# Records Disposal Schedule - Context Statement

# Biosecurity SA - History and Background

### Role and Function

Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA)

Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA) is a key economic development agency of the South Australian Government. PIRSA plays an important role in contributing to the sustainable planning and development of South Australia’s natural, industrial and community assets. PIRSA works with industry to manage resources sustainably and enhance value chains.

PIRSA was created as part of the Departmental restructure resulting from the change of State Government in October 1997. It is an amalgamation of the former departments of Mines and Energy, Primary Industries SA (PISA), Office of Energy Policy, South Australian Research Development Institute [SARDI] and the Rural Communities Office.

PIRSA has a focus on agriculture and fisheries (primary industries) and minerals, energy and petroleum (resources). The inclusion of SARDI is seen as providing added support and impetus to the agricultural sector through targeted research on behalf of the State's largest export earner.

The bringing together of a number of economic development agencies reflects the attempt by the Government to have a single organisation with the capacity and coordinated infrastructure to provide support to the agricultural, minerals and energy sectors spread throughout the State.

The former Department of Primary Industries South Australia was formed on 8 October 1992 from the amalgamation of the former Departments of Agriculture, Woods & Forests and Fisheries.

Biosecurity SA

The PIRSA Biosecurity Division was formed in July 2009 to minimise risks from priority pests, diseases and contaminants. The division is responsible for ensuring the State’s economy, environment and community are protected from these threats through effective and efficient prevention, preparedness, response and management with industry, community and government partners. The Division was the result of a restructuring of regulatory programs within the Agriculture Food & Wine and Fisheries Divisions.

From 1 July 2010 PIRSA Biosecurity Division joined with natural resources management (NRM) biosecurity programs from the former Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) to form Biosecurity SA and to consolidate an integrated program addressing vertebrate pests (including the Dog Fence) and weeds along with the Branched Broomrape Eradication Program.

Prior to the current arrangement, biosecurity activities and programs were carried out by the same business units formerly within the Agriculture Food & Wine Division, and the Department for Water, Land & Biodiversity Conservation. The creation of Biosecurity SA was in part, a move to bring together the various business units with a focus on Biosecurity to provide better coordination and promotion for the protection of the State from Biosecurity incursions.

Biosecurity SA has responsibilities for policy, planning, surveillance, preparedness, response and ongoing control programs in the areas of animal health, aquatic animal health, marine pests, vertebrate pests, weeds, social amenity pests, plant health, food borne pathogens from primary industries and contaminants. The responsibilities ensure that South Australia is able to control or eradicate harmful pests and disease that affect primary industries and natural resources in some parts of Australia.

Biosecurity SA has a role and function within the following areas;

* Partner with industries and communities to build a shared vision and shared responsibility for biosecurity
* Build biosecurity capability and capacity across government agencies and industries
* Be prepared to respond to animal and plant pest and diseases, contaminant and food safety emergencies
* Build and/or maintain surveillance programs for high priority threats
* Continuously improve the NRM Biosecurity programs managing vertebrate pests, weeds and other social amenity pests
* Continuously improve primary industry biosecurity programs managing established pests, diseases, contaminants and food safety risks
* Develop cost recovery arrangements with industries based on the PIRSA Cost Recovery Policy
* Positively influence state and national policies, commitments and agendas.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The Animal Health business unit protects and facilitates market access and livestock productivity, public health and consumer confidence through the health, welfare, quality, safety and image of South Australian livestock and livestock products. The Animal Health section is responsible for the oversight and assistance to industry of matters relating to both national and state based disease control and surveillance programs. Through membership of national and state bodies responsible for advisory and active input, the aim is to assist in the supply of wholesome animal products to the Australian community and through surveillance and disease control and ensure the maintenance of export markets.

The Aquatic Pests business unit works to prevent aquatic pests from entering the state’s waterways, respond to reported sightings and incursions and monitor aquatic systems to both predict and recover the effect of aquatic pests.

Plant Health Operations provides a strategic focus on plant bio-security policy issues at the state level taking into consideration significant global and national issues which impact in this area. The development and evaluation of plant bio-security policy contributes to the maintenance of plant bio-security standards in South Australia to meet the requirements of domestic and international markets and community expectations. Within the Plant Health program, Plant Health Operations implements and monitors plant bio-security policy to ensure the protection of state resources and facilitation of interstate trade through minimising the impact of declared and exotic pest and disease.

The Plant & Food and Standards group focuses on providing the primary industry sector with information on food, which includes meat hygiene and seafood safety, and rural chemicals through a variety of accreditation categories and an improved food safety surveillance and incidence response framework. This program contains Food Safety, Meat Hygiene, SA Shellfish Quarantine Program and Rural Chemicals business units.

The Rural Chemicals Program of PIRSA promotes the safe and responsible use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals. It is responsible for developing policies and projects that identify and manage risks to trade, food safety, environmental protection and community health arising from the use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

The Compliance business unit coordinates prosecutions and provides an advisory role primarily for Animal Health but also supports other business units.

The purpose of the Emergency Management Coordination team is to lead and foster sound emergency management practices across PIRSA, Rural Solutions South Australia and PIRSA’s corporate staff.

The Strategy and Policy unit coordinates the various strategies and policy information for which Biosecurity SA is responsible.

The Business Performance business unit coordinates and supports Biosecurity SA in an administrative role and maintains the responsibility for the divisions internal reporting to other government agencies.

The NRM Biosecurity business unit coordinates state-wide responses to incursions and management of existing pest species to minimise their impacts. The Unit conducts research on control techniques, provides policy advice and support to regulatory activities, and contributes to the State NRM Plan, which outlines the priorities and policies for pest control in South Australia. Risk analysis is used to prioritise species for coordinated control programs, which involve enforcement, assistance, education and awareness activities. The Unit coordinates the State's contributions to national eradication programs for social amenity pests, including the red imported fire ant, electric ant in Queensland and European house borer in Western Australia.

The Branched Broomrape Program manages the campaign to eradicate branched broomrape from South Australia under a national eradication program. The current Containment Zone contains all of the known infested sites in Australia.

Biosecurity SA has reporting relationships with The Minister for Agriculture & Fisheries with the exception of NRM Biosecurity and Branched Broomrape business units who report to the Minister for Environment & Conservation.

**Prepared by**: Rita Novia, Senior Consultant Records Management, PIRSA.

**Date**: Prepared in 2012 and published in April 2019

1. http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/home/customer\_service\_charter [↑](#footnote-ref-2)