



Fact sheet: Biosecurity

KEY POINTS:

- Biosecurity is a national issue relating to the minimisation of risks associated with the transferral of unwanted plants, animals or diseases into unaffected areas of Australia.
- The oil and gas industry uses a risk-based and system-wide approach to address biosecurity threats resulting from the movement of vehicles and ships.
- Every petroleum project must specifically address biosecurity in its environmental plans.

THE FACTS:

Australia's biosecurity

Introduced pests and weeds can cause significant damage to Australia's agricultural and fishing industries and to the natural environment. It has been estimated that alien invasive species cost our economy at least \$7 billion a year. Internationally, the cost is estimated at around \$350 billion a year.

Increased vehicle and ship movements associated with onshore and offshore petroleum activities have the potential to spread unwanted pests such as weeds or other biological threats. Therefore, the oil and gas industry has adopted a comprehensive risk-based, system-wide approach to biosecurity protection. All projects must specifically address biosecurity in their environment plans.

Onshore protection

Onshore biosecurity focuses on preventing, minimising and/or controlling the spread of pest animal species, harmful weeds, and soil and plant disease. In Queensland, where most of Australia's onshore oil and gas exploration and production is now occurring, companies have employed biosecurity specialists to minimise the risk of spreading unwanted plant and animal species. The highest risk of weed spread occurs in earth-moving and construction activities. Strict wash-down processes are in place to minimise this risk.

Marine protection

Ballast water exchange is internationally recognised as a major pathway for the spread of marine pests. It is estimated that up to 30 per cent of the invasive marine species in Australia have arrived via ballast water.¹

Australia's standards for marine biosecurity are consistent with those of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). All ships must discharge or exchange ballast water at least 12 nautical miles from the Australian coastline. In addition, all liquefied natural gas (LNG) vessels arriving in Australia from international waters are required to submit a Quarantine Pre-Arrival Report to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) 12 to 96 hours before entering Australian waters. The department conducts ballast water verification inspections on board vessels to ensure compliance with Australia's ballast water management requirements.²

¹ <http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/pests-diseases-weeds/marine-pests>

² <http://www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/quarantine-concerns/ballast/australian-ballast-water-management-requirements>