

2nd Australian Biosecurity Symposium

A decade of biosecurity: turning a moment into a movement

Final Report

3–5 May 2022 • Gold Coast, Queensland



#BioSym2022



Event summary

For enquiries:

E: symposium@animalhealthaustralia.com.au

W: www.biosym.com.au

Over 400 of the country's leading innovative minds and influential players converged on the Gold Coast on 3-5 May for the 2nd Australian Biosecurity Symposium. Together they networked, brain-stormed and united under a common purpose: to accelerate biosecurity reform.

The Symposium continued the work of the Biosecurity Collective - a shared initiative consisting of Animal Health Australia (AHA), Invasive Species Council (ISC), Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) and Plant Health Australia (PHA), to define and influence the direction of Australia's biosecurity system towards 2030 - particularly in engaging all Australians in building a stronger biosecurity system.

Presentations, posters and panel discussions were positioned around four themes:

1. Connecting the dots: enhancing the system and its resilience
2. Empowering action: working together for transformational change
3. Future-focused: how science and tech are paving the way forward
4. Mainstreaming biosecurity: turning buzzword into a way of life.

“

“Catching up with many known colleagues and meeting new ones, and being inspired by constructive presentations, was very much welcomed.”

”

Special thanks and congratulations to all our speakers and delegates. Many delegates spoke about the power of meeting in person again. While many have made the best of online communication, to be interacting face-to-face at the Symposium was invaluable and made the event's goals of empowering change all the more tangible.

We hope you enjoyed the Symposium – stay tuned for the announcement of the next Symposium's date and location!



Kathleen Plowman
CEO, AHA



Andrew Cox
CEO, ISC

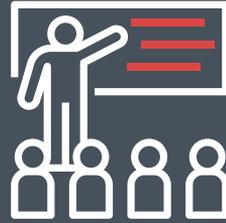


Andreas Glanznig
CEO, CISS



Sarah Corcoran
CEO, PHA

Symposium snapshot



106 presentations

showcasing

**4 thought provoking
keynote sessions**

Representatives from across **8 sectors**



Livestock



Plants



Aquatics



Human



Environment



Pests



Wildlife



Weeds

99%

of delegates rated the Symposium as excellent, very good or good

98%

of delegates rated the program and presentations highly

12

supportive sponsors and exhibitors



1.48
million

reach across
news platforms and
social media

1

Key highlights



Our fabulous MC, Costa Georgiadis, whose energy and passion was unwavering.

Launch of the Decade of Biosecurity.



Face-to-face networking

Jessamy Gee's excellent drawings summarising presentations – Check them out [here](#)



The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment biosecurity detector dogs.

Feedback

We received valuable feedback about what worked well and how we can make improvements for our next Symposium.

What delegates liked

“Inclusivity, range of presenters, motivating keynote speakers.”

“Networking - such an unusual, wonderful opportunity to have representatives from so many parts of the biosecurity system & different perspectives present.”

“Great networking opportunities, great speakers, location was good, very well organised - congratulations and thank you!”



An inspirational and valuable event.

What could be improved

“It felt quite jam packed. Maybe consider doing it over three days next time so there is more time for groups to organise face to face catch ups.”

“Diversity - would be great to include more indigenous & other cultural perspectives, and also consider session where we hear from community stakeholders & their perspectives.”



Longer time to present and time for questions and discussion.

Event highlights

Welcome reception (pre-event)

At an outdoor welcome reception that made the most of the Queensland weather, Andrew Cox, CEO, ISC welcomed attendees to the Symposium, highlighting its unique ability to lead transformative action and change.



“This Symposium delivers the opportunity to develop new concepts, share and test ideas, build new partnerships and engage in challenging discussions that will help us shape the future of Australia’s biosecurity system.”

- Andrew Cox

Day 1 highlights

Symposium welcome

Costa Georgiadis, Symposium MC, welcomed delegates and reminded them of their role as communication amplifiers, encouraging them to use their reach to share biosecurity moments.

“

I loved the diversity of speakers and the way Costa brought that diversity together. The framing of the event with the turning a ‘moment into a movement’ tagline worked well and kept the energy focused.

”



“We’re focusing on biosecurity preparedness, as it’s not a case of if, but when a new biosecurity threat arrives.”

- Costa Georgiadis



CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE SYMPOSIUM LAUNCH VIDEO



Setting the scene

Malcolm Letts, Chief Biosecurity Officer, Biosecurity Queensland and Kathleen Plowman, CEO, AHA, set the scene for the Symposium, speaking about achievements and goals for the future. Kathleen encouraged delegates to think about moments in their lives that have been part of movements, as that's what the Symposium is all about: turning moments into a movement by mobilising all Australians to take ownership and be part of biosecurity transformation.



“This Symposium grew from an ambitious idea in 2018 that recognised the power of collaborations and partnerships, to build a biosecurity collective that can rise up to meet the task of transforming our national biosecurity system to meet the challenges of this decade.”

- Kathleen Plowman



Anika's plenary was absolutely fantastic and really inspiring. It was great to see presentations from such a big field of biosecurity.

Keynote Dr Anika Molesworth

Dr Anika Molesworth, who has a PhD in international agriculture and environmental management and lives on a family farm in far west New South Wales on the lands of the Wilyakali people, spoke from personal experience about climate change and her work with rural communities. Dr Molesworth took delegates on a climate change journey, reflecting on where we have come from and where we are going, instilling courage to enable us to choose the story we want to create for our land and the legacy we want to leave. She highlighted that we all share the problem of climate change, and that the Symposium was a gathering of problem solvers.



“The biosecurity sector is facing significant threats but through science and technological innovation, and engagement of the broader community, we are capable of transformational change.”

- Dr Debbie Eagles

Keynote Dr Debbie Eagles

Dr Debbie Eagles is an epidemiologist with a background in vector-borne diseases and extensive experience in animal health and biosecurity preparedness and response in Australia. She spoke about how research and innovation is fundamental in transforming the national biosecurity system and highlighted how a transformed national biosecurity system needs to be underpinned by digital and genetic surveillance systems supported by citizen science, big data analytics and fully integrated pre-border and post-border systems.

Concurrent sessions

There were three concurrent sessions held on Day 1 to discuss topics such as surveillance, shared responsibility and building resilience.

“The fundamental nature of biosecurity demands that all parts of the biosecurity system are alert, inquisitive, communicative, decisive and operationally disciplined,”

Rob Delane, Inspector-General of Biosecurity, from his presentation *Towards a more accountable biosecurity system*.

“When industry is motivated, resourced, and has the capacity, it can be a powerful contributor to biosecurity resilience.”

Nathan Hancock, CEO of Citrus Australia and Chair of the Plant Industry Forum, from his presentation *CitrusWatch: launch of a multi-pronged, multi-stakeholder approach to commodity protection*.



“In 2020 over 56,000 overseas seed parcels failed to meet import conditions.”

- Gabrielle Vivian-Smith, Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer, from her presentation *Australia's biosecurity outlook: a plant health perspective*.



Decade of Biosecurity Launch

Andrew Cox, CEO, ISC launched the 2020s as the 'Decade of Biosecurity' in order to future-proof Australia's biosecurity system.

In a special address, Mark Furner, QLD Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities, stated that the 'Decade of Biosecurity' aims to mobilise a 25 million strong mass movement, secure sustainable investment in biosecurity, foster innovation and create a formal partnership between government, industry and the community.



"We need to build a biosecurity system ready for 2030. And we need to start now. We want to ensure that every individual Australian, business and organisation recognises and understands their role and the important contribution they can play in creating a stronger and more resilient biosecurity system."

- Andrew Cox

Dinner

After a great day of presentations, it was time to relax at the Symposium dinner. Delegates heard from Platinum Sponsor representative Dr Robyn Cleland, Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer from the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment before being entertained by Josh Norbido, an illusionist and magician.



**CLICK HERE
TO VIEW THE
FULL PHOTO
GALLERY FROM
THE DINNER.**

Day 2 highlights

Carrying on the spirit of innovation from the previous day, Sarah Corcoran, CEO, PHA and Costa Georgiadis stepped outside of the box, delighting us with some Kath & Kim impersonations to deliver the Day 1 recap.



“We all know that biosecurity outbreaks are continuing to rise in volume and complexity. Over the next decade, Australia needs a biosecurity movement to meet the challenges facing the national biosecurity system and influence the direction of the future biosecurity system.”

- Sarah Corcoran

Keynote Connecting the dots panel

Costa Georgiadis claimed that one of the keys for ensuring a successful biosecurity system is having a ‘shared responsibility’ mentality. He then added that this statement is often said but not always understood. What do we mean by sharing responsibility and how do we connect all the dots so the responsibilities across the sector are in fact shared? This was the question posed to the panel participants - Bruce Christie, Chair, CISS; Nathan Hancock, CEO, Citrus Australia and Chair, Plant Industries Forum Committee; Sal Milici, Head of Border & Biosecurity, Freight & Trade Alliance; Christine Milne AO, Ambassador, ISC; and Georgie Somerset, President, Agforce.



“A National Biosecurity Strategy is really important to give us the direction we need to manage risks on a national scale. We now have a workable version that all parties can talk to,”

- Dr Bruce Christie
(panel participant)



“

**Well organised.
Interesting content. Costa
was a fantastic host.
Dr Norman Swan was a
fantastic speaker.**

”

Keynote Dr Norman Swan

Dr Norman Swan, health journalist and host of RN's Health Report and Coronacast, shared his experiences and knowledge in 'mainstreaming' important messages to a broad audience – bridging the gap from awareness to practice change. A past Gold Walkley winner, Dr Swan has shone a spotlight on public health issues across various platforms, so was very well-placed to speak to delegates about mainstreaming biosecurity issues and activism. His address provided delegates with key takeaways on how to mainstream the importance of biosecurity practices, bringing about positive and sustained engagement from the broader community.

Concurrent sessions

There were three concurrent sessions held on Day 2 to explore topics such as social attitudes to mainstream biosecurity, Northern Australia/indigenous approaches to biosecurity and empowering action.

“

**Good mix of science
and 'big picture' talks.
Enjoyed the panel
sessions.**

”

“To create movement, we need to get emotional, talk to people's hearts and connect on a deeper level.”

Sonia Graham, Senior Research Associate at the University of Wollongong, from the panel discussion about social attitudes to mainstream biosecurity.

“In the Territory we've built a community of trust that underpins biosecurity resilience. We've built a strong system through a series of very small steps.”

Greg Owens, Industry Development Manager, NT Farmers Association, from the panel discussion on a shared vision for Northern Australia.

Closing statements

The Biosecurity Collective's four CEO's, Kathleen Plowman from AHA, Andrew Cox from ISC, Andreas Glanznig from CISS, and Sarah Corcoran from PHA, wrapped up the Symposium.



“It’s been an amazing Symposium that has highlighted the enormous amount of change that has happened over the past three years since the last Symposium. I was really pleased to see how we are gaining momentum in innovation and transformation of the biosecurity system, the progress in environmental DNA detection, and the work by the University of Adelaide around e-commerce surveillance.”

- Andreas Glanznig



What did we learn?

Delegates came away from the Symposium with some important learnings:

Community engagement

- We are choosing the story we want to tell, the legacy we want to leave
- Engaging rural producers is central to the shared responsibility approach
- Shared responsibility has been a cornerstone of biosecurity since 1996, now it is time for collective accountability
- Understand barriers and enablers
- Connect locally with local issues and priorities

Diversity and culture

- Bring diverse people to the table – relinquish power, engage traditional owners, and think about not just who but how
- Create a culture to care and protect
- Be inclusive
- Mix up the structure and formality
- Empower and collaborate with Indigenous rangers
- There are cultural and institutional norms which form barriers

Taking action

- Courage is what connects us. Step forward. Speak up. Look challenges in the eye
- Learn from failure
- Communities will save us – when they change, politics follow
- Data collection helps create actionable information that can be delivered to stakeholders
- Need to do more in terms of preparedness, education and training and surveillance

Innovation and collaboration

- The world is not the same... we must change with it
- We require transformational change through system connectivity, shared responsibility and innovation in science and technology
- We are only as prepared as our neighbours – international collaboration is key
- Build connections and have conversations
- Connect to community activists without driving a wedge
- Create parliamentary friends and connect with local journalists
- Leverage new technology

What's next?

At the Symposium close, the CEOs of AHA, ISC, CISS and PHA outlined what actions were required from the biosecurity collective to maintain momentum gathered for the biosecurity movement:

- 1** We need to work together to encourage action at the grassroots level to support change from the bottom up
- 2** We need to amplify our message by speaking up, being inclusive and making it easy to understand
- 3** We need to achieve political traction by formalising a Parliamentary Friends of Biosecurity group
- 4** We need double of the current investment in biosecurity to sustain long-term biosecurity transformation

These actions will be further explored through the Decade of Biosecurity initiative.

CLOSING STATEMENTS

WE'VE SEEN the PROGRESS and MOMENTUM WE'VE GAINED

WE KNOW WE NEED this MOVEMENT to COME BOTTOM UP

HOW do WE enable THIS?

WORKING TOGETHER ALONGSIDE GOV'T & COMMUNITY GROUPS

SMALL STEPS. EVERY DAY.

BE COURAGEOUS

MAKE NOISE - THEY CAN'T HEAR US!

THIS is a PEOPLE and COMMUNICATION PROBLEM

WE HAVE to AMPLIFY

NOT JUST TALK to OURSELVES.

BE INCLUSIVE.

FOCUS on PREVENTION.

MAKE it RELEVANT and SIMPLE!

SUSTAINABLE

WE NEED DOUBLE the INVESTMENT by 2030 BARGAIN! THIS IS OUR FUTURE!

THIS is OUR PROBLEM. OUR COLLECTIVE. OUR SYSTEM.

JESSAMIE GEE

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Keep an eye out for the date and location of the next Symposium, to be held in 2024.