

Queensland biosecurity roundtable report

Thank you for attending the 2016 National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) Biosecurity Roundtable (Roundtable) held in Brisbane, Queensland on Wednesday 15 June 2016.

This event was hosted by the NBC, together with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland. 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 Canberra later in the year.

The morning session opened with updates from the state government, federal government and an industry representative, Rachel Mackenzie from Growcom.

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

The afternoon session consisted of discussion groups on two key topics 'Queensland Biosecurity Act' and 'Community Awareness'. For the Biosecurity Act session, attendees broke up into six smaller discussion groups, then reported their key discussion points back to the group. The group then reconvened for the Community Awareness session and discussed this topic as a whole.

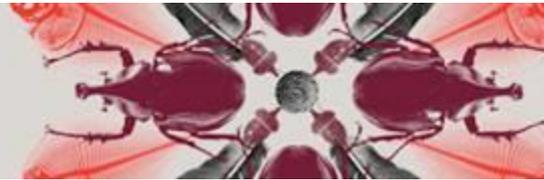
A copy of the agenda is provided at [Attachment A](#).

A copy of the Q&A panel biography is provided at [Attachment B](#).

Key themes from the Queensland event include:

1. Shared responsibility
2. Queensland Biosecurity Act
3. New pest/disease management
4. Communicating the importance of biosecurity to the broader community.

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. Shared responsibility

The group discussed the concept of shared or joint responsibility at several times throughout the day. There were some suspicions raised that 'shared/joint responsibility' was code for cost shifting from government to industry. The group agreed that there is a need for shared responsibility to be a well-defined and understood principle and not a cost shifting exercise. The group also discussed the view that there is a failure at all levels of government to provide mechanisms for industry to effectively, efficiently and economically participate in the shared responsibility. The group discussed the need for a commitment from the top down to implement new initiatives and technology, and that government staff working in biosecurity need to believe in the shared approach including working with industry and providing them with the mechanisms to be able to contribute.

2. Queensland Biosecurity Act

The group discussed the incoming Queensland *Biosecurity Act 2014* which came into effect on 1 July 2016. It was noted that the recent capability review of Queensland's biosecurity system considered the legislation to be an appropriate step forward, whilst encouraging government to explore more flexible ways to regulate. The group discussed the General Biosecurity Obligation in the new state legislation, how it will be applied and what it will mean for industry. The group stressed a need to inform people about the requirements, educate and then enforce where necessary. Queensland government representatives explained that lot of other jurisdictions are going down the same path on this issue, and that this means there will be a lot of discussion about what these concepts mean for everyone moving forward.

3. New pest/disease management

The group discussed issues of dealing with pest/diseases that are currently out of scope of the current emergency response deeds, and what the best process or mechanism for this would be. Attendees raised concerns around how best to transition to management of and support for a pest/disease that can't be eradicated and how we could find better ways to support and fund these matters. The group also discussed how diagnostic times for new/emerging diseases are problematic, with timeframes being too slow with potentially devastating results for industry. Some groups raised concerns that they think the Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis (BIRA) process does not take into account new or emerging diseases/pests.

4. Communicating the importance of biosecurity to the broader community

The group discussed how there is a large problem with people not understanding their role in the biosecurity system or not taking personal responsibility for biosecurity, not just in Queensland but on a national level. Biosecurity is often viewed as someone else's problem. The group also discussed ways to change this perception such as advertising and social media campaigns. The group discussed that we aren't currently capturing the public imagination, and that there is a lack of any incentives to do so.