



## Tasmania Biosecurity Roundtable Report

Thank you for attending the 2017 National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) Biosecurity Roundtable held in Hobart, Tasmania on 29 August 2017.

This event was hosted by the NBC, together with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

There were 27 participants at the roundtable representing a wide range of organisations including aquaculture, livestock, farming and environmental groups and state and federal government.

The forum opened with an official welcome and outline of the day's program by Josephine Laduzko from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, who was the day's facilitator.

### What we heard from participants

- Biosecurity surveillance and monitoring could be boosted by educating and empowering the community and smaller industry players to participate.
- More work is needed to lift the adoption of biosecurity plans across producers and allied industries.
- Better drivers for change and incentives and disincentives to improve biosecurity compliance is needed.
- The community needs consistent branding of reporting portals, hotlines and apps.
- Building confidence in reporting and response processes will improve planning and reporting outcomes, including through increasing general awareness of biosecurity.

**Howel Williams (Biosecurity Tasmania)** presented on the range of services provided by Biosecurity Tasmania and the way in which it underpinned of the Tasmanian Government's new agricultural policy "Cultivating Prosperity: a 2050 Vision for Agriculture". This included major initiatives such as the development of new biosecurity legislation and a review of the Tasmanian Biosecurity Strategy.

**Tim Chapman (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources)** spoke about the three main spheres of the biosecurity system - pre border, border and post border - with the Commonwealth focus largely on pre border and border activities with a preference to keep risks offshore. With increasing passenger, cargo and mail movements and new risks emerging constantly, the emphasis has to be on shared responsibility, preparedness, surveillance and response. In particular government, industry and community must work together to make 'shared responsibility' meaningful.

**Donald Coventry (Southern Natural Resource Management (NRM South))** gave an overview of the work undertaken by his organisation as it builds relationships and partnerships with government, industry, environmental groups and community delivering a wide range of initiatives. This includes formation of formal and informal networks with NRM South acting as facilitator; delivery of regional strategies every five years; and development and delivery of biosecurity processes and tools such as a dry disinfection program for bushwalkers, biosecurity hygiene fuel kits, engagement with and education of mountain bike riders, best practice protocol delivery training sessions and future planning around National Landcare 2 and potential research opportunities.

After morning tea, a **Q&A session** with a panel of the previous speakers answered a range of questions including on biosecurity risk management practices around shipping and increasing associated tourism; future priorities in the biosecurity arena; and the role of regional differentiation and policy and process responses to that.



**Allison Woolley (Biosecurity Tasmania)** gave a comprehensive overview of the development of the new Tasmanian Biosecurity Act. The latest public consultation closed in June 2017. The proposed new Act will replace seven other legislative instruments and see the implementation of a single piece of framework biosecurity legislation that establishes sets of rules, principles and approaches to support the regulation of biosecurity. Key to the new biosecurity environment will be shared responsibility as Tasmania shifts to performance based legislation rather the existing prescriptive system. It is expected that the Tasmanian Government will table the bill in Parliament in late 2017.

**Rod Andrewartha (Biosecurity Tasmania)** presented on the recent outbreak of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) in a number of sites in Tasmania. The virus causes very high mortality among infected oysters, and whilst not transmittable to any other marine species, it has the potential to cause significant financial losses for growers and the industry in Tasmania as a whole. The Aquavet plan was enacted in response to detection with a decision made not to extract and destroy all oysters in affected fisheries. All levels of government and industry members are focused on ensuring sustainability of the industry and have responded by engaging with ongoing research into the virus, appointment and funding of a biosecurity officer, development of spat hatchery biosecurity assurance program and high level of consultation between all parties.

During the first workshop of the afternoon, **“Surveillance and Reporting”**, participants highlighted a number of barriers to reporting. These included a lack of knowledge around biosecurity risks, fear of the social and financial implications of biosecurity breaches, including the loss of certification and export opportunities medium and long term. Suggestions around possible changes to improve reporting included: using advocates or champions to promote biosecurity best practices; a bio-risk identification app or website; education programs for industry and hobby farmers; consistent branding of reporting portals; hotlines and apps and clear protocols in industry management plans.

During the final workshop, **“Industry’s Role in Biosecurity”**, Ms Laduzko introduced the findings of the broad social attitudes survey which aimed to provide understanding on social attitudes to biosecurity, identify any gaps, and help the department develop new initiatives. Whilst the results showed that community has some awareness and knowledge of biosecurity, it also showed that the community’s understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the biosecurity system has to be improved.

Participants were then asked what might stop them or their members from having biosecurity plans. Responses included industries may be dominated by small businesses or hobby farmers with lower awareness, communication difficulties for producers or industry members from non-English speaking backgrounds and sectors such as tourism not self-identifying biosecurity risks. Some of the suggestions around improving industry’s role included requiring on and off farm practices to be biosecurity compliant, for export certification to include biosecurity compliance as part of the certification process and for the development of mandated biosecurity plans.

#### **Next steps...**

The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment would like to thank everyone who participated in the Tasmanian Biosecurity Roundtable for their time and contributions. The discussions and ideas from the roundtable will feed into the agenda for the National Biosecurity Forum 2 November 2017 as well as biosecurity governance and communication processes through the NBC and other avenues.