



2026 PBRI Symposium PROGRAM

12 & 13 May

Victorian State Library

Melbourne

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Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
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**Hort
Innovation**



2026 PBRI Symposium

12 & 13 May 2026

The Conversation Quarter

Victorian State Library,

328 Swanston St, Melbourne VIC

Entry via Door 3

DAY ONE - 12 May 2026

Time	Session and Topic	Presenter
8:30 am	Registration and check-in enter via Door 3 La Trobe St Coffee served in Hansen Hall	
8:55	Delegates seated in the Conversation Quarter	
9:00	Welcome MC: Catriona Nguyen-Robertson, University of Melbourne	
9:05	Welcome to Country	Mr Tony Garvey
9:15	Minister's Opening Address	Hon. Julie Collins, MP Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry
9:20	The Symposium	Dr Jo Luck, Program Director PBRI
9:25-9:35	Biosecurity Trakka Launch	Julie Bird, Chair of the Hort Innovation Board and Dr Will Cuddy, Director Animal & Plant Biosecurity Research & Diagnostics NSW Department Primary Industries Regional Development and Jo Luck
9:35 KEYNOTE Sponsored by DAFF Chair: Dr Gabrielle Vivian-Smith	Disaster recovery and community resilience - parallels for Biosecurity	Anne Leadbeater OAM, Strategic Advisor, Leadbeater Group.
SESSION 1: Early Warning and Risk Chair: Zali Mahony, PBRI Ritman Scholar, University of Queensland		
10:00	Industry perspectives on Early warning and Risk.	Kim Chalmers, Chalmers grapevine nursery, Luke Benham, General Manager at Aroona Almond Farms, Bannerton and Ron Hards, Mallee Grain Grower. Via video
10:05	Address from the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer	Dr Gabrielle Vivian-Smith, Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer, DAFF
10:15	National Biosecurity Strategy – a shared vision for the future	David Gavin, Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Response and Reform Branch, DAFF

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10:25	PhytoGuard® for Phytophthora Surveillance, Risk Management, and Conservation Impacts: from Nurseries to World Heritage Areas	Dr Brett Summerell, Chief Scientist Botanic Gardens of Sydney
10:35	Q&A	
10:40	International Day of Plant Health Morning tea Hansen Hall – Sponsored by CEBRA	
11:00	Managing changes in pest risk associated with traded goods	Dr Jana Mayo, Plant Sciences and Risk Assessment, DAFF
11:10	Modelling the potential incursion and spread of hitchhiker plant pests: Khapra beetle in Australia	Dr Tracey Hollings, Senior Research Fellow CEBRA, University of Melbourne
11:20	Closing the Aerial Pathway Gap: Developing an Operational Early-Warning System for Wind-Dispersed Pests	Dr Ilze Pretorius, Atmospheric Scientist, Bioeconomic Science Institute, NZ
11:30	Democratising biosecurity emergency decisions: A digital tool for multi-stakeholder eradication feasibility evaluation.	Dr Estibaliz Palma CEBRA, University of Melbourne
11:40	Q&A	
SESSION 2: Diagnostics and Surveillance		
Chair: Shakira Johnson, Innovation Broker CRDC		
11:50	Industry perspectives on Diagnostics and Surveillance	Kim Chalmers, Chalmers grapevine nursery, Luke Benham, General Manager at Aroona Almond Farms, Bannerton and Ron Hards, Mallee Grain Grower. Via video
12:05	One health surveillance using metabarcoding approaches: A one-stop shop for surveillance data.	Dr Brendan Rodoni, Research Director, Agriculture Victoria Research
12:15	Biosecurity Trakka – Shared High Throughput Sequencing for Near Real-Time Diagnosis and Monitoring of Biosecurity Threats.	Dr Daniel Bogema, Senior Research Scientist, DPIRD NSW
12:25	Q&A	
12:30	Lunch - Hansen Hall Digital posters	
1:30	The NGDSI: An Industry- government partnership to uplift the diagnostic and surveillance capability for the Australian Grains Industry	Dr Amy Koschella Manager Biosecurity, GRDC
1:40	The use of drones and satellites for surveillance of Australian Plague Locusts	Con Goletsos, Director, Australian Plague Locust Commission, DAFF
1:50	Improving Wheat Stripe Rust Management Through Airborne Genomic Surveillance	Dr Mareike Moeller, Research Scientist, ANU

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2:00	Quantum-enabled detection of invasive pathogens for improved biosecurity.	Paul Coldrey, Technical Director, Data Effects
2:10	From DNA to decisions: genomic tracing resolves early incursion dynamics in invasive insect pests	Dr Alexander Piper, senior Research Scientist, Ag Victoria
2:20	Q&A	
2:30	Sensing airborne semiochemicals for nondestructive pest detection: opportunities and challenges	Dr Ming Chen, Research Scientist, CSIRO
2:40	Developing Karnal bunt surveillance systems for Australia	Kiflu Tesfamicael, Department of Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia (PIRSA)
2:50	Strain level diagnostics of a key forest pathogen from complex environmental DNA samples at scale	Prof. Benjamin Schwessinger, Senior Lecturer ANU
3:00	AI-Enabled Imaging Systems for Non-Destructive Pest Detection and Biosecurity Diagnostics	Dr Maryam Yazdani, Senior Research Scientist, CSIRO
3:10	Advancing Continual Improvement of General Surveillance Programs for Plant Biosecurity and Beyond: ABARES Research Insights.	Dr Md Kamruzzaman, Research Officer, Social Sciences Program, ABARES
3:20	Q&A	
3:30 – 4:00	Afternoon Tea – Hansen Hall	

SESSION 3: Resilient Crop protection

Chair: Rabia Ali, PBRI Ritman Scholar, Macquarie University

4:00	Industry perspectives on resilient crop protection into the future	Kim Chalmers, Chalmers grapevine nursery, Luke Benham, General Manager at Aroona Almond Farms, Bannerton and Ron Hards, Mallee Grain Grower. Via video
4:05	Advancing biological control for sustainable pest management in Australia's forestry and horticultural industries.	Dr Umar Lubanga, Research Scientist, AgVictoria
4:15	Host-Parasitoid Mismatch Under Climate Change: Implications for Fall Armyworm Biosecurity in Australia	Dr Jeremy Gonthier, Post Doctoral Researcher, Bioeconomic Science Institute, NZ
4:25	Q&A	

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4:30	Bioinformatic design of RNAi-based biopesticides for agricultural and biosecurity applications	Dr Stephen Fletcher, Research Fellow, Charles Sturt University
4:40	Novel pest suppression in grains and vegetables	Dr Xinyue Gu, Research Fellow, University of Melbourne
4:50	Genomic data as a foundation for genetically informed pest management	Dr Joshua Thia ARC Industry Research fellow, University of Melbourne
5:00	Q&A	
5:10	Day 1 Close	MC
6:30 pm	Drinks and Canapes – La Trobe Reading Room (The Dome) Victorian State Library.	
7:30	Symposium Dinner Isabella Fraser Room, enter the library through the main public entrance.	
8:05	PBRI Dinner address – Melanie Mark – Shadbolt, Chair B3 New Zealand	
10:30	Close	

DAY TWO - 13 May 2026

8:30 am Tea and Coffee, Hansen Hall

9:00 am	Secretary's address Victoria Anderson Secretary Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	MC
9:05	Human centred design and the applications to plant biosecurity research	Professor Siobhan Banks, Director of the Behaviour-Brain-Body Research Centre, University of Adelaide.
	KEYNOTE Sponsored by DAFF Chair: Dr Gabrielle Vivian-Smith	
9:30	SESSION 4: Trans -Tasman Biosecurity Research Chair: Co-Directors, B3 New Zealand: Alby Marsh and Dr Beccy Ganley	
9:35	Defending Our Forests – Forest Biosecurity and Biosecurity in Partnership in New Zealand	Brendan Gould, Director Biosecurity and Risk, New Zealand Forest Owners Association
9:45	Surveillance for early detection of exotic invaders to New Zealand: practices, technologies, and research needs.	Dr Rachael Horner, Scientist, Bioeconomy Science Institute
9:55	Biosecurity risk evaluation for NZ industries in collaboration with Australia	Dr Rebecca Turner, Bioeconomy Science Institute
10:05	Indigenous perspectives on Biosecurity	Alby Marsh, B3 Co-Director, Bioeconomy Science Institute
10:15	The impact of heatwaves on surveillance programmes for high-risk pests in New Zealand	Dr Adriana Najar-Rodriguez, Bioeconomy Science Institute
10:25	Q&A	

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10:35	Morning tea – Hansen Hall	
SESSION 5: Readiness and Recovery		
Chair: Michael Edwards, La Trobe University, Ritman Scholar		
11:00	Industry perspectives on Readiness and recovery	Kim Chalmers, Chalmers grapevine nursery, Luke Benham, General Manager at Aroona Almond Farms, Bannerton and Ron Hards, Mallee Grain Grower
11:05	Ahead of the threat: Australia’s readiness for Xylella (include Mildura Scenario exercise)	Dr Piotr Trebicki, Senior Research scientist, Macquarie University
11:15	On farm industry biosecurity planning, Melons - a case study	Johnathan Davey, CEO Melons Australia
11:25	Forest insect risk assessment: can we predict the next big, small thing?	Dr Helen Nahrung, Senior Research Scientist, University of Sunshine Coast
11:35	Improving the utility of Industry Biosecurity Plans Risk assessment framework	Dr James Walker, Biosecurity Consultant, Bioent Services
11:45	Q&A	
11:55	Cotton scenario planning	Shakira Johnson, Innovation Broker, Cotton RDC
12:05	A risk with an untapped remedy: Understanding the evidence-to-practice gap in pre-bunking biosecurity misinformation.	Dr Mathew Nurse, Postdoctoral fellow ARC Training Centre in Plant Biosecurity, Australian National University
12:15	Timely, coordinated and targeted communication to support plant biosecurity response	Lauren Rollason, Director Crisis Communications (DAFF)
12:25	Q&A	
12:30	Lunch	
		Digital Poster Session

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SESSION 6: Plant Biosecurity Capability Building EUPHRESCO III sponsor

Chair: MC - Catriona Nguyen-Robertson

1:30	South African Biosecurity Hub Video pre-record	Dr Merinda Visser, Director: Strategic Projects and Partnerships in Agriculture
1:35	ARC Training Centre in Plant Biosecurity	Sarah Adams, COO, ARC Training Centre in Plant Biosecurity
1:45	ARC Training Centre in Plant Biosecurity PhD projects	Stephanie Morgan, Giullia de Frietas Rossi and Bethany Perry, ARC Training Centre in Plant Biosecurity
1:55	Building Indigenous capacity in biosecurity preparedness with the IBRAM-path framework	Dr Nari Williams, Forest Health and Biosecurity Research Leader, Adelaide University
2:05	Strengthening Australia's preparedness for huanglongbing through an offshore–onshore biosecurity model	Dr Meena Thakur Research Horticulturist, Entomology, DPIRD NSW
2:15	Q&A	
2:25	Plant Health TV Award Announcement of the Global Plant Health TV Contest winner	MC
2:35	The 2024 Ritman Scholars	MC
2:40	Leveraging Sydney Botanic Gardens Collections for Population-Level Disease Resistance Gene Analysis	Alyssa Martino, Botanic Gardens, Sydney Via Video
2:45	Surveillance and diagnostics to delimit native resident psyllids from unwanted guests in Australian citrus regions	Michael Edwards, La Trobe University
2:50	Strengthening IPM of Fall Armyworm Through Biological Control	Rabia Ali, Macquarie University
2:55	A nasty surprise: black core rot in Citrus	Zali Mahony, University of Queensland
3:05	The 2026 Ritman Scholarship Awards	MC
3:10		Ritman Scholar 1
3:15		Ritman Scholar 2
3:20		Ritman Scholar 3
3:25		Ritman Scholar 4
3:30	Symposium wrap-up	
3:35 Close		

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