



## NPBDN residentials – 2023 applications finalised

Applications for the 2023 NPBDN residentials were open for approximately six weeks (closed 23 June 2023). A total of six residential applications were accepted after review by the Network Implementation Working Group (NIWG).

This year's residentials address diagnostics capabilities in detecting various invertebrate, bacterial, and fungal pathogens in a range of plant industries. Applicants will learn a range of diagnostic approaches and techniques, including CRISPR-based diagnostics and MALDI-TOF. Several applicants will also advance the development and/or validation of National Diagnostic Protocols ([NDPs](#)) of National Priority Plant Pests (NPPP) through their residential visits.

By visiting another organisation, interstate or internationally, the NPBDN residential program supports plant health diagnosticians in improving their capabilities to detect [NPPPs](#), pests/pathogens on the priority list of [exotic environmental pests and diseases](#), or [High Priority Pests](#) of relevant plant industries.

Funding for Diagnostic Residentials is provided by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and is open to all NPBDN members. NB: Commonwealth DAFF members need to discuss with their line manager.

[2023 Australian Entomological Society  
Photographic competition](#)

The Australian Entomological Society is running a [Photographic Competition](#) until 12 October 2023. Photos entered in the competition will be displayed and judged at the 2023 Australian Entomological Society 54th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference, held 12 – 15 November 2023 at the University of Western Australia, Albany Campus.

Visit the link below for more information on the competition and how to enter.

[Learn more](#)



### **Have your say: APPD survey closes 28 August 2023**

Plant Health Australia (PHA) are running a user experience [survey](#) for Australian Plant Pest Database (APPD) until Monday 28 August 2023.

The results of the quick six-question survey will help PHA understand why people are accessing the APPD and the ease at which they can perform their intended tasks.

The implementation of this survey will ensure stakeholders and users play active roles in the development of the APPD system and to guide PHA to better support their requirements. PHA will present the findings of this survey to the APPD Steering Committee once available.

APPD provides rapid access to over 1.4 million records of vouchered specimens held in Australian reference collections. It is an important tool used to inform decision making processes during plant pest incursions, biosecurity import risk assessments, market access, and to enhance Australia's diagnostic capability.

Following on from the National Biosecurity Committee agreement (NBC37; September 2022) to support the APPD for five years under a national cost-shared model, PHA are committed to ensuring the APPD continues to provide access to vouchered specimens.

[Take the survey](#)

## PhD scholarship opportunities

Advertisements for four exciting PhD opportunities based at universities in New South Wales, Queensland, or Victoria are up on the NPBDN website.

Applications for two PhD scholarships at The Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment (HIE), Western Sydney University are open until **31 August 2023**. These projects aim to contribute towards improving production of vegetable crops and trialling technologies for early detection of common bacterial diseases. Visit the [NPBDN website](#) for more information on these projects.

A PhD project based at The University of Queensland will investigate the biology and epidemiology of foliar diseases of macadamia, including the effects of climate change and anomalous weather trends on disease prevalence and impact. For more information, visit the [NPBDN website](#).

An industry-linked PhD project based at AgriBio, La Trobe University, Melbourne will focus on viruses associated with Agaricus mushrooms in Australia, with the aim of providing the mushroom industry and growers with an understanding of both local and exotic disease threats. For more information on this opportunity visit the [NPBDN website](#).



## Call for abstracts - Biosystematics 2023

The [Biosystematics 2023 Conference](#) will be held 26 – 30 November 2023 both online and in-person at the Australian National University, Canberra. The theme of the conference is “Celebrating the past | Planning the future” and has several symposia which may be relevant to NPBDN members, including:

- Taxonomy in support of conservation and biosecurity
- Exploring the dark taxa: linking DNA sequences to species
- Contributions of citizen science to taxonomy and systematics
- Communicating taxonomy and systematics beyond the scientific community

Abstract submissions for the conference close **22 September 2023 (5.00 pm)**.

This is a joint conference of the Australian Biological Resources Study, Australasian Mycological Society, Australasian Systematic Botany Society, and Society of Australian Systematic Biologists.

For more information and to register, visit the conference website via the link below.

[Learn more](#)



## Welcome Bianca - Networks Coordinator

[Bianca Rodrigues Jardim](#) joined Plant Health Australia at the end of June 2023 as the Networks Coordinator.

Bianca's postgraduate research has focused on the genomics of organisms involved in insect-vectored plant and animal pathogens. Most recently, she completed a PhD titled 'A Genomics Approach to Investigate Phytoplasma Taxonomy and their Diversity in Australia' at La Trobe University, Melbourne. This work has improved the understanding of phytoplasmas in vegetable growing areas of Australia, providing baseline taxonomic and distribution data and an ability to differentiate Australian phytoplasmas from exotic species. Bianca also co-founded the [PBRI Plant Health Student Network](#) during her PhD.

Her role as the Networks Coordinator involves supporting the advancement of plant pest surveillance and diagnostic capacities and capabilities of NPBDN and PSNAP members by coordinating workshops that support continual professional development and provide networking opportunities. She is also involved in promoting the NPBDN and PSNAP networks and their websites to foster an increase in their membership and linkages with other surveillance and diagnostics networks domestically and internationally. Projects managed by Bianca aim to strengthen partnerships and enhance integration of technologies and approaches in plant biosecurity.

For any NPBDN matters, information, or queries, Bianca can be contacted at: [brodriguesjardim@phau.com.au](mailto:brodriguesjardim@phau.com.au) or [npbdn@phau.com.au](mailto:npbdn@phau.com.au).



## Welcome Rachel Mann – Manager, Diagnostics

Rachel Mann joined Plant Health Australia at the end of July 2023 as the Manager, Diagnostics.

Rachel brings over 15 years of experience in plant pathology, biosecurity and diagnostics to the role. Rachel has worked in senior advisory, diagnostic and research roles at Agriculture Victoria. The national and international research that Rachel has collaborated on has focused on pathogens of biosecurity significance (e.g. *Xylella fastidiosa*, *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* (CLso) and *Erwinia amylovora*) and has influenced Australian and global diagnostic protocols, sampling strategies and surveillance.

Her role as the Manager, Diagnostics involves working collaboratively with industry, government and the NPBDN and PSNAP networks to support Australia's ability to identify and detect biosecurity threats.

Rachel can be contacted at: [rmann@phau.com.au](mailto:rmann@phau.com.au).

## NPBDN updates – coming soon!

The Network Implementation Working Group (NIWG) is currently planning some exciting events for National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN) members over the next nine months. These include a Virtual ADSW2023 later

this year and face-to-face Annual Diagnostic Workshop in 2024.

The NPBDN website has also undergone a refresh with the aim of improving navigation and visual appeal of the site. This refresh was led by Plant Health Australia with input from the Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD), NIWG, and user feedback.

Keep an eye out on [Tendrils](#), the refreshed NPBDN website, and future NPBDN newsletters for more information on these exciting events and updates!

[Visit the website](#)

## Career Profile



This month we shine the light on Elizabeth Wilson, Quarantine Senior Technician at Sugar Research Australia LTD, based in Indooroopilly QLD. Elizabeth has over 30 years of experience working on projects in both human and plant science, with an emphasis on molecular research and diagnostics.

[Read more](#)

## About the Network

The National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Professional Development and Protocols Projects are coordinated and

delivered by Plant Health Australia and are funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The objectives of the Projects are to enhance and strengthen Australia's diagnostic and surveillance capacity and capability to identify priority plant pests that impact on plant industries, environment and the community.

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