



Ref. A2237052

22 July, 2015

National Biosecurity Committee Secretariat
Department of Agriculture
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

POWERLINK QUEENSLAND SUBMISSION - Modernising Australia's approach to establishing pests and diseases of national significance

This submission is made on behalf of the Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited trading as Powerlink Queensland (**Powerlink**). Powerlink is a government owned corporation that owns, operates, develops and maintains Queensland's high voltage electricity transmission network.

Powerlink Queensland has reviewed the "*Modernising Australia's approach to managing established pests and diseases of national significance – Discussion Paper*" and has summarised the following feedback below:

1. *Are the proposed Policy Principles appropriate and practical?*

The proposed policy principles are practical in terms of their level of application. Powerlink will be most interested in the implementation of the policy, for example the methods used to develop national management plans and how these will be funded; and how the location of biosecurity threats on a property are to be made public to allow for effective risk management.

2. *Are the proposed Policy Principles sufficient?*

The content associated with the proposed Policy Principles is well targeted and sufficient.

3. *Should listing of established pests and diseases of national significance be for a defined period, or open-ended?*

A defined period (eg. 10 years) with an automatic review trigger may provide greater flexibility in managing pests and diseases of national significance. An alternate option may entail a surveillance or high level review after 5 years in order to gauge the pests and diseases progress, with a definite formal review period after 10 years.

4. *What form of review should be required to maintain the listing of a pest or disease as an established pest or disease of national significance?*

Selected knowledge specialists and Government representatives should undertake the review by some developed or set Charter. This Charter may include standard agenda items – for example:

- Existing management control effectiveness
- Spread of pests and diseases – increase/decrease
- New methods of management control
- Funding management strategies or trending for mitigation and control

5. *What is an appropriate time period for such a review?*

Please refer to the response in Item 3.

6. *Are the proposed roles and responsibilities clear, particularly in relation to your role?*

The roles and responsibilities are drafted sufficiently at a high level to enable flexibility for different management approaches and risk mitigation.

7. *Are the proposed roles and responsibilities appropriate and practical?*

The “risk creators” category is practical, logical and introduces a risk assessment concept to any activity. An additional reference to any quarantine issues within the Industry and Community Groups section may be warranted.

8. *What are the issues with establishing and maintaining effective collective action?*

Establishing and maintaining a partnership approach can be difficult to sustain over time as different industries or individuals have different involvement appetites. Maintaining the enthusiasm by all active participants can also be difficult.

There may often be a reliance on industry groups to undertake the bulk of the ‘heavy lifting’ associated with any large scale implementation measures.

Gaining agreement of accountabilities for joint management and allocation of resources is also difficult. Proactive individuals and organisations should be incentivized to make early investments that benefit the broader community.

9. *How can the coordinated approach be best implemented across the various stakeholder groups?*

The development of a suite of standard implementation guidelines or templates (e.g. Charter, Agenda’s) for a coordinated approach may be warranted. The source or location of these documents would be further enhanced with them being centrally located on the Department of Agriculture’s Internet web site.

A single source of the truth for the location of biosecurity threats, control measures and potential spread/vectors (i.e. shared data) is vital for a coordinated approach to work.

10. *How do you see yourself (or your interest/industry/organisation) contributing?*

As an electricity transmission network business, Powerlink would welcome the opportunity to participate in the development of the framework for the management of established pests and diseases of national significance.

As a joint land manager, Powerlink is primarily concerned with taking a coordinated approach to controlling biosecurity threats and therefore welcomes many of the proposed changes.

From the list of weeds of national significance, Powerlink recognizes parthenium weed (*Parthenium hysterophorus*) as its most significant risk based on our activities and the location of assets.

While we encounter other weeds of national significance (e.g. lantana), the threat of these biosecurity threats being spread from our activities is far less than for parthenium weed. As a result, we would be most interested in participating and contributing to management plans associated with parthenium in particular.

11. *Other comments*

Powerlink has experienced some difficulties with a transparency with biosecurity threat data, including the National Johne's Disease Control Programme (i.e. difficulty to gain access to data to enable Powerlink to proactively manage risks). We hope proposed changes can improve this situation in the future.

Yours sincerely,



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Group Manager Environmental Strategies