



Wildlife Health Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 9 June 2023

Launch of WILDDeST – An essential decision support tool for wildlife and One Health

Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) has launched the Australian Wildlife Health Incident Decision Support Tool (WILDDeST), designed for use by Australian government agencies to facilitate structured, standardised, and transparent decision-making for investigation and management of wildlife health incidents.

“The early stages of a wildlife disease incident are the most critical to an effective response. There is a need to act quickly, which may require decisions to be taken based on incomplete information. WILDDeST helps to ensure that the appropriate framework and processes are in place to rapidly develop a shared situational awareness when an incident is first detected and enable transparent and robust decision making for identified hazards,” said Dr Rupert Woods, WHA’s CEO.

“Management of wildlife health incidents often present a true One Health challenge, with the natural interplay between human, animal and ecosystem health. WILDDeST will be invaluable in wildlife health incidents where multiple agencies may have legislated responsibilities and inter-agency or inter-jurisdictional coordination is required.

“WILDDeST users respond to a series of questions through an input worksheet, and the tool produces a gap analysis, additional information summary and an overall incident category. These outputs aim to capture all the essential elements in a simplified form using standardised methodology to reach a proposed decision.”

WHA has worked with global epidemiology consultants Ausvet and key stakeholders to develop and validate WILDDeST, building on an initial concept design developed by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

WILDDeST has been developed with funding from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry’s One Health Surveillance Initiative, part of the Australian Government’s investment in preventing, detecting, and mitigating the impacts of emerging animal diseases, including those with pandemic potential.

Australia’s Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Mark Schipp said, “Recognising the connection between people, animals, and the environment is a crucial element of protecting our communities, wildlife and industries. WILDDeST is an excellent achievement of the One Health Surveillance Initiative and I look forward to seeing the tool used by government agencies throughout the country.”



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WILDDeST has been rolled out to state and territory jurisdictions following the delivery of training to wildlife coordinators and environmental representatives.

Note: Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) is the coordinating body for wildlife health in Australia. We work to protect and enhance the natural environment. We link, inform and support people and organisations who work with or have an interest in wildlife health and provide leadership, coordination, technical advice, facilitation, communications, and professional support.