

# BIOSECURITY COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



## ANNUAL REPORT

2010 – 2011

Copies of this document are available in alternative formats upon request.

Comments on the Biosecurity Council of Western Australia Annual Report 2010 – 2011 can be provided to:

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## What is 'Biosecurity'?

The protection of our economy, environment and human health from the negative impacts of pests, weeds and diseases, including the management of established invasive species.

## What is the purpose of biosecurity?

To preserve and enhance our unique lifestyle, livelihoods and environment, and in so doing, help to:

- maintain market access
- maintain industry profitability (especially our primary industries)
- preserve our existing social amenity for the enjoyment of future generations
- preserve our environmental assets and services
- maintain our all-important food security.

## Why is biosecurity important?

The Western Australian community places a high value on the biodiversity of its unique terrestrial and aquatic environment, the vibrant economy and the high standard of human health and lifestyle. Western Australia has a reasonably successful history of managing pests, diseases and weeds that could potentially impact on its primary industries and natural environment. Although we have made good progress, there are still major gaps, particularly in relation to protecting the terrestrial, aquatic and built environments from biosecurity risks.

Increasingly, biosecurity threats pose significant short and long-term risks to biodiversity, ecosystem health, productivity and market access for primary industries, built infrastructure, public health and amenity. Pests and diseases, assisted by rapid global and regional spread as a result of expanding trade, travel and community diversification, are real risks to WA.

## What are the key biosecurity challenges faced by WA?

- Increased risks from exotic plant and animal pests and diseases as international and domestic trade continues to expand rapidly and the movement of people and commodities becomes quicker and easier.
- Maintaining market access by demonstrating freedom from pests and diseases.
- Growing concerns that 'sleeper' weeds and existing pests are establishing new levels of threat due to reduced resources for surveillance and control and a lack of sufficient containment action.
- The increasing incidence, both domestically and internationally, of new and re-emerging diseases.
- Increasing demand from domestic and international consumers for production systems that produce safe food while protecting the environment, coupled with increased recognition of the impact of exotic plant and animal pests and diseases.
- Establishment and spread of exotic pests and diseases that cause chronic decline in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem health and threatens to biodiversity.
- Increasing community awareness and expectations that Crown land managers meet benchmarks for pest and weed control similar to those demanded of private landowners, including 'good neighbour' responsibilities.



Hon Terry Redman MLA  
Minister for Agriculture and Food  
Level 11 East, Dumas House  
2 Havelock St  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Minister

Pursuant to s51 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* and on behalf of my fellow Members, it gives me great pleasure to deliver the fourth Annual Report of the Biosecurity Council of Western Australia (the Council) for your information and presentation to Parliament.

The Council continued its progress throughout the 2010/2011 reporting year, its third full year of operation. Although drawn from a very diverse range of backgrounds and fields of endeavour, the Members continued to develop a shared understanding of key concepts and a shared vision for the future management of biosecurity within the State.

The Council is particularly mindful of the management of biosecurity risks to ensure that Western Australia's economic, environmental and social values are enhanced by:

- preserving our access to existing markets and positioning us favourably to expand into new markets (via continued maintenance of our pest & disease free advantage, and our reduced reliance on potentially harmful chemical control methods);
- helping our food and fibre industries to remain globally competitive (through lower production costs as a result of avoided expenditure on the management of unwanted pests and diseases not yet present / established); and
- preserving our relatively pristine natural environment and our unique outdoor way of life (through the avoided establishment of a large number of non-native pest species);

Past interactions that Council Members had within their own networks and in the broader community have identified that the role of biosecurity is neither well understood nor appreciated. Council resolved to address this issue and have adopted five portfolio areas to improve feedback between Council and identified key stakeholders.

The Council was pleased to hear confirmation of the State's participation to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) and National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA). Council expects the Action Plans being developed by the State agencies to complement the Agreements will focus and coordinate effort, and clearly identify Western Australia's biosecurity priorities. The Council looks forward to providing advice on the content of the Action Plans during the coming year. The Council was also pleased to be involved in the development of the regulations for section 131 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*, and looks forward to the completion and implementation of the rest of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* provisions.

The Council believes that there is a need to further develop community understanding, with regard to the full spectrum of biosecurity issues that we face, and that a more holistic approach is necessary if Western Australia is to be adequately protected from the increasing levels of biosecurity risk that our State is confronted with on a daily basis.

The Council looks forward to the opportunity to play its part in bringing about this paradigm shift/cultural change, through the ongoing provision of sound advice, and a continuing constructive working relationship with all key stakeholders.

Chris Richardson  
Chairman, Biosecurity Council of Western Australia

November 2011





# 1. The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia

The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia (the Council) was established on 27 February 2008 as a specialist advisory group to the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Director General of the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA).

The establishment of the Council was a requirement under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*, with the inaugural members appointed in March 2008.

## 1.1 Terms of Reference

The principal role of the Biosecurity Council is to provide advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Director General of DAFWA on any matter related to biosecurity, whether referred to the Council by the Minister or Director General, or of its own motion.

Biosecurity matters on which the Council provides advice include:

1. Western Australia's biosecurity system.
2. Biosecurity policy, regulations and legislation, particularly:
  - Opportunities to improve Western Australia's surveillance, response and management of biosecurity threats.
  - Opportunities to improve awareness, support and participation in biosecurity activities.

The Council also provides advice on other biosecurity-related matters as requested by the Minister or DAFWA Director General. See Appendix A for the full terms of reference for the Biosecurity Council of WA.

The Council operates at a strategic level, with a long-term vision for biosecurity in WA that considers national and international treaties and obligations. The advice provided by the Council is based on sound scientific assessment of the risks posed by harmful organisms and balances the needs of industry, community and government.

## 1.2 Membership

Council membership includes the Chair and 11 ordinary members. Membership is drawn from among those experienced or actively involved in agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, pearling or related commercial activities, natural resource management, environmental protection and/or regional communities. Nominations are sought from industry, academia and community organisations, with appointments (for up to three years) made by the Minister.

Executive and administrative support for the Biosecurity Council's operation is provided by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.



## 2. 2010 – 2011 Council Members



**Chris Richardson (Biosecurity Council Chairperson)** was an Agriculture Protection Board member from 1998 and Chairman from 2002 until 2010. Chris' background is in mixed farming and agricultural contracting, and he served as a Local Government councillor for ten years.

Chris is the past Chairman of the WA Footrot Management Committee, the WA Ovine Johne's Disease Advisory Committee, the Bedstraw Consultative Committee and the Industry (Biosecurity) Funding Schemes Working Group. He was also closely involved with the development of the WA Rangelands Wild Dog Management Policy.

Chris is also an independent director of National Plant Biosecurity CRC Ltd, which is based in Canberra.



**Bob Pearce** is the Executive Director of the Forest Industries Federation of WA and President of the National Association of Forest Industries.

He was previously Minister for the Environment, Education, Transport, Planning, Parliamentary and Electoral Reform and Leader of the House in the Government of Western Australia.

Bob is Deputy Chairman of the Fremantle Port Authority Board, Deputy Chairman of the Freight and Logistics Council, and a Board Member of the CRC Forestry.



**Johann van der Merwe** is responsible for the Barrow Island Quarantine Management System for Chevron. This system has set new benchmarks in the management of biosecurity risks, particularly those associated with large resource projects in sensitive locations.

Johann was previously the Parks Director for South African National Parks. He managed biosecurity threats to the biodiversity of national parks, including management of highly contagious diseases (e.g. anthrax, bovine tuberculosis, foot and mouth) and a massive invasive species management program.

He is considered an international authority on conservation planning and development, protected area management, and associated sustainable regional development.





**John Edwards** is the Dean of the School of Veterinary and is Emeritus Professor at Murdoch University in Perth. He also works privately in the fields of biosecurity and public health in Australia, Asia and Africa. Professor Edwards is actively involved in research on trans-boundary animal diseases in Australia and Southeast Asia.

Previously, John was a veterinary epidemiologist with the WA Department of Agriculture and a Lecturer of Veterinary Epidemiology at Murdoch University. He was appointed Chief Veterinary Officer for Western Australia (1993 - 2001), followed by three years as the Regional Coordinator for the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Southeast Asia Foot and Mouth Disease Campaign.



**David Anderson** is currently Senior Logistics Officer for the Potato Marketing Corporation of WA. He is also a Board member of The Perth Market Authority.

He is the immediate past president of Vegetables WA (2004 - 2008), AUSVEG Ltd and was Vice Chairman of the Potato Growers Association of WA.

David is a former vegetable grower with more than 20 years experience in the fresh produce industry. He grew produce for both the domestic and international markets.



**Maxinne Sclanders** is a former senior public servant now working as a consultant. Her family has operated a small vineyard and winery in the Perth Hills for the last 20 years.

Maxinne is a member of the Mental Health Review Board, the Board of the Midland Information, Debt, Legal and Advisory Service and Fremantle Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee. She has a particular interest in finding ways to encourage urban populations to participate in the management of biosecurity risks.



**Lisa Christy** spent many years working with State Government agencies in roles relating to biosecurity and emergency response, including leading the emergency response to the European House Borer incursion from 2004 to 2006.

She has strong ties to the equine industry, having fulfilled Executive roles on State and Federal Equestrian Industry bodies and as a representative of the WA Horse Industry. Lisa is an Equine Industry Liaison Officer for Emergency Animal Disease Response and was a member of the WA Equine Influenza Industry Group (WAEIIG). Her role included developing Contingency Planning frameworks for development of Quarantine Action Plans, which were implemented across the WA industry.

Lisa is currently based in the Mining and Resources industry, and has previously spent time implementing Quarantine management for a major WA Project.



**Michelle Allen** was a member of the Agriculture Protection Board of Western Australia and chaired the State Wild Dog Management Advisory Committee.

She is experienced with policy and service delivery in the Northern Agricultural Region, and with natural resource management through the Sustainable Rural Development Program.

With her husband, son and his family, Michelle operates a broad-acre cropping enterprise in Northampton. She is actively involved with grain marketing and transport, and works closely with numerous local organisations in a governance capacity.

Michelle is a foundation member of the Northern AGri Group (Inc.), and works with local grower groups to build awareness of issues that affect regional economies.



**Ron Creagh** was a member of the Agriculture Protection Board of Western Australia until 2010 and Chairman of the GrainGuard Initiative. He is also a former Chairman of Plant Health Australia's Biosecurity Committee for the Western Region. In these roles, Ron has helped guide the development of biosecurity plans for the grains sector.

Ron owns and operates a broadacre cropping and livestock enterprise in the Shires of Nungarin and Trayning. He is a foundation member of the Ningham Focus Group, and a past President of the Nungarin Shire Council.

Ron is currently Chairman of the Eastern Districts Declared Species Group—a position he has held for the past 5 years. Ron was recently appointed to the Grain Industries Association of Western Australia's Wheat Council.



**Lesley Maher** has been the Managing Director of Era Farming for the past 10 years. Era Farming works with the University of Western Australia to take agricultural research into agricultural practice, and has programs for farmers who wish to be chemical free, use the soil as a carbon sink, and ensure that their crops are contaminant free and their farming style is sustainable. Era Farming has research relationships with Newcastle University (UK) and Cornell (USA).

Lesley was a member of the Minister's Sustainable Agricultural Committee for 2 years. Era Farming is a current recipient of an ARC grant to look at how soil biota can influence farming practice. Lesley has previously been a Member of the Senate of the University of Western Australia and a Member of the Strategic Planning Committee for the NHMRC.



**Dan Machin** is currently the Executive Officer of the State peak aquaculture industry body, the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia. He has over 20 years experience in aquaculture and seafood industry development, and has worked along the continuum of strategic roles from Public Company Director, Ministerial Advisory Committees and in senior and middle management positions both in business and in government. Dan has a BSc. (Zoology and Botany), Diploma in Business, and a MSc. in Aquaculture.

Dan has solid general knowledge of aquatic biosecurity arrangements within WA, developed through a long standing involvement with the Biosecurity Agriculture Management Bill Overarching Reference Group and West Australia Biosecurity Review, and his operational experience in biosecurity breaches in the seafood industry in WA and nationally.



**Rob Gillam** was a member of the Agriculture Protection Board and is currently President of the Pastoralist and Graziers Association.

Rob has a wealth of experience in both agricultural and pastoral enterprises. Rob's family business now operates from Dongara (cropping, wool, and sheep and cattle for domestic and live export markets). Until recently, he also ran a pastoral sheep station at Yalgoo involving wool production and live export markets.

Rob remains active in the biosecurity sphere, and is formerly a Local Government Councillor of many years standing and experience.



## 2.1 Summary of Member Terms

In February 2011 the terms of nine members were extended for a year, as the transition of Councils' role and the details of its future membership were being finalised.

Name	Position	Expiry of Current Term	Section of Act
Mr Chris RICHARDSON	Chairman	27 February 2012	48(1)
Prof John EDWARDS	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Mr Rob GILLAM	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Mr Dan MACHIN	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Ms Lesley MAHER	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Mr Bob PEARCE	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Ms Lisa CHRISTY	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Mr Ron CREAGH	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Ms Maxinne SCLANDERS	Member	27 February 2012	48(1)
Mrs Michelle ALLEN	Member	27 February 2013	48(1)
Mr David ANDERSON	Member	27 February 2013	48(1)
Mr Johann VAN DER MERWE	Member	27 February 2013	48(1)





### 3. Interaction with Government

As part of its role to advise the Minister and DAFWA Director General, the Biosecurity Council liaises with the Biosecurity Senior Officers Group (BSOG). The BSOG is comprised of senior executives from each of the four State Government agencies that have responsibility for various aspects of biosecurity—

- the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA);
- the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC);
- the Department of Fisheries (DoF); and
- the Forest Products Commission (FPC).

#### 3.1 Biosecurity Senior Officers Group

Senior Executives from each of the four State Departments involved in Western Australia's biosecurity provided regular reports to the Council throughout the 2010-2011 reporting year. The BSOG members that contributed to the Council's work in 2010-2011 included:

##### **John Ruprecht**

Executive Director, Agricultural Resource  
Risk Management  
Department of Agriculture and Food

##### **Gordon Wyre**

Director, Nature Conservation  
Department of Environment and  
Conservation

##### **Heather Brayford**

Director, Aquatic Management  
Department of Fisheries

##### **John McGrath** *(since moved on from the agency)*

Manager, Forest Science and Resources  
Forest Products Commission



## 4. Council Activities in 2010 – 2011

Since the establishment of the Biosecurity Council in 2008, the Council has worked with the BSOG on the development of a Strategic Framework to guide future biosecurity investment in WA.

During 2010-2011, Council was asked by Government to focus on the development of a Western Australian Biosecurity Policy to complement the earlier work on strategy development. The Council and BSOG worked with Dr Lisa Adams to develop this whole-of-state policy.

While Council were working on the future biosecurity policy, the State of Western Australia agreed to become party to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA). A condition of being a signatory to the IGAB was that, within 12 months of signing the agreement, Action Plans to make system improvements had to be developed to meet identified priority reform areas in the schedules to the IGAB. It was decided that developing and implementing these Action Plans would become the focus of Western Australia's planning for Biosecurity. The Biosecurity Council will provide advice on the content of the Action Plans developed by the State biosecurity agencies in response to the IGAB.

During the 2010-11 year, the Biosecurity Council held five ordinary meetings (9 August 2010, 18 October 2010, 13 December 2010, 22 February and 14 June 2011), a number of working group meetings and also conducted an internal review of Council operations and systems.

### 4.1 *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (BAM Act)*

In 2010, the Minister highlighted that finalising the remaining regulations under the BAM Act and subsequently proclaiming the Act would be a high priority. Council provided advice to the Minister and the Director General of DAFWA on the BAM Act Regulations Consultation, Communication and Engagement process. The Council also agreed to participate in a Regulatory Reference Group (RRG) for all remaining BAM Act regulations, and proceeded to set up working groups where members with their specific skill sets contribute and provide feedback on the draft regulations and legislative proposals. In 2010-2011, the Council delivered feedback on the section 131 regulations via its working group and will now participate in further regulatory reference groups, including the RRG for the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Declared Pest Account Rate Consultation) Regulations 2011*.

### 4.2 Council Portfolios

As a result of the Council's internal review, Council agreed that members would take on the responsibility of a portfolio area and:

- Liaise with other portfolio members to scope the portfolio;
- Document 'high-level' groups to interact with for each portfolio;
- Identify potential speakers (relating to each portfolio) to present at future Council meeting;
- Identify gaps within the portfolio, and request the BSOG to update on any work being done in these gap areas;
- Identify areas of the IGAB / NEBRA relevant to each portfolio; and
- Prepare portfolio reports for WABC meetings.



The following portfolios were established:

Portfolio	Council Member
International/National/State/Federal policy / legislation / agreements	L Christy, J Edwards, M Sclanders, B Pearce
Research and development, and emerging issues	J Edwards, L Maher, M Allen, J van der Merwe
Industry – agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, oil/gas/mining, forestry, market access	D Machin, L Christy, R Creagh, J van der Merwe, L Maher, M Allen, D Anderson, R Gillam, B Pearce
Social – recreation/environment/other	D Anderson, M Sclanders, L Christy
Special Interest – Recognised Biosecurity Groups / Declared Species Groups / Industry Funding Schemes	R Creagh, M Allen, R Gillam

### 4.3 Biosecurity Investment Decision-making

The Council agreed to develop advice to Government on decision-making in biosecurity investment, with some focus on the issue of public and private benefit. Council received briefings on both the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) and the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and outcomes from a State Government forum held on the issue. Council committed to finalising this advice in 2011-2012, with input from economic and policy points of view.

### 4.4 Communication Activities

The Agriculture Protection Board (APB) was abolished with the repeal of the *Agriculture Protection Board Act 1950* and amendments to the *Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act (ARRPA) 1976* on 18 December 2010. With the amendments in place, ARRPA is continuing to operate with the Minister, rather than the APB, making the necessary declarations of declared plants and animals. The Director General of DAFWA is responsible for the operational aspects of the control of declared plants and animals. This is in keeping with the legislative regime under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act).

The Council recognised that with the demise of the APB, some sectors of the agriculture industry would seek alternative avenues to communicate their biosecurity issues and receive information. The Council spent some time updating the *Biosecurity in WA* website ([www.biosecurity.wa.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.wa.gov.au)) including providing member contact details, posting Chairman's Notes from Council meetings and a Communiqué on the role of Council. Together with documenting the activities of the Industry Funding Schemes and the Recognised Biosecurity Groups, information on industry and community-based biosecurity is becoming more freely available.



## 5. Cost of Council Operation in 2010 – 2011

The direct costs of the Councils' operation during the 2010-2011 reporting year amounted to \$189,497 (Table 1). This total does not include executive, accounting, administrative and other general support that was provided throughout the year by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA. All activities of the Biosecurity Council were financed from within the 2010-2011 recurrent Consolidated Fund Appropriation made to the Department of Agriculture and Food.

Table 1. Biosecurity Council of Western Australia expenditure for 2010-2011.

Description	Total \$ (2010-11)
Travel expenses	6,580
Room hire	517
Catering	5,383
Printing	102
Conferences	450
Sitting fees	174,647
Consultant	1818
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>189,497</b>

Notes:

- (1) Data sourced from the accounting records of the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.
- (2) Costs of executive, accounting, administrative and other general support not included – funded elsewhere within the recurrent Consolidated Fund Appropriation of the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.





## 6. Activity Plan for 2011 – 2012

The Biosecurity Council has some work in progress and will continue to develop its advice on relevant issues. This work includes:

- Developing advice to Government on decision-making in biosecurity investment, with some focus on the issue of public and private benefit.
- Participating on the Regulatory Reference Groups for all remaining sets of BAM Act regulations and full proclamation of the BAM Act.
- Providing feedback and advice on the Action Plans being developed by the State as part of the IGAB.
- An investigation into the field of emergency and incident preparedness with a view to providing advice to government, if so warranted.

The portfolio approach instigated by Council will enable it to raise any emerging biosecurity issues with Government, and so these portfolio groups will continue to bring the outcomes of their deliberations and consultation to Council. It is anticipated that this will be complemented by reports from the BSOG on gaps in policy and strategic issues.

The Biosecurity Council will also be responding to Government, through the BSOG, and the Minister when Government requests advice on particular issues of strategic biosecurity policy. The Council will also recommend if it believes this advice should encompass other Ministerial portfolios.

As an outcome from its review process, Council has undertaken to review its actions and direction on a yearly basis.



## Appendix A: Terms of Reference

The functions of the Biosecurity Council are:

1. to provide advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Director General of DAFWA on any matter related to biosecurity, whether referred to the Council by the Minister or Director General, or of its own motion; and
2. if the Minister so approves, to advise any other Minister on any matter related to biosecurity.

Particular matters on which the Council are to provide advice include:

1. The requirements, generally, of a comprehensive and effective biosecurity system for the State of Western Australia, and necessary linkages to biosecurity systems established at the national and international levels.
2. Strategic biosecurity policy required for the effective operation of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*, including:
  - i any identified gaps in, or necessary improvements to, the biosecurity system implemented under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* and, in particular, in relation to the likelihood of incursions of high impact organisms and prohibited organisms;
  - ii opportunities to improve the management of declared pests within the State;
  - iii opportunities to enhance biosecurity surveillance and incursion response capabilities;
  - iv opportunities to improve industry and public awareness and support of, and participation in, the achievement of biosecurity objectives;
  - v opportunities to improve the capacity of regional communities and interest groups to contribute to effective biosecurity;
  - vi the operation of regulations and other subsidiary legislation under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* and any amendments to this legislation that are identified as necessary; and
  - vii identified opportunities to improve Government, community and primary producer cooperation and collaboration on biosecurity matters.
3. Any proposal to declare an organism to be a permitted organism, a prohibited organism or a declared pest on which the Minister decides to consult the Council under sections 12 and 21 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*; and
4. Any changes it may recommend to the matters set out in the Instrument of Appointment (for appointment of members to the Biosecurity Council).

In relation to the operation of the Council, the Council is expected to:

- a. Be strategic by adopting a long-term perspective for biosecurity in Western Australia and by giving appropriate consideration to national and international treaties and obligations.
- b. Anticipate and be prepared to identify and provide advice in response to changes in the operating environment.
- c. Advocate biosecurity measures that are based on sound scientific assessment of the risks posed by harmful organisms.



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- d. Maintain an awareness of industry, community and government opinion and needs, and an ability to balance the demands of different interests.
  - e. Be ethical by ensuring the highest standards of openness and accountability in its operations.
  - f. The Council may establish its own sub-committees to deal with any particular issue relevant to its function.