

### Notes from the Chair

This has been a busy period for the Marine Pest Sectoral Committee (MPSC), with the committee progressing a number of priority tasks and gearing up to consider future processes in light of the Australian Government Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity.

Highlights of the period include drafting of the MPSC Communications and Engagement Strategy, progress in development of a marine pest risk management system for population of the Australian Priority Marine Pest List, and attendance at a marine pest simulation exercise led by New South Wales.

Other important events include the tenth MPSC meeting (MPSC10) and MPSC Partners Workshop (previously the Industry Consultation Day) held on 18-19 November. These meetings allowed for valuable discussion and information sharing on a number of topics including recent biosecurity legislation, relevant international organisations, and biosecurity activities in the marine pest sector.

As Chair, I extend my thanks to MPSC members, observers, partners, stakeholders and all who participated in these MPSC meetings and activities.

I would like to acknowledge the retirements of longstanding MPSC partners Pheroze Jungalwalla and Sue Fryda-Blackwell. Thank you to both of you for your insight, commitment and contribution to MPSC over the years. I would also like to extend my best wishes to Rae Burrows, who is resigning her role as MPSC Western Australia member. Rae has been involved with MPSC since its inception, and her knowledge, experience and enthusiasm were an asset to MPSC. We wish Rae, Sue and Pheroze the best of luck for their future adventures.

Dr Robyn Martin  
Chair MPSC10

### MPSC High Priority Work Items

Since June 2015, there has been progress on a number of MPSC high priority work items.

#### MPSC Communication and Engagement Strategy

MPSC is developing a Communication and Engagement Strategy. This strategy will outline how the committee will communicate and promote marine pest matters to stakeholders. The strategy will be included under the overarching National Marine Pest Strategy. Members considered a draft in September 2015 and hope to finalise the work in early in 2016.

#### Australian Priority Marine Pests List

MPSC is developing a marine pest risk management system in collaboration with similar work underway in South Australia. It is anticipated this will provide a robust, repeatable means to prioritise marine pests for control programs at a range of geographic sites, including population of the Australian Priority Marine Pests List.

#### National Marine Pest Biosecurity Strategy Development

The national strategy was previously placed on hold pending the results of the Australian Government Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity. Now that the review has been finalised, work on the strategy will resume in the near future.

### Jurisdictional Updates

#### Western Australia

The WA Department of Fisheries has been involved in a range of marine biosecurity research, compliance, policy and communications activities since May 2015.

These activities include the ongoing research into Asian Green Mussels with the University of Singapore and the NT Government, refinement and extension of the early warning system of monitoring at high value high risk assets around the state, and attempting the eradication of a marine pest on pearling lines and moorings at the Abrolhos Islands.

There also continues to be an investment of resources in the development of legislative frameworks and guidelines to support the implementation of the Aquatic Resources Management Bill when it is enacted.

### Victoria

A new incursion of Northern Pacific Seastars in Gippsland Lakes in 2015 marked a range extension for this species. The Victorian Government implemented a successful emergency management response. Spot diving, underwater camera surveys, and plankton trawls returned negative results in late 2015. A 12 month management plan is being developed, with further surveys scheduled for 2016.

### New South Wales

The New South Wales *Biosecurity Act 2015* was passed in September 2015, and subordinate legislation is now being developed with the expectation of the new legislation coming into force during 2017. NSW Department of Primary Industries led the development of a preparedness exercise in November 2015, called 'Exercise Wakame'. This exercise aimed to test the knowledge and understanding of procedures, plans and responsibilities in the event of an actual marine pest response, with final outcomes from 'Exercise Wakame' to be circulated to participants during early 2016.

### Queensland

The Queensland Government is preparing for the commencement of new biosecurity legislation in July 2016 which will provide stronger legislation for dealing with marine pests in Queensland waters and places greater responsibilities on individuals and organisations whose activities may pose a biosecurity risk.

The outcomes of an independent review into Queensland's biosecurity capability may also provide future direction for marine pest biosecurity in Queensland.

Follow up of an Asian Green Mussel detection in Cairns in December 2014 has been completed with no further detection of the pest. Ongoing targeted monitoring continues in the port of Cairns.

### Northern Territory

Ongoing programs/activities in the Northern Territory include:

- Continuation of the early warning marine pest monitoring program for Darwin Harbour, its marinas as well as Gove and Groote Eylandt Harbours and the new port development at Melville Island.
- Assessment based on evaluation of marine growth on hard substrates in areas of high vessel traffic.

### Tasmania

Tasmania has been participating in the National Monitoring Network with the South Australian Research and Development Institute undertaking sampling in the port of Hobart. Initial findings have been provided, with final reports now being prepared.

### Australian Government

Five Australian Emergency Marine Pest Plan Rapid Response Manuals were recently endorsed and will be published on the National System website. The department is currently working with Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis to complete a project on development of a marine spatial analysis model for improved biofouling risk assessment, and another project on improving ballast water risk tables.

## Recent Meetings

### MPSC Partners Workshop

The MPSC Partners Workshop was held on 18 November 2015.

The day began with an update on the Australian Government Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity, which has now been finalised and can be viewed on the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/marine-pests/review-national-marine-pest-biosecurity>

The Department also provided a detailed update on the progress of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, with a focus on legislation surrounding on first points of call and ballast water.

Highlights of the day were presentations from MPSC10 special guests Mr Robin Payne and Ms Judy Fisher. Mr Payne is a Churchill Travelling fellow and ecologist based in the United Kingdom, who provided an overview of marine pest management in the United Kingdom. Ms Fisher, in her role as Chair of the Ecosystems and Invasive Species Specialist Group for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), provided insight into the activities and innovations of the IUCN CEM specialist group.

#### **Did You Know**

- In Britain it is convention to use the phrase 'non-native invasive species' instead of 'pests'.
- Most British non-emergency marine pest work is completed through projects run by non-government organisations.

Members also received invaluable feedback from partners regarding future MPSC engagement with stakeholders.

MPSC announced that it had recently removed restrictions on a number of 'government only' meeting papers to facilitate increased stakeholder consultation.

#### **MPSC10**

MPSC10 was held on 19 November 2015. Members compared and contrasted funding sources for marine pest activities in Australia and the United Kingdom with Mr Payne.

The committee then discussed strategies for increasing engagement at future MPSC Partners Workshops. Members acknowledged that the preceding workshop was unable to focus on the Australian Government Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity as initially planned, due to unexpected scheduling matters. Future workshops will be more targeted towards specific marine pest matters, and led by MPSC partners.

Members also agreed to review the current list of nationally engaged stakeholders, with a view to expand this list.

Other topics of discussion at the meeting included increasing efficiency of paperwork in a marine pest emergency through the creation of response plan templates, and surveillance activities under the recently released Agriculture Competitiveness White Paper.

More information on the White Paper can be found at the link below:

<http://agwhitepaper.agriculture.gov.au/>

## **Upcoming MPSC Meetings & Activities**

### **Review Workshop**

Members, partners and other stakeholders will be attending a workshop in 2016 to discuss the Australian Government Review of National Marine Pest Biosecurity. Although the review focused on Australian Government investment, MPSC will have an important role in delivering the recommendations.

### **MPSC11**

The eleventh MPSC meeting will be held in Tasmania on 16 June 2016, preceded by a Partners Workshop on 15 June 2016.

## Member contacts

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