



**Biosecurity Council
of Western Australia**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014/2015**



November 2015

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Chair's report

Over the past 12 months or so, the Biosecurity Council has witnessed a shift in the dynamics of biosecurity delivery in Western Australia. Decreasing resources have prompted governments' resolute focus on its core business and a withdrawal of resources from what it has deemed as 'low priority' activities. Alongside this is a growing (if not, widespread) acceptance within industry and community of sharing responsibility and resourcing to maintain the biosecurity of our State.

The challenge lay in connecting the two situations, as a collaborative effort between industry, government and community will be critical in maintaining an effective State-wide biosecurity system into the future.

Biosecurity can be described as the safeguarding of resources from biological threats such as pests, weeds and disease. The economic, environmental and social value of effective biosecurity is significant. Our long history of quarantine practice, coupled with the State's geography, has provided West Australians with a relatively bio-secure State that is free from many of the pests, weeds and diseases found elsewhere in Australia. In order to maintain this status, joint effort is required—from activities to prevent biosecurity threats entering our State, through to actions to eradicate or contain the threats and protect key assets, as well as surveillance to monitor the situation.

The implication of government's focus on its core business for the biosecurity of WA remains to be seen; however, it will undoubtedly leave a void in the system. This void



Invasive plant and animal pests pose a risk to the WA economy, environment, social amenity and human health.



can be filled through increased industry and community leadership and action, but government will need to provide support, advice and engagement, and industry/community will need to step up to the challenge.

To support this transition to greater industry/community-led biosecurity action, the overarching (or underpinning) principles, frameworks, policies and agreements for biosecurity in Western Australia must be identified and developed. This will help ensure action occurs across the biosecurity continuum, and investments directed toward the areas that provide the best economic, environmental and social returns.

If our goal is to maintain the integrity of our biosecurity system during this period of change, there is no point investing the limited industry, government and community resources in low priority areas.

Delivering an effective biosecurity system for Western Australia is a complex task requiring a sustained and collaborative effort on the part of all stakeholders. The timing is right for genuine collaboration and cooperation between industry, government and community and, as we move into 2015/16, the Council look forward to providing robust advice to help government through this transition.

Michelle Allen
Chairperson
Biosecurity Council of Western Australia





1. The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia

1.1 Overview

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 (the Minister) and the Director General of the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA).

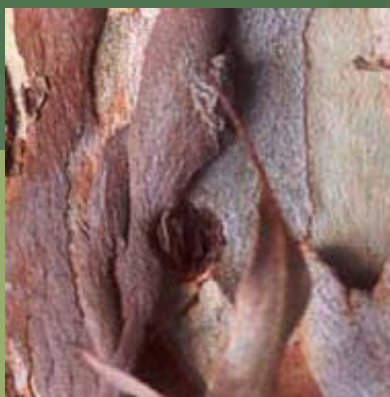
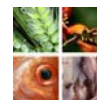
Establishing the Council is a requirement under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act), with inaugural members appointed in March 2008.

The principle role of the 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.

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 assessment, and balances the needs of industry, community and government.

Current membership consists of the Chair and six ordinary members. Membership is drawn from people who are 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 DAFWA.



1.2 Terms of reference

Biosecurity matters on which the Council provides advice include:

1. the requirements of a comprehensive and effective biosecurity system for the state of Western Australia, including the necessary linkages to national and international biosecurity systems
2. significant gaps in, or necessary improvements to, the biosecurity system
3. opportunities to improve industry and public awareness and support for biosecurity objectives; and
4. opportunities to improve government, community and industry cooperation and collaboration on biosecurity matters.

The Council also provides advice on other biosecurity-related matters as requested by the Minister or DAFWA Director General, or of its own motion.

See Appendix A for the Council's instrument of appointment.



1.3 Biosecurity Council membership

Alan Robson (Biosecurity Council Chairperson¹) is the former Vice Chancellor of The University of Western Australia (UWA) and is currently Emeritus Professor, School of Earth and Environment (UWA). Alan's background is in agricultural sciences, particularly in the areas of plant nutrition and soil fertility. Alan has been actively involved on many boards, including the CSIRO Board and the Premier's Science Council.

Michelle Allen (Deputy Chair / Chairperson²) has a farming and community background, and experience as a grain and livestock producer in the northern agricultural area of Western Australia. She has extensive experience working within community, industry and government organisations in the fields of biosecurity, natural resource management and grains research and development. Michelle has 15 years' experience with biosecurity policy and regulation in Western Australia, and served on the Agriculture Protection Board of WA for 11 years. During that time she chaired a Parliamentary Review of the Wild Dog Control Program of WA.

Kevin Goss (Deputy Chairperson³) is the former Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre Ltd. Kevin has worked in agricultural, natural resource management, policy and environmental fields with the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, DAFWA and the Department of Environment and Conservation. Currently, he is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow with UWA, and chairs the Research and Development Committee of the Western Australian Marine Science Institute.

David Jarvie is the General Manager Wellard Feeds Pty Ltd., Group Veterinarian and Transport Division Manager at Wellard Rural Exports. David joined the Wellard Group in 1990 after positions in veterinary practice in the Riverina and with Metro Meat Ltd. as on-board Veterinarian, Live-Export Manager and Manager at Geraldton Abattoir. From 1985-90, David was an AQIS Veterinary Officer based in Melbourne, supervising livestock exports. David has been a Director of LiveCorp since 2007, and is Chair of the Cattle Industry Funding Scheme Management Committee.

Barry Large runs an 8500ha family farm in the Miling area. The main focus of the farm is a 6000ha cropping program, which is complemented by a merino flock. As well as sitting on a number of national agricultural bodies, Barry is Chairman of the Grains, Seeds and Hay Industry Funding Scheme Management Committee, a grower representative on the Biosecurity GrainGuard, a Director of Grain Producers Australia and a Director of the Grains Industry Market Access Forum.



Simon McKirdy has a long history in the biosecurity/quarantine area. He is currently the Biosecurity Science and Risk Manager for Chevron Australia and Adjunct Professor at Murdoch University's Centre for Biosecurity and Food Security. Prior to these positions, Simon was the Chief Executive Officer of the Plant Biosecurity CRC, and has worked on various biosecurity-related committees including seven years with the Plant Biosecurity Quadrilateral Scientific Collaboration Working Group, which included representatives from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

Tina Thorne is the Executive Officer of the state peak aquaculture industry body, the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia. Prior to this position, Tina worked for the Department of Fisheries for more than 20 years with positions in the Regional Services Division, Aquaculture Program and Fish Health Section, and has broad experience in aquatic biosecurity policy, legislation, compliance and research. Tina has been appointed to various Ministerial Advisory Committees, including the Aquaculture Development Council and the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee.

Cliff Winfield⁴ is a third generation primary producer and a grower member of several horticulture groups. He held positions across the State in the Department of Agriculture and Food and Department of Parks and Wildlife predecessors, then moved to Manjimup to develop a vineyard and pulpwood plantation, and currently a citrus orchard. He has a long involvement in biosecurity management from local government, conservation agency and primary producer perspectives. Cliff is a keen advocate for community involvement and using interpretation to communicate science objectives. He is a Manjimup Shire Councillor, a board member of the South West Catchment Council, and a member of Warren Donnelly Water Advisory Committee.

¹ Chairperson until 27 February 2015

² Deputy Chairperson until 27 February 2015; Chairperson from 28 February 2015

³ Deputy Chairperson from 8 May 2015

⁴ Member from 9 March 2015



1.3.1 Appointments and member terms

The terms of four Council members, including the Chairperson, expired on 27 February 2015. The Minister reappointed three members for three year terms, and appointed a new member (Mr Cliff Winfield) to provide the Council with increased expertise around local government. With the retirement of the Chairperson, the Minister appointed Mrs Michelle Allen as Chairperson. The membership of the Biosecurity Council is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the terms of members of the Biosecurity Council of WA.

Name	Position	Expiry of term
E/Prof. Alan Robson	Chairperson	27 February 2015
Mrs Michelle Allen	Member/Chairperson	31 December 2016
Dr Simon McKirdy	Member	31 December 2016
Ms Tina Thorne	Member	31 December 2016
Mr Kevin Goss	Member	27 February 2018
Mr David Jarvie	Member	27 February 2018
Mr Barry Large	Member	27 February 2018
Mr Cliff Winfield	Member	27 February 2018



2. Council activities in 2014/15

2.1 Overview

Developing constructive biosecurity advice to government requires a comprehensive understanding of the needs and challenges of industry, government and community, and the potential impacts of changes to the Western Australian biosecurity system on these groups as well as on the biosecurity of the State. Throughout 2014/15, the Council continued its commitment to engaging the key stakeholders so as to develop robust advice for government that is underpinned by a strong consultative process. The key areas of advice that were progressed during the year were:

- Biosecurity roles and responsibilities;
- Biosecurity investment decision-making;
- Mechanisms for funding biosecurity;
- The declaration of weeds and vertebrate pests; and
- The biosecurity of the Pilbara region.

In addition, the Council kept a watching brief on the biosecurity-related developments at the national and state levels, including Western Australia's preparedness for biosecurity emergency response and cross-agency collaboration.

This section of the report documents the activities undertaken by the Council. The Council's position and recommendations resulting from the activities are detailed in the appendices, and government progress on the recommendations is discussed in section 3.



An effective biosecurity system requires a sustained and collaborative effort from everyone.



2.2 Stakeholder consultation

2.2.1 Roles and responsibilities

A decline in government resources for biosecurity has set in motion a strict process to target the limited resources toward activities that are core government business; however, the implications of this shift on the biosecurity of Western Australia needs to be explored and addressed. Of particular importance is the assumption that industry and the community will 'step up' to drive biosecurity actions that will provide benefits at the industry/community level. As such, the Council have actively engaged with key stakeholders to develop a clear picture of stakeholder perceptions on the delivery of biosecurity activity within Western Australia and how industry, government and community fit within this system.

The Council's stakeholder engagement work began in April-May 2014, where formal discussions were held with nine key stakeholder groups (34 individuals) to elicit perceptions about biosecurity roles and responsibilities, and the principles that underpin these. From this, an online questionnaire was developed to quantify the significant themes, issues and ideas. The survey was conducted in June/July 2014, with a total of 290 responses received across industry, government, community and research sectors. The results of the stakeholder engagement were released in December 2014 and can be found on the [Council's webpage](#).



Biosecurity is important for a productive and competitive agricultural sector.



The process used by the Council was collaborative—key stakeholders were actively sought to input to the engagement process, the ensuing report and the advice presented to government.

The key findings and recommendations from this work are included at Appendix B.

2.2.2 Biosecurity investment decision-making

A clearer understanding of the activities and resources being applied to biosecurity by government, industry and community is necessary to enable assessments of the strength of our biosecurity system into the future. This includes understanding how investment decisions are made and, therefore, how resources are allocated. Following the Roles and Responsibilities consultation (see section 2.2.1), the Biosecurity Council proposed to gather more precise knowledge about the current levels of resourcing and how shared resourcing might evolve.

From early 2015, the Council planned and coordinated a stakeholder workshop to further explore risk-based decision-making and investment in biosecurity from industry, government and community perspectives. The key anticipated outcome from this work was for a new understanding on how industry, government and community sectors can cooperate in biosecurity decision-making and joint effort. The workshop was held on 10 July 2015 and involved a total of 49 stakeholders from across industry, government and community (including the Council).

As part of the preparation for the workshop, the Council commissioned a short video explaining the ‘generalised invasion curve’ and how it can be used to assist in decision-making, with reference to the Western Australian situation. Production of the video was completed by 30 June 2015, and the video was released in the 2015/16 financial year. It is anticipated that the video will be a useful tool to engage industry and community in targeted biosecurity action. The video can be accessed from the [DAFWA YouTube channel](#).



2.3 Mechanisms for funding biosecurity

To complement the stakeholder consultation (see section 2.2), and prompted by the transition to greater industry/community-lead biosecurity action, the Council began investigating the various legislated mechanisms for funding biosecurity action:

- Declared pest rate, administered via Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs) under the BAM Act
- Industry Funding Schemes (IFSs) established under the BAM Act
- Fee-for-service via producer committees established under the *Agricultural Produce Commission Act 1988* (APC Act).

The Council's deliberations have focused on the current use of these mechanisms, the benefits and issues, and their potential to support industry/community-lead biosecurity action into the future. Council activities have included formal briefings and discussions with IFS and APC representatives and government staff, as well as gathering information via the Council's stakeholder consultation activities. In addition, Council participated on the Steering Committee for a community-coordinated approach to biosecurity in the south-west land division; and provided a formal submission to the Minister for Agriculture and Food supporting the continuation of the IFSs beyond 30 June 2015.

The Council will continue to work in this area during 2015/16, expanding their exploration to include all institutional arrangements across the breadth of the invasion curve. This work will be one of the underpinnings of a Council position on 'who does what, how they prioritise, who should pay (and why/how)', with such a position focused on continuing to deliver a functioning and effective biosecurity system for Western Australia.

2.4 Declaration of weeds and vertebrate pests

During 2014/15, the Council finalised and delivered its advice to government on the declaration of weeds and vertebrate animals under section 22(2) of the BAM Act. Under the legislation, landholders are responsible for managing all declared pests occurring on their land—but with more than 150 weed and vertebrate species declared under section 22(2), the ability of government to ensure compliance with the legislation is limited. It was this issue that prompted the request for advice.



The Council's consideration of the issues was informed by consultation with the DAFWA (particularly staff involved in the declaration process and the Invasive Species program) and, as noted in the 2013/14 Council annual report, focused on three key areas:

- The validity of the organism declaration process
- Management of the list of declared weeds and vertebrates, including potential implications of changing the declaration status of organisms
- Options to address the issues around monitoring compliance with the legislation.

The key findings and recommendations from this work are included at Appendix C, and build upon the relevant findings and recommendations from the Western Australian Auditor General's report 'Managing the impact of plant and animal pests: a state-wide challenge' that was released in December 2013.

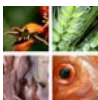
2.5 Biosecurity of the Pilbara region

In December 2014, the Council received approval from the Minister for Agriculture and Food to provide the Minister for Environment with the Council's response to advice prepared by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). The EPA advice, presented in a report titled 'Cumulative environmental impacts of development in the Pilbara region', centred on actions to help protect the biodiversity values of the Pilbara region. Along with habitat loss, invasive species are a key driver of biodiversity loss globally. As such, biosecurity is a critical component of any action taken to protect the State's biodiversity. Following the Council's response, the Council Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson held a successful meeting with the EPA Chairperson and a senior staff member from the Office of the EPA to discuss the Council's response and linkages between the work of the Council and the EPA.

The Council's response to the EPA advice is provided in Appendix D, and the Council will continue to monitor developments in this area during 2015/16.



Exotic bird species can escape from aviaries to become social and/or environmental pests.



2.6 Meetings

During the 2014/15 year, the Biosecurity Council formally convened four times (August, November, February and May) and held one teleconference (June). Formal invitations to attend meetings were provided to the office of the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Director General of DAFWA. Table 2 documents Council members' attendance at meetings.

Table 2. Biosecurity Council member attendance at meetings.

Name	No. meetings attended	No. teleconferences attended
E/Prof. Alan Robson	3	0
Mrs Michelle Allen	4	1
Mr Kevin Goss	4	1
Mr David Jarvie	4	1
Mr Barry Large	4	1
Dr Simon McKirdy	4	1
Ms Tina Thorne	4	0
Mr Cliff Winfield	1	1

Note: C Winfield appointed to Council on 9 March 2015; A Robson retired from Council on 27 February 2015.



As per the Council's Instrument of Appointment (Appendix A), the Council should be aware of changing industry, community and environment needs, and of options for balancing the demands of different industries. Furthermore, the Council should adopt a long-term perspective for biosecurity in WA, and give appropriate consideration to national and international treaties and obligations. To assist, Council meeting agendas include presentations that address key biosecurity activities and issues. Many of these presentations are open to agency staff members to support an environment of knowledge-sharing. Table 3 lists the presentations made to the Council during 2014/15. In addition, the Chairperson of the cross-agency Biosecurity Senior Officers Group (or a representative) provided an update on current biosecurity activities, advances and issues from both national and state perspectives at each meeting.

Table 3. Presentations to the Biosecurity Council during 2014/15.

Date	Title	Name	Organisation
14 August 2014	Office of the Inspector General of Biosecurity	Mike Bond	Department of Agriculture
14 August 2014	Boosting our Biosecurity Defences R4R project	John Ruprecht	DAFWA
7 November 2014	Biosecurity legislation forum	Kris Duthie Deb Langford	Department of Agriculture
7 November 2014	Recognised Biosecurity Groups—update	Viv Read	DAFWA
7 November 2014	WA Invasive Species Management Plan	Viv Read	DAFWA
23 February 2015	Industry Funding Schemes—update	Rebecca Heath	DAFWA
8 May 2015	Agricultural Produce Commission (APC)	William Ryan Ingrid Smith	APC
8 May 2015	Review of the s22(2) declared pests	Jon Dodd	DAFWA



2.7 Other activities

2.7.1 Boosting our Biosecurity Defences

'Boosting our Biosecurity Defences' (BBD) is a \$20 million Royalties for Regions funded project under the Seizing the Opportunities in Agriculture initiative. The BBD project incorporates 11 subprojects, and will build significant capacity within the agricultural sector, and within government, to better manage the biosecurity risks to WA's economy and rural community.

The Biosecurity Council is the external Reference Group for the project, providing an external point of reference and advice for the planning and conduct of the project. The Reference Group held two meetings during 2014/15, chaired by the project manager (Dr Debra Cousins, DAFWA).

2.7.2 Research and Development Fund

One of the subprojects of the BBD project is the \$3.5 million Biosecurity Research and Development (R&D) Fund. The aim of the R&D Fund is to support the development of innovative solutions to better manage agricultural biosecurity risks. During 2014/15, four members of the Biosecurity Council participated on the panel that considered the funding applications and made recommendations on projects for R&D investment.

DAFWA accepted the recommendations made by the panel, resulting in \$2.5 million dollars being awarded across seven research projects. The projects covered a range of biosecurity areas and priorities to provide a balanced investment portfolio.

Approximately \$700 000 was remaining, and the Biosecurity Council recommended that this be used for a second round of applications targeting particular R&D gaps. During 2015/16, the Council will once again participate as the panel for the second round of funding, which is targeting R&D aimed at preventing and/or eradicating biosecurity pests and diseases that are a threat to the WA grains industry.



Invasive plant and animal pests can have devastating effects on our natural environment and biodiversity.



2.7.3 Interactions with government

Biosecurity Senior Officers Group

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 the state government agencies that have biosecurity responsibilities:

- the Department of Agriculture and Food (Chair)
- the Department of Parks and Wildlife
- the Department of Fisheries
- the Forest Products Commission
- the Department of the Premier and Cabinet; and
- the Department of Defence (Commonwealth).

Throughout 2014/15, the Council continued to keep the BSOG informed of their work. Similarly, the BSOG have actively participated at each ordinary Council meeting to provide the Council with updates on the key issues and biosecurity activities at both the state and national levels.

Meetings

The Council resolved to meet regularly with the Minister and Director General of DAFWA to ensure they are kept updated on the progress of the Council's work. During 2014/15, the Council Chair and Deputy Chair met twice with the Minister and three-times with the Director General. In addition, an introductory meeting was held with the new Chairperson of the BSOG (Kevin Chennell, Executive Director, Biosecurity and Regulation, DAFWA) to provide an overview of the Council and discuss the Council's interactions with DAFWA and the BSOG.

Council was also invited to provide an overview of their work to the biosecurity-related branch of the Department of Fisheries. Following from this, the Deputy Chair was invited to participate on the panel assessing the nominations for the 2015 Excellence in Marine Biosecurity Awards.



Comment on government legislation, policy and strategies

The Biosecurity Council provided feedback on various pieces of government work, or participated in government-coordinated consultation, during 2014/15 including:

- consultation workshop for examining Australia's Import Risk Assessment process, 6 August 2014
- the national Marine Pest Biosecurity Workshop, 17 April 2015
- comment on the Invasive Species Plan for Western Australia 2015-2019
- input to the Western Australia State Biosecurity Strategy
- comment on the review of the declared pests of Western Australia
- submission on the benefits of the IFSS/continuation of the schemes.

2.7.4 Communications

Over the course of the year, the Biosecurity Council were invited to present at and/or participate in various events. The Council used the opportunities to highlight the role of the Council, the work being undertaken and, where appropriate, their recommendations on key issues. During 2014/15, these events included:

- Participation in the WA Marine Biosecurity Workshop, 15 August 2014
- Presentation at the Market Access Biosecurity Forum (Grains Industry Association of WA), 21 July 2014
- Presentation at a community biosecurity workshop in Merredin (Wheatbelt NRM), 8 October 2014
- Invitation to attend the Biosecurity Legislation Update Forum (Commonwealth Department of Agriculture), 24 October 2014
- Invitation to participate in a discussion on hazard analysis for invasive species (DAFWA/Invasive Animals CRC), 2 December 2014
- Invitation to attend the 2015 Biosecurity Roundtable (Commonwealth Department of Agriculture), 5 March 2015
- Presentation at the Feral Animal Forum (Chittering Landcare), 31 March 2015.

Up-to-date information about the Biosecurity Council continues to be freely available on the [Biosecurity Council's webpages](#) on the DAFWA website.



3. Progress on Council recommendations to government

3.1 Biosecurity roles and responsibilities

See Appendix B

Clear roles and responsibilities will guide biosecurity investment decisions and enable coordinated government, industry and community investment across the various components of the WA biosecurity system. As such, stakeholders must have a common understanding of roles and responsibilities. Through the Council's engagement process, stakeholder perceptions of roles and responsibilities were identified and collated into statements of what is believed to be the broad roles and responsibilities of industry, government and community. It was recommended that these be incorporated into the Western Australian State Biosecurity Strategy.

Progress: The broad roles and responsibilities, as identified by the Council, are being incorporated into the Strategy by DAFWA in consultation with the BSOG. It is being decided whether the description will be included in its entirety or as a summary.

The stakeholder engagement also identified six areas as integral to a robust biosecurity system. It was recommended that these be incorporated into the Western Australian State Biosecurity Strategy:

- Collaboration, cooperation and communication with key organisations or individuals with a strong stake in the issue.
- Broad engagement, education and awareness-raising with citizens in general.
- Prioritisation using justifiable risk management and science-based processes to provide the greatest return on investment (not just economic returns).
- Robust legislation to support the WA biosecurity system; and enforce the legislation to ensure the integrity of the system is maintained.
- Adequate level of preparedness to ensure Western Australia is always ready to tackle biosecurity threats (horizon-scanning and capacity).
- Research, innovation and continuous improvement to enable a flexible biosecurity system that can adjust to changing circumstances.

Progress: DAFWA, in consultation with the BSOG, has included these areas in the Strategy, but not all are listed as headline areas. The current thinking (and writing) is focused on making the six areas, plus a seventh (mechanisms to manage established pests and diseases), 'goals' in the Strategy.



3.2 Declaration of weeds and vertebrate pests

The declaration of organisms under the BAM Act is an integral part of Western Australia's biosecurity system. It is the responsibility of the owner/person in control of the land to ensure all 'declared pests' are managed as per the prescribed control measures. The ability of government agencies to extensively monitor landowner compliance with the declared pest legislation has not been rigorously evaluated; however, the Western Australian Auditor General's audit of the management of plant and animal pests noted 'there is limited monitoring and almost no enforcement of landowner responsibilities to control established pests'.

It is Council's view that the limited government biosecurity resources should be targeted toward areas that provide the most effective use of public funds (e.g. prevention and early intervention), and that it is not an effective use of government resources to ensure landholders are adequately managing low priority declared pests. As such, Council recommended that:

- The declaration status and categorisation of declared pests be reviewed at least every five years, and changes made to the statuses/categorisations as required. The review process must be robust and enduring, and understood by key stakeholders.
- A process and criteria be developed in partnership with industry and community, and used to identify low priority⁵ declared pests.
- Low priority⁵ declared pests are 're-declared' as permitted organisms under section 11 of the BAM Act, unless external resources are available for compliance and enforcement activities.

Progress: DAFWA's Invasive Species program is reviewing the declaration status and categorisation of the current declared weeds and vertebrate animals using a science-based assessment as the first step, followed by stakeholder consultation. The process was developed in consultation with key stakeholders. A stakeholder reference group provides comment on the results of the science-based assessment and recommendations regarding changes to the declaration status/categorisation. The process identifies 'low priorities' as those which no longer meet the criteria for declaration; and it is proposed that these will only remain 'declared' if external resources are allocated. DAFWA is expected to complete this work by 30 June 2016.

⁵ In terms of government investment



3.3 Emergency response preparedness and cross-agency collaboration (2013)

Western Australia is obligated under national arrangements to maintain adequate capacity to undertake a sustained response to a major biosecurity outbreak. Furthermore, collaboration across State government portfolios is necessary in many biosecurity-related situations, including emergency response.

The Council noted that the informal nature of the communication/cooperation between State government biosecurity agencies can (and has) lead to situations where biosecurity activity is stalled owing to differing priorities of different agencies. As such, it was the Council's recommendation that mechanisms for cross-agency collaboration on biosecurity are established and formalised.

Progress: The BSOG are developing a memorandum of understanding between the BSOG agencies. This outlines the agency responsibilities in biosecurity, including how issues will be resolved and information/data/resource sharing.

The Council's investigations identified a high level of operational risk for biosecurity emergency response. It was the Council's recommendation that this was best addressed via collaborative, outcomes-based planning at the State level, particularly around a State-wide biosecurity strategy; interagency biosecurity threats; and biosecurity emergency response capability.

Progress: A State biosecurity strategy has been drafted by DAFWA (in conjunction with the BSOG) and sent out for public consultation. This is anticipated to be finalised in early 2016. The Invasive Species Plan for WA (2015-2019) was published in February 2015. The plan outlines WA's approach to managing existing and potential invasive species, and was prepared within government to provide cross-agency leadership through its strategies and actions. There has been significant improvement in the area of emergency response capability—DAFWA has a BBD project dedicated to improving emergency response capacity through eight initiatives (e.g. training, data systems, industry liaison training etc.); significant progress in logistics procedures, the implementation of emergency resource management and communications tool and the development of internal response plans.



Western Australia has an excellent record of industry participation in biosecurity. However, the Council believed industry could play a greater role in biosecurity response and preparedness. It was the Council's recommendation that government investigate ways to build industry's biosecurity capacity and leadership.

Progress: This is an area that is being developed by government. The IFS management committees have now been in place for five years, and are facilitating industry leadership in biosecurity. Similarly, the APC committees are becoming more engaged in biosecurity. There has been some work in this area via the BBD 'Industry liaison training' activities (Livestock biosecurity initiative); and the use of industry during biosecurity emergency response is a key principle that has been included within the Emergency Management training.



The Carabid ground beetle (*Calosoma schayeri*) is a native primary predator of crop pests.



4. Cost of Council operation in 2014/15

The direct costs of the Councils' operation during the 2014/15 reporting year amounted to \$162 213 (Table 4). This total does not include executive, accounting, administrative and other general support that was provided throughout the year by DAFWA.

Table 4. Biosecurity Council of Western Australia expenditure for 2014/15.

Description	Total \$
Sitting Fees	112 378
Travel expenses	24 688
Meeting/workshop expenses	20 143
Invasion curve animation	4 068
Consumables / incidentals	936
TOTAL	162 213

Notes:

- (1) Data sourced from the accounting records of DAFWA.
- (2) Costs of executive, accounting, administrative and other general support are not included.



5. Direction for 2015/16

From a whole-of-system perspective, there is reasonably widespread acceptance of biosecurity as a shared responsibility. However, this needs to be translated into coordinated and cooperative action to address biosecurity priorities across the breadth of the invasion curve, with a clearer sense of direction than at present.

The resourcing position of government is clear—there are fewer resources, which has set in motion a strict process to target the limited resources toward activities that are core government business. Although joint effort in biosecurity has been gaining traction over the years, the current resourcing position of government has provided a strong incentive to settle conflict around biosecurity responsibilities and direction—with the key objective being to maintain a functioning and effective biosecurity system for Western Australia.

The Biosecurity Council will continue its work in the area of ‘shared biosecurity responsibilities and resourcing’ into 2015/16, with the goal of developing a well-informed Council position on ‘who does what, how they prioritise, who should pay (and why/how)’. Although this area of work will be informed by a formal request for advice from government, the Council anticipate:

- exploring the institutional arrangements for biosecurity
- identifying prioritisation and risk-based decision-making principles and process
- framing a Council position on industry, government and community responsibilities and resourcing for biosecurity.

The work will build on the Council’s past research, and will be underpinned by a ‘snapshot’ of the current status of Western Australia’s biosecurity system. The Council aim to develop this snapshot, including significant gaps and/or necessary improvements to the system, in early 2016.

The Council will also continue to monitor the implementation of the BAM Act, and its subsidiary legislation, as the legislated foundation for the State’s biosecurity system. This includes the progress of RBGs and IFSs as mechanisms for biosecurity delivery and/or funding. In addition, the Council will maintain a watching brief on the transition to



the new Commonwealth biosecurity legislation and the implementation of national biosecurity agreements.

Western Australia's preparedness for biosecurity threats and opportunities for collaboration across State government portfolios remain important areas in which the Council will observe.

The Council will continue to work closely with DAFWA on the Royalties for Regions funded Boosting Biosecurity Defences (BBD) project. The Council, as the BBD Reference Group, will provide an external point of reference and advice for the conduct of the project. It will also act as the panel to assess applications for the second round of biosecurity research and development investment via the BBD Research and Development Fund.

During 2015/16, the Council look forward to holding its quarterly meetings at different locations. It is anticipated that this will support stronger relationships between the Council and the various organisations involved across the biosecurity spectrum—agriculture, fisheries, environment and forestry.



Biosecurity protects our aquatic environment from invasive pests and diseases.



Appendix A — Copy of instrument of appointment

BIOSECURITY AND AGRICULTURE MANAGEMENT ACT 2007 INSTRUMENT ESTABLISHING AND APPOINTING MEMBERS OF THE BIOSECURITY COUNCIL.

1. This instrument replaces the instrument signed on 8 February 2015.
2. As required by section 48(1) of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*, the Biosecurity Council is established and the following persons are appointed as members of the Council for the term specified.

Members	Term
Mrs Michelle ALLEN (Chairperson)	for a term expiring on 31 December 2016
Mr Kevin GOSS	for a term expiring on 27 February 2018
Mr David JARVIE	for a term expiring on 27 February 2018
Mr Barry LARGE	for a term expiring on 27 February 2018
Dr Simon McKIRDY	for a term expiring on 31 December 2016
Ms Tina THORNE	for a term expiring on 31 December 2016
Mr Clifford WINFIELD	for a term expiring on 27 February 2018

3. Set out below are the matters on which the Council is to give advice and other matters relating to the operation and procedures of the Council:

MATTERS ON WHICH COUNCIL IS TO GIVE ADVICE

The Council is to give advice to the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (the Act) Minister and Director General of the Department of Agriculture and Food on any matter related to biosecurity and in particular:

1. The requirements of a comprehensive and effective biosecurity system for the state of Western Australia and necessary linkages to other biosecurity systems (national and international); and
2. Significant gaps in, or necessary improvements to, the biosecurity system; and
3. Opportunities to improve industry and public awareness and support for biosecurity objectives; and
4. Opportunities to improve government, community and industry cooperation and collaboration on biosecurity matters; and
5. Matters referred to the Council by the Minister or Director General.



MATTERS RELATING TO THE OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL

The Council should:

- 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. Be aware of changing industry, community and environment needs and of options for balancing the demands of different interests.
- c. Provide advice to others, including other Ministers and Directors General, only when specifically permitted.
- d. Act and be seen to act with integrity, as set out in the Western Australian Public Sector Code of Ethics.

On or before 30 November of each year, the Council must prepare and submit to the Minister an annual report on its activities throughout the preceding financial year in accordance with section 50 of the Act.

MEETINGS AND CONDUCT OF THE COUNCIL

The Council is to hold four ordinary meetings each year. For consideration of issues out-of-session, agenda papers will be directed to all members by the Secretariat and the outcome of any decision will be communicated to all members.

The Chairman may convene special meetings of the Council if it is necessary to deal with any urgent matters requested by the Minister or Director General.

The Council must maintain a formal record of its proceedings and make that record available to the Minister and the Director General or their nominees.

Signed by the Minister for Agriculture and Food on 18 February 2015.



Appendix B — Biosecurity roles and responsibilities—summary of findings and recommendations to government

Biosecurity roles and responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities can guide biosecurity investment decisions and enable appropriate, and coordinated, government, industry and community investment across the various components of the WA biosecurity system. Through the Council's engagement process, stakeholder perceptions of roles and responsibilities were identified and collated into statements of what is believed to be the broad roles and responsibilities of industry, government and community (see below).

It is the Biosecurity Council's advice that the roles and responsibilities are incorporated into the Western Australian State Biosecurity Strategy.

Industry:

Good biosecurity provides financial benefits to industry, such as increased productivity and access to markets. Industry contributes to biosecurity-related activities through compulsory levies, subscriptions, fee-for-service and voluntary financial contributions. Industry also undertakes activities to ensure compliance with legislation and protocols, and general surveillance, management and eradication activities. As such, industry is perceived to play a strong role in safeguarding the State's biosecurity in a number of ways:

- Being aware and understanding biosecurity (what it is, why it is important, what you can/must do).
- Reporting and managing declared pests occurring on their land.
- Undertaking measures, including adherence to relevant legislation, to minimise biosecurity risks resulting from business activities.
- Facilitating industry-wide biosecurity activity to deliver industry benefits—including surveillance, eradication, control and funding that is targeted toward providing the best return on investment.
- Proactively engaging with government on biosecurity issues.
- Raising awareness of biosecurity within the industry and community, inasmuch as this will provide benefits to the industry.



Government

It is critical for government to ensure public funds are invested effectively and efficiently. As such, government has a broad leadership role as communicators, educators, facilitators, coordinators, assessors and protectors. To facilitate industry and community acceptance of government funding decisions, it is expected that valid methods will be used transparently. While industry accepts and supports government's regulatory role, it expects regulatory requirements to recognise and align with industry operations to minimise 'red tape' and ensure practical application. Government roles and responsibilities were identified to include:

- Targeting effort toward prevention and early eradication, as this provides the best return on investment of public funds.
- Supporting industry / community in eradication and control efforts (e.g. technical expertise, coordination of responses to new biosecurity incursions).
- Developing and delivering robust legislation, policies, systems and processes to support the State's biosecurity system.
- Building and maintaining widespread support for and understanding of 'biosecurity'.
- Targeting government investment in biosecurity toward areas of public benefit.
- Managing declared pests on land that government is responsible for.
- Providing coordination and leadership in undertaking biosecurity-related emergency response, including the rapid mobilisation of resources.
- Ensuring engagement and partnerships with industry and community, and clear, transparent process—including for all of the above.

Community (all citizens)

Biosecurity is an important part of the Western Australian economy, environment and society requiring participation from all citizens, including the management of pests and diseases by all landholders. From the data, community's roles are believed to include:



- Reporting biosecurity issues.
- Undertaking measures, including adherence to relevant legislation, to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, weeds and diseases.
- Being aware and understanding biosecurity (what it is, why it is important, what you can/must do).

Not-for-profit, research and community organisations also play an important role through funding, voluntary donations of time, money and expertise, delivering biosecurity-related research and on-ground programs, as well as fundraising, communications and awareness-raising activities.

Prioritisation

There will always be a limit to the amount of resources available to address our biosecurity. As such, targeting resources toward activities that will deliver the greatest benefits is essential. To do this, a clear and robust process is required. The process would identify the priorities across the key components of the State's biosecurity system to ensure the integrity of the system is not compromised, and take into consideration environmental, economic and social outcomes. Furthermore, stakeholders must have confidence in any prioritisation process if they are expected to support the subsequent outcomes.

The Biosecurity Council's intends to further explore the area of prioritisation.

Resourcing

Adequate government resourcing for biosecurity was seen as the top need of industry, government and community to maintain or improve the biosecurity of Western Australia. Declining government resources has emphasised the need to target government investment toward priority areas. In turn, this has increased the focus on collaborative partnerships with industry and community in order to ensure the key components of the State's biosecurity system are preserved.

A clearer understanding of the activities and resources being applied to biosecurity by government, industry and community is required—including how resources are allocated. The Biosecurity Council proposes to gather more precise knowledge about the current levels of resourcing and how shared resourcing might evolve.



The delivery of biosecurity in WA

The stakeholder engagement identified six areas as integral to a robust biosecurity system:

- Collaboration, cooperation and communication with key organisations or individuals with a strong stake in the issue to ensure support, understanding and ownership. This will also deliver increased efficiencies and build stronger relationships and networks.
- Broad engagement, education and awareness-raising to develop and maintain widespread support for the State's biosecurity. This was identified as a top need by government, industry and community, and relates to 'citizens' in general, rather than targeted stakeholders.
- Prioritisation using justifiable risk management and science-based processes to identify the greatest return on investment. This 'greatest return on investment' does not apply only to economic returns, but also environmental and social outcomes.
- Robust legislation to support the WA biosecurity system that takes into consideration the impost on industry; and enforce the legislation to ensure the integrity of the system is maintained.
- Adequate level of preparedness to ensure Western Australia is always ready to tackle biosecurity threats. There are two aspects to this: 1) horizon scanning; and 2) capacity.
- Research, innovation and continuous improvement to enable a flexible biosecurity system that can adjust to changing circumstances.

These were also identified as areas requiring greater action. Of particular importance was 'broad engagement, education and awareness-raising'. Through the stakeholder engagement, this emerged as a top need of industry, government and community for maintaining or improving the biosecurity of Western Australia.

It is Council's advice that the six key areas are included in the Western Australia State Biosecurity Strategy.



Appendix C — Declaration of weed and vertebrate pests—summary of findings and recommendations to government

It is the responsibility of the owner/person in control of the land to ensure all declared pests are managed as per the prescribed control measures. Reduced government resources have been identified as an important barrier to adequate capacity within government agencies to monitor landowner compliance with the declared pest legislation. Given that the issue is not likely to be resolved in the short to medium term, the Biosecurity Council identified two potential options:

- leveraging external resources and capacity for monitoring and compliance work;
- changing the declaration status of identified species from 'declared pest' to 'permitted.'

Periodical reviews

Species attributes, such as distribution, prevalence and impact, can change over time. From the Council's work, it appeared that reviews of the declaration status and categorisation of species were ad hoc. Regular reviews will provide a more accurate picture of the impact of, and threat from, declared pests. It will also identify species that no longer meet the criteria for declaration as a 'declared pest'.

The Council acknowledges that regular reviews may be time-consuming; however, it is a critical step that can 1) ensure appropriate declaration of species; 2) guide appropriate levels of government, industry and community investment; 3) provide long-term data such as species abundance and distribution; and 4) be used to evaluate the effectiveness of activities to address declared pests. The review process should be well-developed and robust to enable replicability and comparisons to be made over time. Such a process should be understood by key government, industry and community stakeholders, with DAFWA taking the lead as the custodian of the legislation.

It is the Biosecurity Council's recommendation that the declaration status and categorisation of declared pests be reviewed at least every five years, and changes made to the statuses / categorisations as required. The review process must be robust and enduring, and understood by key stakeholders.

Targeting resources toward priorities

The Biosecurity Council acknowledges monitoring and enforcement as an important component of the Western Australian biosecurity system; however, the current environment of declining government resources has reinforced the need for government agencies to target their investment toward areas that provide the most effective use of public funds (e.g. prevention and early intervention). As such, it is the Biosecurity Council's



view that it is not an effective use of government resources to ensure landholders are adequately managing low priority (in terms of government priorities) declared pests.

Although criteria for determining what constitutes a 'low priority' are required, it is thought a low priority declared pest would be, at the least:

- classified as a C3 pest (i.e. eradication is not feasible)
- widespread in an area or areas
- routinely controlled as a normal part of business activities
- controlled to deliver primarily private benefits.

It is the Biosecurity Council's recommendation that a process and criteria be developed in partnership with industry and community, and used to identify low priority declared pests.

External capacity and resources influencing the declaration status

If government resources are not used to monitor landholder compliance for low priority declared pests, there is little advantage in having these species declared under section 22 of the BAM Act—unless resources for compliance and enforcement activities are found elsewhere. If stakeholders do not believe their investment in compliance and enforcement is worthwhile, it is queried why the species should be addressed via the legislation as a declared pest.

It is the Biosecurity Council's recommendation that low priority declared pests are re-declared as permitted organisms under section 11 of the BAM Act, unless external resources are available for compliance and enforcement activities.

Revoking the 'declared species' status will mean:

- Landholders will no longer be legally bound to manage the species.
- There would be no control over the importation of the species into the state.
- The species cannot be addressed through funding mechanisms under the BAM Act (Industry Funding Schemes and Recognised Biosecurity Groups).
- The species (if it is a plant) can be targeted through local government laws under section 193 of the BAM Act.

The potential implications of the above four points should be thoroughly considered and discussed with industry and community stakeholders before changing the declaration status. Issues such as possible increases in abundance, spread, impact and community concerns may drive industry and/or community decisions to invest in compliance and enforcement activities for particular 'low priority' species. Conversely, it may be agreed that the species can be better managed at the local level using local pest plant laws.



Appendix D — Summary of Council's response to EPA advice to government

Invasive species are one of the top two issues affecting biodiversity globally. As such, biosecurity is a critical component of biodiversity conservation. The Biosecurity Council of WA would like to highlight that 'controlling the spread' of invasive species, as identified in the EPA advice, is just one part of facilitating the biosecurity of our State's biodiversity. Another important area is the prevention of biosecurity risks from entering and establishing within the Pilbara.

The EPA advice highlights the continued development of the Pilbara region, with up to \$328 billion of resource projects under construction, committed, planned or possible in coming years. As such, the need to identify and manage the biosecurity risk pathways is becoming increasingly important.

With growing numbers of vessels arriving at Pilbara ports and the introduction of machinery and infrastructure materials from other regions, the risk of new invasive species entering and potentially establishing in the region is magnified. Furthermore, this may be further exacerbated by the increased scale, rate and pattern of land clearing, identified in the EPA advice, as many invasive species will successfully out-compete native species in the colonisation of disturbed sites.

The key recommendation made by the EPA was the development of a whole-of-government strategic plan for biodiversity conservation in the Pilbara. The Biosecurity Council is fully supportive of this, and have identified the following points for consideration.

Biosecurity is incorporated as a key component of any strategic plan for biodiversity conservation in the Pilbara. It is the Biosecurity Council's advice that such a plan addresses the prevention of new invasive species from entering and establishing in the Pilbara, in addition to actions to control the spread of those species already found in the region. Importantly, the strategic plan should identify the risk pathways and strategies to minimise the risks.



A strategic plan for biodiversity conservation in the Pilbara should encompass the whole region including off-shore islands. In doing so, the strategic plan would address the biosecurity of all terrestrial and aquatic (including marine) ecosystems. This would deliver a comprehensive, all-inclusive plan for the region that acknowledges the heightened risks to aquatic biodiversity from increasing ship movements through Pilbara waters.

Alignment with existing plans for the management of invasive species.

Strategies already exist, or are in development, for managing invasive species in Western Australia. Any biosecurity aspects of the strategic plan for biodiversity conservation should align with other State-based plans and policies to ensure a consistent approach to invasive species management.

