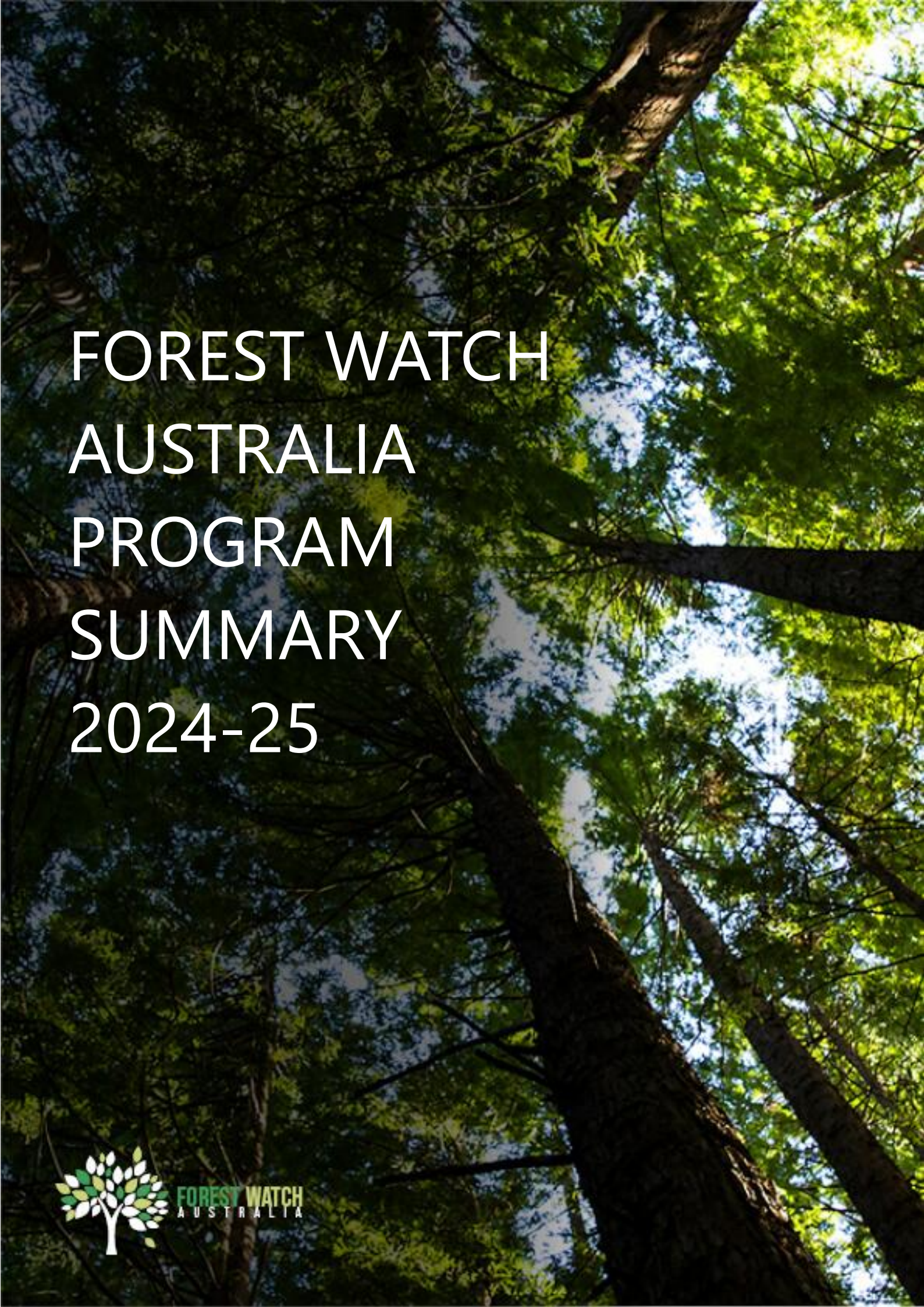


# FOREST WATCH AUSTRALIA PROGRAM SUMMARY 2024-25

FOREST WATCH AUSTRALIA

**Attribution**
In referencing this document, the preferred citation is:

*Plant Health Australia (2025) Forest Watch Australia: Program Summary 2024-25. 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 | Phone: (02) 6215 7700 | Address: Level 1, 1 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600



# 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.

# Summary

Rising trade, global movement of people and goods, and climate change are driving a steady increase in the risk and establishment of exotic forest pests in Australia. The arrival of new pests carries significant economic, environmental, and social consequences, impacting governments, industry, and local communities alike.

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

The program strengthens Australia's biosecurity system through coordinated, risk-based surveillance to enable early detection of exotic forest pests and increase the likelihood of eradication or containment before major impacts occur.

In 2024-25, Forest Watch Australia activities were delivered across Australia. The program delivered on its aims through:

- Analysis and identification of high-risk areas for entry and establishment of exotic forest pests.
- Establishing and conducting lure-based trapping and conducting visual surveillance for forest pests.
- Performing diagnostic testing on samples collected through trapping and visual checks.
- Building entomological capacity of diagnosticians from across Australia through sponsorship of their participation in the Fifth Bark and Ambrosia Beetle Academy Training workshop held at the Universitas Brawijiya, Indonesia.
- Delivering training workshops to stakeholders (arborist, local councils, etc.) to build awareness, capacity and encourage reporting of unusual pests.

These activities resulted in:

- Deployment of 213 insect traps across Australia, monitored monthly from October 2024 to April 2025 (and April to October in the Northern Territory).
- An estimated collective surveillance effort of 33,599 trap days[1].
- Conducting 7,191 visual assessments of trees specifically targeting exotic pests.
- Uploading 23,191 pest absence records to AUSPestCheck® for surveillance activities conducted in the 2024-25 financial year.
- Organising 8 stakeholder training workshops, involving 211 participants plus attendance at 2 large community gardening events designed to raise public awareness of the program and pest reporting.

All data collected through the program has been integrated into Australia's national biosecurity surveillance repository, AusPest*Check*®, reinforcing pest-free status claims for key forest pests and supporting trade and market access for forest products.

In summary, the program's third year of operation has significantly strengthened Australia's post-border surveillance capability and readiness against exotic forest pests.

[1] Trap days is a measure of surveillance effort and represents the number of traps deployed multiplied by the number of days each trap was deployed in the field.

# Building expertise

The Forest Watch Australia Expert Training Program supported the participation of eight entomologists to attend the Fifth Bark and Ambrosia Beetle Academy. This international professional development course was held at the Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, East Java, Indonesia from 14-18 October 2024.

Attendees learned about bark beetle collection and identification techniques. This training allowed participants to build knowledge and capacity to support the Forest Watch Australia program and build capacity within their own organisations.

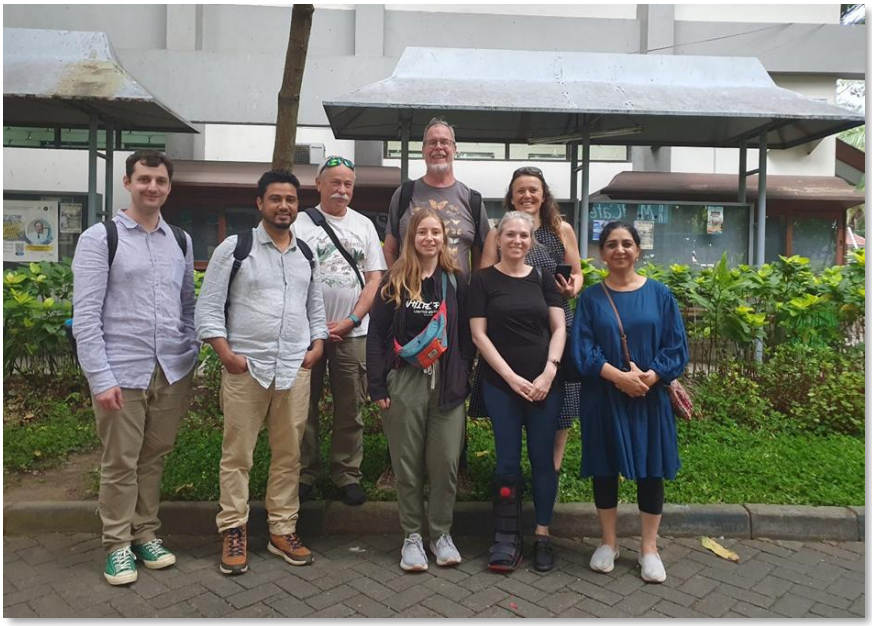


*Image 1: Attendees supported by Forest Watch Australia (L-R, James Buxton (AgVic), Prakash Gaudel (NT DAF), Andras Szito (WA DPIRD), Jordyn Giddins (SARDI), David Britton (NSW DPIRD), Emily Lancaster (QDAF), Melissa Houghton (NRE TAS), Ramandeep Kaur (DAFF)). Source: David Britton, NSW DPIRD.*

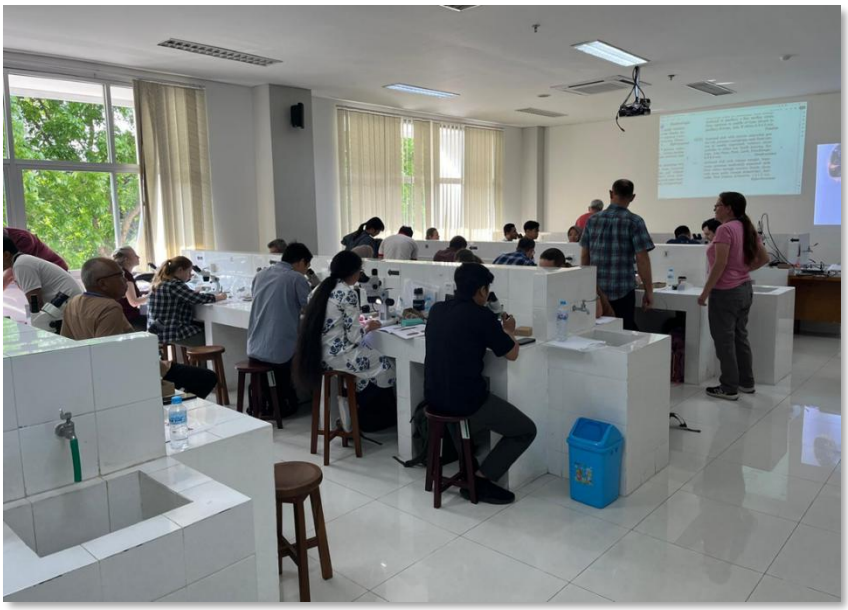


*Image 2: Attendees working with specimens in the laboratory. Source: Ramandeep Kuar, DAFF*

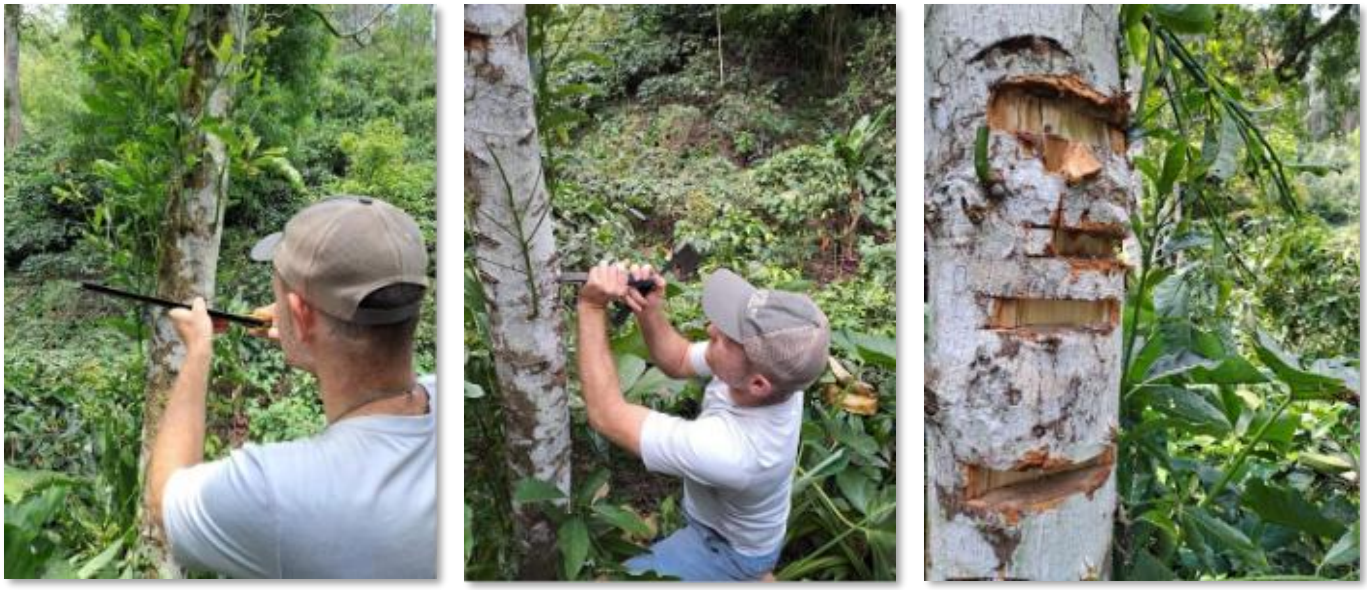


*Image 3: Removing a wood sample from infected tree, parallel cuts are made and the sample is chiselled out for dissection and collection of beetles. Source: Andy Szito, WA DPIRD*

# Creating a surveillance community

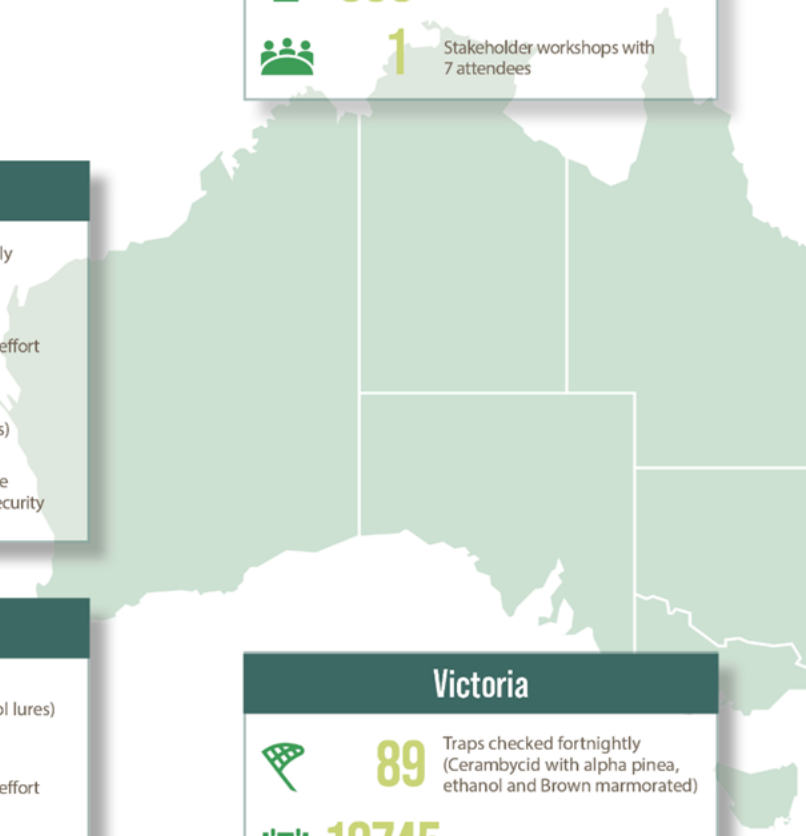
Forest Watch Australia plays a vital role in building national awareness and participation in forest biosecurity. A key component of the program is the delivery of targeted stakeholder training sessions aimed at individuals working in high-risk areas such as ports, industrial zones, and urban–forest interfaces. These sessions strengthen community capacity to recognise and report signs of exotic forest pests, forming a critical layer of early detection within Australia's biosecurity system.


In 2024–25, the program delivered eight workshops, training 211 participants across the country. The sessions not only increased stakeholder awareness of forest biosecurity and the importance of reporting unusual pests but also introduced the MyPestGuide® Trees application that is a user-friendly digital tool that supports pest identification and facilitates the reporting of potential exotic pest sightings.

To coincide with the International Day of Forests, the program launched the TREEmendous Biosecurity Blitz, encouraging participants and the broader community to actively use the MyPestGuide Trees app between 21 March and 21 April 2025 to identify and report suspect pests.

Together, these initiatives are fostering a more proactive, connected, and informed surveillance community that is equipped to detect threats early and play an active role in safeguarding Australia's forests for future generations.

# FOREST WATCH AUSTRALIA 2024-25



## Northern Territory

- 3 Traps checked monthly (Cerambycid, alpha pinea and ethanol lures)
- 540 Trap days of surveillance effort
- 360 Tree assessments (30 trees assessed 12 times)
- 1 Stakeholder workshops with 7 attendees

## Queensland

- 36 Traps checked monthly (alpha-pinea & ethanol lures)
- 6480 Trap days of surveillance effort
- 722 Tree assessments during one survey
- 2 Stakeholder workshops with 58 attendees

## Western Australia

- 21 Traps checked fortnightly (Cerambycid lures)
- 4704 Trap days of surveillance effort
- 364 Tree assessments (91 trees assessed 4 times)
- 2 Public events held to raise awareness of forest biosecurity

## New South Wales

- 40 Traps checked monthly (23 Cerambycid, 3 Cerambycid with alpha pinea, ethanol and Brown marmorated stink bug lures, 14 Euwallaceae lures )
- 7200 Trap days of surveillance effort
- 1725 Tree assessments during one survey
- 3 Stakeholder workshops with 87 attendees

## South Australia

- 12 Traps checked monthly (alpha pinea and ethanol lures)
- 2130 Trap days of surveillance effort
- 1624 Tree assessments (232 trees assessed 7 times)
- 1 Stakeholder workshops with 45 attendees

## Victoria

- 89 Traps checked fortnightly (Cerambycid with alpha pinea, ethanol and Brown marmorated)
- 10745 Trap days of surveillance effort
- 2276 Tree assessments during one survey

## Tasmania

- 12 Traps checked monthly (Cerambycid lures)
- 1800 Trap days of surveillance effort
- 120 Tree assessments (60 trees assessed 2 times)
- 1 Stakeholder workshops with 14 attendees

# Target pests

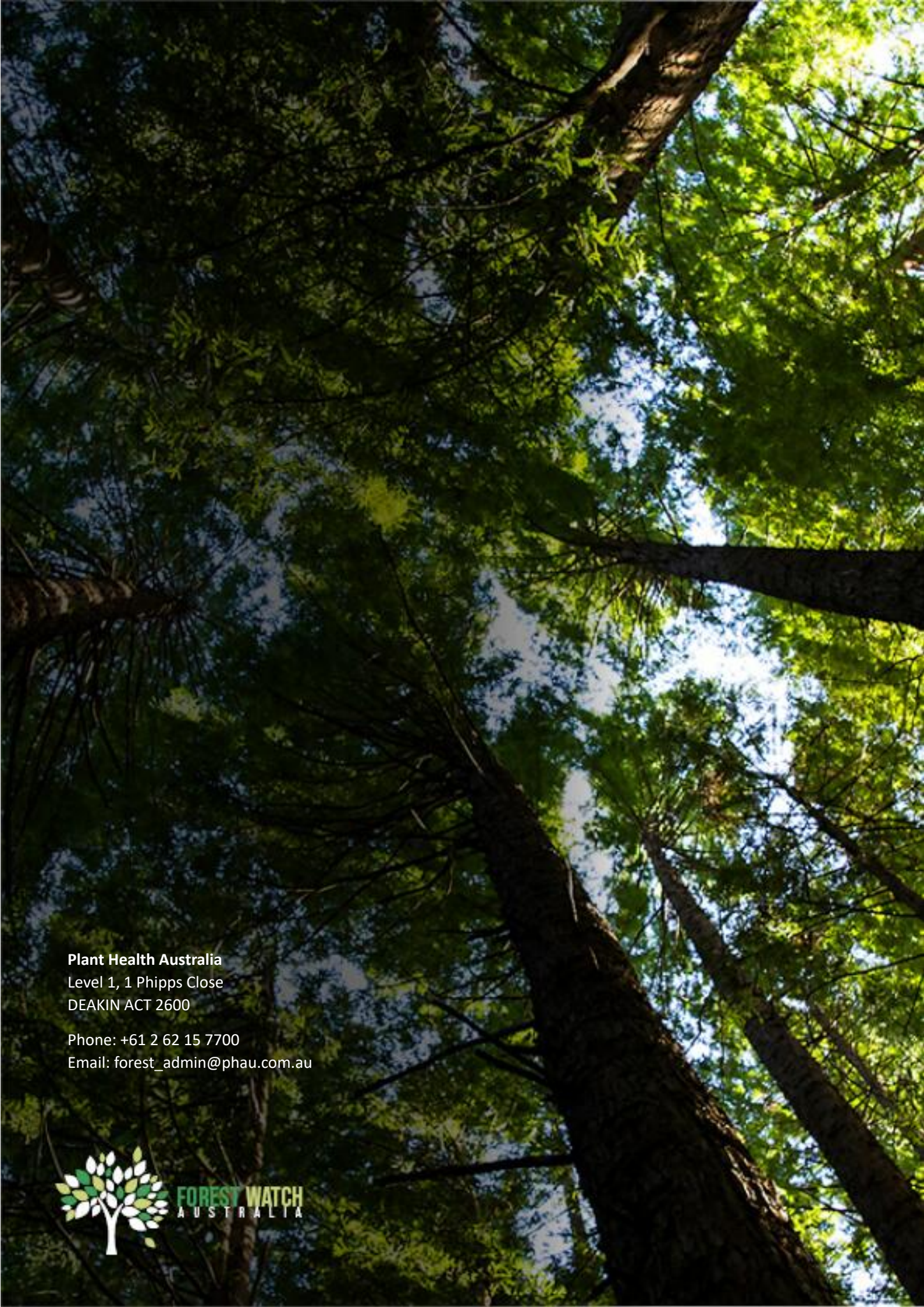
The Program focuses on surveillance activities for the early detection of exotic High Priority Pests (HPPs) affecting native, plantation, and urban forest trees (Table 1).

Although these activities focused on the listed exotic HPPs, surveillance methods are designed to detect any unusual insects, pathogens, host symptoms, and signs that may indicate biosecurity concerns. *Detection efforts are therefore not limited to exotic pest of forests or trees listed below.*

*Table 1: List of surveillance targets for 2024-25*[2]

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

[2] 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