

Notes from the Chair

2016 was an eventful year for the Marine Pest Sectoral Committee (MPSC) and stakeholders, with the introduction of new national biosecurity legislation, ratification of the international Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention and significant progress in a number of priority MPSC tasks.

(More information on the BWM Convention can be found at the link:

[http://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Control-and-Management-of-Ships'-Ballast-Water-and-Sediments-\(BWM\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Control-and-Management-of-Ships'-Ballast-Water-and-Sediments-(BWM).aspx))

Highlights of the period include development of a draft National Strategic Plan for Marine Pest Biosecurity (*MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*), development of a draft Australian Priority Marine Pest List, and establishment of two new task groups: one to determine the scope of a national marine pest surveillance and diagnostics strategy, and the other to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place for the use of ballast water management systems (BWMS) in Australian waters.

The eleventh and twelfth MPSC meetings and workshops were held in June and December 2016. Both workshops included a heavy focus on collaborative progression of the draft *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*. The committee extends thanks to all industry, research, conservation, government, and non-government marine pest stakeholders whose attendance, expertise and commitment made these workshops such a great success.

Other highlights of 2016 included publication of five Emergency Marine Pest Plan (EMPPlan) Rapid Response Manuals on the department's website, planning for several marine pest projects under the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, and finalisation of the updated

Consultative Committee on Introduced Marine Pest Emergencies (CCIMPE) Terms of Reference and Operating Guide.

(More information on the Rapid Response Manuals can be found at the link:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/marine-pests/empplan>)

(More information on the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper can be found at the link: <http://agwhitepaper.agriculture.gov.au>)

As outgoing Chair, I would like to thank the MPSC members, observers, and stakeholders for the many informative, productive, and enjoyable meetings and workshops. I would especially like to thank the MPSC nationally engaged stakeholders, whose partnership and commitment has been invaluable to MPSC's successes. I would also like to welcome Dr Andrew Sanger as the incoming Chair. Dr Sanger works for the NSW Department of Primary Industries, and leads teams involved in invasive species strategy and policy, management programs, and research. He is also a member on the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee. I am confident Dr Sanger will enjoy, as I have, working with MPSC members and stakeholders to progress the valuable work of the committee.

Dr Robyn Martin
Chair MPSC08-12

MPSC High Priority Work Items

In 2016, MPSC progressed the following high priority work items:

National Strategic Plan for Marine Pest Biosecurity: *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*

On 15 June 2016, over 40 marine pest stakeholders attended a full-day workshop in Hobart to progress the development of the National Strategic Plan for Marine Pest Biosecurity: *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*.

Participants – including representatives from a broad range of non-government organisations – discussed and agreed on:

- Principles in development of the plan.
- Top marine pest issues and desired management outcomes for 2017-2022.
- Objectives to address the issues and achieve the desired outcomes.
- Some specific activities to take measurable steps towards achieving the agreed objectives.

What's in a name?

- The short title of the National Strategic Plan for Marine Pest Biosecurity is *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*.
- This name reflects the content of the document and is easy to remember.
- It also aligns with the short titles of similar strategies in terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases, such as [AQUAPLAN 2014-2019](#).

The Strategy Task Group then developed the draft *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*, which was circulated to members and stakeholders for comment on 17 November 2016. The draft document drew on the outcomes from the June 2016 workshop and the Australian Government's *Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity*.

On 1 December 2016, MPSC held a second workshop in Adelaide. The 35 participants, including a range of non-government stakeholders, provided high-level feedback on the draft *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022* and assessed the suitability of the proposed activities.

The Task Group are now considering comments and aim to submit the *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022* for consideration by MPSC by mid-2017.

(More information on the Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity can be found at the link: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/marine-pests/review-national-marine-pest-biosecurity>.)

Australian Priority Marine Pests List

On 28-29 November 2016, the List Task Group held a workshop to populate the Australian Priority Marine Pest List. Attendees – including jurisdictional representatives and marine pest experts – assessed a range of exotic and established marine pest species for inclusion in the Priority Pest List.

A draft Priority Pest List, including both exotic and nationally significant established pests, was presented to stakeholders at the MPSC12 workshop on 1 December 2016. The List Task Group plans to develop a report on the assessments, undertake further consultation and finalise the list.

Ballast Water Management Systems

The Biosecurity Act 2015 enables the use of approved Ballast Water Management Systems (BWMS) as an alternative to ballast water exchange. Systems that manage ballast water using active substances – such as chemical biocides, electric currents, or acids – are approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In June 2016, MPSC established a task group to (1) support Australia's involvement in this approval process, and (2) consider options for monitoring and predicting any potential environmental effects of BWMS used in Australian waters.

(More information on BWMS can be found at the link:

<http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/BallastWaterManagement/Pages/Default.aspx>)

National Marine Pest Surveillance and Diagnostics Strategy

Work has begun on development of a national strategy for marine pest surveillance and diagnostics. On 30 November 2016, MPSC established a scoping group to define the main outcomes of marine pest surveillance, and determine the scope of the document. Once this work is complete, a task group will be formed to draft the national marine pest surveillance and diagnostics strategy. Stakeholder engagement

and input will be an important part of the development of this strategy.

Marina and Slipways Biofouling Guidelines

Work to review the biofouling guidelines for the marina and slipways sectors is progressing steadily. Task group membership has recently expanded to include members from the marina and boating industries.

Jurisdictional Updates

Western Australia

The Department of Fisheries, WA has been involved in a range of marine biosecurity research, compliance, policy and communications activities. Highlights include:

- Creation of the Global Marine Biosecurity Research Network.
- Refinement and implementation of the early warning system of monitoring at high value and high risk assets around the state.
- Creation of new and revised communication materials, for marine pests broadly, and for specific marine pest biosecurity projects.
- Ongoing research into Asian Green Mussels with the University of Singapore.
- Continued compliance vessel inspections around the state.
- Continued development of legislative frameworks and guidelines to support aquatic biosecurity with the implementation of the Aquatic Resources Management Bill 2015, when it is enacted.

Victoria

Victoria is continuing to work collaboratively with the Australian Government towards the implementation of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* for domestic ballast water, which will commence on 8 September 2017, when the BWM Convention will come into effect. The Victorian Environment Protection (Ships' Ballast Water) Regulations 2006 have been extended to 28 May 2017. The Environmental Protection Authority Victoria is currently in the final stages of remaking the regulations to fill the gap until the

commencement of the Australian Government ballast water arrangements. For more information about the current domestic ballast water management system in Victoria, view the ballast water web page at <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/your-environment/water/ballast-water>.

South Australia

South Australia is progressing work in:

- Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome preparedness.
- Developing a smart phone application for aquatic pest reporting.
- A range of research and policy projects on pest detection, response and established pest management.

New South Wales

In January 2016, NSW delivered two presentations at the International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions in Sydney; one explaining changed management of *Caulerpa taxifolia* in NSW and the second on the outcomes and future challenges identified as part of a NSW-led national marine pest simulation exercise (Exercise Wakame).

NSW is amalgamating all biosecurity legislation under a single new Act, the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. Development of the subordinate legislation is now underway and it is anticipated the Act will be enforced in 2017. Consultation material regarding this new Act will soon be ready, including a draft Regulation and Regulation Impact Statement. These documents will be made available for comment once ready.

(More information on the International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions can be found at the link:

<http://www.marinebioinvasions.info/>)

Queensland

The new Queensland *Biosecurity Act 2014* commenced on July 1, 2016 and provides stronger legislation for dealing with marine pests

in Queensland waters and places more responsibility on risk creators.

The Queensland Biosecurity Capability Review identified marine and aquatic biosecurity in Queensland as a capability gap. The Queensland government has commenced implementation of a Queensland Marine Pest Prevention and Preparedness Project to deliver on recommendations of the review.

Northern Territory

In May 2016, Parliament passed amendments to the NT Fisheries Act to strengthen NT aquatic biosecurity provisions. These provisions, which came into effect on 1 Jan 2017, include:

- Increased penalties for intentionally bringing in, causing to bring in, and/or releasing pests or diseases.
- Appropriate powers of entry, inspection and detainment for biosecurity officers.
- The ability for the Fisheries Director to issue instructions or orders to respond to biosecurity threats, including to order a person to destroy or dispose of diseased or contaminated fish or aquatic life as well as noxious species.

NT continues with the ongoing early warning marine pest monitoring program for Darwin harbor and its marinas, Gove and Groote Eylandt harbors, and the new port development at Melville Island.

Tasmania

Biosecurity Tasmania continues to liaise with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) regarding implementation of ballast water arrangements. Tasmania has continued involvement in the National Monitoring Network with SARDI undertaking additional sampling in the port of Hobart.

A new position within the Invasive Species Branch of DPIPW has been established to provide coordination of the Tasmanian marine invasive pest program.

The fire crab (*Pyromaia tuberculata*) was detected in the south-east region of Tasmania. It

is also recorded from Victoria and New South Wales.

An infestation of the bay barnacle (*Amphibalanus improvisus*) was also detected on the hull of a vessel seized by Australian Border Force in November. The barnacles were removed by divers and the vessel is being monitored.

Australian Government

The Australian Government is progressing amendments to the *Biosecurity Act 2015* to ensure full implementation of the BWM Convention, which will come into force on 8 September 2017.

DAWR has also progressed:

- Development of policies related to domestic ballast water.
- Projects under the Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity and the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper.
- A range of activities and projects on marine pest surveillance and biofouling management.

Recent Meetings

MPSC11

The eleventh MPSC meeting was held in Tasmania on 16 June 2016. The day began with updates on National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) activities and implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB), including the IGAB review, which is currently being undertaken by an independent panel.

(More information on the IGAB review can be found at the link:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/partnerships/nbc/intergovernmental-agreement-on-biosecurity/igabreview>)

MPSC members then discussed ballast water management under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, which had come into force that day. Following

this, members agreed to the MPSC strategic work plan for 2016-17 – including the MarinePestPlan and the Australian Priority Marine Pest List as key MPSC work items – and endorsed the draft CCIMPE Terms of Reference and Operating Guide.

The day finished with a presentation from NSW on the outcomes of Exercise Wakame, and agreement to a process for endorsement of any future EMPPlan manuals.

MPSC11 was preceded by a Partners Workshop on 15 June, which focused on the *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*.

MPSC12

The twelfth MPSC meeting was held in Adelaide on 30 November 2016. As well as progressing several high priority work items, as outlined above, highlights of this meeting also included updates on:

- **The Australian Government's review of risk tables for domestic ballast water risk assessment (BWRA)**

It is intended that the BWRA will be used by vessels on domestic routes to determine if the vessel is eligible for a risk based exemption under the Biosecurity Act 2015. DAWR intend to remove out of date pest status data from the BWRA and are considering options to build on existing data for presence/absence of marine species as recommended by the Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity (2015). Analysis of these options will include prioritisation of ports and the use of new technologies where available, to ensure a cost-effective, robust and repeatable approach.

- **White Paper projects**

Activities under the White Paper relevant to marine pest biosecurity include development of marine pest molecular detection methods and validation guidelines, work to improving marine pest surveillance in northern Australia, and marine pest surveys in Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island, and Ashmore Reef.

- **Recent molecular detection workshop**

This workshop was held in Adelaide on 16 November 2016, in order to:

- Share experience and knowledge on marine pest molecular detection methods.
- Discuss and evaluate approaches to validation of animal disease diagnostic methods as an example.
- Develop guidelines for validation of molecular methods for the detection of marine pests.

Once the guidelines are finalised, a second project will focus on validation and development of marine pest molecular diagnostic methods.

The MPSC12 Partners Workshop was held on 1 December 2016. As well as an interactive MarinePestPlan session, the day also included presentations on biofouling projects - including the biofouling Regulatory Impact Statement – and international and domestic ballast water requirements.

(More information on biofouling, including current projects, can be found at the link: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/biofouling/>)

Upcoming MPSC Meetings & Activities

MPSC13

The thirteenth MPSC meeting and corresponding Partners Workshop will be held in Canberra on 7-8 June 2017.

MPSC14

The fourteenth MPSC meeting will be held in Sydney, instead of Adelaide as previously planned. This meeting will be held in the second half of 2017, dates to be confirmed.