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Comments:

Council of Australasian Weed Societies written submission to NEBRA five year review, March 2017

1.2 The Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS) supports having a strong, efficient, and importantly effective national biosecurity system for all land uses and marine and fresh waterways in Australia. CAWS supports the strengthening of the NEBRA and increasing the awareness and use of this agreement for the long term benefit of the country.

1.3 The use of 'shared responsibility' is popular in government however can be nebulous in its use – it can mean everyone but no-one in particular. Each group involved needs to have roles and responsibilities clearly defined and be as a result of widespread public awareness and consultation. The national and state leadership of the NEBRA, and its responses need to have clear goals, be sufficiently resourced and be accountable.

2.4 See 1.3

2.6 CAWS supports the increased involvement of private enterprise where relevant in supporting, either financially or logistically, operations under NEBRA. CAWS suggests that it is likely that members of various private industries, including but not limited to growers, would be eager to help in this way; many industries have a ready network of people who could quickly act in surveillance or other many other ways should the urgent need arise. These industries would realise the relevant long term benefits of their assistance. Likewise, governments should also remain acutely aware of the long term broader benefits to society of controlling environmental pest/weed/disease incursions where it is known those control actions will also benefit particular industries; healthy plant and animal industries help provide healthy communities, which are then in a stronger position to look after their own health, their communities' wellbeing and the environment around them. There remains an intrinsic public good for governments to protect Australia's environment from biosecurity threats.

3.8 Yes, increased consultation, and preparation readiness for biosecurity incursions should occur with non-government stakeholders. As per 2.6, many environmental and industry groups have established networks and employees with an existing knowledge base of the areas and various organisms, who would be in a prime position to help in an emergency.

4.11 Maintain a database of, and engage non-government stakeholders in awareness and preparedness well in advance of the outbreak, to increase efficiencies and chances of success at the critical time of the outbreak – a stitch in time saves nine.

6. 14-17, Training of non-government sector could be achieved with a well co-ordinated and funded program do to so. Funding could be mostly Federal and State Government but could potentially include industry levies for a matrix for threats that would affect relevant industries as well as the environment as agreed with industry groups.

6. 16 A State based weed risk assessment process/method could be modified for use on a national scale to develop a list of priority environmental pests and diseases. This list would be extensive however, and there may also be benefit in undertaking generic preparedness amongst stakeholders, government and the community for biosecurity threats from grouped categories of pests.

Is this submission confidential? No

Do you agree to be contacted about your submission? Yes