

Developing practical tools to support biosecurity legislation

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Summary Australia has seen significant biosecurity reforms in the past decade. New measures aim to streamline systems and offer a more flexible and consistent approach to invasive species management. With a key focus on risk-based decision making, governments are emphasising biosecurity as a shared responsibility. In Queensland the Biosecurity Act 2014 (the Act) includes several fundamental changes to previous legislation, including:

- The introduction of outcome-based legislation (through a General Biosecurity Obligation);
- The requirement to establish reasonable and practical management measures based on the level of risk for each situation;
- Changes to the way declared species are defined and categorised; and
- The introduction of the precautionary principle.

These changes represent a paradigm shift for those enforcing the Act, and have introduced uncertainty regarding appropriate planning, enforcement and administration processes. In recognition of this the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland, have invested in the

development of simple and practical tools that assist local governments. The tools provide guidance and best practice approaches that can be used to develop local government biosecurity plans, a mandatory document under the Act. The presentation will present a brief overview of the Act, the engagement process to determine areas of greatest need and the development of a series of biosecurity planning and support tools for local governments. Detail will be provided on:

- How to identify and address the needs and varying capacities of local authorities to plan and prioritise weed and pest animal management;
- Instilling confidence in providing direction to meet a general biosecurity obligation; and
- Communicating the new approach to local communities. The state-wide roll-out of these tools seeks to improve collaboration and consistency across nearly eighty local government areas, enabling biosecurity officers to reduce risk posed by biosecurity matter in Queensland.

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