



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture  
and Water Resources**

# Australian Biosecurity Awards 2017

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2017 AWARD RECIPIENTS





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#### **The David Banks Biosecurity Lifetime Achievement Award**

Recognises an individual that has made an outstanding contribution to biosecurity integrity in Australia over a number of years.

#### **Australian Biosecurity Award – Industry category**

Recognises individuals, groups or organisations in industry that have demonstrated a significant contribution to maintaining Australia's biosecurity integrity.

#### **Australian Biosecurity Award – Government category**

Recognises individuals, groups or organisations within government that have demonstrated a significant contribution to maintaining Australia's biosecurity integrity.





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BIOSECURITY

ARRIVALS



# From the Deputy Secretary

Australia is fortunate to be free from many of the agricultural pests and diseases present in other parts of the world.

While our geographical isolation has played a key role in maintaining this status, our isolation as an island nation is rapidly changing as the barriers of time and distance become less relevant and international travel and trade increase.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources works offshore, at the border and onshore to maintain Australia's enviable biosecurity status.

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility and the department partners with industry and government to manage risks and increase community awareness using modern technology and innovative approaches.

The Australian Biosecurity Awards recognise individuals, groups and organisations that show a commitment to working collaboratively with the department to support and promote Australia's biosecurity and the systems that uphold it.

This year's award winners recognise an outstanding field of contributors to Australia's biosecurity across the three categories of industry, government and the David Banks Biosecurity Lifetime Achievement Award.

For the first time there is a joint industry and government award to acknowledge the rapid, well-coordinated response to a biosecurity incident which protected our grain industry and maintained international trade.

On behalf of the department, I would like to congratulate all the winners. Thank you for your ongoing contribution to Australia's biosecurity, I look forward to continue building our partnerships into the future.

**Lyn O'Connell PSM**  
Deputy Secretary  
Department of Agriculture  
and Water Resources



**Lyn O'Connell PSM**  
Deputy Secretary

# Bruce M. Christie

*NSW Department of Primary Industries*

## The David Banks Biosecurity Lifetime Achievement Award

Bruce Christie has been protecting Australia from pests and diseases for more than 35 years.

His outstanding leadership and commitment to his work have inspired countless industry stakeholders and public servants to serve the nation's biosecurity.

Bruce Christie graduated as a veterinarian in 1979.

He began working with the NSW Government in 1982 and has been actively contributing to the nation's biosecurity ever since, initially as a veterinarian dealing with animal health and production issues and then across the broader biosecurity spectrum of animal and plant pests, diseases and weeds.

Bruce was NSW's chief veterinary officer from 2003–2009.

In 2004 Bruce was appointed to the position of Director Animal and Plant Biosecurity and in 2009 to the position of Principal Director Biosecurity.

In 2011 he was appointed as the first head of Biosecurity NSW and is currently the Deputy Director General Biosecurity and Food Safety within the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

In these roles Bruce has led and successfully managed many responses to important pests and diseases including the eradication of equine influenza from NSW.

The NSW EI team was awarded the NSW Premier's Public Sector Awards Gold Award in 2008 and Bruce was also awarded the NSW Department of Primary Industries Outstanding Service Award in 2007 and the Equine Veterinary Association Award for Services to the Australian Horse Industry 2009.

Bruce has had a significant impact in the delivery of biosecurity practices in NSW particularly through his leadership in the development of the NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013–2021 and the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 both of which emphasise the need for everyone to recognise that we all have a 'shared responsibility' to protect Australia's biosecurity status.

Bruce is also a national leader in biosecurity, representing NSW on the National Biosecurity Committee and chairing a number of national biosecurity working groups. He is the delegate for the Director General, NSW DPI during biosecurity emergencies on the National Management Group and he supports the Director General DPI and the NSW Minister for Primary Industries in negotiations with interstate and Commonwealth counterparts. Bruce was appointed to the CSIRO Biosecurity Flagship Advisory Committee and is a Director on Animal Health Australia (AHA). He is also the NSW Government's Plant Health Australia representative.



The Biosecurity Lifetime Achievement Award is dedicated to the memory of Dr David Banks

Bruce co-authored and helped negotiate the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) and National Environmental Agreement on Biosecurity (NEBRA).

Bruce has always driven a cross-sectoral agenda aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of biosecurity systems for animals and plants in NSW and across Australia.

His ongoing contributions at a professional and personal level have led to positive biosecurity outcomes internationally and nationally.

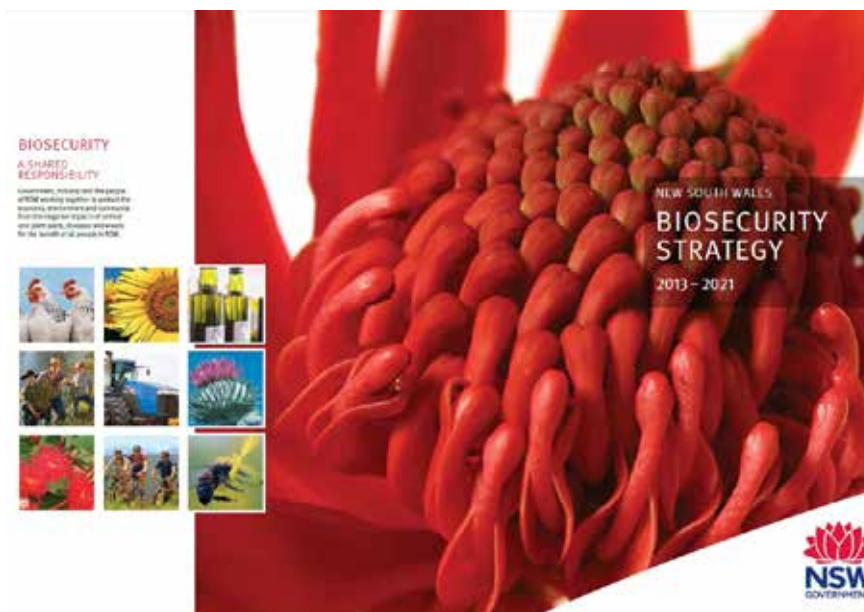
As the Director General DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety, Bruce now leads a biosecurity agency that has demonstrated that with its partners it is able to manage multiple major biosecurity and food safety incidents.

Bruce's work in NSW and his collaboration with industry, other jurisdictions and the Australian Government has resulted in reduced risk from biosecurity impacts to NSW and Australian agricultural industries, environment and community.

Bruce was nominated for the award by Brett Upjohn, from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Biosecurity and Food Safety.



**Bruce M. Christie**





# John Chambers, Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia

## *Industry category*

Licensed customs broker John Chambers has gone above and beyond to contribute to Australian biosecurity for 20 years.

He has worked tirelessly to improve policies and procedures, provide training and professional development opportunities and support industry in biosecurity matters.





John Chambers has worked for two decades with the Australian Industry Working Group on Biosecurity, the Department of Agriculture and its predecessors to enhance biosecurity integrity.

He has worked on policies and processes to improve efficiency, service delivery and the relationship between the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and industry.

John's work has enhanced Australia's biosecurity intervention on imports and exports, cut red tape and allowed for more cost-effective service delivery.

Most importantly, he has advanced biosecurity integrity and awareness within industry.

John chaired the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia Inc. (CBFCA) board from 2014-2016, and remains an active member of the CBFCA.

His expertise and knowledge was recognised by the council, leading to a role as their national expert on biosecurity matters, providing support to the department, CBFCA and its members.

John has a passion for biosecurity training and professional development and has been instrumental in the delivery of the Non-Commodity for Containerised Cargo Clearance Accreditation and AEP for Commodities courses.

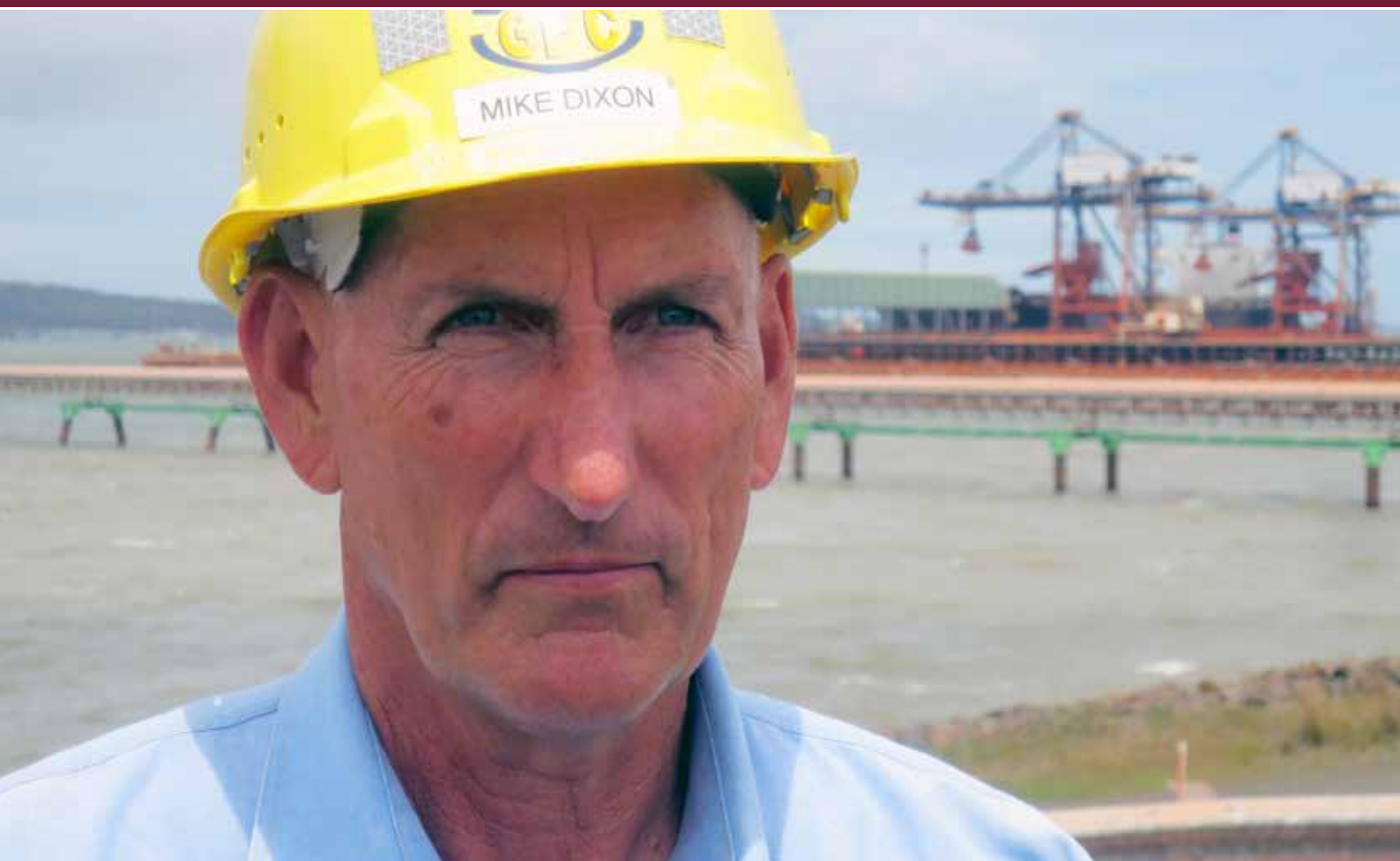
John has represented CBFCA on a wide range of working groups and committees, including the Cargo Consultative Committee, BICON Working Group, South East Region consultative meeting, Cargo Online Lodgement System development and testing, and Illegal Logging Working Group.

He developed CIQ Certification awareness material to give customs brokers a better understanding of the security features and material for Chinese suppliers.

John has also contributed to a new website to include the needs of customs brokers, the development of the Broker Accreditation and Re-accreditation Scheme and teaching the Broker Accreditation and Re-accreditation Scheme course.

He continues to provide support to industry on biosecurity matters.

John was nominated for the award by Stephen Morris, from CBFCA.



## Mike Dixon, Gladstone Ports Corporation

### *Industry category*

Described as a man with a tough exterior and a heart of gold, Gladstone Ports Corporation Fisherman's Landing Coordinator Mike Dixon was instrumental in the eradication of fire ants from a central Queensland port.

His diligent and proactive support helped prevent the damaging ants from gaining a foothold in Australia.



Red imported fire ants are one of the world's worst invasive ant species.

If the ants were to become established and spread, the impact on the Australian economy is estimated to be between \$5.3 billion and \$45 billion over 20 to 70 years.

When fire ants were detected at the Fisherman's Landing industrial site and port facility in 2013, an emergency response was launched immediately, coordinated by Biosecurity Queensland's National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program.

Mike Dixon was the program's key contact for the eradication effort and his local knowledge, experience and networks were invaluable.

Mike led the charge in communicating amongst industry about the importance of identifying and reporting suspicious ants.

He advocated fire ant awareness training for numerous Gladstone Ports Corporation staff, as well as employees of the 20 multinational corporations who lease land at the port.

Mike promoted biosecurity protocols within industry such as movement restrictions and wash-down for vehicles and machinery.

He arranged induction training and stakeholder meetings for 50 Biosecurity Queensland officers, coordinated escorted visits to the site and worked closely with the program's odour detection dog team.

A respected community leader, Mike was also the face of a television advertising campaign encouraging Gladstone residents to check their yards, and took part in media events even though he prefers to be off-screen.

Fire ants were declared eradicated from the area in mid-2016, a year and a half earlier than the previous incursion.

Mike's efforts show how one person can truly make a difference in addressing Australia's fire ant problem.

He is diligent, thoughtful and tenacious, and countless program staff have given glowing reports about their working relationship with him.

Mike was nominated for the award by Jim Thompson, from Biosecurity Queensland.





## Vinehealth Australia

### *Industry category*

Vinehealth Australia has continuously protected South Australia's vineyards from pests and diseases for 117 years.

Initially started to combat the insect phylloxera, the industry-funded body now targets all biosecurity issues facing vineyards.





It's 1899, two years before Federation.

Australia consists of six British colonies and World War I won't start for another 15 years.

But Australian vineyards are producing wine, and with phylloxera invasions devastating viticulture in the northern hemisphere, Vinehealth Australia is born.

Originally called the Phylloxera Board of South Australia, Vinehealth has seen South Australia's vineyards in a continuous state of preparedness for invasion for 117 years.

From its earliest days, Vinehealth pursued the contemporary concepts of risk assessment, emergency preparedness, and outbreak response planning and recovery.

South Australia was fortunate to have future-focused viticulturists and winemakers who saw the need for biosecurity, and had the vision to put quarantine steps in place to prevent the incursion of pests.

When Vinehealth was established, it created a phylloxera fund to compensate viticulturists in the event of an outbreak, by collecting a small levy from vineyard owners.

This contribution remains in place today, with every one of the 3500-odd vineyard owners in South Australia making an annual contribution of \$9.50 per hectare, or a minimum of \$50, to Vinehealth.

The funds are now used to prepare, manage and recover from pest and disease incursions rather than as compensation for growers.

South Australia remains free from phylloxera.

Today Vinehealth has jurisdiction over half of all plantings in Australia, and maintains records of varieties, rootstocks, planting dates, locations and vineyard owners.

It has kept its focus on vine health, biosecurity and awareness of threats to the Australian wine industry, which contributes \$40.2 billion in gross output to the nation's economy.

The body continues to invest in biosecurity training and awareness, policy and procedures, research and development, surveillance and preparedness.

Vinehealth was nominated by Linda Bowes, who chairs both the Barossa Grape and Wine Association and South Australia's Environment Protection Authority.



## Kangaroo Island Freight Services

### *Industry category*

COLLABORATIVE AWARD WITH MIDDLETON'S DISTRIBUTION (A DIVISION OF TOTAL LOGISTICS PTY. LTD.)  
AND BIOSECURITY SA

When one of the world's most damaging grain pests was detected on Australian shores in March 2016, swift and decisive actions contained the incursion and was successful in keeping Australia Khapra beetle-free.



It started with larvae discovered in imported plastic containers at a food production facility in Adelaide.

The specimens, brought in by a member of the public, were identified by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' Adelaide Post Border Detection team as belonging to the destructive Khapra beetle and traced back to a consignment of 20 cartons transported by Kangaroo Island Freight Services.

An entomologist inspected the company's freight depot and two more Khapra beetle larvae were collected from a wall near where the affected products were stored.

Led by managing director Mike Smith, Kangaroo Island Freight Services played a significant role in minimising the spread of the beetle.

Despite being in no way responsible for the incursion, the company not only allowed for the shut down of operations while treatment occurred but also supplied staff, transport and business documentation to minimise the biosecurity risk.



Collaborative award winners were nominated by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' Nathan Rhodes.





## Middleton's Distribution (a division of Total Logistics Pty. Ltd.)

*Industry category*

COLLABORATIVE AWARD WITH KANGAROO ISLAND FREIGHT SERVICES AND BIOSECURITY SA

When one of the world's most damaging grain pests was detected on Australian shores in March 2016, swift and decisive actions contained the incursion and was successful in keeping Australia Khapra beetle-free.





Freight warehouses are high risk areas for the spread of Khapra beetle.

When Middleton's Distribution (a division of Total Logistics Pty. Ltd.) was informed that the beetle had been identified in a product stored in one of its warehouses, all movement of goods in and out of the facility stopped.

Managing director Andrew Tarca immediately appreciated the seriousness of the detection and the significant implications for the country if Khapra beetle became established.

The company's friendly and cooperative staff secured all affected product before shutting down the entire warehouse for a period of four months.



Collaborative award winners were nominated by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' Nathan Rhodes.



# Biosecurity SA, Primary Industries and Regions South Australia

*Government category*

COLLABORATIVE AWARD WITH MIDDLETON'S DISTRIBUTION (A DIVISION OF TOTAL LOGISTICS PTY. LTD.) AND KANGAROO ISLAND FREIGHT SERVICES

When one of the world's most damaging grain pests was detected on Australian shores in March 2016, swift and decisive actions contained the incursion and was successful in keeping Australia Khapra beetle-free.



Biosecurity South Australia became involved in the response to the Khapra beetle detection almost immediately, leading the work on Kangaroo Island.

It established an operational command centre on the island and employed a large number of casual staff to trace the movements of almost 7500 goods.

This information was passed onto surveillance teams who conducted property risk assessments, collected samples and established an ongoing surveillance program.

Staff conducting ongoing monitoring of traps have so far collected more than 3200 samples, with no further detection of the beetle.

Throughout the process, Biosecurity SA liaised with Kangaroo Island business owners and landholders to minimise disruption, while working to provide industry confidence that Australia remains free from Khapra beetle.



Collaborative award winners were nominated by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' Nathan Rhodes.









CropSafe is a novel, cost-effective surveillance program that aims to detect pest and disease incursions as soon as possible.

The program uses an extensive network of volunteer agronomists, who conduct surveillance and provide early detection of invasive species.

This significant effort by industry is underpinned by the CropSafe Team with sample kits, surveillance and identification training, information updates and diagnostic services for unusual or difficult samples.

More than 85 per cent of Victoria's grains agronomists are part of CropSafe's volunteer network.

They collectively provide a level of surveillance equivalent to 81 full-time positions.

When the Russian wheat aphid—an emergency plant pest—was discovered in Victoria in June 2016, it was a CropSafe agronomist who first detected and reported the outbreak.

CropSafe quickly coordinated training to help volunteer agronomists identify Russian wheat aphids, rolling out a rapid and extensive crop surveillance initiative in a timeframe that would not have been possible without the program.

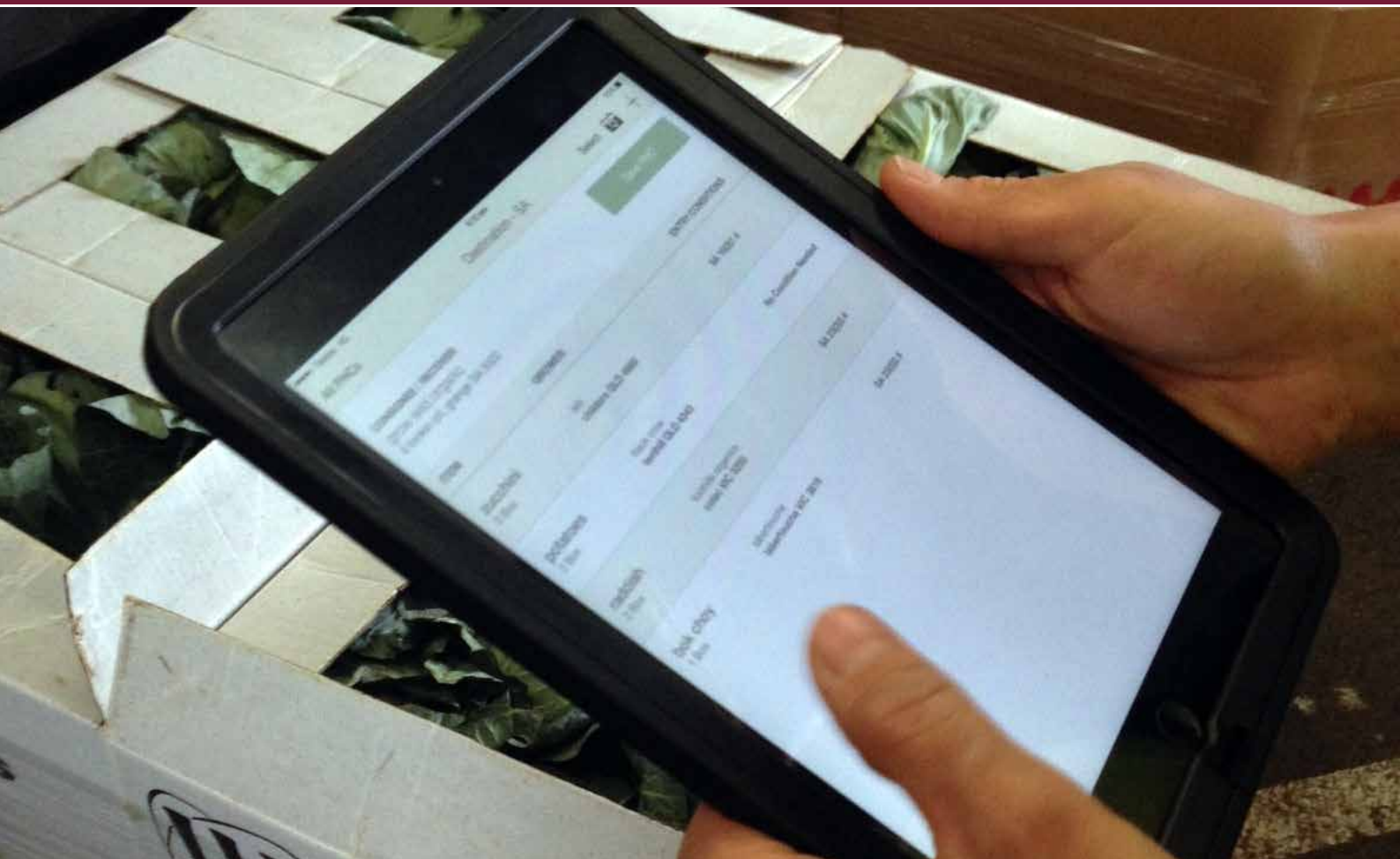
As well as early detection of exotic pests and diseases, the program helps assure domestic and international markets of Victoria's pest area freedom status.

CropSafe provides direct benefits to industry with a parallel suite of online and social media tools including Twitter, email, SMS and an app.

These social media communications are high impact, with the 17 GrowNotes Alert tweets in the 2016 season generating more than 2800 impressions each.

The success of the program has led other jurisdictions to express interest in adopting the CropSafe model.

The CropSafe team was nominated by Dr Chris Pittock, from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

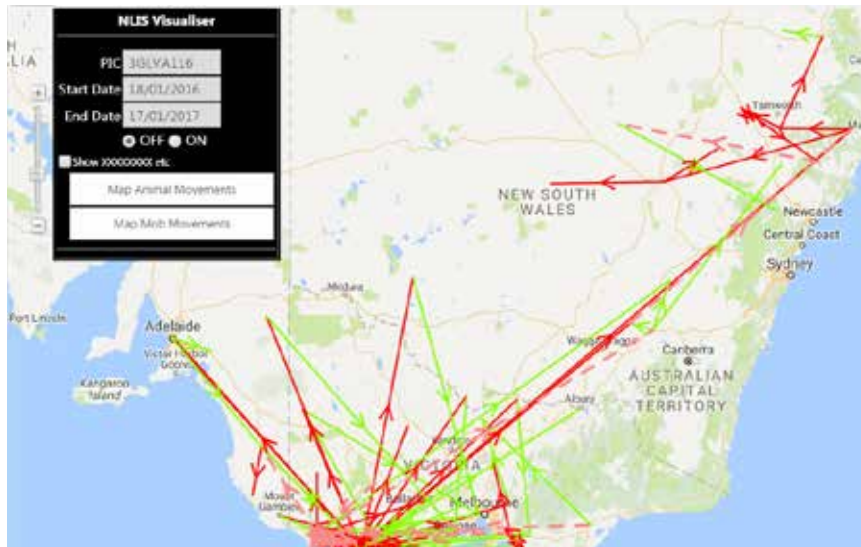


## Agriculture Victoria – Biosecurity Branch, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Victoria

### *Government category*

Agriculture Victoria's Biosecurity Branch designed and built a biosecurity case management platform known as MAX.

The system was created for biosecurity emergencies and allows end-to-end information systems to be deployed within days, resulting in a quicker and more efficient response.



The MAX biosecurity case management platform allows biosecurity agencies to respond to emergencies faster and more efficiently than ever before.

The easy to use system requires minimal training, and users are able to enter data directly from the field without needing to return to an office.

In addition to emergency situations, the flexibility and features of the platform have seen it increasingly used for routine biosecurity operations.

In Victoria alone MAX has been used for numerous responses including giant pine scale, chestnut blight and anthrax, plant and animal health surveillance, issuing plant health certificates, bushfire and flood recovery, wild dog management and drought assistance programs.

Other biosecurity agencies in Australia have also adopted the MAX platform, with Agriculture Victoria's Biosecurity Branch working to install the system and conduct training in other states.

In Western Australia, the system was successfully tested for foot and mouth disease response.

In South Australia, MAX has been used for fruit fly trapping and Khapra beetle surveillance.

In Queensland, MAX has been used for Varroa mite surveillance, biosecurity entity registration, fly trapping, a pest animal register, red witchweed response and Hendra virus response, with plans to implement the system in other areas including animal and plant health surveillance.

The Northern Territory is in the process of installing MAX and Tasmania are waiting to commission their installation.

Nationally, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will also pilot the system.

As well as enhanced biosecurity response, the sharing of the system across jurisdictions has resulted in more common tools and processes implemented across Australia.

Agriculture Victoria – Biosecurity Branch was nominated by Cassandra Meagher, from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.



## Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia

### *Government category*

Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia's Farm Biosecurity Program is funded to the tune of just \$200,000 and one full-time position a year.

Yet the program has led the way in developing a suite of education and awareness raising tools for biosecurity on farms.





Australia's biosecurity landscape is changing. Biosecurity legislation around the country is being modified with a theme of less regulation and more shared responsibility.

Governments will no longer be relied upon to enforce biosecurity on farms, and producers will increasingly need to assess their own biosecurity risks and make sure they have measures in place to stop diseases, pests and weeds from affecting their profits.

Amidst this change, the Farm Biosecurity Program had led the way with the development of a suite of education and awareness raising tools for on-farm biosecurity.

The program is run by Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia, and serves as a powerful example of Australia's industry and government working together to protect our way of life.

Before the Farm Biosecurity Program, on-farm biosecurity was implemented in a piecemeal fashion, often driven by the efforts of extension officers, veterinarians and passionate individuals in particular industries or regions.

Now, six essential principles have been developed as the basis for a comprehensive suite of tools and materials covering all on-farm biosecurity risks.

These essentials are:

- Farm inputs
- People, vehicles & equipment
- Production practices
- Feral animals & weeds
- Farm outputs
- Train, plan & record

The Farm Biosecurity Program has also kept pace with new communication methods to meet the needs of producers.

In 2009, the project used manuals, pamphlets, posters, print advertising and signs to get the biosecurity message out.

In 2016, the program included an e-newsletter, phone app, interactive website and a social media presence.

The Farm Biosecurity Program has a robust annual business plan to make the most of its modest resourcing and ensure funds are allocated appropriately.

Part of the funding is spent evaluating the program by surveying producers from across industries and states every few years.

The nomination for the award came from Harley McNamara, from Animal Health Australia.