Cooperative Research Centre
for National Plant Biosecurity

Final Report

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National Communications Strategy Framework

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1. Executive Summary

This review of biosecurity communications projects and strategies that have been used in Australian agriculture focuses on the plant health sector. The scope of the report is to develop a national plant health communications strategy framework and toolkit aimed at enhancing biosecurity awareness and behaviours across Australia's plant industries. This has been done by analysing previous agricultural biosecurity communications campaigns to identify the critical components of effective strategies and recommending those and others which could be adapted for use in future plant industry campaigns.

Extensive analysis of previous agricultural biosecurity communications campaigns has been conducted to identify the critical components of effective strategies.

This report highlights the effective strategies and elements used in previous campaigns. It then recommends activities that could be adapted for use in future biosecurity communications and campaigns in the plant industry.

Summary findings and recommendations from the analysis include:

- There are numerous biosecurity communications activities but no national coordination, leading to possible duplication of efforts and inconsistent messages
- There is minimal evaluation of biosecurity communications activities across all stakeholders and therefore minimal understanding of the impact of biosecurity communications on behavioural change
- Biosecurity communications efforts need to engage with "gap" audiences
- There are gaps in the broad understanding of the barriers, drivers and incentives affecting the uptake of biosecurity practices and therefore a need for further research.
- Messages are also most effectively received when they are linked to 'hip-pocket' issues
- Industries should leverage off current government communications activities to ensure that messages to growers are complementary and consistent
- Recommend a national biosecurity newsletter to industries and communities[1]
- Recommend a proforma survey mechanism for industries to assess biosecurity awareness and behaviour change, with the results being shared across stakeholders

[1] Throughout this report, the use of the term "communities" refers to centres of production significance for each industry, e.g. Goulburn Valley for vegetables and fruit, or the Adelaide Hills for viticulture.

- Recommend standardised templates for biosecurity communications with growers to simplify communications activities for industries
- Recommend a biosecurity awareness week with a common National theme

These strategies, key elements and other tools and tactics of communication campaigns have been developed into a Communications Framework and Toolkit designed for industry organisations (particularly smaller, less well resourced industries) to better enable them to meet their risk mitigation obligations under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). This Toolkit will be refined to provide to industry for use in communications activities and campaigns and will eventually be included as part of each industry's National Biosecurity Plan.

2. Aims and objectives

Plant Health Australia (PHA) and the Cooperative Research Centre for Plant Biosecurity (CRCNPB) have identified that a robust and viable communications framework spanning plant industries and the general community is essential to manage disease or pest incursion risks and control measures.

There has been extensive review of previous agricultural biosecurity communications campaigns to identify the critical components of effective strategies. The strategies reviewed provide information on communicating biosecurity messages and reaching different audience segments, including indigenous and culturally diverse sectors. *While few of the communications strategies contained rigorous evaluation or costings, they do provide valuable insights into audiences, channels and some innovative communication tools that are used in the plant industry.*

This report then details communications tactics as a Framework to inform the construction and implementation of communications activities, and a Toolkit is presented to enable industry to use key elements in the creation or conduct of communications activity.

PHA has managed this project for the CRCNPB, engaging the services of Cox Inall and the assistance of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F) and the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA).

The attached Toolkit is presented as a draft to enable the incorporation of feedback from testing with key industry stakeholders.

3. Key findings

3.1. Preview

An extensive review of previous agricultural communications campaigns and their materials was conducted to gain a 'snapshot' appreciation of industry activities and identify the critical components of effective strategies.

The campaigns that have been reviewed display a wealth of innovative approaches to communicating biosecurity messages. They also provide strategies for targeting different audience segments including indigenous and culturally diverse sectors.

While few of the communications strategies assessed provided rigorous evaluation or costings, there are still valuable insights into audiences, channels and tools that have been incorporated in the final recommendations.

3.2. Approach

Appropriate communication strategies and activities were collected by contacting communications professionals in the agricultural sector and requesting examples of effective and/or current activities for this exercise.

A total of 36 documents which were received and from this 26 strategies and documents were selected as appropriate to be reviewed for critical components. While this body of information can be regarded as representative of the communications activities within the industry in recent times, it cannot be presented as the complete body of works.

To analyse the strategies and activities, Cox Inall has adapted a framework developed initially by Dr Jim Macnamara, Group Research Director, Media Monitors – CARMA Asia Pacific. It asks a number of questions around three core phases of any communications project, namely:

- preparation or inputs
- implementation or outputs
- impacts or outcomes

The communication strategies and products which were provided for analysis varied enormously in breadth and depth of information. They covered the spectrum – from 'action lists' to large comprehensive reporting documents. While the most appropriate and potentially meaningful were selected for analysis, few documents provided enough information to answer all the analysis questions.

3.3. Assessment of Industry Biosecurity Communications

The below template was used to analyse the communication activities and strategies of various organisation's biosecurity communication campaigns. Results have been omitted to ensure the privacy of participants. Evaluation of the assessment is available in Section 3.4.

Project	Preparation/Inputs	Implementation/Outputs	Impact/Outcomes	Conclusions
Communication Project	• Adequacy of backgrounding program design • Appropriateness of program content • Quality of messages and activity presentation	• Number of messages sent to media and designed activities • Number of messages placed in media and activities implemented • Number who receive messages • Message retention	• Awareness levels across target audiences • Attitude and action change in target audiences • Evaluation activity and outcomes	

3.4. Evaluation

From the assessment process it is readily apparent that evaluation has not been, and is not, a consistent feature of communications plans and programs that are conducted within this sector of industry. The reasons for this are not specified.

However, from professional observations made on activities within and across the communications industry, it is suggested that:

- the focus of campaigns is on the immediacies of planning, liaising with stakeholders, 'getting the materials out' and working within budget
- budgets and resources are not allocated specifically for evaluation in the initial campaign development phase
- evaluation is seen as a 'post-campaign' activity and budgets are better applied to actual activities, rather than 'review' activities
- limited resources and time constraints often preclude the extension of personnel and resources into evaluation processes (instead, they are often given new tasks and campaigns to work on)

The fact that evaluation does not appear as an essential feature of a campaign can pose risks to industries and stakeholders as there is then no mechanism to:

- identify gaps and future targets
- provide input to the design and budgeting of future campaigns
- ensure all commitments and activities were undertaken as agreed and on time
- provide accountability to stakeholders

Best-practise communications design recommends that an evaluation process (covering both outputs and outcomes) be accounted for in the initial design and construction of the communications planning phase.

Outputs include numbers of physical materials, such as: media releases, advertisements, actual media coverage, newsletters and brochures issued, meeting attendances etc. These can be readily measured by keeping tallies throughout the conduct of the campaign.

Campaign outcomes relate more to attitudinal and behavioural change. While they are more difficult and costly to measure, the standard practise is to conduct surveys of industry stakeholders, groups and target audiences. This can be achieved by various methods; ranging from completing evaluation forms at meetings, through mail-outs to memberships and databases, or commissioning formal surveys by specialised businesses.

3.5. 'Prevention versus cure'

As a generalisation, the assessed campaigns can be divided into two key types: reactive and proactive. Many focus on dealing on a reactive basis to an existing or current issue or outbreak. Other campaigns have operated on a proactive basis. Again, the reasons for this are not specified.

Clearly, there is industry and community appreciation of the value of being and acting proactively over reactively i.e. prevention is better than cure, yet it is suggested that due to the very nature of biosecurity there will need to be an ongoing mix of the two campaign types.

Reactive campaigns will be needed to focus on dealing with current issues/outbreaks; proactive campaigns are required to raise the general or base level of awareness and preparedness about general biosecurity or particular biosecurity threats. Industry will need to be prepared to plan for and participate in both types of activities.

3.6. Campaign economics

No data or information has been provided on funding and costs associated with running these campaigns and activities.

However, from communications industry observation, campaign costs are directly determined by the required reach to audiences.

Campaigns which are targeted at particular industries or industry sectors are usually based on internal communications (magazines, newsletters, meetings and events) and supported by limited, targeted media activity (editorial, often supported by print advertising). This activity is most cost-effective.

Campaigns which are targeted at the broader community usually involve substantial liaison with industry and government bodies, preparing editorial materials, devising and placing promotional materials with stakeholders and extended advertising in local or regional media (print, radio and TV), and participating in news stories and public events. This level of activity can be very time consuming and expensive.

There is no 'rule-of-thumb' or 'minimum spend' for costing a communication campaign, as it varies greatly according to audience size, timeframes available, existing resources and preparedness.

3.7. Awareness Gaps

The assessment and personal communications suggest that a sector which has not been well-targeted with communications materials in the past is producers in the peri-urban areas of Australia. The report by the BRS found that peri-urban/hobby farmers across Australia are generally not reached by biosecurity education and awareness communications, in particular in NSW, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. The report also found that NESB farmers are also not generally considered.

The Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS) report recommended that:

- closer relationships be developed with farmer bodies to access their avenues of communication
- consideration is given to developing general awareness material for peri-urban/hobby farmers and the general community, either by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry or by broadening the activities of cross-industry biosecurity peak bodies such as PHA and AHA
- consideration be given to developing materials in languages other than English for NESB farmers
- biosecurity education and awareness be elevated to a national level and a co-ordinated, consistent approach developed to address the communication gap for peri-urban/hobby farmers, NESB farmers and the general community

The report also recommended that:

- biosecurity messages should not be communicated in isolation but rather integrated with messages about natural resource management (e.g. weeds, pasture management)
- messages for small landholders in the lifestyle category need to be couched in terms of care of animals and plants, sustainability and connection to the land
- messages need to be conveyed in a positive manner rather than a punitive or negative one. This is because the high level of independence believed to be associated with “lifestylers” means that they may not respond well to messages they see as authoritarian

Other reports reviewed as part of the assessment process also contain suggestions on engaging with ‘gap’ audiences.

It is suggested that individual industry groups will have knowledge of gap audiences and groups, and that they will need to specifically consider and account for these in the design and construction of a communications campaign.

4. Implications for stakeholders

This analysis reveals that there is an array of activities that can be, and are, undertaken to communicate to stakeholders in the industry, and there are a number of common elements in campaign design and implementation. These elements also provide guidance about industry's preferred communications methods and tactics.

In the design and construction of professional communications campaigns there are acknowledged core strategies, components and activities which are regarded as essential for success.

By combining this extensive analysis of contemporary activities with 'best-practice' communications design knowledge, a number of key findings emerge that characterise effective communication strategies and actions in the agricultural and/or plant bio-security sector. These are:

- Clearly articulated objectives and evaluation processes need to be in place from the outset
- Community, industry and government communications partnerships should be developed with stakeholders and key influencers
- All relevant existing networks need to be accessed and leveraged proportionately
- Distribution of agreed key messages should be through a wide range of communication channels and tools to target different audiences, including face-to-face, with an emphasis on existing networks
- Sustained delivery of consistent messages over a significant yet strategic period of time is required
- Innovative materials and methods delivered through partners can be extremely effective in extending the reach among audiences
- Indigenous, NESB and discrete communities/audiences require specially prepared materials (e.g. in simple clear English rather than translation)
- The internet is now a significant channel that should be utilised in all future communications strategies.
- Mechanisms for regular input and feedback are required – annual surveys of industry member's (both bodies and individuals) attitudes and behaviours should be conducted

A number of other key points for consideration emerged during the analysis:

- To maintain a base level of awareness, people need to be regularly reminded about biosecurity
- Arrange to mention biosecurity at all appropriate opportunities, or provide access to materials e.g. ranging from displays to brochures, at industry meetings, field days and events

- There is a role for a ‘biosecurity newsletter’ template to be compiled (with input from key stakeholders) to regularly distribute to selected industry and community databases detailing industry news and possible or actual threats, region, identification, reporting process etc
- There is a role for a more regular one-page ’pest alert’ template to enable detailing of seasonally potential threats/priority pests and diseases, and identification etc
- There is value in obtaining and maintaining databases of each industry’s preferred communications methods, key contacts and distribution lists etc. and make the necessary arrangements to ensure they can be used when required
- Industry should liaise with government on proposed or planned activities to complement or leverage off any government programs or resources (e.g. through the www.outbreak.gov.au or www.farmbiosecurity.com.au websites)

The other higher level key observation that emerges from the analysis is that while there are many activities that have been, and are being, conducted across the industry they appear to be relatively un-coordinated across industry and jurisdictional boundaries. In other words, there appears to be substantial scope for a more strategic and coordinated approach to planning and conducting communications activities within plant industry sectors, across the plant industry as a whole and with Federal and State government agencies.

Furthermore, synergies might be possible from coordination with animal industry biosecurity communications activities.

4.1. Highlights of the Plant Sector

In the design and construction of future biosecurity communications planning, it is important to also acknowledge the background of recent and existing overarching or industry-wide initiatives and awareness levels.

4.1.1. Plant Health Australia

“Spotted Anything Unusual” Campaign

Since 2004 PHA has run the National Plant Health Awareness Campaign, which targets commercial plant producers with the message “Look. Be Alert. Call an Expert.” This call to action urged producers to develop and maintain their vigilance and to take action if they spotted anything unusual in their crops, thereby helping to protect Australia’s $13 billion plant industries. The campaign focused on the

importance of plant health with an emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of commercial plant producers.

The campaign aimed to make commercial plant producers aware that plant health is an important issue to them individually, to their industry and the national economy at large, and there are steps they can take to reduce the risk of exotic pests and diseases. Industry and government participation have been central to the implementation of the campaign. Commercial plant producers have been encouraged to call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 if they spot anything unusual in their crops.

The campaign was centrally organised, with communications tools including:

- Media releases and media material, both general and member specific
- Community service announcements in Queensland
- Postcards and posters, both generic and industry specific
- Advertisements

4.1.2. Current Levels of Awareness

There is already a high level of awareness of general biosecurity issues through Australia's traditional plant industries. Surveys carried out by Solutions Marketing in 2004 found that:

- 96% of all producers surveyed, look over their crops to see if they have any new diseases or pests.
- 74% look over their crops weekly or more
- 90% look over their crops fortnightly or more
- 71% of stone fruit growers look over their crops daily
- 70% of cotton producers look over their crops 2-3 times/week

While almost 100% of surveyed said they would report anything unusual, they were less clear about who to report it to: 65% of those surveyed said they would report it to a state department of agriculture, 52% said they would report it to an agronomist.

However it should be noted that the results above conflict with those from an Animal Health Australia (AHA) survey in March 2007 which found that fewer than one in three livestock producers think about biosecurity on a weekly basis, and only 34% have embedded biosecurity as part of their business activity. This study also found that the preferred format for producers receiving information was mail, face-to-face meetings, email and through websites (77% of producers interviewed as part of the AHA survey have internet connection and 70% use the internet weekly).

This data could suggest that producers conduct surveillance more from a perspective of what pests or disease might need to be controlled or cured, rather than from a

perspective of what biosecurity prevention measures might be required. This conclusion is supported by anecdotal evidence suggesting that while growers were concerned about the personal economic impact of particular exotic diseases, there was little understanding of what these diseases looked like or what practices could be implemented to protect crops from infestation.

This conclusion is only suggestive and is not reflective of all plant industries. It does, however, highlight the lack of research into the levels of biosecurity awareness, including growers' understanding of biosecurity risks and responsibilities.

While this review in some way attempts to identify mechanisms to achieve better cut-through in this era of information fatigue, further study into the barriers, drivers and incentives affecting the uptake of better biosecurity practices.

While this review focuses on the plant health sector, it is anticipated that the outcomes will be relevant across both the plant and animal biosecurity sectors, as well as being of benefit to the environment and weeds sectors.

4.2. Communications Framework

The communications framework outlines a range of possible and essential ingredients and tactics to inform the design, construction and implementation of future communications activities. This has been developed using the assessment of biosecurity communications and adopting best-practice communications plan design.

As determined from the biosecurity communications assessment, there are ten main elements to be factored in to communication campaigns:

1. Clearly articulated objectives and evaluation processes to be in place from the outset
2. Industry communications need to use partnerships with stakeholders and key influencers
3. All relevant existing networks need to be accessed and leveraged proportionately
4. Distribution of agreed key messages should be through a wide range of communication channels and tools, including face-to-face, with an emphasis on existing networks
5. Distribution channel databases need to be maintained, regularly updated and shared
6. There should be a sustained delivery of consistent messages over a significant yet strategic period of time
7. Innovative materials delivered through partners can be extremely effective in extending the reach among audiences
8. NESB, Indigenous and discrete communities/sectors (eg hobby farmers) require special materials

9. The internet should now be fully utilised in all communications activities
10. Industry (at all levels) requires regular input and feedback methods – annual surveys of industry member's (both bodies and individuals) attitudes and behaviours to the toolkit and the communication activities should be conducted.

Notes that support and extend upon these ten key points, and other possible elements and initiatives, are presented as follows:

4.2.1. Communication Objectives

Setting communication objectives clarifies the desired communication outcomes for each industry and audience. The key objectives are:

- *increased awareness of biosecurity needs by target audiences and stakeholders*
- *increased numbers of people who modify their biosecurity behaviour*

These objectives are measurable targets to work towards and the communications will be considered as successful if they are realised. Specifically:

1. There will be increased awareness:
   - about what biosecurity is
   - that signatories to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (including industries) have obligations to mitigate the risks posed by invasive plant pests and diseases
   - that industries have National Biosecurity Plans in place outlining priority pests and incursion management procedures
   - that contact numbers exists for plant producers to register something unusual that they've seen, for instance the national toll-free Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: 1800 084 881
   - that plant industries are working collaboratively and communicating consistent messages about biosecurity
   - that groups throughout the community are taking action to improve plant biosecurity
   - that plant industry groups and stakeholders have distinct roles and responsibilities
   - that everyone has a role to play in plant biosecurity

2. More people will modify their behaviour to:
   - look for anything unusual regarding plant health and pests
   - apply best practice around plant/crop management and biosecurity
   - engage in debate and discussion on biosecurity risks to plant health
   - call the 1800 number or notify an expert about something unusual that is seen

4.2.2. Evaluation Processes

There are a number of evaluation measures available. Evaluation measures include determining the number of:

- members contributing to e-newsletter
- subscriptions
- producers aware of PHA and recognising key messages and key pests
- calls to 1800 Hotline
- media releases developed and released. No. of media monitoring clips mentioning key messages, PHA and member organisations.
- articles appearing
- website accesses/week
- field days where materials are used
- producers/businesses/stakeholders that materials are distributed to
- promotional materials (brochures, posters, flyers) distributed and displayed
- clips in regional & metro media.
- journalists briefed
- subscriptions to newsletters and publications

As an addition to these measures, media monitoring clippings of articles and items could be distributed by a central organisation to stakeholders to monitor debate and media pick-up of campaign materials.

It is also recommended that industries conduct annual formal surveys of members, to be distributed through industry newsletters and mediums. The survey could be developed and supplied as a pro-forma. A central body would collate returns and facilitate analysis and reportage back to industry. (While this provides a means of evaluation, it is also a tool to inform industry of its progress - survey data could be published nationally and locally by each industry, industry body and other stakeholders, e.g. government agencies).

4.2.3. Defining Target Audiences

Target audiences are the groups and individuals that plant industry biosecurity information needs to reach. The audiences that are to be targeted need to be established in the communications campaign preparation process.

Individual industry groups will have knowledge of important gap groups that they will need to specifically consider and account for in the design and construction of a campaign.

Each of the audiences outlined below source their information through a number of different channels. These channels need to be identified and recorded for later use.

The primary audiences vary for each of the plant industry groups, but can be broadly grouped as:

- Agricultural producers - cropping and horticulture
- Peri-urban producers
- NESB groups
- The general public
- Educators and school children (as influencers of parents)
- Key influence media
- Indigenous groups
- Local, State and Australian government agencies
- Travellers
- Regional communities (i.e. cross-sectoral within production region)
- Stakeholders outlined in Section 5.4

4.2.4. Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those groups or individuals who have an interest or involvement in biosecurity communications activities. Engagement with stakeholders is vital to the success of communication, and leveraging their networks is crucial to delivering information. Relevant stakeholders need to be identified and their contact details recorded in a database.

Existing and potential stakeholders fall broadly into the following categories:

- Plant industry associations and groups
- State farm organisations, National Farmers Federation
- Government (including Australian, state, local - primary industry, environment, health, education/research)
- Farm consultants
- Agronomists
- Crop protection companies and bodies (Syngenta, Bayer & Crop Life Australia etc)
- Farm produce suppliers (CRT, Elders, Landmark)
- AQIS
- Nurseries and their associations
- Non government organisations (NGOs) /community interest groups e.g., Landcare, Coast Care, Garden Clubs and Seedsaver networks
- Indigenous communities, including Land Councils, service providers, clans/families
- NESB, hobby- and peri-farmers
- General public

4.2.5. Key Messages

Communication activities need to include a set of agreed key messages. The key messages can be adapted to suit the different industries and their target audiences.

The review of previous communications campaigns highlighted that there is value in maintaining key messages over time, rather than changing them. The most successful campaigns have been those that have been long running (e.g. NAQS, Fruit Fly). Previous campaigns analysed as part of this project often use the overarching message “if you see something unusual/fruit fly etc, report it to XXX”. There is value in maintaining this vigilance and message about reporting to keep the messages consistent.

For messages to be effective in reaching the target market they need to be relevant, consistent, sustained and applied strategically at appropriate times. This approach also leverages on the investments already made in campaigns.

Messages are also most effectively received when they are linked to a relevant ‘hip-pocket’ issue. Messages delivered in novel ways also helps to gain traction. Research into attitudes of peri-urban farmers suggests that messages should refer to maximising profit and sustainability. Messages for indigenous audiences should be linked with a cultural motivator e.g. ‘caring for country’.

Other key messages that would be incorporated into communication materials could be:

- Healthy crops = healthy farms
- Protecting crops protects the bottom line
- Plant biosecurity is everyone’s responsibility
- Community surveillance is vital
- If you see a suspected pest or disease, report it to XXX
- The exotic plant pest hotline is 1800 084 881
- Plant Health Australia is working with <insert industry group name> across Australia to reduce the risk of pest and disease incursions

4.2.6. Campaign costs

Estimates of campaign costs will be required to develop budgets, determine the reach of the campaign and identify the required resources. Each component of the campaign will need to be costed.

Internal industry communications practitioners or external Public Relations agencies can be used to provide advice, estimates and quotes.

4.2.7. Communication Approaches

There are a number of communication approaches that can be used by industry to effectively target their primary and stakeholder audiences. They vary in their relative cost. These activities are described as a communication mix, which is made up of a range of tools and channels, including:

Direct approaches:

- field days and meetings
- extension officers
- workshops
- stakeholders/key influencers

Indirect approaches:

- Broadcast media – TV and radio (paid advertising as well as community announcements)
- Electronic – websites
- Print - such as flyers and fact sheets.

4.2.8. Communication Tools

Communication strategies and activities in plant and animal industries have made use of a range of different communication tools. They range from standard to novel in nature. All are aimed at achieving ‘cut-through’.

These tools can be used by any industry, some of the more successful tools identified in the assessment are:

- Surveillance Kits developed for National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) included key messages, identification tools of a Fire Ant ID booklet and card. This identification kit could take different forms, e.g. book mark, postcard with magnet. Distribution could be direct mail, media insert, industry publications etc.
- Development of a Biosecurity “Most Unwanted” list. (Queensland DPI&F developed a “Most Wanted” list as part of their messaging). This is adaptable to all states and industries and provides a catchy hook for ID cards and can be used seasonally by various industries in the media.
- Use of “community watch groups” encouraging involvement and ownership of community (potentially more effective in metropolitan areas than regional

locations). Community surveillance is consistently identified as being vital for successful control of incursions[2].

- Direct mail to target audience of pest ID booklet and card to promote awareness of campaign, events and key messages (NFAEP, DPI&F).
- A bookmark targeting travellers was direct mailed with car registration renewals with the message “Do not travel into SA with fruit and vegetables” (PIRSA 2007-08 Fruit Fly Campaign). 2 million bookmarks also produced for schools, tourism outlets and interstate.
- Convenience advertising (posters on the back of toilet doors) placed in 40 venues as well as roadhouses, shops, motels leading to SA borders (used in PIRSA Fruit Fly Campaign). Effective if targeting traveller audience.
- School Kits developed to engage school children in search for pests (Fire ant nests in NFAEP)
- Face to face visits from biosecurity officers. The NAQS “Topwatch” campaign reached 71% Indigenous/Torres Strait Islanders and 74% pastoralists this way. This is effective in remote areas with small, geographically spread numbers of target audience.
- Communications materials such as mugs, paperweights, pens, caps, t-shirts. These were used in NAQs “Topwatch” campaign. Can be successful if only reaching relatively small numbers, otherwise could be perceived as not effective value for money.
- Postcards and posters (a previous PHA campaign resulted in 23% recall from producers)
- Display materials for use at field days, agricultural events (AHA campaign)
- E-newsletters can be an effective way of reaching a diverse stakeholder group to keep them informed of strategies and activities in other plant sectors. A “Biosecurity news” newsletter template could be compiled centrally (with input from industry groups and key stakeholders) that can be regularly distributed to selected industry and community databases on need
- A pest “alert” template to enable detailing of seasonally potential threats / priority pests and diseases, identification and reporting process
- The internet can be used to place materials on websites, as well as distribute information via electronic newsletters
- A web based site could be used to store biosecurity information and communication materials, operating as a central reference and exchange point. Materials could include:
    - A general PowerPoint presentation about biosecurity stakeholders and legal arrangements such as the EPPRD

[2] The Australian National University is developing a program call the Community Detective Project – see http://www.webls.net/weblease/clientimages/16awc/Community%20detectives_summary.pdf for information.

- key plant biosecurity messages
- a link paragraph and an icon for web links to other stakeholder websites
- all communication materials, including a toolkit template

Examples of other media based activities include:

- A specific “week” or “day” to reinforce awareness of a particular pest (e.g. NFAEP) can be created. This can be run as a local/regional sub-campaign and provides a media hook for media to leverage stories. This works particularly well when there is an incursion to be controlled, about which there is already some base awareness
- Media releases – develop a calendar of national media releases coordinated between stakeholders about particular pests/events
- Encourage regular contact between industry and key media at local level to raise awareness and build relationships
- Establish and maintain a shared database of key industry media contacts for each industry
- Negotiate regular columns in rural weeklies e.g. QCL, The Land, Countryman (to profile local industries and biosecurity concerns) – could be funded and coordinated nationally by an appropriate organisation

Examples of NESB and Indigenous communications include:

- Use of community “enablers” or key influencers ensured that messages were effectively relayed to target NESB audience. Materials for NESB audiences were delivered at workshops in English but printed in their language
- Indigenous messages are best delivered face to face. Use clear English for written messages. Materials should include images of indigenous staff/audience.
- Use Community Service Announcements on radio using a respected indigenous identity.

4.2.9. Communications Mix

As described above, there are a number of tools and tactics that can be adopted and used by industry. These are presented as a Sample Communications Mix to display the range of activities that can occur and the associated evaluation methods. These include communications for the target audiences of producers and other external stakeholders.

Target Audiences	Communication Activity	Evaluation
Primary industry groups	Develop industry specific on-farm tool kits for improved awareness and identification of exotic pests (such as PHA has already done with grains and apple and pear industries). Includes development of industry "Most Wanted" list of exotic pests/diseases.	Increase in number of producers aware of PHA and recognising key messages and key pests. Increased calls to 1800 Hotline
	Calendar of media releases, highlighting seasonal requirements, particular risk times for each industry. PHA to issue national releases to coincide with state and industry campaigns.	Media releases developed and released. No. of media monitoring clips mentioning key messages, PHA and member organisations.
	Editorial in industry newsletters/magazines	No. articles appearing No. Of responses to articles
	Central website as exchange hub for sourcing information, with web content also available to all other industry web sites. Content to include communications materials	No. of accesses/week
	Display materials (posters, ID kits) for use at field days and events	No. of field days where materials are used. Monitor feedback. Demand for copies of material from other organisations
	Template of design for production of posters with similar messages as on-farm kit for distribution to industry key influencers (farm suppliers, grain delivery receival points etc)	
Peri-urban producers	General on-farm identification kits translated into plain language. Distribution through CMAs and Local Councils and local NESB industry groups. Posters made available at events.	Numbers of producers that on-farm kit is distributed to. No. posters distributed and displayed
Indigenous Producers & community	On-farm identification kits designed with indigenous audience in mind using indigenous images and in plain English	No. kits distributed. Reports of calls to Exotic Plant Pest Hotline.
Public	Media	No. clips in regional & metro media.
Key influence media	Briefings by PHA and industry about campaign.	No. of media briefed
Govt agencies, SFOs.	E-newsletter Biosecurity news. Face to face briefings to ministers by state and federal government stakeholders.	No. subscriptions to e-newsletter.
All other stakeholders	E-newsletter Biosecurity news. Stakeholders to be sent copies of on-farm kit for crops in their region/state.	No. subscriptions to e-newsletter.

5. Recommendations

This review of biosecurity communications projects and strategies that have been used in Australian agriculture focuses on the plant health sector. The scope of the report is to develop a national plant health communications strategy framework and toolkit aimed at enhancing biosecurity awareness and behaviours across Australia's plant industries. This has been done by analysing previous agricultural biosecurity communications campaigns to identify the critical components of effective strategies and recommending those and others which could be adapted for use in future plant industry campaigns.

It is readily apparent that right across the plant sector, and at all levels (from Federal and State Governments to national, state and local industry levels) there is a wide range of communication activities earnestly attempting to address the key issues of firstly raising biosecurity awareness (either reactively or proactively), and secondly, promoting behavioural change by farmers and communities.

However, it is also readily apparent that these activities are not broadly coordinated at the industry and state agency level. This creates an environment where possible duplication, inconsistency and lack of planning can occur in communications/campaign construction, stakeholder engagement and messaging. Also, maximal usage of available resources and materials and learning from previous campaigns is not necessarily undertaken within, among or between industries and agencies.

It is suggested that this scenario can be addressed by a national body actively working with various industries and agencies, and providing agreed tools and resources (the communications framework and toolkit) to streamline and underpin common approaches. Such a body can also play a lead role to address issues to do with gap audiences, leveraging of government resources, and providing consistent high level communications products and biosecurity intelligence.

Following submission of this review, PHA tested the attached draft tool kit with key stakeholders. The toolkit is to be presented to industry at PHA Industry Forum in October 2008. The Industry Forum is an appropriate opportunity to highlight to industry groups the risk mitigation obligations under the EPPRD and the importance of communications as one of the levers for affecting behaviour change. Presenting this review and the toolkit at the Forum will help industries consider the adequacy and appropriateness of their communications activities as well as providing them with the means of considering how to address any gaps they may identify. PHA is also in a position to offer further support to those industries seeking assistance in implementing programs to help them meet their risk mitigation activities, and the on-farm biosecurity programs delivered in partnership with the grains and apple and pear industries will be showcased at the Forum as possible approaches for industry groups to consider.

PHA will also present the review at the September meeting of the Biosecurity National Communications Network, a group comprised of communications managers from the Australian and state and territory governments to gain their support for a coordinated National Biosecurity Communications campaign as recommended here. As this group is responsible for the bulk of biosecurity communications campaigns, there are many benefits from gaining their understanding of and support for the recommendations of this review. It is hoped that the Network will incorporate the learnings of this review into their future campaigns, and some opportunities for collaboration have already been identified, such as a Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries communications strategy for peri-urban communities that is utilising the findings of a project by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Risk Analysis (ACERA) on identifying biosecurity stakeholders.

Additionally, PHA will collaborate with CRCNPB to develop a comprehensive delivery strategy to further extend the reach of the review and increase its potential to inform other related research or communications activities.

This review has also brought to light a number of gaps in our understanding of communications in the biosecurity sphere. Specifically there is a need future research to:

- assess the costs and benefits of biosecurity communication activities to determine the relative value of risk mitigation communications versus incursion management communications
- survey or otherwise measure the impact of biosecurity communications on grower behaviour
- determine motivational factors driving key audience behavioural change and provide ideas, including legislative and market-based drivers, to accelerate the rate of change.

Further research in this field will only help to strengthen the understanding, and therefore the effectiveness, of future communications activities aimed at helping protect the profitability and sustainability of Australia's agricultural industries.

While this review focuses on the plant health sector, it is anticipated that the outcomes will be relevant across both the plant and animal biosecurity sectors, as well as being of benefit to the environment and weeds sectors.

6. Abbreviations/glossary

ABBREVIATION	FULL TITLE
AHA	Animal Health Australia
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
BRS	Bureau of Rural Science
CRCNPB	Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity
DAFF	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DAFWA	Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food
EPP	Emergency plant pest
EPPRD	Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed
NAQS	Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy
NESB	Non-English speaking background
NFAEP	National Fire Ant Eradication Program
PHA	Plant Health Australia
PIRSA	Department of Primary Industries and Resources of South Australia
QDPI&F	Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
QFF	Queensland Fruit Fly
RIRDC	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation