FOREST WATCH AUSTRALIA PROGRAM SUMMARY 2022-23

FOREST WATCH AUSTRALIA

Copyright Licence

Attribution

In referencing this document, the preferred citation is:

Plant Health Australia (2023) Forest Watch Australia: Program Summary 2022-23. Plant Health Australia, Canberra ACT

Contact information

If you have any requests or inquiries concerning reproduction and rights or suggestions or recommendations, you should address those to the contact details below.

Email: forest_admin@phau.com.au

Mailing address: Level 1, 1 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600

Phone: (02) 6215 7700

Disclaimer

Plant Health Australia and the Forest Watch Australia partners accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of the information contained herein.

Acknowledgements

The Forest Watch Australia Program Summary was collated by Plant Health Australia (PHA) from information provided by Participants.

PHA gratefully acknowledges the partner organisations that support the program.

Foreword

Murray Watt

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry,

Australia has the seventh largest forest estate in the world.

Our native, commercial, and urban forests are an important resource for Australia's economy, trade and market access, environment and way of life.

New and exotic pests and diseases pose a significant risk to our commercial forest plantations, to our native tree species, and more broadly to the natural environment.

The National Forest Pest Surveillance Agreement brings together governments, the forest sector and community environment groups into a nationally coordinated post-border surveillance program called Forest Watch Australia.

Forest Watch Australia enhances our biosecurity system through coordinated, risk-based forest pest surveillance activities that enable early detection of exotic forest pests and improve the likelihood of pest eradication or containment before significant impacts occur.

With the signing of the Agreement in 2022, it's now so pleasing to see the following summary of Forest Watch Australia's first year of operation.

The breadth of biosecurity capacity building and surveillance activities being delivered across the country is encouraging. I commend my department – the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry - as well as the forestry sector, state government agencies, Plant Health Australia and all the dedicated staff involved for their efforts and support of Forest Watch Australia program.

The Forest Watch Australia program clearly demonstrates the benefits of biosecurity stakeholders and government agencies working together in partnership to enable improved biosecurity.

By working together, I'm confident we can deliver great outcomes for the forestry sector and maintain Australia's enviable plant and environmental biosecurity status around the world.

28th November 2023

1. Summary

Increasing levels of trade, movement of people and commodities, and climate change all contribute to an upward trend in the number of exotic forest pests establishing in Australia. New forest pests establishing in Australia can result in significant economic, environmental and amenity costs that affect stakeholders across government, industry, and the broader community.

ForestWatch Australia is a post-border surveillance program established through a partnership agreement between governments, the forest sector and community and environment groups. Plant Health Australia (PHA) coordinates the program's delivery, with activities collaboratively implemented through government agencies.

The program aims to enhance Australia's biosecurity system through coordinated, risk-based surveillance activities, enabling early detection of exotic forest pests and improving the likelihood of successful pest eradication or containment before significant impacts occur.

In 2022-23, ForestWatch Australia activities were delivered in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory. The program delivered on its aims through:

- Conducting analysis and mapping to determine areas at highest risk of exotic pest entry nationally.
- Mapping of the top 30 high-risk areas for pest entry in each state to guide surveillance activities locally.
- Identifying suitable sites in each state's high-risk areas where trapping and visual surveillance could occur.
- A national training workshop was held in NSW on pest trapping and visual surveillance techniques, attended by staff implementing the program.
- Setting up and servicing of lure-based traps targeting forest pests.
- Identification and visual surveillance of potential hosts of exotic forest pests.
- Diagnostics of samples from surveillance trapping or visual surveillance.

These activities resulted in:

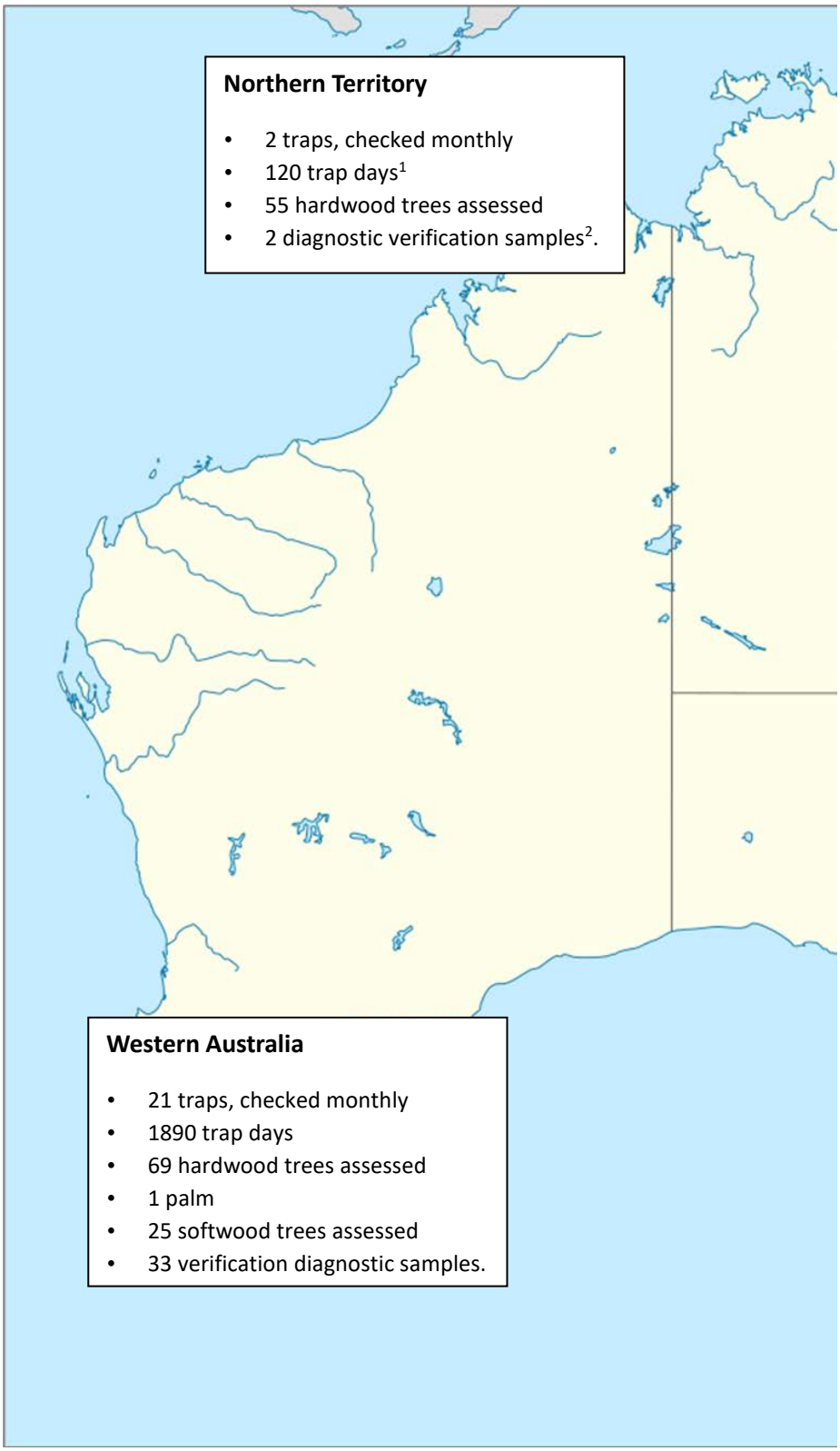
- 163 insect traps being deployed across Australia from October 2022 to April 2023.
- A collective surveillance effort of 18,030 trap days[1].
- 2,768 potential hosts trees were surveyed visually for the presence of exotics including, 1,581 hardwood trees, 1,186 softwood trees and 1 Palm tree.
- 338 samples were sent for diagnostic verification[2].

Data collected through the program is being collated into Australia's biosecurity surveillance data repository, AusPest*Check*®. The data supports Australia's claims of pest area freedom for significant exotic pests of forest trees, protecting trade and market access for forest products.

In summary, the Program's first year of operation has delivered significant improvements to Australia's post-border surveillance capacity and capability targeting exotic pests of forest trees.

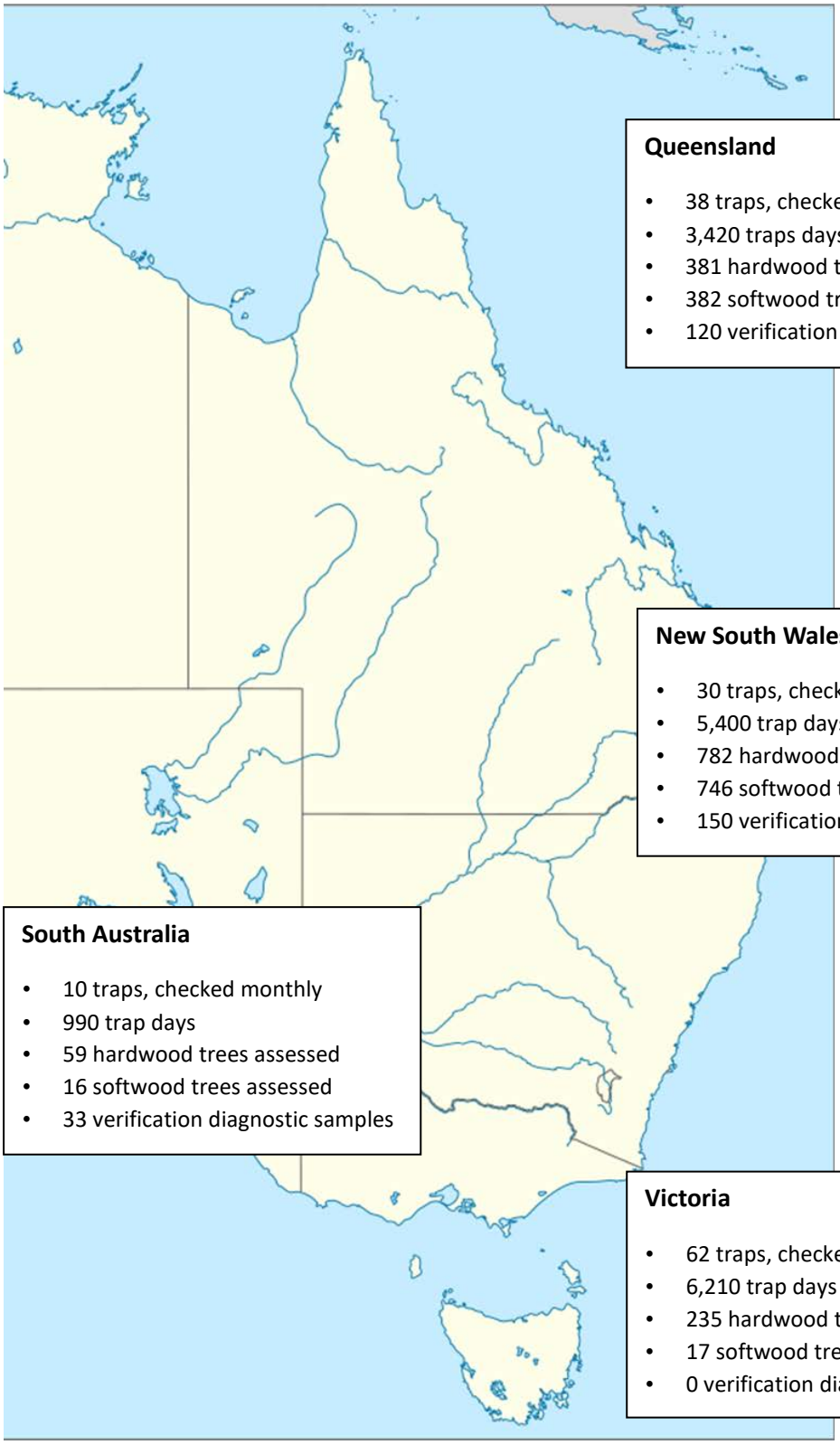
[1] Trap days is a measure of surveillance effort = the number of traps x days deployed
[2] Samples are diagnosed in the field or in the laboratory by expert staff. Where verification of the species is required, samples are sent to diagnostic laboratories.

2. Surveillance 2022-23



[1] Trap days is a measure of surveillance effort = the number of traps x days deployed

[2] Samples are diagnosed in the field or in the laboratory by expert staff. Where verification of the species is required, samples are sent to diagnostic laboratories.



Queensland

- 38 traps, checked monthly
- 3,420 traps days
- 381 hardwood trees assessed
- 382 softwood trees assessed
- 120 verification diagnostic samples

New South Wales

- 30 traps, checked monthly
- 5,400 trap days
- 782 hardwood trees assessed
- 746 softwood trees assessed
- 150 verification diagnostic samples

South Australia

- 10 traps, checked monthly
- 990 trap days
- 59 hardwood trees assessed
- 16 softwood trees assessed
- 33 verification diagnostic samples

Victoria

- 62 traps, checked fortnightly
- 6,210 trap days
- 235 hardwood trees assessed
- 17 softwood trees assessed
- 0 verification diagnostic samples

3. Target Pests

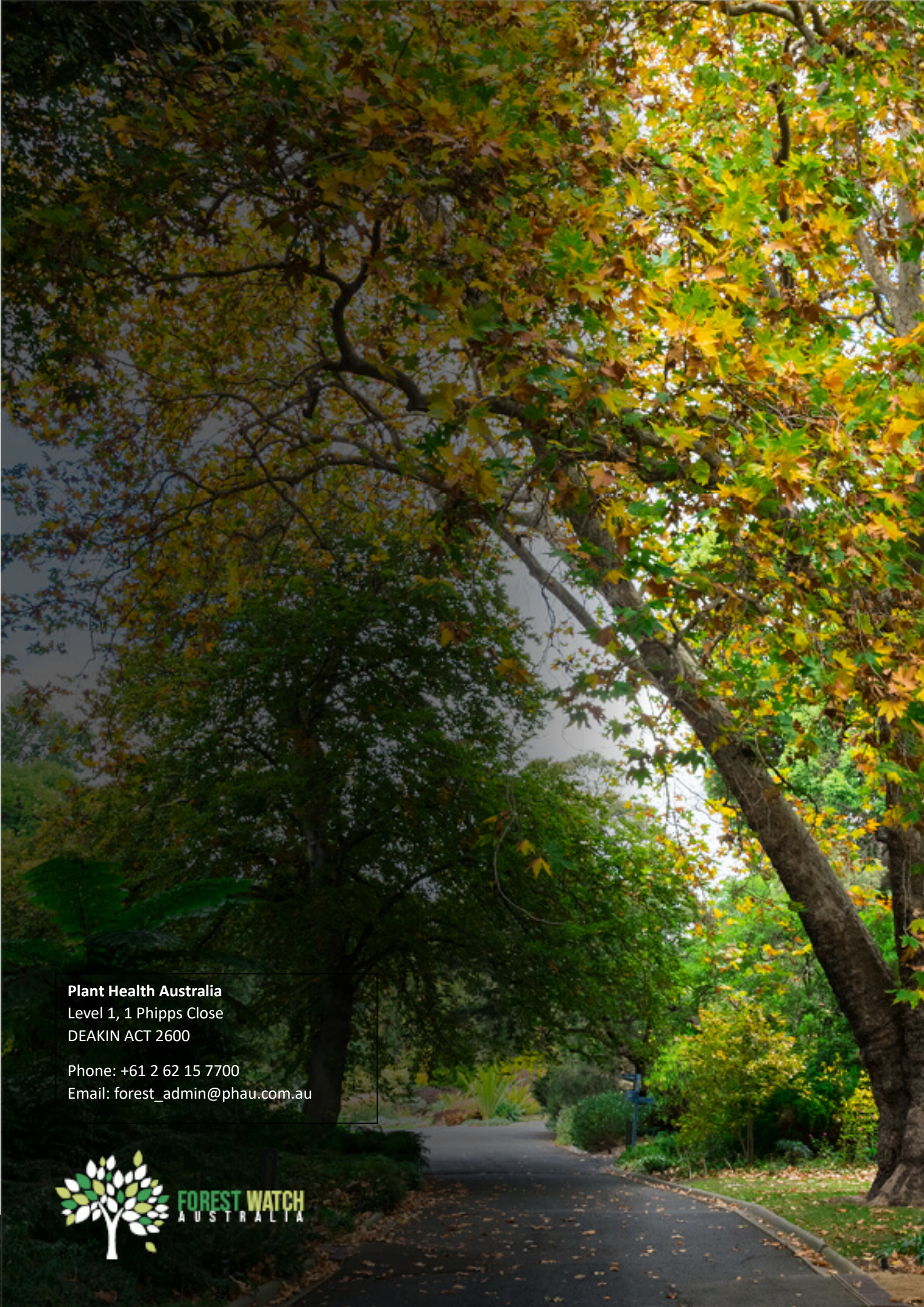
The Program focuses on surveillance activities for the early detection of exotic High Priority Pests (HPPs) of native, plantation and, urban forest trees (Table 1).

While surveillance activities are focused on exotic HPPs listed, the methods employed will enable the detection of any unusual insects, pathogens, host symptoms and signs that may, on investigation, be of biosecurity significance. *That is, detection is not limited to exotic pest of forests or trees listed below.*

Table 1: List of surveillance targets for 2022-23[3]

SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME	LISTING	HOSTS	HRSS TRAPPING	HRSS HOST-MONITOR	STAKEHOLDER SURVEILLANCE
Arhopalus ferus Burnt pine longicorn	HPP	S, A	✓	✓	✓
Austropuccinia psidii (exotic strains) Myrtle rust (other exotic strains)	EEPL, NPPP, HPP	N, A		✓	✓
Bursaphelenchus spp. Pinewood nematode species complex	NPPP, HPP	S, A		✓	✓
Coptotermes formosanus Formosan subterranean termite	EEPL, NPPP, HPP	T			✓
Coptotermes gestroi Asian subterranean termite	NPPP, HPP	T			✓
Dendroctonus spp. Bark beetles	HPP	S, A	✓	✓	✓
Dendroctonus valens Red turpentine beetle	HPP	S, A	✓	✓	✓
Fusarium circinatum Pine pitch canker	NPP, HPP	S, A		✓	✓
Lymantria dispar, L d. asiatica, L d. japonica Spongy moth	EEPL, NPPP, HPP	M		✓	✓
Lymantria monacha Nun moth	EEPL, NPPP, HPP	M		✓	✓
Monochamus spp. Longhorn beetles	NPPP, HPP	S, A	✓	✓	✓
Monochamus alternatus Japanese pine sawyer beetle	NPP, HPP	S, A	✓	✓	✓
Phytophthora pinifolia Daño foliar del Pino	HPP	S, A		✓	✓
Phytophthora pluvialis Red needle cast	HPP	S, A		✓	✓
Phytophthora ramorum Sudden oak death	EEPL, NPPP, HPP	M		✓	✓
Teratosphaeria destructans Eucalypt leaf blight	EEPL, HPP	N, A		✓	✓
Tomicus piniperda Pine shoot beetle	HPP	S, A	✓	✓	✓

[3] Surveillance pest targets were collated from various national pest lists: EEPL= **Exotic Environmental Pest List**, NPPP = **National Priority Plant Pests**, HPP = **High Priority Pest for Plantation Forests**. Indication of the forest types where pest impacts are likely to occur is given by: A= Amenity, H= hardwood plantation, M= Multiple, N= native forest, S= softwood plantation, T= Timber)



Plant Health Australia
Level 1, 1 Phipps Close
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Phone: +61 2 62 15 7700
Email: forest_admin@phau.com.au

FOREST WATCH AUSTRALIA