



# Queensland Biosecurity Strategy 2017-2022

Submission from  
Australian Veterinary Association Ltd  
Queensland Division



10 July 2017

## About us

The Australian Veterinary Association is the national organisation representing veterinarians in Australia. Our 9000 members come from all fields within the veterinary profession. Clinical practitioners work with companion animals, horses, farm animals, such as cattle and sheep, and wildlife. Government veterinarians work with our animal health, public health and quarantine systems while other members work in industry for pharmaceutical and other commercial enterprises. We have members who work in research and teaching in a range of scientific disciplines. Veterinary students are also members of the Association.

## Recommendations

As a participant in developing the Strategy, the AVA welcomes the development of the Queensland Biosecurity Strategy. With its long coastline, proximity to Indonesia and New Guinea and diversified decentralized primary industry base, Queensland is potentially most at risk from biosecurity incursions. The following comments and recommendations are made to enhance the strategy for maximum outcomes and benefits for Queensland.

**Goals:** The AVA supports the 4 goals of the strategy. There will be challenges for the first goal of prevention of exotic pests and diseases from entering Queensland as this is a federal responsibility and apart from lobbying the federal government for more resources and policy changes, there is little direct influence that can be had over this goal. The recent White Spot in prawns is a recent example of how difficult it is to manage national trade policies.

**Recommendation 1:** The Qld biosecurity strategy should be partnered with a national biosecurity strategy in order for this to be a realistic goal.

**Strategic themes:** The 6 strategic themes are the essence of how the goals will be achieved. The areas of focus in all themes seem largely to be based on collaboration, knowledge and awareness and funding but actual outcomes are less well defined.

**Recommendation 2:** All themes would benefit from having baseline status measured and then measured annually to gauge effectiveness of strategies and progress towards aspirations.

Specific comment on each of the themes is as below.

**Theme 1 – collaborative governance and leadership.** While it says in the strategy that there will be a focus on forums to reach agreement on collective biosecurity priorities, issues and investment, this is actually the most important part of the strategy and potentially should be included in this strategy for completeness. If too specific, commitment to action could be captured by saying the following:

*A scorecard will be developed to track progress on Queensland biosecurity status. Coordinated action plans will be developed based on the assessment of priorities on key principles including value and potential value to the Queensland economy, threat to human health and the environment and impact on social licence.*

Currently there is ill defined commitment to doing anything solid by this strategy and it would be helpful to have a measurable outcome of improving biosecurity by this theme.

**Theme 2 - Every Queenslanders plays their part.** This theme is about increasing awareness to enhance surveillance and would possibly be better described as *Extending capacity to recognize threats*. An important area of focus for this is training so effective knowledge transfer to the general public or targeted groups is a critical component. The current areas of focus are on engagement (which is important) but less on knowledge transfer (which is critical).

**Theme 3 – Empowered to act.** This theme focusses on skills analysis, communication and networking. This theme could be enhanced by including two other components that play critical roles in feeling empowered to act. Training and skills development is one and the ability to be part of the decision making is essential if one is feeling empowered to act. The strategy area of focus misses both these points.

**Theme 4 – Bright Ideas and better ways.** This is a great theme but is missing the importance of research in getting these better ways. Australia has a great history of being innovative but with traditional government funding of research being cut, the lag phase of this reduced investment will eventually impact in decades to come. Short term thinking will inhibit progress in this theme.

**Theme 5 – Valuing and building on our investments.** The AVA agrees on the areas of focus in this theme.

**Theme 6 – Better Intelligence Systems.** The AVA agrees on the areas of focus in this theme. It is not clear what “fit for purpose intelligence” is and perhaps another area of focus could be on managing data so that knowledge is reported in a timely and relevant manner.

The AVA thanks the Queensland Government for the opportunity to comment on this strategy.