National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (SEQ) Steering Committee
Thursday 20 August 2020
Teleconference
10.00am – 1.00pm

MINUTES – MEETING 13

ATTENDANCE

Attendees	Wendy Craik, Chair Jo Laduzko, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (C'wealth) John Robertson, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) (QLD) Scott Charlton, Department of Primary Industries (NSW) John van Schagen, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA) Nigel Ainsworth, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (VIC) Lloyd Klumpp, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (TAS) Justine Clark, Chief Finance Officer, DAF (QLD)
Program Presenters	Graeme Dudgeon, General Manager Andrew Turley, Strategy Director Brett Turville, Operations Director Sarah Mitchell, Finance Officer Heather Lesson, Manager, Policy
Observers	Malcolm Letts, Deputy Director-General/Chief Biosecurity Officer, Biosecurity Queensland, (DAF)
A/Secretariat	Sonia Marsanic, Policy Officer, (NRIFAEP)
Apologies	Anne Walters, Department of Primary Industry and Resources (NT) Kerrian Nobbs, Senior Policy Officer, (NRIFAEP)

MAIN DISCUSSION, AGREED OUTCOMES AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

The meeting opened at 10.00am.

Agenda Item 1 - Introduction

The Chair opened the 13th meeting and welcomed Justine Clark as a member of the Steering Committee. Justine was recently appointed to the Chief Finance Officer role within DAF following Mike Richards' retirement from the department. Justine holds a Bachelor of Commerce (majoring in Accounting) and is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Justine has extensive experience in senior finance leadership roles predominantly in the mining industry and previously worked with the government, including as the Executive Director at the Public Trustee of Queensland.

The Chair said that she would write a letter to Mike Richards on behalf of the Steering Committee to thank him for his contribution to the Committee.

The Chair provided an overview of the day's agenda and objectives.

Due to COVID-19, the meeting was condensed to a three hour teleconference meeting and discussion was on the priority agenda items.

The updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) and the Risk Management Sub-Committee (RMSC) were circulated prior to the meeting for final review. Final endorsement was received by all members. They will be published on the web.

The Chair provided an apology on behalf of the secretariat. Kerri was unable to attend the meeting due to an unexpected health issue. Best wishes were sent on behalf of the Steering Committee for her recovery.

Minutes for Meeting 12, held on 21 May 2020 and the extraordinary meeting held on 12 June 2020 were taken as a correct record and approved, with all actions having been completed, ongoing or on the agenda.

The progress of the Steering Committee webpage on the DAWE website was noted. It is progressing well despite some accessibility issues which are being addressed. There will be no cost to the Program to use this website and items for publishing will be provided to the Commonwealth team.

The Steering Committee:

- **APPROVED** the minutes of Meeting 12 and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 12 June 2020.

- **AGREED** the minutes for both meetings can be published to the web.

- **AGREED** to publish the amended SAG and RMSC Terms of Reference to the Steering Committee webpage on the DAWE website.

- **AGREED** to send a letter on behalf of the board to Mike Richards for his contribution to the Steering Committee.

Agenda item 1 - Action items	Responsibility	Target	Status
1. Publish approved minutes for Meeting 12 and extraordinary meeting on 12 June 2020.	Secretariat	September 2020	Completed
2. Send letter to Mike Richards	Chair	September 2020	Completed
3. Publish the approved SAG and RMSC ToR	Secretariat	September 2020	Completed

Agenda Item 2 – General Manager's Update and Omnibus

The General Manager gave a brief overview of the key points listed in the Omnibus, including:

- Treatment
  - Last treatment season went well despite the interruptions early on (drought, fire and wet weather).
  - Most treatment occurred as planned with only minor variations. The Area 1 overlap only received one round of treatment instead of the planned two. However, these resources were used to address gaps in treatment in the Western Boundary.
  - Sub-optimal treatment in areas was a result of inconsistent timing between the treatment rounds or the number of completed rounds in the first years of eradication.
- Condensed treatment strategy
  - The treatment strategy has been revised from six rounds over two years to four rounds of treatment in a single year.
  - Trials will occur in Area 2 with three alternating strategies using a mixture of IGR and toxicant bait in different treatment rounds.
  - Including toxicant has increased the cost of treatment by $4M. This is likely to be offset by the compression of eradication treatment into one season.
- Movement control review
  - CSIRO have been granted a further extension due to the complexity and extended time it took for consultation to occur.
  - Consultation will take place with NSW and the Sub-Committee on Domestic Quarantine and Market Access to co-ordinate proposed changes to the ICA40 market access protocol with the outcomes of the CSIRO review.
  - The final report from CSIRO is due late October 2020. The outcomes and impacts from the review will be discussed in the Steering Committee meeting to be held in November 2020. Members of the Steering Committee will be provided with the report out-of-session prior to the meeting.
- Eradication success results
  - Clearance surveillance has occurred in approximately one third of the eradication area in areas that are considered 'high risk'.
  - Infestation has been found at a total of 15 sites as a result of this surveillance, as well as some public reports. This is only 2.5 per cent of the total area surveyed.
  - Until surveillance of all high and low risk sites is completed, along with delineation from detections, the extent of infestation, reliability of the risk modelling and the impact it may have on planned treatment in Area 2 is unknown.
  - Detections are expected as, until now, intensive surveillance has not occurred in the eradication area.
  - Analysis for treatment success cannot occur until all sites have been surveyed which is expected late September 2020. An update will then be provided to the Steering Committee.
- Budget and work plan
  - The General Manager highlighted the current budget for 2020-21, spending for 2019-20, and the increase that the cost of surveillance has added.

     o   Depending on the eradication area's surveillance results, revision of the work plan may need to be considered and approved by the Steering Committee to ensure costs can be kept within the available funding if the priorities need to change.

The Steering Committee:

- **NOTED** the General Manager's update on the Program, including:
  - o the review of 2019-20 treatment season and learnings
  - o design of 2020-21 condensed treatment strategy
  - o update on the movement controls review by CSIRO.
- **DISCUSSED** the information presented by the General Manager including:
  - o process and timetable for analysis and release of eradication success results
  - o the implications this may have on the budget and current work plan.
- **SUGGESTED** depending on findings, another meeting be called to discuss the surveillance results and budget impacts prior to the November 2020 meeting.
- **AGREED** the Program may need to review its work plan and priorities following surveillance results.

Agenda Item 2 - Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
4.	Provide update (map and one page) to Steering Committee regarding clearance surveillance	General Manager	August 2020	Provided OoS and in November Papers
5.	Provide surveillance analysis report	Program - Science	September 2020	Completed, sent 9 September 2020.
6.	Provide Steering Committee with the CSIRO Review Report out-of-session.	Program – Policy	November 2020	Report has been delayed, final version will be available end November 2020.

Agenda Item 3 – Financial Update

The Steering Committee received a verbal update from Sarah Mitchell on the financial reporting. Discussions related to:

- current delays for 2019-20 financial and capital updates – an out-of-session paper will be provided to Steering Committee members
- an update on the collaborative funding agreement – all jurisdiction funds have been received and cleared
- the original and current 10 year plan funding profile – there is a significant drop in funding which occurs from 2021-22 which will impact the Program.

The Steering Committee:

- **NOTED** the update on the status of the Program's funding.
- **NOTED** and **DISCUSSED** the budget decrease in the funding profile and potential Program impacts.

Agenda item 3 - Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
7.	Financial update to be provided to Steering Committee members out-of-session when available.	Program - Finance	31 August 2020	Will be sent by end November 2020.

Agenda Item 4 – Treatment – Year in Review

Graeme Dudgeon provided an update on the improvements made in treatment processes which have achieved increased efficiency and effectiveness. This included:

- increased efficiency in responsive treatment
- increased effectiveness using the mobile data initiative
- field staff providing positive reinforcement for fire ant awareness to the public.

A question was raised by the Chair regarding the map provided in Attachment C: how is the prioritisation separated into the 13 categories? The Chair would like the basis of this provided in order to understand how the risk rating was formed.

The benefits and challenges of self-management was also discussed including:

- self-management is a preventative measure of ant infestation in areas waiting for eradication treatment
- assists in ant suppression/containment
- the strategy needs to consider public incentive and/or obligation to self-manage
- public view and perception of self-management and how to shift the existing ideology

The Steering Committee:

- **NOTED** the update on the RIFA Eradication treatment progress.

- **NOTED** the complexity of the self-management and public perception of the Program which requires further discussion in the November meeting.

- **SUGGESTED** the Program should consider drawing on some expert advice to promote shared responsibility.

Agenda item 4 - Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
8.	Provide clarity to the Chair/Steering Committee to why there are 13 different categories presented and how the risk rating was formed (Attachment C).	Program - Science	September 2020	Completed – sent to SC members 13 November 2020.
9.	Program is to develop a model for responsive treatment that enforces the shared responsibility (between government, community and industry) for fire ants as per	Program	November 2020	In Progress

	the Biosecurity Act 2014 and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity.			

Agenda Item 5 – Update of the 10 Year Plan and costings – preparation for presentation to NBC and AGMIN

Graeme Dudgeon and Andrew Turley provided an update regarding the 10 Year Plan and the current addendum.

It was noted the addendum of the 10 Year Plan makes it difficult to align the changes made to the plan and still does not represent how the Program is operating.

The 10 Year Plan itself states it should be reviewed and updated biennially. The Program would like to update the 10 Year Plan to align with the Three Year Strategy and current Program practices.

The Steering Committee agreed that rewriting the document would be the most beneficial way to progress as the plan should be adaptive.

The Steering Committee:

- NOTED the Program will review and update the 10 Year Plan for consideration by the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC).
- AGREED the Program will present a short document outlining the structure and major elements that will be proposed for the 10 Year Plan and an early business case to the Steering Committee.

Agenda item 5 - Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
10.	Provide a business case and document outlining the structure and elements for the revised 10 Year Plan.	Program – Policy	November 2020	On November Mtg Agenda

Agenda Item 6 – Stakeholder Mobilisation Plan Update

The General Manager provided a quick overview of the work the communications team have ahead to continue to shift public perception of the threat fire ants pose. It was noted the self-management aspects of this have already been discussed.

Andrew Turley provided a quick summary of the progress of the campaigning despite the restrictions presented by COVID-19. This included:

- the success of the biosecurity zone changes campaign that commenced in late May 2020
- direct mail being sent into Area 1, 2, 3 and 4 with general fire ant information and specific information relating to the Program's progress in that region, including surveillance, treatment and self-management
- first round of cane grower trials commenced in late July/early August 2020 with a second round of bait being provided for application by the growers in September 2020.

Further discussions were held around:

- communication and engagement strategies
- progress of the communication and engagement governance proposal

- mobilising for awareness, containment and surveillance
- developing self-management
- developing accreditation for the turf industry indicating their products are fire ant free.

The Steering Committee:

- **NOTED** the update provided on the Stakeholder Mobilisation Plan.

- **AGREED** the communication and engagement strategies will be included in the Three Year Strategy under 'Mobilisation Strategies'.

- **NOTED** the Program will continue to gain approval on campaigns through the Queensland Government Advertising and Communication Committee.

- **NOTED** the saving measures provided in Attachment A.

- **NOTED** the Queensland Government Caretaker conventions and where NRIFAEP advertising is captured.

- **NOTED** the schools, sporting club and facilities, and the waste management facility strategies provided in Attachments C, D and E.

Agenda item 6 - Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
11.	Review and provide feedback on the school, sporting club and waste facility self-management strategies.	Steering Committee Members	September 2020	Some positive feedback received. Reminder sent 29 October.

Agenda Item 7 – Compliance Update

Brett Turville provided an overview of the compliance activities over the last six months including:

- the changes required as a result of COVID-19 to compliance work
- delay in the movement of the team to the operational area of the Program
- identified top high risk industries which will be prioritised into quarterly audit targets to achieve the KPI
- separation of the team into auditing and investigations (to assist with significant detections resulting from human assisted movement).

Jo Laduzko queried how the risk of industries were calculated. This will be provided to the Steering Committee for review and feedback.

 The Steering Committee:

- **NOTED** the Compliance Activities Plan 2020-2021 provided in Attachment A.
- **NOTED** the Compliance Plan targets industries on risk.
- **NOTED** the number of new initiatives that will facilitate the Program's ability to meet the targets.

- **AGREED** the Program will provide an out-of-session paper on the high risk industry profiling.
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Agenda item 7 - Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
12.	Provide the Steering Committee with the high risk industry profiling out-of-session.	Program - Compliance	September 2020	Finalisation pending results of CSIRO Review.

Agenda item 8– Other Business

The Chair summarised the outcomes from the meeting.

An update was provided on the progress of the Efficiency and Effectiveness recommendations. A report for publication on the progress of recommendations will be prepared. Recommendations that have evolved or are still being implemented will transition to the Business Improvement Plan.

The Chair will be providing an update on the Progress of the Program to the NBC on 17 September 2020. A document will be circulated prior to the meeting ensuring the Steering Committee is aware of the discussion points.

A request was made by the Chair to shift the November Steering Committee date to 18 November instead of 19 November 2020.

Steering Committee feedback on the Three Year Strategy needs to be addressed. This will be provided to the Steering Committee in early September 2020.

The Steering Committee:

- **AGREED** the next meeting will take place on 18 November 2020 unless a meeting is called earlier based on surveillance results.

Agenda item 8 – Action items		Responsibility	Target	Status
13.	Program to provide a response to the feedback provided from the Steering Committee on the Three Year Strategy.	Andrew Turley	4 September 2020	Completed
14.	November Steering Committee meeting to be rescheduled to 18 November 2020.	Secretariat	31 August 2020	Completed

The next meeting will be held on 18 November 2020 by teleconference.

The meeting closed at 12.08pm.