

Biosecurity - Aquatic biosecurity pests and diseases

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1. Purpose

This policy details what the New South Wales Government will do to manage the risks posed to economy, community and environment of NSW by declared and emergent infectious and transmissible aquatic disease agents, freshwater fish pests and marine pests.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), an office within the NSW Department of Industry, and Local Land Services (LLS) implementing activities in their roles as authorised officers under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) and the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the overarching policy 'Principles for Management of Animal Biosecurity and Welfare in NSW'.

This policy covers management of significant aquatic pests and diseases that include marine vegetation, marine and estuarine and freshwater fish, and the invasive freshwater diatom didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*). The policy excludes mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians. The policy does not include management of freshwater pest plants or weeds. Also excluded are aquatic wildlife incidents where significant aquatic diseases or pests are not believed to be the cause.

3. Safety requirements

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* places an obligation on the agency (NSW DPI and LLS) as a person conducting a business or undertaking and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method Statements that support activities included in this policy must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

NSW DPI and LLS will work together to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any activities for this policy.

4. Outcomes

4.1 Threats to aquatic biosecurity in NSW are assessed and managed according to a consistent, robust and systematic decision-making process

- Situational awareness about emerging aquatic biosecurity threats is maintained by NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity
- The significance of aquatic biosecurity threats are evaluated and prioritised, according to consistent risk criteria
- Resources are allocated to manage aquatic biosecurity threats in accordance with the NSW DPI organisational objectives
- NSW effectively contributes to the development of national aquatic biosecurity policies, programs and plans

- e. Management of aquatic biosecurity threats is enhanced by harmonised legislation and cooperation between NSW and other Australian jurisdictions.

4.1.1 Activities

- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity coordinate reports of aquatic pests and diseases submitted by the 24 hour telephone reporting hotline, aquatic.pest@dpi.nsw.gov.au reporting email, online reporting form and those made directly to NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity, NSW DPI Fisheries or LLS (4.1a)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity coordinate reports of passive surveillance made by stakeholders, industry and researchers (4.1a)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity lead the development and implementation, with input from NSW DPI Fisheries and LLS, of the procedures that implement this policy. These procedures are underpinned by risk assessments for relevant aquatic disease and aquatic pest issues, surveillance and response activities (4.1b)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity adopt a risk based approach to determining the significance of a disease or pest report or incursion to inform an appropriate response, for example to prevent, eradicate, contain, control, educate, or accept the risk (such as do nothing) as required (4.1c)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity or an appropriate member of NSW DPI Animal Biosecurity and Welfare unit (AB&W) participates in or has active membership on national committees and working groups, for example the Sub-Committee for Aquatic Animal Health and the Freshwater Fish Experts Group, etc. (4.1d)
- NSW DPI cooperates with other Australian jurisdictions and, where appropriate, develop harmonised legislation, Memoranda of Understanding with other jurisdictions and implement the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) (4.1e).

4.2 NSW DPI and LLS activities minimise the incidence and impact of declared and emergent infectious and transmissible aquatic disease agents, freshwater fish pests and marine pests in NSW

- a. Regulatory and advisory activities are available to minimise spread of aquatic disease agents and pests to unaffected fish populations and aquaculture businesses
- b. Responses to aquatic pests and diseases incidents are supported by a robust response capability
- c. NSW DPI staff are trained to perform aquatic biosecurity preparedness and response
- d. LLS, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), the Roads and Maritime Services, other relevant government agencies and aquatic industries are actively engaged with NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity or the NSW DPI AB&W.
- e. Impact on market access for NSW producers from aquatic pest and disease agents is minimised
- f. NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity is engaged in NSW DPI Aquaculture Research, EMAI animal health research and NSW DPI Aquatic Ecosystems pest research activities.

4.2.1 Activities

- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity develop procedures, underpinned by risk assessment that clearly define roles and responsibilities for aquatic pests and diseases including for carp, abalone viral ganglioneuritis, tilapia, aquatic fieldwork hygiene, Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome response, responding to aquatic disease reports, and aquatic surveillance procedures (4.2a)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity collaborate with NSW DPI Fisheries and other internal staff to assist in the development of regulatory importation requirements that focus on

minimising the potential introduction of aquatic pest and disease agents into NSW (4.2a)(4.2d)

- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity develop and maintain response capabilities through training, planning and participation in responses, to facilitate timely responses to reports of suspected aquatic pest and disease agents (4.2b)
- NSW DPI and LLS are trained, prepared and have the capability and resources to respond (4.2b)(4.2c)(4.2d)
- NSW DPI Fisheries and LLS report cases of suspect aquatic pests and diseases to ABRM (4.2b)(4.2d)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity collaborate with other relevant agencies, including NSW Biosecurity and Food Safety, OEH and Port Authority NSW, to facilitate cross-agency management of aquatic pests and diseases (4.2b)(4.2d)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity collaborate with aquatic industries to facilitate effective Government and industry partnerships in the management of aquatic pests and diseases (4.2b)(4.2d)
- NSW DPI uses an aquatic pest and disease record keeping system and database to underpin export certification (4.2b)(4.2e)
- NSW DPI develops and implements aquatic pest and disease surveillance, reporting and tracing systems (4.2b)(4.2e)
- NSW DPI inspections and auditing processes inform OIE reporting and Commonwealth audit requests. NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity risk assessments are underpinned by robust scientific evidence (4.2e)(4.2f).

4.3 Stakeholders are empowered to implement best aquatic biosecurity practices to minimise the incidence and impact of declared and emergent infectious and transmissible aquatic disease agents, freshwater fish pests and marine pests.

- a. Stakeholders promptly notify NSW DPI or LLS of important, suspected or unusual aquatic animal disease or mortality events and pests
- b. Stakeholders are informed about biosecurity measures and encouraged to implement biosecurity plans and standard operating procedures to minimise the likelihood of fish becoming infected with declared or emerging aquatic pests and diseases
- c. Stakeholders adopt biosecurity plans and standard operating procedures that minimise the risk of spread of aquatic disease agents and pests
- d. Peak industry bodies promote the objectives of this policy to their stakeholders.
- e. Stakeholders understand their biosecurity duties including their general biosecurity duty in relation to aquatic disease agents and aquatic pests
- f. Human health risks from zoonotic diseases are communicated to and managed by NSW Health.

4.3.1 Activities

- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity develop social research activities to inform improvements to aquatic biosecurity advisory messages and materials that aim to improve a shared responsibility of aquatic biosecurity by all stakeholders (4.3a)(4.3b)(4.3c)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity work with aquatic industries during times of increased aquatic biosecurity risks to support industries' management of those risks (4.3a)(4.3b)(4.3c)(4.3e)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity develop and distribute (with assistance from LLS) advisory materials to inform stakeholders of biosecurity requirements, best practice and duties under the Act in relation to aquatic pest and disease management in NSW (4.3a)(4.3b)(4.3c)(4.3e)

- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity provide feedback and advice on the development of biosecurity management plans and protocols for stakeholders (4.3b)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity attend meetings of relevant industry bodies, committees or working groups where appropriate to provide advice on biosecurity requirements and best practice, including the provision of out of session updates (4.3d)
- NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity notify and refer information regarding zoonotic issues to NSW Health (4.3f).

5. Related procedures

Procedure – Responding to carp fishing and control enquiries from external stakeholders

Procedure – Aquatic fieldwork hygiene

Procedure – Pacific oyster mortality syndrome response

Procedure – Responding to aquatic pest and disease reports

Procedure – Aquatic pests and diseases surveillance

Procedure - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

6. Definitions and acronyms

Aquatic pest	as per ‘pest’ definition in Act, which are also either marine vegetation, or fish as per the definition of fish under the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i> or
Aquatic wildlife incidents	includes fish kill events, oil spills and other environmental/pollution events with negative impacts on aquatic wildlife
Disease agent	as per definition in the Act
DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
EMAI	Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute
Fish	as per definition in the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i>
LLS	Local Land Services
NEBRA	National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement
NSW DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
OEH	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
QX disease	Sydney Rock Oyster disease caused by <i>Marteilia sydneyi</i>
Stakeholders	includes (but not limited to) water users, vessel owners or managers, aquaculture operators, research scientists, mooring contractors, barge operators, fishing clubs and persons who deal in or with aquatic matter

7. Legislation

Animal Research Act 1985

Biosecurity Act 2015

Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986

Fisheries Management Act 1994

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Government Sector Employment Act 2013

Local Land Services Act 2013

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979

State Records Act 1998

Veterinary Practice Act 2003

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

8. Related documents

Policy - Biosecurity - Principles for the management of animal biosecurity in NSW

Policy -Biosecurity - Chemically affected food-producing animals, animal food commodities and stock food

Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)

Policy -Information Security (IND-I-197)
Policy -Classified Information (IND-I-196)
Policy - Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)

9. Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	01/07/2017	New policy developed in response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare

10. Contact

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