Biosecurity Reference Group: meeting summary

# Meeting 1, Monday 28 March 2022

The Biosecurity Reference Group (BRG) met on Monday 28 March 2022 in person at

Agriculture Victoria’s Attwood site.

The Chair, Katherine Clift, acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the

Meeting was held and paid respect to their Elders, past and present. The Minister for

Agriculture, Mary Anne Thomas, formally opened the meeting (virtually) and

acknowledged that the BRG will be an important resource for Agriculture Victoria and

will assist with the strategic direction towards change.

## Introductions and committee operations

As this was the first meeting of the group, members introduced themselves and then

agreed how they will work together. This included a discussion on concepts of bias and

critical thinking processes and considered the implications for the group’s role.

The BRG endorsed its Terms of Reference (ToRs). Members also noted the ToRs will be revised

in June 2023, noting that the Group may continue beyond this timeframe as a different forum.

## Biosecurity in Victoria

The Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Graeme Cooke, and Chief Plant Health Officer, Dr Rosa Crnov, provided insights into the current state of biosecurity in Victoria, including some of the risks and threats faced in the future.

## Biosecurity Statement

Members noted that Agriculture Victoria is developing a Biosecurity Statement for Victoria as a precursor to a new Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria. The statement will provide a shared narrative and sense of direction for the biosecurity system and will build from the extensive consultation and engagement carried out with key stakeholders, including the BRG.

Members noted that the statement is being co-developed with stakeholders as part of the Strengthening Victoria’s Biosecurity System program. Members also participated in a workshop where they provided their vision of biosecurity in Victoria.

## Biosecurity legislative reform

Agriculture Victoria provided an overview of the work done on the new biosecurity legislation for Victoria and the key stakeholder engagement activities that will support the reform. It was noted that current legislation is not fit for purpose and the reforms will place Victoria in a better place to manage biosecurity risk and compliance tools.

## Next meeting

The Biosecurity Reference Group will meet on Monday 2 May 2022.