National Plant Biosecurity CRC Bid 2004

CRC for National Plant Biosecurity - 2004 Bid

The bid has continued into Round 2 of applications, with the submission of the Full Business Case on 2 July. Many thanks to everyone involved in getting all the necessary information together for this next stage of the operation, especially Ian Muirhead and Margaret McGrath who took on the unenviable task of finalising the document. Fingers crossed that there will be more opportunities for sleepless nights to progress the bid even further! In the end, the bid was an impressive one, with participating organisations pledging $43 million in support of the Centre. Some highlights of the final bid document are listed below.

The economic benefits of the CRCNPB are enormous: a study by the Centre for International Economics told that the CRC would only have to achieve relatively minor reductions in the probability of establishment for only a few serious exotic pests for it to pay for itself several times over.

CRCNPB aims to achive its outcomes through adoption and commercialisation outcomes from 4 Research Programs (Preparedness and Prevention; Diagnostics; Surveillance; & Impact Management), in combination with an Education and Training Program.

The CRC for National Plant Biosecurity (CRCNPB) aims to address the National Research Priority of "Protecting Australia from invasive diseases and pests" and targets the Australian plant industries, worth around $14 billion annually.

The welfare losses to Australia (in net present value terms) if incursions from exotic diseases and pests were to occur would be devastating. Incursions costs have been estimated for:

- Ramu stunt disease of sugar cane: $8 billion;
- Moko disease of banana: $330 million;
- Fire blight of apples: $870 million; and
- Fusarium head blight in wheat: $427 million a year.

The CRCNPB bid is supported by:

- Plant Health Australia, the national coordinating body for plant health in Australia;
- Three rural Research & Development Corporations (GRDC, RIRDC & HAL);
- Federal and State Government Agriculture Departments (DAFF, NSW, QLD, NT, WA, SA); and
- Key research organisations, both from industry (Saturn Biotech Limited & the Australian Plant DNA Bank) and Universities (CSIRO & SCU, Murdoch, CDU, Adelaide).

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Status of the Bid...

October: STAGE 3 (Interview)
Shortlisted applicants will be notified of interviews by **23 September 2004**. Interviews will then be conducted over the period 5-29 October.

December: FINAL STAGE (Recommendations)
The CRC Committee will recommend to the Minister those applications that should be funded and the amount of the funding. The Minister is expected to announce the successful applications in December 2004.

July 2005: START-UP
Subject to Centre agreements being completed, the CRC will begin operations on 1 July 2005.

Current Activities

Head Hunt
A search is underway for an interim CEO to see the CRC through the interview and start-up stages. Nominations may be directed to Ian Muirhead.

Program Development
The NPB Research Programs continue to be developed and fine-tuned towards interview stage. Feedback from the full business case document is welcomed by the Program leaders - see the Profiles page of this newsletter for contact details.




CRCNPB Research & Education Programs

Dr Paul DeBarro
(CSIRO)

Program 1: Research - Preparedness and Prevention

Australian plant industries and governments do not have sufficient resources to tackle every biosecurity threat that exists. We plan to prioritise in order to be better prepared and to prevent problems before they start. International trade regulations demand that prioritization and targeting of biosecurity risks be done scientifically, and risk analysis is a set of disciplines that brings greater rigour to this decision-making process. Four components that are central to this program include: Comparative Risk Analysis; Risk Assessment; Risk Communication; and Emergency Pest Biology and Epidemiology.

Program 2: Research - Diagnostics [Dr Caroline Hauxwell (DPI&F)]

Rapid identification of emergency plant pest and pathogen incursions is essential to reduce the cost of eradication and impacts through rapid response. Diagnostic technology and data underpin our capacity for early identification and monitoring. This Program will anticipate and apply new technologies (genomics, proteomics, metabolomics and bioinformatics) to develop new tools and procedures, and to provide rapid access to data and expertise that is accurate, sensitive, reliable and cost-effective. It will deliver a world-class biosecurity capability that will underpin the surveillance and management outcomes of programs 3 and 4 and of front line surveillance personnel.

Program 3: Research - Surveillance

Dr Darryl Hardie
(DAWA)

Plant pest surveillance is a key component of biosecurity. The challenge for Australia is to have a pest surveillance system that takes into account the diverse plant industries and the range of production, the large area over which production occurs, the urban areas as well as natural ecosystems. This has to be considered in the global setting where increases in trade and travel have increased the potential for pest introductions. This program will develop technically sound sample/survey methodologies and systems to enhance the ability to capture a wide range of plant health information in an accurate and cost effective manner that will be accepted both internationally and domestically.

Dr Simon McKirdy
(PHA)

Program 4: Research - Impact Management

It is critical that appropriate tools are available to ensure that the impact of any incursion response is minimised. The tools will also enable pre-emptive decisions to be made which will diminish the impact of any strategy undertaken as a result of an emergency plant pest incursion. The outcome of this program is to minimise the social and economic impact of an emergency pest incursion though the development of pre-emptive management strategies. Development of incursion management tools will enable incursion managers to do pre-emptive modelling of possible strategies to deal with the incursion.

Program 5: Education and Training

Prof Peter Baverstock

In Australia there is a dearth of trained PhD graduates that have expertise specifically in Plant Biosecurity. Moreover, Australian PhD graduates have traditionally been poorly equipped to move immediately into an applied Plant Biosecurity setting. There is also an unfilled demand for vocational training from people already working in industry and government who need to be updated and kept abreast of modern developments. The CRC will focus its education and training efforts specifically on addressing these deficiencies. Furthermore, training programs will be presented for research staff and students to upgrade skills, develop their industry awareness, and ensure that Australia 's Plant Biosecurity Industry has the highest possible quality research community. The graduate training program will be delivered at all four participating universities - Adelaide, Southern Cross, Murdoch and Charles Darwin. Collaboration between these Universities and others will deliver a decentralised national program.

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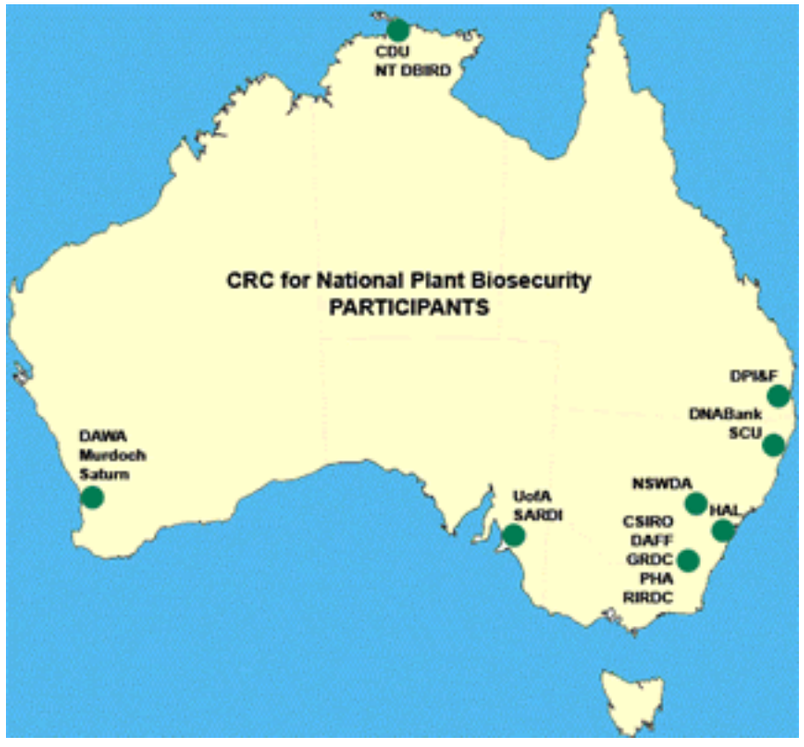
The organisations listed below are supporting the ***National Plant Biosecurity CRC bid 2004***. Discussions with other organisations are continuing - there are still opportunities for other organisations to join the bid as either core or supporting participants - please contact Ian Muirhead for more information.

CRC for National Plant Biosecurity - Bid Participants

1. Australian Plant DNA Bank **NEW!**
2. Charles Darwin University (CDU)
3. CSIRO Entomology
4. Department of Agriculture Western Australia (DAWA)
5. Dept of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
6. Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)
7. Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL)
8. Murdoch University
9. New South Wales Dept. of Agriculture (NSWDA)
10. Northern Territory Dept of Business, Industry and Resource Development (NT DBIRD)
11. Plant Health Australia Ltd (PHA Ltd)
12. Qld Dept. of Primary Industries & Fisheries (QDPI&F)
13. Rural Industry Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC)
14. Saturn Biotech Limited **NEW!**
15. Southern Cross University (SCU)
16. South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)
17. University of Adelaide (UofA)



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P5: Education & Training

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