



# Biosecurity Council of Western Australia

Annual Report  
2015/2016



## **November 2016**

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## Chair's report

Maintaining resilient agricultural biosecurity systems underpins the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of our agriculture and food sector. Over the past year, the Council has focused much of its work on agricultural biosecurity — more specifically, the funding of agricultural biosecurity.

'Biosecurity' is often described as the protection of our economy, environment and human health from the negative impacts of pests, weeds and diseases. Bio-secure agricultural systems help maintain access to markets, industry profitability and our all-important food security. However, there are growing pressures on the system.

As the Council have previously noted, maintaining Western Australia's agricultural biosecurity is a complex task requiring a sustained and collaborative effort between government, industry and community. An important part of this is biosecurity investment decision-making — How are investment decisions made? What are the biosecurity priorities? Into which parts of the biosecurity system should government, industry and community resources be invested?

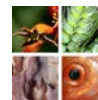
During the year, the Council has investigated these questions; however, there are no simple answers. Biosecurity investment decisions are influenced by a myriad of interacting factors and differing contexts. Nevertheless, decisions should be underpinned by a robust prioritisation process, as this will support effective investment decisions by government, industry and community. Council observed greater commitment to rigorous prioritisation by agencies, in the face of some stakeholder scepticism. Clearer articulation of the prioritisation processes being used will help stakeholder understanding of the investment decisions that are being made.

Partnerships, and robust transparent process, are key to determining and understanding funding responsibilities. These are progressing but, in sharing the costs of maintaining the biosecurity system, the decision-making power must also be shared between government, industry and community.

Industry, government and community's strong advocacy for a true partnership approach to biosecurity, particularly on strategic matters, is encouraging. As we move into 2016/17, the Council will continue to observe how this plays out within the agricultural sector whilst exploring the funding issue for other sectors within the biosecurity arena.

Michelle Allen  
Chairperson (to 2 June 2016)  
Biosecurity Council of Western  
Australia

Kevin Goss  
Chairperson (from 3 June 2016)  
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 principal role of the Council is to provide advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Director General of DAFWA on any biosecurity matter, 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 effective biosecurity in Western Australia (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, silviculture, fishing, aquaculture, pearling or related commercial activities; natural resource management; environmental protection; and/or regional communities. Nominations are sought from industry, research organisations 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
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

**Michelle Allen** (Chairperson<sup>1</sup>) 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 Chairperson/Chairperson<sup>2</sup>) works in the agricultural, natural resource management and environmental fields, with a background in policy and research management in Western Australia and interstate. Currently, he is Deputy Chair of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Chair of the Research and Development Committee of the Western Australian Marine Science Institution, and he is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow with the University of Western Australia. Kevin has held senior executive roles with Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre Ltd, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission and DAFWA.

**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. Until recently, David was a Director of LiveCorp and the Chair of the Cattle Industry Funding Scheme Management Committee. He currently is Chair of the Western Australian Live Exporters Association and is a Director of the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Chairperson until 2 June 2016

<sup>2</sup> Deputy Chairperson until 2 June 2016; Chairperson from 3 June 2016



**Simon McKirdy** has a long history in the biosecurity/quarantine area. He is currently Professor of Biosecurity and Sustainable Development at Murdoch University. 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 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 Winfield** 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, and then moved to Manjimup to develop a vineyard, 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.

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Expiry of term</b>
Mrs Michelle Allen <sup>a</sup>	Chairperson/Member	31 December 2016
Mr Kevin Goss <sup>b</sup>	Member/Chairperson	27 February 2018
Dr Simon McKirdy	Member	31 December 2016
Ms Tina Thorne	Member	31 December 2016
Mr David Jarvie	Member	27 February 2018
Mr Barry Large	Member	27 February 2018
Mr Cliff Winfield	Member	27 February 2018

<sup>a</sup> Chairperson until 2 June 2016

<sup>b</sup> Chairperson from 3 June 2016





## 2 Council activities in 2015/16

### 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. During 2015/16, the Council continued its commitment to engaging with key stakeholders so as to develop robust advice for government underpinned by a strong consultative process. The focus during the year was on government, industry and community investment in Western Australia's biosecurity. The key areas of advice that were progressed were:

- Biosecurity investment decision-making
- Biosecurity resource allocation and prioritisation within DAFWA
- Funding agricultural biosecurity.

In addition, the Council kept a watching brief on the biosecurity-related developments at the national and state levels, advising on the review of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity and the State Biosecurity Strategy. The Council also monitored application of a 'community-coordinated approach' to biosecurity in the south-west, Western Australia's preparedness for biosecurity emergency response and cross-agency collaboration.

This section of the report documents the activities undertaken by the Council. Government progress on past recommendations is discussed in Section 3.



Biosecurity protects the environment from invasive pests and diseases.



## 2.2 Biosecurity investment decision-making

In the previous reporting period, 2014/15, the Council actively engaged 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<sup>3</sup>. This was prompted by a decline in government resources for biosecurity that resulted in a strict process to target the limited resources toward activities of core government business. It was Council's view that the implications of this shift on the biosecurity of Western Australia required investigation.

The 2014/15 work revealed the need for a clearer understanding of the activities and resources being applied to biosecurity by government, industry and community — particularly, how investment decisions are made and, therefore, how resources are allocated. Accordingly, the Biosecurity Council proposed to gather more precise knowledge about the current levels of resourcing and how shared resourcing might evolve.

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

From this, the Council developed a statement on 'where we are at' in terms of biosecurity decision-making and joint effort. To summarise, there is reasonably widespread acceptance of biosecurity as a shared responsibility. However, this needs to be translated into coordinated and cooperative action to address the biosecurity priorities across the breadth of the invasion curve, with a clearer sense of direction than at present.

Other key Council conclusions were:

- Where government withdraws funding support or transfers responsibilities, it must also accept that it has also relinquished control.
- Industry is ready to 'step up' and take a greater leadership role, but government must continue to provide support, advice and engagement.
- Industry and community resources should be targeted toward the priority areas, and government guidance and support in this area will be critical.

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<sup>3</sup> The results of this work were released in December 2014 and can be found on the [Council's webpage](#).



- A species-specific issue may be important in uniting and motivating groups; however, it is suggested that, as groups mature, they consider priority-setting, risk-based decisions and a more strategic approach.
- Policy issues around Recognised Biosecurity Groups need addressing.

The Council suggested that policies need to be identified, developed and agreed upon in order to advance cooperative decision-making and joint effort. Furthermore, the growing industry and community leadership in biosecurity (or, at the least, the expectation of increased leadership and self-direction) requires a strong collaborative approach with government in order to construct these foundations.

The Council is aware that a partnership approach has been initiated between DAFWA and key industry groups to begin building these foundations (for example, the reinvigoration of the biosecurity GrainGuard). DAFWA is also seeking to develop a cost-sharing and cost-recovery policy for agricultural biosecurity (see Section 2.4). This policy is anticipated to provide a course of action to support an effective agricultural biosecurity system into the future as agency budgets tighten and biosecurity risk increases.

The complete findings can be found in the Council's [workshop report](#), which was released in October 2015.

### **2.2.1 Invasion curve animation**

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. The video was released during the 2015/16 financial year on the [DAFWA YouTube channel](#).

It was anticipated that the video would be a useful tool to engage industry and community in targeted biosecurity action. Since its release, the video has been viewed more than 2400 times from the DAFWA YouTube channel. It has received international attention resulting in its translation to Spanish and French, and been promoted by various organisations across Australia and the world<sup>4</sup> and shared via social media. The video is being used for training purposes by New Zealand's Department of Environment and the WA's Department of Parks and Wildlife.

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<sup>4</sup> Including the International Plant Protection Convention (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), Nature Fiji (Fiji), Oregon Sea Grant (Oregon State University), Inland Fisheries Ireland, Greater Sydney Local Land Services, Biosecurity Tasmania, Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International's Invasive Species Compendium and others.



### **2.3 Biosecurity resource allocation and prioritisation within DAFWA**

Maintaining a resilient agricultural biosecurity system underpins the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of Western Australia's agriculture and food sector. At a time of diminishing agency budgets and heightened industry expectation that a core role for DAFWA is biosecurity to protect market access and area freedom, a rigorous process of establishing priorities is critical to enabling defensible decisions on resource allocation. In February 2016, the Minister for Agriculture and Food requested advice and guidance from the Council on resource prioritisation and allocation with regard to biosecurity and associated regulatory functions within DAFWA.

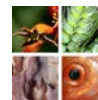
To develop its advice, three key activities were undertaken — a review of relevant studies, nationally; participation in the DAFWA 'stocktake and future directions' process (stocktake); and face-to-face discussions with senior DAFWA staff with responsibility for biosecurity-related programs.

The stocktake took place in March 2016, and consisted of presentations followed by questions and answers across the seven biosecurity-related programs within DAFWA. Program Directors spoke to future funding scenarios and discussed the potential impacts of the budget outlook on agency functions and operational risks with the stocktake panel.

To build on the information provided via the stocktake, Council followed-up with face-to-face discussions with six senior DAFWA staff in June 2016. This allowed a greater depth of questioning and discussion, which was necessary to meet the Minister's request for advice. The main focus of these discussions was to determine whether the current budget was adequate to deliver priority biosecurity functions. Questions focused on the adequacy of current resources (financial and human); the level of emergency response capability; and the impact of 'non-priority' (in terms of DAFWA priorities) directives and budget cuts.

The differences between the information collected via the stocktake and Council's face-to-face discussions were noticeable. Much of this related to the resourcing requirements needed to respond to increasing pressures on the biosecurity system and to maintain appropriately skilled human resource capacity.

The information-gathering activities were completed by 30 June 2016, and the advice to government was finalised in the 2016/17 financial year.



## 2.4 Funding agricultural biosecurity

To complement its work on biosecurity investment decision-making (see Section 2.2), and prompted by the transition to greater industry/community-led biosecurity action, during 2014/15 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).

This work continued into 2015/16, anticipating that it would contribute to 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. However, in February 2016 the Minister for Agriculture and Food requested advice and guidance from the Council on policy and regulation relevant to the funding of agricultural biosecurity activities — specifically, its adequacy, appropriateness and efficiency. Consequently, there was a slight shift to focus on the areas requested by the Minister.

The request for advice noted that ‘further progress [in achieving the goal of ‘biosecurity is everyone’s business’] will be predicated on a clear policy position (backed by the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*) that articulates who is responsible for in-kind and cash contributions to various parts of and functions within the biosecurity system within Western Australia’. This ‘clear policy position’ is to be developed by DAFWA, with the Council’s work informing the policy position.

To develop its advice, a document review was conducted and in-depth discussions were held with people directly involved in regulated industry-based biosecurity funding (i.e. members of Industry Funding Scheme management committees and Agricultural Produce Commission producer committees). The bulk of this activity took place during the 2016/17 financial year, and revealed stakeholder uncertainty — particularly, feelings of cost-shifting and increasing government expectations for industry funding. Consequently, industry input on a future policy framework was limited.

The Council will deliver its advice to government on this area in November 2016.





## 2.5 Planning

The Council held a planning workshop to identify its priority areas of activity to June 2017. In addition to completing its advice to government on biosecurity resourcing and funding (see Sections 2.3 and 2.4), the Council identified the following areas for future work:

- Biosecurity emergency response – investigation into preparedness to deliver timely and consistent biosecurity response
- Biosecurity legislation and policy – input to DAFWA’s cost-sharing and cost-recovery policy framework, which is to be developed by DAFWA alongside Council’s advice on biosecurity funding (see Section 2.4). Input to the biosecurity section of the aquatic resource management regulations, which are under development. Advice to the Minister and Director General of DAFWA on i) potential changes to the BAM Act; and ii) the effectiveness of biosecurity enforcement and compliance activities.
- Biosecurity resourcing – advice and guidance to other government agencies regarding resource prioritisation and allocation to biosecurity (applying the process used with DAFWA – see Section 2.3).
- Biosecurity scorecard – developing a ‘scorecard’ to give a clear picture of the biosecurity of Western Australia, tracked over time.
- Community coordinated biosecurity – advice on new principles for a more coherent approach to ‘public benefit’ biosecurity.



Biosecurity protects our aquatic environments from invasive pests and diseases.



## 2.6 Meetings

During the 2015/16 year, the Biosecurity Council formally convened four times (September, November, February and May), held three half-day Council workshops (September, February, May) and had two teleconferences (March, June). Formal invitations to attend meetings were provided to the office of the Minister for Agriculture and Food. Table 2 documents Council member attendance at meetings.

Table 2 Biosecurity Council member attendance at meetings during 2015/16

Name	No. meetings attended	No. workshops attended	No. teleconferences attended
Mrs Michelle Allen <sup>5</sup>	3	2	1
Mr Kevin Goss	4	3	2
Mr David Jarvie	4	2	2
Mr Barry Large	4	2	1
Dr Simon McKirdy	4	3	1
Ms Tina Thorne	4	3	2
Mr Cliff Winfield	4	3	2

<sup>5</sup> M Allen was on leave from 3 June 2016.

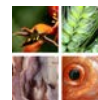


As per the Council’s Instrument of Appointment (Appendix A), the Council should be aware of changing industry, community and environment needs, and of options for balancing the demands of different industries. Furthermore, the Council should adopt a long-term perspective for biosecurity in Western Australia, 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. Some 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 2015/16. In addition, the Chairperson of the cross-agency Biosecurity Senior Officers Group 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 2015/16

Date	Title	Name	Organisation
4 September 2015	Animal Health Australia	Kathleen Plowman Peter Milne	Animal Health Australia
4 September 2015	CSIRO Health and Biosecurity	Gary Fitt	CSIRO
4 September 2015	DAFWA biosecurity over the next three years	Kevin Chennell	DAFWA
6 November 2015	Biosecurity overview – parks and wildlife	Geoff Stoneman	Department of Parks and Wildlife
6 November 2015	National cost-sharing framework	Kevin Chennell	DAFWA
19 February 2016	Aquatic biosecurity overview - fisheries	Mike Snow, Russell Adams, Victoria Aitken	Department of Fisheries
13 May 2016	Biosecurity policy position and action plan – local government perspective	Mark Batty	WA Local Government Association





## 2.7 Other activities

### 2.7.1 Boosting our Biosecurity Defences

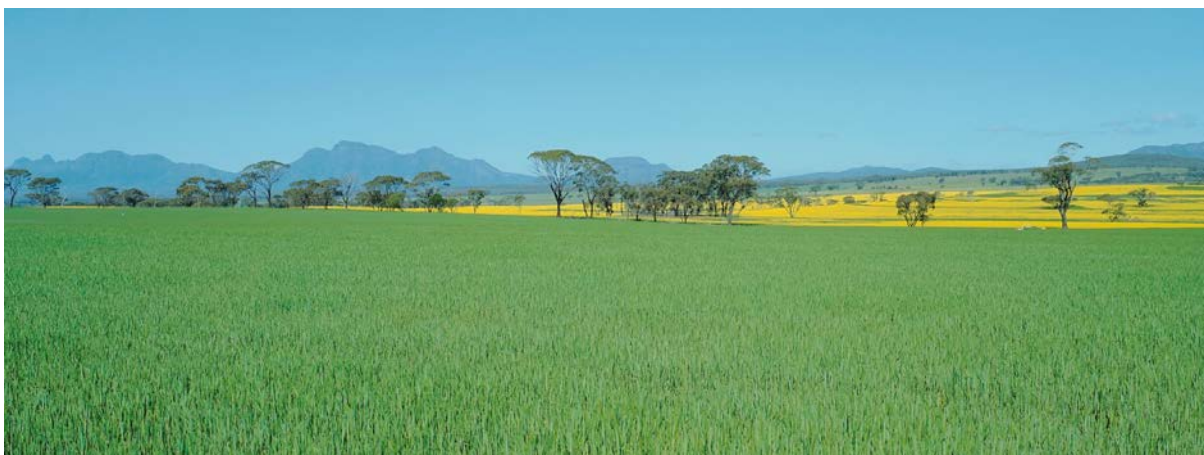
'Boosting our Biosecurity Defences' (BBD) is a \$20 million Royalties for Regions funded project under the Seizing the Opportunities in Agriculture initiative. The BBD project incorporates 11 subprojects, and will build significant capacity within the agricultural sector, and within government, to better manage the biosecurity risks to Western Australia'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 one meeting during 2015/16, 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 2015/16, a second round of funding was available for grains-related biosecurity R&D. 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 approximately \$700 000 being awarded across three research projects. The projects covered two key research foci — improved surveillance, identification, diagnosis and reporting for high-risk grains pests and diseases; and strategies to raise stakeholder awareness of grains biosecurity threats.



Biosecurity protects our agricultural industries from invasive pests and diseases.



### 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) through its chair. 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 2015/16, 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 2015/16, the Council Chair and/or Deputy Chair met once with the Minister and twice with the Director General.

To support stronger relationships between the Council and the various organisations involved across the biosecurity spectrum, during 2015/16 the Council held its ordinary meetings at different locations — DAFWA, Department of Fisheries and Department of Parks and Wildlife.

#### *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 2015/16 including:

- the review of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity*, meeting held 7 July 2016
- the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre consultation on 'facilitating effective community action'
- the National Biosecurity Committee's Biosecurity Roundtable, 9 June 2016
- the Agricultural Produce Commission roundtable, 17 July 2015
- input to draft DAFWA policies on 'funding mechanisms for biosecurity' and 'declaring and categorising organisms'.



#### 2.7.4 Engagement with industry and community

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 2015/16, these events included:

- Presentation at the Agricultural Produce Commission roundtable, 17 July 2015
- Presentation at the DIG (Dieback Information Group) Conference 2015, 31 July 2015
- Participation in the 'Seizing the Opportunity in Agriculture' forum
- ABC radio interview, in response to the 2014/15 Biosecurity Council annual report.

A representative of the Biosecurity Council also attended six Western Australian Local Government Association workshops, held across regional Western Australia. The workshops, held in Esperance, Katanning, Merredin, Bridgetown, Geraldton and Perth, were designed to explore local government biosecurity issues and discuss future management options.

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



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



### 3 Progress on Council recommendations to government

#### 3.1 Biosecurity roles and responsibilities (December 2014)

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.

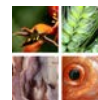
*Progress: The broad roles and responsibilities, as identified by the Council, have been incorporated into the Strategy by DAFWA in consultation with the BSOG. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be launched in late 2016.*

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 West Australian 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 six areas as 'biosecurity goals' within the State Strategy. A seventh goal ('mechanisms to manage established pests and diseases') is also included. For each goal, the Strategy identifies outcomes and the tactics required to successfully achieve the goals.*





### 3.2 Declaration of weeds and vertebrate pests (December 2014)

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<sup>6</sup> 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 priority declared pests.
- 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.

*Progress: DAFWA's Invasive Species program completed reviewing the declaration status and categorisation of the current declared weeds and vertebrate animals in June 2016. The process used a science-based assessment as the first step, followed by stakeholder consultation. This process was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, and has since been documented in the DAFWA policy 'Declaring and Categorising Organisms: Section 22(2) Declared Pests'. A stakeholder reference group provided comment on the results of the science-based assessment and recommendations regarding changes to the declaration status/categorisation. The process identified 'low priorities' as those that no longer met the criteria for declaration; and for the 'low priorities' to remain 'declared' only if they were a priority species being targeted by stakeholder groups (such as Industry Funding Schemes or biosecurity groups).*

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<sup>6</sup> 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: During 2015/16, the BSOG finalised a memorandum of understanding and operating rules for the group. The BSOG is committed to improving cross-agency interactions on biosecurity, which is evident from their proactive activities. Additionally, the BSOG will hold meetings to discuss the interpretation of the BAM Act and its implications for agency resourcing for compliance and regulation — particularly, the responsibilities of biosecurity agencies under this legislation.*

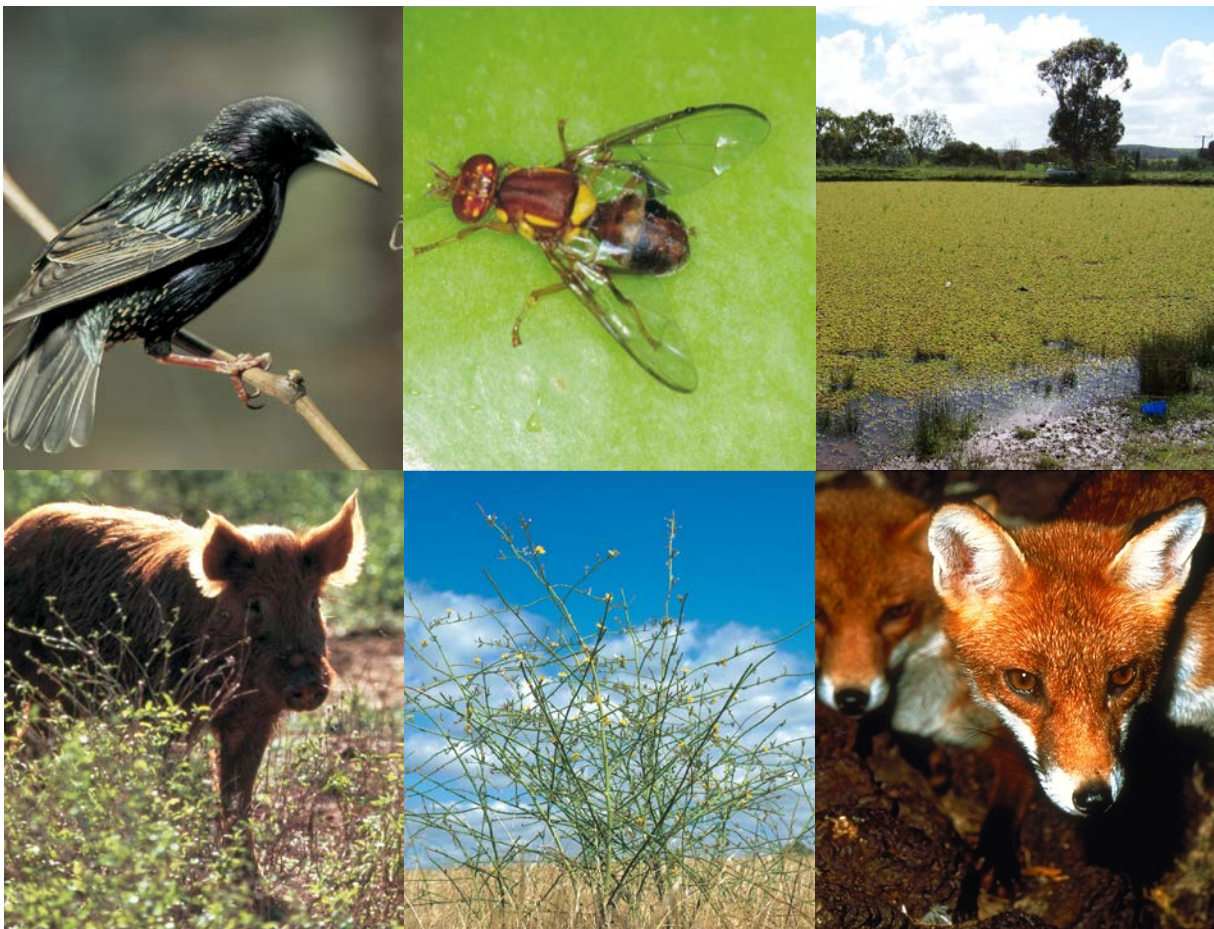
The Council's investigations identified a high level of operational risk for biosecurity emergency response. It was the Council's recommendation that this was best addressed via collaborative, outcomes-based planning at the state level, particularly around a state-wide biosecurity strategy; interagency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

*Progress: A State biosecurity strategy has been drafted by DAFWA, in conjunction with the BSOG and with public input. This is anticipated to be released during the latter part of 2016. There has been significant improvement in the area of emergency response capability, such as training, improving data systems, progressing logistics procedures, implementing emergency resource management and communications tools and developing internal response plans. A framework for 'WestPlan – animal and plant biosecurity' is being developed, which includes preparedness, clarity of purpose, responsiveness and allocation of responsibility. There is continual interagency collaboration with respect to emergency response training. Furthermore, the BSOG is working on developing a set of state-wide risk assessment criteria, developing a strategic biosecurity management risk register and undertaking a biosecurity threat impact and gap analysis.*



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. There has been work in this area via the BBD 'Industry liaison training' activities that involve industry in training, response exercises and the 'recovery' stage of emergency response. The use of industry resources during biosecurity emergency response is a key principle of the Emergency Management training, and industry were keen participants in Exercise Apollo (a national emergency response exercise based on a livestock disease scenario).*



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



#### 4 Cost of Council operations in 2015/16

The direct costs of the Councils' operation during the 2015/16 reporting year amounted to \$135 763 (Table 4). Executive Officer and administrative support (salaries, overheads and operating) were approximately \$57 427 and \$1263, respectively. Additionally, DAFWA provided other services to the Council throughout the year, such as accounting and other general support.

Table 4 Biosecurity Council of Western Australia expenditure for 2015/16

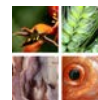
Description	Total \$
Sitting fees	107 897
Travel expenses	18 616
Meeting/workshop expenses	8 011
Communications	796
Invasion curve animation	407
Consumables/incidentals	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>135 763</b>

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 2016/17

'Biosecurity is everyone's business' is a message that is reasonably well-accepted. However, this still requires translation 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 Council's focus for the first half of 2016/17 will be in finalising its advice to government on two key areas, as requested by the Minister — biosecurity resource allocation and prioritisation within DAFWA (completed August 2016), and funding for agricultural biosecurity (completed in November 2016).

This work will be an important addition to past Council work in the area of 'shared biosecurity responsibilities and resourcing', and will underpin its future work. Specifically, the Council will explore the area of environmental biosecurity, with particular focus on resourcing for environmental biosecurity and harmonising a whole-of-government approach. It will also develop an issues paper on the development and implementation of recognised biosecurity groups under the BAM Act. Environmental biosecurity and recognised biosecurity groups are consistently identified by stakeholders as challenges for a cooperative approach to biosecurity.

Furthermore, the Council will apply its process for assessing biosecurity resource allocation and prioritisation within DAFWA to other biosecurity agencies. With agency budgets generally in decline, such assessments can highlight the potential impact on the Western Australian biosecurity system and identify ways in which the systems' resilience may be maintained.

The Council will also continue to monitor the implementation of the BAM Act and its subsidiary legislation, as the legislated foundation for much of the State's biosecurity system. It will also keep a watching brief on the review of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity*.

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.

During 2016/17, the Council will continue to hold its quarterly meetings at different locations, and further build the relationships between the Council and the various organisations involved across the biosecurity spectrum — agriculture, fisheries, environment and forestry.



## 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.

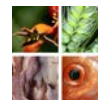
<b>Members</b>	<b>Term</b>
Mrs Michelle <b>ALLEN</b>	for a term expiring on 31 December 2016
Mr Kevin <b>GOSS</b>	for a term expiring on 27 February 2018
Mr David <b>JARVIE</b>	for a term expiring on 27 February 2018
Mr Barry <b>LARGE</b>	for a term expiring on 27 February 2018
Dr Simon <b>McKIRDY</b>	for a term expiring on 31 December 2016
Ms Tina <b>THORNE</b>	for a term expiring on 31 December 2016
Mr Clifford <b>WINFIELD</b>	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.*