

# Changes to biosecurity within the Queensland sugarcane industry



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*The sugar industry has a long history of working with governments to prevent the spread of serious pests and diseases, and to manage incursions or outbreaks.*

The Federal and Queensland governments have supported the sugar industry legislation including the *Queensland Plant Protection Act 1989* (the Act), Plant Protection Regulation 2002 and the Plant Protection (Approved Sugarcane Varieties) Regulation 2003.

In the past, BSES conducted regulatory roles in an agreement with Biosecurity Queensland (BQ), part of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ). SRA has taken a different approach to its involvement with biosecurity and no longer fulfils a regulatory role. All regulatory actions are now performed by BQ.

Organisations or individuals are required by law to obtain an approval (permit) before moving plant material or appliances (machinery) between Pest Quarantine Areas (PQAs).

## Movement of Sugarcane Machinery between Pest Quarantine Areas

These procedures must be followed by an individual or organisation who wants to move an appliance that has been in contact with sugarcane from one PQA to another:

- > Clean down the appliance using high-pressure washing equipment to ensure all contaminants (soil, stalk, leaves, roots and juice) are removed.
- > An inspector (under the Act) must be notified that an appliance is being moved. The inspector will inspect the appliance to ensure it is clean. If the cleanliness standard is not met then the inspector will indicate this and further cleaning will be required.
- > Once the inspector is satisfied that the appliance meets the required cleanliness standard, they will issue an approval for the transfer of the appliance from the existing PQA to the other PQA.

A number of productivity service officers have been appointed under the Act as appliance inspectors. Additional training courses are scheduled to be conducted by Biosecurity Queensland for further appointments.

Moving machinery between PQAs? Contact your local productivity services group or Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

## Movement of Sugarcane Plant Material between Pest Quarantine Areas

An individual or organisation who wants to move plant material (soil which has been in contact with sugarcane, roots, stalk and leaf) between PQAs, must obtain an approval before doing so.

The inspector will require the following information:

- > The full contact details of the individual or organisation sending the material and the originating PQA.
- > The full contact details of the individual or organisation receiving the material and the destination PQA.
- > The variety or varieties being moved.
- > The part of the plant being moved and what it will be used for.

Moving plant material? For all Plant Movement Approvals contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

## Offence warning

When approvals are issued they come with conditions which must be adhered to before movement can take place.

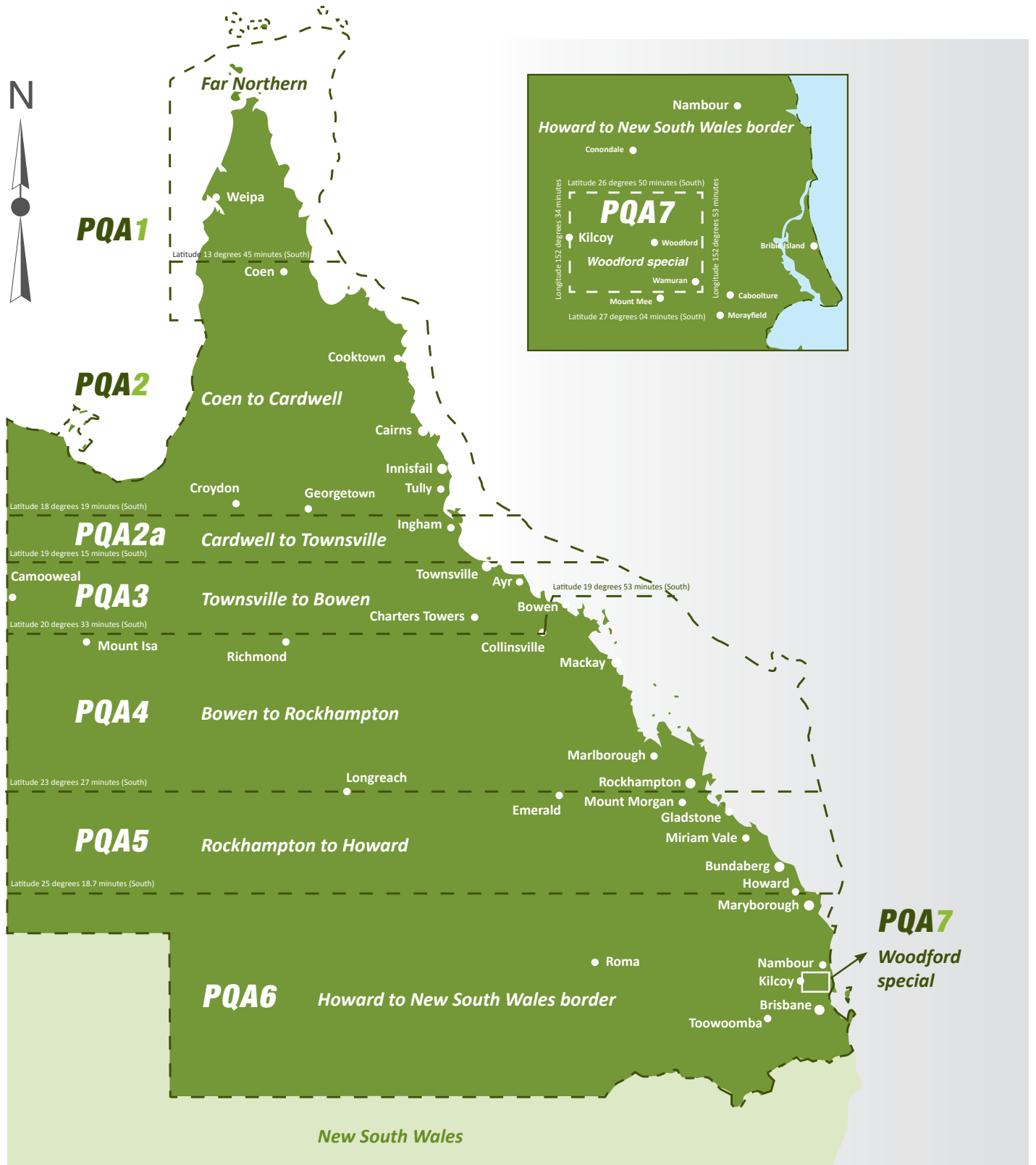
A person who contravenes the conditions of an approval given by an inspector under section 117 of the Plant Protection Regulation 2002 commits an offence under section 11(7) of the *Plant Protection Act 1989*. The maximum penalty for an offence under this section is 2000 penalty units for an individual (\$220 000) or 10 000 penalty units for a company (\$1 100 000). A penalty unit is currently set at \$110.00.

## The importance of quarantine borders

Some endemic diseases exist only in certain PQAs but not in others. Restricting the movement of plant material and machinery up and down the state helps to stop the further spread of these diseases.

## Pest Quarantine Area boundaries

See map below.



## When quarantine borders work well

Fiji leaf gall disease was recorded in heavy levels in the Southern region in the early 80s. By preventing the movement of plant material north through quarantine control, the disease has never been recorded beyond Proserpine. Breeding resistant varieties has also reduced the impact of the disease.

The biggest threat to our industry is an exotic threat such as Sesamia or Top borer. Failure to isolate and eradicate an incursion would be devastating to the industry if these borers crossed our borders.

We only have to look at the effect these pests have had on our neighbour's industry. Ramu Estate in PNG produces half the tonnes of sugar per hectare that we do here and most of this loss has been caused by borers.



Above: Plants with Fiji leaf gall disease (foreground).



Above: Sesamia borer.



Above: Top borer.



### Protecting our industry

Our industry can only be protected if all participants do the right thing.

- Ensure that machinery is cleaned to the required standard.
- Plant material moved between PQAs will have restrictions on its movement.
- Ensure approvals are applied for and are in place before any appliance or plant material is moved.



Report any suspicious pest or disease to your local productivity services group or the Plant Health Australia Hotline on 1800 084 881.



Report any illegal movement of plant material or machinery between PQAs to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.