

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Stage 2 survey

Stage 2 of the review is now underway. The review panel is looking for ways to improve the operation and effectiveness of the BAM Act, with a focus on four key themes identified through Stage 1. These are areas that the review panel and stakeholders identified as particularly challenging for WA.

You are encouraged to read the discussion paper describing the four themes and challenges, available [here](#). The review panel is interested in your ideas about potential options and solutions to improve how WA's biosecurity system responds to the challenges presented across the four themes.

Tell us what you think by completing this short survey **by midnight on Sunday 4 December 2022**.

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Theme 1: Principles to underpin WA's biosecurity

Two existing principles of WA's biosecurity system were identified as areas that are critically important but challenging to put into practice – biosecurity in all contexts and shared responsibility.

Biosecurity in all contexts: While the BAM Act was established to address biosecurity in all contexts, it's an ongoing challenge to balance different interests and ensure WA's biosecurity system is balanced to deliver social, environmental and economic outcomes.

Shared responsibility: Biosecurity is in everyone's interest. The volume of pests, weeds and diseases that need to be stopped, eradicated, or managed makes biosecurity a never-ending and difficult task. While it's easy to agree that collective action is needed, what this means on the ground can be confusing and contested.

1. How important do you believe the above principle of 'shared responsibility' is to WA's biosecurity?

Choose an option

2. How important do you believe the above principle of addressing 'biosecurity in all contexts' is to WA?

Choose an option

Critical

Very important

Moderately important

Not very important

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Theme 2: Legal foundations for WA's biosecurity

Legislation can support, enable or force certain actions. When legislation is used to make people and organisations act in a certain way, it's important that it is proportionate with the threat or harm being addressed. The review panel has identified two legal foundations of WA's biosecurity system that are particularly challenging.

Prioritising pests, weeds and diseases: There is concern that interest groups influence the process used to prioritise pests, weeds and diseases under the BAM Act. This can detract focus and resources from more serious threats and/or non-agricultural threats, and result in legal requirements being applied where they aren't warranted (or not applied where they are).

Enabling industries and local/regional communities to act: Mechanisms under the BAM Act support industry and/or community-driven biosecurity and pest management. However, there is a tension between the pests, weeds and diseases addressed through the BAM Act and enabling and empowering local and regional communities to respond to pests, weeds and diseases that impact them.

3. How important do you believe it is for the BAM Act to provide the legal foundations for prioritising pests, weeds and diseases?

Choose an option

4. How important do you believe it is for the BAM Act to provide the legal foundations to enable industries and communities to address their pest, weed and disease priorities?

Choose an option

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Theme 3: Planning, coordinating and resourcing WA's biosecurity system

Contending with an increasing volume of pests, weeds, and diseases across the whole of WA, and working with many stakeholders, means that planning, coordinating, and allocating resources for biosecurity issues is no easy task. The key is determining who is responsible for what, and what will and won't be done, and when; but there are differing opinions about who should be doing and paying for different aspects within the WA biosecurity system.

5. How important do you believe planning, coordinating and resourcing WA's biosecurity system is to WA?

Choose an option

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Theme 4: Community-led pest and weed management

Community-led pest and weed management is currently supported by the BAM Act through the 'declared pest rate - recognised biosecurity group' (DPR-RBG) model. Community support for the model varies significantly across the State, reflecting the diverse landscapes, communities, and pest management challenges present in WA.

There is significant stakeholder interest in, and different views about, whether the DPR-RBG model is a good way to support communities to work together to manage widespread and established pests under the BAM Act.

6. How important do you believe community-led pest and weed management is to WA?

Critical

Critical

Very important

Moderately important

Not very important

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Answers

#1-5 Critical

#6 Moderately Important

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Options and solutions

The review panel is interested in your ideas about **potential options and solutions to improve** how WA's biosecurity system responds to the challenges presented across the four themes:

1. Principles to underpin WA's biosecurity: Biosecurity in all contexts; shared responsibility
2. Legal foundations of WA's biosecurity: Prioritising pests, weeds and diseases; enabling industries and local/regional communities to act
3. Planning, coordinating and resourcing WA's biosecurity system
4. Community-led pest and weed management

7. What is achievable and can be done now?

Please add your comment here...

Theme 1 – Principles to underpin WA's biosecurity

Shared responsibility

The AVA strongly supports enhanced collaboration, sharing of responsibilities and improving awareness at all levels of society of the significance of biosecurity, given the increasing complexities and challenges we face as a nation.

In Australian agriculture, our 'clean and green' reputation has provided a privileged trading position for many years, ensuring consumer confidence in terrestrial and aquatic livestock production in both local and international markets.

This reputation is reliant on a sound animal disease biosecurity, surveillance and reporting system, and veterinarians play a crucial role in maintaining this.

The contribution veterinarians make to the community is highly valued, underpins the health of animals and significantly contributes to the social license of animal industries to operate.

The AVA would encourage legislative reform to specifically acknowledge this by requiring all assurance schemes involving animals to require veterinary input.

We know that the impacts on our livestock and export industries would be catastrophic and cost the economy many billions of dollars, should diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever or Lumpy Skin Disease gain entry to the country.

In a time of heightened risk from both exotic and emerging diseases, as well as rapidly increasing global trade in animal products and human travel and resettlement, it is imperative that if greater coregulation is pursued as part of legislative reform then resourcing the delivery of the public good that this provides must be a shared responsibility.

In the context of the veterinary sector the AVA believes that adequately resourcing public-private partnerships between the government and private veterinary sectors, and development of a coordinated framework for disease surveillance, prevention, and control, is key to success of this shared approach.

Another opportunity for shared responsibility is to improve the education of non-veterinary industry participants about their obligations in respect to the use of veterinary chemicals i.e. not relying on veterinarians to perform this role.

Theme 3 – Planning, coordinating and resourcing WA's biosecurity system

Resourcing of veterinarians

The ability to respond effectively to an incursion of an Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) into Australia would rely on an available pool of veterinarians who are appropriately prepared and supported to assist in such a situation.

Unfortunately, as a result of the veterinary workforce shortage, this pool of veterinary expertise is not available. Resourcing of veterinarians and the services they provide is currently not adequately addressed.

This workforce shortage is a product of the diminishing sustainability of the veterinary profession due to decades of underinvestment.

The effects of this have resulted in an increased difficulty accessing veterinary care (particularly in regional and remote areas).

Further effects could include greater delays in disease detection in production animal species and an impaired emergency animal disease response.

Public investment in the veterinary profession, and recognition of the important role veterinarians play in society is required to help address this situation.

This can be achieved through:

- Improving the sustainability of the veterinary profession, through:
 - Improving financial viability through changing the business model to ensure all veterinary services that deliver public benefits do not come at a cost to veterinary businesses
 - Including veterinarians in schemes that incentivise professionals to deliver services rurally (e.g. HECS bonding scheme for rural and regional vets similar to doctors, access to subsidies)
 - Supporting veterinary profession infrastructure (e.g. adequate funding for veterinary training to ensure Australia can continue to supply local veterinary graduates and support for workforce planning)
 - Providing sectoral support to improve workforce wellbeing and address the mental health crisis facing the profession
 - Planning for, and funding, veterinary services in areas of public need:
 - Animal welfare
 - Biosecurity - surveillance, testing and control of disease through vaccination
 - Animal population control (e.g. desexing animals)
 - Care of animals owned by the crown (e.g. wildlife)
 - Emergency care of owned animals in natural disasters
- Ensuring the veterinary profession is involved in animal welfare planning and implementation
 - Developing a national animal welfare strategy and implementation plan that ensures Australia's animal welfare standards are world leading
 - Removing exemptions for animals such as wildlife and production animals from animal welfare legislation to maintain consumer confidence in modern animal welfare legislation
- Embedding the veterinary profession in any Australian Centre for Disease Control and acknowledge the important role the sector plays in One Health surveillance, disease prevention and control

Veterinarians are the only experts to have the relevant training and knowledge to integrate key areas such as pharmacology, epidemiology, animal husbandry, microbiology/parasitology, veterinary public health etc. There should be support and facilitation for registered veterinarians to develop capacity and capability in fields such as:

1. Adverse experiences with veterinary chemical treatment including but not limited to the development of resistance, treatment failures, animal toxicity, suspect residues, toxicity to operators or handlers etc
2. Physical, microbiological and chemical safety when handling livestock.
3. Occurrence of endemic disease at high frequency or prevalence, especially when identified at slaughter and/or saleyards.
4. Risk management of biological hazards associated with animals or animal products including zoonoses etc

8. What do we need to start now for longer-term benefits?

Please add your comment here...

The actions as outlined above must be taken immediately as the veterinary workforce crisis is already established and will only be exacerbated over time without active intervention.

9. Are there different and better ways of doing things? Tell us!

Please add your comment here...

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

10. Which of the following categories best describes you *

- ☐ Community member or group
- ☐ Primary industries
- ☐ Environment/natural resource management
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Academic / research
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other – Australian Veterinary Association (AVA):

The AVA is the national organisation representing veterinarians in Australia.

Our members come from all fields within the veterinary profession. Clinical practitioners work with companion animals, horses, livestock, and wildlife. Government veterinarians work with our animal health, public health, and quarantine systems while other members work in industry, research, and teaching.

We empower the veterinary profession to thrive by providing voice, education, community and support.