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**Response to feedback from consultation on the DRAFT WA Biosecurity Strategy (December 2014 – May 2015).**

The *Draft* Western Australian Biosecurity Strategy (the Strategy) was released for public comment on 4 December 2014 at the State Biosecurity Forum held in Fremantle.

The Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) coordinated a range of consultation processes from December 2014 to May 2015, to gather feedback from government, industry and community on the draft.

Consultation mechanisms included face-to-face conversations with BSOG members and the Biosecurity Council, use of an online consultation page and dedicated email address for responses. Feedback was encouraged using direct emails to stakeholder lists, three media releases and social media. More than thirty detailed submissions were received (from government, community and industry sources).

The feedback has been analysed and a brief overview of the key messages from stakeholders, and the response is provided below.

**Implementation Plan**

Most of the submissions were very supportive of the Strategy, 57% of stakeholders noted the importance of having an implementation plan or components of an implementation plan to support it.

*We agree with the importance of measuring progress against the Strategy and have developed an agreement with the key government organisations that have responsibility for biosecurity management in WA as to what this would look like. For simplicity this will be an annual report against the Tactics; the first set of data has already been gathered and will be reported in 2016/17. In addition the Strategy will be reviewed within three years.*

**Biosecurity is a shared responsibility**

Almost without exception, stakeholders agreed with the statements related to ‘Biosecurity is a shared responsibility’ and some of you explained how your organisations already participate, or could participate more explicitly, in the management of biosecurity in WA.

*In relation to this and the previous point we are interested in exploring community and industry opinions about whether we should facilitate collating a broader contribution to the Strategy, taking account of key industry and community contributions and aligning the State Strategy with Industry, local government and NRM Strategies for example. However, additional funding would be required to achieve this, as it is resource dependent.*

**Roles and responsibilities:**

Clarification of roles and responsibilities for an organisation (what can we do?) and government, industry and community was highlighted by over 53% of respondents.

*Roles and responsibilities for various groups have been included in the revised Strategy (with a link to more detailed information), and graphic has been devised and included to clarify the linkages and information flow system for collaboration and advice.*

**Biosecurity is important for the environment and social amenities**

Enhanced acknowledgement of biosecurity importance for the natural environment and social amenities was requested by 20% of stakeholders.

*This has been included in the final version of the Strategy.*

**Targeting resources**

Concern was expressed by 30% of stakeholders on the availability of resources to successfully implement the strategy. Recommendations were made by 7% of industry respondents to focus government resources on surveillance and the border and improve partnerships with industry and community to implement the strategy.

*The revised strategy includes evidence based decision making to better target resource allocation as Goal 3, and Enhanced partnerships, collaboration and engagement with industry and the community as Goals 1 and 3.*

**Terms and definitions**

Inclusion of term and definitions and use of terms and definitions that were consistent with other WA documents was requested by 27% of stakeholders.

*We have included the ‘weeds’ in the initial discussion of the different pests and diseases (for example in the Scope and the Introduction). ‘The strategy covers pests and disease and weeds)…’ After that we have retained ‘pests and diseases’ as this is consistent with Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) language. A glossary of terms is included.*

**Case studies**

Stakeholders generally recognised the value of including the case studies and 17% suggested shortening them, or having different examples.

*We have reviewed the case studies in relation to species, position on the invasion curve try and look at how they might be shortened. After discussion with the Biosecurity Senior Officers Group (BSOG) who developed and approved the original set, it was decided to limit the case studies to four, using a spread of examples for prevention, eradication, containment and management across agriculture, environment and fisheries.*

**Making more of WA’s unique position**

Many stakeholders (17%) suggested highlighting more strongly the position of WA in relation to its unique geographical, biosecurity and biodiversity position.

*We have highlighted this more strongly in the revised strategy.*

**Wider consultation**

Wider consultation on the Strategy was requested by 17% of respondents.

*The Strategy was available to all Western Australians to provide feedback from 4 December 2014 to 11 May 2015. The consultation was advertised through email, media statements, and twitter.*

**Biosecurity gains/benefits**

Inclusion of the gains/benefits of conducting biosecurity activities was requested by 17% of stakeholders (why should I spend time and resources on biosecurity?).

*The Draft and the revised Strategy acknowledge that industry and community members need to know why biosecurity is important. The importance of this has been elevated as separate goal – ‘Enhanced engagement’ in the revised Strategy.*

**Funding mechanisms**

Over 13% of stakeholders requested that the strategy include funding mechanisms to manage pests and diseases.

*In the revised Strategy we have included as Goal 6, provisions to improve community and industry understanding and use of pest and disease management mechanisms that include funding, for example, Industry Funding Schemes and Recognised Biosecurity Groups.*

**Improved sentence structure**

Improved sentence structures for different parts of the Strategy were recommended by 10% of respondents.

*Many parts of the revised strategy have been reworded, and the document has been subject to a professional edit*.

**Intergovernmental cooperation**

Successful intergovernmental cooperation was a concern for 10% of stakeholders.

*The strategy highlights that we are part of a national system. The revised strategy has been reworded to include the need to enhance and build better partnerships and collaboration as Goal 1, and a specific tactic addressing intergovernmental collaboration is included as a tactic against this Goal.*

**Acknowledgement of market access and pre-border and border (prevention)**

Better inclusion of pest absence (market access) and prevention (pre-border and border) was requested by 7% of stakeholders.

*We have increased emphasis of these elements in the revised Strategy; specific tactics that address these aspects are included, aligned to Goal 3 (Increasing use of evidence) and 5 (More effective preparedness).*

**Scope**

The scope of the strategy was thought to be too narrow by 7% of stakeholders. Some stakeholders (7%) specifically requested the inclusion of genetically modified organisms.

*The Strategy scope is consistent with other state strategies and includes what is normally considered for management of pests and diseases.*

**Review period required**

A specified review period for the Strategy was requested by 7% of stakeholders.

*A commitment has been made that the Strategy will be reviewed within three years.*

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