



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment**

Australian Biosecurity Awards 2020

Round 2 award recipients
November 2020





The Dr Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation

Recognises an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to biosecurity science and innovation in Australia over a number of years



Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year

Recognises Australian primary producers, including individuals and organisations, that have demonstrated outstanding on-farm biosecurity practices



Environmental Biosecurity Award

Recognises individuals, groups or organisations that have demonstrated a significant contribution to maintaining Australia's environmental biosecurity integrity



Education Award

Recognises individuals, groups or organisations in education that have demonstrated a significant contribution to promoting or raising biosecurity awareness



Community Award

Recognises individuals, groups or organisations within the community that have demonstrated a significant contribution to maintaining Australia's biosecurity integrity

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FROM THE DEPUTY SECRETARY



Welcome to round 2 of the 2020 Australian Biosecurity Awards (ABAs). These awards represent our longstanding commitment to recognising and celebrating Australians who have worked hard to maintain our world-leading biosecurity system.

It has been a challenging year for all Australians, from the devastating effects of last summer's bushfires to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. On top of these challenges, the biosecurity risks we face have remained present and will increase in the future.

We face the growing threat of African swine fever, which could devastate our pork industry if it reaches our shores. The hitchhiker risk of the brown marmorated stink bug and khapra beetle continues to threaten our agricultural industry. This year large volumes of unsolicited seeds were received by Australians across the country. These seeds could carry a range of exotic plant diseases, such as tomato brown rugose virus.

All over the country, individuals and organisations work tirelessly to safeguard our country from these biosecurity threats – from implementing innovative industry and business practices, to educating the next generation of biosecurity-aware Australians.

To recognise the efforts of a wider range of biosecurity stakeholders, and the diverse aspects of our biosecurity system, we developed 4 new ABA categories – Environmental Biosecurity, Education, Community and the Dr Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation.

The Dr Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation was created in honour of Dr Kim Ritman's career. Kim, a former Chief Scientist and Chief Plant Protection Officer of our department, sadly passed away this year, leaving behind a substantial legacy that has helped strengthen our biosecurity system to better manage the risk of exotic plant pests and diseases. Kim's contributions were also pivotal for Australia's natural resources and environmental management.

He will be remembered for his great contributions to plant health, promotion of science, and for his thoughtfulness and kindness to all who worked with him.

The winners of round 2 of the 2020 ABAs include a range of biosecurity champions, such as industry leaders in on-farm biosecurity, community members, Indigenous rangers and those supporting biosecurity education.

This round of awards is a transitional event to present the 4 new categories and to introduce the National Biosecurity Forum as the new host of the ABAs. The new categories will be included in the full suite of categories from 2021.

Thank you to Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia for their continued support of the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award.

Congratulations to this year's winners and thank you for your valuable contributions to Australia's biosecurity.

Andrew Tongue

Deputy Secretary

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment



Professor Brendan Rodoni

As the inaugural winner of the Dr Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation, Professor Brendan Rodoni is recognised for his outstanding scientific contributions and national leadership in improving Australia's capability in managing plant biosecurity risks. He is Research Director, Microbial Sciences, Pests & Diseases with Agriculture Victoria and a joint appointee with La Trobe University. He is highly respected by industry, government and research stakeholders for his technical competency, innovative thinking and interpersonal skills.

Prof Rodoni's understanding of both the theoretical and practical perspectives of biosecurity have made him an influential and impactful scientist and educator both within Australia and internationally over the course of his 35-year career. He is an outstanding advocate for biosecurity research and has made a substantial contribution to the field of plant virology and bacteriology research.

Prof Rodoni was heavily engaged in the national response to the reported detection of fire blight in Melbourne in 1997. This report triggered one of the most intense survey and diagnostic programs in the history of plant industries in Australia.

In 2010 he was involved in the development of advanced molecular diagnostic methods for the detection of plant viruses. This resulted in adoption of new PCR tests for post-entry quarantine operations. He was awarded the 2012 Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity Science Committee Award for Biosecurity Impact for this work.



In 2012 he was involved in a project investigating new approaches for diagnosing high-priority exotic plant bacterial pathogens that pose significant threats to Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The project resulted in improvements to the diagnostic capability for all 3 countries to test for fire blight, zebra chip, citrus canker and kiwi fruit blight.

A key driver of diagnostic protocols and strategies for high-priority pests, Prof Rodoni has been involved in developing national and international protocols, including for zebra chip (*Candidatus Liberibacter* spp.), Plum pox virus and Potato spindle tuber viroid.

Prof Rodoni has led innovative work in emerging genomics technologies and field-deployable detection systems, for which he was awarded the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre CEO's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Australian Plant Biosecurity in 2017.

Since 2018 he has been involved in a national high-throughput sequencing (HTS) project, including his advocacy role in developing a framework and guidelines for using HTS. This work will assist in developing a regulatory platform for using HTS in post-entry quarantine.

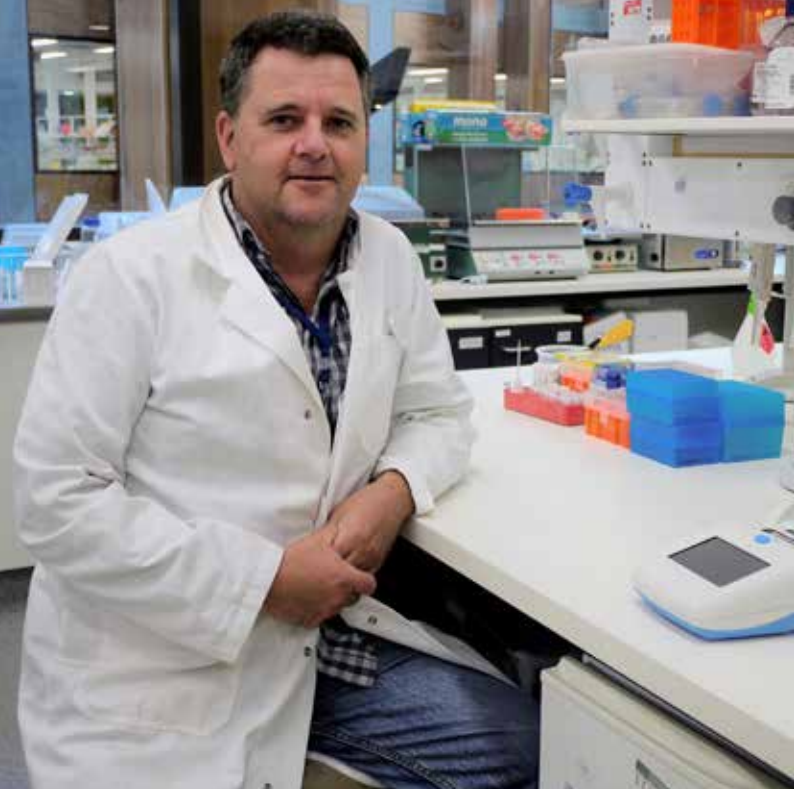
Committed to building Australia's scientific and technical capability, Prof Rodoni is currently engaged in a 5-year industry-funded surveillance project that will change the way airborne emergency plant pests are detected.

With a strong ethos of delivery of outcomes for government, industries and the community, a sense of public purpose and a passion for people and capability development, his efforts have contributed significantly to innovations in biosecurity.

Prof Brendan Rodoni was nominated by Mark Whattam from the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

The Dr Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation is dedicated to the memory of Dr Kim Ritman







Kia Ora Merino

Dedicated merino wool producers Brendan, Susan, James and Nicole Finnigan, through their farming business Kia Ora Merino, are leaders in on-farm biosecurity, sustainable land management and animal welfare practices.

They are strong advocates for biosecurity and best practice livestock and farm management. This has supported their market access and the quality of their farming environment. Their seamless and strict biosecurity measures are incorporated into everyday farming practices. They developed Ethical, Sustainable, Profitable (ESP) wool production, which combined their BIOCHECK® Biosecurity plan with all farm welfare, quality and management processes, and procedures.

Kia Ora Merino uses a variety of biosecurity systems. The Finnigan family regularly update their biosecurity plan, use strong documentation practices and have high standards for nutrition, cleanliness, health and disease prevention. Kia Ora Merino also uses the AWEX WoolClip app, which is used in conjunction with the addition of QR/RFID tracking on each wool bale. This means tracking is possible from farm to product, adding a new level of biosecurity and provenance to the wool.

Kia Ora Merino does not have footrot, lice or drench resistance. To maintain this status, strict rules are applied, such as:

- never returning sheep to the flock if they leave the property
- well-maintained boundary fences
- fencing off rivers within property boundaries.



To reduce the risk of introducing new diseases, Kia Ora Merino has a self-replacing flock and uses artificial insemination to purchase outside genetics. The few purchased stock undergo quarantine drenching, inspection, vaccination and other measures before being quarantined in a separate paddock for 21 days.

Equipment is kept on the property to avoid contamination. Visitors must follow biosecurity signage and sign a logbook. Visitor vehicles are directed to specific parking locations and visitors use farm vehicles on the property. New footwear is also provided to shearers to stop the spread of lice between sheds.

Kia Ora Merino has also played a role in influencing and enabling other farmers to take biosecurity measures. The family uses social media and the Kia Ora Merino website to maintain transparency and communicate farm practices to customers and the public. Kia Ora Merino was one of the first farms in the local area to introduce biosecurity signage at all entry points.

Kia Ora Merino has won several awards, including the Premier's Sustainability Awards 2019 and the Lambition Awards Meat & Livestock Australia Sustainable Producer of the Year 2020. The farm is also accredited under the Fox & Lillie Rural Genesys group for Responsible Wool Standard (RWS). The family also works towards protecting remnant vegetation and is involved in the Australian Platypus Monitoring Network.

Kia Ora Merino's industry-leading biosecurity management approach helps protect Australian agricultural industries from exotic pests and diseases.

Kia Ora Merino was nominated for the award by Mon Schollick, Fox & Lillie's RWS Genesys Certification Standards Coordinator.





KW Orchards

After Weel & Heredics Northern Territory melon farm was impacted by cucumber green mottle mosaic virus in 2014, owner Kees Weel became a strong advocate for proactive biosecurity measures.

When establishing the KW Orchards (previously Belah Heights) citrus and wine grape property at Trentham Cliffs, NSW, Weel and the property's management team took necessary measures to protect it from biosecurity risks. The team developed a farm biosecurity plan by combining previous management experience and the Biosecurity Manual for Citrus Producers.

The plan is based on farm biosecurity essentials. For example:

- all propagation material is sourced from an accredited nursery, placed in a holding area, and inspected for pests and diseases before use
- external vehicles are monitored and cleaned before entering the property and deliveries are unloaded outside the orchard
- a record system is used that allows traceability of harvest
- staff and contractors are aware of their biosecurity responsibilities
- the property can only be accessed via the main gate – other access points are monitored and accessible only to authorised staff.

KW Orchards has incorporated the plan into its daily operations. The plan is based on principles of monitoring, reporting anything unusual and using pest-free propagation material. The plan also covers the careful management of people, produce, vehicles and equipment.



The management team – Lynn, Toby and Paul – regularly update their knowledge on national and international industry trends to refine their farming and biosecurity practices. The management team considers biosecurity to be a team effort and they encourage all staff to take ownership of the protocols in place.

Their passion extends to the community, with KW Orchards regularly attending and holding industry events to encourage other producers to adopt farm biosecurity plans. These events give them an opportunity to demonstrate how a strong plan can improve business operations and reduce biosecurity risks. KW Orchards also hosts national and international visitors to demonstrate their commitment to safe, pest-free citrus production.

KW Orchards is a member of Citrus Australia, the Victorian Farmers Association, Hort Innovation and Sunraysia Citrus Growers, and shares biosecurity experience and current practices freely with members of the groups.

KW Orchards was nominated for the award by Jeff Milne on behalf of Citrus Australia.





DHI Water and Environment Australia & Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (Western Australia)

A successful collaboration between DHI Water and Environment Pty Ltd Australia (DHI) and Aquatic Pest Biosecurity, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Western Australia (DPIRD) resulted in the development of Vessel Check, an innovative reporting tool that helps mitigate the risk of introducing marine non-indigenous species (NIS) through biofouling.

Vessel Check is a cloud-based decision support tool that centralises the storage of biosecurity data and management actions. It combines innovative and emerging technology to enable early and accurate assessment of biosecurity risks from vessel biofouling.

Designed for both biosecurity regulatory agencies and vessel operators, Vessel Check leverages the power of cloud computing, vessel automatic identification system data and machine learning to streamline the marine biosecurity management process for vessels and facilitate efficient sharing of information between vessel operators and Australian biosecurity regulators.



Vessel Check focuses on 2 key areas:

- rapid and consistent assessment of risks associated with a vessel's biofouling based on their biofouling management practices
- effective pre-border communication and awareness with vessel operators outlining indicative risk profiles and how their vessel's biosecurity risk can be managed appropriately.

The only vessel biosecurity decision support solution of its kind in the world, Vessel Check enables efficient pre-border engagement with the maritime industry to drive better biofouling management, which reduces biosecurity risks to Australia's and the world's marine environment. It allows different jurisdictions to collaboratively and rapidly mitigate the potential incursion of NIS, thereby decreasing the impact of NIS on Australia's precious marine environment.

Vessel Check goes beyond regulatory compliance by raising awareness and biosecurity understanding to change attitudes. It is creating widespread awareness of marine biosecurity, including best practice biofouling management. It provides vessel owners/operators and biosecurity agencies with a reliable and targeted decision support system that gives a high level of confidence to the Australian community.

A consistent and cost-effective marine biosecurity solution for all of Australia, developed in Australia, Vessel Check allows a collaborative mitigation of NIS incursions. It decreases the impact of NIS in Australia's precious marine environment and ensures ongoing access to our international markets and through our sea ports.

DHI Water and Environment Pty Ltd and Aquatic Pest Biosecurity, WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development were nominated by Richard Bell from Agriculture Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.





ENVIRONMENTAL BIOSECURITY AWARD

Dr Geoffrey Pegg

Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Over the course of his distinguished career, Dr Geoffrey Pegg from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has made a significant contribution to Australia's environmental biosecurity through his work and leadership in managing environmental disease incursions.

Dr Pegg has played a pivotal role in responding to the myrtle rust incursion, working closely with Biosecurity Queensland during the emergency response phase of the incursion and subsequently with the Queensland Myrtle Rust Program.

Since the disease was first detected in Australia in 2010, Dr Pegg has worked tirelessly to implement strategies to protect agricultural production and the environment from the impacts of myrtle rust. Working closely with stakeholders and collaborators to manage the disease once it was established, Dr Pegg provided expert advice on disease preparedness, prevention, control and containment strategies, education and awareness, training and other aspects of the response.

Dr Pegg's research and extension work into myrtle rust has been fundamental to deepening the understanding of this disease and its impacts in Australia. His work has directly contributed to prevention, preparedness and response strategies, including development of the national action plan for myrtle rust.



Highly devoted to education and out-reach, Dr Pegg brings people together to address serious biosecurity incursions. He is a dedicated team player driven by the mission to conserve Australian forests and ecosystems.

He has established several key collaborations with environmental groups to enhance awareness of environmental biosecurity. Dr Pegg has also promoted Indigenous participation in activities to improve environmental biosecurity outcomes, working in partnership with Indigenous groups to develop and deliver projects to address exotic pests that threaten the cultural and environmental biodiversity values unique to Australia. This includes myrtle rust affecting Australian Myrtaceae and the more recent decline of bunya pines in the Bunya Mountains National Park.

As an active collaborator with national and international colleagues, he has established extensive professional networks across government, industry and the community, building capacity within forest health and environmental biosecurity. In fostering and maintaining these networks and collaborations, Dr Pegg shares his own knowledge and expertise, and seeks advice and information from his colleagues and partners to address environmental biosecurity threats efficiently and effectively.

Dr Pegg was nominated by Dr Suzy Perry from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Biosecurity Queensland) and Professor Jennifer Firn, Queensland University of Technology.





Revitalising School Farms Initiative

Tasmanian Department of Education and Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre

Through the Revitalising School Farms initiative, the Tasmanian Department of Education and the Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre are working together to educate students on biosecurity.

The Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre is an established working farm and part of the Tasmanian Field Study Centres network. The visitor centre has approximately 5,000 visitors each year, who come to gain practical experience about food and fibre production. Primary and secondary school students are exposed to a range of topics and industries, including dairy, sheep, poultry, crop and soil management and water usage.

The Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre provides opportunities for students to increase their awareness of the importance of biosecurity. Students are actively engaged in learning their responsibilities in preventing the introduction and spread of pests, diseases and weeds on farms.

Students are taught about biosecurity through practical learning and demonstrations of on-farm biosecurity measures, such as displays of biosecurity signs, boot and hand washing facilities, record-keeping of visitors, and bins for disposal of food to prevent accidental consumption by animals. This practical approach to learning engages students and assists them in spreading biosecurity messages to their family and friends.



The Revitalising School Farms initiative has worked alongside the Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre to develop food and fibre curriculum resources that are aligned with the Australian Curriculum and include biosecurity topics. In collaboration with Biosecurity Tasmania, they have developed a series of online education modules for students and conducted a series of professional learning sessions for teachers throughout the state. This ongoing work allows more schools to access current and correct information on biosecurity and educate Tasmanian students on this important topic.

The Tasmanian Department of Education's Revitalising School Farms initiative and the Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre were nominated by Mandy Bowling from the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association.





COMMUNITY AWARD

Wellesley Islands Rangers

The Wellesley Islands Rangers are exemplars of the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program, playing a crucial role in protecting northern Australia from new pests, weeds and diseases from unregulated pathways.

The Wellesley Islands Rangers, located in the lower Gulf of Carpentaria in Queensland, have been keeping a Top Watch on the frontline, working with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for over 6 years.

The Ranger team is governed by the Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation, the Prescribed Body Corporate representing the rights and interests of the Traditional Owners of the Wellesley Islands, and managed by Wellesley Islands Land and Sea Social Economic Development Pty Ltd. Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation provides crucial support and mentoring, including employing a Land and Environment Projects Officer that works closely alongside the Wellesley Rangers.

The 4-ranger unit works across 22 islands known as the Wellesley Islands Group, as well as the community of Gununa on Mornington Island with a population of over 1,700.

Through their proactive management, regular and timely reporting of matters of potential biosecurity concern and accurate and responsive sample provision, the rangers have consistently demonstrated the value of people on-the-ground who know their Country and have genuine concern for protecting Australia from exotic weeds, pests and diseases.



The Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program provides rangers with skills and support to draw on conservation training and their intimate knowledge of Country to carry out a variety of activities on Australia's biosecurity frontline. These activities include animal, plant and aquatic health surveillance, insect trapping and surveillance, plant host mapping, animal health reporting and biosecurity awareness. Indigenous rangers are a critical part of Australia's early detection system for exotic pests and diseases in remote coastal areas across northern Australia. Their work helps protect Australia's \$60 billion agricultural industry as well as our priceless natural heritage.

Three examples of the high-quality work demonstrated by the Wellesley Islands Rangers and their outstanding contribution to northern Australia biosecurity are:

- **Detection of an introduced weed species** (*Solanum melanospermum*) to the region, and ongoing monitoring for further occurrences of this species and any other new weeds that may have inadvertently been introduced to Mornington Island through imported road base materials or other means.
- **Investigation of a foreign bamboo raft**, which led to ruling out an invasive plant, aquatic or animal species. The activity demonstrated Wellesley Islands Rangers' high level of biosecurity awareness, the presence they have within their community and the success of Indigenous rangers being on the frontline to identify and report suspicious activities.
- **Detection of Asian green mussel** (*Perna viridis*) during a coastal surveillance activity. Asian green mussel is a non-native mussel that is not currently established in Australian waters. The role the Wellesley Islands Rangers played in this detection and the on-ground management of ongoing aquatic surveillance was crucial to a successful operation in a remote part of Australia. This highlights the rangers' genuine belief in the importance of aquatic biosecurity.

The Wellesley Islands Rangers were nominated by Desley Darby and Darren Peck from the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.





Panama TR4 Program

Biosecurity Queensland

Biosecurity Queensland's Panama TR4 Program delivers a control and containment response to a serious banana disease, Panama disease tropical race 4 (Panama TR4). Panama TR4 was detected in Australia's largest banana production area in March 2015. The program is a Queensland Government initiative that, with cooperation of growers and industry, has implemented a world-leading response to Panama TR4.

News of Panama TR4 in Queensland sent shock waves through Australia's \$580 million per year banana industry. Far North Queensland produces 95% of Australian bananas and local growers feared the disease could destroy the industry, as it has done overseas and in the Northern Territory.

From the outset, the Panama TR4 Program worked with the Australian Banana Growers' Council and banana growers to control and contain the disease through effective biosecurity surveillance, compliance, laboratory diagnostics, communication and education. After 5 years, the disease is contained to just 5 properties in close proximity. This remarkable achievement is due to industry and government collaboration created by the Panama TR4 Program.



The Queensland response to the disease is highly regarded in those nations affected by Panama TR4. Industry and government bodies in Latin America have been working closely with the Panama TR4 Program, looking to learn from Queensland's experience as they deal with outbreaks in their region.

The Panama TR4 Program has built effective relationships, bringing stakeholders together to implement and maintain biosecurity measures to reduce risk of disease spread. The program is an example of how people can work together and combine their diverse skills and talents to protect a valuable industry against one of Australia's most serious biosecurity risks. The Panama TR4 Program's continuing efforts in Queensland since 2015 have been an outstanding contribution to plant health, and to the protection of the banana industry and associated communities from a potentially devastating disease.

Biosecurity Queensland's Panama TR4 Program was nominated by Jim Pekin from the Australian Banana Growers' Council.





COMMUNITY AWARD

Mr Brett Burdett

In August 2020 Mr Brett Burdett, a resident of Canberra, demonstrated the community's importance in managing biosecurity. Mr Burdett and his wife, Donna, noticed the presence of unusual insects in their newly purchased refrigerator and reported this to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The insects in Mr and Mrs Burdett's fridge were identified as khapra beetle, *Trogoderma granarium*. Khapra beetle is Australia's number two national priority plant pest and number one plant priority pest for grains.

Australia is currently free from khapra beetle, a plant pest that poses a major threat to Australia's grain industry and can adversely affect human health. An outbreak could cost Australia \$15.5 billion over 20 years through revenue losses from damaged grain. Additionally, it would negatively affect Australia's khapra beetle free status, which is important for access to valuable international markets.

Mr Burdett's report allowed the department to initiate immediate tracking, tracing, inspection, containment and treatment of this pest. This led to finding khapra beetle in additional locations associated with the same import of refrigerators as Mr Burdett's. Management of this interception was a large-scale effort that spanned the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales, and involved the cooperation of the community, importers, Australian businesses and state and territory governments.



Thanks to Mr Burdett's initial report and cooperation, the department has been able to effectively manage this interception and prevent a very serious plant pest from calling Australia home.

Mr Burdett's report has also added to the department's risk profile of khapra beetle, providing valuable information on how the department can better manage the risk of khapra beetle entering Australia. The department is currently implementing additional urgent actions to address the risk of khapra beetle as a result of Mr Burdett's report and subsequent interception management activities.

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility – the community plays an important role in preventing pest and disease incursions. By reporting unusual pests or diseases as soon as possible, the department has the best chance of containing the pest or disease before it spreads.

Mr Brett Burdett was nominated by Ben Rowntree, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.



FROST-FREE REFRIGERATOR-FREEZER

RATED VOLTAGE	220-240	V
RATED FREQUENCY	50	Hz
RATED CURRENT	0.8	A
RATED POWER INPUT	-	W
DEFROSTING INPUT	125	W
RATED TOTAL STORAGE VOLUME	319	L
RATED TOTAL GROSS VOLUME	339	L
CLIMATE CLASS	T	
REFRIGERANT / MASS	R600a / 50	g
INSULATION BLOWING GAS	CYCLO PENTANE	
NET WEIGHT	60.4	Kg

S/N

PNC No.

MADE IN THAILAND

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Biosecurity Commendation Certificates

The Biosecurity Commendation Certificates are a new Australian Biosecurity Award category. They recognise those who have contributed to support and promote Australia's biosecurity on a local or regional scale.

2020 Biosecurity Commendation Certificate Winners

-  **Ms Kate Elliot, Farrer Primary School.** For teaching the importance of biosecurity to students and developing a card game that raises awareness of national plant priority pests.
-  **Ms Kathryn Glanville, Namadgi School.** For teaching the importance of biosecurity to students and developing a card game that raises awareness of national plant priority pests.
-  **Dr Ed Morton, Rapiscan Solutions.** For leading the development of the algorithms for Rapiscan RTT110 3D x-ray, the world's first biosecurity risk material auto-detection unit.
-  **Mr Mervyn Buffett, Norfolk Island apiarist.** For his efforts in protecting Norfolk Islands' bees from pest and disease incursions.
-  **Ms Clare McPherson, Norfolk Island apiarist.** For her efforts in protecting Norfolk Islands' bees from pest and disease incursions.

Australian Biosecurity Awards

Do you know an individual,
group or organisation
that has contributed to
our biosecurity outcomes?

The Australian Biosecurity Awards recognise individuals, groups and organisations in industry and government that show a commitment to working collaboratively with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment to support and promote Australia's biosecurity and the systems that uphold it.

For more information,
visit awe.gov.au/aba.

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