

Reference: CTS 4469/17

Dr Timothy Sutton  
NEBRA Five Year Review Secretariat  
nebrareview@agriculture.gov.au

Dear Dr Sutton

I refer to your call for submissions on the *National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) Five Year Review Discussion Paper*. I welcome the opportunity to make this submission.

I understand that feedback on the NEBRA was provided by Queensland Government officers who attended the roundtable session in February 2017. In addition to that feedback, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries would like to raise the following points.

The suitability of Queensland's climate and geography for the establishment and spread of many pests and diseases, its proximity to northern neighbours and extensive coastline ensures that Queensland will continue to be the front-line state for dealing with biosecurity threats for the foreseeable future.

Current major biosecurity responses in Queensland include: White Spot Disease in prawns; Red Imported Fire Ants; Panama Disease tropical race 4; Electric Ants; Four Tropical Weeds; Varroa Mite; Red Witchweed; Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus; and exotic fruit fly in the Torres Strait. Given the increasing competition for government and private sector budgets and the threats that biosecurity incursions pose to our economy, health, way of life and environment, transformational change is required across the national biosecurity system.

In relation to funding, Queensland has recently led several multi-million dollar emergency responses that have been hindered by slow decision making and delayed establishment of binding funding commitments by individual beneficiaries or risk creators. While all parties are benefiting, Queensland bears the financial risk. Queensland therefore argues that:

1. a policy principle be established in NEBRA that cost-sharing will apply to precautionary measures that must be undertaken while the risk assessment and technical feasibility of eradication is completed, to ensure that future eradication is not jeopardised

2. cost-sharing arrangements should include a default binding funding arrangement for when decisions cannot be quickly reached about the risk, technical feasibility and cost/benefit of an eradication program.

The Palaszczuk Government has committed over \$30 million to implement the transformational change recommended in the Queensland Biosecurity Capability Review (QBCR) to strengthen Queensland's biosecurity capability. A key response to implementing the QBCR findings is the development of a five-year Queensland Biosecurity Strategy and Action Plan (SAP). The SAP will set the strategic goals and direction for biosecurity in Queensland from 2017-2022 and it is being co-developed by the government, community groups and industry peak bodies.

As the frontline state for biosecurity, the Queensland Government considers that there are significant benefits in aligning the development of the SAP and QBCR initiatives with the draft report's findings and recommendations. Queensland's priorities for transforming the biosecurity system are:

1. collaborative governance and leadership, with a clear understanding of responsibilities, roles, obligations and rights, along with shared decision making across the system
2. fostering awareness, acceptance and motivation to act on biosecurity roles and responsibilities through tailored education and engagement programs around the everyday economic, environmental, community, health and lifestyle benefits that effective biosecurity delivers
3. building skills, support programs and tools for people to participate in biosecurity
4. innovation across all areas of the biosecurity system, including a national biosecurity research coordinating body and the development of priorities for research and development
5. valuing and building on our investments – developing sustainable funding models, improving coordination and leveraging of investment and fostering risk based investment decision making frameworks and practices
6. intelligence processes and systems to share information that reduces uncertainty and ambiguity to provide confidence in the accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency of biosecurity decisions.

Given the increasing number and complexity of biosecurity threats affecting the environment, Queensland supports strengthening the environmental biosecurity arrangements under IGAB. The structure of these changes requires further discussion.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please contact Dr Jim Thompson, Chief Biosecurity Officer of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on telephone 07 3087 8011 or email [jim.thompson@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:jim.thompson@daf.qld.gov.au) or alternatively you can contact my office on telephone 07 3719 7560.

Yours sincerely

**The Honourable Bill Byrne MP**  
**Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and**  
**Minister for Rural Economic Development**  
**Member for Rockhampton**