

FLYING MINUTE: WALGA Submission on the National Biosecurity Reform Agenda

By Melanie Davies, Senior Policy Advisor, Environment

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission on the National Biosecurity Reform Agenda Discussion Paper.

RESOLUTION 269.FM/2026

CARRIED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Australia's biosecurity risks continue to increase in scale, complexity and cost. Agriculture Ministers have identified the need to address a range of biosecurity risks through reform of the national biosecurity system.
- The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is consulting on a Discussion Paper outlining reforms across key themes, including preparedness, response, recovery, workforce, operations, legislation and regulation and funding.
- Key points in WALGA's submission:
 - Support for the alignment of the reform themes with the emergency management framework as biosecurity is identified as one of the hazards within this framework.
 - Focus on prevention of biosecurity incursions which are potentially increasing due to global factors and instability.
 - Preparedness, response and funding are the highest priority action areas; the actions associated with these themes identify review and reform to the governance systems in place, which underpin the effective implementation of any biosecurity measure.
- The submission is due on Friday, 12 June, and no extension is available.
- The Environment Policy Team met on 25 May and recommended that State Council endorse the submission.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item aligns with WALGA's Strategic Pillars:

- **Influence:** Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government and lead policy development for the Local Government sector.
- **Support:** Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA Submission - National Biosecurity Reform](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This submission aligns with WALGA's Advocacy Position [4.4 Post Border Biosecurity](#) and previous WALGA submissions on the draft National Biosecurity Statement (2018), the review of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA).

BACKGROUND

Australia's biosecurity risks continue to increase in scale, complexity and cost. Australian Agriculture Ministers have identified six strategic risks to Australia's biosecurity system to guide a national reform agenda:

- sustainable investment and funding;
- social licence;
- global factors and instability;
- workforce capability and capacity;
- operational capability and capacity; and
- legislation and policy.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is consulting on national biosecurity reform and has developed a [National Biosecurity Reform Agenda Discussion Paper](#) which outlines a series of national biosecurity reforms, building on the [National Biosecurity Strategy](#). The reforms are grouped into themes of preparedness, response, recovery, workforce, operations, legislation and regulation and funding.

Feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform a reform roadmap for consideration by Agriculture Ministers this year. Feedback is due by 12 June, and no extensions will be granted.

The Environment Policy Team met on 25 May and recommended that State Council endorse the submission.

COMMENT

This submission has been developed following extensive engagement with Local Government that occurred as part of the BAM Act Review, a recent Submission on the NEBRA and experience with the polyphagous shot-hole borer and H5 Bird Flu.

WALGA supports aligning the reform themes with the emergency management framework, which recognises biosecurity as one of its hazards. In developing the feedback, WALGA identified that prevention of biosecurity incursions is not specifically addressed in the Discussion Paper. While the National Biosecurity Strategy acknowledges the scale of biosecurity activity across Australia, including inspections undertaken, the Ministers have identified global factors and instability as key strategic risks and, as such, the reform agenda should place greater emphasis on prevention measures such as increased inspection frequency and scope.

It is challenging to identify relative priority in relation to the themes, as many are interdependent. However, WALGA considers that preparedness, response and funding are the highest priority action areas. The actions associated with these themes identify review and reform to the governance systems in place, which underpin the effective implementation of any biosecurity measure.

FLYING MINUTE OUTCOME

Poll created: 28/05/2026 at 16:00

Poll closed: 09/06/2026 at 17:00

Total invited to survey: 24

Total finished survey: 19

Name	Completed Date
Chris Antonio	28/05/2026 18:50
Phillip Blight	1/06/2026 7:57
Laurene Bonza	9/06/2026 11:23
Donelle Buegge	29/05/2026 7:10
Scott Crosby	3/06/2026 5:48
Patrick Hall	5/06/2026 11:24
Cate McCullough	No response
Lewis Hutton	No response
Suzanne Migdale	No response
Paul Kelly	9/06/2026 16:02
Terresa Lynes	7/06/2026 00:13
Paige McNeil	31/05/2026 11:14
Chris Mitchell	9/06/2026 16:45
Matthew Niikkula	No response
Les Price	31/05/2026 6:41
Helen Sadler	1/06/2026 20:48
Robert Schmidt	9/06/2026 21:22
Eman Seif	7/06/2026 12:05
Audra Smith	8/06/2026 16:07
Stephen Strange	29/05/2026 10:02
Liz Sudlow	No response
Mike Walmsley	3/06/2026 12:08
Karen Wheatland	5/06/2026 10:27
Barry Winmar	8/06/2026 16:08

The submission was endorsed.

Following State Councillor feedback, the following amendments were made to the submission:

- *Highlight prevention, early intervention and sustainable investment as the top priorities for reform.*
- *Identifying the significant contribution from Local Government to biosecurity management activities.*
- *Advocating for the elevation of biosecurity as a national priority.*
- *Noting that the proposed reform has the potential to create significant additional finance and resourcing pressure for Local Government.*