an RNQP on those pathways (see Table 1).

For the department to regulate a pest as an RNQP at the international border, mandatory phytosanitary measures must be applied on the plants for planting pathway to manage and suppress the RNQP in the protected production scheme in Australia.

A protected production scheme is where the RNQP is under official control to mitigate its harmful effects on host plants. An official control program for RNQP (RNQP program) can be applied at a national or sub-national level, within a state or territory jurisdiction. Once it is established that the plants for planting pathway is the main source of infestation, the department may regulate the RNQP at international first points of entry (FPoEs).

Jurisdictions are responsible for the implementation of RNQP programs within their territories. This responsibility may be shared with industry stakeholders. The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders implementing the RNQP program must be clearly defined, supported by jurisdiction's regulatory instruments, and will be described in the RNQP application submitted to the department.

To submit an RNQP application, the applicant must complete the *RNQP Application Template*, located at the end of the *Regulated Non-Quarantine Pests Application Guideline*. Learn more about the application process and how to complete the application template in the *Regulated Non-Quarantine Pests Application Guideline*.

The criteria used to determine whether a pest is an RNQP or a quarantine pest are summarised in Table 1.

## Differences between RNQPs and quarantine pests

**Table 1 Key Criteria differentiating RNQPs from quarantine pests**

Defining criteria	RNQP	Quarantine pest
Pest status (IPPC 2022)	The pest is present and may be widely distributed in Australia.	The pest is absent or has a limited distribution (may be under eradication).
Pathway on which measures can be applied	Phytosanitary measures are only applied on plants for planting.	Phytosanitary measures can be applied on any pathway.
Economic impact	The economic impact is known to be unacceptable and is quantifiable.	The economic impact is predicted to be unacceptable.
Official control	The pest is under official control in specified plants for planting for intended uses, with the aim of suppression.	The pest is under official control, with the aim of eradication, containment, or exclusion.

To qualify as an RNQP, the plants for planting pathway must be the main source of infestation that leads to an unacceptable economic impact. This is the only pathway that may be regulated for RNQPs, and only when the plants have an intended use in the importing country.

Examples of intended uses are:

- growing to produce other commodities (e.g. tubers, cut flowers)
- fruit production
- plants to remain planted (e.g. potted plants)
- propagation to increase plant numbers.

Host plants associated with RNQPs imported into Australia should be grown or used in designated locations (protected production schemes). Pests that are not associated with the plants for planting pathway do not meet the criteria to be regulated as RNQPs.

# Assessment of RNQPs

Pests categorised as RNQPs can be regulated at international FPOEs on the plants for planting pathway. For a pest to be recognised as an RNQP and regulated at the international border, industry and jurisdictions must submit an RNQP application. The application must include:

- pest risk assessment
- economic impact
- control measures.

This information has been adapted from [ISPM 21: Pest risk analysis for regulated non-quarantine pests](#). The department will assess the information provided in the RNQP application before determining whether the pest can be recognised as an RNQP.

Learn more about the implementation of this policy in the *Regulated Non-Quarantine Pests Application Guidelines*.

## Pest risk assessment

A pest risk assessment is needed to justify regulating a pest as an RNQP. Unlike a pest risk assessment for a quarantine pest, a pest risk assessment for an RNQP does not necessarily need to consider the potential introduction and predicted economic impact (IPPC 2021c). This is because the pest is considered present within Australia, and the economic impact is likely to be known.

The pest risk assessment outlines current information about the pest, its host, and the impact of the pest on the intended use of the host plant. It must also evaluate all potential pathways for pest infestation. To support RNQP recognition, the assessment must demonstrate that the plants for planting pathway is the main pest infestation pathway causing economic impacts.

Pest infestation pathways may include soil, water, air, other plants or plant products, pest vectors, poor hygiene practices, human-assisted spread, contaminated machinery or transport methods, and by-products or waste. The influence of these sources on pest infestation and plant use must be clearly identified, assessed, compared, and, if needed, managed to reduce associated risk.

As with all regulated pests, the department takes a risk-based approach to regulating RNQPs. The department may impose a zero-tolerance approach under certain circumstances (IPPC 2021c). If the pest is present within the protected production scheme, the department may consider a pest tolerance level at international FPOEs.

## Economic impact

Regulating an RNQP should deliver an overall net economic benefit. In the application, industry and jurisdictions must provide evidence of the expected economic benefits to industry from regulating the pest as an RNQP. The department will consider and assess the benefits against the regulatory costs borne by jurisdictions and the department to ensure regulation is cost-effective and justified.

Since the pest is already present in the country, its negative impacts on the associated plant hosts should be known. As a result, when assessing potential economic impacts of RNQPs, considerations such as potential effects on international market access and broader environmental benefits are typically not considered.

## **Control measures**

Control measures must be risk-based, supported by evidence and serve to either exclude the RNQP from, or suppress RNQP populations in, the protected production schemes. Jurisdictions or industry, with regulatory support from their jurisdiction, can implement these measures. Measures must be effective in maintaining a very low (or zero) pest population in the protected production schemes. Mandatory industry certification schemes are accepted as control measures for managing RNQPs. The RNQP application must specify the control measures in detail.

If the department accepts an RNQP application, the department will establish appropriate regulatory measures at the international border.

# Roles and responsibilities

**Table 1 Roles and responsibilities of parties involved in RNQP programs**

Role	Responsibilities
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advises on RNQP requirements.</li> <li>• Evaluates and reviews the activities undertaken by jurisdictions and industry and determines whether the activities meet the requirements for an RNQP program.</li> <li>• Regulates RNQPs at international first points of entry, including the application of phytosanitary measures and corrective actions.</li> <li>• Communicates and engages with international trading partners and bodies (e.g. WTO) on changes to import conditions resulting from changes in pest regulatory status.</li> <li>• Maintains a list of regulated pests, including RNQPs.</li> </ul>
States and territories (jurisdictions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses pest risk to determine the activities needed to meet RNQP requirements (shared with industry).</li> <li>• Oversees the management of RNQPs within their territories and can support the implementation of RNQP programs.</li> <li>• Submits RNQP application to the department (shared with industry).</li> <li>• Provides documentation supporting the implementation of RNQP programs to the department (shared with industry).</li> <li>• Communicates with industry on their responsibilities in implementing measures to establish and maintain the protected production scheme.</li> <li>• Informs the department on changes to the status of the protected production scheme in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Informs the department of any proposed changes to agreed RNQP programs.</li> </ul>
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses pest risk to determine the activities needed to meet RNQP requirements (shared with jurisdiction).</li> <li>• Submits RNQP application to the department (endorsed by jurisdiction).</li> <li>• Provides documentation supporting the implementation of RNQP programs to the department (shared with jurisdiction).</li> <li>• Ongoing implementation and maintenance of RNQP programs.</li> <li>• Informs jurisdictions on changes to the status of agreed RNQP program activities and the protected production scheme in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

# Conclusion

An RNQP is a pest that is present – and often widespread – in Australia. It is either currently being controlled or suppressed, or will be controlled or suppressed, using measures that are recognised by the department. If specific conditions are met, the department may regulate an RNQP at the international FPOEs, based on the domestic control measures in place.

RNQP is a defined term under the IPPC and is subject to a range of mandatory requirements aligned with international standards. This policy outlines the requirements and principles to support the implementation of an RNQP in Australia in a manner that is consistent with the relevant ISPMs.

For more information on this policy, email [Nationalpestpolicy@aff.gov.au](mailto:Nationalpestpolicy@aff.gov.au).

# Glossary

Term	Definition
jurisdictions (states and territories)	The responsible biosecurity agencies within the state and territory governments.
official control	'The active enforcement of mandatory phytosanitary regulations and the application of mandatory phytosanitary procedures with the objective of eradication or containment of quarantine pests or for the management of regulated non-quarantine pests.' (IPPC 2024)
plants for planting	'...seeds, bulbs and tubers, and various kinds of vegetative propagating material, which may be whole plants or parts of plants (such as cuttings) ... potted plants (including bonsai) are included.' (IPPC 2021a)  'Plants intended to remain planted, to be planted or replanted' (IPPC 2024)
protected production scheme	A production system that is defined and has a level of phytosanitary measures protecting it. Official control activities will vary depending on the relevant biological characteristics of the pest and the geographical characteristics of the protected production scheme.
quarantine pest	'A pest of potential economic importance to the area endangered thereby and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled.' (IPPC 2024)
regulated non-quarantine pest (RNQP)	'A non-quarantine pest whose presence in plants for planting affects the intended use of those plants with an economically unacceptable impact and which is therefore regulated within the territory of the importing contracting party.' (IPPC 2024)
RNQP program	An official control program that serves to control and/or suppress the RNQP.

# References

IPPC 2021a, [ISPM 16: Regulated non-quarantine pests: concept and application](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, accessed 13 June 2025.

—2021b, [ISPM 1: Phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants and the application of phytosanitary measures in international trade](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, accessed 13 June 2025.

—2021c, [ISPM 21: Pest risk analysis for regulated non-quarantine pests](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, accessed 13 June 2025.

—2022, [ISPM 8: Determination of pest status in an area](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, accessed 13 June 2025.

—2024, [ISPM 5: Glossary of phytosanitary terms](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, accessed 13 June 2025.