

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 69

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Policy and Implementation Division

**Topic:** Environmental biosecurity engagement strategy

**Proof Hansard page:** 129

**Senator SIEWERT asked:**

**Mr Koval:** We have. We are working on the environmental biosecurity engagement strategy and how we might have better visibility of what we do in environmental biosecurity. It is a work in progress. This year we hope to be even better positioned to release some of it.

**Senator SIEWERT:** When was that?

**Mr Koval:** During the course of this year.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Do you have a time frame?

**Mr Koval:** I do not have a hard time frame at the moment, but I am happy to take that on notice and come back to you with some hard time lines, if that is of help.

**Answer:**

The National Biosecurity Committee endorsed the Engagement and Communication Strategy for Consulting with Community and Environmental Stakeholders in December 2015. This strategy promotes ongoing engagement with community and environmental stakeholders.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of the Environment are planning a community and environmental stakeholder forum in the coming months as the first action under the strategy. This forum will include a discussion on stakeholders' preferred methods of engagement and frequency of ongoing engagement.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 70

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Policy and Implementation Division

**Topic:** Finalisation of the National Environment and Community Biosecurity Research, Development and Extension Strategy?

**Proof Hansard page:** 129-130

**Senator SIEWERT asked:**

**Senator SIEWERT:** It sounds like it is a question I need to ask at estimates in May. Have you finalised the National Environment and Community Biosecurity Research, Development and Extension Strategy? In fact, it was originally prepared as a draft in April 2014.

**Mr Koval:** Not that I am aware of. I will take that one on notice and get back to you.

**Senator SIEWERT:** That would be appreciated. At the same time could you also take on notice the question of what resources have been committed to its implementation, if they have been?

**Mr Koval:** Okay. Certainly.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Has the government prepared a national priority list of pests and diseases not yet established in Australia that are of environmental biosecurity concern?

**Mr Koval:** That is a bit of work that has to be done more broadly within the government, not by us. I am not aware that we have actually finalised a list of pests that are of environmental concern. But, again, I will take that on notice and come back to you.

**Ms O'Connell:** Senator, we do have lists of pests and diseases that are of concern, but the ones of environmental concern are not segregated from those of other concern.

**Senator SIEWERT:** You have the general list.

**Ms O'Connell:** That is right. But we have not segmented it—and some of them will be on more than one list in terms of being an environmental concern and also a production concern, for example.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Okay. Could you take on notice how regularly that is updated and reviewed?

**Mr Koval:** Yes, certainly.

**Question:** 70 (continued)

**Answer:**

The Australian Government, state and territory governments and industries maintain a range of pest and disease lists for a variety of purposes. For example, there are a range of notifiable pest or disease lists to meet domestic or international reporting obligations or to prioritise action, such as surveillance, diagnostic or intervention effort. These lists are monitored and updated on an ongoing basis and are available on the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website: [www.agriculture.gov.au/pest-diseases-weeds](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pest-diseases-weeds).

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question: 71**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Policy and Implementation Division

**Topic:** Stakeholders invited to biosecurity legislation information forum

**Proof Hansard page:** 130

**Senator SIEWERT asked:**

**Ms O'Connell:** Also, in terms of the new biosecurity legislation, we are about to hold the first stakeholder's sort of information forum on 23 February, and we will have some of those stakeholders present represented there.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Could you provide me with a list of the stakeholders that have been invited?

**Mr Koval:** Certainly.

**Ms O'Connell:** We will do so, yes.

**Answer:**

The list of stakeholders invited to the forum held on 23 February 2016 is found below:

Organisation	Organisation
Board of Airline Representatives	Avalon Airport
Qantas/Emirates	Brisbane West Wellcamp
Virgin Australia	Broome Airport
Brisbane Airport Corporation	Gold Coast Airport
Sydney Airport Corporation	Karratha Airport
Melbourne Airport Corporation	Newcastle Airport
Canberra Airport Corporation	Port Hedland International Airport
Perth Airport Corporation	Sunshine Coast Airport
Adelaide Airport Corporation	Townsville Airport

**Question: 71 (Continued)**

Organisation	Organisation
Darwin Airport Corporation	Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia Inc
Cairns Airport Corporation	Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers
International Working Group on Quarantine Ltd	Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA)
Export Council Australia	International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association (ICHCA)
Australian Logistics Council	Australian Federation of International Forwarders (AFIF)
Australia Post/Star Track	Ministerial Freight Advisory Council (Vic)
Australian Trucking Association	Asciano Limited
Australasian Railway Association	Shipping Australia Limited (SAL)
TOLL	Ports Australia
DHL	Carnival and P&O Cruiseships
Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL)	Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association
INPEX	Post Entry Plant Import Consultative Committee
Shell	Australian Seed Federation
BHP Billiton	Australian Timber Importers Federation
Animal Medicines Australia	Plant Health Australia
Australian Veterinary Association	Food and Beverage Industry Association (FBIA)
IRT (international racehorse transport)	Science Industry Australia
Veterinary Manufacturers and Distributors Association (VMDA)	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Australian Horticultural Exporters Association	Commonwealth Department of Health
Nursery and Garden Industry Australia	

- A number of further engagement activities with other groups are also underway.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 72

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Policy and Implementation Division

**Topic:** Crazy yellow ant

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator WATERS asked:**

1. Last Estimates, the Greens asked about the application from WTMA for \$15m over 3 years to eradicate the YCA near the WTWHA, and the Minister had received the submission from WTMA but no decision had been made. What is the update?
2. Have you assessed that application from WTMA?
3. Are there funds available for projects like that? I.e. there is a \$50m “eradication fund” under the Agricultural White Paper
4. Is there a timeframe for a decision to be made? We understand that the WTMA runs out of money to fight the YCA this year.
5. How long has it been since they applied for funding?
6. Is it the Department’s view that the YCA be eradicated? It’s been reported that Biosecurity Queensland has abandoned its baiting program and instead moved to a containment strategy – is the Federal approach the same – have you abandoned the push to eradicate?
7. Do you view the YCA as eradicable at the WTWHA?
8. I know there is a lot of local community support for the eradication efforts – have you spoken with the Qld Government and the Commonwealth Department of Environment?
9. Can you provide a list of the Australian entry points (ports etc.) where yellow crazy ants been detected and intercepted over the last three years (providing a breakdown of the date and location for each detection or interception)?
10. What action is being undertaken to identify likely entry pathways of yellow crazy ants?
11. What specific actions are being undertaken to reduce the probability of entry of yellow crazy ants via these pathways?
12. Have these actions been effective? How is that being assessed?

**Question:** 72 (continued)

**Answer:**

1. The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has not received any formal applications from the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) in relation to funding the eradication of yellow crazy ants.

On 4 September 2015, the department received a WTMA discussion paper on the eradication of yellow crazy ant, which included a funding proposal. The department met with the WTMA on 9 September 2015 to discuss this paper. As the department did not administer any programmes applicable to WTMA's proposal, it helped WTMA identify other funding options available through the Australian Government, Queensland Government and regional natural resource management (NRM) bodies.

2. The department has not formally assessed any applications from the WTMA in relation to funding the eradication of yellow crazy ants. Please refer to the response to Question 1.
3. Through the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, the Australian Government allocated \$50 million over four years to boost Australia's emergency pest and disease eradication capability.

The majority of this funding (\$39.5 million) is available for national eradication responses to new pest and disease incursions that affect the animal, plant and environmental sectors. National eradication responses for environmental pests are initiated through the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA). These responses are funded, and must be agreed to, by all Australian, state and territory governments.

For an eradication of an environmental pest to proceed, criteria must be met under the NEBRA. These include that the relevant jurisdiction must notify the Australian Government of an outbreak of a pest or disease and all jurisdictions must agree that the outbreak is eradicable.

The yellow crazy ants affecting the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area were likely detected around Cairns in 2001, predating the NEBRA. It is not possible to consider an existing outbreak under this agreement and therefore initiate a national eradication response. However, the Queensland Government ceased its eradication programme in late 2012 following additional detections during 2011-12, indicating state-wide eradication was no longer feasible.

The remaining \$10.5 million established the Immediate Assistance Fund (IAF). This fund supports industries and state and territory governments in rapidly responding to, or preparing for, new incursions of pests and diseases.

The Government has also allocated \$50 million in the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper to improve the way that common pest (including feral) animals and weeds are managed and to increase the capacity of farmers to deal with these threats.

The funding will focus on developing new or improved control tools (research and development) and building the capacity of the farmers, industry and the community to manage pest animals and weeds (for example training in best practice methods).

**Question: 72 (continued)**

Projects to build the capacity of the farmers, industry and the community to manage pest animals and weeds will be delivered by state and territory governments, as agreed through bilateral project agreements (currently under negotiation). Projects will focus on improving the management of established pest animal and weed species of national significance that have a detrimental effect on Australia's agricultural competitiveness and are in the national interest to manage. The Queensland Government will put forward projects for funding based on their priorities.

4. The department has not formally assessed any applications from the WTMA in relation to funding the eradication of yellow crazy ants. Please refer to the response to Question 1.
5. The department has not received any formal applications from the WTMA in relation to funding the eradication of yellow crazy ants. Please refer to the response to Question 1.
6. Yellow crazy ants were first recorded on Christmas Island in 1934 and in the Northern Territory in 1975 and since then they have established throughout large parts of Australia. It was estimated in 2001 that yellow crazy ants occupy 2500 square kilometres in Arnhem Land. Additionally, since 2001, yellow crazy ants have been found at more than 20 sites in Queensland: in and around Cairns, Townsville, Hervey Bay, Caboolture and Brisbane among others. The Queensland Government ceased its eradication programme in late 2012 following additional detections during 2011-12, indicating state-wide eradication was no longer feasible.

The department has no current involvement in any eradication programmes for yellow crazy ants.

However, the department does not consider that yellow crazy ants can be eradicated from Australia based on the established populations in the Northern Territory and Queensland.

7. The eradication of yellow crazy ants from the WTWHA would be difficult given current available methods for eradication, the difficult terrain in the region and the high likelihood of reintroductions due to the existing population of ants in surrounding areas.
8. Government activity in response to yellow crazy ant in Queensland and on Christmas Island is led by the Department of the Environment. However, the department is in regular contact with the Department of Environment and the Queensland Government regarding environmental pests and diseases, including yellow crazy ant.
9. The follow table provides information on interceptions of yellow crazy ants from 2013 to 2015. There have been no interceptions of yellow crazy ants in 2016.

<b>Incident Date</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Location</b>
25-February-2013	QLD	Townsville Port Precinct
02-May-2013	QLD	Fisherman's Island Port Precinct
14-May-2013	QLD	Townsville Port Precinct
03-July-2013	QLD	Gladstone Port Precinct



02-September-2013	SA	Port Adelaide Port Precinct
20-September-2013	QLD	Cairns airport
08-December-2013	NT	Darwin airport
31-December-2013	QLD	Amberley Airforce Base (RAAF)
04-February-2014	VIC	Tullamarine airport
07-March-2014	QLD	Fisherman's Island Port Precinct
26-March-2014	QLD	Gladstone Port Precinct
27-March-2014	QLD	Brisbane International Airport
16-June-2014	QLD	Fisherman's Island Port Precinct
21-June-2014	WA	Perth International Airport
16-August-2014	QLD	Brisbane International Airport
15-September-2014	QLD	Fisherman's Island Port Precinct
20-October-2014	QLD	Bundaberg Port Precinct
16-November-2014	QLD	Gold Coast Airport
20-December-2014	VIC	Tullamarine airport
15-January-2015	VIC	Tullamarine airport
24-February-2015	QLD	Fisherman's Island Port Precinct
09-April-2015	WA	QAP facility in Perth
29-May-2015	QLD	Fisherman's Island Port Precinct
11-August-2015	VIC	QAP Facility in Melbourne
14-August-2015	QLD	Fisherman's Island Port Precinct
17-August-2015	SA	QAP facility in Adelaide

10. In 2015, the department funded the CSIRO to undertake an invasive ant pathway project. This project, expected to be completed in 2016, will identify high-risk points of entry to Australia and the likelihood of establishment in various locations. It will inform the efficient allocation of resources, mitigating risk and delivering optimal investment in surveillance activities for invasive ants.
11. The department performs a range of activities designed to minimise incursions of exotic pests and diseases. This includes:

**Question:** 72 (continued)

- inspections of imported commodities for the presence of biosecurity risk material commonly associated with those commodities
- surveillance – on vessels, aircraft, cargo and the places at which cargo is handled – for hitch-hiker pests, including yellow crazy ants, that are not specifically associated with an import commodity.

There have been no new post-border detections of yellow crazy ants since 2013. Most recent post-border detections are believed to have originated from the existing population and are not new incursions. However, it is very difficult to establish the effectiveness of border controls through incursion or interception data for a specific pest such as yellow crazy ants.

There are multiple pathways through which yellow crazy ants could enter Australia. These include natural pathways as well as regulated and non-regulated human-assisted pathways. Because yellow crazy ants are a hitch-hiker pest (not associated with a specific commodity), the source of a new incursion is hard to identify and it is therefore difficult to assess the effectiveness of interception activities undertaken by the department.

Regardless, the department is focused on continuous improvement and maintaining the highest possible standard of biosecurity system. As such, it is considering a number of options to minimise the likelihood of invasive ant incursions, including the CSIRO pathway project.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question: 73**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Policy and Implementation Division

**Topic:** New Biosecurity Regulations

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

A range of workshops and forums are underway across the country to discuss details of delegated legislation and allow stakeholders and clients to consider how the legislation will affect their industry.

There will be changes under the Act, and the regulations include important details of how it will work in practice, including the process for applying for import permits, how goods and conveyances are assessed and managed for biosecurity risk when they enter the country, and the information that must be included in an application for a permit to bring or import conditionally non-prohibited goods.

1. Can you provide information on how the department will undertake workshops and forums across the country to discuss the delegated legislations?
2. Can you provide a list of stakeholders and clients the department intends to consult with?
3. What will be the main points the department intends to discuss with stakeholders and clients?

**Answer:**

1. The department has been undertaking a broad range of stakeholder engagement activities to discuss the delegated legislation through standing consultative committees and additionally, through a series of targeted forums. This is in addition to the regular routine engagement with our stakeholders and clients through the relevant business areas.

A Biosecurity Legislation Industry Forum was held on 23 February 2016 which involved round table discussions between industry peak bodies and departmental senior executives and subject matter experts on the delegated legislation and the impact on their industries.

**Question: 73 (continued)**

Further Biosecurity Information Sessions are scheduled to be held around Australia from 15 March to 6 April 2016 to provide for two way discussion on delegated legislation to a broad range of clients and stakeholders. Department representatives will discuss the delegated legislation, what and how the changes to the legislation will impact them, and provide opportunity for questions.

2. Below is a list of stakeholders the department is engaging or intends to engage with:

<b>Airport and Passenger</b>	
Board of Airline representatives	Avalon Airport
Qantas / Emirates	Brisbane West Wellcamp
Virgin Australia	Broome Airport
Brisbane Airport Corporation	Gold Coast Airport
Sydney Airport Corporation	Karratha Airport
Melbourne Airport Corporation	Newcastle Airport
Canberra Airport Corporation	Port Headland International Airport
Perth Airport Corporation	Sunshine Coast Airport
Adelaide Airport Corporation	Townsville Airport
Darwin Airport Corporation	
Cairns Airport Corporation	
<b>Freight and Cargo</b>	<b>Shipping and Ports</b>
Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia (CBFCA)	Shipping Australia Limited (SAL)
Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers (CAPEC)	Ports Australia
International Working Group on Quarantine	Carnival and P&O Cruiseships
Export Council Australia	APPEA
Australian Logistics Council	Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL)
Australia Post / Star Track	INPEX
Australian Trucking Association	Shell
Australasian Railway Association	BHP Billiton
TOLL	
DHL	
Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA)	
International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association (ICHCA)	
Australian Federation of International Forwarders (AFIF)	

**Question: 73 (continued)**

Ministerial Freight Advisory Council (Vic) Asciano Limited Food and Beverage Importers Association (FBIA)	
<b>Animal</b>	<b>Plant</b>
Animal Medicines Australia Australian Veterinary Association IRT (international racehorse transport) Veterinary Manufacturers and Distributors Association (VMDA) Invasive Species Council	Australian Horticultural Exporters Association Nursery and Garden Industry Australia Post Entry Plant Import Consultative Committee Australian Seed Federation Australian Timber Importers Federation Plant Health Australia
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>	<b>Consultative Committees</b>
Science Industry Australia Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Department of Health Department of Innovation, Industry and Science Department of Defence Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development Attorney General's Department Department of Immigration and Border Protection State and Territory Governments Environmental Groups International Trading Partners Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Cargo Consultative Committee (DCCC) National Farmers' Federation (NFF – Biosecurity Taskforce see additional page) Horse Industry Consultative Committee Biological Consultative Committee

3. The main points the department intends to discuss with stakeholders are:

- Key changes in the *Biosecurity Act 2015* that take effect 16 June 2016
- How the changes to the delegated legislation will impact stakeholders and any transition arrangements
- Invite stakeholders to provide feedback on the delegated legislation through forums and through the submissions process

**Question: 73 (continued)**

- Provide supporting information and fact sheets

**NFF Biosecurity Taskforce Members:**

AgForce Queensland
Animal Health Australia
Animal Medicines Australia Limited
Australian Cane Growers' Council Limited
Australian Chicken Growers Council Limited
Australian Dairy Farmers' Limited
Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association Ltd
Australian Livestock Exporters Council
Australian Pork Limited
Australian Veterinary Association
Beechworth Honey Pty Ltd
Cattle Council of Australia
Corporate Agriculture Group
Cotton Australia Limited
Dried Fruits Australia
Future Farmers Network
Goat Industry Council of Australia
Grain Growers Limited
GrainCorp Operations Limited
Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
NSW Irrigators' Council
NSW Farmers Association
Pastoralists Association of West Darling
Primary Employers Tasmania
Ricegrowers' Association of Australia
Ridley Corporation Limited
Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association
Victorian Farmers Federation
WA Farmers
WoolProducers Australia
Plant Health Australia