



## The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc. Submission on the Exposure Draft Biosecurity Bill 2011

# Biosecurity Bill 2011 Submission

### Submission To:

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This submission is presented by the Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Penton, on behalf of the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc. (QMDC). QMDC is a regional natural resource management (NRM) group that supports communities in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin (QMDB) to sustainably manage their natural resources.

### Comments:

The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc. (QMDC) supports the intent of the Biosecurity Bill to implement biosecurity objectives within a one cohesive and integrated document. Strategic and better alignment of state legislation will provide the capacity for the State to fulfill its biosecurity obligations.

QMDC supports the Bill's overarching framework. QMDC's view is that this will provide a logical and effective mechanism to ensure the successful implementation of the new legislation.

QMDC's past submissions urged the drafting of new biosecurity legislation that provided:

1. clear definition on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; and
2. a commitment by those key stakeholders to implement legislation and policy in a coordinated manner.

QMDC is still concerned that the clauses relating to community involvement, local and State government (Clauses 6, 11, 45 -49) may need further amendment to ensure clarity on roles and responsibilities and better coordination of state, regional and local priorities and actions.



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Once appropriate regulatory roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and assigned incentives such as public infrastructure for wash down or technical, mapping, monitoring and financial assistance, will allow the appropriate body to be resourced and mandated to, for example, implement chemical, mechanical and biological control measures or issue notices for non-participation in weed spread prevention.

QMDC submits the Bill still needs to provide clear mechanism by which the State must take greater responsibility for biosecurity issues on State land and where Local Government does not have the capacity to implement the Act. If the State government, for example, has the regulatory responsibility to prohibit and restrict biosecurity matter it must do so within a regional partnership. Consultation with local government, NRM organisations like QMDC and other key stakeholders will achieve improved collaborative actions of prevention, eradication, containment, and or active management.

QMDC supports an integrated approach which promotes planning, education, incentives and regulation as key mechanisms to achieve biosecurity action.

The Bill's implementation of coordinated planning at a number of levels including species specific and according to appropriate scales will in QMDC's view influence key stakeholder practice and attitude change and delivery of actions on-ground .

QMDC also supports the Bill's recognition that in order for regulation to be successfully implemented it must be linked to a number of implementation mechanisms.

QMDC supports the use of codes of practices and guidelines as biosecurity tools and the consultation role Regional NRM organisations can play with regards to the production of these tools (clauses 65 -70).

QMDC reasserts that managing the threats to regional assets requires legislation to provide impetus to planning processes that reflect inter- linkages between local, regional, state and national strategies/plans, for example:

- Regional Pest Management Plans & Local Government Pest Management Plans
- area wide (sub-catchment) management plans
- Rapid Response (emergency response) plans; and
- species specific guidelines for current recommended practices
- Regional NRM Plans

A comprehensive identification and assessment of biosecurity risks must include recognition of existing risks within Queensland from region to region. QMDC sees the value of having biosecurity zones. The recognition and establishment of biosecurity zones and their risk management however requires well executed actions that reflect the severity of the impacts and the most appropriate remedies.

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The Bill therefore must be able to ensure better coordination and collaboration amongst the key stakeholders who have responsibilities for those zones. QMDC would argue that the reliance on the department's website as mechanism to inform affected people of the establishment of a biosecurity zone is not adequate. It is, recommended the Bill articulates more effective communication mechanisms be identified and stated (Clause 110).

QMDC submits that when draft plans are being prepared (clause 51) that the consideration of Regional NRM Plans be required in the development and review of Biosecurity Plans. It is recommended that the plans be developed in consultation with the relevant local governments and Regional NRM organisation.

QMDC suggests that greater by involving Regional NRM organisations, in the decision making process funds will be able to be more strategically spent in order to generate more investment into biosecurity activities (Clauses 61 -64).

**In Summary:**

QMDC supports the overall ambition to implement a coherent piece of legislation. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to its ongoing development and look forward to playing an active role in helping to identify biosecurity matters that pose risks to the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin region. We are also most interested in defining the most appropriate tools and programmes for implementation in this region.