

## **Answers to questions on notice from hearing on 10 November 2014**

### **Received from Biosecurity Tasmania**

With respect to my appearance before the Inquiry on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014 in Hobart, I provide the following information in response to questions from Senator Waters. The information is as provided to me by the Parks and Wildlife Service within our broader agency.

#### "Joint PWS-AAD Macquarie Island Biosecurity Plan

The plan has been under development for several years however its finalisation is now imminent. The Australian Antarctic Division is currently considering a final draft with a view to the plan being adopted by both agencies well prior to the scheduled Macquarie Island resupply voyage in April 2015.

Although the Biosecurity Plan has yet to be finalised, in reality a range of biosecurity screening, surveillance and response systems have been in place since the conclusion of the aerial baiting component of the Macquarie Island Pest Eradication Project in the winter of 2011. These include:

- PWS and AAD have been using rodent detector dogs to screen cargo, ships and passenger personal effects departing for Macquarie for several years. A new rodent detector dog is currently being trained and arrangements are being developed for it to screen all ships departing for Macquarie Island from Hobart and for the dog and handler to travel to Macquarie Island on-board the AAD chartered ship undertaking future resupply voyages.
- Individual inspections of expeditioner personal effects have been undertaken on all AAD voyages to Macquarie since late 2011
- A three tiered inspection regime (along with the use of rodent proof and invertebrate resistant cargo containers) has been implemented to inspect all Macquarie Bound cargo
- The AAD now sends all cargo through a purpose built Cargo and Biosecurity Centre which has been designed to be rodent proof. The Cargo and Biosecurity Centre is regularly baited for rodents and sprayed for invertebrates.
- The scientific station area is monitored for any pest species introductions (and also baited for rodents) over the course of each shipping season.

#### Macquarie Island Tourist Vessels

All educational tourist ships visiting Macquarie Island are subject to a comprehensive biosecurity screening regime.

- All Ships intending to visit the Reserve must provide PWS prior to departing for the Reserve with a copy of a current 'Ship Sanitation Control Exemption Certificate' and with evidence of ship hull cleanliness demonstrating that the Ship is free of marine invasive species.
- Most tourist ships visiting Macquarie Island also have New Zealand Department of Conservation representatives on-board. Under an arrangement which has been in place since 2009 these representative are signed up as PWS volunteers and undertake pre and post visit biosecurity surveillance on behalf of PWS
- The small boats used during tourist visits are checked for the presence of any soil, plants, animals or animal products prior to the commencement of any ship-to-shore operations.
- Mooring lines or any other lines are not allowed to be run to the shore at any time and ships are usually anchored at least 500m offshore.
- No soil, plants, animals, animal products or other organic material are allowed to be brought onto the Island and no food (other than some required pre-packaged emergency food) is allowed be brought ashore.

- PWS rangers are present on-island to directly supervise each visit and ensure that no prohibited items are taken ashore.
- Tourists are restricted to two landing sites on the island and these are monitored over the course of the tourist season for any pest species introductions.
- Rodent detector dogs are not used to inspect New Zealand departing tourist ships because tourist vessels do not carry cargo and therefore represent a lower risk of pest species entrainment than do cargo carrying ships. It should be noted that the New Zealand Department of Conservation does not require tourist ships to be inspected by rodent dogs prior to visiting their rodent free New Zealand sub-Antarctic Islands and nor do the managing authorities of any other sub-Antarctic islands which have regular tourist visits”.

**Dr Stephen Harris**

**A/Manager**

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