

Biosecurity - Wildlife biosecurity – management of pests and diseases of wildlife

NUMBER:	INT17/24475	VERSION:	1.0
AUTHORISED BY:	Group Director, Animal Biosecurity and Welfare	AUTHORISED DATE:	02/06/2017
ISSUED BY:	Biosecurity & Food Safety	EFFECTIVE DATE:	01/07/2017
CATEGORY:	Operations and Industry	REVIEW DATE:	01/07/2018

Management of the biosecurity risk

The purpose of this procedure is to outline when and how wildlife health incidents will be managed by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services.

Scope

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) promotes biosecurity as a shared responsibility between government, industry and communities. This procedure is a State Priority for NSW and should be read in conjunction with the Surveillance for Animal Pests and Diseases policy. The procedure applies to the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), an office within the NSW Department of Industry, and Local Land Services (LLS) in their role as authorised officers under the Act.

For the purposes of this procedure, wildlife means animals (amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles) that are feral and/or free living. The term does not include domestic animals, animals held in captivity (excluding wildlife in rehabilitation with view to release into the wild), invertebrates or fish.

Work health and safety

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* places an obligation on the agency (NSW DPI and LLS) as a person conducting a business or undertaking and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method Statements that support activities included in this procedure must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

NSW DPI and LLS will work together to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any activities for this procedure.

Biosecurity legislation summary

Schedule 2 of the Act lists prohibited matter pest and diseases. The prohibited matter listing requires:

- people to notify any suspect or known cases of prohibited matter pests or diseases affecting wildlife to LLS (www.lls.nsw.gov.au) or to the Animal Biosecurity Emergency Hotline on 1800 675 888, and
- a person not 'deal with' prohibited matter.

Schedule 1 of the Act lists notifiable pests and diseases. The listing requires any person who knows or suspects that wildlife is infested or diseased with a notifiable pest or disease to notify a NSW DPI or LLS authorised officer within 1 working day of first suspecting or becoming aware of the notifiable pest or disease.

Any person (e.g. wildlife carer, national parks staff, veterinarian, veterinary laboratory staff, researcher, zoological park staff) who deals with wildlife and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks

associated with wildlife has a general biosecurity duty to take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

Potential ways to discharge this 'biosecurity duty' include:

- actions to minimise wildlife becoming infected e.g. isolation of sick/infested animals
- regularly monitoring of wildlife in care for signs of disease/infestation
- immediate notification of suspected disease/infestation
- isolation of a potentially infected/infested animal, carrier or premises
- disinfection/disinfestation of potentially infected/infested items
- making and maintaining records to assist in disease tracing
- appropriate disposal of potentially infected/infested things e.g. of infected carcasses.

See the [Primefact - Wildlife](#) for more information on suggested wildlife risk mitigation measures.

The collection, use and disclosure of information in accordance with this procedure, including any internal or external discussion or distribution of information, must be in compliance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* or be exempted by the operation of section 387 of the Act.

Section 387 (2) of the Act provides authority for the disclosure of information about a person, without the consent of the person: to a public sector agency, or to any other person, but only if the disclosure is reasonably necessary for the purpose of exercising a biosecurity risk function.

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Wildlife – Management of wildlife pest and disease procedure

1. Roles and responsibilities

1.1 NSW Department of Primary Industries

- be the lead agency in the coordination of investigation of any wildlife health incident where an infectious pest or disease is suspected or confirmed as a significant biosecurity impact to public health, domestic animal health, animal welfare, the environment or economy
- be the lead agency in the coordination of information and investigation of any wildlife health incident where the disease agent is unknown, until it is deemed there is no likely significant biosecurity impact from an infectious pest or disease to public health, domestic animal health, animal welfare or the economy
- be the lead agency for the management of suspected or confirmed emergency animal pest or disease in wildlife in accordance with the Australian veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) Wild Animal Response Strategy, individual AUSVETPLAN disease strategies or other emergency animal disease response plans
- provide a support function when deemed by CVO to be required, to the appropriate organisations in other wildlife health incident responses, which may include biosecurity management, surveillance and infectious disease investigation
- provide general pathology and specialist laboratory services through NSW DPI Laboratory Service for diagnosis of notifiable or new and emerging infectious pests or diseases of wildlife
- appoint a NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator whose responsibilities are detailed in this procedure.

1.2 NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator

- represent NSW as the WHA Coordinator
- attend quarterly WHA Coordinator meetings and report on significant biosecurity related wildlife cases within NSW
- provide feedback to the NSW DPI CVO on relevant significant wildlife health incidents in other jurisdictions
- provide information to the National Wildlife Health Information System via monthly entry of significant wildlife cases to satisfy national and international reporting requirements.
- assist WHA to prepare reports for Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly, the World Organisation for Animal Health, Animal Health Australia reports, and the WHA Quarterly Report
- assist the WHA National Coordinator to facilitate action on wildlife disease incidents Participate in decision-making for National Significant Disease Investigation Program (NSDIP) funding of wildlife investigations.

1.3 Local Land Services

- report suspected or confirmed wildlife pest or disease incidents to relevant staff and agencies as per this procedure and the NSW DPI Procedure – Reporting Prohibited Matter and other Notifiable Animal Pests and Diseases
- assist with field investigation of wildlife pest or disease incidents which are suspected or confirmed to have a significant biosecurity impact
- undertake activities as per the NSW DPI-LLS Emergency Management Strategic Plan, Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan and relevant policies and procedures
- complete data entry into the LHMS, as detailed in the [LHMS User Guide](#) and the LHMS User Guide Wildlife appendix for cases where an LLS authorised officer is undertaking triage and /or investigation of wildlife health incidents
- participate in informing local stakeholders regarding significant/relevant wildlife health incidents.

2. Receiving reports of wildlife health incidents

2.1 Initial notification and reporting of wildlife health incidents

- notifications may be made to authorised officers from other agencies, private veterinarians, wildlife care organisations or the public
- authorised officers must collect the following information from the notifier:
 - species and numbers involved (including if only one species affected, what species are or are not affected)
 - species and numbers of moribund vs dead animals
 - age of affected animals (e.g. juvenile vs adult)
 - clinical signs of affected animals
 - date of observations and date of notification
 - location and distribution (including if multiple locations are involved)
 - any unusual environmental conditions (e.g. poor water quality, drought, construction)
 - access of affected wildlife to domestic animals / livestock / captive populations.
- reporting of any suspect or confirmed prohibited matter or other notifiable diseases in wildlife is as per the Procedure – Reporting Prohibited Matter and Other Notifiable Pests and Diseases of Animals.

2.2 Triage of Wildlife Health Incidents

- the authorised officer who receives the notification should enter available data into the Wildlife Incident Classification Tool as per the Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator work instruction
- obtain an output from Wildlife Incident Classification Tool
- incidents which indicate **amber** or **red** in any category are potentially a **significant wildlife health incident** and should be reported to the NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator.

The authorised officer who is triaging the notification should enter the relevant details into LHMS as per the [LHMS User Guide](#) and the LHMS User Guide Wildlife appendix.

3. Investigation and Response

3.1 Wildlife health Incidents which are Suspected or Confirmed to be prohibited matter.

Investigation of any wildlife health incidents which are suspected or confirmed prohibited matter will be as per the Procedure – Prohibited Matter Pests and Diseases of Animals– Investigation and Alert Phase.

3.2 Wildlife health incidents with suspected or confirmed risk to human health

For wildlife health incidents with suspected or confirmed risk to human health, NSW Health will be notified as per the Procedure - Reporting Prohibited Matter and Other Notifiable Pests and Diseases of Animals.

3.3 Wildlife health incidents which are suspected or confirmed to have a significant biosecurity impact:

- a biosecurity impact is defined in section 13 of the Act.
- a wildlife health incident which is suspected or confirmed to have a significant biosecurity impact is classified as a biosecurity event under section 39 of the Act.
- the NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator will:
 - inform the Manager Animal Biosecurity Services and Response and/or NSW DPI CVO.
 - provide information to and discuss a risk-based investigative plan with Manager Animal Biosecurity Services and Response, Manager Animal Disease Surveillance and where appropriate, NSW DPI CVO, LLS and/or NSW DPI Biosecurity Coordinator of Laboratory Services

- consider the NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator work instruction regarding potential diagnostic or investigative options
- coordinate and manage the investigation following the agreed investigative plan. This may include, but is not limited to, coordination of sample collection, coordination with other agencies, communications and reporting of results
- notify other relevant agencies, with guidance from the Wildlife Incident Classification Tool output. Further details on inter-agency communication chains are available in Appendix A Figure 2 and the NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator work instruction
- use the Wildlife Incident Classification Tool to reassess information gathered during investigation to inform ongoing risk management
- record all details in LHMS, unless LLS is the investigator as per the [LHMS Manual](#) and the LHMS Manual Wildlife appendix.
- the NSW DPI CVO may:
 - request the NSW Wildlife Inter-Agency Group to be convened by the NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator
 - appoint an incident coordinator from within NSW DPI to coordinate and manage the investigation and response
 - convene a meeting with the Australian CVO or CVO's from other jurisdictions.

3.4 Wildlife health incidents where a likely causative agent is unknown:

The NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator will follow the steps outlined in 3.3 until the incident is considered unlikely to have a significant biosecurity impact. The incident will then subsequently be managed by the relevant agency where appropriate (see 3.5).

3.5 For significant wildlife health incidents where the likely cause is the responsibility of another agency:

- the NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator will:
 - notify other relevant agencies, with guidance from the Wildlife Incident Classification Tool output. Further details on inter-agency communication are available in Appendix A, Figure 2 and the NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator work instruction
 - record all details in as per the LHMS Manual - Wildlife Data Entry.
- NSW DPI and LLS may provide a support function to the lead agency where deemed appropriate following discussion with Manager Animal Biosecurity Services and Response, Manager Animal Disease Surveillance and where required, CVO and/or Biosecurity Coordinator NSW DPI Laboratory Services. This may include:
 - biosecurity advice and management
 - surveillance and/or
 - infectious pest or disease exclusion/investigation.

4. National Significant Disease Investigation Program funding for Wildlife Investigations

WHA administers funding allocated by Animal Health Australia for wildlife investigations as part of National Significant Disease Investigation Program (NSDIP). Investigations of suspected notifiable diseases are not eligible for funding through the NSDIP. Eligible events include investigations:

- by registered, veterinary practitioners (excepting NSW DPI/LLS vets) including all university clinics, zoos and wildlife parks
- with significant wildlife morbidity and mortality.
- criteria of significance include events clinically consistent with national notifiable diseases or suspected to be a new or emerging disease (increasing incidence/expanding geographic or host range).

The NSW DPI Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator will:

- follow the WHA NSDIP application instructions recorded at INT16/101875

- consult with Manager Animal Biosecurity Surveillance before approving funding of investigations through the NSDIP.
- advise the applicant to either seek recovery of approved expenditure by making a claim to WHA or to charge approved testing to Bio76 (for which WHA will be invoiced directly by NSW DPI).

5. Definitions and Acronyms

AHA	Animal Health Australia
AUSVETPLAN	Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
LHMS	Livestock Health Management Systems
LLS	Local Land Services
NSDIP	National Significant Disease Investigation Program
NSW DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
TOR	Terms of Reference
WHA	Wildlife Health Australia

6. Documentation

Policy - Surveillance for pests and diseases of animals
 Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information
 Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)
 Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)
 Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)
 Policy - Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)
 Procedure - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information
 Procedure - Prohibited matter pests and diseases of animals– investigation and alert phase
 Procedure- Reporting notifiable pests and diseases of animals
 LHMS User Guide Wildlife appendix (in draft)
 NSW Wildlife Inter-Agency Group - Terms of Reference (in draft)
 NSW Wildlife Inter-Agency Group - Statement of Agreed Responsibilities (in draft)
 NSW Wildlife Inter-Agency Group - Wildlife Incident Contact List (in draft)
 WHA National Significant Disease Investigation Program Procedure
 Wildlife Biosecurity Coordinator Work Instruction (in draft)
 Wildlife Incident Classification Tool (in draft)

7. Records

Records created as a result of this procedure are stored in the Livestock Health Management System (LHMS).

Records relating to properties placed under biosecurity restrictions must be maintained for at least ten years.

8. Revision History

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	01/07/2017	Complete revision of the old wildlife policy and procedure in response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare

9. Contact

Biosecurity NSW – General Enquires
 1800 808 095
biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Appendix 1

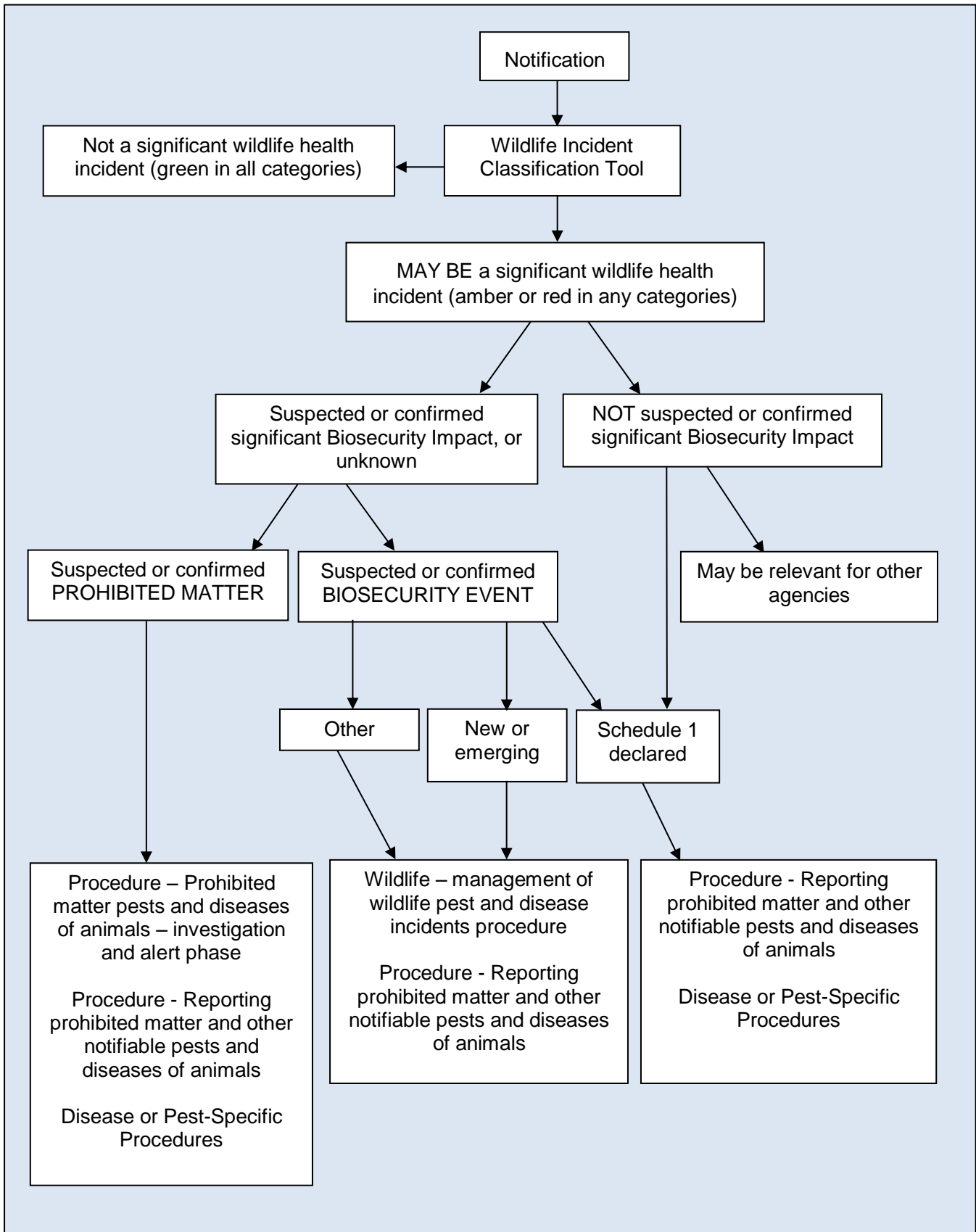


Figure 1: Decision tree for appropriate procedural documents to reference in wildlife health incidents

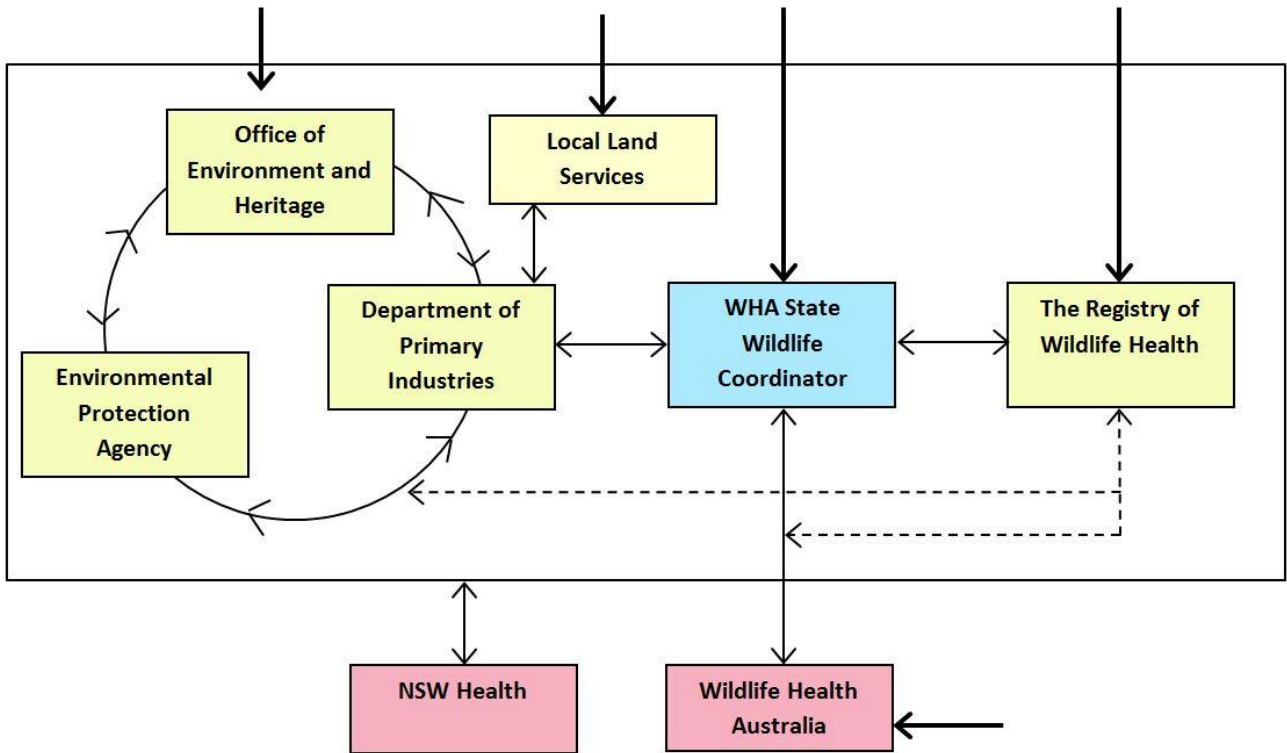


Figure 2: NSW Inter-Agency communication chain for wildlife health incident notifications