

Northern Territory biosecurity roundtable report

Thank you for attending the 2016 National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) Biosecurity Roundtable (Roundtable) held in Darwin, Northern Territory on Wednesday 20 July 2016.

This event was hosted by the NBC, together with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, Northern Territory. After receiving feedback from stakeholders who attended previous events, a new format for the Roundtables has been trialled this year. There has been one roundtable event held in the capital city of each state/territory. The key themes from each Roundtable will be discussed at the National Forum in Canberra later in the year.

The morning session opened with the launch of the Northern Territory Biosecurity Strategy 2016-2026 by the Hon. Gary Higgins MLA, Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, Land Resource Management, the Environment and Arts and Museums. Updates were given from the state government, federal government and two industry representatives, Tom Ryan from the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association and Shenal Basnayake from NT Farmers.

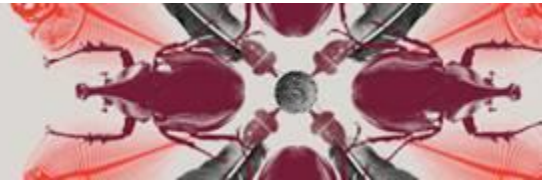
The morning session closed with a round-table discussion of key biosecurity concerns from the state government, federal government and industry representatives in attendance.

The afternoon session consisted of discussion groups on two key topics. For the first session 'Biosecurity Strategy: Key Goals and Implementation' attendees broke up into smaller discussion groups. The group then reconvened for the second session 'Community Awareness' and discussed this topic as a whole.

Key themes from the NT event included:

1. *Northern Territory Biosecurity Strategy 2016-26*
2. Resourcing and surveillance capability
3. Communicating the importance of biosecurity to the broader community.

More detail about these themes is included below. The key themes from the other roundtable events will be added to this list and then discussed at the National Forum.



Key themes

1. Northern Territory Biosecurity Strategy 2016-26

The group discussed the new *Northern Territory Biosecurity Strategy 2016-26* following the launch at the beginning of the roundtable. It was noted that the introduction of the new strategy was a positive step forward for the Northern Territory Government, but that there is still work to be done to ensure that the strategy is a success.

In the afternoon session, the group split up to workshop several of the goals outlined within the strategy. These included questions around what sort of industry/government advisory committee would be appropriate, what the terms of reference should be, and what governance arrangements should be put into place. Discussions yielded a lot of material for further discussion, which Northern Territory Government staff will be collating and will form the basis of recommendations to the Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister.

2. Resourcing and surveillance capability

Resourcing and surveillance were themes that were raised several times throughout the day. Issues raised included the need to strengthen surveillance capabilities, the threat of a lack of resources available in key sectors in the Northern Territory, and the benefits of collaboration across industries and government.

The group raised concerns with funding and resourcing for biosecurity and the impact of lack of resources on the Northern Territory. Concern was raised around a lack of adequately resourced monitoring programmes to detect pests and diseases early. Attendees agreed that there was an above-average level of collaboration and engagement in the Northern Territory, and that this means there is great potential for improvements in surveillance capability.

3. Communicating the importance of biosecurity to the broader community

The group discussed the challenges of engaging the general public in understanding their role in the biosecurity system and the importance of taking personal responsibility for biosecurity, not just in the Northern Territory but on a national level. Biosecurity is often viewed as someone else's problem.

The group discussed ways to change this perception such as advertising and social media campaigns. The group highlighted that the public's imagination is not being captured by current engagement methods, and that there is a lack of any incentives to do so. The group agreed that citizen science and social media may present one of the best ways for engagement, and that social media's quick, responsive nature makes it a useful medium to disseminate a message widely. Framing the importance of biosecurity will be a challenge for industry and government moving forward.