

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Communiqué

NRMMC 14

7 NOVEMBER 2008

Primary Industries, Natural Resources, and Environment Ministers from across Australia met in Adelaide on Friday 7 November 2008. This was the fourteenth meeting of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. Specific issues dealt with by Council are detailed below.

Review of Quarantine and Biosecurity Arrangements

Mr Roger Beale AO, Chair of the independent review of Australia's quarantine and biosecurity arrangements, provided Council with an update on the review and some of the key issues raised. The review panel provided its report to the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on 30 September 2008. The Minister is considering the report prior to releasing it.

Review of Directions for the National Reserve System

Council agreed that a draft strategy for the National Reserve System that identifies priority actions for the ongoing development of a system of protected areas will be released for comment at the Australian Protected Areas Congress in November 2008. Submissions will be sought from key stakeholders and comments incorporated into a final strategy for release in mid-2009.

Climate Change in Primary Industries, NRM and Biodiversity—Future Directions

Council agreed to progress climate change priority actions for 2009-12, and that they will be reviewed and assessed following decisions made by COAG in relation to climate change and by the Australian Government in relation to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme at the end of 2008. Council also noted current progress towards completion of existing climate change priority actions identified in the November 2006 meeting.

Codes of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos

Council endorsed for release a revised Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes (commercial code) and a Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-commercial Purposes (non-commercial code). The use of shotguns is prohibited under the commercial code but allowed in the non-commercial code in Tasmania and South Australia. Tasmania and South Australia will review other appropriate control options and report back to Council in 2010.

National Strategy and Action Plan for the Role of Australia's Botanic Gardens in Adapting to Climate Change

Council endorsed the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Role of Australia's Botanic Gardens in Adapting to Climate Change and agreed that the Council of Heads of Australia's Botanic Gardens (CHABG) will provide advice on the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan through the Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee.

National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program—Funding and Review

Council agreed that eradication of the Red Imported Fire Ant remains the goal of the program.

Council agreed to further consider continued funding of \$22.0 million in 2009-10 for program operations and \$2.0 million for a research and development program, subject to jurisdictions' budgetary processes and confirmation by the National Biosecurity Committee that increased resources are warranted. Ongoing support for the proposed six-year forward program will be considered in November 2009, when the policy framework for this and similar programs has been defined consistent with the intent of AusBIOSEC.

Establishment of the Australian Weeds Research Centre

Council agreed that nationally coordinated weeds research is vital in tackling one of Australia's most pressing natural resource management issues. Council welcomed the establishment of the Australian Weeds Research Centre and agreed to work together to establish a truly national centre to reduce the impact of weeds on productivity and the environment.

Indigenous Reconciliation in PI and NRM: 2007-08 Annual Report

Council endorsed the Indigenous Reconciliation in Primary Industries and Natural Resource Management: Annual Report 2007-08. Council noted that all participating government agencies in natural resource management and primary industries wish to be more inclusive of Indigenous people in land and sea management activities and agricultural pursuits.

Council requested the NRM and PI Indigenous Reconciliation Working Group to identify specific actions and potential partners to increase Indigenous participation in natural resource management and primary industries.

Update on Caring for our Country

Council noted a verbal update from the Australian Government Ministers for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, on progress in the Caring for our Country Program.

Progress in the Enhancement of AusBIOSEC

Council noted progress in whole of government clearance of a draft Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to enhance Australia's biosecurity system for primary production and the environment (AusBIOSEC). Council noted that the IGA establishes arrangements to extend the current, effective biosecurity system for primary production to also protect our environment and social amenity from the negative affects of pests and diseases. Council noted that the IGA is likely to be brought forward to Council in April 2009, and this will need to be in the context of consideration of the outcomes of the Review of Quarantine and Biosecurity Arrangements.

National System for the Prevention and Management of Introduced Marine Pest Incursions

Council noted progress in implementing the National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions. Council also noted that the revised Marine Intergovernmental Agreement will be presented to Council for signature at its next meeting in April 2009.

National Climate Change and Fisheries Action Plan

Council noted progress on the development of the National Climate Change and Fisheries Action Plan. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is drafting the plan in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including the commercial and recreational fishing and aquaculture sectors and Australian and state government departments. The plan will be provided to Council for endorsement before release.