**ENVIRONMENT AND INVASIVES COMMITTEE**

**Sectoral Committee of the National Biosecurity Committee**

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Purpose**

The Environment and Invasives Committee (EIC) will provide national policy leadership on the identification, prevention and management of invasive[[1]](#footnote-1) plant, vertebrate and invertebrate species that adversely impact the environment, economy and community. The committee will provide a national mechanism for identification and resolution of national priorities on freshwater aquatic and terrestrial invasive species and any other species where there is an environmental or community biosecurity[[2]](#footnote-2) impact where it is found not to be the responsibility of any other sectoral committee.

It will also provide national policy leadership on environmental biosecurity more broadly, including engaging with stakeholders and working with other national sectoral committees to provide the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) with consistent and consolidated advice on environmental biosecurity issues across the national biosecurity system.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The EIC will provide national policy leadership by:

1. delivering an integrated and effective national approach to the prevention, detection, identification, response and management of emerging and established invasive species that affect the environment, the economy and the community.
2. supporting the development and implementation of a nationally consistent and effective approach to biological control programs, activities and associated governance, administrative and legislative processes (where relevant). This includes the consideration of nominations of plant and vertebrate target species for biological control activities, both in individual jurisdictions and nationally.
3. developing and implementing national strategies to:
   1. ensure a clear governance structure for the management of relevant species of national importance within the national biosecurity system, and
   2. prioritise research, development and extension in invasive species biosecurity.
4. supporting national communication and stakeholder engagement on invasive species, including leading engagement with environmental biosecurity stakeholders.
5. assisting the efforts of the Commonwealth to meet Australia’s obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, being the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) and the *Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals* (SDG) as they relate to environmental biosecurity:
   1. CBD Aichi Biodiversity Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment,
   2. SDG 15.8: By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species
      1. Indicator 15.8.1: Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species [indicator methodology still under development].
6. providing the NBC with advice on national invasive species policy issues and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA).

**Chair**

The Chair of the EIC must be a member of the NBC and will rotate every two years.

**Membership**

One member representing the Commonwealth and each state and territory jurisdiction.

To ensure coverage of both general biosecurity and environmental biosecurity, membership may comprise up to two officials from relevant agencies. However, jurisdictional members must bring a single jurisdictional view to the meeting. Accordingly, the below table will be updated to reflect any additional agencies.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Jurisdiction** | **Member Agency** |
| Commonwealth | Department of Agriculture and Water Resources,  Department of the Environment and Energy, and  Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer (CEBO) |
| New South Wales | Department of Primary Industries, and  Office of Environment and Heritage |
| Queensland | Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and  Department of Environment and Science |
| Northern Territory | Department of Environment and Natural Resources |
| Tasmania | Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment |
| Western Australia | Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development  Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions |
| South Australia | Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, and  Department for Environment and Water |
| Australian Capital Territory | Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate |
| Victoria | Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions |

**Observers**

|  |
| --- |
| Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) |
| Plant Health Australia (PHA) |
| Animal Health Australia |
| Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) |
| Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) |
| Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) |
| Note: Other observers may be invited for specific agenda items, as required |

**Governance arrangements**

In addressing these terms of reference, the committee will:

* meet at least twice annually, either face-to-face or by teleconference as required
* agree to a strategic work plan, to be reviewed every 12 months and approved by the NBC, with progress assessed as a standing item at each meeting
* maintain appropriate linkages with other sectoral committees to avoid duplication of work or gaps in coverage across sectors, and
* form advisory or working groups and, when required, task groups to progress priority activities.

Secretariat support for the EIC is provided by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

The Secretariat will prepare a record of each meeting setting out decisions and action items.

All other arrangements and processes are detailed within the committee’s operational guidelines.

**Reporting**

The EIC will report to NBC at each NBC meeting on:

* progress against the strategic work plan
* work priorities, if these have changed significantly from those outlined in the strategic work plan, and
* any issues that affect the ability of the EIC to progress its approved work plan.

Advisory committees or working groups will provide a draft work plan for EIC consideration by May each year. If task groups are established they will have specific reporting timeframes.

**Review of terms of reference**

The terms of reference will be reviewed every two years, unless there is a requirement to revise it earlier.

**Financial expenditure**

It is the responsibility of EIC members to ensure they are in a position to represent their governments at meetings and make relational decisions requiring a financial commitment.

**Sub-groups**

The EIC is supported by five sub-groups. Four are technical working groups, comprising officers from the Commonwealth, state and territory governments as well as non-government experts where appropriate. There is also one advisory group that is largely comprised of non-government representatives.

| **Working and Task Groups** | **Chair** |
| --- | --- |
| Freshwater Vertebrates and Invertebrates Working Group | Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries |
| Weeds Working Group | South Australia Department of Primary Industries & Regions |
| Terrestrial Vertebrates Working Group | New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage |
| Terrestrial Invertebrates Working Group | New South Wales Department of Primary Industries |
| Environmental Biosecurity Advisory Group | Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer |

Governance arrangements for sub-groups are set out in the EIC operating guidelines.

**Sunset clauses**

* Working and advisory groups are ongoing.
* Task groups are to be time-limited or reviewed annually, unless otherwise provided in their terms of reference.
* Observer status will be reviewed every two years, aligned with the review of the committee terms of reference.

Version history:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Version: 1 | Date: 14 February 2018 | Endorsed by National Biosecurity Committee at NBC27. |
| Version 1.1 | Date: 7 December 2018 | Inclusion of Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer as observer and chair of Environmental Biosecurity Advisory Group, at request of National Biosecurity Committee. |
| Version: 2 | Date: 23 May 2019 | Inclusion of Department of Environment and Science as a co-member for Queensland and Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries as the chair of the FVIWG. Minor changes to improve clarity (e.g. ‘Working and Task Groups’ changed to ‘Sub Groups’, moved ‘Sunset Clauses’ section to end). Endorsed by National Biosecurity Committee out of session. |
| Version: 3 | Date: 24 September 2019 | Inclusion of Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer a member, rather than observer of the Committee, and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions as a co-member for Western Australia. |

1. An invasive species is a species occurring, as a result of human activities, beyond its accepted normal distribution and which threatens valued environmental, agricultural or other social resources by the damage it causes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Environmental biosecurity is the protection of the environment and/or social amenity from the risks and negative effects of pests and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading in Australia.

   Under this definition:

   * + *the environment* includes Australia’s natural terrestrial, inland water and marine ecosystems and their constituent parts, and its natural and physical resources
     + *social amenity* includes the social, economic and cultural aspects of the environment, including tourism, human infrastructure, cultural assets and national image
     + human health impacts of pests and diseases are not captured.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)