

Question on Notice

No. 1152

Asked on 6 September 2018

MS C LUI ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise on the progress of the Asian green mussel surveillance plan?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Activities under the Asian Green Mussel Surveillance Plan have been carried out by Biosecurity Queensland in partnership with key stakeholders between June 2017 and June 2018.

The 12-month surveillance plan details a number of surveillance methods that could be utilised to define the extent of any incursion or provide evidence to demonstrate proof of freedom.

Over the 12-month surveillance period, surveillance methods utilised included: plankton tows, settlement plate inspections, low-tide inspection of fixed in-water infrastructure, vessel inspections, dive inspection, underwater remotely operated vehicle inspection, shoreline surveys and passive surveillance during maintenance activities on floating infrastructure such as mooring buoys.

To date, no further evidence of Asian Green Mussel has been detected through any of these surveillance methods including molecular diagnostic analysis for environmental DNA from plankton tow and settlement plate samples.

The final settlement plates collected from the Port of Weipa in late May 2018 and pylon scrape samples collected from the dive inspection of the Chith export facility pylons in June 2018 are yet to be analysed. Samples are currently in transit from Cairns to the Western Australia Aquatic Biosecurity Laboratories for molecular analysis.

Once analysis of the final samples is complete, and if all samples are negative for Asian Green Mussel, it is expected that a recommendation will be made by the Consultative Committee on Introduced Marine Pest Emergencies to stand down from the response and transition back to business as usual.

Biosecurity Queensland will continue to support ongoing surveillance as part of business as usual with North Queensland Bulk Ports and Rio Tinto continuing settlement plate monitoring at their port facilities. Awareness material will also continue to be provided to the local community as a reminder to remain vigilant for any suspect marine pests.