



Biosecurity Council of Western Australia Annual Report



2022/2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country, the Aboriginal people of the many lands that we work on and their language groups throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waters. The Council respects the continuing culture of Aboriginal people and the contribution they make to the life of all our regions, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Important disclaimer

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Preface: Biosecurity in Western Australia

What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity is the protection of our industries, economy, environment, and community from the impacts of pests, weeds and diseases entering, emerging, establishing, or spreading.

Western Australia (WA) has a successful history of preventing pests, weeds and diseases that threaten our natural environment, agrifood, fibre, and tourism industries.

Why is biosecurity important?

Biosecurity is fundamental to preserving and enhancing our lifestyle, livelihoods and environments that are unique to WA and in doing so, we can:

- sustain our environmental assets and ecosystem services;
- preserve our existing social amenity for the enjoyment of future generations;
- maintain market access for our agrifood and fibre industries;
- maintain industry profitability, especially for our primary industries; and
- maintain our all-important food security.



WA's transport and livestock industry protects our environment and agricultural industries by utilising truck washdown facilities, ensuring that disease, pests and weeds are not spread or introduced into WA.

What are the key biosecurity challenges facing WA?

Excluding human-related biosecurity emergencies, WA has been in a state of biosecurity emergency since 2017. Between 2011 to 2014 there were 6 biosecurity incidents compared to over 20 from 2015 to 2022. Additionally, WA contributes nationally and internationally, considerable resources in preparedness for emerging threats such as foot and mouth disease, lumpy skin disease, myrtle rust, varroa mite, and others.

Furthermore, incursions over the past 6 years have included several high-impact pests and diseases including Queensland fruit fly, polyphagous shot-hole borer, tomato potato psyllid, khapra beetle, brown marmorated stink bug and red imported fire ants. Many of these were successfully managed, however the road to recovery for affected producers can be lengthy.

The changing biosecurity risk is not just a challenge for WA. A report produced by the CSIRO, *Australia's Biosecurity Future – Unlocking the next decade of resilience (2020–2030)*, highlights increasing trends in terms of the number of incursions of pests, weeds and/or diseases into Australia from overseas. It is not just the growing number of biosecurity incursions that is a concern – it is also the increasing complexities that are putting pressure on the system.

Challenges include:

- the rapid expansion of international and domestic travel and trade
- limited availability of financial and human resources
- climate change
- building the social licence to support biosecurity actions
- the introduction, integration and unintended impacts of new technologies
- changing land use; and
- declining ecological resilience.

With collaboration, cooperation, communication, and contribution across industry, community and government, the biosecurity of WA can be strengthened and maintained into the future.

Western Australia must continue to position itself to deliver a fit-for-purpose, future-focused biosecurity system. To enable this, decisive policy interspersed with transparent and justifiable prioritisation is critical; and equally important, all Western Australians must participate.

Acronyms

BAM Act	<i>Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007</i>
BAM Act Review	Statutory review of the <i>Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007</i>
BSOG	Biosecurity Senior Officers Group
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
DG	Director General DPIRD
DPR	Declared pest rate
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
Minister	Minister for Agriculture and Food
NRM	Natural Resource Management
R&D	Research and development
RBG	Recognised Biosecurity Group
WA	Western Australia
WALGA	Western Australian Local Government Association
WHO	World Health Organisation

Chair's report

The 2022-23 year has been one of considerable change for the Biosecurity Council of Western Australia with the retirement of four long-term members as well as our long-standing Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by former Minister MacTiernan who worked tirelessly to ensure that WA maintains its enviable reputation of a robust and resilient biosecurity system. I have been fortunate to meet with Minister MacTiernan throughout her term and appreciated her constant support of Council. Similarly, Council welcomes our new Minister, Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC and is strongly encouraged by her active interest in the biosecurity of WA.

Council is also excited to welcome new members Dr Melissa Thomas and Dr Tracy Sullivan, selected by Minister Jarvis based on their considerable skills and experience. We are also fortunate to have Dr Kelly Pearce reappointed for another term, with her understanding of Council's strategic focus providing a welcome continuity.

This considered, it will be difficult to replace the skills and dedication of the outgoing members Ms Nicole Batten, Dr Regina Flugge, and Prof John Mackenzie. Moreso, I must also acknowledge the previous Council Chair, Prof Simon McKirdy, who with 9 years on Council, was one of the longest serving Members. His significant contributions, knowledge and leadership will be sorely missed. Evidence of Simon's insight and experience are found throughout previous Council reports to the Minister and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), by way of overseeing and informing solid recommendations, which highlights his depth of understanding and commitment to the biosecurity needs of WA.

At the beginning of my term as Chair, Minister Jarvis tasked Council to assist with the statutory review of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act). Throughout the year, Council spent considerable time both with DPIRD and the BAM Act Reform Panel and provided comprehensive comments to various stages of the review. Whilst this review is nearing its end, at the request of the Minister, Council will continue to provide comment and guidance when invited, on progress of the review recommendations.

In addition to contributing to the review of the BAM Act, Council is continuing to focus attention on other strategic priorities. These include investigating where improvements can be made to biosecurity at our state borders, how to ensure a sufficient workforce is in place for current and future needs across the biosecurity continuum and how greater awareness and engagement with positive biosecurity behaviors can be enabled across the WA community.

Council acknowledges the secretariat support by staff in DPIRD that assists us in our remit, to provide advice to the Minister and DPIRD. In particular we would like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by Ms Rebecca Heath over numerous years, who has recently moved onto other important tasks within the organisation.

Looking forward, I note and appreciate that the Minister has granted full 3-year terms for each new and recently renewed Council Members. This will provide Council with stability to complete projects identified by Council, the Director General of DPIRD, or the Minister.



Justin Bellanger
Chair, Biosecurity Council of Western Australia



The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia

Overview

The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia (the Council) was established under the provisions of the BAM Act. The Council functions as a specialist advisory group to the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Minister) and to the Director General of DPIRD.

The principal role of the Council is to provide advice to the Minister and the Director General (DG) of DPIRD on any biosecurity matter, whether referred to the Council by the Minister or DG, or of its own volition.

The Council's relevant 'Instrument of Appointment' for this reporting period, can be found at Appendix 1.

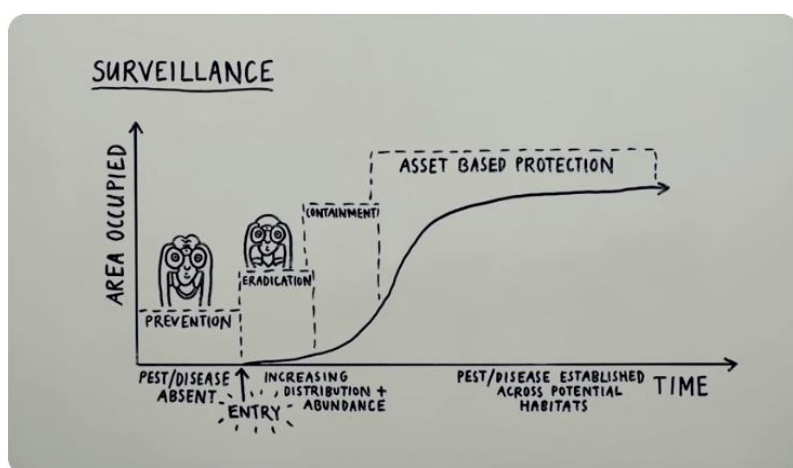
The Council operates at a strategic level, with a long-term vision for effective biosecurity in Western Australia that also considers national and international treaties and obligations.

The advice provided by the Council is based on sound assessment and balances the needs of the environment, industry, community, and government.

Examples of matters on which the Council may provide advice include but are not limited to:

- the requirements of a comprehensive and effective biosecurity system for WA;
- significant gaps in, or necessary improvements to the biosecurity system;
- opportunities to improve industry, public awareness, and support for biosecurity objectives;
- opportunities to improve government, community, and industry cooperation and collaboration on biosecurity matters; and
- matters referred to the Council by the Minister for Agriculture and Food and/or the DPIRD Director General.

YouTube snip of the Invasion Curve Animation



In this video

00:57 GENERALISED INVASION CURVE



01:45 PREVENTION



02:11 ERADICATION



02:45 CONTAINMENT



03:11 ASSET BASED PROTECTION



The invasion curve animation produced by the Biosecurity Council, designed to be an easy way of understanding the generalised invasion curve of biosecurity. The full YouTube video can be found online by searching 'Invasion Curve Animation Biosecurity Council of WA'

Council membership

Council membership in the 2022/23 financial year consists of a Chair and, 7 ordinary Members. Membership is drawn from people who are highly experienced and/or actively involved in agriculture, forestry, fishing, aquaculture, pearling or related commercial activities, natural resource management, environmental protection, or regional communities. Appointments are all made by the Minister and approved by Cabinet.

Mr Justin Bellanger (Chair) is an Executive and Governance Services Consultant providing specialist services primarily to businesses within the natural resource management sector. Justin has extensive director, senior consulting and executive leadership experience in natural resource management, aquaculture, and fish management, spanning non-government and government sectors.

Justin manages NRM WA, the entity used by the seven regional National Resource Management groups in WA to progress cross-regional and statewide issues. He is also the Independent Chair of the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia, a Director with the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions, a member of the National Environmental Biosecurity Advisory Group, and the Co-convenor of the National Biosecurity General Surveillance Community of Practice.



Mr Bradley Adams is a third-generation fisherman who has been involved in the commercial abalone industry all his life. Brad was a commercial abalone diver for many years and pioneered a sea-based abalone culture technology.

He is the founder and Executive Director of Rare Foods Australia Ltd, based in Augusta. Brad has a keen interest in aquatic biosecurity as healthy marine ecosystems are essential to the future of sustainable fishing and aquaculture production of seafood. Brad was also a director, and past Chair of the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council. He currently serves as President of the Abalone Association of Australasia and is a Director of the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia.



Mr Tony Dean is the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) representative appointed to the Biosecurity Council. He brings a wealth of experience in science, agriculture, and advocacy. Tony has over 22 years' experience in local government and is the current Shire President of Nannup.

Along with his work on various councils, boards, and committees, he has 11 years' experience teaching and was the Principal at the WA College of Agriculture in Cunderdin. Tony is President of the South-West Local Government Association, and the Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils. He is a Board member on the South-West Development Commission and State Councillor for WALGA, chairing the People and Place Policy Team.



Dr Kelly Pearce is the inaugural Director of the Western Australian Agricultural Research Collaboration (which includes DPIRD, CSIRO, Grower Group Alliance and the four public universities). Kelly's extensive portfolio includes Director at the WA Meat Industry Authority and Committee Member to the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee.

Kelly is a Nuffield farming scholar, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, has worked in agricultural research for over 23 years and, as well, runs a broadacre grain farm in Yealering with her husband and two young children. As a member of the Biosecurity Council of W.A., Kelly seeks to ensure an effective Biosecurity system in WA based on high quality science and innovation on an international scale.



Dr Tracy Sullivan is a veterinarian with Masters and PhD degrees in Veterinary Science and has published numerous journal articles focusing on the impact of diet on heifer development during gestation. Tracy has over 20 years of combined experience working as a veterinarian in the capacity of clinician, researcher, and teacher. Tracy's work focused on reproduction, welfare, trade, beef production, and biosecurity.

Tracy is also a director for Yawuru Holdings Company Pty Ltd operating the Roebuck Plains Station and runs her own semen assessment business from Broome. Tracy represents the Australian Cattle Veterinarians on the Board of the Australian Veterinary Association. Tracy is currently the Policy Councillor for Cattle Australia (CA) and represents the CA on the National Farmers Federation Indigenous Engagement Working Group.



Associate Prof Melissa Thomas has a long history in the biosecurity area and is passionate about ensuring WA remains at the forefront in protecting its resources, environment, and natural amenity. Melissa has worked across the entire biosecurity continuum from pre-border mitigation strategies, border quarantine procedures, post-border detection, and invasive species management.

Melissa is an Associate Professor with the Centre for Biosecurity and One Health, Harry Bulter Institute, Murdoch University. Prior to this, she was the Biosecurity Scientist at Chevron Australia, and a research associate at the University of Western Australia. Melissa has a keen interest in island and environmental biosecurity with a primary focus on terrestrial ecosystems.



Retired Chair and Council Members 2022/2023

Prof Simon McKirdy (retired 31 December 2022) Former Council Chair who has a long and esteemed history in the biosecurity/quarantine fields of work. He is currently Professor of Biosecurity at Murdoch University and Pro Vice Chancellor of the Harry Butler Institute. Prior positions held include the Biosecurity Science and Risk Manager for Chevron Australia and Chief Executive Officer of the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre.

Simon has worked on many 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 United States of America. He is currently a board director for Plant Health Australia.



Ms Nicole Batten (retired 31 December 2022) is Director of Batten Farms – a 12 000-hectare broadacre grain and livestock property 500km north-east of Perth. She has worked in natural resource management, community development, and the agricultural sector in the northern agricultural area of WA for many years.

Nicole is a Councillor for the Shire of Chapman Valley, a grower Director on the Grower Group Alliance board and is the former national and State Chairperson for Partners in Grain (now known as Rural Edge). She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is currently representing her grower group to formulate the Midwest Drought Resilience Plan.



Dr Regina Flugge (retired 30 June 2023) has over 30 years of experience in environment and sustainable development roles and has worked in the education, government, not-for-profit, and corporate sectors. Regina has a keen interest in environmental biosecurity following previous Ministerial appointments to the Conservation and Parks Commission, Conservation Commission of WA, Coastal Planning and Coordination Council, and the Air Quality Coordinating Committee.

Regina was Chair of Rangelands Natural Resource Management (NRM), the largest NRM region in WA, and is the Chair of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee. Regina was also the peer appointed Deputy Chair for the Biosecurity Council and provided much guidance in Council Governance and project work plans.



Prof John Mackenzie (retired 30 June 2023) has had a long involvement in biosecurity and global health security, with a strong background in human and animal virus. John's interests have broadened to encompass global outbreak alert and response activities, including the development of international surveillance within the International Health Regulations, chairing the Steering Committee of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, and participating as a member of the WHO's International Health Regulations Emergency Committee for COVID-19 and the Emergency Committee for polio.



John is an advocate of the 'one health' concept that recognises that the health of people, animals and the ecosystem are inextricably woven together. He initiated the international One Health Congress series and has been appointed to the FAO/UNEP/WHO/WOAH One Health High Level Expert Panel. He co-wrote the proposal and served as the interim Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre and was a member of the Commonwealth Biosecurity Advisory Council.

Biosecurity Council membership terms (2022/2023)

Name	Position	Expiry of term
Mr Justin Bellanger	Chair from 1 January 2023	31 December 2025
Mr Bradley Adams	Member	31 December 2023
Dr Kelly Pearce	Member (reappointed)	31 December 2025
Dr. Tracey Sullivan	Member (new)	31 December 2025
Dr. Melissa Thomas	Member (new)	31 December 2025
Mr Tony Dean	Member (WALGA representative)	30 June 2025
Prof Simon McKirdy*	Former Chair	31 December 2022
Ms Nicole Batten*	Former Member	31 December 2022
Dr Regina Flugge	Former Deputy Chair	30 June 2023
Prof. John Mackenzie	Former Member	30 June 2023

Incursions

WA is currently battling a number of significant pest and disease incursions, including in the metropolitan area, the 2 plant pests mentioned below. If these spread to the regions, it will have significant impact on our food supplies, trade relations and environment.

Queensland Fruit Fly (Qfly)



Qfly Tag- A reminder helping gardeners protect their valuable plants and to keep out destructive pests (Bayswater area)

Polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB)



PSHB trap inspection at Mason Gardens (Dalkeith)

Council activities in 2022/2023

Overview

During 2022/23, the Council continued to monitor biosecurity related developments at national and state levels and proactively engaged with industry, community, and government on biosecurity matters.

The statutory review of the BAM Act also provided opportunities for Council's previous reports and recommendations to be used as a solid information source for the responsible reviewing agency and its consultants.

Update for new Minister

During the financial year Council liaised regularly with Minister MacTiernan via email and letters to discuss progress of its workplans until her retirement in December 2022. In February 2023, Council was very pleased to meet with the new Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Minister Jackie Jarvis MLC. The meeting was very important for Council to not only discuss current work, but to gain an understanding of the new Ministers' remit for the Council.

Following that meeting, Minister Jarvis requested previous Council reports and notification of progress on the recommendations. Council provided 4 reports¹ to the Minister in March 2023.

Government: Biosecurity Senior Officers Group (BSOG)

BSOG is comprised of senior staff from agencies that have biosecurity responsibilities including DPIRD (Chair), Department of Biodiversity, Conservations and Attractions (DBCA), the Forest Products Commission, the Department of Health, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) and WA Local Government Association (WALGA).

The objective of BSOG is to deliver, efficient management of the State's responsibilities for biosecurity through effective cooperation, where these agencies have a joint responsibility, or where there is an overlap of responsibility. The Council as ex-officio Members, participated in all meetings, provided updates on its activities, and collaborated with other agencies in biosecurity-related tasks and discussions.

Industry and community engagement

Over the course of the year, the Biosecurity Council was invited to present at or participate in various industry and community events. The Council used these opportunities to highlight its role, the work being undertaken and, where appropriate, its recommendations on key issues. During 2022/23, this included:

- participated on the WA Feral Cat Working Group
- participated in the 2-day Mrytle Rust Symposium in Brisbane
- met with members of the National Wild Dog Action Plan and the WA Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme (IFS);
- participated in a community field day in Cascade, Esperance; and
- met with the key stakeholders at the National Biosecurity Forum in April 2023.

1. ¹Environmental Biosecurity in Western Australia (February 2018)

2. Biosecurity Research and Development in Western Australia (November 2019)

3. Declaration of Non-agricultural Pests under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (February 2020)

4. Mechanisms for Funding Biosecurity (June 2022).

Regional stakeholder engagement

Esperance 30 August to 2 September 2022

The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia (Council) is committed to holding annual regional meetings. The intent of the regional meetings is to:

- engage with local/regional stakeholders on biosecurity matters;
- build networks/relationships with key biosecurity stakeholders;
- provide a conduit to government for local/regional biosecurity stakeholders, and
- progress its projects and workplans by seeking direct stakeholder engagement.

Esperance is home to significant pastoral enterprises, proposed aquaculture initiatives, and increasing motoring/camping/tourism. Additionally, Esperance has a substantial port exporting nickel, iron ore and grain while importing fuel and fertiliser. There are significant port movements of shipping containers. The region has several biosecurity issues and risks that Council believed were important to understand.

Over 3 days, Council held 9 meetings and private discussions with 13 stakeholder groups and organisations. Council also hosted a networking dinner attended by over 45 stakeholders and toured specific locations, with subject matter experts to learn about their biosecurity work or areas of potential concern.

Council was invited to a field day at Derella Downs Pyramid Poll Merino Stud which was also attended by local farmers, members of the National Wild Dog Action Plan Committee, the Esperance Biosecurity Group, and the Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme Management Committee. Whilst at the property, Council reviewed the extension of the State Barrier Fence and learned of its importance to the local farming community.

The stakeholder engagements were interspersed with Council workshops and its statutory quarterly meeting. Importantly, the interactions at Esperance also informed Council projects, 'Border Biosecurity' and 'Funding Mechanisms for Biosecurity and Pest Management'.

All Council attended except unfortunately the Chair, Prof Simon McKirdy who became ill just prior to the event. Prof McKirdy did however attend the workshops and meetings online. The Chair duties were ably performed by Dr Regina Flugge. The final report on the Esperance regional visit has been provided to the Minister and the DG of DPIRD.



Biosecurity Council at the State Barrier Fence Esperance Extension, November 2022. Left to right. Justin Bellanger, Nicole Batten, Tony Dean, Brad Adams, Regina Flugge, Kelly Pearce, John Mackenzie, Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for the Agricultural Region and Scotty Pickering Member of the Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme and host to the Cascade Field Day (missing Simon McKirdy).

BAM Act Review / BAM Act Review Panel

The Biosecurity Council maintains a keen interest in any proposed amendments or reviews to the BAM Act, this has been encouraged and supported by the Minister.

In late 2022, the Minister appointed a six-member independent panel (Review Panel) to undertake the statutory review of the BAM Act. Council and the Review Panel discussed how the Council can assist the review by offering an independent source of expertise and support.

In February 2023 Council met with Minister Jarvis, who encouraged continued collaboration between Council and the Review Panel. This advice provided support for Council to prioritise the BAM Act Review over other projects on its workplan.

In May 2023 Council met with the Chair of the Review Panel to discuss the final (Stage 3 of BAM Act Review) consultation paper prior to distribution for public comment. Council's suggestions were considered, and the majority were accepted prior to publishing. Council also submitted an independent detailed response to the Stage 3 Review Paper.

Council was pleased to note that a significant number of its previous project recommendations were incorporated into the Stage 3 consultation paper. This acknowledged the Council's work and ensured that these recommendations would be viewed by a much wider and interested audience for greater feedback for analysis and decision-making.

Council looks forward to continuing its support for the BAM Act Review past the 'review' stage and into the recommendations and implementation stages.

DPIRD acknowledgment

Council reports were provided to the independent panel (panel) reviewing the BAM Act to consider as part of its review. Many of the Council's past recommendations are reflected in the panel's Stage 3 discussion paper on potential reform opportunities. The Council has also actively participated in and contributed expertise to the panel's review process.

Council reports are also used by DPIRD to inform continuous improvement, and specifically contribute to the Department's 'Biosecurity Futures Initiative' to develop a roadmap to reform WA's biosecurity system, to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and financially sustainable into the future. The review of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* is a key element of this initiative and the first to be nearing completion.



Yellowtail kingfish (AKA Yellowtail amberjack) bred and released by DPIRD fisheries, near the Fremantle Yacht Club.

Council meetings in 2022/2023

Council membership and attendance at quarterly (statutory) meetings

Name	Expiry of term	#58	#59	#60	#61
Prof. Simon McKirdy (Chair 2022)	31/12/2022	Yes	Yes	Retired	Retired
Ms Nicole Batten	31/12/22	Yes	Yes	Retired	Retired
Dr Regina Flugge	30/06/23	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
Prof. John Mackenzie	20/06/23	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mr Justin Bellanger (Chair 2023)	31/12/25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mr Brad Adams	31/12/23	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Dr Kelly Pearce*	31/12/25	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Mr Anthony Dean	30/06/25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dr Melissa Thomas	31/12/25	Not yet commenced	Not yet commenced	Yes	Yes
Dr Tracy Sullivan	31/12/25	Not yet commenced	Not yet commenced	Yes	Yes

*Dr Kelly Pearce's term ended on 31 December 2022, and she was reappointed on 3 April 2023.

Presentations to the Biosecurity Council during 2022/23

Date	Title	Name	Organisation
31 August 2022	State and National Update	Dr Mia Carbon	DPIRD
1 September 2022	National Wild Dog Action Plan (NDAP)	Greg Mifsud	NDAP Committee
	State Barrier Fence Esperance Extension	Tim Thomson	DPIRD
	Esperance Biosecurity Association	Scott Pickering	Chairperson EBA
25 November 2022	State and National update	Dr Mia Carbon	DPIRD
10 March 2023	State and National update	Victoria Aitken	DPIRD

Presentations for 2022/2023 continued

11 May 2023	WA Quarantine and operations	Greg Pickles	DPIRD
12 May 2023	State and National update	Victoria Aitken	DPIRD
12 May 2023	ARMA ² progress of Act	Jodie O'Malley, Jo Kennedy	DPIRD

Governance

Council documents and policies

The governance framework that shaped the operations of the Council during 2022/23 includes various critical documents, processes, and procedures including reviewing sections of, or all of:

- the BAM Act
- member's instrument of appointment
- government code of ethics
- council ratified code of conduct
- Chair, member, and secretariat duty statements
- conflict of interest /disclosure of interest procedures
- annual reporting requirements
- financial management; and
- monitoring and evaluation.

During the 2022/23 financial year, the Council ratified an additional internal policy titled 'Investment Decision-Making Policy'. It is aimed at establishing guidelines for a consistent, transparent, and objective approach to approving and investing in activities, outside of Council's current approved workplan.

New Members and induction

The Financial year of 2022/23 saw significant changes in membership for Council. Long-term Chair Prof Simon Mckirdy retired, and Justin Bellanger was appointed by the Minister as the replacement Chair. With the retirement of Nicole Batten and Prof Simon Mckirdy, two new Members Dr Tracy Sullivan and Dr Melissa Thomas were also appointed. Furthermore, Dr Kelly Pearce was required to reapply for Council as her term had expired.

When a new Member is appointed, they receive an in-depth face-to-face induction with the Council Chair and secretariat. The two-hour induction includes reviewing all governance documents, being made aware of current and past Council projects as well as examining Council previous meeting Minutes and Actions.

Future new Members - with the retirement of Prof John Mackenzie and Dr Regina Flugge on 30 June 2023, two replacement Members will be profiled in the 2023/24 annual report.

² ARMA – Aquatic Resources Management Act – more information on DPIRD's website.

Annual performance review

The Council evaluates its performance annually. This enables Members to be constructively critical of the Council's operations and, thereby, identify areas for improvement to enhance its effectiveness.

In November 2022 Council completed its performance review, with the majority of responses indicating that the policies, processes and governance of Council working well. The review also identified some gaps which limited its ability to effectively manage its work. In particular, the time taken to complete recruitment of new members to replace outgoing members, leaving a large knowledge gap for over 4 months.

Council also noted that secretariat support was reduced in comparison to previous years, which had a negative impact on its ability to progress its projects. That issue was addressed by a full-time Executive Officer being appointed to oversee Council work in January 2023.

The annual performance review is usually conducted November to ensure planning for the next calendar year incorporates any improvements.

Cost of Council operations in 2022/23

The direct costs of the Council's operation during the 2022/23 reporting year amounted to \$150,916. Points to note:

- figures are collected from DPIRD accounts and financial management system; and
- does not include the cost of DPIRD Executive services to Council.

Biosecurity Council of Western Australia expenditure for 2022/23

Description	Cost (\$)
Board member fees	130,106
Superannuation	3,438
Travel expenses	7,803
Professional services – consultancies	2,410
Meeting/workshop expenses	6,433
Advertising	217
Printing/consumables	307
Credit card surcharge	19
Misc. Allowances	183
Total	150,916

Bees: Surveillance

Exotic bees entering WA could be a pathway for bee pests and viruses, such as varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) which have decimated many hives and industries world-wide. Targeted surveillance is undertaken by DPIRD around WA, to protect our precious honey bees from exotic bees including surveillance for the pest; red dwarf honey bee (*Apis florea*) .



National Honey Bee Pest Surveillance program, checking for invasive species and sick bees.



Honey bee (left) vs the Red dwarf honey bee (right) - which can carry many pests and diseases.

Council past projects; progress on recommendations from reports published between 2019 to 2023

Overview, reports and responses:

Under s50 of the BAM Act, a **key function** of the Biosecurity Council is to advise the Minister or the DG DPIRD, as the case requires, on any matter related to biosecurity whether referred to the Council by the Minister or the DG or of its own motion.

Biosecurity Council reports are in response to that key function and the resultant recommendations are used to inform ongoing improvement of our biosecurity system.

Mechanisms for funding biosecurity and pest management in Western Australia (2022)

The purpose of this work was to provide advice to the Minister and the DG of DPIRD on avenues, or potential avenues, for sustainable funding for biosecurity in Western Australia.

In the 2021/22 financial year, Council prioritised the project with the knowledge that the impending review of the BAM Act would be a prime opportunity for consideration of any recommendations. Comprehensive literature reviews, desktop analyses, and stakeholder consultations were undertaken to inform the Council's advice.

The final report was submitted to Minister MacTiernan and the DG of DPIRD in June 2022. A copy was also provided in March 2023, to Minister Jarvis at her request. Below is a summary of the 8 recommendations from the report:

1. Implement an equitable, fair, independent, and transparent funding model for biosecurity similar to the 'Emergency Services Levy'
2. Clarify and communicate the roles and responsibilities of government (federal, state and local), industry and community groups and individuals in supporting WA's biosecurity
3. Develop a biosecurity cost-sharing policy for WA
4. Ensure an unbiased process, based on appropriate science-based criteria, is used to assess whether an organism should be a declared pest
5. Develop policy to guide when and how the biosecurity funding mechanisms are used
6. Establish a body to coordinate across WA's biosecurity funding mechanisms
7. Develop an annual state-wide biosecurity investment plan; and
8. Enable flexibility in the way the DPR delivery model is applied.

Implementing the recommendations

The report has been considered by the panel and used to inform its review of the BAM Act. It has also been considered by DPIRD and will inform improvements to existing species declaration process and continuous improvement of existing policies and processes for biosecurity cost-sharing and the use of biosecurity funding mechanisms. Longer-term outcomes will be considered through the Biosecurity Futures Initiative program of works.

The panel's stage 3 discussion paper has further developed the rationale for improving funding arrangements and taken into consideration the Council's recommendations. Key opportunities for reform identified by the panel relevant to improved funding arrangements include improved biosecurity communications engagement on roles and responsibilities, institutional arrangements for system wide planning and reporting, industry-government response agreements, and significant changes to the declared pest rate delivery model.

Declaration of non-agricultural species (2020)

Concerns were raised with the Council about the process of declaring non-agricultural pests under the BAM Act – specifically, the length of time it takes to make a declaration, and perceived biases against declaring organisms that do not have a primary impact on agricultural industries. The Council engaged key stakeholders and, following these discussions, put forward 4 recommendations to DPIRD and DBCA.

The report's recommendations focused on improving understanding of the declaration process and opportunities for cross-agency collaboration.

Implementing the recommendations

The report has been considered by the panel and used to inform its review of the BAM Act. It has also been considered by DPIRD and will inform improvements to declaration process through the Biosecurity Futures Initiative and continuous improvement of existing policies and processes.

Key opportunities for reform relevant to improving declaration of non-agricultural species processes identified by the panel in its discussion paper include institutional arrangements for system wide planning and reporting, a general biosecurity obligation and improving the legislative framework for declarations.

Biosecurity research and development (2019)

Research and development (R&D) are crucial to managing WA's biosecurity risks and threats. There is a perception that these risks and threats could be better recognised nationally to provide opportunities to access funding for R&D activities relevant to WA's biosecurity. The Minister requested Council advice on opportunities to enhance biosecurity R&D funding for WA.

The Council delivered its report on 'Biosecurity R&D' to the Minister and Director General of DPIRD in November 2019.

The report made 2 recommendations:

1. WA, through DPIRD, establish, coordinate, and drive a biosecurity R&D network across WA; and
2. DPIRD establishes a baseline for its science capability that extends beyond 'response readiness' to engaging in biosecurity research and innovation.

The Council also identified seven opportunities to build WA's biosecurity science capability and enhance its R&D opportunities.

Implementing the recommendations

The report has been considered by DPIRD and will inform improvements to biosecurity research and development.

DPIRD has recently appointed a scientist to lead input to the Biosecurity Futures Initiative as well as other key elements such as the review of the WA Ten Year Science and Technology Plan, as well as to develop a Biosecurity Science Strategy for the department.

Sustaining a biosecurity response (2019)

The Minister requested the Council investigate the ability of the then Department of Agriculture and Food to sustain a high-level biosecurity response while retaining the integrity of its budget and other functions. With the amalgamation of the Department of Agriculture and Food into DPIRD, this work was expanded to help shape change in an agency with a larger biosecurity function and with broader skills, resources, and regional presence.

In June 2019, the Council delivered its report to the Minister and DG of DPIRD which included 7 recommendations:

1. DPIRD develop a strategy that clarifies the expectations for biosecurity responses in DPIRD
2. Implement a multi-layered approach to stakeholder engagement as part of DPIRD's preparedness planning
3. Formalise cost-sharing arrangements with stakeholders
4. Establish a State Government biosecurity contingency fund
5. Develop and maintain resources, including external resources, to ensure DPIRD is operationally ready for pest/disease incursions
6. Develop and implement an active intelligence gathering and analysis network; and
7. Provide staff with opportunities and incentives for innovation, research and development.

Implementing the recommendations

The report has been considered by DPIRD and has informed many improvements to biosecurity response planning and preparedness.

The WA State government is continuing to increase its investment in its biosecurity response capability. This has included \$32.6 million to protect the State's livestock industries from increasing biosecurity threats, including emergency animal disease preparedness (\$10.4 million) and an electronic identification (eID) system for sheep and goats (\$22.2 million) in the 2023-24 State budget.

DPIRD has increased its internal focus on strengthening emergency response capability and culture, including biosecurity incidents, by making it a strategic priority to improve this function and allocating staff resources to an improvement project.

DPIRD is undertaking workforce planning and has launched an Emergency Response Reserve (ERR) initiative to identify and train staff for core roles. These staff are being preferentially trained and provided experience, in lower-level responses.

This initiative is supported by the development of a new training pathway to prepare staff for a significant biosecurity response and a DPIRD Response Coordination Centre that has visibility over all active incidents.

The report has also been considered by the panel and used to inform its review of the BAM Act. The panel's stage 3 discussion paper has further developed the rationale for improving legislative powers for biosecurity responses.

Key opportunities for reform identified by the panel relevant to improving biosecurity responses include institutional arrangements for system wide planning and reporting, clearer emergency response powers, and state level industry-government response agreements.

Directions for 2023/24

BAM Act Review. Council will continue to collaborate with DPIRD on the next stages of this important and opportune statutory review. This includes assessment of the final project report, review of recommendations, and providing support to government to implement the recommendations.

Border biosecurity. WA has an enviable reputation and is held as an exemplar in keeping out many pests and diseases that are prevalent in other countries. Maintaining this enviable reputation can be challenging with issues like climate change, increasing travel at unmanned border crossings and strong tourism increasing the risk of harmful pests entering WA and becoming established. Council has made significant progress with this project and is aiming for the draft report and recommendations to be provided to the Minister and DG of DPIRD by June 2024. Notwithstanding the report, Council and DPIRD liaise and engage regularly on border biosecurity matters to clarify issues that arise as the project progresses.

Building a biosecurity workforce. Government cannot be expected to deliver WA's biosecurity on its own – everyone has a role to play. The Council will explore what skillsets are needed to keep WA bio-secure into the future, where these skillsets are to be found and if there are gaps, how these gaps can be filled. With the new Members inducted, Council is keen to prioritise this work in 2023 – 2024.

Understanding the 'value' of biosecurity. Biosecurity awareness is critical to community and industry support for and compliance with WA's biosecurity system. Understanding how Western Australians perceive 'biosecurity' is needed to inform policy and underpin biosecurity communications, extension, engagement, and education.

This information can also be used as indicators to better understand the value proposition of a bio-secure WA, including for hard-to-measure aspects such as environmental, social, and cultural biosecurity.

2023/24 will also see the Council travelling to Geraldton for its annual regional meeting and stakeholder engagements. The meetings and tours cover 3 full days and will include discussions on biosecurity issues with local and regional biosecurity groups, industry representatives in the transport, mining, agriculture, environment, and fishing fields.

Discussion will also take place with a variety of government and shire services that are involved in biosecurity matters.

The report with observations and stakeholder feedback will be provided to the Minister for Agriculture and Food, and the DG of DPIRD.

Appendix 1. Instrument of Appointment

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

1. This instrument replaces the instrument signed on 1 January 2023, and comes into effect on 4 April 2023.
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
Mr Justin BELLANGER (Chairperson)	for a term expiring on 31 December 2025
Dr Tracy SULLIVAN	for a term expiring 31 December 2025
Assoc Prof Melissa THOMAS	for a term expiring 31 December 2025
Dr Kelly PEARCE	for a term expiring 31 December 2025
Mr Bradley ADAMS	for a term expiring on 31 December 2023
Mr Anthony DEAN	for a term expiring on 30 June 2025
Dr Regina FLUGGE	for a term expiring on 30 June 2023
Professor John MACKENZIE	for a term expiring on 30 June 2023

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 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).
2. Significant gaps in, or necessary improvements to, the biosecurity system.
3. Opportunities to improve industry and public awareness and support for biosecurity objectives.
4. Opportunities to improve Government, community and industry cooperation and collaboration on biosecurity matters.
5. Matters referred to the Council by the Minister or the Director General.

Matters relating to the operation of the Council

The Council should:

1. Be strategic by adopting a long-term perspective for biosecurity in Western Australia and by giving appropriate consideration to national and international obligations.
2. Be aware of changing industry, community and environment needs and of options for balancing the demands of different interests.
3. Provide advice to others, including to other Ministers and Directors General, only when specifically permitted.
4. 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 s50 of the Act.

Meetings and conduct of the Council

The Council is to hold four ordinary meetings each year.

The Chairperson 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.