



4 December 2022

Ms Kaylene Gulich
Chair
BAM Act Review Panel
C/- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
Via email: BAMAreview@dpird.wa.gov.au

Dear Ms Gulich

RE: PGA Supplementary Submission - Review of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007

Further to our previous submission dated 27 July 2022, on behalf of the Members of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia (PGA) we would like to provide additional comment regarding our strong objection to the Biosecurity Council of WA's proposed 'whole-of-State' biosecurity levy.

In its recent annual report to the Minister, the Biosecurity Council recommended the levy be implemented in a bid to secure a 'sustainable' funding stream for the State's defences against pest animal and plant species.

The report stated that, "There is an opportunity to review and revise WA's biosecurity cost sharing options to ensure a fair and equitable system is in place to carry WA into the future."

"The option favoured by the Council is a whole-of-State rate or levy, similar to the Emergency Services Levy."

"This will augment the available funding to a level more appropriate for maintaining WA's biosecurity, enabling increased government-led biosecurity action and better support for industry and community-driven action."

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Under the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007 the State manages pests both newly arrived at the borders and those present ‘in a small, eradicable population’.

Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs) support land managers to control widespread and established pests, and are funded by rates levied from property holders, with the WA Government equally matching all funding collected under the Declared Pest Rate (DPR).

The PGA notes the Minister for Agriculture’s opposition to the replacement of the DPR with a proposed state-wide levy and agrees with her comments in *The Countryman* on November 11 that there is not a “good argument for replacing the declared pest rate – which is levied on particular communities to deal with particular pests on particular land – to make that a more general tax.”

A State-wide biosecurity levy is not the solution; what is needed is greater support for the RBGs.

Overall, the RBG model is working well as it provides community (including landholders) assistance and guidance on Declared Pest management on their properties. The provision of a Declared Pest Rate provides sustainable funding for LOCAL groups to manage LOCAL pests and is an effective way to manage these pests with landholders contributing funds for pests on a nil-tenure basis. It provides direct community buy-in and responsibility from landholders/community on reporting declared pests and management of declared pests

RBGs have also established great partnerships with government/industry/NRM/Farming groups and other local community groups to raise awareness and have delivered real on-ground outcomes. However there needs to be a fair and proper balance between competing interests.

It is also important to note that pests are cross boundary and the management of Declared Pests on government land necessitates the need for some additional funding to manage these pests and work alongside community efforts. Whilst RBGs provide strategic pest management actions across their specified areas, the Act (or administrators of the Act) should provide a greater flexibility for reactive management of declared pests.

Yours faithfully



Tony Seabrook
PGA President