



# Priorities for Australia's biosecurity system

An independent review of the capacity of the national biosecurity system and its underpinning intergovernmental agreement

**RESPONSE FROM AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE MINISTERS**

NOVEMBER 2018





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# Foreword

As the Australian, state and territory government ministers responsible for biosecurity, we present our response to the 2017 report *Priorities for Australia's biosecurity system: an independent review of the capacity of the national biosecurity system and its underpinning intergovernmental agreement*.

Agriculture ministers commissioned this review in 2015 to fulfil the commitment within the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) for a review of the implementation and effectiveness of the IGAB and its schedules. The review also considered and provided recommendations on the capacity of key components of the national system to manage increasing biosecurity risk.

Australia is free of many pests and diseases that are common around the world. This status drives our reputation as a producer of clean and safe produce and provides a competitive advantage for Australian agricultural goods in the global market. Our world class biosecurity system and strict import requirements help maintain this status. They ensure the risk of pests and diseases entering, establishing and affecting our agricultural industries, environment and way of life are managed.

However, as the report acknowledges, managing biosecurity risks will become more challenging in the future. The forecast increase in volumes of passenger, shipping and containerised cargo arrivals in Australia of more than 70 per cent by 2025 will be a major part of this challenge.

Australian governments are committed to strengthening Australia's biosecurity system. The 42 recommendations of the report provide a road map to guide our efforts over the life of the next IGAB. Our response demonstrates our shared commitment to strengthening the national biosecurity system to ensure it is able to meet the challenges of today, and into the future.

We will achieve this by strengthening Australia's ability to test for and detect priority pests and diseases, enabling us to rapidly respond if they breach our pre-border and border defences.

New aquatic animal and exotic production weed deeds will complement our existing response arrangements. This will ensure appropriate cost-sharing and decision-making processes are in place and ready to support responses across all sectors.

Many of our greatest pest and disease threats pose a significant risk to our environment, as well as our production systems. For example, if *Xylella fastidiosa* (an exotic plant pathogen) reached our shores, this devastating disease would not only virtually wipe out our grape industry, at an estimated cost of \$7.9 billion over 50 years, but also potentially infect and kill plants from the Acacia genus, such as our native wattle species.

Despite all governments recognising the importance of environmental biosecurity, we acknowledge that biosecurity arrangements to date have too often focused on the production sectors. To enhance our capability to manage environment biosecurity, a Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer has been appointed. The officer will play an important national policy, engagement and leadership role and will be responsible for driving investment in environmental biosecurity capability and capacity. We also support the improved collaboration of our agriculture and environment agencies on national biosecurity policy through the development of formal arrangements in all jurisdictions.

When all governments, industries and Australians are aware of each other's roles and responsibilities, and we work collaboratively toward achieving a common goal, our national biosecurity system is stronger. To achieve this, we recognise the need to build public awareness of, and engagement with, biosecurity.

We will develop a biosecurity website to ensure travellers, importers, farmers, landholders and exporters have access to comprehensive biosecurity information. A National Biosecurity Statement will clearly articulate a national vision shared by government, industry and the community that outlines our place within the system.

As biosecurity risks evolve and increase, governments and industry will continue to face ongoing resourcing pressures. The review highlighted the need for a smarter system to manage expanding and increasingly complex international trade and tourism growth. Research and innovation is critical to this.

To ensure we continually drive biosecurity innovation we have set out a series of national biosecurity research, development and extension priorities. These priorities will give a more unified, strategic and nationally consistent focus to biosecurity research and support improved national biosecurity outcomes. We will build a secure national platform for sharing biosecurity data between government agencies and significantly advance our ability to identify passengers, imports and pathways most likely to expose Australia to exotic pests or disease.

We recognise that greater investment certainty is needed to strengthen the national biosecurity system and, without it, our progress will be limited. We support ensuring the national biosecurity system is resourced to maintain an appropriate level of protection in the face of increasing biosecurity risks.

We also recognise the need to better target and maintain investment in the system over time that maximises the return on investment to producers, industry and the broader community. However, as biosecurity is a shared responsibility, funding this investment is a role for all participants, including importers.

Biosecurity activities, such as traceability, contribute to maintaining our favourable pest and disease status and access to premium overseas markets. A stronger traceability system involving consistent property and product identification arrangements and rapid location of goods will help prevent and control a pest or disease outbreak.

As recommended by the review, we are revising the IGAB to capture a range of additional commitments to ensure robust national biosecurity arrangements into the future. This new agreement will remain an agreement between the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers. It is intended to be signed by the end of 2018.

Successful implementation of the review recommendations will require cooperation and contribution by governments, industries and other system participants. We are prepared to do our part and encourage all Australians to commit to doing their part, however small, to build a better national biosecurity system for the benefit of our agricultural and tourism industries, and the environment. In turn, the Australian public and tourists will continue to enjoy the benefits of our clean, biodiverse and largely pristine natural environment.

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## Agriculture ministers

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Minister	Portfolio	Jurisdiction
The Hon. David Littleproud MP	Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources	Australian Government
The Hon. Niall Blair MLC	Minister for Primary Industries	New South Wales
The Hon. Jaala Pulford MLC	Minister for Agriculture	Victoria
The Hon. Mark Furner MP	Minister for Agricultural Industry, Development and Fisheries	Queensland
The Hon. Alannah MacTiernan MLC	Minister for Regional Development; Food and Agriculture	Western Australia
The Hon. Timothy Whetstone MP	Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development	South Australia
The Hon. Guy Barnett MP	Minister for Primary Industries	Tasmania
Mick Gentleman MLA	Minister for the Environment and Heritage	Australian Capital Territory
The Hon. Kenneth Vowles MLC	Minister for Primary Industry and Resources	Northern Territory

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# Introduction

The Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB), which commenced in 2012, is an agreement between the Australian, state and territory governments (except Tasmania) to strengthen the national biosecurity system.

In 2015, Australian ministers for agriculture initiated a review of the national biosecurity system and the IGAB. The review panel, chaired by Dr Wendy Craik, received more than 60 submissions from government, industry, researchers and the community in response to the discussion paper.

On 26 July 2017, Dr Craik presented the final report, *Priorities for Australia's biosecurity system: an independent review of the capacity of the national biosecurity system and its underpinning intergovernmental agreement*, to the Agriculture Ministers' Forum. This report, which was also released to the public, made 42 recommendations for strengthening Australia's national biosecurity system. Agriculture ministers agreed to develop a national response to the report recommendations.

Australian governments are committed to strengthening Australia's biosecurity system. The report's findings have reiterated the need to act. Its recommendations have provided us with a clear road map to guide efforts. This response outlines Agriculture ministers' commitments. We agree, or agree in principle, to all of the report's 42 recommendations. Our response is structured in the priority themes identified by the review – engagement and communication with system participants, financial sustainability of the system, governance of the system, risk and capability, and government performance and accountability.

The review has also guided a revised intergovernmental agreement. It will be an agreement between the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers, intended to be signed by the end of 2018 and reviewed again within 5 years of signing.

Our response will be implemented within the timeframe of the revised IGAB (5 years) unless otherwise specified.

Agriculture ministers will look to the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC), industry, biosecurity stakeholders and the wider community to implement these activities and commitments.

# Response from Australian agriculture ministers

## Engagement and communication with system participants

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility. For the national biosecurity system to be effective, all Australians need to be aware of and acknowledge their role and responsibilities and those of other system participants. An important step to realising this is articulating agreed roles and responsibilities and developing partnerships with key system participants.

This can be achieved through improving biosecurity engagement and communication.

### Recommendation 1

IGAB2 should include a core commitment by jurisdictions to ongoing stakeholder communication and engagement, building on existing partnerships, with activities scrutinised as part of jurisdictional evaluations under Recommendation 22.

#### Agreed

Our biosecurity partnerships are essential to improving stakeholder awareness, engagement and collaboration across the biosecurity system. Ministers will ensure commitment to ongoing stakeholder communication and engagement will be included in the revised IGAB.

### Recommendation 2

The NBC and the Industry and Community Biosecurity Committee should, through an open, transparent and collaborative process, lead national consultation on a draft National Biosecurity Statement, such as that proposed by this review. The consultation process should involve all levels of government (including local government), industry and the community, with the statement finalised and launched within eighteen months of the IGAB review report.

#### Agreed

Ministers agreed in July 2017 to develop a National Biosecurity Statement. An independent working group, comprised of state government, industry and environmental stakeholders, is guiding this process. Consultation on the statement will continue throughout 2018 at state and territory biosecurity roundtables and environmental biosecurity roundtables, as well as Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Plant Health Australia (PHA) member forums. Public consultation concluded on 31 October 2018. Feedback will be consolidated, considered and incorporated where possible. The statement will be presented to stakeholders at the National Biosecurity Forum in November 2018.



### Recommendation 3

The Primary Industries Technical Market Access and Trade Development Task Group should enhance engagement with industry to ensure that Australia's market access strategies are aligned appropriately through an agreed priority-setting process and that the degree of transparency and communication is carefully weighed against its level of risk to trade activities.

#### Agreed

Ministers recognise that Australia's favourable pest and disease status provides a key competitive advantage for Australian agricultural goods in the global market and the biosecurity system plays a vital role in protecting this status. Biosecurity arrangements and key biosecurity activities, such as surveillance, support this access by providing evidence of freedom from pest and diseases to our trading partners.

Our governments, through the Primary Industries Technical Market Access and Trade Development sub-committee of Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC), have agreed to a set of prioritisation principles for trade and market access and will work together on a number of projects, including projects that align with our biosecurity priorities, to improve trade and market access outcomes.

This recommendation will be implemented alongside recommendation 4 (see [Financial sustainability of the system](#)).

### Recommendation 21

The NBC should increase its public profile and openness, including by establishing a standalone website, to be maintained by but be separate from the Australian Government agriculture department. The website should centralise all information on the NBC, its committees and their activities. Key policy frameworks, agreements and reports of the NBC should be made public on the site.

#### Agreed

Ministers have agreed that the Australian Government will lead the development of, and host, a national biosecurity website to support greater public awareness of and engagement with biosecurity. This website will be completed by 30 June 2019. The website will act as a central hub, linking government, industry and environmental biosecurity websites, providing information relating to the NBC and its committees, and establishing clear avenues to advice and information for reporting and managing biosecurity risks.

## **Recommendation 25**

Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC) should establish, as a priority, an Industry and Community Biosecurity Committee as a forum for the NBC to discuss key national biosecurity policies and reforms.

### **Agreed**

An Industry and Community Reference Group will be established by November 2018 as an important stakeholder forum to inform key national biosecurity policies and reforms. The group will be encouraged to raise emerging issues for further consideration by governments and will consider matters referred to it by the NBC.

## **Recommendation 26**

The full membership of the NBC should meet annually with AHA and PHA members to discuss key national biosecurity policies and reforms.

### **Agreed**

Ministers recognise the importance of continuing to build industry and government networks and relationships. AHA and PHA are already observers on NBC to encourage two-way information exchange. NBC members will, from 2018, attend the joint annual AHA and PHA members meetings.

## Financial sustainability of the system

The strength of Australia's biosecurity system is reliant on sustained levels of well-targeted investment, underpinned by strong funding principles and arrangements that are nationally coordinated, consistently applied and well communicated. Current funding pressures across the system need to be examined to guide development of a more sustainable funding base. Responsibility for funding of the system extends beyond governments and must be appropriately shared with system participants as well.

### Recommendation 4

AGSOC, in conjunction with the Primary Industries Technical Market Access and Trade Development Task Group, should review the total effort and costs associated with demonstrating area freedom by jurisdictions and the value of that trade. The review should establish whether public investment is aligned with IGAB investment principles and the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities (Recommendation 27).

#### Agreed

Ministers are committed to continuously reviewing the allocation of limited available resources to priority activities.

All jurisdictions have endorsed the IGAB investment principles and the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities and will use these to inform biosecurity investment priorities. Further consolidation of these issues will form a key part of responding to recommendation 27.

### Recommendation 27

The NBC and the Industry and Community Biosecurity Committee, in consultation with other key stakeholders, should review the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities to enable its practical application and make it public.

#### Agreed

Ministers have instructed the NBC, the Industry and Community Reference Group (recommendation 25), PHA and AHA to review the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities. The existing cost sharing framework will be made public as part of this review to ensure transparency and for public input. Once complete, the reviewed National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities will be published on the national biosecurity website (recommendation 21).

## Recommendation 28

The NBC, in collaboration with key industry and non-government partners, should agree uniform and fully inclusive categories of activity, including investment categories, for the national biosecurity system.

### Agreed

Ministers, through the NBC, have agreed to use the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA) 'Value of Australia's Biosecurity System' project to identify and agree on uniform and fully inclusive investment categories for the national biosecurity system.

This recommendation will be implemented alongside recommendation 15 (see [Government performance and accountability](#)).

## Recommendation 29

All governments should review their current biosecurity expenditure with a view to redirecting funding to areas that provide the greatest return on investment to producers, industry and the community. This approach will require a planned and coordinated strategy of engagement and communication.

### Agreed

Recognising that budget decisions are a matter for individual governments, each jurisdiction is committed to maximising return on investment to producers, industry, the environment and the community, consistent with agreed investment principles, including the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities (to be reviewed as part of recommendation 27).

## Recommendation 30

The Risk Return Resource Allocation model should be extended to include all jurisdictions and their investments, with the Australian Government providing technical assistance to jurisdictions to build national capacity.

### Agreed

The Risk Return Resource Allocation (RRRA) model assesses the cost and effectiveness of biosecurity controls designed to stop exotic pests, diseases and weeds from entering, establishing and spreading in Australia. In its current form it has limited application to the states and territories as the post border components are not highly developed. The Australian Government is continuing to develop the RRRA model's capability and utility and will work with jurisdictions, through the NBC, to make it an accessible and effective tool nationally. A number of state and territory governments are also working with CEBRA to develop decision support tools, which may also have national benefits.

Governments have agreed to work together to explore the possibilities and options presented by the RRRA for their individual needs and requirements. The NBC will host a risk return workshop before the end of 2018 to further explore building our national risk modelling capabilities.



### **Recommendation 31**

To provide greater system stability, Australian governments' appropriations funding for biosecurity should be maintained at 2016–17 levels (in real terms) or more until after completion of the next review of the IGAB.

#### **Agreed**

Ministers recognise the importance of adequately resourcing the national biosecurity system. Without investment certainty, progress in the improvement and maintenance of the national biosecurity system will be limited. Ministers' support ensuring the national biosecurity system is resourced to maintain an appropriate level of protection in the face of increasing biosecurity risks.

### **Recommendation 32**

State and territory governments should agree a common biosecurity cost-recovery framework and review their biosecurity cost-recovery arrangements to ensure they are nationally consistent, appropriate and transparent.

#### **Agreed**

All state and territory governments have developed their own cost recovery frameworks and arrangements that are appropriate for their needs and they will review these on a regular basis. State and territory governments have agreed to use the nationally consistent framework set out in the Productivity Commission report on cost recovery when considering cost-recovery arrangements.

### **Recommendation 33**

All levels of government could help meet their budgetary challenges by reviewing biosecurity levies and rates/charges currently or potentially applying to biosecurity system participants. These should be commensurate with agreed national cost-sharing principles.

#### **Agreed**

Ministers recognise the importance of adequately resourcing the national biosecurity system.

Australian governments have a number of existing levies and charges in place to help meet biosecurity funding challenges and ensure that system participants contribute appropriately. These arrangements are regularly reviewed.

Ministers agreed that this recommendation will be further considered following the completion of recommendation 27.

## Recommendation 34

Funding for the national biosecurity system should be increased by:

- implementing a per-container levy on incoming shipping containers of \$10 per twenty-foot equivalent unit and a levy of \$5 on incoming air containers, effective from 1 July 2019
- increasing the Passenger Movement Charge by \$5, effective from 1 July 2022, with the revenue generated hypothecated to the Australian Government agriculture department for use nationally to enhance activities across Australia's biosecurity system
- more widespread implementation by states and territories of land-based levies, with each jurisdiction to determine the magnitude of a levy based on its circumstances, but to include properties at least two hectares or greater.

The revenue raised by these mechanisms should be directed to those areas of the national biosecurity system that are currently most underfunded, with a priority for strengthening environmental biosecurity activities, national monitoring and surveillance activities, research and innovation (R&I) and national communication and awareness activities.

### Agreed in principle

Ministers recognise the importance of adequately resourcing the national biosecurity system.

As highlighted by the review, much of the material of concern to the national biosecurity system arrives via vessels and containers – either in the contents of the container, on the containers themselves or the vessel they travel on. The Australian Government, as part of the 2018–19 Budget, has announced the introduction of a Biosecurity Imports Levy on all incoming sea imports (with the exception of military equipment) from 1 July 2019. This levy is consistent with the recommendation.

As acknowledged by the review, the Australian Government has committed to not increasing the Passenger Movement Charge until 1 July 2022. While the review also recommended a charge on air containers, it is not practical or cost-effective to introduce an air container charge at this time.

State and territory governments have a number of levies and charges already in place, including some land-based levies where appropriate, to help meet biosecurity funding challenges and ensure that system participants contribute appropriately. Their arrangements are regularly considered for appropriateness and governments have agreed this will continue – consistent with the National Framework for Cost Sharing Biosecurity Activities.

### **Recommendation 35**

AHA and PHA should coordinate an industry stocktake of national biosecurity system investments and make the results public.

#### **Agreed**

Ministers agree that a stocktake, which captures industry investment alongside government investment, is important for understanding the overall picture of biosecurity investments. AHA and PHA have agreed to consider this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 36**

The Australian Government should enact legislation to put in place a universal emergency response levy, with its activation for any particular industry group to be at the discretion of the Minister for Agriculture. The legislation should provide the minister with discretion to set a positive levy rate to build an emergency response fund for an industry in advance of an incursion. The legislation should require that, for industries covered by an existing emergency response deed, the minister is to comply with the requirements of the relevant deed in making any decisions.

#### **Agreed in principle**

Existing emergency response levy arrangements currently cover 95 per cent of land-based industries (based on their gross value of production). The development of the aquatic animal disease and exotic production weed deeds will increase both the number of industries and the range of pests and diseases covered by such arrangements.

Membership of a response deed is voluntary, with non-member industries still able to gain some benefit from emergency response arrangements (such as maintaining markets). Ministers encourage all current non-member industries to sign up to a response deed so that they can play their part – and pay their share – to gain the broader benefits, as many industry parties already do.

As encouraged by the panel, the Australian Government has also agreed that further implementation of this recommendation may be considered as part of the ongoing program of work to improve levies processes. This includes implementing the Australian Government's response to the 2015 Senate inquiry into agricultural levies.

## Governance of the system

Strong governance arrangements within the national biosecurity system improves our capability and capacity as well as fostering collaboration. These arrangements take into account all sectors – plant, animal and environmental biosecurity – and will provide stakeholders with a voice and a role in further developing the system.

### Recommendation 7

Jurisdictions should institute formal arrangements between agriculture and environment agencies, including through memoranda of understanding, to define the objectives of cooperation, leading and support roles, information flows, resources and deliverables.

#### Agreed

Ministers recognise that cooperation between agriculture and environment agencies improves biosecurity outcomes for the national system. All jurisdictions have agreed to have formal arrangements in place within the timeframe of the new IGAB.

### Recommendation 9

The Australian Government should establish the senior, expert position of Chief Community and Environmental Biosecurity Officer within the environment department. A far less preferred alternative is to house the position in the agriculture department.

#### Agreed

Ministers recognise that environmental pests and diseases are a serious threat to Australia's ecosystems and way of life.

The Australian Government has agreed to establish an ongoing Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer within the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The officer will provide national environmental biosecurity policy leadership (similar to the Chief Veterinary Officer and Chief Plant Protection Officer), working closely with the Department of the Environment and Energy and the Threatened Species Commissioner. The officer will be supported by a dedicated office and oversee the delivery of an annual \$825,000 project fund to drive investment in environmental biosecurity capability and capacity.

Under the Administrative Arrangements Order, biosecurity is currently the responsibility of the Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio. The position will, therefore, be established within the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources rather than the Department of the Environment and Energy. This will ensure the officer is embedded within the national biosecurity system.



## Recommendation 10

The NBC should establish a new Community and Environmental Biosecurity Committee (CEBC) to support the role of the Chief Community and Environmental Biosecurity Officer. The CEBC should comprise government and external community and environmental biosecurity experts and representatives from both the animal and plant sectoral committees of the NBC. The role of the CEBC should be reviewed following its work to prioritise national biosecurity risks impacting on the environment and social amenity (Recommendation 11).

### Agreed in principle

The Environment and Invasives Committee (EIC) was established in February 2018. The EIC is responsible for providing national policy leadership on the identification, prevention and management of invasive plant, vertebrate and invertebrate species that adversely impact the environment, economy and community. The membership of EIC comprises relevant officials from agriculture and environment agencies from the Australian Government and all states and territories, with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS), PHA, AHA and Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) invited as observers. This new sectoral committee replaced the previous Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (IPAC) and brings a greater focus to environmental biosecurity issues. The EIC will have a sub-committee to specifically focus on environmental biosecurity stakeholder engagement.

## Recommendation 12

The Australian Government should assign lead responsibility for driving and coordinating implementation of the National Environment and Community Biosecurity RD&E Strategy 2016–19 to the Australian Government environment department.

### Agreed

Ministers have agreed that the EIC, of which the Department of the Environment and Energy is a member, will take policy responsibility for the National Environment and Community Biosecurity RD&E Strategy 2016–19.

The EIC has been tasked with identifying an appropriate entity to coordinate implementation of the strategy by the end of 2018.

## Recommendation 16

IGAB2 must remain an agreement between the First Ministers of Australian, state and territory governments.

### Agreed

Ministers have agreed that the revised IGAB will be an agreement between the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers.

## Recommendation 17

First Ministers should, within IGAB2, identify lead ministers and agencies for biosecurity (assumed to be agriculture or primary industries) and require supporting whole-of-government arrangements to be in place, including through memoranda of understanding.

### Agreed

Ministers have agreed to implement this recommendation. Memoranda of understanding are being addressed as part of recommendation 7.

## Recommendation 18

First Ministers should formally authorise the NBC and articulate its terms of reference in IGAB2.

### Agreed in principle

Ministers have agreed that the NBC terms of reference should be agreed by the Agricultural Ministers Forum (AGMIN), through AGSOC, rather than incorporated into the revised IGAB, to allow flexibility.

## Recommendation 19

The NBC should include the CEO of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).

### Agreed in principle

Ministers recognise local governments play an important role in biosecurity and are integral to successful consultation. As such, the ALGA will be invited to be an observer of the NBC.

## Recommendation 20

The NBC should adopt a sub-committee structure that aligns with the revised national biosecurity system objectives and revised national reform priorities in IGAB2. All NBC sectoral committees should have a clear and transparent division of responsibilities for pest and disease risk. All NBC working groups and expert groups should be task-specific and, wherever possible, time-limited.

### Agreed

Ministers have instructed the NBC to review and streamline its committee structure and arrangements by the end of 2018 to improve efficiency of decision-making and ensure all stakeholders are heard. This is already well underway, with the establishment of the EIC in response to recommendation 10 providing an opportunity to clarify the division of responsibilities for pest and disease risk across all sectoral committees.

## Risk and capability

The national biosecurity system provides a significant export market advantage which, through improved trade opportunities, benefits our national economy. This cannot be achieved unless the biosecurity system targets national priority risks and has the appropriate measures in place to manage a pest or disease if it breaches our border. Research and innovation is critical to this.

### Recommendation 5

IGAB2 should facilitate greater consideration by governments of market access priorities and outcomes within the national biosecurity system:

- Biosecurity surveillance activities should include pests and diseases and common pathways that pose the greatest threat to our export markets and tourism.
- IGAB2 should clarify the roles and responsibilities of the parties with regard to international and domestic market access, including proof of area freedom.

### Agreed

Ministers recognise that undertaking surveillance and proof of freedom activities are critical to protecting our favourable pest and disease status and our valuable tourism industry. Surveillance activities will be undertaken in a way to prioritise our highest risk pest and disease across pathways and sectors.

Ministers agree that clarification of roles and responsibilities with regard to international and domestic market access, including proof of area freedom is important. This will be reflected in the revised IGAB.

### Recommendation 6

Jurisdictions should develop a nationally consistent system for the allocation and use of property identification codes (PICs) across animal and major plant production sectors.

### Agreed

Ministers recognise that improving traceability systems is critical to avoid the establishment and spread of pests and diseases and demonstrating our pest and disease freedom.

Having a nationally consistent property identification system is critical for a strong traceability system. Ministers, to be progressed through the NBC, have agreed to develop harmonised, national PIC business rules by the end of 2019, and harmonised legislation by 2022.

## Recommendation 8

Jurisdictions should make clearer commitments to environmental biosecurity within IGAB2, including in relation to:

- a clear definition of environmental biosecurity such as that proposed by this review
- the principle of ecologically sustainable development
- acknowledgement of Australia's international responsibilities under the Convention on Biological Diversity
- a program of work to determine, plan and prepare for national priority pests and diseases impacting on the community, environment and native species
- a focus on environment and community as well as industry partnerships
- diseases transmitted to humans by invertebrates as well as vertebrates.

### Agreed

Environmental pests and diseases are a serious threat to Australia's ecosystems and way of life. Ministers agree that clearer commitments to environmental biosecurity will be included in the revised IGAB. In 2017, the NBC also endorsed the following definition of environmental biosecurity to support clear commitments:

*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 to Australia.*

Ministers do not agree to the inclusion of 'diseases transmitted to humans by invertebrates as well as vertebrates' within the revised IGAB as these are the responsibility of health ministers. We remain committed to working with our health colleagues on those plant, animal and environmental biosecurity matters that may also affect human health. To give effect to this, legislation and administrative arrangements are in place between agriculture and health agencies in all jurisdictions.

This recommendation will support implementation of recommendation 7.



## Recommendation 11

The NBC should adopt a systematic approach to determine and plan for national priority pests and diseases:

- Three national priority lists – one each for animal, plant and environmental pests and diseases – should be developed in partnership with system participants.
- The three national lists should be completed by 2020.
- Thereafter, the NBC should lead reviews of the national priority lists at least every five years, reporting to AGSOC and AGMIN.

### Agreed

Ministers agree that developing and maintaining national priority lists for our most threatening pests and diseases is critical to focusing national biosecurity investment and action.

A national list of priority plant pests was developed by the Australian Government in partnership with system participants in 2017. The national list of notifiable animal diseases, which is informed by our reporting obligations to the World Organisation for Animal Health (the OIE), is also maintained by the Australian Government. Ministers have agreed, through the NBC, that the Australian Government lead the development of a national priority list of environmental pests and diseases that are exotic to Australia by the end of 2019. Oversight of the development of this list is the responsibility of the EIC, with all jurisdictions and relevant experts actively involved in its development.

Ministers agree that the lists will be reviewed at least every five years. The national list of notifiable animal diseases is reviewed every two years. A review of the national list of priority plant pests is scheduled to commence in late 2018.

## Recommendation 13

The NBC should authorise and drive development of an agreed set of National Biosecurity R&I Priorities, in consultation with key biosecurity R&I system participants, to guide national R&I investment:

- The sectoral committees of the NBC should lead the development of sectoral and cross-sectoral level national priorities in line with the national priority exotic animal, plant and environmental risks and their pathways, once agreed.
- The NBC, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA) and ABARES should jointly develop system-level national biosecurity priorities (including for the environment) focusing on the policy and decision-making frameworks, tools, innovations and behavioural changes needed to build an effective national system.
- The NBC should determine the final integrated list of National Biosecurity R&I Priorities. The priorities should be developed within eighteen months of the IGAB review report, and should be reviewed at least every five years.

### Agreed

Ministers, through the NBC, endorsed the national biosecurity research, development and extension priorities in June 2017. These priorities include data and intelligence, surveillance and diagnostics, treatment and recovery, risk and decision tools and general surveillance. Each government is currently progressing the implementation of these priorities, including through a national level working group under the NBC.

## Recommendation 14

To accelerate national system innovation the Australian Government should:

- Establish a \$25 million National Biosecurity Innovation Program to enable strategic co-investment in the system-level and environmental national priorities developed under Recommendation 13. The program should be funded initially for a five-year period from 2018–19 through the funding mechanisms in Chapter 8 and be administered by the Australian Government agriculture department.
- Increase the funding appropriation to the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) by \$2 million annually for a new cross-sectoral biosecurity R&I coordination and investment function for the RDCs. Cross-sectoral investments should be in line with the national cross-sectoral priorities developed under Recommendation 13.
- Require RDCs to invest in and report against the new National Biosecurity R&I Priorities through additional provisions in each RDC statutory funding agreement. Cross-sectoral biosecurity R&I will be coordinated by the Rural Industries RDC.

### Agreed

Ministers recognise that biosecurity research and innovation is critical to building a stronger biosecurity system that can meet the challenges of a rapidly changing operating environment. This includes significant increases in the volumes of passengers, mail and cargo entering Australia.

The Australian Government has announced an ongoing Biosecurity Innovation Program, with \$25.2 million allocated for the next five years. The program will invest in accelerating the identification, development and implementation of innovative technologies and approaches that can enhance the capacity of the national biosecurity system to manage changing and increasing biosecurity risks.

The Australian Government also held the inaugural Biosecurity Innovation Exchange in March 2018. The exchange brought together governments, stakeholders and commercial innovators from Australia and New Zealand. Participants were encouraged to collaborate and share ideas about innovative technologies and approaches that can help us meet the emerging challenges for our biosecurity operating environment.

Since 2016, RDCs have also been guided by the four national rural research and development priorities – of which biosecurity is one – to focus their research, development and extension investment in areas of greatest need. The RDCs are required to report against these priorities as part of their annual report. Additional funding to AgriFutures (previously known as Rural Industries Research and Development Corporations) will be considered once work on how best to progress national cross sectoral priorities has been completed.

### **Recommendation 37**

The emergency response deeds for aquatic animals and exotic production weeds should be finalised within eighteen months of the IGAB review report.

#### **Agreed**

The development of response deeds for aquatic pests and diseases and exotic production weeds is being progressed.

The aquatic animal deed will be an agreement between industry and governments for cost-sharing responses to emergency aquatic animal disease outbreaks. Ministers agree to finalise this deed by the end of 2018.

The exotic production weed deed will establish agreed cost sharing and response processes for exotic incursions of weeds that affect agricultural production. This deed will be developed in consultation with the EIC. It is expected to be finalised by the end of 2019.

### **Recommendation 41**

The Australian Government should establish, within the agriculture department, a dedicated National Biosecurity Analytics and Intelligence Centre, to centralise, coordinate and provide advice to the NBC, AGSOC and AGMIN on biosecurity intelligence covering emerging risks and pathways and international and domestic pest and disease detections.

#### **Agreed**

Ministers recognise that data analytics is an essential tool for improving understanding of issues and patterns to enhance biosecurity activities and help mitigate biosecurity risks.

The Australian Government has announced funding of \$36.5 million over five years to support the development of a secure national biosecurity data platform and advance our ability to identify high-risk biosecurity pathways. This will be established within the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and will further support data sharing with states and territories.

### **Recommendation 42**

Jurisdictions should adopt the proposed new priority reform areas and associated work program for IGAB2 and amend the IGAB in line with the proposed revisions.

#### **Agreed**

Ministers will agree to priority reform areas and an associated work program for the revised IGAB. The priority reform areas will be publically released alongside the revised IGAB. Annual reporting against priority reform areas will also take place (recommendation 24).

# Government performance and accountability

Understanding and evaluating the performance of the national biosecurity system is a key part of meeting agreed goals and objectives. Public reporting of the system's performance is also critical to maintaining the support of the community. All governments recognise the importance of transparency and accountability with the public reporting of biosecurity investments contributing to a stronger system.

## Recommendation 15

The Australian Government should require public reporting of all Commonwealth-funded biosecurity R&I investments (sectoral, cross-sectoral and system-wide) in accordance with agreed categories of funding activity developed under Recommendation 28.

### Agreed

Ministers recognise the importance of transparency and accountability – public reporting of biosecurity investments is already undertaken at a jurisdictional level. Ministers, through the NBC, will work to consolidate existing reports for inclusion in a single annual report from 2018–19.

This recommendation will be progressed upon delivery of recommendation 28 (see [Financial stability of the system](#)).

## Recommendation 22 and 23

AGSOC should establish and oversee an independent IGAB Evaluation Program to assess and report on implementation of each jurisdiction's core commitments under IGAB2. Each evaluation, or a comprehensive summary, should be made public following ministerial consideration.

The NBC should define the 'core' or 'normal' commitments of jurisdictions under IGAB2 for use in the independent IGAB Evaluation Program

### Agreed

Ministers have agreed to include 'core' commitments in the revised IGAB. We have also agreed that NBC, through AGSOC, will provide AGMIN an annual report on these 'core' commitments over the lifetime of the revised IGAB. A full evaluation of 'core' commitments will also occur as part of the review of the revised IGAB in five years' time.

## Recommendation 24

The NBC should report annually to AGMIN on its progress against priority reform areas outlined in Chapter 10. The NBC's annual report should be made public upon ministerial consideration.

### Agreed

NBC, through AGSOC, will report annually to AGMIN on progress against activities to progress priority reform areas that have been identified in response to recommendation 10. AGMIN will also release an annual public statement outlining achievements over the past year in biosecurity and highlighting areas of the system that need to be improved.



### **Recommendation 38**

The Productivity Commission should, commencing in 2018, undertake a comparative Report of Government Biosecurity Services (ROGBS) on a five-yearly basis. The report should draw on the existing framework provided by the Report of Government Services (Emergency Management).

#### **Agreed**

Ministers have agreed that the NBC is to work with the Productivity Commission to determine the most feasible approach to achieve this outcome.

### **Recommendation 39**

Data and knowledge sharing should be a core commitment of jurisdictions under IGAB2. Minimum standards and specifications should be agreed for datasets.

#### **Agreed**

Easily accessible, comprehensive and reliable data is essential for anticipating, responding to and managing national biosecurity risks and for decision making. A stronger commitment to data and knowledge sharing has been included in the revised IGAB.

In 2017, NBC endorsed National Minimum Dataset Specifications for surveillance and emergency activity across each sector. AGSOC signed a national data sharing protocol in 2018 to facilitate data sharing between the Australian Government and state and territory biosecurity agencies.

### **Recommendation 40**

Within the period covered by IGAB2, the Australian Government agriculture department should lead the development of a common information architecture for the national biosecurity system (including data-sharing protocols, standards and authority protocols) for all jurisdictions to share and access biosecurity data and information in the national interest.

#### **Agreed**

Ministers recognise that easily accessible, comprehensive and reliable data is essential for anticipating, responding to and managing national biosecurity risks and for decisions making. A stronger commitment to data and knowledge sharing has therefore been included in the revised IGAB.

All governments, through the NBC, endorsed the National Minimum Dataset Specifications for surveillance and emergency activities and these are now being implemented. To facilitate the use of these standards the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is developing a metadata registry that will support access and review.

Our governments, through AGSOC, have signed a national data sharing protocol in 2018 to facilitate data sharing between the Australian Government and state and territory biosecurity agencies.

# Glossary

Term	Definition
ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
AGSOC	Agriculture Senior Officials Committee
AGMIN	Agricultural Ministers' Forum
AHA	Animal Health Australia
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
CISS	Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
CEBRA	Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis
CEBC	Community and Environmental Biosecurity Committee
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EIC	Environment and Invasives Committee
IGAB	Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity
IGAB2	revised Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity
IPAC	Invasive Plants and Animals Committee
NBC	National Biosecurity Committee
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PHA	Plant Health Australia
PICs	property identification codes
R&I	research and innovation
RDC	Research and Development Corporation
RRRA model	Risk Return Resource Allocation model
ROGBS	Report of Government Biosecurity Services
WHA	Wildlife Health Australia

