



**EXERCISE CROWN AND ANCHOR
2019**

FINAL EXERCISE REPORT



Version control

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	EXPANSION
ACPPPO	Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AHA	Animal Health Australia
AHBIC	Australian Honey Bee Industry Council
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAWR	Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
DIRDC	Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (Australian Government)
EM	Emergency management
ESA	Emergency Services Agency
FPOE	First Point of Entry
ICT	Information and communications technology
IMT	Incident Management Team
LCC	Local Control Centre
MEOC	Municipal emergency operations centre
NBEPEG	National Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Expert Group
NBRT	National Biosecurity Response Team
NSW DPI	New South Wales Department of Primary Industries
PD	Professional development
PHA	Plant Health Australia
Qld DAF	Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
RIFA	Red imported fire ant
SCC	State Coordination Centre
SME	Subject matter expert
WA	Western Australia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Biosecurity Response Team (NBRT) program manages a national pool of response-ready personnel. These individuals are available for interstate deployment to support jurisdictional responses to biosecurity incidents. As part of the program, NBRT members have access to professional development (PD) opportunities and activities that look to collectively enhance national response capabilities (i.e. these activities are in addition to, and not in replacement of, response training conducted by jurisdictions in maintaining state-based response capabilities of staff). Exercise Crown and Anchor was designed to be the annual major PD activity in the program that invites the participation of the entire NBRT cohort.

Exercise Crown and Anchor was held during the week of 25–28 March 2019 in Canberra ACT. As a hybrid PD activity, the exercise integrated Incident Management Team function- and discussion-based components inclusive of site visits, guest speakers and presentations, and pre-exercise activities. In addition to NBRT members, the exercise also involved participation of subject matter experts (SME), multiple external organisations and observers.

The exercise aimed to enhance the national ability to manage a response to a post-border biosecurity incident located in a Commonwealth place, with operations extending into an adjoining jurisdiction. In doing so, Exercise Crown and Anchor allowed the NBRT to test the robustness of existing policies, processes and resources should the NBRT be called upon to support a Commonwealth-led response to a biosecurity incident. This was explored through hypothetical scenarios: one on the detection of red imported fire ants at Canberra International Airport, and another on the detection of *Varroa destructor* at a backyard beehive located in Jervis Bay Territory.

This report details key lessons identified for future NBRT and national biosecurity response training activities. Some themes recognised in the final exercise report include (but are not limited to) the value of:

- Ongoing training activities (both theory-based and practical) within the biosecurity emergency response sector on legislation;
- Having available and readily accessible national resources for biosecurity emergency response (e.g. templates, tools, case management system);
- The NBRT program in strengthening national biosecurity emergency response capabilities by maintaining and enhancing a cohort of cross-sectoral and response-ready personnel; and
- SME and stakeholder engagement during the planning and conduct of training activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1** The Commonwealth to clarify the use of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* in respect of a biosecurity emergency response in Commonwealth places and provide the information to biosecurity responders in the form of training and/or information packages.
- Recommendation 2** The Commonwealth to develop and strengthen deployment and communications processes such that immediate and sound advice on Commonwealth legislation can be provided in the event of a biosecurity response within a Commonwealth place.
- Recommendation 3** The Commonwealth to develop and make accessible standardised national biosecurity emergency response tools and templates for responses in Commonwealth places (e.g. by a resource kit) to support response personnel.
- Recommendation 4** The Commonwealth to provide options for a national case management system for biosecurity emergency responses to support response personnel.
- Recommendation 5** Training activities to involve relevant SMEs and stakeholders during planning and exercise conduct to support scenario development and contextualisation, session activities and facilitate working relationships.
- Recommendation 6** The NBRT program to incorporate sessions delivered by external EM agencies to facilitate the cross-sectoral sharing of new developments (e.g. technological advances) that could support enhancing biosecurity response and preparedness.
- Recommendation 7** The NBRT program to develop a communications platform for its members to encourage ongoing networking and discussions.
- Recommendation 8** The NBRT program to investigate ways to increase the uptake of the NBRT members' SharePoint as an ongoing, resource-sharing platform.
- Recommendation 9** The NBRT program to investigate ways for improving the utilisation of NBRT members' expertise and their deployment to biosecurity responses.
- Recommendation 10** Training activities to incorporate observer packages consisting of briefing material on the scenario and rules of engagement.
- Recommendation 11** The NBRT program to offer opportunities for the mentor cohort to exercise their facilitation skills.
- Recommendation 12** The NBRT program to incorporate member-led or -supported sessions into training activities to encourage accountability and ownership in its members to contribute to their own PD.
- Recommendation 13** The NBRT program to communicate and engage with jurisdictional and Commonwealth executives and management to increase awareness of the program and its members.

- Recommendation 14** Training activities to record, incorporate and trial previous lessons learned (incl. barriers to attendance) for the ongoing improvement of training activities.
- Recommendation 15** The Commonwealth to develop and maintain a national repository of lessons identified from previous activities and responses, and how these are to be/have been addressed.
- Recommendation 16** The Commonwealth, jurisdictions and NBRT program to offer information and/or training on high-level, strategic considerations during an emergency response on an ongoing basis.



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1. EXERCISE CROWN AND ANCHOR

1.1 Background

The National Biosecurity Response Team (NBRT) was established in 2017 as a pool of response-ready personnel across Australia which can be accessed by a jurisdiction's biosecurity agency when responding to a biosecurity incident. The NBRT includes:

- a cohort of mentors that can be called upon to assist a jurisdiction in establishing its initial response arrangements; and
- a cohort of response personnel that are able to perform a range of response functions within a State Coordination Centre (SCC) or Local Control Centre (LCC), at any stage during the response to a biosecurity incident.

In accordance with the NBRT Arrangements 2017–19, members are provided opportunities to participate in professional development (PD) activities relevant to their nominated Incident Management Team (IMT) function in the NBRT. Accordingly, the major PD activity for the 2018–19 financial year was Exercise Crown and Anchor, a hybrid functional and discussion exercise conducted in Canberra ACT during the week of 25–28 March 2019.

1.2 Aim

To enhance the national ability in managing a response to a post-border biosecurity incident located in a Commonwealth place (see Appendix 1), with operations extending into an adjoining jurisdiction.

1.3 Objectives

1. Improve the capability to deliver an effective response to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places.
2. Increase NBRT members' knowledge of the relevant legislation and arrangements for post-border biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places with operations extending into the ACT or NSW.
3. Increase NBRT members' awareness of new developments in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements.
4. Define how the NBRT could contribute to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places.

1.4 Scope

Exercise Crown and Anchor was a hybrid functional and discussion exercise designed to allow NBRT members to practice their IMT functional roles and explore how these could be applied to a post-border biosecurity incident occurring in a Commonwealth place which had the potential to spread into an adjoining jurisdiction.

As a lead-in activity, NBRT members were offered visits to first points of entry (FPOE, ports and airports) in NSW, Qld and WA. These members reported back on their experiences to the wider



group during the exercise to assist with the appreciation of potential complexities around conducting response activities in a Commonwealth place.

Delivered over three days, the exercise focused on existing legislation, policies and emergency response arrangements for the Commonwealth and adjoining jurisdictions. Technical subject matter experts (SME) Dr Thomas Wallenius (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, CSIRO) and Dr John Roberts (Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, DAWR) presented on the two scenario pest species: *Varroa destructor* (Varroa mite) and *Solenopsis invicta* (red imported fire ant (RIFA)).

In addition, Exercise Crown and Anchor included site visits to relevant scenario locations within the ACT, including:

- ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA), Fairbairn
- ACT municipal emergency operations centre (MEOC, Ron Reynolds Training Centre)
- Canberra International Airport
- Fairbairn and Majura Park stakeholders (Australian Government Department of Defence and ACT State Emergency Service)
- Training beehives in Jerrabomberra.

The exercise did not include:

- The establishment of fully functioning operations centres;
- Field-based response activities; or
- Site visits outside the ACT (e.g. Jervis Bay).

See Appendix 2 for the Exercise Crown and Anchor program outline.

1.5 Participants

The following organisations and groups were represented in the exercise and provided input:

- ACT Government (Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate)
- Animal Health Australia (AHA)
- Australian Government Department of Defence
- Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (DIRDC)
- Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC)
- CSIRO
- DAWR
- NBRT
- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- Parks Australia
- Plant Health Australia (PHA)
- Qld Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
- Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community.

In total, 88 people attended part or all of the three-day exercise. This included the NBRT, Exercise Planning Team and Exercise Evaluation Team members, facilitators and observers.



National Biosecurity Response Team

Of the 61 NBRT members, 49 participated in Exercise Crown and Anchor. All jurisdictions and IMT functional cohorts were represented, although some jurisdictions could not send all of their NBRT members due to concurrent biosecurity response operational commitments.

Exercise Planning Team and facilitators

Twelve Exercise Planning Team members (see Section 2.2) attended the exercise, along with two technical SMEs from CSIRO and DAWR who presented on Varroa mite and RIFA. Seven presenters attended from a range of organisations including ACT Government, Agriculture Victoria, DAWR, NSW DPI, Qld DAF and Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

Evaluators

Three members of the Exercise Evaluation Team (see Section 2.4) from Qld DAF attended the exercise.

Observers

Fourteen observers attended the exercise at various occasions. Seven were from DAWR, four from ACT Government, two from PHA, and one from AHA.

Industry

Two members of AHBIC attended the exercise.

Site tours

Four guest speakers presented during the site tours. Two were from the Australian Government Department of Defence, one from the ACT MEOC and one from the ACT ESA. Two observers from PHA provided their technical insights during the site tour to the training hives in Jerrabomberra.

1.6 Exercise design and scenarios

Exercise Crown and Anchor was designed, planned and conducted by a nominated Exercise Planning Team (see Section 2.2). The exercise was delivered over three days as a hybrid exercise, employing a combination of workshop-style and scenario-based discussion activities, presentations and site visits. Lead-in activities were also incorporated to familiarise and prepare participants to discuss jurisdictional and Commonwealth biosecurity response and emergency management (EM) arrangements.

The exercise aim and objectives and program were developed by the Exercise Planning Team (see Appendix 2 for the Exercise Crown and Anchor program outline). The scenarios were developed in consultation with SMEs. Participants were equally distributed across and arbitrarily allocated to one of two scenarios (see below); NBRT members were spread across the scenarios such that both scenarios had even representation of IMT functions, mentors and jurisdictions.

Scenario 1: red imported fire ant

Scenario 1 described the fictional detection of a suspected tramp ant nest at Canberra International Airport – an FPOE and Commonwealth place. The species was confirmed to be RIFA following sampling and testing by CSIRO and DAWR. Subsequently, the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests was notified by the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer (ACPPPO), and LCC was established by DAWR as the lead agency.



Scenario 2: Varroa mite

Scenario 2 described the fictional detection of suspected Varroa mites in a backyard beehive in Jervis Bay Territory (a Commonwealth place). Following preliminary identification, the ACPPO was notified and delimiting surveillance initiated. DAWR acted as the lead agency with support from Australian Government Department of Defence, Australian Government DIRDC, NSW DPI and Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community.

2. EXERCISE MANAGEMENT

2.1 Exercise governance, sponsor, approval and reporting

The NBRT Advisory Group gives the operational direction for the NBRT. As such, the exercise concept was developed by the NBRT Advisory Group (who formed the Exercise Planning Team, see Section 2.2) and provided to the National Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Expert Group (NBEPEG) for approval, to whom the NBRT Advisory Group directly reports.

Subsequently, endorsement of Exercise Crown and Anchor had also been sought from:

- DAWR, as the lead agency for Commonwealth biosecurity emergency responses
- ACT Government – Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, as the lead agency for ACT biosecurity emergency responses
- NSW DPI, as the lead agency for NSW biosecurity emergency responses.

The NBRT Advisory Group membership comprises of representatives from DAWR (Chair), AHA, PHA and at least two state/territory biosecurity agencies. The Chair is responsible for reporting directly to NBEPEG and the National Biosecurity Committee. The state/territory representatives are nominated by the NBEPEG to ensure that there is equitable representation across biosecurity sectors and jurisdictions. For 2018–19, ACT, NSW and Qld were the nominated state/territory representatives.

The Exercise Writing Team, Exercise Evaluation Team and exercise communications were also nominated and managed by the NBRT Advisory Group. Much like the Exercise Planning Team, the Exercise Writing Team was based on the membership of the NBRT Advisory Group but with support from SMEs and external agencies. The Exercise Evaluation Team was led by Qld DAF, and exercise communications determined by the NBRT Advisory Group.

2.2 Exercise Planning Team

The Exercise Planning Team was responsible for the design, planning and conduct of Exercise Crown and Anchor. For Exercise Crown and Anchor, the Exercise Planning Team included representatives from:

- ACT Government
- AHA
- DAWR
- NSW DPI
- PHA
- Qld DAF.



See Appendix 3 for a list of reference documents used to guide the development and conduct of Exercise Crown and Anchor.

2.3 Communications

Exercise communications were managed by the Exercise Planning Team.

The final exercise report was prepared by the Exercise Planning Team and distributed to the NBEPEG and NBRT. The final exercise report is to be made available publicly.

3. EXERCISE OUTCOMES

3.1 Evaluation summary

An evaluation of the exercise was conducted by an independent evaluation team. An objective performance matrix was used to determine how effectively each objective was met (Appendix 4).

In its assessment, the evaluation report generated a number of considerations regarding the effectiveness of activities during the exercise and for the ongoing strengthening of national response capabilities. While the Exercise Evaluation Team deemed the exercise to have effectively achieved its objectives in the evaluation report, observations and considerations (including that of exercise planning and management, see Section 3.2.5) from the evaluation report have been further discussed here. Steps and activities undertaken in meeting each objective and their relative effectiveness and value to the NBRT have been detailed, and recommendations identified for improving national capability in responding to biosecurity incidents.

3.2 Insights, findings and recommendations

3.2.1 Objective One (Improve the capability to deliver an effective response to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places)

Summary of activities and outcomes

Exercise Crown and Anchor used a combination of functional and discussion-based activities to explore national capabilities in managing and responding to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places through the involvement of the NBRT. The relevant activities sought to examine the practicality of implementing existing biosecurity legislation (the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Commonwealth)). Participants and the Exercise Evaluation Team considered Objective One to have been met, with 93% of survey respondents directly indicating Exercise Crown and Anchor to have addressed this objective during the survey.

Areas of strength

The exercise scenarios offered an opportunity for participants to practice their IMT roles and work through a response to a post-border biosecurity incident in a Commonwealth place. This was supported by the pre-exercise site visits and questionnaire which prompted participants to consider the locations of Commonwealth places (see Appendix 1) and the legislation and legal implications of Commonwealth legislation before taking part in exercise activities.



The exercise further facilitated the strengthening of national capability in responding to biosecurity incidents by providing participants with:

- a working environment that mimicked the pace of an operational control centre.
- The use of lesser known pest species within the scenarios which helped to avoid participants from focusing on and being distracted by highly technical details.

Despite the challenge posed by a lack of Commonwealth response resources and legal expertise, this was offset by the ability of the NBRT to process, progress and evaluate the information and situation at hand despite limitations. In addition, participants agreed that incident management systems and processes had been successfully demonstrated during the exercise.

The success of meeting Objective One was strongly supported by observations made under Objective Two.

Areas for improvement

Participants had limited knowledge on the application of the Commonwealth legislation before the exercise. Unfortunately, the limited availability of SMEs on Commonwealth legislation, arrangements and policies inhibited the operations of some activities (e.g. implementing movement restrictions), as it was unclear under which authority it could be completed. Participants frequently considered that the involvement of such SMEs, particularly at strategic levels pre-exercise, would have offered clarity on how the 'response' could have been operationalised under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Commonwealth), and participants consequently felt their performance to have been constrained by their absence.

Similarly, NBRT members identified the lack of Commonwealth response tools and templates (e.g. Incident Action Plans; Situational Reports; Communications Plans; Logistics Plan, etc.) and case management system for responding to biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places to have been a challenge to carrying out the activities. As a result, NBRT members reverted to and adopted jurisdictional resources to complete tasks and felt this to be disruptive to the process.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1	The Commonwealth to clarify the use of the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> in respect of a biosecurity emergency response in Commonwealth places and provide the information to biosecurity responders in the form of training and/or information packages.
Recommendation 2	The Commonwealth to develop and strengthen deployment and communications processes such that immediate and sound advice on Commonwealth legislation can be provided in the event of a biosecurity response within a Commonwealth place.
Recommendation 3	The Commonwealth to develop and make accessible standardised national biosecurity emergency response tools and templates for responses in Commonwealth places (e.g. by a resource kit) to support response personnel.
Recommendation 4	The Commonwealth to provide options for a national case management system for biosecurity emergency responses to support response personnel.



3.2.2 Objective Two (Increase NBRT member knowledge of the relevant legislation and arrangements for post-border biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places with operations extending into ACT or NSW)

Summary of activities and outcomes

The combination of functional and discussion-based activities allowed participants to familiarise themselves with, discuss and troubleshoot relevant legislation and EM arrangements in the context of post-border biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places (see Appendix 1). In doing so, the activities of Objective Two supported achieving Objective One (improving response capabilities).

The evaluation report indicated that Objective Two was achieved, with 90% of survey respondents expressing agreement that their knowledge of the relevant legislation and arrangements for post-border biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places with operations extending into ACT or NSW had been increased. However, closer assessment of the criteria for the performance of Objective Two and the evaluation report demonstrate comparatively varied (but still favourable) responses.

Areas of strength

As mentioned under Objective One, the pre-exercise site visits and identification of Commonwealth places in their jurisdictions increased participants' awareness of Commonwealth places and facilitated their involvement in both functional and discussion-based activities.

A notable majority (>60%) responded favourably to whether the exercise had enhanced their knowledge and/or awareness of i) Commonwealth legislation and its application; and ii) ACT EM arrangements. The integration of functional and discussion activities allowed participants to practice their understanding of the relevant legislations; but furthermore, the exercise format provided opportunities to collaboratively identify, discuss and evaluate the strengths, challenges and nuances of the legislations. This, in addition to access to SMEs, contributed to increasing NBRT members' knowledge of relevant legislation and arrangements for post-border biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places.

The inclusion of site visits and guest speakers also offered insights on how biosecurity incidents are managed in Commonwealth places and of the interplay between legislations. Neither the Exercise Evaluation Team nor participants considered the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Commonwealth) to have directly inhibited 'response' operations to a biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places.

Areas for improvement

Similar to Objective One, the lack of legal SMEs (notably on the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Commonwealth)) restricted the activities and participation; the presence of such expertise would have complemented the pre-exercise activities and minimised confusion and time spent interpreting and applying the relevant legislation.

Although overall awareness and knowledge of the relevant legislations by NBRT members were indicated to having been strengthened, investigation of the interactions and differences between these legislations had also been limited, often by time. Consequently, the application of jurisdictional legislation in the context of a Commonwealth-led response to biosecurity incidents remained an area of uncertainty and concern to the participants as a result.

Feedback was variable when participants were asked whether their knowledge and awareness of jurisdictional legislation and arrangements had increased. Even though not explicitly stated, this is likely attributed to i) the way the exercise activities were segmented into two scenarios in different



jurisdictions; ii) variable knowledge of jurisdictional legislation and arrangements prior to the exercise; and iii) a significant portion of NBRT members being from NSW.

Recommendations

Recommendation 5	Training activities to involve relevant SMEs and stakeholders during planning and exercise conduct to support scenario development and contextualisation, session activities and facilitate working relationships.
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3.2.3 Objective Three (Increase NBRT member awareness of new developments in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements)

Summary of activities and outcomes

The exercise had sought to introduce and discuss new developments in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements. The exercise incorporated a range of site visits and guest speakers to contextualise such developments and embrace the cross-sectoral scope of the program and biosecurity preparedness and response. In addition, the exercise included a designated session for NBRT members to share insights and experiences from novel jurisdictional research and development in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements.

This, in addition to the inclusion of networking sessions, provided participants with opportunities to discuss the future direction that biosecurity emergency preparedness and response arrangements may be taking, and helped increase their situational awareness in this space. The considerable majority of survey respondents (78%) considered this Objective Three to have been achieved (with the remaining respondents either not agreeing or disagreeing (10%) or disagreeing (2%).

Areas of strength

The site visits, guest speakers and the expertise of SMEs were greatly valued by participants. The site visits showed participants the available incident management facilities and their technologies, equipment and locations, particularly in the context of the scenarios. Meanwhile, the presentations, guest speakers and SMEs provided a broader overview of new developments in biosecurity preparedness and response, across the animal, plant and environmental sectors.

Exercise Crown and Anchor also incorporated a session dedicated to NBRT members presenting their jurisdictional and personal insights on the evolving developments in biosecurity preparedness and response. This, combined with the additional networking opportunities throughout the exercise, prompted the sharing of jurisdictional knowledge and experience and facilitated discussions on national improvements and developments for future consideration.

By encouraging NBRT members to actively lead components of the PD activities within the program, participants also took ownership to strengthening the awareness and capability of the NBRT as a whole. In doing so, this session also promoted NBRT members to acknowledge, utilise and rely on the experiences and expertise of one another.

Areas for improvement

It would be beneficial to increase and strengthen ties in the broader EM context to reinforce the cross-sectoral scope of the program. This would also offer avenues through which new developments, such as technological advances, could be shared and adapted for enhancing biosecurity response and preparedness. A reasonable approach would be to facilitate the



involvement and participation of individuals, organisations and/or sectors extending beyond the biosecurity sector.

Objective Three was considered as having been achieved; however, the challenge moving forward will be facilitating ongoing communications to maintain awareness of new developments in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements within the NBRT. Previous feedback from the NBRT had requested that relevant resources be made available through an online file-sharing platform (SharePoint), as well as the development of an online communication platform for NBRT members. Although the former was developed and remains available, its uptake has been poor. Meanwhile, an appropriate platform continues to be deliberated as considerations on its management (e.g. administrative oversight; terms of use) and accessibility are still being clarified.

Recommendations

Recommendation 6	The NBRT program to incorporate sessions delivered by external EM agencies to facilitate the cross-sectoral sharing of new developments (e.g. technological advances) that could support enhancing biosecurity response and preparedness.
Recommendation 7	The NBRT program to develop a communications platform for its members to encourage ongoing networking and discussions.
Recommendation 8	The NBRT program to investigate ways to increase the uptake of the NBRT members' SharePoint as an ongoing, resource-sharing platform.

3.2.4 Objective Four (Define how the NBRT can contribute to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places)

Summary of activities and outcomes

The functional activities allowed participants to practice how the NBRT would operationally fit into a Commonwealth-led response, whilst discussion activities provided participants the opportunity to deconstruct and evaluate existing policies, processes and resources at their disposal. Survey respondents (90%) believed Objective Four to have been satisfactorily met.

Areas of strength

The majority of participants believed NBRT members had become more familiar with the differences in legislation and arrangements (69% and 72%, respectively). This, in combination with recommendations from previous objectives, indicate that NBRT members gained an understanding of how they would contribute to post-border biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places. Furthermore, confidence in NBRT members' capabilities to contribute to post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places was expressed by members and the Exercise Evaluation Team, recognising the participants to have worked well together in establishing appropriate response structures and documentation despite challenges in resourcing. These observations suggest that Objective Four had been achieved, and in doing so, the national capabilities in biosecurity response and preparedness having also been strengthened.

A notable observation from Exercise Border Bridge (2018) had been a lack of clarity on the role of NBRT mentors. Since then, the NBRT PD program has sought to clarify their roles, responsibilities and expectations. Exercise Crown and Anchor provided an opportunity to test the lessons learned through the program and better define how NBRT mentors could contribute to a biosecurity



response. The survey repeatedly indicated the value that the NBRT mentors had offered during Exercise Crown and Anchor through offering their guidance and experience to the IMT cohort.

Areas for improvement

Survey respondents tended to agree that they had become more familiar with the differences in legislation and arrangements; however, further clarity was still desired as participants felt that more time was required to allow for the in-depth discussions that they had anticipated. Furthermore, respondents considered the exercise to have had a disproportionately heavy focus on Commonwealth arrangements over that of the relevant jurisdictions.

Participants also felt the scope of the tasks and activities to have lacked consistency and/or direction in some instances. This mainly regarded the activities where there should have been inputs from the SCC, or where the tasks were more relevant to the SCC (as opposed to the LCC).

Additionally, it should be acknowledged that challenges beyond those identified in this report will likely be experienced should a real-life biosecurity incident occur, in Commonwealth places or otherwise (i.e. lessons learned may not translate directly or completely to an actual response environment). Likewise, it is important to recognise that there may be challenges and considerations in deploying NBRT members to responses. These include (but are not limited to) NBRT members not being released; responses not solely involving NBRT members; and lack of clarity surrounding deployment processes within jurisdictions. Although noted here, these issues were not for the program to address or the exercise to resolve.

Recommendations

Recommendation 9	The NBRT program to investigate ways for improving the utilisation of NBRT members' expertise and their deployment to biosecurity responses.
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3.2.5 Exercise planning and management¹

Areas of strength

Observations across the previous objectives indicated for Exercise Crown and Anchor to have been a success. More specifically:

- 98% of survey respondents indicated that the exercise had run smoothly in a coordinated and structured manner and allowed for the key objectives of the exercise to be achieved.
- 97% had agreed to have remained engaged throughout the exercise.
- 83% believed that they had received adequate resources and an appropriate level of logistical support in the lead-up to the exercise.

The above are largely credited to the regular communications of the Exercise Planning Team, stakeholders and SMEs to ensure the development of relevant activities and realistic scenarios. The hybrid exercise format, mixture of activities and the networking sessions offered context and situational awareness whilst avoiding participant burnout and loss of engagement. The Exercise Crown and Anchor program outline can be found in Appendix 2.

¹ No formal objective/s was set for exercise planning and management. As such, the evaluation of exercise planning and management is founded on observations from and themes based on the evaluation report and insights of the Exercise Planning Team and NBRT Advisory Group.



As mentioned, the inclusion of guest speakers was also valued for offering insights on their expertise and had also contributed to increasing NBRT members' awareness of recent developments in the biosecurity response space. Feedback suggested that international and/or those beyond the biosecurity sector be invited as guest speakers and presenters in future.

Survey respondents also acknowledged the exercise to have successfully demonstrated the application of incident management systems and processes. This, too, could be recognised as having been a result of the exercise design and management, and the capability of the NBRT.

The success of the exercise was also attributed to the experience and expertise within the NBRT. NBRT members utilised Exercise Crown and Anchor to its fullest in testing their own knowledge and capacity to adapt and effectively progress a response to a biosecurity incident. As captured previously, the mentor cohort was effectively incorporated and their knowledge and experience appreciated. Furthermore, Exercise Crown and Anchor had recognised and applied some of the lessons learned from Exercise Border Bridge. Particularly, Exercise Border Bridge had faced some challenges in developing participants' situational awareness due to the large volume of documentation and limited time available. In comparison, Exercise Crown and Anchor had incorporated a session designated to briefing the mentors on their involvement.

Areas for improvement

Some scope creep had occurred during the conceptual stages of Exercise Crown and Anchor. Initially, the exercise was intended to explore and examine the interactions between jurisdictional and Commonwealth legislation. As this had not been appropriately actualised, it was not sufficiently embedded within the exercise and was the likely cause of confusion regarding some of the activities. The limited availability and involvement of SMEs and relevant agency representatives was largely responsible for this shift in scope.

Exercise Crown and Anchor had investigated the practicality and implications of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Commonwealth) at an operational level; that is, high-level, strategic considerations were not explored. Although the NBRT is comprised of operational response personnel, a strong and holistic understanding of how the strategic and operational considerations interact would be valuable for NBRT members as part of their PD.

Several key themes for improvement were pronounced in addition to the challenges noted in the preceding objectives. These included:

- **Information and communications technology (ICT)**
Limitations in the number of computers, setting up of email addresses and access to stable wireless internet had inhibited the efficiency and effectiveness of the functional activities. Despite the presence of ICT personnel, the lack of connectivity had been beyond their control and remained a persistent issue. In addition, the process for setting up departmental email addresses for specified personnel during exercises could be better streamlined, the process for which had been deprioritised due to competing priorities of the Exercise Planning Team.
- **Pre-exercise site visits**
Participants acknowledged the value of including site visits to Commonwealth places. However, the availability and involvement of NBRT members had been limited by delays in arranging the site visits and notifying NBRT members.
- **Terms of engagement**



Although the pre-exercise briefing had aided the involvement of mentors, feedback indicated for further structure and information on the roles and responsibilities and a terms of engagement to have been valuable. Similarly, a terms of engagement/observer program would have been beneficial for the observers.

To note, there were also some challenges to NBRT attendance. Reasons primarily comprised of (but are not limited to) weather and climate impeding travel and personal reasons.

Recommendations

Recommendation 10	Training activities to incorporate observer packages consisting of briefing material on the scenario and rules of engagement.
Recommendation 11	The NBRT program to offer opportunities for the mentor cohort to exercise their facilitation skills.
Recommendation 12	The NBRT program to incorporate member-led or -supported sessions into training activities to encourage accountability and ownership in its members to contribute to their own PD.
Recommendation 13	The NBRT program to communicate and engage with jurisdictional and Commonwealth executives and management to increase awareness of the program and its members.
Recommendation 14	Training activities to record, incorporate and trial previous lessons learned (incl. barriers to attendance) for the ongoing improvement of training activities.
Recommendation 15	The Commonwealth to develop and maintain a national repository of lessons identified from previous activities and responses, and how these are to be/have been addressed.
Recommendation 16	The Commonwealth, jurisdictions and NBRT program to offer information and/or training on high-level, strategic considerations during an emergency response on an ongoing basis.



4. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Commonwealth places

Commonwealth places are defined as a place (not being the seat of government) with respect to which the Parliament, by virtue of Section 52 of the Constitution, has, subject to the Constitution, exclusive power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth.

This includes:

- Australian external territories
- First points of landing as defined by the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Commonwealth)
- Indigenous Protected Areas administered by Prime Minister and Cabinet for the Department of Environment and Energy
- Land or property owned, leased or otherwise managed by Commonwealth Government agencies such as buildings and land used by the Department of Defence or Airservices
- National parks, gardens or reserves managed by the Department of Environment and Energy
- Commonwealth heritage listed places and world heritage areas
- Commonwealth marine reserves
- Waters beyond three nautical miles from the territorial sea baseline to the outer edge of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (or otherwise agreed between the Commonwealth and relevant state or territory).

NB: land or properties owned, leased or management by Commonwealth agencies in foreign land such as an Embassy are not considered Commonwealth Places in the scope of this policy.

NB: Crown land that is unallocated, subject to reservation, dedication or leasing is managed by states and is not considered a Commonwealth place.



Appendix 2 – Exercise Crown and Anchor program outline

SESSION TOPIC	PURPOSE	FORMAT	PRESENTER
DAY 1 – MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2019			
Mentor session	Mentor briefing Mentor time	Facilitated discussion	Steve Dibley Claire Petterson
Arrival and registration	-	-	-
Welcome, introductions and evening networking	Welcome and introductions	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan Ian Thompson
DAY 2 – TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2019			
Activity briefing/expectations	Provide overview of days activities	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
“Homework” discussion	Strategic appreciation and awareness of Commonwealth places and arrangements, including FPOE	Facilitated discussion	Stephen Dibley Claire Petterson
Scenario introduction and briefing	Introduction of both scenarios and guest technical speakers	Facilitated discussion	Lucy Aukett Chris Dunne
Commonwealth arrangements ACT arrangements NSW arrangements	Presentation of the EM and biosecurity arrangements in each jurisdiction	Presentations	Chris Dunne Warren Schofield Simon Oliver
Briefing for site visits	Briefing groups on their site visits	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Site visits	Site appreciation for NBRT members to assist them in the development of their exercise outputs	Site visit	Ben Byrne Stephen Dibley Chris Dunne

SESSION TOPIC	PURPOSE	FORMAT	PRESENTER
DAY 3 – WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH 2019			
FPOE discussion	To facilitate discussion around the issues and challenges when responding to an incursion at an FPOE	Facilitated discussion	Chris Dunne
Introduction of key organisations	Introduction of key organisations	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Induction to Commonwealth systems	Induction to Commonwealth systems	Facilitated discussion	Chris Dunne
Establishing the IMT Scenario-based discussions (Part 1)	Establishing context	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Stakeholder consideration and assessment Scenario-based discussions (Part 2)	Stakeholder consideration and assessment	Facilitated discussion	Ben Byrne
Response actions Scenario-based discussions (Part 3)	Response actions	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Response actions	Scenario-based discussions (cont'd)	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Response actions	Scenario-based discussions (cont'd)	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Debrief	Debrief	Debrief	Incident Controllers
DAY 4 – THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2019			
Complete outputs Scenario-based discussions (Part 4)	Complete outputs Incident Controller handover	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Report back	Report back and issues, gaps and challenges	Facilitated discussion	Tony Callan
Exercise evaluation	Exercise questionnaire/evaluation (hot debrief)	Facilitated discussion	Chris Lavin
Group discussion	NBRT Program evaluation	Online survey	Stephen Dibley Claire Petterson

SESSION TOPIC	PURPOSE	FORMAT	PRESENTER
What's new in biosecurity emergency preparedness and response?	Guest speakers share experiences/insights on changes and developments Ian Thompson (Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer) closes	Presentations	Five speakers

Appendix 3 – Reference documents

The following is a list of key reference documents that guided the development and conduct of Exercise Crown and Anchor.

Legislation

- Animal Diseases Act 2005 (ACT)
- Biosecurity Act 2015 (Commonwealth)
- Emergencies Act 2004 (ACT)
- Plant Diseases Act 2005 (ACT)
- Pest Plant & Animals Act 2005 (ACT)
- Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)
- Local Land Services Act 2013 Part 10 (NSW).

Jurisdictional emergency response arrangements

- ACT emergency plan
 - ACT EM legislation
 - ACT EM arrangements.
- ACT emergency coordination centre/s
- NSW Sharing Staff policy
- NSW Emergency Plan
 - NSW EM legislation
 - NSW EM arrangements.
- Australian Government Crisis Management Framework
- Australian Government Agricultural Incident Plan
- Commonwealth policy to support a biosecurity response on Commonwealth Places (under development)
- Jervis Bay Territories.

National emergency response arrangements

- Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA)
- Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD)
- National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA)
- Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN)
- Australian Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan (PLANTPLAN)
- Australian Government Crisis Management Framework
- Australian Government Agricultural Incident Plan.

National guidance documents

- Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Working Group (2014) *Biosecurity Emergency Management Guide – Exercise Management Guide*. Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Resources and Water Resources
- Biosecurity Emergency Preparedness Working Group (2017) *Evaluation and Lessons Management Guide*². Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Resources and Water Resources.

² www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/biosecurity/committees-partnerships/nbc/evaluation-lessons-mngt-guide.pdf

Appendix 4 – Objective performance matrix

	OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVE 2	OBJECTIVE 3	OBJECTIVE 4
Performance measure	Improve the capability to deliver an effective response to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places	Improve the capability to deliver an effective response to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places	Improve the capability to deliver an effective response to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places	Improve the capability to deliver an effective response to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places
(a)	Awareness of Commonwealth places is enhanced.	Awareness of Commonwealth places is enhanced.	Awareness of available incident management facilities and locations.	NBRT members are familiar with differences/nuances in legislation between jurisdictions.
(b)	Awareness of Commonwealth EM arrangements is enhanced.	Knowledge of legislation regarding Commonwealth places is enhanced.		NBRT members are familiar with differences/nuances in legislation between jurisdictions.
(c)	Awareness of NSW EM arrangements is enhanced.	Knowledge of legislation regarding NSW places is enhanced.		NBRT members demonstrate capability to operate in a Commonwealth place.
(d)	Awareness of ACT EM is enhanced.	Application of relevant legislation is demonstrated.		
(e)	NBRT members demonstrate improvement in capability.	Application of incident management systems and process is demonstrated.		