



## Plant Health Committee Communiqué—PHC58

The Plant Health Committee (PHC) held its 58th meeting virtually from 23 - 27 November 2020. Andrew Bishop (Tasmania), as the outgoing Chair, welcomed Rosa Crnov (Victoria) and Anne Walters (Northern Territory) as the incoming Chair and Deputy Chair respectively. Andrew thanked Peter Cross for acting as the member for Tasmania during his tenure as Chair. Rosa Crnov appointed Stephen Dibley as the new member for Victoria during her tenure as Chair.

### ▪ PHC Work Plan

The Committee noted the PHC work plan is compliant with the requirements of the National Biosecurity Committee and includes initiatives previously considered by the Committee, including the agreed research development and extension priorities, climate change, and assessment of the national plant health capability, including areas of strength and improvement.

### ▪ Subcommittee and Working Group updates

The Committee acknowledged the progress of work under the Subcommittees and working groups that support the delivery of the Committee's mandate and responsibilities. This included:

- Endorsing the workplans of the Subcommittee for Domestic Quarantine and Market Access (SDQMA) and the Subcommittee for National Plant Health Surveillance (SNPHS).
- Noting the progress within the projects developing the Australian National Fruit Fly Management Protocols and the Electronic Plant Health Assurance Certificate system.
- Acknowledging the successful implementation of the National Plant Pest Reference Collection Strategy and the work remaining to ensure coverage of the 42 National Priority Plant Pests (NPPPs) with verified specimens in the collection.

### ▪ Preparedness

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the *National Xylella Action Plan*, noting some deliverables had been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and will be delayed. The Committee also discussed the importance of consolidating agreed host lists in preparation for incursions and potential domestic movement restriction implementation. The importance of clarity and aligning the terminology and definitions with those already internationally accepted was emphasised along with the important role industry funding plays in preparedness projects. A recent audit of the National Citrus Canker Eradication Program highlighted strong industry engagement and proactive sharing of key information across stakeholders.

### ▪ Surveillance

The Committee agreed to hold a workshop to develop the national policy to support implementation and delivery of the *National Plant Health Surveillance Program* and the *National Plant Health Surveillance Reform Project*.

### ▪ Project Updates and New Initiatives

A plant health capability assessment undertaken by each jurisdiction in mid-2020 highlighted strong organisational direction and policy. As a result of the assessment, areas for improvement included recruitment capability, succession planning, stakeholder engagement, data management, and preparedness.

The committee discussed measures in place to address these gaps, including the appointment of Deputy Chief Plant Health Officers in each of the jurisdictions, which would benefit succession planning for Chief Plant Health Officers



in the future. Input from subcommittees and consultation with organisations would also assist with improving key gap areas.

▪ **Next Meeting**

The Committee will hold its 59<sup>th</sup> meeting in Darwin, scheduled for July 2021. The Committee looks forward to the opportunity to meet face to face after working through virtual means for an extended period.