

Australian Capital Territory / New South Wales biosecurity roundtable report

Thank you for attending the 2016 National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) Biosecurity Roundtable (Roundtable) held in Sydney, New South Wales on Wednesday 22 June 2016.

This event was hosted by the NBC, together with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries and Biosecurity and Rural Services ACT. After receiving feedback from stakeholders who attended previous events, a new format for the Roundtables is being trialled this year. There will be one roundtable event held in the capital city of each state/territory. The key themes from each Roundtable will be discussed at the National Forum in the Australian Capital Territory later in the year.

The morning session opened with updates from the state government, federal government and an industry representative, Kevin Shiell from Vision Rural Services.

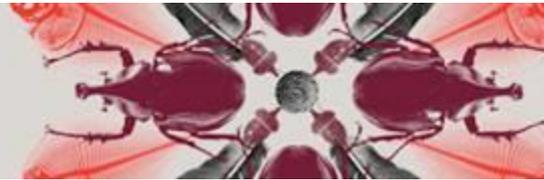
The morning session closed with a question and answer (Q&A) panel, made up of seven state government, federal government and industry representatives.

The afternoon session consisted of discussion groups on two key topics 'Market Access' and 'Community Awareness'. For the Market Access session attendees broke up into smaller discussion groups. The group then reconvened for the Community Awareness session and discussed this topic as a whole.

Key themes from the ACT/NSW event included:

1. Peri-urban biosecurity
2. Shared responsibility
3. Research and development
4. Market access
5. Surveillance capability, and
6. Cost of biosecurity

More detail about these themes is included below. The key themes from the other roundtable events will be added to this list and then discussed at the National Forum.



Key themes

1. Peri-urban biosecurity

The group discussed concerns that some people do not understand their role in the biosecurity system or take personal responsibility for biosecurity. A key area of concern were peri-urban areas, (including urban dwellers or lifestyle blocks), which can be a source of weed and animal pests. The group discussed how the general understanding of biosecurity is often low and viewed as someone else's problem or responsibility. The group then discussed ways to change this perception, such as advertising and social media campaigns.

2. Shared responsibility

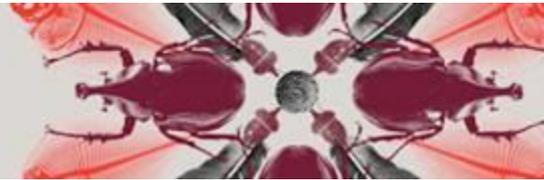
The concept of shared responsibility was raised several times throughout the day. There was discussion about how a better understanding of 'shared responsibility' might be developed. The group discussed what shared responsibility and engagement should look like. Some attendees were concerned that 'shared responsibility' can be code for cost shifting from government to industry. It was discussed how shared responsibility is not just about increased obligations for industry, but can also involve increased benefits and privileges for industry and the scope for industry to have 'a seat at the table'.

3. Research and development

The importance of building long term research and development capacity was discussed at several points throughout the day. The group discussed the need to identify key priorities and strategies, which can differ across industries, then coordinate and be clear across different institutions (like the CRC and PHA) about what the priorities are.

There was discussion about how to build capacity with diminishing resources including getting more 'bang for our buck' and considering how research might be applied more broadly. It was identified that human, animal and plant priorities can overlap and a broader base might increase the available funding options. There was also discussion about giving more time for collaboration on project applications, so that better quality funding proposals can be developed instead of independent competitive ones.

The group discussed the importance of the agriculture portfolio working together with the environment portfolio to get good biosecurity outcomes. There was discussion of relationships already in place and continuing to strengthen these at both the state and federal level moving forward. There was also some discussion about the formal structures in place for agricultural research and the lack of a community and environment research RD&C.



4. Market Access

In the afternoon session there was discussion about market access and the increased difficulty of relying on Australia's clean and green reputation with importing countries now wanting proof.

The difficulty of demonstrating area freedom from pests was discussed. It was identified that there is a lot of information held by industry stakeholders that may assist and a discussion around the best way to capture this information. For example, veterinarians play an important role in identifying diseases and odd symptoms, but they also can confirm the absence of disease that might not be being captured.

5. Surveillance capability

The group discussed surveillance capability, including the need to strengthen surveillance capabilities, the benefits of citizen science and reporting and taking advantage of inexpensive new technology. The group discussed how there is a need for a maintained and enhanced structure of surveillance programs across plant, animal and invasive pest areas in NSW. Concerns were raised around funding for surveillance in NSW and a lack of on-ground officers active in the broader community to recognise threats before they spread. There was also some discussion about the need to destigmatize reporting and find a way to incentivise the reporting of disease.

6. Costs of Biosecurity

The group discussed some concerns that it is often the agricultural portfolio and industries that bear the costs of biosecurity, however a lot of threats will also impact the environment and the general community. There was discussion about lifting the profile of incursion management and the responsibility for pests from being exclusively agriculture, to also include the health and environment portfolios and get them more involved.