



Local Government Association Tasmania

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Mark Sayer
Deputy Secretary
Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment
Level 2, 1 Franklin Wharf
HOBART TAS 7000

Via email: biosecurityreview@dpiwve.tas.gov.au

Dear Mark,

Response to *Biosecurity Bill 2017* consultation

Thank you for the inviting the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) to provide comment on the draft *Biosecurity Bill 2017*.

LGAT is incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1993* and is the representative body for Local Government in Tasmania. The functions of LGAT are:

- (a) to protect and represent the interests and rights of councils in Tasmania;
- (b) to promote an efficient and effective system of local government in Tasmania;
- (c) to provide services to member councils, councillors and employees of councils

This submission has been developed in collaboration with member Councils. Where an individual Council has made a direct submission, any omission of these specific Council comments in this submission should not be viewed as lack of support for that specific issue.

We note the biosecurity legislation that sets out the framework, goals, principles and overarching functions to support biosecurity regulation in Tasmania. Conceptually the Draft *Biosecurity Bill 2017* appears to address its major task of improving the existing biosecurity operating environment.

The Local Government sector is keen to support the process in sustaining these gains, and are aware that specific measures on how exactly these are to be met will be built into subordinate regulation and administrative practices.

LGAT proposes that the Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment (DPIWVE) establish an expert Advisory Committee (as mentioned in the Bill) to guide the process of regulation making. This process should address a number of concerns for Local Government including:

- Clarification on roles and responsibilities of all sectors for preventing, detecting, responding and recovering from biosecurity breaches.
- Communication with all landholders (and especially targeted stakeholders) to develop awareness of their responsibilities under the new regulatory regime.

- Developing a framework or guidelines around data information that integrates with an agreed national system/framework.
- A focus on better emergency measures including a high level of vigilance and sustained surveillance.

A few councils have provided some specific examples of local issues that could be addressed through the work of an Advisory group:

- The draft *Biosecurity Bill 2017* covers the whole range of biosecurity issues – animals, plants, quarantine. The roles may be too broad for some stakeholders and place an expectation beyond the role that councils have funded to date. For example, those councils that have funded an Authorised Officer under the *Weeds Management Act* may not see the need for this role to be expanded to other biosecurity issues.
- What are the scope, breadth and limits on the Authorised Officer role? For example, is there an expectation that a council Authorised Officer working in a location outside the municipality would respond to a potential issue?
- The draft *Biosecurity Bill 2017* requires `approval' by the Minister for an activity that is a 'program'. The example used in the fact sheets is of a farmer group wanting to co-ordinate control of a weed species across multiple tenures owned by the group. It is felt that this could be too onerous and a disincentive to register co-ordinated on ground works. Approval should be simple and able to be issued by delegated officers.

Local Government looks forward to working with DPIW in the further development of the supporting regulatory environment for the *Biosecurity Bill 2017*.

If you have any queries or would like further information, please contact Penny Finlay at penny.finlay@lgat.tas.gov.au or by telephone on 62335965.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Katrena Stephenson
Chief Executive Officer
Local Government Association of Tasmania