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EXERCISE SUMMARY

MARINE PEST EXERCISE PROGRAM 2018

Marine Pest Exercise Summary 2018

In 2015, the Australian Government completed a review of marine pest biosecurity in Australia (Review of national marine pest biosecurity, October 2015). The review identified a number of key areas for improvement, including that:

- National marine pest emergency response activities should continue to be implemented under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA).
- The Australian Government should support a national marine pest emergency response exercise.

The NEBRA relies on consultative committees to provide technical advice on the feasibility of eradication through response activities. The Consultative Committee for Introduced Marine Pest Emergencies (CCIMPE) is the responsible committee for marine pest responses. The CCIMPE Terms of Reference and Operating Guide were recently updated (June 2016) but had not yet been fully tested or exercised prior to this program.

In line with the marine pest review recommendations, stage one of a Marine Pest Exercise Program was developed which involved a two-part exercise program based on introduced marine pest/s at a nominated Australian port, which demanded a response from the CCIMPE in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Exercise One was a two-day exercise held on February 7 & 8 2018 at Animal Health Australia in Canberra and was aimed at CCIMPE representatives. The exercise was focussed on ensuring CCIMPE members understood their role in a marine pest response as both the combatant jurisdiction, and as participants of the CCIMPE. Twenty-five participants in total attended from each Australian jurisdiction and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries sent an observer. The exercise format combined training sessions on current national arrangements utilising documents such as the CCIMPE Terms of Reference and Operating Guide; the NEBRA; supporting documents under the Australian Emergency Marine Pest Plan (EMPPlan); and the biosecurity incident management system (BIMS); with discussion-based scenarios on simulated CCIMPE and National Biosecurity Management Group (NBMG) papers.

Exercise One covered two scenarios; firstly, participants were asked to examine the economic, environmental and political consequences to an unknown, hypothetical marine pest (the indigo striped oyster) introduced to a major Australian port at a state level. Participants discussed reporting, information and communication arrangements; CCIMPE operating procedures; and cost-sharing. In the second scenario, participants analysed risk, performed an options analysis and developed a stakeholder list for a known marine pest of national significance.



Exercise Two was held on April 10-12 2018 based at the Grace Hotel, and involved a range of stakeholders focussing on the potential impacts and response activities to manage a marine pest emergency at Sydney port. This exercise was a discussion-based scenario, with participants involved in the 'Investigation and Alert

Phase' and 'Operational Phase' of a response to the hypothetical invasive marine pest (the indigo striped oyster). On day one participants were briefed on national arrangements and marine pest impacts from subject matter experts, and were then asked to consider their initial actions in the response. This was followed by a site visit to the affected areas as described in the scenario to allow participants to fully understand the complexity of the operating environment as part of the appreciation process. Group discussions followed the site visit, focussing on analysing options and deploying plans on days two and three.



Captions 1&2 – Marine Pest Exercise One participants, AHA Canberra, 7 & 8 February 2018.



Caption 3 & 4 – Marine Pest Exercise Two, Sydney Port site visit 11 April 2018.



Caption 5 - Marine Pest Exercise Two, Sydney Port site visit 11 April 2018.

Both phases of the Marine Pest Exercise program 2018 provided opportunities for stakeholders in the invasive marine pest emergency management sector to network and develop professional contacts. The Marine Pest Exercise Program 2018 fostered and strengthened links within CCIMPE, and between jurisdictions and stakeholders involved and impacted by a marine pest emergency response at a Port.

The Marine Pest exercise program 2018 enabled CCIMPE members to strengthen their knowledge of roles and responsibilities in CCIMPE, and gave them an understanding of the purpose of CCIMPE in an emergency response. The port exercise gave participants the opportunity to explore the operational environment in a multipurpose port situation and appreciate the complexities of planning and implementing a successful response. Feedback on the exercises indicated participants are now more prepared for real response events.

The final exercise report is available upon request from the Marine Pest Sectoral Committee, mpsc@agriculture.gov.au



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