

CHAIRPERSON ADDRESS

PHA 24th Annual General Meeting

27 November 2024

For over 24 years, PHA has played a pivotal role in Australia's plant biosecurity system – being instrumental in facilitating industry-government partnerships to uphold and enhance our world-class biosecurity framework.

This moment provides a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the remarkable progress, not only within PHA, but also across the broader plant biosecurity landscape, thanks to the collective efforts and dedication of everyone involved.

As an island nation, our geographic isolation has been crucial in protecting us from the world's most destructive pests and diseases. However, our biosecurity system is under increased pressure from various factors, highlighting the need for transformational change and sustainable funding solutions.

To continue fulfilling our role as the trusted coordinator of Australia's plant biosecurity efforts, PHA must remain agile, adapting to the accelerating demands of operations and the growing levels of support required by our Members. This adaptability is essential to ensure the resilience and effectiveness of the system in the face of evolving challenges.

Despite navigating a range of operational and environmental challenges, PHA has remained steadfast in its commitment to fostering strong and collaborative relationships with our Members. Through a diverse array of engagement channels, including virtual, hybrid, and in-person meetings, webinars, forums, and targeted communications, PHA has ensured continuity in dialogue and collaboration with its stakeholders.

Partnerships have always been a cornerstone of PHA's success. We prioritise keeping our Members informed and actively engaged in shaping, implementing, and adopting the company's activities and objectives. This inclusive approach not only strengthens alignment with Member priorities but also fosters shared ownership of initiatives, designed to fortify the plant biosecurity system.

Looking forward, PHA remains committed to strengthening these connections, enhancing transparency, and working collaboratively with Members to address the evolving challenges and opportunities facing plant biosecurity in Australia. Through these efforts, we aim to sustain and strengthen the collective impact of our work for the benefit of all stakeholders.

This month, we published the 2024 Annual Report, now available in digital format for download on the PHA website. The Annual Report provides a comprehensive account of the organisation's achievements, challenges, and progress against the key performance indicators outlined in the 2023–24 Annual Operational Plan.

The PHA team has once again demonstrated exceptional performance, diligently delivering value to our Members across all areas of operation. Notably, within emergency response, we have provided substantial support to affected Government and industry parties under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). This work, in addition to managing ongoing response plans initiated in previous years, reflects PHA's commitment to effectively respond to, and recover from plant pest incursions.

October marked 19 years of the EPPRD fostering unique and invaluable partnerships. The EPPRD exemplifies a collaborative approach, with its key features of co-design, co-funding, and joint decision-making enabling Parties to achieve priority outcomes efficiently and effectively.

These efforts, which align with Strategic Priority 1, underscore PHA's pivotal role in strengthening the nation's biosecurity framework and ensuring a resilient plant biosecurity system.

Aligned with Strategic Priority 2, PHA continues to focus on strengthening existing partnerships while fostering new collaborations. Through active engagement, participation, and contributions to national committee meetings, we aim to build and enhance the cooperative frameworks that underpin the plant biosecurity system.

Notably, the Biosecurity Collective, of which PHA is a member, has remained a driving force behind the Decade of Biosecurity initiative. This commitment was highlighted by the successful delivery of the 3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium, held on the Gold Coast in August. This event further emphasised the importance of collaboration and innovation in safeguarding our future.

In support of Strategic Priority 3, PHA has advanced awareness of innovative technologies to strengthen Australia's pest and disease detection capabilities. Key digital platforms, including AUSPestCheck®, the Australian Plant Pest Database (APPD), and the Pest and Disease Image Library (PaDIL), continue to provide nationally coordinated, accessible repositories of essential biosecurity data. These resources are integral to early detection, rapid response, and informed decision-making across the plant biosecurity system.

The Board and I are also excited about the recently formed Business Model Committee that will be reviewing PHA's business model and exploring alternative funding and revenue streams to ease the pressure on Member subscriptions.

On today's agenda is the Directors' Report, Financial Statements and Independent Audit Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2024, Directors' remuneration and the plant industry membership application from Protected Cropping Australia.

Sarah Corcoran, PHA's Chief Executive Officer and her Executive Management Team will present performance highlights and achievements against the key performance indicators as detailed in the 2024-25 Annual Operational Plan.

Sarah's outstanding leadership over the past four years as CEO has been instrumental in the success of PHA. Under her guidance, PHA's strategic direction and delivery have consistently aligned with providing exceptional value to our Members.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the PHA team for their exceptional efforts

in organising the Member and Deed meetings. Furthermore, I commend their dedication in developing a comprehensive portfolio of work that not only maximises benefits for our Members, but also addresses emerging needs and maintains a steadfast focus on fortifying the plant biosecurity system.

To our Members, I extend my sincere gratitude for your continued support and your presence here today. I look forward to an engaging and insightful meeting as we work together toward our shared goals.