

Exercise Crown and Anchor

25–28 March 2019



Exercise report

Executive summary

The 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. 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 25–28 March 2019 in Canberra ACT. 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), external agencies 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 legislation and arrangements 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.

Key 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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 4** The Commonwealth to provide options for a national case management system for biosecurity emergency responses to support response personnel.
- 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.
- 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.
- 7** The NBRT program to develop a communications platform for its members to encourage ongoing networking and discussions.
- 8** The NBRT program to investigate ways to increase the uptake of the NBRT members' SharePoint as an ongoing, resource-sharing platform.
- 9** The NBRT program to investigate ways for improving the utilisation of NBRT members' expertise and their deployment to biosecurity responses.
- 10** Training activities to incorporate observer packages consisting of briefing material on the scenario and rules of engagement.

Recommendations

- 11** The NBRT program to offer opportunities for the mentor cohort to exercise their facilitation skills.
 - 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.
 - 13** The NBRT program to communicate and engage with jurisdictional and Commonwealth executives and management to increase awareness of the program and its members.
 - 14** Training activities to record, incorporate and trial previous lessons learned (incl. barriers to attendance) for the ongoing improvement of training activities.
 - 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.
 - 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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Exercise overview

3
days

Canberra
ACT

Aim

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

Four objectives

Site visits

Presentations

Discussions

Guest speakers

Functional activities

88
attendees

Including the Exercise Planning Team, Exercise Evaluation Team, facilitators, SMEs and observers

Exercise input and support from 12 agencies

Including
49/61 NBRT
members



Scenario 1

- Fictional detection of a suspected tramp ant nest at Canberra International Airport
- Confirmation of RIFA by CSIRO and DAWR
- Notification of the ACPPO by the CCEPP
- Establishment of an LCC.



Scenario 2

- Fictional detection if suspected Varroa mites in a backyard beehive in Jervis Bay Territory
- Preliminary identification
- Notification of ACPPO
- Initiation of delimiting surveillance.

Objective 1

Improve the capability to deliver an effective response to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places.

A combination of functional and discussion-based activities were used to achieve Objective 1. The activities sought to i) explore national capabilities in managing and responding to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places with the involvement of the NBRT; and ii) examine the practicality of implementing existing biosecurity legislation.

93% indicated Objective 1 to have been achieved.



- Practised IMT roles
- Worked through biosecurity incident responses
- Functional activities' working environment mimicked the pace of an LCC
- Used lesser known species and disease for scenarios
- Demonstrated the capability of the NBRT
- Successfully set up IM systems and processes.



- Knowledge on the application of Commonwealth legislation was limited (pre-exercise)
- Lacked legal SMEs
- Lack of Commonwealth response tools and templates
- Lack of Commonwealth case management system.

Recommendations

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Objective 2

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.

A combination of functional and discussion-based activities were used to achieve Objective 2. The activities sought to have participants familiarise themselves with, discuss and troubleshoot relevant legislation and EM arrangements in the context of post-border biosecurity incidents in Commonwealth places. Observations regarding Objective 2 supported achieving Objective 1.

90% indicated Objective 2 to have been achieved.



- Effective lead-in activities
- Practised understanding of relevant legislations and arrangements
- Collaboratively identified, discussed and evaluated relevant legislations and arrangements
- Site visits and guest speakers offered insights on how biosecurity incidents are managed in Commonwealth places.



- Lacked legal SMEs
- Limited time
- Lack of in-depth discussions on the interactions and differences between relevant legislations and arrangements.

Recommendations

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Objective 3

Increase NBRT member awareness of new developments in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements

Presentation- and site visit-based sessions were used to achieve Objective 3. The sessions sought to introduce and discuss new developments in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements. A session dedicated for NBRT members' presentations allowed a sharing of insights and experiences from novel jurisdictional research and development in biosecurity preparedness and response arrangements. The sessions also incorporated guest speakers to help contextualise such developments and embrace the cross-sectoral scope of the program and biosecurity preparedness and response.

78% indicated Objective 3 to have been achieved.



- Site visits, guest speakers and the expertise of SMEs
- NBRT-led presentation session
- Networking opportunities.



- Increase ties with broader EM sector
- Developing a platform for ongoing communications to maintain networks and awareness of new developments.

Recommendations

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4 Objective

Define how the NBRT can contribute to a post-border biosecurity incident in Commonwealth places

A combination of functional and discussion-based activities were used to achieve Objective 4. The functional activities allowed NBRT members to practice how they would fit operationally into a Commonwealth-led response. While the discussion activities provided NBRT members participants the opportunity to deconstruct and evaluate existing legislation and EM arrangements.

90% indicated Objective 1 to have been achieved.



- Gained understanding of relevant legislation and arrangements
- Practised IMT roles and how the NBRT would fit into a response operationally
- Good cooperation and collaboration of participants
- Better defined role of NBRT mentors
- Experience and guidance from mentors.



- Further clarity on nuances of and between relevant legislation and arrangements
- In-depth discussions limited by time
- Scope creep/confusion on the scope of some activities.

Recommendations

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5 Objective

Exercise planning and management

No formal objective was set for exercise planning and management. The evaluation of exercise planning and management is founded on observations from the evaluation report and insights of the Exercise Planning Team.

98% indicated that the exercise had run smoothly in a coordinated and structured manner and allowed for the exercise objectives to be achieved.

97% agreed to have remained engaged throughout the exercise.

83% agreed that they had received adequate resources and an appropriate level of logistical support in the lead-up to the exercise.



- Regular communications during planning
- Relevant activities and realistic scenarios
- Activities avoided burnout and loss of engagement
- Guest speakers
- Capability of the NBRT.



- Scope creep
- Limited availability and involvement of stakeholder agencies
- ICT issues
- Pre-exercise site visits with short notice
- Lack of terms of engagement.

Recommendations

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More information

This exercise report is an abbreviated version of the full Exercise Crown and Anchor exercise report, both prepared by the Exercise Planning Team for endorsement by the Exercise Steering Committee.

The full exercise report can be found on Animal Health Australia's website [here](#).

More information on the NBRT program can be found [here](#).

For further information on Exercise Crown and Anchor or the exercise report or the NBRT program, please refer to the above webpage or contact NBRT@animalhealthaustralia.com.au.

