

TRANSFER OF PEST MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY TO DPI

Questions and Answers

1. What happened?

Responsibility for the management of weeds and pest animals, as well as wild dog operations, was transferred from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to DPI in November 2007.

DPI's Biosecurity Victoria division now has responsibility for policy and investment, Farm Services Victoria (FSV) and Biosciences divisions will be responsible for service delivery.

The transfer aligns responsibility for pest management with land tenure responsibilities of both departments with DPI taking a lead role for overall weeds and pest animals policy.

As a result of the transfer:

DSE has responsibility for:

- Overall accountability for administration of the *Catchment and Land Protection (CaLP) Act* to the responsible Minister
- Administration of the Good Neighbour program
- Established pests and weeds on public land
- Management of stakeholders relating to public land
- Communications relating to public land.

DPI has responsibility for:

- Overall accountability for administering the proposed *Plant Biosecurity Act* (currently *the Plant Health and Plant Products Act 1995*)
- Overall policy for weeds and pest animals and for wild dog operations. This will include a consolidated approach to prevention and early intervention
- Policy and funding for strategic research
- Established weeds and pests on private land
- Biosecurity policy direction and policy oversight for established pests on public and private land
- Management of stakeholders relating to private land
- Communications relating to private land and wild dogs.

Jointly, DPI and DSE have responsibility for:

- Establishment of a committee to ensure an integrated policy and investment framework for State government involvement in pest management and biosecurity as it relates to environmental protection. This committee would provide broad guidance on outcomes and investment of allocated budgets. This group would report to both Ministers, with overall priority setting and direction being the responsibility of the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change.
- Developing a joint biosecurity policy direction regardless of land tenure
- Developing an integrated information management system that meets the needs of both departments
- Managing investment and funding into weed and pest animal control
- Engaging catchment management authorities in program development and pest action plans. This aspect would be primarily a DPI responsibility as the investor, initially through a regional catchment investment process. DSE would have input to ensure a public land and biodiversity perspective and the process will be reviewed within 12 months.

2. Why did this happen?

This transfer had two primary purposes:

1. To enable a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention, allowing the department to take a 'biosecurity approach' to pest management.
2. To facilitate a closer alignment between pest management and land tenure responsibilities of both departments. While DPI will be responsible for overall weeds and pest animals policy, DSE will be responsible for implementing pest management activities on public land, and DPI on private land.

3. When was the decision made?

The agreement was reached between the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, and the Minister for Agriculture, Joe Helper, in August 2007 and announced in October 2007 following a thorough negotiation process between both departments.

4. When did this happen?

The transfer was finalised on 30 November 2007.

5. How was the transition process managed?

The process was managed in partnership between DSE and DPI and involved the DSE Natural Resources Division, the DPI Biosecurity Victoria Division and the then DPI Catchment and Agriculture Division (now Farm Services Victoria).

Action and implementation plans were developed by the transfer project team and a project control board and steering committee composed of representatives from both departments oversaw the process.

6. How did this impact on pest management service delivery?

The transfer had very little impact on the delivery of pest management services across both land tenures.

Over the coming years, DPI and DSE will work with key stakeholders to develop and implement a biosecurity approach to pest management that is intended to improve pest management outcomes for the Victorian community, environment and economy.

7. What is a 'biosecurity approach' to pest management?

The term 'biosecurity' is used to describe the protection of the economy, the environment or human health from the negative impacts associated with invasive species of plants, animals and pathogens. It covers preparedness, prevention, detection, surveillance, monitoring, control, and, response to and recovery from new incursions and outbreaks of invasive species as well as the ongoing management of some established species.

8. Where can I get more information?

Details on the transfer can be found at www.dpi.vic.gov.au or the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.