

# PHA 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting

28 November 2023

## CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME

Welcome to the 23rd Annual General Meeting of Plant Health Australia being held in Canberra for both in-person and virtual attendees.

Today, I come to you from Ngunnawal (Noon-a-wall) land and I pay respect to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

On today's agenda is the Directors' Report, Financial Statements and Independent Audit Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2023. Under the provisions of the PHA Constitution, the Director terms for Dr Joanne Daly, Mr Robert Prince, Ms Kathy Kelly and I will expire at this AGM; creating the need to vote on four new Company Directors as recommended by the Board Selection Committee. Biographies for each of the prospective Directors were included in the Notice of the Meeting.

Sarah Corcoran, PHA's Chief Executive Officer and her Executive Management Team will present the performance report against the key performance indicators as detailed in the 2023-24 Annual Operational Plan, before we outline the process for the preparation of next year's Annual Operational Plan.

## CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

Despite operational and environmental challenges over the past 12 months, PHA's focus on cultivating strong Member relationships through various touchpoints such as virtual, hybrid and face-to-face meetings, webinars, forums and communications has not waived. Partnerships remain a cornerstone of PHA and we actively work to keep our Members informed and involved in the setting, implementation and uptake of company activities and objectives.

Last month, we published the 2023 Annual Report with a digital version available for download on the PHA website. This year's report is the first in the implementation of PHA's 2022-27 Strategic Plan and is delivered in a fresh new format. The Annual Report describes the achievements, challenges and progress made against key performance indicators as set out in the 2022-23 Annual Operational Plan. Once again, the PHA team has performed well, diligently delivering value to our Members.

Within our emergency response area, in addition to ongoing response plans agreed to in previous years, we've provided significant response support to affected Government and Industry Parties under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, with particular mention of the Varroa mite response. This work is designed to advance our nation's collective ability to respond and recover from plant pest incursions and is captured under Strategic Priority 1.

During October, we celebrated 18 years of the EPPRD and the unique and valuable partnerships it brings. Co-design, co-funding and joint decision-making are key features of the EPPRD that allows Parties to deliver priority outcomes. Under Strategic Priority 2, we work to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new partnerships through engagement, attendance and contributions to national committee meetings. The Biosecurity Collective, of which PHA is a founding member,

continues to drive the Decade of Biosecurity initiative, seeking new collective engagement opportunities.

Working with Members extends to developing best practice solutions for preparedness, response and recovery. Through our biosecurity planning and review activities we continue to develop industry biosecurity plans and update the Biosecurity Capability Index. Our national biosecurity programs work hard to promote best practice solutions and promote industry adoption of these practices to reduce risks.

Under Strategic Priority 3, the PHA team has worked to increase awareness of innovative technologies and approaches in plant biosecurity to enhance Australia's identification and detection capability. Our digital services offering remains strong with AUSPestCheck®, the Australian Plant Pest Database and the Pest and Disease Image Library providing accessible, national repositories of plant biosecurity data.

Our Membership profile continues to develop and from 1 October, we welcomed the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research as an Associate Member.

In respect of finance, completed audits have provided assurance over the accuracy and completeness of financial records and compliance with relevant legislative requirements.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the PHA team for their continued commitment to building a strong and resilient plant biosecurity system.

As my eight year tenure on the PHA Board concludes, I'd like to reflect on a few of the highlights from my time at PHA. These include:

- welcoming the Australian Tea Tree Industry Association as our 29<sup>th</sup> Industry Member
- securing additional EPPRD signatories
- receiving funding for the National Fruit Fly Council
- raising awareness of the importance of plant health to a wider group of stakeholders through the International Year of Plant Health
- sponsoring the inaugural Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award
- publishing the Australian Handbook for the Identification of Fruit Flies and companion website
- celebrating 21 years of PHA
- releasing the new five-year strategic plan.

I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding contributions made by outgoing Directors Joanne Daly and Robert Prince to the work of the PHA Board over the past 8 years. Their insights drawn from years of relevant biosecurity experience in the science and industry sectors respectively have been invaluable.

I would once again like to acknowledge the excellent work that Sarah Corcoran has done as PHA's CEO. Under her leadership, the PHA team continue to deliver exceptional results for the company with a myriad of work that is testament to their passion and dedication. I look forward to seeing her vision of PHA realised over the coming years.

Finally, a big thank you to our valued Members for your continued partnership and commitment to improve plant biosecurity for the benefit of the economy, environment and community. The company's achievements over the past year could not have been made without your ongoing support and input.

**- Steve McCutcheon**