

Tasmanian Biosecurity *Policy*



Ensuring Tasmania's Biosecurity Future



Tasmania's biosecurity system is at the very core of the Tasmanian Brand as our natural environmental values, and quality produce relies upon our relative freedom from pests, diseases, and weeds. Tasmania's natural island advantage has given us a head start in maintaining a relatively pest, disease, and weed-free status. This status allows us to trade in markets closed to others, reduces production costs and sets us apart as a natural and quality producer and destination.

The Government recognises the importance of maintaining this status and so has developed this robust policy for Tasmania's biosecurity, which relies upon science-based assessment of our ever-changing risk environment. This policy accepts that we can not maintain Tasmania as an island fortress with zero risk but it does recognise that we manage biosecurity risks down to a very low level. It is based on the foundation set by the resolution of the Primary Industries Ministerial Council in 2002 which clearly recognises our right to manage our unique biosecurity status legitimately within our national and international obligations.

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Minister
Primary Industries and Water
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Tasmania's biosecurity policy objective is "to protect and enhance Tasmania's biosecurity status for the benefit of Tasmania's industries, environment and public well-being, health, amenity, and safety."

This policy objective is to be realised through the effective adoption of the following seven policy elements. The policy objective and these elements form the Tasmanian Biosecurity Policy.

1. Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP)

Tasmania's ALOP is set at a 'very low level of risk'. Each World Trade Organisation (WTO) member country determines its own ALOP. The ALOP is applied through the setting of sanitary and phytosanitary measures on imports. These measures must be scientifically based, transparent and consistently applied. The varying levels of risk are illustrated (Table 1) in a risk estimation matrix based on the likelihood of an event occurring and the consequences if it occurs (Level of Risk = Likelihood x Consequence). This matrix forms the basis of biosecurity risk assessments to determine if the risk (either unmitigated or managed) would meet Tasmania's ALOP. The Australian Government's ALOP is stated as "a high or very conservative level of protection aimed at reducing risk to very low levels, while not based on a zero risk approach." Similarly, Tasmania recognises that zero risk is not possible and a managed approach to risk is practical and desirable. The Australian Government's ALOP statement is considered acceptable as an over-arching statement provided that it is suitably qualified so as to avoid arbitrary interpretation and outcomes. The Tasmanian Government has determined an ALOP that is consistent with the Commonwealth's ALOP. In practical terms:

Tasmania's appropriate level of protection (ALOP) is a high or very conservative level of protection aimed at reducing risk to very low levels, while not based on a zero risk approach.



Tasmania's ALOP requires that for any disease/pest, one of three criteria must be met before the importation of a commodity will be permitted:

- » The disease/pest must be assessed by the hazard identification step in the biosecurity decision-making process as **not** being a disease/pest of concern; OR
- » The risk estimate for the disease /pest in association with a particular commodity must result in a "very low risk" (acceptable without additional risk management) or lower on the risk evaluation matrix (Table 1); OR
- » "Risk management measures" are implemented to reduce the risk estimate for the disease/pest associated with a particular commodity so that it results in a "very low risk" or lower on the risk evaluation matrix (Table 1).

Table 1.
Risk Estimation Matrix (adapted from *Biosecurity Australia's* risk estimation matrix) Lightly shaded boxes satisfy Tasmania's ALOP requirements.

likelihood of entry, establishment & spread	high likelihood	Negligible risk	Very low risk	Low risk	Moderate risk	High risk	Extreme risk
	moderate	Negligible risk	Very low risk	Low risk	Moderate risk	High risk	Extreme risk
	low	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Very low risk	Low risk	Moderate risk	High risk
	very low	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Very low risk	Low risk	Moderate risk
	extremely low	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Very low risk	Low risk
	negligible likelihood	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Negligible risk	Very low risk
	negligible impact	very low	low	moderate	high	extreme impact	
	consequences of entry, establishment & spread						

2. Least Restrictive Sanitary and Phytosanitary Requirements

The Tasmanian Government applies a range of sanitary and phytosanitary measures that are the least trade-restrictive measures available that will satisfy our ALOP. This approach is consistent with our international obligations.



3. Science-Based Risk Analysis

The Tasmanian Government's biosecurity decision making is founded on a scientific-based risk analysis framework consistent with Tasmania's (ALOP). Tasmanian biosecurity decisions and subsequent quarantine measures and/or management are based on processes that employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative risk assessments based on expert opinion, published information and risk assessment models. Methodology is applied consistently and in a transparent manner. This forms the Tasmanian Biosecurity Risk Analysis Framework.

4. Risk-Based Resource Allocation

In assessing, and responding to biosecurity risks, the Tasmanian Government recognises that resources should be allocated according to risk. Thus resources for pre-barrier, barrier and post-barrier services are allocated to achieve the greatest reduction in the highest priority risks.

5. Cost: Benefit Decision Making on Control and Eradication

The Tasmanian Government bases its decisions on the control and eradication of pests, diseases, and weeds on cost:benefit considerations. Public resources therefore are only allocated to the control and eradication programs that provide the most cost-effective benefit for the community.

6. Whole-of-Government Approach to Biosecurity

The Tasmanian Government recognises that the maintenance and enhancement of Tasmania's biosecurity status can be effectively addressed only with a whole-of-Government strategic approach. Progressing this approach is the prime responsibility of the Tasmanian Biosecurity Committee.

7. Shared responsibilities

The Tasmanian Government has a leadership role in biosecurity but a strong and active biosecurity system is a shared responsibility of Government, the Tasmanian community, the corporate sector and visitors to Tasmania. All levels of Government, public sector agencies, primary producers, importers, exporters, transport industries, environmental managers (State and private), non-Government organisations, service providers, tourism operators, visitors to Tasmania, and the Tasmanian community have a role to play. Our relative freedom from the pests, diseases, and weeds that occur elsewhere helps make Tasmania a good place to live. It also is a great advantage when it comes to marketing our primary produce both in Australia and overseas. Recognising this, all who benefit from Tasmania's biosecurity status should share in the resourcing and management of Tasmania's biosecurity system.

Further Information

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