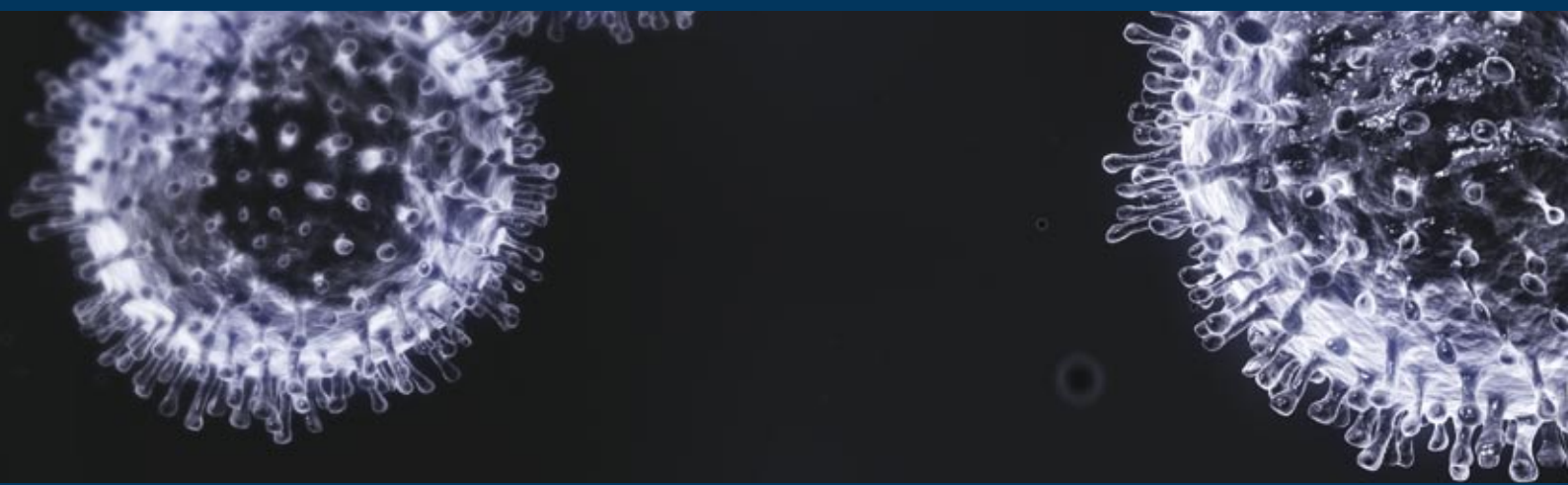


biosecurity

Strategy for Victoria



Government, Industry, Community – Protecting Victoria

Biosecurity is fundamental to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of all Victorians. Victoria has a strong record of identifying and managing biosecurity risks for the agricultural production sector but it is time to look to the future. Our natural environment and primary industries face new and emerging biosecurity threats which bring new challenges and require new solutions.



What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity is the protection of the economy, the environment, social amenity or human health from negative impacts associated with the entry, establishment or spread of animal or plant pests and disease, or invasive plant and animal species.

What does the strategy cover?

Victoria's biosecurity strategy covers threats to primary industries, the environment, social amenity and human health, across Victorian public and private land, freshwater and marine habitats, caused by:

- plant pests and diseases
- animal pests and diseases, including diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans (i.e. zoonoses)
- invasive plants and animals.

The focus of the biosecurity strategy is on new and emerging threats, rather than on endemic pests or diseases that are currently managed by government, industry, the community or other parties.

Why do we need a biosecurity strategy?

The biosecurity environment in Victoria is becoming more complex as trade volumes and patterns, migration, tourism, land use, agricultural practices and climate change evolve and interact.

Resources traditionally required to manage biosecurity in the agricultural production sector will be insufficient to deal with new and emerging biosecurity threats, and the broader focus of environmental and social responsibilities within biosecurity.

The Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria

The Victorian Government's new approach is encapsulated in a vision of collaboration between government, industry and community to manage the state's biosecurity risk profile.

Building partnerships; strengthening the coverage of our biosecurity system; improving decision making and prioritising investment; building skills and capability; and improving our surveillance and incursion response systems will be critical to our success.

Theme 1: Developing Partnerships



No government or stakeholder, no matter how well resourced or prepared, can effectively act alone in managing and responding to biosecurity threats.

An integrated biosecurity system can be effective, efficient and equitable if government, industry and the community are partners who understand and respect each others' roles and responsibilities and if there is

broad understanding about the strategies and institutions required for success.

The Victorian Government's biosecurity strategy focuses on strengthening collaboration between government, industry and the community to deliver biosecurity outcomes across an expanding range of threats.

Theme 2: Strengthening the coverage – addressing the challenges



Victoria's biosecurity capability and capacity has been built around the management of biosecurity in the primary industries sector. However, this is not sufficient to deal with new and emerging biosecurity threats across the full range of environmental, economic, social, amenity and human health values.

Victoria will be exposed in a number of key areas if current biosecurity coverage is not strengthened.

The Victorian Government will examine the areas of exposure, to establish or formalise biosecurity responsibilities and arrangements, as well as develop capability to deal with the gaps.

Theme 3: Making sound decisions and investments



We live in a complex and changing environment; despite the implementation of controls, we can never guarantee 'zero risk' of pest or disease incursion.

Biosecurity involves managing risk by making decisions and investment based on a clear understanding of the potential threats, likely pathways of introduction and factors influencing change, then focusing interventions on

the areas of highest risk and return.

A consistent approach is required to assess risks and mitigate threats against primary industries, the environment, social amenity assets and human health. Decision making must be consistent and transparent, and must include consultation and input from stakeholders.

Theme 4: Building the biosecurity skill base and systems



Having the right capability, including skills, tools and knowledge, strengthens our ability to address biosecurity threats.

Research is fundamental to Victoria's biosecurity system. It helps us to prepare for an uncertain future by providing new technologies and methodologies. Legislation to

support programs; specialised information technology systems; capability building in government, industry and the community; and better communication strategies all contribute to a more biosecure Victoria.

Theme 5: Smarter surveillance



Early detection and a rapid, planned response are key to effective biosecurity emergency management.

Victoria needs comprehensive, flexible and sensitive systems in place to accurately and efficiently monitor disease and pest situations across the state.

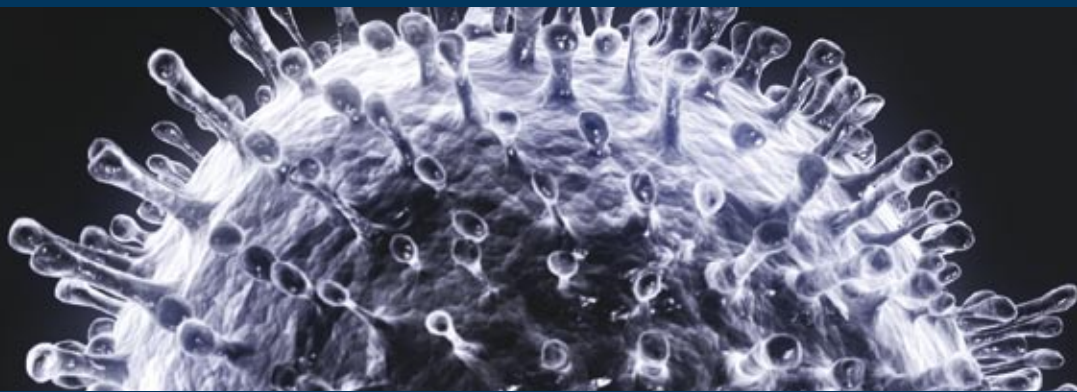
Surveillance will be focused on pathways of entry, not just specific pests and diseases. Such systems will alert us to new, unusual or serious biosecurity threats, and to the spread of pests and disease. They will provide information to underpin routine interstate and international trading and certification requirements, and enable the rapid identification of threats that require investigation by experts in animal, plant or ecosystem health.

Theme 6: Responding to incursions



Despite our best efforts, we must recognise that occasionally we will have to manage a disease or pest incursion in Victoria, or in neighbouring states. Although we hope for the best, we must plan for the worst. We must be prepared to manage an emergency quickly, effectively and professionally.

This strategy will strengthen Victoria's response by building extensive networks across agencies, organisations and within the community; promoting emergency management relationships; and strengthening response capacity, capability and communication.



This Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria sets a firm foundation to guide the biosecurity planning, preparedness, service delivery and partnerships required to meet Victoria's future needs and protect the extraordinary economic, environmental and social assets on which our prosperity depends and our way of life is built.

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