

New biosecurity laws for the Queensland landscaping industry

The new *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act) will come into effect on 1 July 2016. The Act will improve Queensland's biosecurity preparedness and response capabilities for the protection of your industry. Under the Act, we will be better placed to focus on the biosecurity risks that impact our economy, our agricultural and tourism industries, our environment and our lifestyle.

All individuals and organisations whose activities pose a biosecurity risk will have a legal responsibility for managing them. As an industry worker you will need to take an active role in managing biosecurity risks under your control. You will not be expected to know about all biosecurity risks, but you will be expected to know about those associated with your landscaping activities.

The general biosecurity obligation means you will need to ensure your activities do not spread a pest, disease or contaminant. You will need to:

- take all reasonable and practical steps to prevent or minimise each biosecurity risk;
- minimise the likelihood of the risk causing a biosecurity event and limit the consequences of such an event; and
- prevent or minimise the adverse effects the risk could have and refrain from doing anything that might exacerbate the adverse effects.

A biosecurity risk exists when you deal with any pest, disease or contaminant, or with something that could carry one of these. This includes, for example, moving diseased plant material, or associated soil or equipment, off the property. A biosecurity event is caused by a pest, disease or contaminant that is, or is likely to become, a significant problem for your industry, human health, social amenity, the economy or the environment.

Zones and movement restrictions in Queensland

Fire ant biosecurity zones

It is proposed that fire ant biosecurity zones will come into effect to control the movement of fire ant carriers, previously known as restricted items. For some carriers, such as potted plants, mulch, turf, animal manures, specific provisions for meeting the general biosecurity obligation of preventing the spread of fire ants will be outlined in the *Biosecurity Regulation 2016*. The regulation will specify procedures that must be followed when moving or storing a fire ant carrier.

Information about fire ant zones, movement controls and ways to mitigate the spread of fire ants, as part of the *Biosecurity Regulation 2016*, will be detailed on our website www.daf.qld.gov.au/fireants from 1 July 2016. We encourage you to visit our site from that date onwards to familiarise yourself with these zones and regulations.

Far Northern Biosecurity Zone

Far north Queensland is a high risk area for the introduction of plant pests and diseases from nearby Papua New Guinea. The spread of pests into the rest of the state poses a significant risk to our agricultural industries. It is therefore proposed that two biosecurity zones will be established in the northern half of the Cape York Peninsula to control the movement of risk items that may carry pests and diseases to the south. It is proposed that the Far Northern Biosecurity Zone 1 (FNBZ1) be established to include areas of Queensland north of the Jardine River. The Far Northern Biosecurity Zone 2 (FNBZ 2) would then include areas of the state between the southern boundary of FNBZ 1 and north of Coen. It is proposed that movement of plants, plant pests, soils and appliances will be prohibited south from FNBZ 1 to FNBZ 2 without permit. The same restrictions would apply to materials moving south out of FNBZ 2 into the rest of Queensland.

More information on zones and detailed maps will be available online at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au from 1 July 2016, or please call 13 25 23 for further information.

Entry restrictions into Queensland that apply to the landscaping industry

Mediterranean Fruit Fly

We are committed to keeping Queensland free from Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly). As such, current regulatory restrictions on the introduction of Medfly carriers, including host fruits and vegetables will be continued. A biosecurity certificate will be required if these hosts are being moved into Queensland from an area where Medfly has been found. Medfly is also prohibited matter under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act), which makes it an offence to deal with the pest in any way.

Giant pine scale

Giant pine scale is a tree pest that is not present in Queensland, and it is proposed that it will be listed as prohibited matter under the new legislation, making it an offence to deal with the pest. A biosecurity certificate will also be required if giant pine scale host plants are being moved into Queensland from an area where the pest has been found.

Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV)

CGMMV has been detected in Charters Towers. At this time, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries continues to pursue eradication of the virus, given its very limited distribution. As such, it is proposed that it continue to be an offence to move cucurbit plants, CGMMV and other risk items into or within Queensland without a biosecurity certificate. It is proposed that the property currently infested with CGMMV will be designated as a restricted place until eradication is achieved.

Queensland Biosecurity Manual and Biosecurity Certificates

The movement restrictions being established within and into Queensland aim to prevent the introduction and spread of pests and diseases that affect our agricultural industries. These restrictions will apply to risk materials including some nursery plants, soil on which these plants have been grown, and appliances that have been in contact with high risk plants.

Approval to move these items can be granted by obtaining a biosecurity certificate. A biosecurity certificate is used to certify that the risk materials meet the requirements outlined in the *Queensland Biosecurity Manual*. This manual sets out how risk materials must be treated, inspected, sourced or packed prior to obtaining a biosecurity certificate.

Where movements are from interstate into Queensland, existing trading arrangements will apply. Certificates issued by interstate authorities or under Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangements meet Queensland's entry requirements as they are recognised as biosecurity certificates.

Accreditation

Queensland's existing plant health certification system will continue under the Act. There will be some changes to the terminology used and to the system itself, however this should not result in any disruption to trade arrangements that are in place. A person or business can still apply to become 'accredited' under the ICA scheme, or other non-ICA accreditation, and issue certificates. Alternatively, Biosecurity Queensland inspectors can inspect and certify produce and other plant material as required. A Plant Health Certificate issued by an inspector and Plant Health Assurance Certificate by an accredited business are both forms of acceptable biosecurity certificates under the Act.

Where the legislation establishes movement restrictions on commodities coming into Queensland, a certificate issued by an interstate authority is recognised as a biosecurity certificate and can facilitate the movement into Queensland, provided the requirements of the *Queensland Biosecurity Manual* have been met. More detailed information on the accreditation process and a copy of the Manual will be available online at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au from 1 July 2016, or please call 13 25 23 for further information.