

National Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Expert Group Meeting 4 Communiqué

The National Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Expert Group (expert group) was established by the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) in March 2015 as a recommendation from the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) Implementation Taskforce. The role of the expert group is to develop, harmonise and maintain the national capability and capacity to prepare for the response to biosecurity emergencies. The expert group's first achievement was to progress the national agreement of the *Strategic Position for Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness*, which was endorsed by the NBC in November 2015. Three specialist task groups were established under the expert group to focus on different elements of preparedness (resourcing, training and evaluation/lessons management).

The fourth meeting of the expert group was held in Attwood, Victoria on 31 March 2016. Members from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department), every state and territory, Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Plant Health Australia (PHA) attended the meeting.

The expert group discussed:

- A self-assessment of the current level of preparedness to manage a level 3 biosecurity incident from a state/territory perspective, entitled 'the national stocktake of biosecurity emergency preparedness activities'.
- A national stocktake of training and assessment materials undertaken by the Training Specialist Task Group (TSTG) that was designed to:
 - identify all training and assessment materials that exist across all jurisdictions for potential use as nationally available resources for biosecurity incident response-related training, and
 - identify if and where any gaps exist in the availability of training and assessment resources at the national level.
- The progress of consultations currently occurring to assist in the development of updated biosecurity qualifications.
- The transition of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) into a cross-sectoral resource assisting in all areas of biosecurity response. Discussions included structure and changes to the RRT's current form.
- The planned and in-progress biosecurity exercise activities across all jurisdictions.
- The development of a "roadmap" to support the strategic position for biosecurity emergency preparedness, outlining the key deliverables for the expert group and specialist task groups from 2016-2019.

Outcomes:

- All three specialist task groups will utilise the results of the national stocktake of emergency preparedness activities to assist in identifying deliverables for their 2016/17 work plans.
- The TSTG will develop an accessible suite of training and assessment materials to support the biosecurity response qualification.
- The Resource Management Specialist Task Group (RMSTG) will finalise the draft the "Interstate Deployment Arrangements for Biosecurity Responses" document.
- The expert group will take the "Interstate Deployment Arrangements for Biosecurity Responses" to NBC for endorsement at the next meeting mid-July.
- A three year roadmap of the expert group's activities will be developed for the next expert group meeting and then put forward to the NBC for endorsement.



Expert Group Members at the 31 March Meeting

The next meeting of the expert group will be held in Darwin on 29-30 June 2016.

For more information contact the expert group's Secretariat: NBEPEG@agriculture.gov.au