



**Australian Timber Importers Federation Inc**  
[www.atif.asn.au](http://www.atif.asn.au)

## **Submission to Inspector-General of Biosecurity Review**

### **Assessment of the effectiveness of biosecurity measures to manage the risks of brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) entering Australia**

*20 February 2019*

#### **Purpose:**

The intention of this submission is to summarise for the above review issues previously raised with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) by the Australian Timber Importers Federation (ATIF)<sup>1</sup> related to the required treatment of Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB). These issues previously brought to the attention of DAWR were again canvassed at the BMSB forum hosted by ATIF in Melbourne in November 2018 and also attended by DAWR officials.

#### **Background:**

As previously indicated to DAWR, ATIF strongly supports an adequate risk-based phytosanitary regime to combat the prospect of BMSB being introduced into Australia. Clearly the importation of this pest would result in serious adverse impacts on agricultural production, natural biological values and human health and lifestyle.

It is also apparent that the importation of Chapter 44 timber-based products is predicted to grow and such imports will make an increasingly significant contribution to the country's housing, commercial construction and social goals.

#### **Commentary:**

ATIF is of the view that notwithstanding the need for a robust treatment regime for BMSB during the risk season from identified BMSB host countries, Chapter 44 products should be treated equitably in terms of treatment requirements and duration with other product categories with similar risk profiles.

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<sup>1</sup> ATIF is the peak national body representing the business interests of timber product importing and wholesaling companies.

ATIF also acknowledges the commendable research and operational effort of DAWR in BMSB risk assessment, treatment methodology and industry advice. That said ATIF is of the view, as was reinforced at the Melbourne forum that improved outcomes for industry, notably for timber product importers, were likely if Departmental resources for dealing with BMSB-related matters were increased.

**Recommendations:**

ATIF offers the review by the Inspector-General of Biosecurity the following recommendations for consideration prior to the commencement of the 2019 BMSB risk season:

1. Review the merits of treating Chapter 44 timber products equitably with similar risk category, and arguably more complex products, in relation to the post 1 December exemption from treatment requirements.
2. Strengthen resources within the Plant Import Operations section of DAWR to more thoroughly undertake BMSB risk assessment, treatment requirements and industry advice.
3. Simplify and consolidate documentation requirements related to BMSB treatment 'evidence' to avoid documentation duplication and improved efficiency<sup>2</sup>.
4. Strengthen the network of approved BMSB treatment providers in target countries to improve treatment efficiency and reduce treatment time delays.
5. Review advice provided to the industry ahead of the 2019 BMSB risk season via industry associations such as ATIF and the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia Inc.

**Further information:**

ATIF is presently seeking company members to provide information related to the details of timber products processed/manufactured in BMSB risk countries that are able to be packed into a sealed container within five days of manufacture as follows:

1. HS code of product
2. Brief product description, including heat/kiln drying treatment
3. Country of manufacture

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<sup>2</sup> It is understood that the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia Inc. (CBFCA) will be submitting more detailed recommendations in relation to this issue

4. Confirmation that the finished product is or could be packed into a sealed container within five days of manufacture.

This information is not expected to be provided by companies and collated by ATIF before the end of March 2019. It will then be provided the Inspector-General of Biosecurity via DAWR.

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