

Notes from the Chair - MPSC13

The Marine Pest Sectoral Committee (MPSC) held its thirteenth partner's workshop and committee meeting in Canberra on 7-8 June 2017.

As Chair, I extend my thanks to MPSC members, observers, partners, stakeholders and all who participated in the MPSC13 workshop and meeting.

The Partner's Workshop provided an opportunity for industry representatives to discuss and contribute to *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*, which has been developed as part of the National Marine Pest Biosecurity Strategy. The workshop also facilitated two-way dialogue on a range of marine pest topics including biofouling, the development of a Marine Pest Network and the Australian Government's recent ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments.

The Committee Meeting saw the progression of high priority activities including the endorsement of a National Surveillance Strategy Development Plan and the formation of a Surveillance Strategy Task Group to lead this work.

I would like to offer my best wishes to members who have resigned from their roles in MPSC. We thank you for your valuable contributions to the committee and wish you the best of luck in the future.

This was my first meeting as Chair, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MPSC members, observers, industry partners and secretariat for the productive and constructive MPSC sessions. I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

Dr Andrew Sanger
Chair MPSC13

MPSC High Priority Work Items

In the first half of 2017, MPSC progressed the following high priority work items:

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

The National Marine Pest Strategy Task Group met in February 2017 to consider comments submitted by MPSC members and stakeholders on the *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*.

As part of the development of *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022* the Task Group has consulted with a wide range of stakeholders.

At the MPSC13 Partners Workshop the plan was further discussed, with MPSC partners providing valuable input.

The plan has been developed as part of the Australian Government's Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity and was endorsed by MPSC in October 2017.

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

Ballast Water Management Systems

On the 17 May 2017 an amendment in the *Biosecurity Act 2015* received Royal Assent. The *Biosecurity Amendment (Ballast Water and Other Measures) Act 2017* will strengthen Australia's ability to manage vessel ballast water and was a necessary step in the ratification of the *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments* (BWM Convention) on 7 June 2017. The BWM Convention came into effect on 8 September 2017.

More information on Australia's ballast water requirements can be found at the link: www.agriculture.gov.au/ballast

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. An initial assessment of the possible impacts of BWMS on receiving ports is currently being undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARES).

More information on BWMS can be found at the link:
www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/BallastWaterManagement/Pages/Default.aspx

Ballast Water Management Convention

- The use of ballast water (to stabilise vessels) is an integral part of modern shipping as it can improve both maritime safety and fuel efficiency.
- Ballast water is a major vector for the spread of marine pests. It is estimated that up to 30 per cent of the invasive marine species in Australia have been introduced via ships ballast water.
- Australia has had ballast water management requirements for international ships since 2001.
- The BWM Convention, first adopted by the International Maritime Organization in 2004, came into effect on 8 September 2017 and requires all vessels to effectively manage their ballast water and sediments.
- Australia has ratified the BWM Convention and requires vessels traveling both internationally and domestically to manage their ballast water from 8 September 2017.

Ballast water reporting for international vessels arriving in Australian ports is managed through the Maritime Arrivals Reporting System (MARS). MARS provides vessel operators with clear guidance when traveling to Australian seas. More information on MARS can be found at the link:
www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/mars

Australian Priority Marine Pests List

Based on consultation with jurisdictional representatives and marine pest experts the MPSC Australian Priority List Task Group is finalising the list of species to be included, and expects to complete this work by early 2018.

The draft list includes both established and exotic marine pests that have been identified as being of national significance. ABARES has been engaged by MPSC to assist in the species assessments and publication of the priority pest list.

National Marine Pest Surveillance and Diagnostics Strategy

2017 has seen exciting developments in the National Marine Pest Surveillance and Diagnostic Strategy (Surveillance Strategy) with the formation of a Surveillance Strategy Task Group and endorsement of the Surveillance Strategy Development Plan.

A workshop was held in September 2017 to further develop the Surveillance Strategy and identify priority surveillance activities. The Surveillance Strategy will be implemented over the next five years in conjunction with *MarinePestPlan 2017-2022*.

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 actively involved in a range of marine biosecurity research, compliance, policy and communications activities. Highlights include:

- Collaborative initiatives through the Global Marine Biosecurity Research Network including 'Innovation Jam' and development of an international workshop on the use of molecular tools in marine pest surveillance.
- New legislation *Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016* was passed in November 2016. The Act will replace the current state legislation *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*. Part 6 of the new Act is devoted to aquatic biosecurity.
- An updated version of Vessel Check, WA's online vessel biofouling risk assessment tool was put into production. It is designed to enable vessel managers to take an active role in management of biofouling on their vessels, and reduce their risk of moving marine pests into and around WA.
- WA has implemented the State-wide Array Surveillance Program (SWASP) which supersedes the previous Early Warning System (EWS) program at WA ports from Broome to Esperance using settlement arrays and molecular surveillance tools. The first round of array surveillance has been completed and a second round of arrays were recently deployed.
- Biosecurity WA has extended its external communications with the introduction of Facebook and Twitter accounts. It is anticipated that these platforms will assist during aquatic biosecurity and fish kill incidents to improve public engagement and communication, including delivery of immediate information to the community and stakeholders.
- Aquatic biosecurity in Western Australia is now managed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The new department is an amalgamation of the former Department Agriculture and Food and the Department of Fisheries. MPSC welcomes the new WA committee member Karen Dowd.

Victoria

Victoria continued to implement domestic ballast water regulations with an extension of the sun-setting date to 28 May 2017 for the Victorian Environment Protection (Ships' Ballast Water) Regulations 2006. Victoria has been working collaboratively with the Australian Government towards the implementation of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* for domestic ballast water, which commenced on 8 September 2017, when the Ballast Water Management Convention came into effect.

Victoria is working with the Commonwealth to communicate transitional arrangements for management of ballast water pending the introduction of the Ballast Water Management Convention and held a Ballast Water Information Workshop in March 2017.

Marine Pest Biosecurity in Victoria is now led by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) and MPSC welcomes the new Victorian committee member Dr Andrew Woolnough.

South Australia

South Australia is progressing work in:

- Assisting the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) in the development of ballast water policies.
- The development of a South Australian Marine Pest Surveillance and Monitoring Plan
- The development of a fish kill response training program.
- The development of a *Kangaroo Island Marine Pest Response Plan* to outline the approach to dealing with vessels and infrastructure when marine pests are detected.
- An update of the biosecurity content on the south Australian Primary Industries and Regions website.

More information on marine pests that are currently found in South Australia or that are identified as a risk if introduced can be found at www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/aquatics/aquatic_pests

New South Wales

The New South Wales *Biosecurity Act 2015* came into effect on 1 July 2017 and replaced 14 Acts that dealt with biosecurity in the past.

More information on the Act can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/biosecurity-legislation

NSW Aquatic Biosecurity has followed up on a number of reported marine pests sightings around NSW. They have confirmed a slight range extension of European fan worm *Sabella spallanzanii* in a tributary of Botany Bay as well as a confirmed sighting of European green crab *Carcinus maenas* in the Wonboyn River where this marine pest is already known to occur.

NSW Aquatic Biosecurity is working to develop a trial of in-water hull cleaning in Port Kembla. This work will progress throughout 2017.

Queensland

Biosecurity Queensland has been busy responding to the detection of Asian green mussel *Perna viridis* at the Amrun Port development site south of Weipa.

A surveillance plan has been developed in response to the detection of *P. viridis* and will be carried out over the coming 24 months to: conduct tracing investigations of vessel movements in the area; determine the extent of the incursion and develop containment measures if more Asian green mussels are detected. More information on the detection of *P. viridis* can be found at:

www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/land-management/health-pests-weeds-diseases/pests/invasive-animals/prohibited

A domestic ballast water workshop was held in November 2016 with representatives from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, relevant QLD agencies and Ports Queensland who met to discuss draft policies relating to the implementation of domestic ballast water management policies.

Discussions about the domestic ballast water policy relating to the Great Barrier Reef Marine

Park are on-going with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Northern Territory

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

- Increased penalties for intentionally bringing in and/or releasing pests and 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 and noxious species.

Information on the aquatic species that are listed as prohibited or pest species in the NT can be found at:

www.nt.gov.au/marine/for-all-harbour-and-boat-users/aquatic-pests-marine-and-freshwater

Tasmania

Tasmania is in the process of developing the *Tasmanian Biosecurity Bill*, which will be introduced to Tasmanian Parliament in 2017. The Bill will streamline biosecurity legislation within Tasmania by bringing together legislation that is currently set out under seven separate acts.

Biosecurity Tasmania has identified and removed an infestation of bay barnacles (*Amphibalanus improvisus*) that were detected on the hull of a vessel seized by Australian Border Force in November 2016. The barnacles were removed by divers upon an inspection of the hull of the vessel that was intercepted and escorted to Hobart Harbor as part of an investigation into international drug smuggling.

The detection of this exotic marine pest highlights the biosecurity risks associated with vessels operating outside of the regulatory framework.

The European green crab *C. maenas* has been detected in Macquarie Harbor on the central west coast. This detection signifies a range expansion of *C. maenas* and is the first report on the west coast of Tasmania.

Australian Government

The Australian Government has amended the *Biosecurity Act 2015* to ensure full implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention, which came into force on 8 September 2017. More information on ballast water management in Australian waters can be found at:

www.agriculture.gov.au/ballast

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources 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. Including expanding port surveillance and investing in molecular surveillance techniques.
- Biofouling related projects including a review of the Anti-fouling and In-water Cleaning

Guidelines, a non-market valuation of public values for minimising marine pest arrivals and both commercial and recreational vessel biofouling surveys.

More information on biofouling, including current projects, can be found at the link:

www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/biofouling/

Upcoming MPSC Meetings & Activities

MPSC14

The fourteenth MPSC meeting and corresponding Partners workshop will be held in Sydney 15-16 November 2017.

MPSC15

The fifteenth MPSC Committee meeting and Partners workshops will be held in Queensland. These events will be held in early 2018, dates to be confirmed