

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Senate Estimates DAFF
Sent: Friday, 1 November 2024 4:02 PM
To: DLO Collins; **s. 47E(d)** @education.gov.au; **s. 47E(d)** @mo.regional.gov.au; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; Preece, Jason; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**
Cc: **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**; Senate Estimates DAFF; **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**
Subject: Updated KIBs - 1 November [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: PPEBD02 - Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus.pdf; **s. 33(a)(iii)**
 APD06 - National Statement on First Nations in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.pdf; APD03 - Competition Issues in the Chicken Meat Industry.pdf; APD04 - Red Wine Oversupply.pdf; KIB E-Pack - 1 November.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

OFFICIAL

Good Afternoon,

Please find attached updated KIB documents for:

Outcome 1

APD03 – Competition Issues in the Chicken Meat Industry

APD04 – Red Wine Oversupply

APD06 – National Statement on First Nations in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Outcome 2

PPEBD02 - Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus

s. 33(a)(iii)

Electronic pack has been updated to reflect above and is attached.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Cheers

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**

Assistant Director

Governance Branch

Strategy, Performance and Engagement Division

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

P: **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)** M: **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)**E: **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)****OFFICIAL**

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

AGVRURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – NOVEMBER 2024

CORPORATE		
Finance and Investment Division (FID)		
FID01	Departmental Financial Position	SB24-000129
FID02	Departmental Cost Recovery	SB24-000130
FID03	Consultants	SB24-000131
FID04	Grants	SB24-000132
FID05	Superannuation – Over and Under Pay	SB24-000133
FID06	Levies	SB24-000134
Transformation Taskforce		
TT01	Integrated Transformation Project	SB24-000135
Legal Division (LD)		
LD01	Management of FOI Requests to the Department and Minister	SB24-000127
LD02	Litigation	SB24-000128
Strategy Performance and Engagement Division (SPED)		
SPED01	ANAO Annual Performance Statements Audits	SB24-000136
SPED02	Status of Election Commitments	SB24-000137
SPED03	Gender Diversity on Boards	SB24-000138
SPED04	Corporate Plan and Statement of Strategic Intent	SB24-000139
SPED05	Emergency Preparedness – Recommendations and Capability Initiatives	SB24-000140
People, Property and Security Division (PPSD)		
PPSD01	SES Cap and Recruitment	SB24-000141
PPSD02	Department Staffing Numbers and Contractors	SB24-000142

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

OUTCOME 1: MORE SUSTAINABLE, PRODUCTIVE, INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE AND PROFITABLE AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND FIBRE INDUSTRIES THROUGH POLICIES AND INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE BETTER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, INNOVATION, SELF-RELIANCE AND IMPROVED ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.		
AGVET Chemicals, Fisheries, Forestry Division (ACFFD)		
ACFFD01	APVMA Reform	SB24-000143
ACFFD02	Aquaculture in Macquarie Harbour and Maugean Skate	SB24-000144
ACFFD03	Forestry Programs	SB24-000145
Agricultural Policy Division (APD)		
APD01	Agricultural Workforce	SB24-000146
APD02	Competition	SB24-000147
APD03	Competition Issues in the Chicken Meat Industry	SB24-000148
APD04	Red Wine Oversupply	SB24-000149
APD05	Plant-based Labelling Election Commitment	SB24-000150
APD06	National Statement on First Nations in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	SB24-000151
APD07	National Farmers Federation National Farmer Priorities Survey	SB24-000152
Farm Resilience Division (FRD)		
FRD01	Drought including Future Drought Fund	SB24-000153
Sustainability, Climate and Strategy Division (SCSD)		
SCSD01	Natural Heritage Trust	SB24-000154
SCSD02	Agriculture and Land Sector Plan	SB24-000155
SCSD03	Emissions Reduction Budget Measures	SB24-000156
SCSD04	Climate-Related Financial Disclosures	SB24-000165
SCSD05	Land Use Change and Competition	SB24-000166
Trade and International Division (TID)		
s. 33(a)(iii)		
TID02	Trade - European Union Deforestation Regulation	SB24-000162
TID03	Export statistics and market access achievements	SB24-000176
s. 33(a)(iii)		

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

OUTCOME 2: SAFEGUARD AUSTRALIA'S ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH STATUS TO MAINTAIN OVERSEAS MARKETS AND PROTECT THE ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT FROM THE IMPACT OF EXOTIC PESTS AND DISEASES, THROUGH RISK ASSESSMENT, INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND FIBRE INDUSTRIES.		
Biosecurity Animal Division (BAD)		
BAD01	High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza	SB24-000167
BAD02	Salmon Imports	SB24-000178
Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division (BSRD)		
BSRD01	National Biosecurity Strategy	SB24-000168
BSRD02	Biosecurity Sustainable Funding	SB24-000169
BSRD03	Biosecurity Key Achievements	SB24-000173
BSRD04	Biosecurity Protection Levy	SB24-000174
Biosecurity Operations Division (BOD)		
BOD01	Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) Charge	SB24-000170
Biosecurity Plant and Science Services Division (BPSSD)		
BPSSD01	Plant Trade and Market Access Matters	SB24-000171
Exports and Veterinary Services Division (EVSD)		
s. 33(a)(iii)		
Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity Division (PPEBD)		
PPEBD01	National Fire Ant Eradication Program	SB24-000172
PPEBD02	Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus	SB24-000175
Plant and Live Animal Exports, Welfare and Regulation Division (PLAEWR)		
PLAEWR01	Australian Animal Welfare Strategy	SB24-000163
PLAEWR02	Live Sheep Phase Out	SB24-000164
PORTFOLIO AGENCY OVERVIEWS (PA)		
PA01	Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)	SB24-000157
PA02	Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)	SB24-000158

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Finance and Investment Division

FID01**DEPARTMENTAL FINANCIAL POSITION****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The department faced a tight financial situation in 2022–23 and managed its budget accordingly.
- Since commencing in the role, the Secretary's main financial focus for 2023–24 was on the financial sustainability of the department.
- The department has recorded a surplus in the 2023–24 financial year, with a departmental operating surplus of \$65.7 million (net cash appropriation arrangements).
- Excluding the surplus attributable to large ICT projects, the department reported an underspend of 2% against budget in 2023-24.
- The 2024–25 Budget provided the department with an additional \$789.0 million in funding over 8 years.
- The department has commenced the 2024–25 in a strong financial position, with expected revenue to meet planned expenditure through the financial year, and sufficient cash reserves providing a sustainable financial position.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES**2023-24 Financial Result**

- In 2023–24, the department came out of a period of cost control measures. The operating surplus of \$65.7 million was mainly due to:
 - \$35.3 million in underspends related to the timing of expenditure for large ICT programs of work in the Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing System (\$17.9m) and Taking Farmers to Market program (\$17.4m). The department will likely seek spend this funding next financial year.
 - underspends in staffing costs due to a tight employment market, and reduced contractor engagements reflecting the APS Strategic Commission Framework's intent to build capability within the APS.

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- At 30 June 2024 the cash balance held by the department was \$290.8 million, including departmental operating appropriation receivable of \$242.9 million. This provides the department with the ability to pay its debts when they fall due.

2024-25 Budget

- The 2024–25 Budget delivered \$789.0 million over 8 years to help farmers and producers adapt to the impacts of climate change, build their resilience and maintain Australia’s position as a trusted and reliable trading partner. This was comprised of:
 - Departmental funding is \$136.8 million over 8 years
 - Administered funding is \$618.8 million over 8 years
 - Other Agencies is \$33.4 million over 8 years (AFMA, Austrade, DCCEEW)
- Approved 2024-25 Budget measures include:
 - \$63.8 million over ten years from 2024–25 (and \$0.9 million per year ongoing) to support initial emission reduction efforts in the agriculture and land sectors as part of Australia’s transition to net zero by 2050.
 - \$519.1 million over eight years from 2024–25 from the Future Drought Fund for initiatives that provide improved support to farmers and communities to manage drought and adapt to climate change. With further \$42.2 million provided to the Department over four years from 2024–25 to support the delivery of the Future Drought Fund initiatives.
 - \$107.0 million over five years from 2024–25 for a suite of actions for sheep producers and the supply chain, market development, sheep welfare, implementation and engagement to support an orderly phase out of live sheep exports by sea, so that individuals, supply chain businesses and communities are well positioned and ready when the trade ends.
 - \$16.9 million over 4 years for the fit out of border processing equipment and other facilities at Western Sydney International Airport.
 - \$3.6 million over 2 years (part of \$29.4 million cross portfolio measure led by DFAT) to establish a simplified trade system unit to continue trade simplification coordination and deliver a Digital Trade Accelerator program to improve cross-border trade by enhancing border and biosecurity risk assessments and government to business trade data sharing.
 - \$13.9 million over four years from 2024–25 (and \$3.4 million per year ongoing) to maintain drought policy capability in the Department to support Australia’s readiness to respond to drought events.
 - \$3.4 million over four years from 2024–25 to develop a national Timber Fibre Strategy and review the National Forestry Policy Statement in collaboration with the states and territories.

- \$1.5 million over two years from 2023–24 to improve existing arrangements for the accurate and clear labelling of plant-based alternative protein products.
- \$1.0 million over two years from 2024–25 for a skilled agricultural work liaison pilot to attract graduates to work in agriculture.
- \$0.5 million over two years from 2024–25 to continue the AgCAREERSTART pilot program for two cohort years to encourage young people to consider a career in agriculture.
- \$0.4 million over three years from 2024–25 for Farmsafe Australia to extend the National Farm Safety Week campaign.

BACKGROUND

2023-24 Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO)

- In the 2023-24 MYEFO update the Government provided the department with a further \$231.1 million in departmental appropriation over the forward estimates.
- The 2023-24 Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) measures addressed immediate financial pressures faced by the Department in 2022-23 in relation to export cost recovery arrangements.
- These measures, combined with the Biosecurity Sustainable Funding package announced in the 2023-24 Budget, assisted in putting the department in a strong financial position.
- Approved MYEFO measures included:
 - \$95.5 million over three years from 2023-24 for DAFF to sustain export regulatory functions, including through capability improvements, assurance and verification to meet trading partner requirements and responding to exporter demand
 - \$75.7 million over three years from 2023-24 to enable border services at Western Sydney Airport
 - \$2.6 million in 2023–24 to establish a taskforce to identify options to reform APVMA informed by the Rapid Evaluation
 - \$4.3 million to support the ongoing resumption of live cattle trade with Indonesia and Malaysia and mitigate the risk of further trade suspensions.
 - \$21.0 million over three years from 2024–25 (and \$7.2 million per year ongoing) to maintain biosecurity clearance activities in international mail gateway facilities
 - \$11.6 million over four years from 2023–24 to continue development and delivery of a simplified trade system that will simplify cross-border trade
 - \$9.7 million over four years from 2023–24 (and \$2.8 million per year ongoing) for the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences to deliver forestry data analysis to support industry development

- \$4.9 million over two years from 2023–24 to develop the Agriculture and Land Sectoral Plan to address key issues for agriculture as part of the whole-of-economy transition to net zero emissions
- \$3.2 million in 2023–24 to continue to deliver Future Drought Fund programs and meet associated legislative requirements
- \$2.8 million over four years to implement changes to eligibility, compliance and case management for the Farm Household Allowance program.

2022-23 Financial Result

- The department faced a tight financial situation in 2022–23 and managed its budget accordingly.
- The department recorded a surplus of \$2.5 million in 2022–23 financial year (excluding unfunded depreciation/amortisation expenses related to normal and right-of-use assets and adding back principal repayments on unfunded leases).
- The department received \$127 million in supplementation funding in June 2023 through the Portfolio Additional Estimates (Appropriation Bill 3) to meet a funding shortfall predominantly related to biosecurity and exports regulatory activities, where existing fees and charges had not recovered the cost of regulatory activity.
- The department had limited cash reserves available to manage the pressures through an operating loss.
- The supplementation funding ensured that the department was able to meet its legislative and regulatory obligations, and financial commitments as they fell due, while continuing to deliver its core functions and ensured that the department did not incur an operating loss or a significant reduction in its cash position due to funding cost recovered activities.

Drivers of financial pressures in 2022-23

- The department's role and budget is complex compared to many public sector organisations.
- Around two thirds of the department works on operational matters, primarily biosecurity functions at the border. This has required surge resources in response to major biosecurity threats and trade disruptions, while maintaining core policy and administration capability.
- Funding comes from a mixture of demand-driven, cost-recovered arrangements (which can be volatile and have been particularly so through COVID), and from the Federal Budget.
- Over recent years, the cost of delivering essential services and policy and program responsibilities outstripped the revenue coming into the department. The department also incurred additional costs associated with the Machinery of Government changes, particularly in ICT and other corporate services which had a financial impact.

- The department delivers our regulatory activities efficiently, moving functions and limited resources to immediate priorities. In line with government charging policy, where possible we recover the cost of these regulatory activities from individuals and businesses who use and benefit from them.
- Fees and charges for cost-recovered services had not been regularly adjusted in line with what it actually costs to deliver these services. Most biosecurity and import fees and charges had not been updated since 2015. This has historically been addressed by short term measures.
- The agricultural exports arrangements were two years into a three-year stepped increase in charging to achieve full cost recovery. The final increase in prices went into effect on 1 July 2023. However, the model was not keeping pace with the cost of delivering export services and the inflationary pressures of supplier cost increases. Further, the existing framework for cost recovery was not responsive to increasing changes and complexity in the global agricultural trade environment.
- New prices across the biosecurity cost recovery arrangement commenced on 1 July 2023, concluding a two-year comprehensive review of biosecurity effort, fees and charges. The new prices were modelled on updated drivers and costs to better reflect departmental effort to deliver biosecurity regulatory activities.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Finance and Investment Division

FID02**DEPARTMENTAL COST RECOVERY****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The department continues to ensure its cost recovery practices are fit-for purpose and remain efficient and effective, while regularly engaging with and reporting to industry on cost recovery matters.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Cost recovered charges are underpinned by government authority and supporting legislation.
- In line with Australian government charging policies, the department recovers the cost of many of the regulatory functions we perform for industry. The largest arrangements include biosecurity (import) and agricultural exports activities.
- A Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) for each arrangement describes the regulatory charging settings and guides the department's engagement with stakeholders. The CRIS also reports on financial matters for each arrangement.
- The department sets prices consistent with the objective of 'efficient cost' - the minimum cost necessary to provide the activity.
- The full year financial result of each arrangement is impacted by demand for service and will not be known until the end of the financial year when the activity-based costing allocation process is run.
- The department aims to minimise any deficit or surplus in an arrangement, noting the department is not permitted to increase fees to recover prior year deficits.
- The department regularly engages with regulated industries, generally through consultative committees, to monitor and report on performance, explain revenue, expenses and cost allocation, and discuss reform impacts on arrangements.
- The department is embedding an annual review cycle to ensure cost recovery settings remain financially sustainable and efficient.
 - Biosecurity fees and charges increased by 4.1% commencing 1 July 2024, in accordance with indexation clauses added to the biosecurity regulations in 2023.

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- Agricultural export fees and charges remain at legislated prices for 2024-25 pending a detailed review by the department.
- CRIS documents have been published on the department's website for 2024-25.

Biosecurity Arrangement

As at 30 June 2024, the audited financial results were as follows:

- Biosecurity Cost Recovery Arrangement finished the year with a surplus position of \$13.9 million, compared to a \$35.6 million deficit in 2022-23.
- The main impacts on the arrangement related to slower than expected recruitment of frontline staff and higher volumes of fee-for-service activities.

Export Arrangement

- The combined result for the Export Cost Recovery Arrangements is a deficit of \$25.6 million, an increase from the \$5.3 million deficit in 2022-23.
- The overspend is primarily driven by prices not keeping pace with expenditure. This shortfall will be funded from supplementation received by the department in the 2023-24 MYEFO. Work on addressing this issue is being undertaken by the Sustainable Trade Funding Taskforce.

BACKGROUND

- Deficits in cost recovery arrangements is a historical and structural issue for the department.
- In exports, losses go back to 2012 in some cases. Biosecurity arrangements have been in deficit for 3 of the past 4 financial years.
 - The Government's decision to increase fees and charges for the biosecurity arrangement in both 2023-24 and 2024-25 are important steps towards sustainable funding for import regulatory activities.
 - While export arrangements have had gradual increases to fees and charges since 2020-21, this has not kept pace with the full cost for regulatory activity, with losses continuing for most arrangements.
 - Without supplementation, deficits in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 would have been \$26.4 million, \$14.7 million, \$15.8 million and \$25.6 million, respectively.
 - The table below shows recent historical losses and accumulated results for cost recovery.

Table 1: Accumulated results for cost recovery by arrangement and stream

Arrangement	Movement 2018-19	Movement 2019-20	Movement 2020-21	Movement 2021-22	Movement 2022-23	Movement 2023-24
Meat	(3.192)	(2.529)	(0.000)	0.000	(4.043)	(0.000)
Seafood and Egg	0.330	(0.000)	0.000	0.000	(0.014)	(0.000)
Dairy	(0.890)	(1.020)	(0.000)	0.000	(0.136)	0.000
Non-prescribed goods	(0.055)	(0.925)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.680)	(0.000)
Export Food Surplus/Deficit	(3.806)	(4.475)	(0.000)	0.000	(4.873)	(0.000)
Grain	(2.697)	(2.738)	(0.000)	1.570	3.085	2.037
Horticulture	(1.496)	(2.468)	(0.000)	0.000	(0.081)	0.765
Export Plants Surplus/Deficit	(4.193)	(5.206)	(0.000)	1.570	3.005	2.802
Live Animal Exports Surplus/Deficit	(5.749)	(12.194)	0.000	(0.000)	(3.447)	(0.000)
Exports Accumulated Results	(13.749)	(21.875)	(0.000)	1.570	(5.315)	2.802
Import clearance	11.364	(11.330)	12.982	(12.161)	(25.646)	16.082
Seaports	2.459	2.093	(0.605)	(7.224)	(7.953)	(0.078)
Post Entry Animal Quarantine (Non-Horse)	0.917	(0.480)	(2.007)	(0.738)	2.470	2.749
Post Entry Animal Quarantine (Horses)	0.065	0.238	(0.105)	0.937	(0.587)	0.025
Post Entry Animal Quarantine (Avian)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(3.209)	(4.037)
Post Entry Plant Quarantine	(1.316)	(1.348)	(0.678)	(0.952)	(0.714)	(0.923)
Biosecurity Accumulated Results	13.488	(10.827)	9.587	(20.139)	(35.639)	13.818

- In the 2023-24 MYEFO budget update, the department was provided \$3.7 million over 3 years (across 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26) for the development of an ongoing sustainable export funding model. This will ensure the department remains appropriately resourced to carry out its agricultural trade and exports functions into the future.
- The department also received funding of \$91.8 million over 2 years (2023-24 and 2024-25) through the budget measure “Securing the future of agricultural trade” covering deficits arising from the export cost recovery arrangements while new models are developed.

National Residue Survey

The National Residue Survey (NRS) is departmental revenue for the cost of managing the risk of chemical residues and environmental contaminants in Australian animal and plant products. Funds are held in the NRS special account. The cash balance of the special account on 30 June 2024 was \$2.9 million.

The actual revenue in 2023-24 was \$13.5 million and expenses was \$13.3 million, a net movement of \$0.3 million.

The forecast for revenue in 2024-25 is expected to be \$13.1 million and expenses \$12.3 million, a net movement of \$0.8 million.

Agricultural Commodity Levies

The department collects, administers and disburses agricultural levies and charges on behalf of Australia’s primary industries. The department charges research and development corporations annually, to perform these activities. Actual costs are reconciled at year end and no reserve or cash balance is maintained for this service.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Finance and Investment Division

FID03**CONSULTANTS****RECOMMENDED RESPONSES**

- The department has reported 14 new consultancies worth \$2.5 million on AusTender between 1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024.
- The department has spent \$938,405 (GST inclusive) on consultants between 1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024.
- The top 10 consultancy contracts with the highest expenditure between 1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024 are as follows:

Supplier	Description	Expenditure
Callida Pty Ltd	Validation exercise - Organisation Design: Strong Corporate Centre.	\$194,370.00
KPMG	Financial Statement Accounting Support Consultancy Services.	\$176,660.00
Charterpoint Pty Ltd	Corporate Advisory Services to review policies and frameworks on financial and budget management.	\$131,609.28
TTF KM Unit Trust	Strategic Change and Organisation Design Partner.	\$126,811.19
Callida Pty Ltd	Analysis services for the international comparison for trading partners.	\$121,810.80
Whereto Research Based Consulting Pty Ltd	Qualitative research and engagement.	\$95,000.00
1 and One Pty Ltd	Design and deliver the bi-annual Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Round Table 2024.	\$88,000.00
Proximity Advisory Services Pty Ltd	Harm Analysis and Regulatory Sanctions Consultancy.	\$77,773.85
1 and One Pty Ltd	Develop an over-arching co-design strategy for renewing the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS).	\$76,350.00
Chartertech Pty Ltd	Corporate Management Advisory Services for system configuration requirements.	\$66,044.00

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- The department uses consultants judiciously where there is a need for independent information or professional skills particularly relating to audit services, financial services and biosecurity services including research into outbreak of diseases within the agricultural industry.
- Consultants are typically engaged to:
 - investigate or diagnose a defined issue or problem.
 - carry out defined reviews or evaluations.
 - provide independent advice, information, or creative solutions to assist in the department's decision-making.
- Consultancy expenditure across the department has reduced by approximately \$20.03m since the strategic delivery partner model used by the former Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) ceased on 30 April 2023.
- When seeking consulting services, the department complies with the Commonwealth *Procurement Rules and Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.
- The department complies with its responsibilities to ensure any procurement undertaken by the department represents the best value for money.
- All require the approval of a First Assistant Secretary or above and is dependent on delegation limits.
- The department publishes the top 5 organisations that provided consultancy services in the Annual Report.
- DAFF awarded one consultancy contract with the Big 4 between 1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024 with EY (Ernst & Young), for Virtual Energy Network (VEN) consultancy services on 9 September 2024 for \$208,438.16 GST Inclusive.

Secretary Fennessy

- Prior to his appointment with the department, Secretary Fennessy held senior roles with the consultancy firm EY (formerly Ernst & Young) from August 2017 to July 2020.
- To avoid any perceptions of a conflict of interest regarding contractual arrangements entered into with EY, the department's Procurement Policy requires probity advice be given on any contractual arrangements with the firm.
- The department previously entered into a contract with EY Digital for research and discovery services to support the Taking Farmers to Market program on 3 June 2024 for \$415,360 GST Inclusive.

Consultancy contracts

- DAFF has **entered into** the following consultancy contracts valued at \$10,000 or more as reported on AusTender:

TOTAL	1 Jul 2024 – 30 Sep 2024 ¹	2023-24 ²	2022–23 ³
Number of Contracts	14	88	42
Value (GST incl)	\$2.5m	\$8.23m	\$10.34m

Consultancy contracts by period are provided in Attachments A to C.

Consultancy expenditure

- DAFF's consultancy **expenditure** (GST incl) was:

1 Jul 2024 – 30 Sep 2024 ⁴	2023-2024 ⁵	2022–23 ⁶
\$938,404	\$7.36m	\$27.49m

Top 5 Organisations - Consultancy Contract Expenditure 2023 – 2024 Annual Report

Organisations receiving a share of reportable consultancy contract expenditure 2023-24	Expenditure (GST incl)	Description of Services (Not detailed in Annual Report)
1 and One Pty Ltd	\$903,605	1 and One provided specialist communication and general consultancy services.
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	\$805,389	CSIRO is a government owned scientific research body. The organisation's roles include conducting a range of scientific research services.
Proximity Advisory Services Pty Ltd	\$533,072	Proximity provided general consultancy services to the department.
TTF KM Unit Trust	\$446,104	TTF KM provided research and consultancy services to the department.
Callida Pty Ltd	\$438,781	Callida provided general consultancy services to the department.

Big 4 Consultancy and other Contracts

- For the 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 period, there has been one contract entered into with the Big 4. The department entered into a contract with EY for Virtual Energy Network (VEN) consultancy services on 9 September 2024 for \$208,438.16 GST Inclusive.
- For the 2023-24 financial year, the department entered into six contracts with the Big 4 valued \$2.48 million for a range of services including an essential 8 awareness campaign, fringe benefit taxation preparation and temporary personnel.
- There are no instances of offers or acceptance of in-kind or pro-bono services in the last 5 years from KPMG, PwC, EY or Deloitte declared on the Department's official compliance reporting system. Officials are required to declare acceptance of gifts and benefits that are valued at over \$50 under the Department's Gifts and Benefits Policy in the Department's official compliance reporting system.
- A breakdown of Big 4 contracts by period are provided in Attachments D and E.

BACKGROUND

- The department provides tools, guidance material and advice to support the procurement processes.
- DAFF has strengthened its Contract Management Framework with changes to policy, aligning to DoF Contract Management Guidelines, providing guidance and resources enabling effective management & performance of contracts. It includes supplementary checklists for managing Probity, Security, Integrity and Fraud, movement/exiting personnel, focusing effort on managing risk throughout the contract to completion.
- AusTender data will vary depending on when a report has been run, since contracts are updated on AusTender daily and existing contracts may be varied in length of time and/or value.

SOURCES

1. AusTender (www.tenders.gov.au) - as at 24 October 2024 (subject to change)
2. AusTender (www.tenders.gov.au) - as at 26 September 2024
3. AusTender (www.tenders.gov.au) - as at 26 September 2023
4. Financial Accounting and Assets Team - as at 3 October 2024
5. Annual Report 2023-24 – as at 22 July 2024
6. Annual Report 2022-23 ([Annual report - DAFF \(agriculture.gov.au\)](http://Annual%20report%20-%20DAFF%20(agriculture.gov.au)))

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Reportable Consultancy Contracts from 1 July 2024 - 30 Sept 2024

Attachment B: Reportable Consultancy Contracts from 1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024

Attachment C: Reportable Consultancy Contracts from 1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023

Attachment D: Big 4 Contract Summary from 1 July 2022 – 30 Sept 2024

Attachment E: Reportable Big 4 Contracts from 1 July 2023 – 30 Sept 2024

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Attachment A - DAFF list of reportable Consultancy Contracts from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024

Supplier Name	Division	AusTender Contract ID	Description	Category	Consultancy Reason(s)	Procurement Method	Start Date	End Date	Value (AUD)
A T CURTAIN AND D P QUINLIVAN	Farm Resilience	CN4093870	Review Chair of the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs Review.	Business administration services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	1-Jul-24	31-Mar-25	\$ 137,500.00
CALLIDA PTY LTD	Transformation Taskforce	CN4096360	Program assurance review	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	15-Jul-24	16-Sep-24	\$ 200,000.00
CALLIDA PTY LTD	Biosecurity Reporting Working Group	CN4082911	Financial Analysis	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	15-Jul-24	18-Oct-24	\$ 295,508.00
CLEAR HORIZON CONSULTING PTY LTD	Farm Resilience	CN4099522	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Support	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	5-Aug-24	30-Jun-25	\$ 591,483.00
ERNST & YOUNG	People, Property and Security	CN4099529	Virtual Energy Network Feasibility Assessment	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	9-Sep-24	31-Jan-25	\$ 208,438.16
GREENWOOD STRATEGY SOLUTIONS PTY LTD	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4087290	Review of Codes of Practice Related to Wood Production in Plantations	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	15-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	\$ 122,760.00
INSTINCT AND REASON PTY LTD	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform	CN4101920	Market Research	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	27-Sep-24	30-Oct-24	\$ 28,600.00
JONES LANG LASALLE (ACT) PTY LTD	People, Property and Security	CN4099528	Electrical Network Engineering Assessment	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	1-Jul-24	30-Sep-24	\$ 73,480.00
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Transformation Taskforce	CN4094090	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	29-Jul-24	30-Sep-24	\$ 79,722.00
NGAMURU ADVISORY PTY LTD	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	CN4092083	Procurement Assistance	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	16-Aug-24	20-Sep-24	\$ 36,190.00
NOETIC SOLUTIONS PTY LIMITED	OCVO Executive	CN4089734	Analysis for Revised Operating Model	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	18-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	\$ 297,175.00
POLICY PERFORMANCE PTY LTD	Farm Resilience	CN4093869	Evaluation Expert for the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs Review	Business administration services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	1-Jul-24	31-Mar-25	\$ 111,925.00
PROXIMITY ADVISORY SERVICES PTY LTD	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4083437	Stocktake, Analysis and Advice of Forestry Industry Stakeholder Projects	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	24-Jul-24	31-Oct-24	\$ 141,076.00
THE FIFTH ESTATE CONSULTANCY PTY LIMITED	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4100253	Development of the Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership's Timber	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	16-Sep-24	31-Jan-25	\$ 210,100.00
TOTAL									\$ 2,533,957.16

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Attachment B - DAFF list of reportable Consultancy Contracts from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Supplier Name	Division	AusTender Contract ID	Description	Category	Consultancy Reason(s)	Procurement Method	Start Date	End Date	Value (AUD)
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3995184	Support for the Live Sheep Phase Out Panel	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	7-Aug-23	15-Sep-23	89,144.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4004664	Support for Live Sheep Phase Out Panel	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	25-Sep-23	30-Nov-23	75,504.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4017276	Specialist Communications Advice	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	20-Nov-23	15-Dec-23	35,600.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Trade and International	CN4035696	Management Advisory Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	15-Feb-24	19-Apr-24	227,700.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	CN4054935	Consultancy Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	18-Apr-24	18-Jul-24	552,000.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4054937	Co-Design Service	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	1-Apr-24	28-Jun-24	108,550.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Trade and International	CN4060151	Consultancy Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	4-Apr-24	30-Jun-24	79,200.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4066695	Project Planning	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	17-Jun-24	28-Jun-24	46,464.00
AGRISCIENCE CONSULTANCIES TAS PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4064044	Consultancy Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	3-Jun-24	20-Dec-24	79,297.00
ANDERSON MALCOLM LAURENCE	Chief Veterinary Office	CN4040726	Chairperson and Consultancy Services	Corporate objectives or policy development	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	18-Mar-24	30-Jun-25	71,280.00
ANDERSON MALCOLM LAURENCE	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4048980	Technical Expertise - Gap Analysis	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	22-Apr-24	31-May-24	66,000.00
ARTD PTY LTD	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	CN4042925	Evaluate Implementation Plan	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	19-Jan-24	28-Jun-24	54,077.00
ARTEMIS PARTNERS PTY LTD	BioSecurity Animal	CN4081478	Support for the Live Sheep Phase Out Panel	Management advisory services	Skills currently unavailable within agency	Limited tender	20-Jun-24	31-Oct-24	123,827.00
AUSTRALIAN FARM INSTITUTE LIMITED	Sustainability Climate and Strategy	CN4061714	Research and Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	31-May-24	28-Jun-24	36,300.00
AUSVET PTY LTD	Chief Veterinary Office	CN4034348	Engagement of Epidemiology and Veterinary Experts	Disease prevention and control	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	2-Feb-24	30-Sep-24	300,000.00
BLACK, PETER FRANCIS	Chief Veterinary Office	CN4048016	Delivery of Horizon Scanning Content and Workshops	Management advisory services	Skills currently unavailable within agency	Limited tender	8-Apr-24	30-Jun-24	19,800.00
CALLIDA PTY LTD	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform	CN4023570	Financial Modelling Expertise and Independent Recommendation	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	4-Dec-23	30-Jun-24	198,720.00
CALLIDA PTY LTD	Finance and Investment	CN4040714	Financial Analysis	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	14-Mar-24	31-May-24	206,643.75
CALLIDA PTY LTD	Sustainable Trade Funding Taskforce	CN4063444	Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	3-Jun-24	30-Jun-25	189,030.75
CALLIDA PTY LTD	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4063451	Consultancy Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	10-Jun-24	20-Sep-24	139,436.25
CALLIDA PTY LTD	Sustainable Trade Funding Taskforce	CN4064878	Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	3-Jun-24	30-Jun-25	135,345.10
CAPITAL COMMUNICATIONS PTY LIMITED	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4015091	Review of Biosecurity Operating Model and Risk Mitigation	Risk management consultation services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	25-Oct-23	24-Dec-23	47,250.00
CHARTERPOINT PTY LTD	Finance and Investment	CN4064043	Corporate Advisory Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	3-Jun-24	30-Sep-24	164,511.60
CHARTERTECH PTY LTD	Finance and Investment	CN4044546	Corporate Management Advisory Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	2-Apr-24	29-May-24	66,044.00
COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4064051	Ecological Risk Assessment	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	16-Feb-24	31-Oct-24	44,283.00
DATALYTICS PTY LTD	Biosecurity Animal	CN4025167	Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis	Risk management consultation services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	3-Oct-23	31-Dec-23	22,682.00
GALLUZZO JACINTA LEANNE	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4062369	AAWS Project Manager	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	22-May-24	28-Jun-24	83,207.52
GAMAYUN PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4061724	Consultancy Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	27-May-24	30-Oct-24	45,000.00
HAPPOLD JONATHAN RICHARD	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer	CN4060940	Development and Delivery Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	20-May-24	30-Aug-24	31,515.00
ICENI GROUP PTY LTD	Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity	CN4051952	Temporary Personnel	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	1-May-24	28-Jun-24	82,368.00
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS PTY LTD	ABARES	CN4061662	Analytics and Modelling Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	22-May-24	31-Aug-24	248,463.00
JEROME KLAAS VANCLAY	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4011677	Review of Regional Forest Agreement	Business administration services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	24-Oct-23	24-Oct-24	120,000.00
JONES LANG LASALLE ADVISORY SERVICES PTY LIMITED	Finance and Investment	CN4021071	Asset Revaluation Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	27-Nov-23	31-Oct-24	52,360.00
K P M G	Finance and Investment	CN4021070	Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) Return Preparation	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	1-Nov-23	31-Jul-24	75,350.00
KSJ CONSULTING SERVICE PTY LTD	Farm Resilience	CN4066700	Framework Support Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	17-May-24	12-Jul-24	79,497.00
LCW ADVISORY	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4065470	Independent Review Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	3-Jun-24	12-Aug-24	59,500.00
MARK ANDREW SCHIPP	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer	CN4061631	Deployment Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	25-May-24	30-May-24	16,650.00
MCCUTCHEON, STEPHEN DONALD	Biosecurity Animal	CN4025166	Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis	Risk management consultation services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	9-Oct-23	31-Dec-23	20,540.00
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4012740	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	23-Oct-23	30-Sep-24	42,886.20
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4012742	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	23-Oct-23	30-Jun-24	26,381.87
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4012743	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	23-Oct-23	30-Sep-24	50,460.00
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4029719	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Jan-24	31-Dec-24	14,869.37
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Trade and International	CN4048032	Remuneration Review	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	8-Apr-24	28-Sep-24	140,000.00
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4055499	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	12,088.75
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058161	Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	44,940.00
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058613	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	14,974.25
PEDERSEN, PETER JOHN	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	CN3998266	Project Assessment	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	9-Aug-23	13-Oct-23	25,000.00
PLATH GORDON JOHN	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	CN4025164	Regulatory Services	Business intelligence consulting services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	4-Dec-23	30-Sep-24	297,088.00
PROXIMITY ADVISORY SERVICES PTY LTD	Compliance & Enforcement	CN4024119	Harm Analysis and Regulatory Sanctions Consultancy	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	20-Nov-23	30-Jun-24	640,129.60
REMOTE PTY LTD	ABARES	CN4061720	Temporary Personnel	Temporary personnel services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	6-May-24	30-Jun-24	80,000.00
SAPERE RESEARCH GROUP LIMITED	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4064905	Data Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	10-Jun-24	9-Aug-24	80,758.70
SLM CORPORATE PTY LTD	Departmental Non-Discretionary (DND)	CN4028329	Bamaga Native Title Valuation	Economic or financial evaluation of projects	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	13-Dec-23	15-Feb-24	11,000.00
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4008662	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	9-Oct-23	30-Jun-24	14,868.40
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4029718	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Jan-24	30-Dec-24	21,161.25
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4029721	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Jan-24	30-Sep-24	11,187.00
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4029723	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Jan-24	30-Dec-24	11,187.00
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4040052	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	26-Feb-24	31-Dec-24	14,833.50
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4040718	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	26-Feb-24	31-Dec-24	51,590.00
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4055498	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	11,742.50
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058615	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	11,302.50

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Supplier Name	Division	AusTender Contract ID	Description	Category	Consultancy Reason(s)	Procurement Method	Start Date	End Date	Value (AUD)
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058616	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	11,880.00
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058618	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	11,302.50
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058621	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	17,077.50
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058622	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	17,077.50
SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058623	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	13,502.50
SYNERGY NEWCO PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4053603	Research and Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	22-Apr-24	28-Jun-24	141,565.00
SYNERGY NEWCO PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4059179	Consultancy Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	20-May-24	30-Jun-24	116,823.00
THE MARSDEN JACOB UNIT TRUST	Agriculture Policy	CN4064879	Agricultural Policy Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Skills currently unavailable within agency	Open tender	3-Jun-24	30-Jun-24	33,000.00
THOUGHTPOST GOVERNANCE PTY LTD	Transformation Taskforce	CN4045463	Committee Governance Review	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Mar-24	24-May-24	54,065.00
THOUGHTPOST GOVERNANCE PTY LTD	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4058164	Strategic Advice and Review Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	16-May-24	12-Jul-24	59,486.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4029717	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Jan-24	31-Dec-24	47,520.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4029720	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Jan-24	31-Dec-24	14,850.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4029722	Internal Audit	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	22-Jan-24	30-Sep-24	11,880.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058614	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	23,760.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058620	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	14,850.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN4058624	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	29-Apr-24	31-Dec-24	11,880.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Export & Veterinary Services	CN4059589	Internal Audit Services	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	10-May-24	31-Dec-24	66,330.00
TTF KM UNIT TRUST	Transformation Taskforce	CN4018555	Functional Review	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	20-Nov-23	28-Jun-24	286,000.00
TTF KM UNIT TRUST	Transformation Taskforce	CN4048033	Strategic Change and Organisation Design Partner	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	20-Mar-24	28-Jun-24	362,500.00
TTF TAILORED HR SOLUTIONS UNIT TRUST	People, Property & Security	CN4031049	Workforce Planning Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	18-Dec-23	30-Sep-24	261,695.00
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE	Australian Chief Veterinary Office	CN4083440	Rabies Modelling Timor	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	19-Jun-24	31-Dec-24	73,326.00
VESCIANT PTY LTD	Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	CN4025168	Risk Management Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	8-Nov-23	30-Jun-26	360,000.00
VIROTECHNOLOGIES INC	Biosecurity Animal	CN4040723	Peer Review - Infectious Salmon Anaemia Virus Policy Review	Management advisory services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	12-Feb-24	26-Apr-24	15,000.00
WARRIE HOLMAN AND ASSOCIATES PTY LTD	Chief Veterinary Office	CN4067888	Research and Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	10-Jun-24	18-Aug-24	24,860.00
WE ARE MALO PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4053600	Web and App Design Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	1-May-24	22-Jul-24	37,939.00
WHERE TO RESEARCH BASED CONSULTING PTY LTD	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform	CN4045460	Delivery of Biosecurity Awareness Research	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	29-Mar-24	28-Jun-24	199,980.00
WHERE TO RESEARCH BASED CONSULTING PTY LTD	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare and Regulation	CN4054073	Research and Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	12-Apr-24	26-Jul-24	199,100.00
ZACHARIN WILLIAM FYFE	Biosecurity Animal	CN4025165	Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis	Risk management consultation services	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	9-Oct-23	31-Dec-23	20,540.00
TOTAL									8,229,377.86

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Attachment C - List of reportable Consultancy Contracts from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Supplier Name	Division	AusTender Contract ID	Description	Consultancy Reason(s)	Procurement Method	Start Date	End Date	Value (AUD)
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3938088	Change Communications Specialist	Skills currently unavailable within agency	Open Tender	11-Jul-22	23-Dec-22	153,032.00
1 AND ONE PTY LTD	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3899770	Communication Specialist Consultancy Services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open Tender	5-Jan-23	30-Apr-23	157,460.00
AGORA CONSULTING PTY LTD	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3908947	Stakeholder Engagement and Monitoring and Evaluation	Skills currently unavailable within agency	Open Tender	10-Aug-22	30-Jun-23	574,120.00
CONCEPTSIX PTY LTD	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3975366	Cataloguing Sheep Submissions	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open Tender	13-Jun-23	31-Jul-23	84,001.50
DATALYTICS PTY LTD	Biosecurity Animal	CN3921067	Scientific Advisory Group - Prawn Imports Phase 2	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited Tender	11-Oct-22	7-Nov-22	24,840.00
DAVEY ALISTAIR COLIN	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3965842	Assessment of Existing Studies on the Live Sheep Trade	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited Tender	12-May-23	30-Jun-23	49,500.00
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY	Finance and Investment	CN3961010	Actuary for Financial Statements	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open Tender	29-Mar-23	31-Oct-23	16,500.00
EPISODE THREE PTY LTD	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3970928	Analysis of Live Sheep Exports	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	1-Jun-23	31-Jul-23	319,500.00
Forestworks Ltd	AgVet Chemicals, Fisheries, Forestry & Engagement	CN3958781	Forestry Industry Workforce Training Program Scoping Study	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	10-Mar-23	30-Nov-23	500,000.00
GROSVENOR PERFORMANCE GROUP PTY LTD	Farm Resilience	CN3911592	Mid-term Evaluation of Drought Resilience Funding Plan	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	5-Sep-22	10-Mar-23	136,098.00
HAPPOLD JONATHAN RICHARD	Chief Veterinary Office	CN3963345	Northern Australia Vulnerabilities Report	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	25-Apr-23	30-Jul-23	79,324.00
HORTICULTURE INNOVATION AUSTRALIA LTD	Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity	CN3928443	Independent Review of Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	16-Nov-22	1-May-23	34,787.50
JONES LANG LASALLE ADVISORY SERVICES PTY LIMITED	Finance and Investment	CN3954985	Asset Valuations	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	13-Mar-23	31-Oct-23	40,150.00
K P M G	Finance and Investment	CN3957270	Financial Statement Accounting Support Consultancy Services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	9-Jan-23	31-Dec-24	800,000.00
K P M G	Finance and Investment	CN3955328	Loans Impairment	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	3-Apr-23	31-May-24	43,199.80
K P M G	People, Property & Security	CN3945773	Forensic Investigative Services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	10-Aug-22	5-May-23	200,000.00
K P M G	Trade and International	CN3938133	Research and Quantitative Analysis Consultancy Services	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	30-Jan-23	7-Aug-23	79,000.00
MARK RICHARD OGDEN	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	CN3968029	Aviation Safety Management Expert	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	19-Apr-23	30-Sep-23	44,000.00
MARY BRENNAN	Executive	CN3931196	Independent Review	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	23-Nov-22	30-Jun-23	105,000.00
MCCUTCHEON, STEPHEN DONALD	Biosecurity Animal	CN3920644	Scientific Advisory Group - Prawn Imports Phase 2	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	11-Oct-22	7-Nov-22	22,484.00
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN3942737	Internal Audit 22-09 Gateway Review Recs	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	7-Feb-23	30-Sep-23	31,302.50
MCGRATHNICOL ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN3942738	Self-assessment Verifications	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	7-Feb-23	30-Sep-23	52,680.00
NOETIC SOLUTIONS PTY LIMITED	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN3938086	Incident Management Training Support	Skills currently unavailable within agency	Open tender	23-Dec-22	30-Jun-23	249,700.00
NOUS GROUP PTY LTD	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN3953692	First Nations Platform for Shared Benefits in Agriculture	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	20-Mar-23	30-Jun-23	546,700.00
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	CN3909275	Evaluation of Indigenous Rangers Biosecurity Program	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	10-Aug-22	23-Dec-22	272,861.00
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS CONSULTING	Traceability, Plant and Live Exports	CN3942943	Agricultural Traceability Alliance Strategic Proposal	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	18-Aug-22	28-Feb-23	1,002,785.40
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS CONSULTING	Trade Reform	CN3935222	Livestock Traceability Project	Skills currently unavailable within agency	Open tender	17-Aug-22	11-Jan-23	1,678,472.68
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS CONSULTING	Biosecurity Operations	CN3918192	Biosecurity Controls Review at International Airports	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	15-Aug-22	15-Sep-22	289,042.94
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS CONSULTING	Biosecurity Operations	CN3912401	Cargo Service Delivery Taskforce	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	30-Sep-22	7-Nov-22	377,491.83
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS CONSULTING	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform	CN3911625	Biosecurity Investment and Compliance Reform	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	19-Aug-22	19-Apr-23	500,320.64

OFFICIAL

Supplier Name	Division	AusTender Contract ID	Description	Consultancy Reason(s)	Procurement Method	Start Date	End Date	Value (AUD)
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS CONSULTING	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform	CN3911622	National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation and Action Plan	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	28-Oct-22	30-Jun-23	573,763.90
PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS CONSULTING	Export & Veterinary Services	CN3909272	Electronic Certification Strategy and Market Prioritisation Framework	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	4-Nov-22	30-Jun-23	197,376.93
PROVIDENCE CONSULTING GROUP PTY LTD	People, Property & Security	CN3897222	Review of Aerial Firearms Operations	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	11-Jul-22	1-Feb-23	148,880.80
ROUGHAN LEE	Export & Veterinary Services	CN3924929	Shellfish Quality Assurance Program Export Standards Review	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	17-Oct-22	30-Dec-23	65,500.00
THE ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE PTY LTD	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform	CN3920502	Investigation of Data Standards and Data Sharing Solutions	Need for specialised or professional skills	Open tender	5-Oct-22	30-Jun-23	499,400.00
THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP PTY LTD	Executive	CN3908946	Agricultural Trade Group Workshop	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	1-Sep-22	31-Oct-22	11,000.00
THE MARSDEN JACOB UNIT TRUST	Biosecurity Animal	CN3900288	Pet Food Standards – Cost Benefit Analysis	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	26-Jul-22	31-Jul-23	108,460.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN3944163	Internal Audit	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	7-Feb-23	30-Sep-23	44,550.00
TTF BIRDANCO PRACTICE TRUST	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	CN3944159	Internal Audit	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	7-Feb-23	30-Sep-24	37,125.00
TTF THE NIDDRIE FAMILY TRUST	Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity	CN3945771	Review of Feral Deer Action Plan	Need for specialised or professional skills	Limited tender	10-Feb-23	14-Apr-23	54,871.08
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE	Biosecurity Operations	CN3947738	Statistical Analysis and Recommendations	Need for independent research or assessment	Open tender	20-Dec-22	30-Jun-23	110,038.50
ZACHARIN WILLIAM FYFE	Biosecurity Animal	CN3921478	Scientific Advisory Group - Prawn Imports Phase 2	Need for independent research or assessment	Limited tender	11-Oct-22	7-Nov-22	22,484.00
TOTAL								10,337,804.00

OFFICIAL

Attachment D - Big 4 Contract Summary from 1 July 2022 – 30 September 2024

Big 4 Reportable Contracts entered into (GST incl)

BIG 4	1 Jul 2024 – 30 Sep 2024 ¹	2023–2024 ²	2022–23 ³
Deloitte Touche Tomatsu *			
Consultancy Contracts	-	-	-
Other Contracts	-	\$1,713,668	\$222,390
Total	-	\$1,713,668	\$222,390
EY (formerly Ernst & Young) **			
Consultancy Contracts	\$208,438	-	-
Other Contracts	-	\$415,360	-
Total	\$208,438	\$415,360	-
KPMG			
Consultancy Contracts	-	\$75,350	\$1,053,024
Other Contracts	-	-	-
Total	-	\$75,350	\$1,053,024
PwC/Scyne***			
Consultancy Contracts	-	-	\$4,892,115
Other Contracts	-	271,995	\$1,144,423
Total	-	\$271,995	\$6,036,539
Consultancy Contracts Total	\$208,438	\$75,350	\$5,945,139
Other Contracts Total	-	\$2,401,023	\$1,366,813
All Contracts Total	\$208,438	\$2,476,373	\$7,311,953

*Deloitte Touche Tomatsu contract data includes data with Deloitte Risk Advisory Pty Ltd (ABN 76 611 748 184)

**EY contract data includes data with EY Digital (ABN 43 096 505 805)

***PwC contract data includes data with Scyne Advisory Pty Ltd (ABN 20 607 773 295)

Big 4 expenditure incurred (GST incl)

BIG 4	1 Jul 2024 – 30 Sep 2024⁴	2023–2024⁵	2022–23⁶
Deloitte Touche Tomatsu			
Consultancy Contracts	-	-	\$1,933,636
Other Contracts	\$191,620	\$1,936,186	\$8,823,225
Total	\$191,620	\$1,936,186	\$10,756,861
EY (formerly Ernst & Young)			
Consultancy Contracts	-	-	-
Other Contracts	\$33,000	\$2,027,313	\$3,067,313
Total	\$33,000	\$2,027,313	\$3,067,313
KPMG			
Consultancy Contracts	\$182,710	\$417,025	\$331,174
Other Contracts	-	-	\$1,255,512
Total	\$182,710	\$417,025	\$1,586,686
PwC/Scyne*			
Consultancy Contracts	-	\$16,540	\$7,914,820
Other Contracts	\$271,995	\$18,510	\$1,508,550
Total	\$271,995	\$35,050	\$9,423,370
Consultancy Contracts Total	\$182,710	\$433,565	\$10,179,630
Other Contracts Total	\$496,615	\$3,982,009	\$14,654,600
All Contracts Total	\$679,325	\$4,415,574	\$24,834,230

* PwC expenditure data includes data from three PwC related companies:
PricewaterhouesCoopers, (ABN 52 780 433 757) Pricewaterhouse Consultancy (20 607 773 295)
which is now known as Scyne Advisory and Pricewaterhouse Compliance Services (95 625 023 716)
now known as Citation Standards.

Sources

1. AusTender (www.tenders.gov.au) - as at 24 October 2024 (subject to change)
2. AusTender (www.tenders.gov.au) - as at 26 September 2024
3. AusTender (www.tenders.gov.au) - as at 26 September 2023.
4. TechnologyOne - as at 1 October 2024 (used for Annual Report).
5. TechnologyOne - as at 26 October 2024
6. TechnologyOne - as at 14 August 2023 (used for Annual Report).

Attachment E - DAFF list of Big 4 contracts published from 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024

Financial Year 2024 - 25

Description	Type	Category	Value (AUD) GST inclusive	Division	Group
EY (formerly Ernst & Young)					
Virtual Energy Network (VEN) Feasibility Assessment	Consultancy	Management advisory services	208,438.16	People, Property and Security	Strategy, Enterprise and Engagement
			208,438.16		

Financial Year 2023 - 24

Description	Type	Category	Value (AUD) GST inclusive	Division	Group
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu					
Financial Management System Support	Contract	Management support services	899,360.00	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform	Biosecurity & Compliance
Facilitation Design and Workshop	Contract	Workplace safety training aids and materials	27,500.00	Export and Veterinary Services	Agricultural Trade and Regulation
Temporary personnel	Contract	Temporary personnel services	786,808.00	Digital Business	Agricultural Trade and Regulation
			1,713,668.00		
EY (formerly Ernst & Young)					
Research Services	Contract	Temporary personnel services	415,360.00	Digital Business	Agricultural Trade and Regulation
			415,360.00		
KPMG Australia					
Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) Return Preparation	Consultancy	Management advisory services	75,350.00	Finance and Investment	Strategy, Enterprise and Engagement
			75,350.00		
PriceWaterhouseCoopers Consulting/Scyne					
Essentials 8 Awareness Campaign	Contract	Education and Training Services	271,995.00	Digital Services	Strategy, Enterprise and Engagement
			271,995.00		

FY 2024-25 - Data extracted from AusTender on 24 October 2024 by Start Date.

FY 2023-24 - Data extracted from AusTender on 1 October 2024 by Start Date.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Finance and Investment Division

FID04

GRANTS

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) administers a range of grants on behalf of government.
- Grants include forestry, agricultural resources, Indigenous Rangers, drought resilience and pest management with funding being administered across Australia.
- Grant recipients include not-for-profit organisations, local governments, universities and other organisations as outlined in the DAFF's annual report.
- Grants are generally funded from administered funds (administered by DAFF on behalf of the Government) as outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statements. However, in rare occasions, grants are also funded from departmental funds (controlled by the department's Accountable Authority) which require the Chief Finance Officer's endorsement prior to the commitment of funds. For example, instances where payments made between non-corporate Commonwealth entities under a record of understanding to deliver a grant or an urgent need for payment to a person or organisation to address an unexpected or unforeseen need without opportunity available through grant programs, departmental funds can be used to deliver grants.
- For the **period 1 July 24 – 30 September 24**, the department:
 - spent \$32.37 million¹ (GST exclusive) on administered grants and \$0.22 million (GST exclusive) on departmental grants.
 - entered into 31 grant agreements totalling more than \$23.84 million (GST inclusive). Refer to **Attachment A1**^{S1} (sorted by programs) and **Attachment A2**^{S2} (sorted by recipients) for details of these grants.
- For the **period 2023–24 financial year**, the department:
 - spent \$208.34 million² (GST exclusive) on administered grants and \$10.90 million (GST exclusive) on departmental grants.

¹ Excludes levies and payments to Corporate Commonwealth Entities.

² Excludes levies and payments to Corporate Commonwealth Entities.

- entered into 128 grant agreements totalling more than \$121.41 million (GST inclusive).
- For the **2022–23 financial year**, DAFF:
 - spent \$200.67 million³ (GST exclusive) on administered grants and \$5.63 million (GST exclusive) on departmental grants.
 - entered into 180 grants agreements for the value of \$339.01 million (GST inclusive).
- In comparison, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water entered into 1,025 grants agreements for the value of \$946.03 million^{S3} (GST inclusive) in the **2023–24 financial year**.
- Grants of high focus are determined based on the value and/or the numbers or the focus of the grants or grant programs. Higher focus grant programs between 1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024 may include:

³ Excludes levies and payments to Corporate Commonwealth Entities.

Focus	Grant Program	Purpose	Grants Awarded Value for the period (\$)	Number of Grants Awarded	PBS Program No. & Name	Division	Responsible First Assistant Secretary
Building Capacity for Australia's sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and environment protection	Climate-Smart Agriculture Program – Capacity Building: Regional Soil Coordinators	Support the Australian Government's investment in public good sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and environment protection. The Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) aims to protect, conserve, and provide for the productive use of Australia's water, soil, plants and animals and the ecosystems in which they live and interact, in partnership with industry, communities and other governments.	\$6,022,233.52	8	Program 1.1: Agricultural Adaptation	Sustainability, Climate and Strategy	Nick Blong
Supporting Australia's agriculture sector to drive climate-smart, sustainable growth, and protect Australia's natural capital	Climate-Smart Agriculture Program – Capacity Building: National Soil Community of Practice	Support Australia's agriculture sector to drive climate-smart, sustainable growth, and protect Australia's natural capital by funding best practice sustainable agriculture and natural resource management activities.	\$2,273,740.72	1	Program 1.1: Agricultural Adaptation	Sustainability, Climate and Strategy	Nick Blong
Funding to conserve, repair and replenish Australia's natural capital infrastructure	Natural Heritage Trust Capacity Building Grants	To conserve, repair and replenish Australia's natural capital infrastructure. Funding will be spent on the environment, sustainable agriculture and natural resources management.	\$9,546,164.90	13	Program 1.2: Sustainable Management - Natural Resources	Sustainability, Climate and Strategy	Nick Blong
Supporting Communities to Manage Pest Animals and Weeds	Supporting Communities Manage Pest Animals and Weeds Program	To continue efforts to deliver better solutions to combat established pest animals and weeds that pose a significant threat to Australian primary production, the environment and biodiversity.	\$874,468.10	1	Program 1.2: Sustainable Management - Natural Resources	Australian Chief Veterinary Office	Dr. Beth Cookson
Supporting Plantation Establishment	Support Plantation Establishment Program	Support Plantation Establishment	\$376,129.60	3	Program 1.3: Forestry Industry	AgVet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	Sarah-Jane McCormack
Wood Processing Innovation	Accelerate Adoption of Wood Processing Innovation	Under "A Future Grown in Australia", funding will be available to wood processing facilities to embrace innovation to increase the use of logs or fibre, to add value to existing products, create new product and reduce carbon footprint.	\$1,563,223.20	1	Program 1.3: Forestry Industry	AgVet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry	Sarah-Jane McCormack

BACKGROUND

Mandatory Reporting Requirements:

The department is responsible for the parliamentary and the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024* (CGRPs) (previously known as *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs) mandatory reporting requirements for the portfolio and/or the department as outlined below:

- Grants approved that were not recommended by departmental officials (CGRPs 4.12):
 - Under paragraph 4.12 of CGRPs, Ministers (including Senators) must report on all instances where they approved a grant that a departmental official recommended be rejected.
 - For the **2023 calendar year**, no grants were approved by former Minister Watt within the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio that a departmental official recommended be rejected.
 - Refer to **Attachment B** for DAFF's department's response, on behalf of former Minister Watt, to the Department of Finance.
- Grants not fully performed, or which have been entered into during the previous 12 months (Senate Order 13 - Murray Motion):
 - Within 2 months of the end of the financial and calendar year Ministers must table a list of grants of the Department and portfolio entities which have not been fully performed or which have been entered into during the previous 12 months, and which provide for a value of \$100,000 (GST inclusive) or more. This is also known as Senate Order 13 - Entity Contracts (Murray Motion) reporting requirement.
 - On 20 August 2024, Minister Collins provided a letter to the President of the Senate (**Attachment C**) on behalf of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, informing that all grants for **2023 – 2024 financial year** that satisfy the Senate Order 13 - Entity Contracts (Murray Motion) reporting criteria are published on [GrantConnect](#). Grants administered by the portfolio agencies are published on the relevant agencies' internet.
- Approved Grants (Senate Order 16 - Minchin Order):
 - Before each Senate Estimates, Ministers must table a list of all grants approved in the department and portfolio agencies, including the value of each grant, the recipient, the program from which it was funded, and the approver. This is also known as Senate Order 16 – Departmental and Agency Grants (Minchin Order) reporting requirement.

- From 02 May 2024 to 04 October 2024, 106 grants valued at \$88.69⁴ million were approved for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- On 18 October 2024, Minister Collins provided a letter to the President of the Senate (**Attachment D**) for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, with a list of all approved grants for the period 02 May 2024 to 04 October 2024 that satisfy the Senate Order 16 - Departmental and Agency Grants (Minchin Order) reporting criteria.

SOURCES (S)

1. *GrantConnect* (www.grants.gov.au) – as at 01 October 2024 (subject to change).
2. *GrantConnect* (www.grants.gov.au) – as at 01 October 2024 (subject to change)
3. *GrantConnect* (www.grants.gov.au) – as at 19 September 2024 (subject to change).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A1 – List of grants entered into from 01/07/2024 to 30/09/2024 and sorted by programs.

Attachment A2 – List of grants entered into from 01/07/2024 to 30/09/2024 and sorted by recipients.

Attachment B – CGRPs 4.12 – Department’s response on behalf of former Minister Watt to the Department of Finance.

Attachment C – Senate Order 13 – Minister Collins’s letter to the President of the Senate.

Attachment D – Senate Order 16 – Minister Collins’s letter to the President of the Senate and the list of approved grants.

⁴ Excludes 13 grants valued at \$2 million from the Senate Order 16 response as they were approved during the previous reporting 19 January 2024 – 01 May 2024.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Finance and Investment Division

FID05**SUPERANNUATION – OVER AND UNDER PAY****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has undertaken a review of its application of the superannuation legislation and enterprise agreements from 1 December 2005 to 30 September 2022.
- In late 2018 the former Department of Agriculture became aware of potential issues with the calculation of superannuation contributions.
- The review included staff from the former Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE).
- DAFF and its predecessors had, in some instances, calculated employer superannuation contributions incorrectly. The consequence is that superannuation contributions for some current and former employees have been overpaid or underpaid.
- DAFF has completed 7,767 reviews for all employees. The review data, except for 318 employees from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) that are Parks Australia employees, has been provided to the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) for PSS, CSS and PSSap members for validation and completion of their remediation processes.
- In July 2024, DAFF handed over the DCCEEW reviews to DCCEEW, including Parks Australia.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The review covered 7,767 employees:
 - 5,841 – DAFF
 - 1,926 – DCCEEW
- DAFF employees have either received an:
 - outcome letter of their review (excluding deceased estates where there was no impact) or

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SES Lead: Matthew Geysen
Last updated: 4 October 2024

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SB24-000133

- a letter notifying them of the superannuation salary information that has been provided to the CSC for their actioning (868 employees). These letters were issued as the CSC advised it will take some time to complete their remediation processes. CSC will advise the outcome of the review to these employees.
- There are currently 313 DAFF remaining reviews pending completion by the CSC.
- There were 1,560 outcome letters provided to DCCEEW employees.
- The estimated financial impact of the review outcomes is \$15.718 million:
 - Commonwealth superannuation funds - \$11.922 million
 - Choice superannuation funds - \$3.796 million

BACKGROUND

- DAFF was made aware of potential issues with the calculation of superannuation contributions for some employees through investigation of individual enquiries in late 2018.
- On further investigation, the department found that some of these issues may also impact other employees, both current and former.
- A broader review of the department's superannuation arrangements was undertaken to address any errors.
- The project was overseen by an internal Superannuation Review Steering Committee whose members included the: Chief Finance Officer; Chief Counsel and Chief People Officer; and Superannuation Review Sub-Committee whose members included representatives from the department's Payroll, Legal and People teams with support also drawing from external advisers who have experience in this type of remediation work.
- The identified superannuation errors are the result of an incorrect calculation of **superannuation salary** as set down in legislation and enterprise agreements. If the **superannuation salary** is not correctly calculated, then the contribution will be incorrect.
- Superannuation is complex and an incorrect **superannuation salary** can be the result of many factors but can include:
 - incorrect interpretation of allowances for superannuation purposes: using the incorrect method for calculating contributions where employees have changed superannuation funds; or
 - a trigger point such as receiving a particular allowance after meeting a qualifying period for superannuation, but the allowance is inadvertently not included in the **superannuation salary**.
- In most cases, the correction of employer **underpayments** occurs between the employer and the superannuation fund.

- For most employees whose employer contributions have been **overpaid**, the department will work with the superannuation fund to recover the overpayment amount from the fund and will not deduct any amount from employee's salary.
- Employee contributions – PSS and CSS members generally make employee contributions based on the employee's **superannuation salary**. Where an adjustment is required to the **superannuation salary** following the review, this may result in an over contribution or shortfall in employee contributions. Options to make up any shortfalls are discussed with employees by either the department or the CSC, depending upon the individual's circumstances.
- For individuals who are members of a Commonwealth superannuation scheme (for CSS, PSS and PSSap), there are additional processes required to be completed by the CSC to enable the finalisation of the review outcome.
- For individuals who are members of Choice superannuation funds, the department has engaged with each fund to confirm arrangements for processing under and over paid superannuation.
- The majority of current and former employees (84 per cent) have been advised of the outcome of their review and just under half (47 per cent) of these were correct with no errors. In addition, former employees whose review has not been finalised by the CSC, have been advised of their original and revised superannuation salary and the reasoning for the difference. The CSC will liaise directly with the former employees for any changes to their benefit.
- DAFF has the below mechanisms in place for communicating with potentially affected current and former employees:
 - providing updates on the status of reviews
 - a mailbox for all communication, including managing enquiries and complaints
 - an internet site with useful information and frequently asked questions
 - dedicated phone numbers for individuals to contact the review team
 - outcome letters to individuals that detailed the reasoning for any variances and next steps in remediation
 - for variances greater than \$2,000, individuals were personally contacted (where DAFF has current contact details)
 - where an individual has a variance over a threshold, DAFF offers to reimburse costs for the individual to obtain independent financial advice up to \$600. To date, no individual has accessed this offer.
- A provision of \$15.718 million was included in the 2021-2022 financial statements for the estimated remediation costs. The provision has reduced to \$5.888 million in the 2023-2024 financial statements.

- DAFF has advised the CSC, the Fair Work Ombudsman, the Australian Taxation Office and the Department of Finance of the review.
- DAFF has provided updates to the Community and Public Sector Union, including written detailed responses to questions.
- DAFF continues to provide monthly updates to the Fair Work Ombudsman of the progress of the review.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Finance and Investment Division

FID06**LEVIES AND CHARGES****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The department administers agricultural levies on behalf of Australian agricultural industries to fund research and development, marketing, biosecurity, and residue testing programs.
- \$603.42 million of levies was disbursed in 2023–24 to Levy Recipient Bodies (LRBs).
- The Australian Government has introduced legislation in Parliament to implement the modernised agriculture levy system from 1 January 2025.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES*Agricultural Levies*

- The department currently administers 110 agricultural levies and charges collected on over 70 commodities across the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.
- Each commodity has different collection mechanisms that are relevant to an industry's production period, supply chain and business practices.
- Levies are self-assessed and are generally collected by intermediaries, a collection agent on behalf of a levy payer who is liable for the domestic levy or export charge.
- There are currently over 7,000 collection agents operating at identified narrow points in the supply chain where most leviable products flow through, for example:
 - Market agents/retailers, grain traders/consumers, abattoirs and stock agents and wool brokers/processors.
- There are some instances where it is practical for the levy payer to pay the department directly such as Turf and Wine, and retail sales of commodities made by levy payers.
- The Levies Compliance team delivers a risk-based National Compliance Program (NCP) that encourages collection agents to comply with legislation and identify levy leakage.

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SES Lead: Maria Loyman
Last updated: 2 October 2024

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SB24-000134

- Agricultural levies and charges received by the department are disbursed monthly to the 18 LRBs. The department recovers from the LRBs the costs for administering existing agricultural levies using an activity-based costing methodology.
- For 2023–24 this cost was \$4.65 million or 0.77 per cent of the \$603.42 million levies disbursed in 2023–24. This was within the performance target being the cost was equal to or less than 1.2% of total levies disbursed.

Financial Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Levies Administration Cost (\$m)	4.76	4.62	4.03	3.77
Levies Disbursed (\$m)	461.51	494.56	602.60	634.38
Ratio as a percentage	1.03%	0.93%	0.67%	0.60%

- The department continues to prepare for the implementation of the modernised levies legislation. Work is currently under way to update the departmental systems, guidance documentation, website and return forms. Collection agents, levy recipient bodies and industry representative bodies will be consulted and informed of the changes in due course.

BACKGROUND

- Our compliance programs include the Operational Compliance Program (OCP), a risk-based record inspection program. On an annual basis the department's levy officers undertake field visits and inspect transaction records of levy agents in each state and territory.
 - The cases targeted for the inspection program are selected by compliance risk, assessed on likelihood and consequence parameters. The program reviews agents who collectively contribute approximately 20 to 30 per cent of revenue at the commodity level annually and approximately 500 inspections are completed each year.
- The Targeted Compliance Assessment Program complements the OCP by allowing compliance assessment of agents that are not selected for record inspection under the OCP.
- The Strategic Compliance Program in partnership with industry involves the identification of strategic projects that can be undertaken to address specific areas of non-compliance in an industry.
- A Variation Risk Tool is used to monitor the lodgement of levy returns and identify distinct variations in return values by comparing against the value of a past return at the commodity level.
- The 18 LRBs include National Residue Survey, Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia and 15 Research and Development Corporations (RDCs).

- Of the 15 RDCs, 5 are statutory and 10 are Industry-owned corporations (IOCs). All RDCs manage R&D services. Most IOCs also provide other industry services, mainly marketing.
 - Statutory: AgriFutures, Cotton Research & Development Corporation, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Grains Research and Development Corporation and Wine Australia.
 - IOCs: Australian Eggs Ltd, Australian Livestock Export Corporation Ltd, Australian Meat Processor Corporation, Australian Pork Ltd, Australian Wool Innovation Ltd, Dairy Australia Ltd, Forest and Wood Products Australia, Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd, Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd and Sugar Research Australia Ltd.
- The biosecurity component of existing agricultural levies is disbursed to Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia for the levy recipient bodies to deliver biosecurity activities.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Transformation Taskforce

TT01

INTEGRATED TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

CURRENT ISSUE

- In 2023, the APSC Capability Review and other independent reviews on DAFF's performance and financial sustainability resulted in establishing the Integrated Transformation Program (ITP) to reform and renew our capabilities, strategic intent, operating model and culture.
- The ITP, through the Transformation Taskforce (established in September 2023 initially to respond to the Capability Review), is composed of four programs of work:
 - The **Transformation Action Plan (TAP)**: published on 30 November 2023, comprising 10 priority actions to uplift capability in the department's leadership and culture, collaboration, delivery, people and resourcing, and risk, by 2027.
 - The **Statement of Strategic Intent**: released August 2024, it communicates the department's vision and aspirational goal to external partners and stakeholders and plays an important role in departmental planning.
 - **Organisation Design**: began in March 2024, this program renews our operating model; enabling an enterprise-wide approach to planning, performance, strategic policy, and regulation.
 - **Culture**: began in July 2024, this pillar will initially comprise the Census Action Plan in response to workplace cultural issues identified in the 2024 APSC Census.
- The ITP is underpinned by the **One DAFF** communications campaign; designed to foster staff engagement and employee advocacy, recognising the critical role these attributes play in a cohesive and high-performing department.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

Achievements

- *The Transformation Action Plan:*
 - **Enhanced governance arrangements** have been established to support effective resource allocation and decision-making in the department.
 - the **10-year Digital Investment and Sustainment Plan** released in June 2024. This plan's first phase sets out how critical information and communication

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SB24-000135

technology (ICT) upgrades and cyber security strategies will be funded. The second phase will see the establishment of integrated ICT investment processes within the department's governance structure.

- the **Enterprise Performance Framework** to be released in November 2024 will embed regular, transparent, accurate and meaningful reporting processes into business-as-usual operations through integrating workforce, financial and business performance and assurance data
- **Financial Management projects:** new financial training program established; new financial reporting and monitoring arrangements established; financial systems upgraded to improve functionality.
- The **Workforce Planning and Development project** has developed a draft Workforce Strategy and Workforce Planning Framework.
- The **Stakeholder Engagement and Practice Framework** in development to establish an enterprise-wide engagement and partnership approach.

Statement of Strategic Intent

- Released in August 2024, this is our renewed strategic vision to engage with stakeholders and inform the Corporate Plan through business planning.

Organisation Design

- Four high-level changes are underway to renew the department's operating model and address review findings:
 - **Building a strong corporate centre:** corporate functions will be strengthened through adopting a business partner model. Implementation is scheduled to begin in November, with further iterations being designed.
 - **Building regulatory capability:** the Office of the Chief Regulatory Officer is being established to uplift regulatory capability.
 - **Uplifting strategic policy capability:** the proposed Strategic Policy function is in design phase and is expected to enter implementation before the end of 2024.
 - **Effective identity:** completed. Group names accurately reflect functions and role.

Delivery governance

- The Executive Board's Finance and Performance Committee oversees the ITP through the Transformation Steering Committee, which is responsible for guiding and monitoring delivery, and benefits realisation, for the program.

Next Steps

- The first annual review of the Transformation Action Plan is in December.
- Organisation design planning and consultation will continue until December, with some implementation to be delivered in early 2025.
- The Culture pillar's Census Action Plan will be released in November.

BACKGROUND

- The TAP was developed in response to the APSC Capability Review and incorporates findings and recommendations from the Independent Financial Review commissioned by the Department of Finance, the ANAO Cultural Reform Audit, the ANAO Performance Statements Review, and the APS Census.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Legal Division

LD01**MANAGEMENT OF FOI REQUESTS TO THE DEPARTMENT AND MINISTER****CURRENT ISSUE**

All Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry are coordinated by the Information and Employment Law Team in the Legal Division and are managed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- All FOI matters are dealt with in accordance with the process and timeframe requirements under the FOI Act, regulations and guidance from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).
 - This includes applying charges in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (Charges) Regulations 2019.
 - Under the FOI Act, the department and the minister are separate entities.
 - Minister Collins and Assistant Minister Chisholm have arrangements in place to receive and respond to FOI matters with advice and assistance from the department.
 - Department advice and assistance includes providing legal advice and assistance with preparing decisions and responses to reviews, induction and training where required, preparing authorisation instruments and meeting reporting requirements.

BACKGROUND

FOI requests received by the minister and assistant minister (all figures are as at 30 September 2024)

- Minister Collins received one FOI request from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024. Processing of this request is ongoing.
- Assistant Minister Chisholm has not yet received any FOI requests.
- The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry received 10 FOI requests from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. This included:

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- One request where the documents were released in full.
- Five requests where the documents were released in part.
- Two requests where access to the documents was refused.
- Two requests where the documents did not exist.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Legal Division

LD02

LITIGATION

S. 42(1)

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S. 42(1)

S. 42(1)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Strategy Performance and Engagement Division

SPED01**ANAO ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS AUDITS****CURRENT ISSUE**

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) on the ANAO's Annual Performance Statements audit for 2023-24 is nearing completion. The department is working closely with the ANAO to address the previous year findings and current year observations.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- In November 2023, the ANAO commenced an audit of the department's Annual Performance Statements for the 2023-24 reporting year.
- The ANAO provided the department with an audit engagement letter on 19 December 2023. The Secretary, as Accountable Authority, responded to the ANAO on 30 January 2024, noting the engagement terms.
- On 16 February 2024, the ANAO provided the department with its draft Audit Strategy document indicating a high overall risk of material misstatement of the department's annual performance statements for 2023-24, which has since been resolved.
- The ANAO provided the Closing Letter to the department on 23 October 2024. (**Attachment A**). In this, the ANAO has both recognised the efforts and improvements made to date and the work still required to mature the department's performance reporting.
- The ANAO's findings include 4 new findings for 2023-24. The 4 prior year findings from 2022-23 that have carried over have been merged into the 4 findings for 2023-24. There is a total of 4 findings for this audit.
- The 2023-24 audit demonstrates the department's performance reporting has improved. The department will continue to develop its enterprise performance and reporting framework as more work is required to increase the maturity of the department's performance reporting.
- Business areas have noted where improvements can be made and changes have been made to the department's Corporate Plan 2024-25 during the audit.
- The ANAO has advised it will commence the 2024-25 audit in November 2024 and the department has begun preparations for this work. The department has requested

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a debrief with the ANAO for lessons learned and to identify improvements to the audit process.

Findings 2023-24 audit

Finding # in 2023–24	Finding # in 2022–23	Status	Finding in Audit Strategy Document (ASD)	Category in ASD	Category in Interim Management Letter (IML)	Category in draft Closing letter
1	n/a	New	Purposes and Key Activities assessment	A	A	B
2	n/a	New	Appropriateness of performance measures	A	A	A
3	n/a	New	Preparation of DAFF’s annual performance statements	A	B	A
4	n/a	New	Record keeping and quality assurance processes	C	C	B
	4	Carried over	Performance measure on point-of-entry failures— not reliable or verifiable	A	Resolved for measure. Overarching issue merged with new finding 1 (above).	

Prior year findings from 2022-23 carried over

- Completeness of performance statements (merged with new finding category B)
- Preparation of DAFF’s annual performance statements (merged with new finding Category A)
- Biosecurity Preparedness Exercises (merged with new finding category A)
- Clear-read – PBS, corporate plan, annual performance statements (merged with new finding category B)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The annual performance statements have been reviewed by First Assistant Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries.
- The Performance and Reporting Sub-Committee reviewed the draft Annual Performance Statements on 17 September 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – ANAO to DAFF: final draft Closing Letter



Closing Letter – Performance Statements Audit

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Annual Performance Statements Audit

Year ended 30 June 2024

21 October 2024

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Executive summary

Item	Overview
Auditor's report	We have signed and will issue an unmodified conclusion in the auditor's report for the 2023-24 reporting period to the Minister for Finance, once all audits are completed. The auditor's report includes two Emphasis of Matter paragraphs to draw attention to DAFF's disclosures regarding alignment with the Portfolio Budget Statements, and the changes in DAFF's key activities, performance measures and targets since the release of the 2023–24 Corporate Plan. The ANAO considers that read together, there is sufficient amendment to be fundamental to a reader's understanding of the performance statements.
Audit findings	<p>This letter is prepared to communicate matters that are directly relevant to the annual performance statements of DAFF and summarises the results of our audit work. This includes the status of the audit findings reported in the Interim Management Letter. The unresolved audit findings are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding 1: Category B (moderate – changed from A significant): Purposes and Key Activities assessment. • Finding 2: Category A (significant – unchanged): Appropriateness of performance measures (includes new elements). • Finding 3: Category A (significant – changed from B moderate): Preparation of DAFF's annual performance statements. • Finding 4: Category B (moderate – changed from C minor): Record keeping and quality assurance processes. <p>Please refer to the Audit findings section below for details.</p>
Audit differences	There were no unadjusted audit differences at the end of the audit. We encourage management to adjust all audit differences.
Audit observations	The observations arising from our audit which we believe are significant and relevant to you include confirmation that we have not identified through the course of our audit any instances of suspected or actual fraud or significant non-compliance with laws and regulations.



Results and findings

Final audit results

Having completed the audit procedures relating to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) 2023–24 annual performance statements audit, we will issue an unmodified conclusion in the auditor's report for the 2023-24 reporting period to the Minister for Finance, once all audits are completed. An 'under embargo' version has been provided with this closing letter.

The ANAO considers that the bases for qualifying the auditor's opinion on DAFF's 2022-23 annual performance statements, and the emphasis of matter, have been sufficiently resolved. These related to:

- (a) **Qualification** on two bases:
 - Completeness – material omissions relating to two of DAFF's three Objectives: Industry Growth (no measures relating to expanding market access for exporters and resolving trade disputes), and Resilience and Sustainability (no measures relating to sector resilience to drought and natural disasters).
 - Biased performance measure – IG-04 *point-of-entry failures for meat exports* was not a suitable proxy for all exports, and only measured failures directly due to the department but not those due to licenced parties.
- (b) **Emphasis of Matter** – drawing attention to DAFF's disclosures about not including performance measures related to fisheries and forestry. In 2022–23 the audit opinion was not modified in respect of this matter.

DAFF has sufficiently resolved these by introducing performance measures for the 2023-24 reporting period that sufficiently report on the matters considered to be material omissions in the 2022-23 performance statements and removing the biased performance measure.

For the 2023-24 reporting period, the auditor's report will include two Emphasis of Matter paragraphs. One draws attention to DAFF's disclosures regarding alignment between the annual performance statements and DAFF's Portfolio Budget Statements. The second draws attention to the changes in DAFF's key activities, performance measures and targets since the release of the 2023–24 Corporate Plan. The ANAO considers that read together, there is sufficient amendment to be fundamental to a reader's understanding of the performance statements.



In addition to the activities reported to you in the Interim Management Letter issued in June 2024 we have completed the following procedures:

- reassessed the appropriateness of the performance measures taking into account DAFF’s responses to the Interim Management Letter, including additional disclosures included in the annual performance statements;
- implemented further measure-specific procedures, including additional meetings with measure owners with a focus on improving measures, review of methodology-related documentation and processes, and more detailed mapping of end-to-end processes;
- assessed whether the methodology for each performance measure produces a result that is reliable and verifiable, and free from bias;
- reviewed DAFF’s “objectives on a page”;
- reviewed early implementation of DAFF’s Enterprise Performance Framework; and
- evaluated the performance statements preparation process.

The following procedures were completed since issuing the draft Closing Letter on 16 September:

- tested the continued operating effectiveness of key internal controls, processes and procedures relating to governance and assurance mechanisms and IT general and application controls that support the preparation of the annual performance statements;
- assessed if DAFF has relevant and reliable processes, systems and records to substantiate the reported results and supporting analysis;
- assessed if DAFF has appropriate quality assurances in place to cover the performance statements as a whole;
- testing the completeness and accuracy of the results and analysis reported in the annual performance statements; and
- reviewed the presentation and disclosure of the annual performance statements and assessing compliance with the relevant requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (PGPA Rule).



S. 47C(1)



S. 47C(1)



S. 47C(1)



S. 47C(1)



S. 47C(1)



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S. 47C(1)



S. 47C(1)



Observations and delivery

Observations arising from the audit

We have outlined below our observations arising from the audit that we believe are significant and relevant to you. Further, in accordance with ANAO Auditing Standards, we are required to communicate certain matters with those charged with governance. Some of these matters (such as the scope and timing of the audit) have been described in our Engagement Letter and other written communications which have been copied to the Audit Committee.

Fraud

There were no instances of suspected or alleged instances of fraud identified as a result of the audit procedures performed during the annual performance statements audit.

Compliance with laws and regulations

There were no instances of significant non-compliance with laws and regulations identified throughout audit.

Internal controls assessment

During the final phase of the audit, the ANAO assessed the following internal controls including systems and processes that supported the preparation of the 2023–24 annual performance statements:

- entity internal control environment and controls including fraud risk assessment;
- IT general controls for systems used to support the preparation of annual performance statements; and
- management assurance controls including audit committee involvement in performance statements reporting and internal audit coverage.

Overall, the key elements of internal control above that we intended to rely upon were operating sufficiently to support the preparation of the performance statements. The ANAO notes that there is an opportunity to strengthen the controls and assurance processes relating to the preparation of the performance statements.



Delivery of the audit

Independence

We confirm that the ANAO is independent of DAFF and that we have met the independence requirements of Australian Accounting Professional Ethical Standards.

Completing our 2023–24 audit

Inconsistencies in the annual report between the audited performance statements and other information may undermine the credibility of the performance statements. We will check the consistency of this information in completing our audit. We therefore require that the final version of your annual report (i.e. printer's proofs) be provided to us prior to its submission for publishing, giving us sufficient time to identify and resolve any inconsistencies.

Planning our 2024–25 audit

Shortly, we will be commencing the planning for the 2024–25 performance statements audit of DAFF.



S. 47C(1)



S. 47C(1)



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S. 47C(1)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Strategy Performance and Engagement Division

SPED02**STATUS OF ELECTION COMMITMENTS****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is tracking the status of the election commitments made by the Australian Government in 2022 relevant to its portfolio.
 - As at 14 October 2024, the department is tracking and monitoring 23 election commitments. A further commitment on the National Reconstruction Fund is being led by the department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR).
- A snapshot and summary details, including those already completed, are provided below and in **Attachment A**.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Of the 22 election commitments made by the government in 2022 and managed by our department, 7 have been completed and 11 are on track to be delivered on time.
- Four commitments are on track but require active management due to various reasons including delayed starts, more complex delivery, or the involvement of other parties in aspects of decision-making.
- Strategies for advancing these have been identified.

Completed election commitments**2nd Dairy Symposium (not funded) (Outcome 1 – item 4)¹**

- The second Dairy Symposium was held in Melbourne on 22 March 2024.

Considering a Framework that addresses the importation of seafood from fisheries that involve illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing practices (not funded) (Outcome 1 – item 7)

- The department delivered its final report to Minister Collins on 16 August 2024. The Minister approved the report and its recommendations and has written to relevant ministers to seek their agreement. Once received, the Minister will seek the Prime Minister's approval.

¹ Refers to corresponding item in the Election Commitment's Report at Attachment A.

Phase out of Live Sheep Exports by Sea (Outcome 2 – item 8)

- The Australian Government considers the election commitment to phase out live sheep exports by sea as delivered – it is now law that the trade will end on 1 May 2028.
 - Exports of live sheep by sea can continue until 1 May 2028 without caps or quotas and export regulatory requirements, including animal welfare requirements, remain in place.
 - Other livestock exports can continue, including live cattle by sea and air, and live sheep by air.
- The government's focus is now on delivering its transition plan.
 - The government wants to enable impacted individuals, supply chain businesses and communities to confidently manage the transition according to their own circumstances and be ready when the trade ends in 2028.
 - The government announced a \$139.7 million transition assistance package (\$107 million as part of the 2024-25 Budget and a further \$32.7 million on 15 October). It has been designed to assist with planning, responding and adapting through transition actions.

Inspector General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports (Outcome – Corporate Matters – item 9)

- Dr Katherine Clift was appointed as the Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports from 30 September 2024 for a 5-year term, replacing acting Inspector-General Dr Michael Bond.

National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) (Outcome 1 – item 12)

- All \$100 million (for initial 5 years) of administered funds committed via contract with University of Tasmania. Research will be commissioned through this program until 2026-27.

Establish a Strategic Forest & Renewable Materials Partnership (Outcome 1 – item 19)

- Partnership established with up to 15 members possessing skills and experience across production, processing, supply chain, research and development, innovation, and knowledge of First Nations matters.

Development of Australia's Seaweed Farming (Outcome 1 – item 21)

- All administered funds committed as part of the 3-year \$8.1 million commitment from 2022-23 to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. Activities will be completed in March 2025.

On track – departmental component completed

Protecting Australia from Illegally Logged Imports (Outcome 1 – item 15)

- All contracts with timber testing labs have been executed and were completed on 30 June 2024. All funds for the one-off grant awarded to World Forest ID (WFID) have been paid and activities will be completed in February 2025.

On-track election commitments

Bolstering Australia’s biosecurity system – Sustainable long-term funding for the biosecurity system (Outcome 2 – item 1)

- Bolstering Australia’s biosecurity system – Package to address foot-and-mouth and lumpy skin diseases (**item 1A**) – is complete.
- Bolstering Australia’s Biosecurity system – Increased Detector Dog Capability (**item 1B**) – is on track.
- Bolstering Australia’s biosecurity system – Exotic Animal Diseases (**item 1C**) – is complete.
- Bolstering Australia’s biosecurity system – National Livestock Traceability Reform to Enhance Agricultural Biosecurity and Exports (**item 1D**) – is on track.

Support Regional Trade Events (Outcome 1 – item 3)

- All funds for the 3-year \$12.3 million package committed; progressing well with several events already delivered. All activities will be completed by 30 June 2025.

Supporting the Development of Sustainability codes to maintain and grow market access (Outcome 2 - item 6)

- The National Agricultural Traceability Strategy: Implementation Plan 2023 to 2028 is being readied for public release.

Accelerate the Adoption of Wood Processing Innovation Fund (Outcome 1 – item 11)

- A total of \$100.7 million was awarded to 33 projects across Australia ranging between \$1 million to \$5 million, from 2022-23 to 2025-26.

Support Plantation Establishment (Outcome 1 – item 13)

- 27 projects have been approved totalling \$15.27 million (GST inclusive), establishing plantation projects across all states (not NT and ACT).
- The 3rd grant round opened in October 2024. (Refer KIB ACFF15 and BPB ACFF16)

Regional Forestry Hubs (Outcome 1 – item 14)

- The current funding for the Hubs ends in June 2025; additional funding allocation is available in 2024-25.
- The department is currently negotiating contract variations with the hub entities. (Refer KIB ACFF15 and BPB ACFF16)

Support for Training and Accreditation in Forestry Sector (Outcome 1 – item 16)

- A Scoping Study was completed by ForestWorks in November 2023 and a contract was signed with ForestWorks for program delivery following an approach to market.
- All activities are scheduled to be completed by June 2026.

Wood Volume Analysis (Outcome 1 – item 17)

- Work is being undertaken in tranches by ABARES with the wood volume analysis report expected to be published in Quarter 1 2025.

Improve Job Security in the APS (not funded) (Outcome – Corporate Matters – item 22)

- In 2024–25, the department will reduce outsourcing of core work in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework.
- As of 30 September 2024, the department’s contractor headcount was 951 which represented 13.4% of the total workforce.
- As of 30 September 2024, 15 contractor roles have been converted to APS.
- In 2023-24, 62 contractor roles were converted to APS.
- The department’s 2024-25 target consists of:
 - Converting 50 contractors to APS staff, resulting in \$6,625,117 in contractor outsourcing expenditure, and
 - 2 consultancy conversions resulting in \$867,567 in consultancy outsourcing expenditure.

Boosting First Nations Employment in the APS (not funded) (Outcome- Corporate Matters – item 23)

- The department has established the First Nations Platform for Shared Benefits Realisation Program and is progressing plans to implement initiatives in the First Nations Roadmap launched in August 2023. Specifically, the First Nations Workforce Strategy, expected to be launched in January 2025, will identify activities to increase First Nations employment opportunities.
- The department continues to look at ways to attract and recruit through various entry program and Affirmative Measures recruitment, such as the Indigenous Apprenticeship Program (IAP).

- The 2024-25 graduate intake includes 4 Indigenous Graduate Pathway (IGP) positions (10% of the graduate cohort).
- The department's current First Nations representation is 2.7% (165 employees) this has increased from 2.5% at the end of the 2023-24 financial year.
- In 2023-24 the department undertook 67 Affirmative Measures rounds, with 29 employees offered positions. From 1 July – 30 September 2024, the department advertised 6 Affirmative Measures rounds and 2 employees offered positions.

Election commitments on-track but requiring active management

Accurate and Clear Food Labelling (Outcome 1 – item 5)

- FSANZ engaged to undertake independent consumer research to understand the extent of any consumer confusion in relation to plant-based and alternative protein labelling. Due to be completed by December 2024.
- Department working with industry sectors to identify how existing arrangements can be improved.
- All activities are anticipated be completed by March 2025, noting that timeframes are dependent on industry agreement and cooperation.

Renewed Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (Outcome 2 – item 10)

- An analysis of the stakeholder feedback received from the first round of consultation has been published.
- Stakeholder workshops were held in September 2024 to inform the National Statement on Animal Welfare, which will underpin the development of the renewed Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.

Commercial Opportunities for Fire Mitigation (not funded) (Outcome 1 – item 18)

- The NSW Government final report to the department in September 2023 found that to provide effective fire risk mitigation, mechanical removal of trees needs to be combined with burning or mulching to remove residual leaf and branch material. Subject to agreement of the Oversight Committee, the report will be published on the department's website.

Forestry Industry Roundtable (not funded) (Outcome 1 - item 20)

- The Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership has been asked to implement the roundtable as part of its development of a long-term national plan.
- The department expects the Partnership will host a Roundtable in November 2024. (Refer KIB ACFF15, BPB ACFF16 and BPB ACFF21)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Summary of 2022 election commitments

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

ATTACHMENT A

Summary of 2022 election commitments

2022 Election commitments (including measures funded in 2022–23 and 2023–24 Budget)			
1	Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system – Sustainable long-term funding for the biosecurity system		Justine Saunders APM s. 47F(1)
1A	Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system – Package to address foot-and-mouth and lumpy skin diseases		Justine Saunders APM s. 47F(1)
1B	Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system – Increase Detector Dog Capability		Justine Saunders APM s. 47F(1)
1C	Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system – Exotic Animal Disease		Justine Saunders APM s. 47F(1)
1D	Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system – National Livestock Traceability Reform to Enhance Agricultural Biosecurity and Exports		Justine Saunders APM s. 47F(1)
2	National Reconstruction Fund – Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Component	N/A	(Managed by DISR)
3	Support Regional Trade Events		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
4	2nd Dairy Symposium		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
5	Accurate and Clear Food Labelling (being delivered under 2024-25 Budget measures)		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
6	Supporting the Development of Sustainability codes to maintain and grow market access		Tina Hutchison s. 47F(1)
7	Considering a Framework that Addresses the Importation of Seafood from Fisheries That Involve Illegal, Unreported, And Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Practices		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
8	Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports by sea (being delivered under 2024-25 Budget measures)		Tina Hutchison s. 47F(1)
9	Inspector General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports		Tess Bishop s. 47F(1)
10	Renewed Australian Animal Welfare Strategy		Tina Hutchison s. 47F(1)
11	Accelerate The Adoption of Wood Processing Innovation Fund		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
12	National Institute for Forest Products Innovation		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
13	Support Plantation Establishment		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
14	Regional Forestry Hubs		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
15	Protecting Australia from Illegally Logged Imports		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
16	Support For Training and Accreditation in Forestry Sector		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
17	Wood Volume Analysis		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
18	Commercial Opportunities for Fire Mitigation		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
19	Establish a Strategic Forest & Renewable Materials Partnership		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
20	Forest Industry Roundtable		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
21	Development of Australia's Seaweed Farming		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1)
22	Improve Job Security in the APS		Tess Bishop s. 47F(1)
23	Boosting First Nations Employment in the APS		Tess Bishop s. 47F(1)

On track but requiring active management

On track – work continuing

On track – department component completed

Completed

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

#	Measure	Budget	Expenditure life to date \$m (flag if under or overspend)	Milestone status and next steps	Risks (if not on track – set of risk(s) and mitigation strategies)	Media milestones	Accountable officer
2022 Election commitments (including measures funded in 2022–23 and 2023–24 Budget)							
1	BOLSTERING AUSTRALIA'S BIOSECURITY SYSTEM – SUSTAINABLE LONG-TERM FUNDING FOR THE BIOSECURITY SYSTEM THIS INCLUDES WORK TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE LONG-TERM FUNDING FOR THE BIOSECURITY SYSTEM AND A NUMBER OF 2022–23 BUDGET MEASURES. THESE HAVE BEEN SPLIT OUT INDIVIDUALLY BELOW.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACKAGE TO ADDRESS FOOT-AND-MOUTH (FMD) AND LUMPY SKIN (LSD) DISEASES. • INCREASE DETECTOR DOG CAPABILITY. • EXOTIC ANIMAL DISEASE • NATIONAL LIVESTOCK TRACEABILITY REFORM TO ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY AND EXPORTS 						
1A	Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system – Package to address foot-and-mouth and lumpy skin diseases – See completed section at end of document.						
1B	BOLSTERING AUSTRALIA'S BIOSECURITY SYSTEM – INCREASE DETECTOR DOG CAPABILITY	\$11.7 million over 4 years and \$3.3 million per annum ongoing.	6.310	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 of 20 handlers have been recruited and onboarded. • Recruitment is being finalised to fill the final budget measure handler position by the end of the calendar year. • 18 of 20 additional detector dogs have been delivered against the budget measure to date. • A novice detector dog training course is scheduled for October with the aim of delivering the remaining two budget measure dogs by the end of the calendar year. 			Justine Saunders APM s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Biosecurity Operations Monica Collins s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary
1C	Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system – Exotic animal diseases – See completed section at end of document.						
1D	BOLSTERING AUSTRALIA'S BIOSECURITY SYSTEM – NATIONAL LIVESTOCK TRACEABILITY REFORM TO ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY AND EXPORTS	\$46.7 million over 3 years from 2022–23 (including amounts in 2021–22)	31.981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) architecture design is underway, in consultation with stakeholders, with the build expected to start in quarter 4 of 2024. • A new grant of \$3.9 million (GST excl.) was awarded to Integrity Systems Company, to support required uplift of third-party systems (such as state government and farm management systems) linked to the NLIS. Work is underway to complete the Activity Work Plan and funding framework. • National implementation of individual electronic identification (eID) for sheep and goats remains on track for 1 January 2025 commencement. • All Commonwealth funding has been allocated providing co-investment for jurisdictional transition support arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All available funding has been allocated for sheep and goat eID. • Jurisdictions are progressing required regulatory changes based on agreed national business rules (the NLIS Sheep and Goat Standards). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of webinars and podcasts to support eID implementation, delivered by Sheep Producers Australia under a Commonwealth grant, are planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Webinar 3 – 1 November 2024. ○ An opportunity exists to note achievement of the 1 January 2025 implementation date. Department to work with the Assistant Minister's office closer to the date. 	Tina Hutchison s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Trade and International Division Jo Grainger s. 47F(1) A/g First Assistant Secretary
2	NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION FUND – AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES COMPONENT	\$500 million	No funding to DAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DISR is the lead agency on this measure – DAFF does not report on this measure. 			
3	SUPPORT REGIONAL TRADE EVENTS	\$12.3 million over 3 years from 2022–23	10.672	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This commitment is progressing well with several events already delivered with more funded for 2024–25. • Beef Australia 2024 completed; all funding has been paid • Casino Beef Week 2023 and 2024 completed. The final payment for Casino Beef Week 2025 is due to be made in November 2024, and is on track • LambEx completed, all funding has been paid • Hort Connections 2023 and 2024 completed, with all funding paid. • Showcasing Australian Horticulture grant agreements signed, and initial payments made. Events to be held 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking and Media opportunities will be available for the minister at the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 22 Events sponsored under the AgriFutures Agritech Event Sponsorship Program, between 1 April 2024 and 31 October 2024. ○ AusAgritech Investor Showcase and Awards 2025 – dates TBC ○ EvokeAg - February 2025 in Brisbane ○ GrowAg - dates TBC. • Multiple industry events under the Showcasing Australian Horticulture grant. 	Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agricultural Policy Joanna Stanion s. 47F(1)

#	Measure	Budget	Expenditure life to date \$m (flag if under or overspend)	Milestone status and next steps	Risks (if not on track – set of risk(s) and mitigation strategies)	Media milestones	Accountable officer
				<p>across the coming months. Japanese inbound delegation scheduled for October 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AgriFutures Agritech Event Sponsorship Program – on track. Final payment to be made when report accepted. Round 1 funding was distributed to seven events. Round 2 is currently underway with 22 events being supported between 1 April 2024 and 31 October 2024. AusAgritech Investor Showcase and Awards - 2023 and 2024 events have taken place. Final payment is due to be made in March 2025 and is on track. Dates for the 2025 event are still TBC. EvokeAg - 2024 event was held in February 2024. Final payment to be made when report accepted. Next event is scheduled for February 2025 in Brisbane. GrowAg - Final payment made in August. The Catalyst Program is underway, and Pitch Event was run in June 2024. Dates for the 2025 event are still TBC. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 Events sponsored under NFF Horticulture Roadshow, between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025. Hort Innovation Australia-Japan Showcase project – knowledge exchange forum on 11 October 2024 in Sydney. The department is working with Grantees and will communicate opportunities to MO as they arise. 	First Assistant Secretary
4	2nd Dairy Symposium – See completed section at end of document.						
5	ACCURATE AND CLEAR FOOD LABELLING – PROVIDED AT - IMPLEMENTING OUR ELECTION COMMITMENT TO ENSURE ACCURATE AND CLEAR FOOD LABELLING- UNDER ERROR! REFERENCE SOURCE NOT FOUND.						
6	SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY CODES TO MAINTAIN AND GROW MARKET ACCESS	\$68.4 million over 4 years from 2021–22	53.620	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>National Agricultural Traceability Strategy: Implementation Plan 2023 to 2028</i> is being readied for public release. A series of traceability grants arrangements are in place or close to being considered and agreed by the Assistant Minister. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcement of successful projects under \$4 million targeted competitive grant round to support adoption and extension of regulatory traceability arrangements for the livestock and animal sector is anticipated in November 2024. 		<p>Potential opportunity for the Assistant Minister to announce successful grantees for the Livestock and Animal Traceability, Development, Implementation and Improvement grants in late October or early November 2024 (tbc subject to consideration of a funding brief from the department).</p>	<p>Tina Hutchison s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Trade and International Jo Grainger s. 47F(1) A/g First Assistant Secretary</p>
7	Considering a Framework that Addresses the Importation of Seafood from Fisheries That Involve Illegal, Unreported, And Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Practices – See completed section at end of document.						
8	PHASE OUT OF LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS BY SEA – REPORTING UNDER THIS ITEM HAS BEEN MOVED TO – PHASING OUT LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS BY SEA TRANSITION SUPPORT PACKAGE OF THE ERROR! REFERENCE SOURCE NOT FOUND.						
9	Inspector General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports – see completed section at end of document.						
10	RENEWED AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY	\$5.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24	1.471	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary of recent stakeholder consultation will be published shortly. Additional facilitated workshops were held in September 2024 to develop the National Statement on Animal Welfare, which will in turn guide development of the renewed Australian Animal Welfare Strategy. A governance closeout workshop for the National Statement on Animal Welfare is being held on 10 October 2024. At this workshop, AWTG and the Commonwealth via SES Sponsor Group (SES from DAFF, DoHA and DCCEEW) will be asked to sign off on draft national statement text prior to AMM consideration at its next meeting on 1 November 2024. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timing for development of the National Statement on Animal Welfare ahead of the AMM in November is tight. External providers will be used judiciously to undertake key activities to support the deadlines, which include the commencement of chapter development this calendar year. 	<p>Tina Hutchison s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Plant & Live Animal Exports, Animal Welfare & Regulation</p> <p>Andrew McDonald s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary</p>

#	Measure	Budget	Expenditure life to date \$m (flag if under or overspend)	Milestone status and next steps	Risks (if not on track – set of risk(s) and mitigation strategies)	Media milestones	Accountable officer
11	ACCELERATE THE ADOPTION OF WOOD PROCESSING INNOVATION FUND	2022 election & 2022–23 Budget: A future grown in Australia	58.638	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of \$100.7 million was awarded to 33 projects across Australia ranging between \$1 million to \$5 million, from 2022-23 to 2025-26. The most recent grant milestone reporting period commenced in June and the department is reviewing these submissions and putting them to the delegate for acceptance. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several grantees have made significant implementation progress on their grant delivery and could be considered for a site visit. 	Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary
12	National Institute for Forest Products Innovation – See completed section at end of document.						
13	SUPPORT PLANTATION ESTABLISHMENT	\$86.2 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to 2026–27	6.181	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first grant round opened on 21 June 2023, closed on 24 January and had 3 batches within the round. The second grant round opened on 9 February, closed on 27 June and had 2 batches. The third grant round is scheduled to open in October 2024 once the Minister for Finance agrees to release the guidelines. This approval is required due to the program's medium risk rating. Currently 27 projects have been approved totalling over \$15.720 million (GST exclusive) establishing plantation projects across all states (excluding NT and ACT). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minister may wish to announce the opening of Round 3. We are working towards an opening date of 11 October 2024, pending the Minister for Finance's agreement. 	Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary
14	REGIONAL FORESTRY HUBS	\$8.6 million for 3 years from 2024–25 to 2026–27	8.319	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current funding for the Hubs ends in June 2025. The additional funding allocation is available in 2024-25. The department will provide a submission to the minister early October 2024 seeking agreement to associated spending and release of the revised Grant Opportunity Guidelines once cross portfolio approvals are concluded. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minister may wish to announce the grant extensions once they are finalised - anticipated October–November 2024. 	Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary
15	PROTECTING AUSTRALIA FROM ILLEGALLY LOGGED IMPORTS	\$4.4 million from 2022–23 to 2023–24	4.357	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All contracts with timber testing labs have been executed and were completed 30/6/2024. All funds for one-off grant awarded to World Forest ID (WFID) has been paid to recipient. Grant deadline has been extended for 6 months to maximise outputs. WFID continue to provide progress updates, demonstrating that the project remains on track. 			Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary

#	Measure	Budget	Expenditure life to date \$m (flag if under or overspend)	Milestone status and next steps	Risks (if not on track – set of risk(s) and mitigation strategies)	Media milestones	Accountable officer
16	SUPPORT FOR TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION IN FORESTRY SECTOR	\$10.0 million over 4 years from 2022–23	1.000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Scoping Study to support delivery of this program was completed by ForestWorks in November 2023. Subsequently. A contract has been signed with ForestWorks to deliver the program following an approach to market. This was announced by the minister on National Forestry Day in August 2024. 			Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary
17	WOOD VOLUME ANALYSIS	Funding provided as part of the forestry data improvements for industry development measure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was funded under the 2023 MYEFO decision. Recruitment is complete. Work will be undertaken in tranches with the wood volume analysis report expected to be published in Q1 2025. Consultant onboarded and work is nearly complete to provide extra assistance on demand side analysis and modelling. Wood processing survey nearly complete. Assessment of revised sustainable yields from public native forestry is nearly complete. 			Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary ABARES Jared Greenville s. 47F(1) Executive Director
18	COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIRE MITIGATION	No funding provided		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are progressing discussions with states and territories in preparation for this to be discussed at the November Forestry Ministers Meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercialising fire mitigation work is a matter for the states. Initial discussions with some state officials indicate concern about commercialising fibre produced through fire mitigation undermining confidence in critical fire management activities. 		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary
19	Establish a Strategic Forest & Renewable Materials Partnership – See completed section at end of document.						
20	FOREST INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE	No funding provided		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department will be working with the Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership to develop a proposal for conducting the roundtable. The roundtable is anticipated to be held in in November 2024, pending confirmation of timing from the Strategic Partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While timing of the Roundtable has not yet been determined, the department has proposed dates and an approach to the Strategic Partnership and expects the commitment to be completed in October or November 2024. 		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1)

#	Measure	Budget	Expenditure life to date \$m (flag if under or overspend)	Milestone status and next steps	Risks (if not on track – set of risk(s) and mitigation strategies)	Media milestones	Accountable officer
							First Assistant Secretary
21	Development of Australia’s Seaweed Farming – See completed section at end of document.						
22	IMPROVE JOB SECURITY IN THE APS	No funding provided.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the APS Reform, the department is implementing the Strategic Commissioning Framework (SCF), released in October 2023, that requires APS agencies to bring core work back in-house over time to strengthen APS capabilities. The department has set a target of converting 50 contractor roles currently performing core work to APS in 2024-25. The department’s Workforce Strategy 2024 – 2027 (launching October 2024) will enhance employee attraction and retention, through identification of critical roles across the department, and utilising labour market trends, the strategy will inform staffing and broader workforce decisions. 62 contractor roles were converted to APS in 2023-24. As at 30 September, 15 contractor roles have been converted to APS during FY 2024-25. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success in achieving this target is dependent on labour market supply, successful bulk recruitment rounds and incentives, and initiatives being available where APS remuneration is below market rate to assist with conversion, attraction, and retention. On-ongoing contracts will be monitored and managed in line with legislative requirements. Including regular reporting on conversions against the departments SCF target. 		Tess Bishop s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary People, Property & Security Tim Simpson s. 47F(1) Chief People Officer
23	BOOSTING FIRST NATIONS EMPLOYMENT IN THE APS	No funding provided.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department has established a First Nations Platform for Shared Benefits Realisation Program and is progressing plans to implement the flagship initiatives within the First Nations Roadmap, which was launched in August 2023. Specifically, the First Nations Workforce Strategy will identify activities to increase employment opportunities. The advancing of the First Nations Workforce Strategy will also support the Muru Western Sydney Airport Project. The department continues to look at ways to attract and recruit through our various entry programs and Affirmative Measures recruitment. This includes the Indigenous Apprenticeship Program (IAP), which the department was ranked the third highest preferred agency by merit-pooled candidates. This resulted in 8 offers of employment being accepted across multiple regional offices, the agency’s largest IAP intake. The 2024-25 graduate intake also includes 4 Indigenous Graduate Pathway (IGP) positions, making up 10% of the total cohort intake. The Entry Program Team have commenced the development of a 3-year strategy to increase participation in the IAP and Indigenous Graduate Pathway (IGP). This will complement the enterprise-wide First Nations Workforce Strategy currently under development, which will specifically focus on improving recruitment and employment experiences for First Nations talent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieving the government’s commitments/targets, specifically regarding First Nations representation is a risk. Mitigation strategies include launch of the First Nations Workforce Strategy, the First Nations Recruitment Strategy, aligning to the department’s Workforce Strategy and Recruitment Strategy, and development of the 3-year strategy to increase participation in the IAP and IGP. 		Tess Bishop s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary People, Property & Security Tim Simpson s. 47F(1) Chief People Officer

#	Measure	Budget	Expenditure life to date \$m (flag if under or overspend)	Milestone status and next steps	Risks (if not on track – set of risk(s) and mitigation strategies)	Media milestones	Accountable officer
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department’s current First Nations representation is 2.7% (165 employees) this has increased from 2.5% at the end of the 2023-24 financial year. • For the 2023-24 financial year there were 35 new starters who identified as First Nations and commenced with the department between 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024. Of these new starters, 10 were onboarded through Affirmative Measures initiatives. • This financial year the department has commenced 21 new starters who identify as First Nations. • From 1 July-30 September 2024 the department advertised 6 Affirmative measures rounds with 2 employees offered positions. 			

2022 Completed Election commitments (including measures funded in 2022–23 and 2023–24 Budget)

#	Measure	Budget	Expenditure life to date \$m (flag if under or overspend)	Milestone status and next steps	Risks (if not on track – set of risk(s) and mitigation strategies)	Media milestones	Accountable officer
1A	BOLSTERING AUSTRALIA'S BIOSECURITY SYSTEM – PACKAGE TO ADDRESS FOOT-AND-MOUTH AND LUMPY SKIN DISEASES	\$10.0 million in 2022-23	9.992		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds fully expended; measure completed. OCVO Northern Australian Office established in February 2023. A range of preparedness and technical assistance was provided to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and PNG - including support on FMD/LSD control and capacity building. 		Justine Saunders APM s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Biosecurity Operations Monica Collins s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary Indonesia, Timor-Leste and PNG support Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Beth Cookson s. 47F(1) Australian Chief Veterinary Officer
1C	BOLSTERING AUSTRALIA'S BIOSECURITY SYSTEM – EXOTIC ANIMAL DISEASE		57.197		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure-specific funding ceased 30 June 2024 Material investment was made under the LSD Action Plan and for FMD. Preparedness for exotic animal disease remains a government priority and is being resourced under the sustainable biosecurity funding outcome. Please refer 2023-24 Measures #1 for disease specific activities. 		
4	2ND DAIRY SYMPOSIUM			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairy Symposium was held on 22 March 2024 in Melbourne, Victoria. It brought together almost 100 representatives from industry groups, dairy producers, dairy processors, employee representatives and government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the symposium, Minister Watt announced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o funding for Dairy Australia to support industry workshops and development plans that improve industry productivity and competitiveness. o second review of the Dairy Industry Code of Conduct to commence in September. 		Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agricultural Policy Joanna Stanion s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary

7	CONSIDERING A FRAMEWORK THAT ADDRESSES THE IMPORTATION OF SEAFOOD FROM FISHERIES THAT INVOLVE ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING PRACTICES	No funding provided.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department delivered its final report to Minister Collins on 16 August 2024 (MS24-000317). The minister has written to relevant ministers seeking approval before seeking the Prime Minister's approval. 		Should the government agree to the recommended course of action, we will discuss with the minister's office the opportunity for some related media.	<p>Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry</p> <p>Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary</p>
9	INSPECTOR GENERAL OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS	\$4.0 million over 4 years from 2022–23	2.216	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The incumbent A/g IGAWLAE (Dr M Bond) finished his 12-month tenure on 21 August 2024. On 5 August 2024, the Minister agreed to appoint a preferred candidate as IGAWLAE and wrote to the Prime Minister seeking approval of the proposed appointment. The appointed was approved by government on 26 August 2024. The Minister finalised the appointment on 19 September 2024. The new IGAWLAE commenced their five-year appointment term from 30 September 2024. 			<p>Tess Bishop s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Strategy, Performance and Engagement</p> <p>Michelle Wellington s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary</p>
12	NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR FOREST PRODUCTS INNOVATION		31.500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A grant of \$100 million has been executed with the University of Tasmania to establish Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (AFWI). Three research centres are being established under this grant, Launceston, Melbourne University and the University of Sunshine Coast. A national open call for forestry research (the first of 4 rounds) has been run with 8 projects supported. Research will be commissioned through until 2026-27 under this program. 			<p>Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry</p> <p>Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary</p>
19	ESTABLISH A STRATEGIC FOREST & RENEWABLE MATERIALS PARTNERSHIP	2022 election: A future grown in Australia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership has up to 15 members with skills and experience across production, processing, supply chain, research and development, innovation, and knowledge of First Nations matters. The first meeting for 2024 was held on 6 August 2024. 			<p>Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry</p> <p>Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary</p>

21	DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIA'S SEAWEED FARMING	2022 election: A future grown in Australia	6.068	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The grant agreement has been executed and the first, second and third milestone payments have been made (\$2.4m in June 2023, \$1.8m in March 2024, \$1.8m in June 2024).• A further \$2m to be paid in the 2024-25 FY.• Two research hubs have been established as part of the National Hatchery Network and work continues on research and development priorities.			Matt Lowe s. 47F(1) Deputy Secretary Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries & Forestry Sarah-Jane McCormack s. 47F(1) First Assistant Secretary
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Strategy Performance and Engagement Division

SPED03

GENDER DIVERSITY ON BOARDS

CURRENT ISSUE

On 1 July 2016, the Australian Government committed to a gender diversity target of women holding 50% of government board positions overall, and women and men each holding at least 40% of positions at the individual board level. The current government has continued with this policy.

KEY FACTS AND RESPONSES

- As of 14 October 2024 (end of the current Senate Estimates reporting period), the department's gender balance for women on agriculture, fisheries and forestry portfolio boards is 52.6% (60 of 114 positions¹, with 54 held by men).
 - The percentage of portfolio board positions held by women since 30 June 2024 has increased from 49.1% (54 of 110 positions). This is due to a combination of new appointments commencing and some appointment terms ending, which have cumulatively affected the figure. These statistics constantly fluctuate depending on the current appointment processes underway.
- The Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report, prepared annually by the Office for Women, outlines performance against the government's target for gender balance on Australian Government boards. The annual gender balance on the department's portfolio boards since 2016 has been:

Date	Boards	Total reportable positions	Women	Men	Change in % for Women
30 June 2024	17	110	49.1% (54)	50.9% (56)	-2.1
30 June 2023	19	121	51.2% (62)	48.8% (59)	+4.9
30 June 2022 [^]	34	242	46.3% (112)	53.7% (130)	-0.6
30 June 2021 [^]	34	241	46.9% (113)	53.1% (128)	-1.6
30 June 2020 [^]	35	237	48.5% (115)	51.5% (122)	+1.1

¹ There is a difference of 4 more reportable positions at the end of the current Senate Order 15 reporting period (14 October 2024) compared to the number of positions recorded in the last annual report on gender balance on boards to the Office for Women as at 30 June 2024. The difference is broken down in detail under 'Additional information'.

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 Last updated: 14 October 2024

SES Lead: Michelle Wellington
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 SB24-000138

30 June 2019 ^{^#}	31	214	46.3% (99)	53.7% (115)	+3.0
30 June 2019 [*]	20	135	47.4% (64)	52.6% (71)	+4.1
30 June 2018 [*]	19	97	43.3% (42)	56.7% (55)	+9.1
30 June 2017 [*]	18	114	34.2% (39)	65.8% (75)	+0.9
30 June 2016 [*]	19	135	33.3% (45)	66.7% (90)	N/A

Source: Figures provided to Office for Women

* Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio

[^] Agriculture, Water and the Environment portfolio

[#] Figures provided to Office for Women but not published in annual report

[~] the number of portfolio boards has remained the same as at 14 October 2024 since 30 June 2024. Details provided under 'Additional information'.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The department reports to the Office for Women on gender balance on boards twice a year with data as at 30 June and 31 December.
- The department has been undertaking activities to promote gender diversity on portfolio boards. For example, on Tuesday 17 September 2024 the department hosted the inaugural 'Women on Agricultural Boards' event at the Australian Parliament House. The event provided a platform for vital conversations on supporting, connecting and empowering more women to leadership positions on government boards.
- The department also maintains an Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio Boards Register, which allows people with diverse skills and backgrounds to be informed of board member opportunities being advertised, and to be considered for board and committee positions relating to their interests, experience and skills.
- As of 18 October 2024, 430 people had registered their interest through the portal (207 women, 223 men). This is an increase of 8 women and 1 man following the 'Woman on Agriculture Boards' event held on 17 September 2024.
- Apart from gender diversity, the department is not required to keep statistics or report on other diversity groups or Indigenous representation on portfolio boards.
- As of 30 June 2024, women held 49.1% of Australian Government board positions, the second highest overall result since reporting began in 2008.
- Since 30 June 2024, the number of portfolio boards (17) has remained the same.
- The total reportable positions at the end of the current Senate Order 15 reporting period is 114 as at 14 October 2024 compared 110 as at 30 June 2024 (the last annual report on gender balance on boards to the Office for Women). The additional positions (+4) is attributed to the following:

- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) Board – Chairperson appointment commenced (+1)
 - Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs Advisory Committee – Three Member positions were filled (+3)
 - Forest and Wood Products Council (Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership) – Co-Chair appointed (+1)
 - Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) – Director position is vacant due to a Director being appointed as the Chairperson (Director position is intended to be backfilled in the coming months) (-1)
 - National Fishing Advisory Committee (NFAC) – member appointment reinstated following withdrawal of their previous resignation (+1)
 - Wine Australia – Board Directors reduced from six to five for the next term (-1).
- The gender balance on individual Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio boards at 14 October 2024 is at **Attachment A**.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Gender balance on individual Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio boards

Attachment A

Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio Boards as at 14 October 2024	Positions filled	Women	Men	Women %	Men %
AgriFutures Australia (Rural Industries RDC)	8	4	4	50.0	50.0
AgriFutures Australia (Rural Industries RDC) Selection Committee	5	2	3	40.0	60.0
Australian Fisheries Management Authority Commission	6	3	3	50.0	50.0
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority Board	4	2	2	50.0	50.0
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	7	3	4	42.9	57.1
Cotton Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee	4	2	2	50.0	50.0
Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs Advisory Committee	7	4	3	57.1	42.9
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	8	4	4	50.0	50.0
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee	5	2	3	40.0	60.0
Forest and Wood Products Council (Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership)	15	7	8	46.7	53.3
Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee	5	2	3	40.0	60.0
Grains Research and Development Corporation	7	4	3	57.1	42.9
Grains Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee	5	3	2	60.0	40.0
National Fishing Advisory Council	12	6	6	50.0	50.0
Regional Investment Corporation Board	5	4	1	80.0	20.0
Wine Australia Board	6	5	1	83.3	16.7
Wine Australia Selection Committee	5	3	2	60.0	40.0
Total Overall Appointments (17 Boards)	114	60	54	52.6%	47.4%

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Strategy Performance and Engagement Division

SPED04**CORPORATE PLAN AND STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC INTENT****CURRENT ISSUE**

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) published its third Corporate Plan on 30 August 2024. On the same day, the department published its first Statement of Strategic Intent.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

Corporate Plan

- The department's *Corporate Plan 2024–25* has been developed in line with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)*, the PGPA Rule and relevant Department of Finance resource management guides. The *Corporate Plan 2024-25* highlights the department's purpose and objectives, and was published by 31 August 2024 as required under the *PGPA Act*.
- The department continues to build the maturity of its performance and reporting, and is implementing an endorsed Enterprise Performance Framework to provide guidance for business areas for business planning, reporting and developing meaningful performance information.
- Performance reporting will continue to be refined and improved over a 2 to 3-year period.
- Guidance materials referencing evaluation best practice and the requirements of the *PGPA Act* and Rule have been developed to help the department improve its approach to performance measurement and reporting and strengthen the appropriateness of performance measures in the Corporate Plan. These guidelines will support the implementation of the department's Enterprise Performance Framework to uplift the department's capability in performance reporting.
- In producing the corporate plan, the department considered input from the Australian National Audit Office and the Department of Finance, particularly around improving performance measures and the ANAO's annual performance statements audit.

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SB24-000139

Statement of Strategic Intent

- The Statement of Strategic Intent complements the Corporate Plan and outlines the high-level strategic goals of the department and supports the delivery of work in line with our Portfolio Budget Statements.
- The Statement was developed following extensive engagement within the department. An all staff event was attended by over 1200 staff, which was complemented by a “Have Your Say” survey with targeted questions that received a total of 159 responses. The feedback from staff within DAFF was positive. The majority of staff responses indicated they can see their roles reflected in the Statement of Strategic Intent (with 64.2% positive responses).
- Extensive engagement was conducted with, key external stakeholders across state and territory Governments, Commonwealth agencies as well as industry representatives.
- The Statement is the narrative that provides us with clarity and guidance on how we will deliver our work. Collectively, this filters down to our group, division, branch business plans and individual work plans.
- The Statement of Strategic Intent is external facing and demonstrates to our external stakeholders such as industry, academia, research and government partners, who we are and how we want to work with them to deliver the government’s agenda. The tone of the document reinforces we are connected, we collaborate and we have one voice.

BACKGROUND

Corporate Plan

- In line with the requirements of the *PGPA Act*, all entities are required to prepare corporate plans.
- The corporate plan is designed to be a Commonwealth entity's primary planning document. It provides parliament, the public and stakeholders with an understanding of our purpose and objectives. It sets out how we undertake our functions and role and how we will measure performance in achieving our purpose, objectives and key activities.
- Under the Commonwealth performance framework, the corporate plan is developed at the beginning of the reporting cycle and sets out the department’s strategies for achieving its purposes and how success will be measured.
- The annual report and annual performance statements are produced at the end of the reporting cycle and provide an assessment of the extent to which the department has succeeded in achieving its purpose.

Statement of Strategic Intent

- We established a strong relationship with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to help inform our approach to engagement with industry and socialisation with the Minister's Office. We also engaged early with our key Commonwealth agencies including central agencies to inform them of the Statement of Strategic Intent.
- The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, NEMA, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, the Department of Health and CSIRO all provided feedback on the draft document.
- Feedback on the intent and vision for the document was positive, with all agencies confirming that the tone and acknowledgement of the department's role was well articulated.
- While the Tasmanian Government is the only jurisdiction to respond to our invitation for feedback, the Secretary mentioned the Statement of Strategic Intent at the Agriculture Senior Officials Committee meeting held on 14 June 2024. We also offered bilateral discussions to all jurisdictions.
- Two 'industry roundtable' forums were chaired by the Secretary
 - 20 June 2024 (18 stakeholders attended)
 - 02 August 2024 (22 stakeholders attended)
 - Participants welcomed the engagement opportunity and noted the positive change in culture within the department's outwards engagement improving.
 - It was also noted that the Statement of Strategic Intent was a positive move towards the department presenting and providing advice to industry with one unified voice. Industry also noted that proposed vision and strategic objectives were concise and well-pitched.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Strategy Performance and Engagement Division

SPED05**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS – RECOMMENDATIONS AND
CAPABILITY INITIATIVES****CURRENT ISSUE**

- In 2022, as the result of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and lumpy skin disease (LSD) outbreaks in Indonesia and an incursion of varroa mite in New South Wales, two reports on biosecurity emergency preparedness were initiated by Government.
- The Joint Interagency Taskforce: Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness report made 14 recommendations.
 - The Taskforce report was released by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on 27 September 2022.
- The Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report on the 'Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and-mouth disease and varroa mite' made 29 recommendations - additional comments provided by the Australian Greens made a further 6 recommendations.
 - The Committee tabled its report on 8 December 2022.
 - The Australian Government response to the report was tabled on 13 September 2023.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Work to implement the Taskforce and Committee recommendations is ongoing.
- Emergency preparedness is a key activity of the department and is embedded in the Corporate Plan 2024-25 under performance measure 'BI-05: Strengthened emergency management capabilities'.
- The measure captures the work we undertake to prepare for emergencies and is informed by the recommendations of the Taskforce and Committee reports.
- Capability development initiatives currently underway include the delivery of incident management training to key personnel, undertaking exercises to test out emergency arrangements and updating plans to incorporate lessons from past responses.

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Joint Interagency Taskforce: Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness

- Of the 14 recommendations, all were actioned. Two have been completed, 11 are in the process of being embedded into ongoing work through complementary initiatives, and one recommendation is in the planning phase.
- Work to implement all taskforce recommendations is further complemented by initiatives such as the National Biosecurity Strategy, which holistically consider preparedness activities across the national biosecurity system.
- The National Biosecurity Committee is also addressing the recommendations of the Taskforce report through its work to embed a shared responsibility approach across Australian, state and territory government biosecurity agencies.
- Quarterly progress reports are provided to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and, subject to approval, are published on the department's website.
 - Reports for the 6 quarters up to March 2024 are available online.
 - The seventh and final quarterly report for the April–June 2024 period will be available shortly.

The Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report

- While Australia remains free of foot and mouth disease, the department is working with other governments, industry and internationally to mitigate the risks to Australia of further spread of disease and strengthen our collective preparedness and response capability.
- The department will continue to work with other governments and industry on the current eradication response for varroa mite.
- Of the 35 recommendations (including those made by the Australian Greens), eight were noted and one was not supported, leaving 26 recommendations to be implemented. Three of the 26 recommendations are now considered closed and work to implement the remaining 23 recommendations is ongoing.
- The department reports regularly to the Minister on the portfolio's Parliamentary Committee activity including the progress toward the implementation of agreed Committee recommendations.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Joint Interagency Taskforce: Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness – Recommendations

Attachment B – Government Response to Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Reference Committee

Attachment C – JIT EADP Quarterly Report March 2024

Australia has a world-class biosecurity system which has kept the country free of serious animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) for 150 years.

Significant economic benefits have flowed from our disease-free status. **Preventing an LSD and FMD incursion remains the priority** for the Australian government.

In recognition of this, the Australian government formed the **Joint Interagency Taskforce of Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness (EAD)** (the Taskforce) to consider the level of preparedness of the emergency management system as a whole to respond to an EAD incursion.

The Taskforce found that overall, the system is strong and it is prepared.

The following recommendations address specific additional preparedness actions that can be undertaken now, before resources are diverted by an active incident.

The recommendations build upon the detailed, well-rehearsed animal health response plans already in place, suggesting actions where national leadership or additional focus would benefit the system's ability to respond at speed and scale.

Legend



National leadership, accountability and coordination



National data intelligence and capability



National crisis communications



National plans and policies regularly monitored, tested, reviewed and updated



Workforce capacity



Mission critical supplies



Working with states and territories



Recommendation 1

Government consider **updating the national coordination architecture to ensure closer integration** of the National Coordination Mechanism and the DAFF-led National Coordination Centre.



Recommendation 2

Government consider **negotiation of a new instrument** to replace the 2002 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) memorandum of understanding on FMD, to align with contemporary crisis management arrangements, to operate beneath the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity.



Recommendation 3

Government consider **engaging a crisis communications consultancy** to accelerate the development of a national crisis communications strategy and 'playbook' to set out strategies, decision-making frameworks and pre-prepared content for initial actions across key time horizons (1hr, 6hrs, 12hrs, 24hrs, 3 days, 7 days).



Recommendation 4

Government consider **establishing a national biosecurity data and intelligence capability** that informs the national collection, processing and dissemination of intelligence to decision making on biosecurity preparedness and responses at the federal level.



Recommendation 5

Government consider **commissioning modelling to determine likely weather events** that could transport LSD virus infected vectors to a location where they could infect livestock.



Recommendation 6

All jurisdictions review and rationalise with a purpose of modernising and maturing key response plans and policies more than three years old to ensure they are contemporary and incorporate lessons from COVID-19 and recent hazard events.



Recommendation 7

Action on recommendations in this report, accepted by the Minister, be **reported to the Minister quarterly**.



Recommendation 8

Government consider **expanding upon its work** through Exercise Paratus.



Recommendation 9

Government consider **expanding on current work across government to conduct modelling of potential economic impacts** and develop a just-in-case policy response for support and recovery to respond to second and third order consequences in the event of an EAD outbreak.



Recommendation 10

NEMA and DAFF work with Defence to **develop contingency plans** to support nationwide biosecurity response activities in an EAD outbreak.



Recommendation 11

DAFF work across government to consider **options for creating more opportunities for First Nations people and Traditional Owners to participate** in and benefit from biosecurity activities including surveillance and feral animal management.



Recommendation 12

Government consider **working with jurisdictions to develop a system-wide strategy** for national animal disease response workforce capacity and training.



Recommendation 13

DAFF, jurisdictions and industry should work together to **develop a resource plan**, including identifying the mission critical supplies needed to operationalise response plans.



Recommendation 14

Government consider further work with the jurisdictions on:

- a **national approach to interstate border control** and permitting to ensure efficient and effective interstate border security movements as part of the enforcement of a livestock standstill or movement controls.
- **continuing engagement** by biosecurity agencies with relevant emergency management agencies to ensure that there is alignment and integration of incident management structures
- **reflecting the common definition** for prohibited pig feed (PPF) and the feeding of PPF developed and endorsed by Animal Health Committee (AHC) in state and territory legislation
- **review and update of plans**
- options to **utilise personnel from workforces that would be stood down**, as a consequence of an EAD outbreak.



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report:

Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and mouth disease and varroa mite.

September 2023

Introduction

The Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report: Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and mouth disease and varroa mite, tabled on 8 December 2022.

The Australian Government takes very seriously the increasing risk of pest and disease entry into the country as the climate changes and global trade and travel patterns shift. While Australia remains free of foot and mouth disease, the Australian Government is working with other governments, industry and internationally to mitigate the risks to Australia of further spread of the disease and strengthen our collective preparedness and response capability. We will continue to work with other governments and industry on the current eradication response for varroa mite and will consider the views of the Committee as this work progresses.

The Australian Government's response to the report is set out below. The response addresses the recommendations contained in the report and takes into account additional contextual information provided by the Committee subsequent to the report's release in relation to the intent of some recommendations.

Response

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, publicly report on findings from their investigations into the origin of the varroa mite incursion in the Williamstown area.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) agrees increasing public information on the source of the incursion is important for public confidence and informing future actions. As was noted in the inquiry, this work may not be conclusive. Releases of information will also need to have regard to the fact that some specific details of the investigations being led by New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) may lead to formal compliance action. DAFF will work with NSW DPI, on appropriate information releases, noting the origin investigations are not limited to the Williamstown area.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry review its food import risk frameworks to ensure that they are fit for purpose and that decisions under the frameworks are accelerated where required.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is responsible for assessing the biosecurity risks associated with the import of a range of goods from overseas. Regular reviews are undertaken, and risk analyses may be conducted, in response to new information about biosecurity risks, or to an import proposal. These reviews aim to modernise Australia's biosecurity measures for imported products to reflect the current and future trading environment. They take into account new and relevant peer-reviewed scientific information, international standards, relevant changes in industry practices and operational practicalities.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry prioritises the enhancement of screening and assessment systems to facilitate the timely processing of mail and cargo entering Australia.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

Enhanced biosecurity detection capabilities continue through the deployment and trial of new technology and methods of detection for biosecurity risk material at our airports, air cargo facilities, seaports and mail centres. This enhanced technology is expected to improve the detection of biosecurity risk material when compared to current screening technologies and supports more efficient and accurate assessments on the presence of biosecurity risk material.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the Australian Government consults with freight, shipping, port and biosecurity stakeholders, including Australia Post, to develop priorities for the implementation and funding of new and emerging technologies into mail and cargo biosecurity screening systems.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) works with industry and partner agencies, both domestically and internationally, on the identification, development and implementation of new and emerging technologies.

Specifically, DAFF engages regularly with international trade and logistics service providers through its Cargo Consultative Committee to consider practical and strategic measures that ensure effective biosecurity outcomes are delivered without unnecessary impediments to trade.

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends the Australian Government, in partnership with industry and state and territory governments, commits to long-term and sustainable funding to the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) recognises the importance of a sustainable funding model for ensuring the delivery of biosecurity outcomes. DAFF has funded Plant Health Australia to develop a national plant health surveillance co-investment model as part of its scoping of a Nationally Integrated Surveillance System for Plant Pests (NISSPP), and will support the implementation of the NISSPP, once finalised.

The Government also supports Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) with matched expenditure on eligible research and development. RDCs such as Hort Innovation are also funding programs in relation to bee pest surveillance.

Recommendation 6

The committee recommends that the Australian Government reviews the balance between sentinel hives and bait hives as part of the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has funded Plant Health Australia (PHA) to develop a national plant health surveillance co-investment model as part of its scoping of a Nationally Integrated Surveillance System for Plant Pests (NISSPP). The government will consider the implementation of the NISSPP, once finalised.

Governments are also considering how the current varroa response experience can help inform future surveillance programs noting that all national cost-shared responses under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) must undertake an after-action review led by PHA and involving both government and industry parties. The outcomes of the review and the response itself will be used to inform the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program.

Recommendation 7

The committee recommends the Australian Government, in partnership with other stakeholders, ensures that adequate funding is provided to the National Bee Biosecurity Program.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of a sustainable funding model for the National Bee Biosecurity Program (NBBP) to ensure the delivery of program outcomes. The NBBP is an industry and government collaborative partnership: Plant Health Australia (PHA) provides national management and governance, the honey bee industry provides funding and resources via a honey levy, and state and territory governments deliver activities and provide regulatory support which includes significant in-kind and financial support.

The responsibility of maintaining the NBBP lies mainly with the state and territory governments as the program focuses largely on management of established bee pests and diseases to maintain the sustainability and viability of Australia's honey bee industry.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has recently committed additional funding to enhance the bee biosecurity awareness activities undertaken by PHA through the NBBP, over the next two years, and will continue to consider opportunities in the future for enhancing the program's effectiveness.

Recommendation 8

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry coordinate a national response to control and manage feral and invasive species to safeguard Australia's biodiversity and environmental biosecurity.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

Established pest and weed management is a shared responsibility between landholders, community, industry and governments, noting it is primarily the responsibility of state and territory governments and landholders. The Environment and Invasives Committee, a sectoral committee supporting the National Biosecurity Committee, provides national policy leadership on the identification, prevention and management of invasive species and facilitates collaboration across all levels of government.

The Australian Government, including both the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), supports a range of work and provides funding to assist state and territory governments, natural resource management groups, Traditional Owners and land managers to effectively manage established invasive species in Australia. These include the National Landcare Program, National Environmental Science Program, Established Pest Animals and Weeds Program and other grant programs. Established Pest Animals and Weeds programs have committed nearly \$160 million since 2015.

DAFF also supports national efforts to control and manage feral and invasive species through:

- the Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer role;
- the development of a new National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP) Framework that aims to revitalise weeds management in Australia. It will allow for new Weeds of National Significance to be declared and introduces Weed Issues of National Significance; and
- funding to support coordinated national action on priority pest animals including wild dogs; feral pigs, cats and deer; and foxes (2022-23). This investment includes assistance for:
 - the upskilling of landowners through training and communication;
 - strengthening collaboration to increase the effectiveness of control actions across land tenures;
 - adoption of technologies and best practice; and
 - collection and sharing of information to measure outcomes.

National action plans for wild dog, feral pigs and feral deer have strong stakeholder involvement and co-investment.

Recommendation 9

The committee recommends that Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia broaden their consultations to include all stakeholders from across the supply chain, including transport and livestock transport industries and the retail sector.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) notes Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Plant Health Australia (PHA) are independent national bodies that are jointly funded by the Australian Government, state and territory government and industry members. AHA and PHA have extensive existing consultation mechanisms, and DAFF will work with them to encourage broader enabling dialogue with stakeholders across the supply chain, including through national preparedness and response exercises. DAFF notes that stakeholders from supply chain sectors are currently not members of AHA and PHA and do not contribute to their operating costs.

Recommendation 10

The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with agencies and industry bodies to ensure appropriate governance and reporting structures are in place to ensure that recommendations arising from simulations and exercises are implemented in a timely way.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

Collaboration on the implementation of biosecurity exercise recommendations currently occurs with government response agencies and industry bodies through established fora, such as the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) and the Biosecurity and Agricultural Emergency Network (BAEN).

This is further supported through collective priority of 'Coordinated preparedness and response' identified through the National Biosecurity Strategy. Strategy implementation planning is underway through a group comprising government and non-government biosecurity stakeholders, including to identify actions that will enhance governance and information flows related to preparedness and response.

Recommendation 11

The committee recommends that the Australian Government increase funding to Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia to enable them to appropriately maintain, review and develop funding and compensation arrangements.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Plant Health Australia (PHA) are funded by all signatories to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). There is a process in place for AHA and PHA to propose these activities as part of their operational plans and seek additional resourcing from all members. The Australian Government contributes one-third of membership fees.

Recommendation 12

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry consults with the honey bee industry to consider the inclusion of pollination services under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed Levy guidelines and legislation.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is streamlining and modernising agricultural levies legislation work is developing legislation that (if passed) would enable a framework under which a levy on bee pollination services could be established. The department expects to consult on the relevant draft legislation. In addition to the legislative framework, the establishment of new levies requires a levy proposal supported by the majority of future levy payers to be submitted by industry to government. The department has encouraged Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) to consider the design of a pollination services levy in advance of the new legislation being in place.

Recommendation 13

The committee recommends that the Australian Government conduct a review of national livestock traceability funding and co-funding mechanisms, to ensure they are sustainable, comprehensive, and equitable.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Australian Government is supportive of national efforts to improve traceability, biosecurity, animal welfare outcomes and notes current work underway by the National Biosecurity Committee. Industry, governments, agricultural supply chain participants and other stakeholders are working together to strengthen our national traceability systems and improve livestock traceability, noting that State and Territory governments are the primary regulators of biosecurity traceability systems that support biosecurity and animal welfare outcomes.

Australia's current livestock traceability systems are world-class and effective, and efforts are ongoing to ensure they remain fit for purpose and able to adapt into the future. There are several livestock and traceability reform processes underway including working towards implementation of electronic identification (eID) for sheep and goats by 1 January 2025. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is working with industry and government

to ensure these processes are staggered, manageable and deliver the desired outcomes within sensible timeframes, which include consideration of governance structures and funding.

The Australian Government has invested \$118.5 million to support the continuous improvement of Australia's agriculture traceability systems. The traceability work program is supporting efforts to enhance traceability systems across agriculture supply chains to safeguard and grow sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry for all Australians. This includes:

- \$68.4 million over four years from 2021-22 to develop a national approach to improve traceability;
- \$46.7 million over three years from 2022-23, as part of the 'Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system' package towards upgrading the national livestock traceability system and transitioning to nationally harmonised individual electronic identification (eID) for sheep and goats.;
- \$1.1 million over two years to support efforts to improve national horse traceability; and
- \$2.3 million ongoing to support the Modernising Agricultural Trade traceability grants program.

Recommendation 14

The committee recommends that the Australian Government establish a statutory or regulatory authority responsible for managing Australian livestock traceability.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The government acknowledges that governance arrangements for traceability are important. While statutory and regulatory authorities are options to manage this, traceability arrangements must be considered wholistically and all options should be considered.

All Australian Agriculture Ministers continue to acknowledge traceability is a shared responsibility, and have agreed to work together on national approaches and aligning key traceability initiatives to continue to enhance Australia's already robust traceability systems.

This responsibility also extends to industry including the management of industry owned traceability systems such as the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). The Australian Government has committed \$26.6 million to support upgrades to the NLIS, and associated activities, to ensure Australia's industry-led national livestock traceability systems remain fit for purpose into the future.

Recommendation 15

The committee recommends the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, in partnership with state and territory governments and the honey bee industry, conduct a feasibility study for a commercial bee hive traceability system.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Australian Government is supportive of national efforts to improve traceability and biosecurity and notes current work underway by the National Biosecurity Committee, recognising that biosecurity traceability is a jurisdictional responsibility. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is aware that work exploring beehive traceability systems is underway in some jurisdictions and this will help inform considerations on the feasibility for future traceability systems.

Recommendation 16

The committee recommends that the Australian Government and Animal Health Australia establish a lumpy skin disease vaccine bank for use by Australia in the event of an incursion.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Australian Government will continue to work with state and territory governments, affected industry parties and Animal Health Australia to determine whether there is merit in developing a national vaccine bank for Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), as agreed by governments and industry in Activity 5.2.c (*Investigate options for the timely supply of LSD vaccines*) of the [National Lumpy Skin Disease Action Plan](#). In the interim, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is working with international vaccine manufacturers to ensure Australia has the ability to access a safe and effective LSD vaccine in an emergency.

Recommendation 17

The committee recommends that the Australian Government negotiate with the United Kingdom Government the ability for researchers from the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness to access and conduct research on Australia's bank of foot-and-mouth virus vaccine in the United Kingdom.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness advises it has longstanding research collaborations with the World Reference Laboratory for FMD in the United Kingdom, as well as other institutions globally, to investigate the efficacy of antigens held in Australia's FMD vaccine bank against new strains emerging overseas. The Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness will advise the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry if they require any assistance in changing these arrangements in the future.

Recommendation 18

The committee recommends that the Australian Government coordinate the implementation of a national approach to interstate border control and permitting, and use of a national movement permitting system.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Australian Government agrees that strong livestock traceability arrangements and 'contact tracing' for livestock are important to Australia's preparedness in the face of the growing threat of exotic animal diseases (including foot and mouth disease).

The Australian Government has committed \$46.7 million over three years from FY 2022-23, as part of the 'Bolstering Australia's biosecurity system' package, towards improving national livestock traceability arrangements. Industry and governments continue to work towards a harmonised approach to implementation in terms of key milestones and timelines, to develop a national system to improve reporting.

The National Biosecurity Committee will consider the merits of a national permitting system as part of its consideration of the National Biosecurity Strategy.

Recommendation 19

The committee recommends that the Australian Government coordinate the development of a national network plan and sustainable funding for the establishment of livestock transport infrastructure at rest stops on key livestock freight routes around Australia.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will work with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to consider how best to support preparedness activities through the utilisation of and improvements to livestock transport logistics.

Recommendation 20

The committee recommends that the Australian Government conduct industry consultation to determine the feasibility of a Road Transport Management Deposit Scheme.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will work with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to consider the feasibility of a Road Transport Management Deposit Scheme.

Recommendation 21

The committee recommends that the Australian federal, state and territory governments commit to a sustainable biosecurity funding model to reflect the changing risk profile of pests and diseases to Australia's agriculture and environment and overall way of life.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

Through the National Biosecurity Strategy, all governments have committed to work together with stakeholders on the development of long-term sustainable funding and investment approaches to support the system's growing needs and priorities. Work is underway – including through a National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Committee comprising a cross-section of stakeholders – to consider how best to implement the Strategy.

Furthermore, the Australian Government has committed to deliver long-term sustainable funding that will go directly to strengthening Australia's biosecurity system. Noting the Commonwealth is a core contributor to national biosecurity outcomes, options for a sustainable Commonwealth biosecurity funding model are being developed for government consideration. These options are being developed following recent stakeholder consultation in which 55 public submissions were received.

Recommendation 22

The committee recommends the Australian Government, in partnership with animal, plant and environment biosecurity stakeholders, conducts a review of how biosecurity funding is allocated to ensure that it is adequate and equitable

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

A strong biosecurity system is critical to protecting Australia's economy, environment and way of life. All Australians share the benefits of our biosecurity system, and we all have a valuable role to play in supporting it to continue to protect Australia – overseas, at our border and within Australia.

As noted in Recommendation 21, options for a sustainable Commonwealth biosecurity funding model are being developed for the government's consideration. This will encompass core Commonwealth biosecurity responsibilities and include investment in critical biosecurity systems.

Sustainable system investment more broadly is one of six priority areas outlined in the National Biosecurity Strategy. Advancing co-funding and investment – recognising all stakeholders have a part to play in supporting the system, just as all share in its benefits – is a key early focus for the national committee steering implementation, the membership of which includes industry, community and government biosecurity stakeholders.

Recommendation 23

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry incorporate an audit of existing skills and gaps in the development of the national biosecurity workforce strategy.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Australian Government supports the proposed audit of the existing skills and gaps as a logical step in the development of the national biosecurity workforce strategy. This will be incorporated into the National Biosecurity Strategy which has identified that that additional skills and infrastructure are required to support a more responsive biosecurity system.

Recommendation 24

The committee recommends that the Australian Government support and prioritise biosecurity officers' capacity and capability development to improve border responses and reduce delays for passengers and importers, and improve Australia's overall biosecurity readiness.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has invested significantly in the capability of biosecurity staff, including through the investment in the Biosecurity Training Centre and new tailored training packages delivered to staff over the past 18 months. The department, as part of its commitment to a professional and capable regulatory workforce, will continue to prioritise support for biosecurity staff who are making important regulatory decisions at the border.

Training is reviewed and enhanced as needed.

Recommendation 25

The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with relevant industry bodies to design and implement measures to improve the capacity and capability of production animal veterinarians, particularly in rural and remote areas, including:

- enhancement of veterinarian attraction and retention strategies and initiatives such as graduate and rural practice incentives;
- compensation paid to veterinarians in the event of their involvement in an EAD response; and
- increased utilisation of rural and remote veterinarians in surveillance and monitoring activities.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Australian Government notes and acknowledges that the initiative to *improve the capacity and capability of production animal veterinarians, particularly in rural and remote areas*, is a broader challenge in the veterinary industry more generally.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has recently participated in, and contributed, to the Animal Health Committee taskforce which is reviewing the National framework for the engagement of private vets during an emergency animal disease response. This is an important initiative which provides a useful platform for engagement on these ongoing challenges.

DAFF has also had recent engagement with the Department of Education who are closely monitoring the efficacy of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debt measures for teachers, and proposed measures for doctors and nurses, to determine whether these initiatives should be expanded to other critical professions such as veterinary science.

DAFF has a particular interest in the strength of Australia's veterinary industry given the contribution this makes to biosecurity and agricultural productivity, and will continue to assist and engage with state and territory governments and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) to enhance veterinarian attraction and retention strategies.

Recommendation 26

The committee recommends that government departments, Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia consult a wider range of stakeholders from across the supply chain, including the transport and livestock transport sectors and the retail sector.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will work with Animal and Plant Health Australia and other government bodies - such as the departments of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts; and Industry Science and Resources - to coordinate dialogue with stakeholders across the supply chain, including through national preparedness and response exercises.

Recommendation 27

The committee recommends that the department, in consultation with stakeholders, coordinate the development of a strategy for biosecurity research development and extension which includes:

- a long-term funding mechanism for biosecurity research;
- approaches to identify research, development and extension gaps and national priorities across the biosecurity continuum;
- strategies to develop better integrations between industry and research organisations; and

- mechanisms to support the commercialisation of research, development and extension outputs.

Response

The Australian Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

As noted in Recommendation 21 – the Australian Government committed to deliver long-term sustainable funding that will go directly to strengthening Australia's biosecurity system.

The development of options for a sustainable long-term funding model for biosecurity is underway. This has included targeted stakeholder consultation to seek feedback on opportunities for government investment including into systems and technologies that both improve risk management and drive efficiency into the system.

Through the National Biosecurity Strategy, all governments have agreed to work together with stakeholders to create a more connected and efficient system in which we better leverage existing and new technology, research and data to facilitate more timely, informed and risk-based decisions. The Strategy discusses initial work on increased coordination and engagement across biosecurity stakeholders, including research and development bodies, investment in transformative technologies, and encouraging greater private sector investment.

As part of the Statutory Funding Agreements, Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) are required to consider each of the four innovation priorities when making investment decisions.

Recommendation 28

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry coordinate the development of national data and information standards, and sharing protocols in relation to biosecurity.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

The National Biosecurity Committee is developing a national data sharing capability that includes identifying critical data holdings across governments, agricultural industries and commercial data vendors. Assessments will be made on data standards, sharing protocols, policy and legislative constraints, including the role of existing systems to support a national approach for sharing pest and disease data.

Recommendation 29

The committee recommends that Plant Health Australia in partnership with the bee industry and other stakeholders of AUSPestCheck, consider the platform's capability and data sharing arrangements for tracking varroa mite should it become endemic.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

Consideration is being given to assessing the role of biosecurity systems, including AUSPestCheck, to support a national approach for collection and sharing of accurate and reliable data to manage biosecurity pests and diseases and export market requirements.

AUSPestCheck is endorsed by National Biosecurity Committee as the national surveillance data system and the department has funded Plant Health Australia to maintain it for the next three years.

Additional Recommendations – Australian Greens**Recommendation 1**

The Australian Greens recommends the Australian Government provide specific commentary on the feasibility of a container levy and outline whether it intends to consider introducing one in this term of government.

Response

The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Australian Government has made a commitment to bolster Australia's biosecurity system including a long-term sustainable funding model to strengthen the system.

Work is underway to develop options to implement a long-term sustainable biosecurity funding model for the government's consideration. Development has included public and targeted consultation to seek feedback on the current funding model as well as options that have previously been provided to government including various air and sea freight, conveyance, or container levies.

Recommendation 2

The Australian Greens recommend that the Australian Government include discussion of state and territory-based biosecurity issues arising from this inquiry in future Agriculture Minister Meetings.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

Australia's biosecurity system is a national asset and the shared responsibility of the Commonwealth, states and territories, and industry. Strengthening biosecurity systems to reflect emerging risks is a significant component of the Agriculture Ministers' Meeting (AMM) work program. In July 2022, AMM approved Australia's first National Biosecurity Strategy. Biosecurity is one of AMM's 3 priorities for 2023 and it will oversee the implementation of the strategy through the National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Committee. The AMM and the Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee are the established mechanisms for considering state and territory-based biosecurity issues of national significance, informed by the work of the National Biosecurity Committee.

Recommendation 3

In relation to inquiry Recommendation 22, The Australian Greens recommend that the Australian Government include specific reference to improvements in training, including the feasibility of formalising and expanding the Biosecurity Emergency Response Training Australia initiative.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

Through the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC), governments have committed to the development of a system-wide strategy that improves workforce capacity and training. A training approach that is consistent with the wider emergency management sector is important to access additional workforce capacity during a largescale biosecurity incident. This forms part of broader strategic considerations about how the biosecurity system can best leverage the emergency management sector training packages to improve interoperability between response agencies.

Recommendation 4

The Australian Greens recommend that the Australian Government provide an update on the progress of implementation of the National Invasive Ants Biosecurity Plan 2018–2028.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

The National Invasive Ant Biosecurity Plan 2018-2028 (NIABP) has been active for four years. Ten of the total 42 actions listed in the NIABP are assigned to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Five of those 10 have been completed and all 5 were high priority, 4 DAFF actions have been started and 1 is to be commenced. The NIABP is scheduled for a mid-term review in 2023 when remaining actions will be re-prioritised and assigned to DAFF, state and territory authorities, NGOs, and researcher stakeholders.

Recommendation 5

The Australian Greens recommend that the Australian Government publish an update on the implementation of recommendations from the 2017 review of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB review) and the reports of the Inspector-General of Biosecurity.

Response

The Australian Government **supports** this recommendation.

In late September 2022, the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) committed to undertake a stock-take of the IGAB review report recommendations to determine their current status and to align implementation activities with work underway to implement the National Biosecurity Strategy.

Updates on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's progress addressing and implementing recommendations made by both the Inspector-General of Biosecurity and the Australian National Audit Office are published within the Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030 annual action plans.

Recommendation 6

The Australian Greens recommend that the Australian Government establishes a Productivity Commission inquiry into the economic and environmental benefits of long-term control of feral animals.

Response

The Australian Government **does not support** this recommendation.

State and territory governments hold the legislative responsibility for the management of feral animals in Australia. The Australian Government provides support, including funding, for management where this is in the national interest or on Commonwealth land.

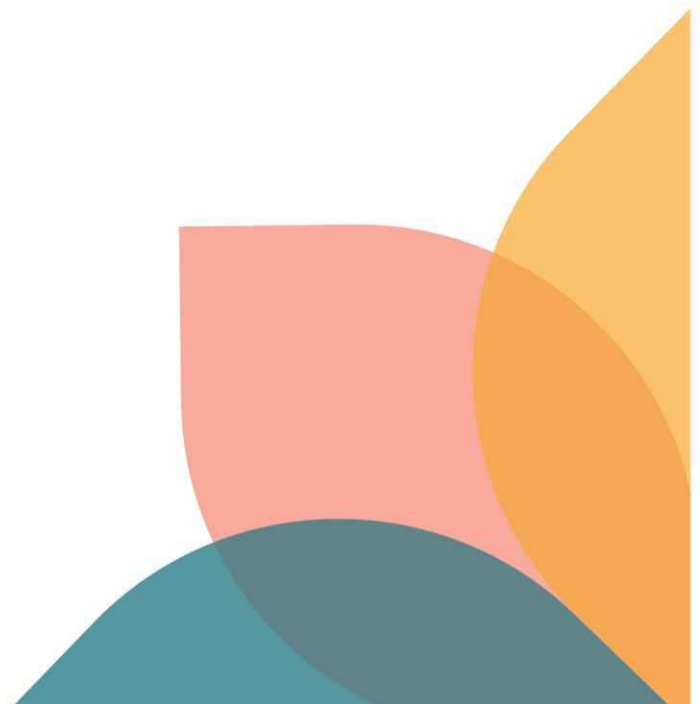
The Australian Government uses a variety of funding models to assist state and territory governments, natural resource management groups, Traditional Owners and land managers to effectively control feral animals in Australia, reducing impacts to provide economic and environmental benefits. These include the National Landcare Program, National Environmental Science Program, Supporting Communities Manage Pest Animals and Weeds Program and other grant programs. These programs have reporting and review mechanisms.

With the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) we continue to work to improve understanding of the distribution, abundance, as well as impacts (including economics) of established pest animals on primary production and the environment.



Joint Interagency Taskforce: Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness

Quarterly Report – March 2024



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.



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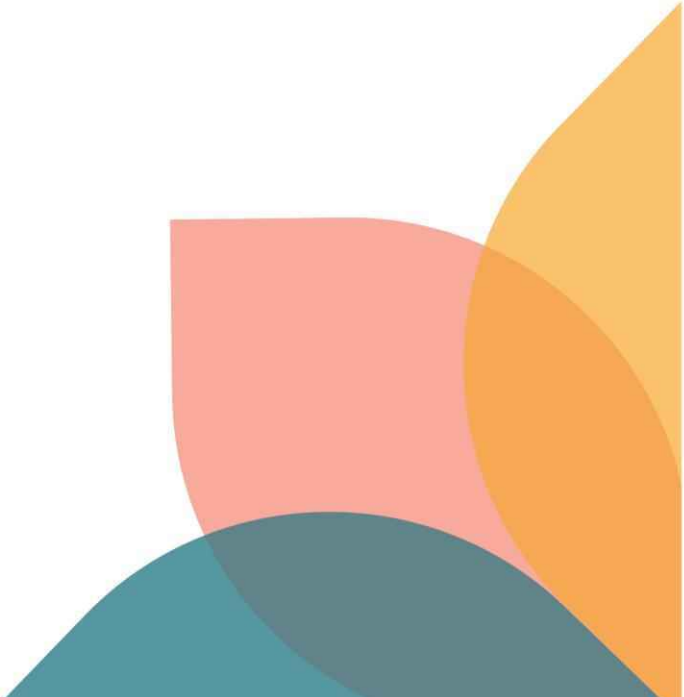
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Summary

On 8 August 2022, the former Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Minister for Emergency Management, Senator the Honourable Murray Watt formally requested the establishment of a time-limited Joint Interagency Taskforce: Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness (the taskforce).

The taskforce was to:

- Ensure that all biosecurity plans are integrated with the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework and with state and territory emergency management arrangements.
- Undertake a series of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and lumpy skin disease (LSD) incursion scenarios to determine respective roles and responsibilities and identify additional actions necessary to ensure we are in a position to quickly contain and/or eradicate the disease and mitigate the consequences should an outbreak occur.
- Provide advice to Government on additional efforts or measures that might be necessary, including additional regulatory or legal measures or additional personnel if applicable.

The taskforce considered the current level of national preparedness and made seven findings and 14 recommendations for action that would build on existing planning and capacity and increase the preparedness of the national system for the speed and scale of response likely to be needed should Australia face an incursion of an Exotic Animal Disease (EAD).

Recommendation 7 tasked DAFF with undertaking a quarterly update on action taken on each recommendation.

This is the sixth quarterly progress report.

Work continued between January and March 2024 to deliver the various strategies and plans that contribute to enhancing preparedness across the national biosecurity system. Much of this work also complements and contributes to the recommendations of the taskforce.

These strategies and plans include:

- National Biosecurity Strategy
- Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030
- Animalplan 2022 to 2027
- National Lumpy Skin Disease Action Plan
- National Agricultural Traceability Strategy 2023 to 2033
- Northern Australia Biosecurity Strategy 2030.

DAFF has developed an implementation 'roadmap' to progress the taskforce recommendations. This has included extensive consultation with key stakeholders to identify relevant actions set out in the complementary strategies and plans. The intent of the roadmap is to holistically consider preparedness activities across the national biosecurity system to ensure that the implementation of taskforce recommendations supports ongoing initiatives and does not duplicate effort.

This report summarises the high-level actions and outcomes against each of the recommendations.

Finding 1: National leadership, accountability and coordination

There is strong support for Australian Government national leadership in preparedness, planning and response. This was highlighted through the scenario discussions and engagement with stakeholders, noting that states and territories are the first responders to any incident that occurs within their jurisdiction and have primary responsibility for emergency management activities, including for biosecurity; and noting the shared responsibility of industry.

Lessons from COVID-19 and the recent fire and flood disasters have elevated public expectations of national leadership when a crisis or disaster is of national significance. Lessons from the UK 2001 FMD outbreak also highlighted the importance of national leadership and speed to action and decisions.

The roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government, States and Territories are being explored through Exercise Paratus.

Recommendation 1

That Government consider updating the national coordination architecture to ensure closer integration of the National Coordination Mechanism and the DAFF-led National Coordination Centre.

Recommendation 2

That Government consider negotiation of a new instrument to replace the 2002 Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) memorandum of understanding on FMD, to align with contemporary crisis management arrangements, to operate beneath the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity.

Action to date

Throughout the quarter, work was undertaken to advance the Coordinated Preparedness and Response priority action under the National Biosecurity Strategy (NBS). A series of surveys, focus groups and Action Development Workshops were conducted on NBS priority areas in early 2024 to inform the first National Biosecurity Strategy (NBS) National Action Plan (NAP). Initial actions for the coordinated preparedness and response priority are focussed on interoperable surveillance and data sharing systems and the development of national biosecurity recovery principles.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) Crisis and Emergency Management branch continues to progress activities to contemporise preparedness and emergency management arrangements across all-hazards, including to further integrate biosecurity hazard and consequence management into whole of Australian government emergency management arrangements.

Collaboration with the Department of Health and Aged Care is continuing to ensure rapid information sharing and decision making across agencies during cross-sectoral emergencies.

Legend: In progress Planned activity

Finding 2: National crisis communications

The Commonwealth, states, territories, and industry have established communications frameworks and pre-prepared messages to be deployed during a biosecurity incident. The National Biosecurity Communication and Engagement Network (NBCEN) has commenced work on national communications and engagement plans. These communications frameworks and NBCEN have been proven effective for smaller scale incidents. The speed and scale of a response to an EAD, and lessons learned from COVID-19 and recent fire and flood disasters, warrant a review of these arrangements.

Recommendation 3

Building upon the work of NBCEN, that Government considers engaging a crisis communications consultancy to accelerate the development of a national crisis

communications strategy and 'playbook' to set out strategies, decision-making frameworks and pre-prepared content for initial actions across key time horizons (one hour, six hours, twelve hours, twenty-four hours, three days and seven days).

Action to date

This recommendation has been fully achieved following finalisation of the Crisis Communication Playbook in 2023.

NBCEN continues to promote biosecurity awareness through social media, website updates, webinars, podcasts, education program content and border signage; participating in training exercises; and updating communication tools, manuals, guidelines and resources during peacetime.

Finding 3: Establishing a national data and intelligence capability

National coordination would be required to provide a common operating picture to enable rapid, coordinated decision-making.

There are a range of systems, data streams and processes at the state/territory and industry level, which are not able to be quickly or easily integrated at the national level. States and territories identified that having a national dashboard was a critical aspect of managing an EAD incursion.

It is important to use modelling to understand where the highest risk regions are to inform targeted surveillance and managing a response.

There is a need for a holistic and integrated national traceability system. The taskforce notes that an in-principle agreement has been reached between all state and territory governments and the federal government on rolling out a mandated sheep electronic identification system.

Recommendation 4

Building on the recommendations from the Matthews and Craik reviews, that Government consider establishing a national biosecurity data and intelligence capability that informs the national collection, processing and dissemination of intelligence to inform decision making on biosecurity preparedness and responses at the federal level. This capability would integrate data from various sources to develop national current (e.g., situation dashboards) and estimative intelligence products (e.g., strategic indicators and warning problems) that inform crisis response, contingency planning and decision making.

Recommendation 5

That Government consider commissioning modelling to determine likely weather events that could transport LSD virus infected vectors to a location where they could infect livestock, to enhance surveillance to increase the chances of early detection of an incursion.

Action to date

Regarding **recommendation 4**, government and industry continue working collaboratively to implement national mandatory individual electronic identification (eID) for sheep and goats, working towards 1 January 2025. This will further improve the accuracy and efficiency of our already robust systems. The updated [National Implementation Plan](#) was released on 27 September 2023.

Work is ongoing to [uplift the National Livestock Identification System database](#) and its supporting systems which will help modernise Australia's data capture, storage, and distribution system for tracking livestock and their movements. The project is being delivered by Integrity Systems Company in consultation with the Australian Government and industry stakeholders.

The Action Development Workshops conducted in February 2024 to inform the first NBS NAP (recommendation 1 report refers) also addressed NBS priority area 'integration supported by technology, research and data.' Draft actions include the development of a national biosecurity research database and activities to strengthen community and local government engagement in research and technology.

Implementation of **Recommendation 5** is complete following publication of the ['Quantitative Risk Assessment for the Introduction of Lumpy Skin Disease Virus into Australia via Non-Regulated Pathways'](#).

Finding 4: National plans and policies

The taskforce's scenario discussions have revealed a high level of expertise and understanding within and between jurisdictions about animal disease prevention and mitigation. Industry is also well-connected into this system.

The speed and scale of a national LSD and/or FMD response would be greater than that for other, more routine, incidents. This is illustrated by the heuristic model. Integration between biosecurity and emergency management agencies continues to mature. It is important that the system as a whole has confidence in and visibility of this preparedness. We note that the review of the AUSVETPLAN FMD response strategy is in the process of being completed by AHA.

Recommendation 6

That all jurisdictions review and rationalise with a purpose of modernising and maturing key response plans and policies more than three years old (for example standard operating procedures and response manuals) to ensure they are contemporary and incorporate lessons from COVID-19 and recent hazard events, i.e. Black Summer Bushfires.

Recommendation 7

That action on recommendations in this report, accepted by the Minister, be reported to the Minister quarterly.

Recommendation 8

That Government consider expanding upon its work through Exercise Paratus to:

- include a tabletop exercise which explores the application of state and territory and Commonwealth biosecurity legislation in respect to an LSD or FMD incursion.

- support Animal Health Australia (AHA) to fully exercise the system and processes for vaccine import, and exercise with the states and territories for the distribution of both LSD and FMD vaccines to ensure there are no critical delays should vaccines need to be quickly imported and distributed.
- develop an ongoing schedule to review and exercise plans and documentation beyond the life of Exercise Paratus, with responsibilities assigned to specific roles. These exercises could include the minister and include a focus on resource modelling.
- re-exercise the International Animal Health Emergency Response (IAHER) manual, including follow-up with international partners, and include the Department of Home Affairs to pre-determine and exercise the processes for securing international assistance under the IAHER, including the most efficient visa process. IAHER is a formal arrangement that provides participating countries access to additional human resources in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak.

Recommendation 9

That Government consider expanding on current work across government to conduct modelling of potential economic impacts and develop a just-in-case policy response for support and recovery to respond to second and third order consequences in the event of an EAD outbreak.

Recommendation 10

That NEMA and DAFF work with Defence to develop contingency plans to support nationwide biosecurity response activities in an EAD outbreak. Envisaged roles include planning and operational support for logistics, movement control and liaison functions, although this has not been consulted with Defence.

Recommendation 11 [REDACTED]

That DAFF work across government to consider options for creating more opportunities for First Nations people and Traditional Owners to participate in and benefit from biosecurity activities including surveillance and feral animal management.

Action to date

Regarding **recommendation 6**, Implementation of the [National Agricultural Traceability Strategy 2023 to 2033](#) continues under the auspices of the Australian Agricultural Traceability Governance Group and supported by DAFF to provide a nationally coordinated approach to enhancing agricultural traceability for biosecurity, trade, food safety and other outcomes. The second (and final) public consultation on the draft *National Agricultural Traceability Strategy: Implementation Plan 2023 to 2028* closed on 29 February 2024. The draft implementation plan is expected to be finalised mid-2024.

The AUSVETPLAN Technical Review Group met face-to-face during February 2024 with a focus on workshopping movement controls for several response strategies, discussing high pathogenicity avian influenza, and refining the 2024/25 AUSVETPLAN workplan. The draft workplan was presented to Animal Health Australia's Member Engagement Week on 19 March and will be formally progressed for approval to Industry Forum and Animal Health Committee (AHC) in the near future.

The AUSVETPLAN resource document—African swine fever response operational guidelines for pig abattoirs has been endorsed by the AHC; and the AUSVETPLAN Response Strategy—Foot-and-Mouth Disease has now been fully endorsed including the section on management of livestock in transit when a national livestock standstill is declared.

Activities continue to progress through the NBS to develop and enhance relationships across governments and industry to improve the national coordination of response activities.

In relation to **recommendation 8**, planning for final activities to be delivered under the Exercise Paratus program is underway, and arrangements for ongoing and systematic conduct of exercises and lessons management processes are being developed under the department's emergency management capability development program.

In relation to **recommendation 9**, DAFF has continued to engage with ongoing disaster funding reviews across the Australian Government and is continuing to assess and identify second and third order consequences. Further development of recovery policy for biosecurity events is ongoing and remains a priority for DAFF.

In relation to **recommendation 10**, DAFF has undertaken a review of the current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) it holds with the Department of Defence setting out how the two departments interact to support each agency's respective objectives, and consulted internal stakeholders to ensure their business needs were captured in the updated MoU. The MoU and schedules are on track to be finalised in the coming months.

Regarding **recommendation 11**, The Northern Australia Biosecurity Strategy is investing in the Northern Australia People Capacity and Response Network (NAPCaRN), which delivers several First Nations initiatives to build capacity and capability outside of the ranger stream. These include an intern program and targeted Vocational Education and Training courses.

DAFF has established a Steering Committee on First Nations Policy to drive actions, including those set out in the First Nations Platform (the platform). The platform sets out five flagship initiatives, with Flagship 2 being a First Nations Workforce Strategy. The First Nations Branch is working closely with DAFF's Transformation Taskforce on the alignment between Flagship 2 of the Platform, and Transformation priority action 7 on workforce planning and development, both of which will advance this recommendation.

Finding 5: Workforce Capacity

All jurisdictions will need to be able to quickly identify and deploy capability in the event of an EAD incursion. Australia has plans for quickly acquiring specialist skills such as veterinarians and epidemiologists from overseas. Jurisdictions have indicated their capacity to rapidly scale-up is likely to be limited by workforce shortages across the system.

An initial 72-hour stock standstill will be a critical period for resources. The next phase of the response will require concurrent response and will include assess and approve stock movement permits, biosecurity orders, testing and quarantining of properties. A strategic and coordinated approach to the deployment of workers in an incursion is warranted. Unions should be consulted in the development of such a strategy, where appropriate.

Recommendation 12

That Government consider working with jurisdictions to develop a system-wide strategy for national animal disease response workforce capacity and training, noting DAFF's previous Vet Reserve program could be used as a guide.

Action to date

The AHC task group—National Framework for the Engagement of Private

Veterinary Practitioners Phase 2—has completed its work and will submit a final report to AHC summarising their activities and recommendations.

The annual Northern Australian Biosecurity Strategy Network (NABSnet) Masterclass was held in Darwin 15–16 March 2024. The network provides ongoing support for veterinarians in northern Australia via regular newsletters, contact through the NABSnet Veterinary Adviser, online resources and subsidies for significant disease investigations and EAD exclusions. Regular e-communications with NABSnet veterinarians encourages reporting and exclusion testing for LSD.

The NABS Animal Technical Working Group met in March 2024 and agreed to a range of projects aimed at boosting national capacity to prepare for and manage an emergency animal disease. Additionally, NABS investment in the NAPCaRN (previously described at recommendation 11) includes several investments aimed at building capacity and capability to manage an EAD incursion in the north.

The NBS highly skilled workforce priority aims to develop and sustain the pipeline of biosecurity skills needed for the future, within government, industry and the community. The Action Development Workshops conducted in February 2024 (previously described at recommendations 1, 4 and 6) to inform the first NBS NAP considered the identification of current and emerging critical skills gaps as a key focus area for NBS implementation.

Finding 6: Mission critical supplies

Based on observations and comments through the scenario-based discussions, there are already mission critical supplies that are impacted by current supply chain issues. This will be further exacerbated in the event of an incursion. This would impact the ability to operationalise response plans.

Recommendation 13

That DAFF, jurisdictions and industry should work together to develop a resource plan, including identifying the mission critical supplies needed to operationalise response plans.

Action to date

DAFF continues engaging with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) on their [National Emergency Management Stockpile \(NEMS\) project](#), and

quadrilateral partners on carbon dioxide supply issues, to progress this recommendation.

The Commonwealth is currently seeking information from jurisdictions, through AHC, on mission-critical supplies that may need to be stockpiled for EAD responses. This includes consultation with relevant agencies and industries within their jurisdictions. Input is expected to be finalised mid-May to provide a national picture of critical supplies needed for EAD response and identified gaps.

As of February 2024, the Vaccine Operational Task Group (VOTG) has met five times and is progressing development of operational plans required to use a registered LSD vaccine during an outbreak. The VOTG is prioritising development of vaccination strategies against LSD before focusing on other important livestock diseases.

Finding 7: Working with states and territories

The taskforce experienced strong engagement from state and territory biosecurity and emergency management agencies, including through the three scenario-based discussions.

Recommendation 14

That Government consider further work with the jurisdictions on:

- a national approach to interstate border control and permitting to ensure efficient and effective interstate border security movements as part of the enforcement of a livestock standstill or movement controls.
- continuing engagement by biosecurity agencies with relevant emergency management agencies to ensure that there is alignment and integration of incident management structures.
- reflecting the common definition for prohibited pig feed (PPF) and the feeding of PPF developed and endorsed by Animal Health Committee (AHC) in state and territory legislation.
- review and update of plans for carcass disposal sites, and where relevant establish agreements for the movement of carcasses between local government areas for disposal.
- accessing remote or isolated livestock, particularly in Northern Australia, including during adverse weather or flooding, for surveillance, testing or other activities.
- cold-chain management of vaccines.
- options to utilise personnel from workforces that would be stood down as a consequence of an FMD or LSD outbreak.

Action to date

The second Animalplan 2022 to 2027 Progress Report published in February 2024 describes several projects that bolster Australia's emergency preparedness and ability to response to emergency animal disease, including the EAD Crisis Management Planning project; Carcass Disposal Destroy and Let Lie project; Disposal Priority project focussing on pyrolysis and composting as methods for large animal disposal; Enhancement of One Biosecurity System; Building EAD preparedness in domestic abattoirs; Exercise Milky Way; and the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) Database Uplift project.

The Action Development Workshops conducted in February 2024 to inform the NBS NAP (previously described at recommendations 1, 4, 6 and 12) produced several draft actions with relevance to this recommendation, which seek to strengthen partnerships and networks between all stakeholders at local, regional, national and international levels.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: People Property and Security Division

PPSD01**SES CAP AND RECRUITMENT****CURRENT ISSUE**

As at 30 September, the department was operating with 106 SES positions. This consisted of departmental substantive SES, employees acting in SES positions, temporary transfers and secondments from other APS departments.

As at 30 September, the department has a total of 11 substantively vacant SES positions (3 vacant SES Band 2 positions and 8 vacant SES Band 1 positions).

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The department's allocated SES Cohort is 96, made up of:
 - 95 positions following the Minister for the Public Service's allocation after the 2022 Machinery of Government change
 - 1 position resulting from a government decision approving the Assistant Secretary, Sustainable Trade Funding Taskforce in December 2023.
- The department's SES vacancies and placements are regularly reviewed to:
 - consider job redesign and the continuing need for SES leads
 - current and upcoming work priorities and associated division/branch structures
 - placements for SES employees returning from long term leave, secondments and temporary transfers
 - determine whether the SES position is required on an ongoing basis or in a temporary capacity
 - consider known cessations and the appropriate movement of existing SES employees to further develop capability and address work priorities.
- Recommendations from the recent external reviews, including an Activity and Cost Base Review conducted by KordaMentha, are being worked through as part of the department's Transformation Program. This review focused on ensuring the department optimises its resources, including its leadership group.

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SB24-000141

- The outcomes of this review will be considered in the ongoing management of the department's SES cohort, including in the preparation of a submission to seek an increase to the SES Cohort.
- Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, 18 external SES recruitment processes have been finalised.
- Between 1 July 2024 and 30 September 2024, 12 external SES recruitment processes have been finalised.
- Details of the recruitment activity undertaken is at **Attachment A** with the remaining SES vacancies at **Attachment B**.

BACKGROUND

- The Government's policy for approval and monitoring of SES numbers provides each department or agency with an SES Cohort to operate within.
- The SES Cohort is based on positions (not employees) and forms part of departments' and agencies' average staffing level (ASL) estimates.
- The department is required to operate within its allocated SES Cohort of 96 or seek approval for an increase from the APS Commissioner and the Minister for the Public Service.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Recruitment Activity – 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024

Attachment B – Current SES vacancies and action

Attachment A

Recruitment Activity – 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024

External Recruitment Process (1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024)	Classification	Outcome
Assistant Secretary, Governance Assistant Secretary, Communications and Media General Counsel, Information Litigation Employment & Commercial Legal Assistant Secretary, Integrity Assistant Secretary, Financial Management & Investment Assistant Secretary, Funding & Revenue	SES Band 1	External movement External promotion Internal promotion External movement External movement External promotion
Chief Finance Officer Chief People Officer First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Strategy & Reform First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Animal Chief Digital Business Officer Australian Chief Veterinary Officer Chief Regulatory Officer First Assistant Secretary, Transformation Taskforce	SES Band 2	Internal promotion Internal promotion External movement Internal promotion Ongoing engagement Internal promotion Internal transfer at level (temporary) Higher Duties
Deputy Secretary, Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry Policy Deputy Secretary, Portfolio Strategies & Services (now Strategy, Enterprise and Engagement) Deputy Secretary, Agriculture Trade and Regulation Deputy Secretary, Biosecurity Operations and Compliance	SES Band 3	Ongoing engagement Ongoing engagement Internal promotion External movement
External Recruitment Process (1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024)	Classification	Outcome
Assistant Secretary, Enterprise & Budget Strategy Chief of Staff Deputy Chief, Veterinary Officer Assistant Secretary, Live Animal Export Assistant Secretary, Animal Strategy & Coordination Assistant Secretary, Plant Systems & Strategies Assistant Secretary, Risk Intelligence & Strategy Assistant Secretary, Plant Health Policy Assistant Secretary, Crisis & Emergency Management Assistant Secretary, Audit & Assurance Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Response & Reform	SES Band 1	No outcome External movement Internal promotion Internal promotion Internal promotion Internal promotion Internal promotion Internal promotion Internal promotion External movement External movement

Attachment B

Current SES vacancies and action (as at 30 September 2024)

Vacancy	Classification	Action
First Assistant Secretary, Compliance and Enforcement	SES Band 2	External recruitment process – outcome confirmed
First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Operations		Internal recruitment process
First Assistant Secretary, Strategy, Performance & Engagement		External recruitment process – outcome confirmed
Assistant Secretary, Farm Performance, Biosecurity & Information	SES Band 1	External recruitment process – outcome pending
Assistant Secretary, National Heritage Trust & Soils		Internal transfer – outcome confirmed
Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Digital Reform		Temporary internal transfer – outcome confirmed
Assistant Secretary, Animal & Biological Imports		External recruitment process – outcome pending
Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Sustainable Funding		External temporary transfer – outcome confirmed
Assistant Secretary, Mail Policy & Operations & Finance		Internal recruitment process – outcome confirmed
Assistant Secretary, Enterprise & Budget Strategy		External recruitment process - no outcome
Assistant Secretary, Agricultural Trade & Market Access		Internal recruitment process – outcome confirmed

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: People Property and Security Division

PPSD02**DEPARTMENT STAFFING NUMBERS AND CONTRACTORS****KEY FACTS AND RESPONSES****APS employees**

1. FY2023-24 Average Staffing Level (ASL):
 2. The department's **published 2023-24 ASL estimate** (as per 2023-24 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) was **5,896**.
 - The department's **actual ASL for 2023-24 was 5,086** which is 810 under the published ASL of 5,896.
 3. FY2024-25 Average Staffing Level (ASL):
 4. The department's **published 2024-25 ASL estimate** (as per 2024-25 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) is **6,166**.
 5. The department's **actual ASL from 1 July to 30 September 2024 was 5,523**.
 6. The department is currently 643 under its published ASL estimate of 6,166 as of 30 September 2024.
1. Paid Full Time Equivalent (FTE):
 - During September 2024 there were **5,615 paid FTE**
 2. Headcount:
 - On **30 September 2024**, the department's APS headcount (excluding the Secretary) was **6,128**.
 - This has **increased by 707** since **30 September 2022**, where the headcount was **5,421**.
 - See table 1 for APS headcount changes since 30 June 2022, to account for headcount changes pre and post the Machinery of Government.

Table 1: Departmental headcount by employment type

Employment Type	30 Jun 2022	30 Sep (MoG)	30 Jun 2023	31 Dec 2023	31 Mar 2024	30 Jun 2024	30 Sep 2024
Ongoing	6,868	4,904	4,956	4,967	5,201	5,414	5,653
Non-ongoing	545	301	328	316	287	264	273
Casual	370	216	200	183	215	210	202
Total Headcount*	7,783	5,421	5,484	5,466	5,703	5,888	6,128

*Headcount figures exclude the Secretary.

External workforce

- On **30 June 2024**, the department's contractor headcount was **926** (including labour hire). This represented **13.2%** of the total workforce.
 - This was a **net decrease of 48** over the 2023/24 FY given the contractor headcount was **974** (representing **15.1%** of the total workforce) on 30 June 2023.
 - From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, **62 external contractors were converted to APS employees**.
 - On **30 September 2024**, the department's contractor headcount was **951** (including labour hire). This represents **13.4%** of the total workforce.
 - This was a **net increase of 25** since 30 June 2024, as headcount was 926 (representing **13.2%** of the total workforce) on 30 June 2024.
7. As at 30 September 2024, for the financial year to date, **15** contractor roles have been converted to APS. While progress is being made in converting contractor roles, overall contractor headcount needs to be monitored to ensure the enterprise level Strategic Commissioning Framework targets (head count and financial) reduction is achieved.
- See table 2 for contractor headcount changes since 30 June 2022.
 - In line with the Strategic Commissioning Framework. The department is committed to reducing our outsourcing of work in administration, accounting and finance, data and research, ICT and digital services, portfolio program and project management, and trades and labour work. We have set a target of converting **50** contractor positions to APS during the 24/25 financial year, which may include ongoing, non-ongoing and casual APS positions.
 - Contractors have been engaged where there is an identified critical need, such as for specialist expertise, short-term projects, surge in demand, backfilling, temporary vacancies, and specific budget measures.
 - The department's procurement process requires staff to consider if a role is core APS business before engaging a contractor.

- The department continues to review its use of contractors and seeks opportunities to convert existing contractor roles into APS, where appropriate.

Table 2: External contractors

Employment Type	30 Jun 2022	30 Sep (MoG)	30 Jun 2023	31 Dec 2023	31 March 2024	30 Jun 2024	30 Sep 2024
Contractors	2,623	1,779	974	868	930	926	951
% of workforce	25.2%	24.7%	15.1%	13.7%	14%	13.2%	13.4%

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The following are the definitions of measures used in this brief.

Term	Definition
Average Staffing Level (ASL)	ASL is defined as the average number employees receiving wages or salaries over the financial year, accounting for casual and part-time arrangements and half-pay/unpaid leave takings. ASL includes the Secretary, DAFF.
Paid Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	<p>Paid FTE is the average number of employees receiving wages or salaries over the pay periods during a month, accounting for casual and part-time arrangements and half-pay/unpaid leave takings. FTE is reported by fortnightly pay periods and not end of month dates.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all active APS staff paid through payroll (part-time employees are converted to full-time equivalent based on the hours they work). • The Secretary, DAFF <p>Excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtime • Employees on unpaid leave.
Headcount	<p>The number of employees directly employed by the organisation at a point in time.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing and non-ongoing employees engaged for a specified term or task or for duties that are irregular or intermittent (casuals) • employees on leave (e.g. maternity leave, long service leave etc)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agvet Chemicals Fisheries and Forestry Division

ACFFD01**APVMA REFORM****CURRENT ISSUE**

- A detailed response was issued by the government on 4 November 2024. This work responds to recommendations made by recent reviews of the APVMA and outlines the government's reform agenda for the APVMA, including reforms already underway or where additional policy analysis and research is to be undertaken.
- Modernising and streamlining the regulatory system and improving safety are key themes of the agvet chemicals regulatory system reforms that will be explored further by the department and actioned in consultation with industry and other key stakeholders.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES*Rapid Evaluation – DAFF Actions*

- On 14 July 2023 then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt announced an independent, Rapid Evaluation of the APVMA's structure and governance, in response to findings of the APVMA Strategic Review Report, which found serious and systemic issues with the APVMA's operations and administration (see **Attachment A** for timeline of APVMA reviews).
- The department established the APVMA Reform Taskforce in February 2024 to develop a detailed Government Response to the Rapid Evaluation and support the APVMA in implementing necessary reforms.
- Minister Watt released the *Future structure and governance arrangements for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority* report, also known as the Rapid Evaluation report, and preliminary government response on 17 April 2024, following careful consideration of the recommendations and analysis to support the government response.
- The Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Location of Corporate Commonwealth Entities) Order 2016, which dictated the APVMA's location, was repealed on 4 June 2024. The then APVMA Acting Board Chair, the then APVMA Acting Chief Executive Officer, APVMA staff and the Community and Public Sector Union were consulted prior to the repeal.

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APVMA Board & CEO

- The department managed the processes to appoint a substantive APVMA Board Chair, Dr Catherine Ainsworth (appointed 12 July 2024) and supported the APVMA Board to recruit a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Scott Hansen (appointed 24 July 2024).
- The *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992* (Administration Act) requires that 'the Minister must cause a review to be conducted of the functions and operation of the Board.' The review must be completed within four years of the section commencing, being 4 March 2026.
- The Board review was brought forward to provide the new Board Chair and CEO with a clear overview of board roles, responsibilities, opportunities for improvement and priority reform areas.
- Thoughtpost Governance Pty Ltd were engaged via the Management Advisory Panel in May 2024 to conduct the review.
- A copy of the report was provided to Minister Collins on 24 September 2024. The department and the APVMA are currently considering the report findings and briefing the minister.
- In accordance with the Administration Act, the report will be tabled in each House of Parliament by 27 November 2024. The report will be published on the department's website.

Safety of agricultural and veterinary products

- While serious concerns were raised about aspects of the culture, operations and governance of the APVMA, the APVMA Strategic Review noted the material before it 'does not indicate any instances where agvet chemical products have been registered inappropriately'.
- Australia's public health, food and environmental safety is assured by an interconnected system of regulations and standards enforced by the APVMA, overseen by Australian, state and territory governments and implemented by agricultural industries. Publicly available National Residue Survey data and Australian Total Diet Studies indicate safe use of agvet chemicals.
- The APVMA Strategic Review identified some instances where safety reviews of chemicals already on the market were taking far longer than statutory timeframes. In response, Minister Watt issued the APVMA a ministerial direction to finalise chemical safety reviews of eight chemicals (see **Attachment A** for detailed timeline).
- The APVMA has established a series of projects for each of those reviews. Seven of eight proposed regulatory decisions have been released, five public consultation periods concluded, three final regulatory decisions have been published and all proposed regulatory decisions are scheduled to be released by late 2025 (see **Attachment B** for individual review schedules).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Detailed timeline

Attachment B – Chemical reviews

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Attachment A – Detailed Timeline

Date	Theme	Action
5 September 2019	Reviews	The then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie appointed an independent panel to undertake a first principles review of the regulatory framework underpinning the National Registration Scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals.
28 May 2021	Reviews	The panel delivered the Final Report of the Independent Review of the Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Regulatory System in Australia (Independent Review).
November 2022	Reviews	The then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt, ordered an independent review into the culture of the APVMA following allegations about APVMA staff conduct raised during Senate Estimates.
8 February 2023	Reviews	<p>The interim report of the APVMA Independent Cultural Review, undertaken by Ms Mary Brennan, was provided to Minister Watt. The interim report identified serious misconduct, including potential breaches of the law and the public service code of conduct. Minister Watt referred these matters to relevant authorities and the Australian Public Service Commission respectively.</p> <p>Minister Watt also requested the APVMA board commission an independent review into the operations of the APVMA, which was conducted by law firm Clayton Utz.</p>
13 February 2023	CEO	The APVMA announced Chief Executive Officer, Lisa Croft, would take a period of extended leave with Ms Nicola Hinder PSM appointed as Interim CEO of the APVMA.
11 July 2023	Board Chair	The APVMA board chair Carmel Hillyard tendered their resignation, effective as of 11 July 2023.

Date	Theme	Action
12 July 2023	Board Chair	Dr Steve Jefferies AM commenced as Acting Chair of APVMA until 12 April 2024.
13 July 2023	Ministerial Direction	Minister Watt had issued a Ministerial Direction to the APVMA to finalise the safety reviews of eight chemicals (ongoing for more than 17 years) as soon as possible.
14 July 2023	Reviews & Chemical safety	Minister Watt released the APVMA Strategic Review Report, which found serious deficiencies in the administration and governance of the APVMA. Minister Watt announced : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Ken Matthews AO would undertake a rapid evaluation of the APVMA and provide recommendations for the future governance, structure and funding arrangements of the APVMA to Minister Watt by 30 September 2023.
14 July 2023	CEO	CEO Lisa Croft tendered their resignation, effective as of 18 July 2023.
24 July 2023	CEO	Dr Melissa McEwen commenced as Acting CEO of the APVMA until 24 July 2024.
19 September 2023	Chemical safety	The APVMA issued a 12-month suspension notice for dimethoate, after testing found dimethoate residue above the maximum permissible limit on the skin of mango and avocado samples. Dimethoate <u>is not</u> one of the eight chemicals covered by Minister Watt's Ministerial Direction.
3 October 2023	Reviews	Minister Watt announced Mr Matthews' rapid evaluation of the APVMA report would have an extended deadline until 27 October 2023.
20 October 2023	Reviews	Mr Matthews delivers Rapid Evaluation Final Report to Minister Watt.
12 December 2023	Chemical safety	The APVMA released a proposed regulatory decision to restrict the majority of uses of

Date	Theme	Action
		<p>chlorpyrifos (insecticide) to address health, environment and trade risks.</p> <p>Chlorpyrifos is one of the eight chemicals subject to Minister Watt's direction for expeditious completion of review.</p>
4 March 2024	Board Chair & CEO	The recruitment process for the permanent Board Chair and CEO commenced.
9 April 2024	Board Chair	Dr Steve Jefferies AM was extended as Acting Chair of the APVMA until 11 July 2024.
17 April 2024	Reviews	Minister Watt released the Rapid Evaluation and preliminary government response and announced key government decisions in response to the recommendations in the report.
22 May 2024	Reviews	Minister Watt caused a review of the APVMA Board.
4 June 2024	Reviews	Following consultation with the APVMA Acting Board Chair, CEO, staff and the CPSU, the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Location of Corporate Commonwealth Entities) Order 2016 was repealed.
12 July 2024	Board Chair	Dr Catherine Ainsworth has been appointed as the new Chair of the APVMA Board for a 4-year term.
24 July 2024	CEO	The APVMA Board has appointed Mr Scott Hansen as the new Chief Executive Officer for the APVMA for a 5-year term.
4 November 2024	Reviews	The government released the Detailed Response to the future structure and governance arrangements for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority report.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Attachment B – Chemical Reviews

Summary of chemical reconsiderations listed in the Ministerial Direction of 13 July 2023

The current forecast dates for publication of the proposed regulatory decisions, public consultation and the final decision are presented in the table below. These dates are subject to change depending on risk assessment outcomes and the information received during public consultation and the resolution of use of protected information.

This information is publicly available on the [APVMA website](#).

Chemical name	Pronunciation	Proposed Regulatory Decision	Public consultation period concludes	Final Regulatory Decision (week commencing)
Malathion	MA-LA-THI-ON	Completed 22 November 2022	Closed 23 February 2023	Published 30 April 2024
Chlorpyrifos	CLOR-PI-REE-FOS	Completed 12 December 2023	Closed 11 March 2024	Published 3 October 2024
Neomycin	NEE-O-MY-SIN	Completed 27 February 2024	Closed 26 May 2024	17 February 2025
Diazinon	DI-AZ-IN-ON	Completed 12 March 2024	Closed 11 June 2024	Published 10 September 2024
Fenitrothion	FENI-TRO-THI-ON	Completed 9 April 2024	Closed 8 July 2024	17 March 2025
Diquat	DI-KWAT	Completed 30 July 2024	29 October 2024	19 May 2025
Paraquat	PARA-KWAT	Completed 30 July 2024	29 October 2024	19 May 2025
Fipronil (Ag)	FIP-RO-NIL	29 April 2025	28 July 2025	10 November 2025
Fipronil (Vet)	FIP-RO-NIL	9 June 2025	8 September 2025	9 December 2025

Last updated 28 October 2024

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agvet Chemicals Fisheries and Forestry Division

ACFFD02**AQUACULTURE IN MACQUARIE HARBOUR AND MAUGEAN SKATE****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The Minister for the Environment and Water (Minister for the Environment) is currently reconsidering a 2012 decision made under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* governing salmon and ocean trout farming in Macquarie Harbour. The reconsideration decision has the potential to impact the Macquarie Harbour finfish aquaculture sector and connected West Coast communities.
 - The timing and outcome of the reconsideration decision remains unknown.
- A key issue driving the reconsideration of the 2012 decision is the availability of new information about the endangered Maugean skate, including new information that indicates the Maugean skate population is in decline and at risk of extinction due to degraded water quality in Macquarie Harbour.
- The Maugean skate is currently listed as endangered under the *EPBC Act*, with a listing reassessment underway to determine if it should be uplisted as critically endangered.
 - Whilst there are a number of factors adversely affecting the habitat and survival of the species, the primary threat to the species is considered to be degraded water quality. In particular, reduced dissolved oxygen levels.
 - There is a link between the reduced dissolved oxygen levels and finfish aquaculture, due to the large oxygen demands of operations.
- The salmon industry is concerned because the reconsideration decision has not been made and there is no indication of when it may occur. This creates uncertainty which impacts industry's ability to contingency plan, noting the process started in June 2023.
 - The industry is sensitive to any government contact and reactive to any government decisions which have any potential (real or perceived) to disadvantage the industry, such as the recent approval of Chilean salmon imports was announced by the department.

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RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The reconsideration of the 2012 decision governing salmon and ocean trout farming in Macquarie Harbour is a matter for the Minister for the Environment and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).
- The Tasmanian Government is responsible for management of aquaculture, operations and licences in Macquarie Harbour under state legislation.
- The Australian Government recognises the importance of the aquaculture sector and is working to support a sustainable industry in Macquarie Harbour while ensuring the conservation of Maugean skate by:
 - Establishing the **National Maugean Skate Recovery Team** with the Tasmanian Government to contribute to the recovery and conservation of the skate.
 - Funding **research**, including \$2.15 million for a captive breeding program and \$3.3 million for an oxygenation trial for Macquarie Harbour to assist with establishing a mechanism for offsetting farming operations.
 - Working with the Tasmanian Government and the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre to allow a **trial of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters** which could provide avenues for aquaculture expansion far offshore.
- The Australian Government support for sustainable aquaculture sector extends beyond Macquarie Harbour and includes:
 - Releasing in June 2024 *Australian Government Aquaculture Statement* which outlines the Australian Government support and initiatives for a sustainable aquaculture industry.
 - Working with industry and governments to implement Australia's fourth national strategic plan for aquatic animal health, AQUAPLAN 2022-2027 to improve the productivity and profitability of aquatic animal industries and to protect our unique aquatic environments from disease.
 - Following endorsement from Ministers at the June 2024 Fisheries Ministers meeting, the department has commenced a review of the National Aquaculture Strategy 2017.

SENSITIVITIES

Recent approval of Chilean salmon imports

- As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), it is important that Australia abides by its WTO obligations and ensure actions are consistent from both an import and export perspective, when it comes to requirements of trade. Refer to **BAD02 - Salmon imports**

Extension to the EPBC Act listing assessment and decision timeframes:

- Minister Plibersek has agreed to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee's (TSSC) request to extend the assessment completion date for the Maugean skate threatened species listing assessment from 30 October 2024 to 30 October 2025. This is a matter for the Minister for the Environment and Water.

Fish Mortality events in Macquarie Harbour

- Mortality events are always concerning, however they are not unusual in animal production systems.
- Australian aquaculture and agriculture work hard to minimise these events and are world leaders in sustainability.
- As part of Tasmanian aquaculture licence conditions, salmon companies are required to report elevated mortality events to the Tasmanian Government.
- Questions about the relevance of the mortality rates and causes of elevated mortalities are best directed to the Tasmanian Government.

Why is the department not providing assistance to the Macquarie Harbour aquaculture industry now?

- The department continues to engage with industry, and we acknowledge that the issue of most interest to industry is the reconsideration process, which is a matter for the Minister for the Environment under the *EPBC Act*.
- The department released the *Australian Government Aquaculture Statement* in June 2024 to outline the Australian Government's support and initiatives for a sustainable aquaculture industry. The department is also:
 - Progressing a review of the National Aquaculture Strategy 2017 to assess the progress of the current strategy and consider the impact of emerging issues, to support the growth of a sustainable, diverse and resilient industry.
 - Allowing a trial of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters which could provide avenues for aquaculture expansion far offshore.

What are you doing to protect Tasmanian workers?

- Aquaculture is now the largest seafood producing sector in Australia and produces many species including salmonids, pearl oysters, southern bluefin tuna, pacific oysters, abalone, barramundi and yellowtail kingfish, the value of the aquaculture industry is forecast to reach \$2.17 billion in the 2024-25 financial year.
- The Government supports local jobs provided by the salmon industry and acknowledges the industry's contribution to the Tasmanian economy.

Engagement with impacted stakeholders

- Noting the reconsideration decision is a matter for the Minister for the Environment and Water, Minister Collins and the department have supported meetings with key stakeholders to hear their concerns and views.
 - Minister Collins met with Salmon Tasmania in August 2024 to understand their concerns and the work driven by industry that is underway to achieve ecological balance in Macquarie Harbour.
 - The department also met with Salmon Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government in August 2024 to listen to their concerns and provided them with an update on future work the department is undertaking including the review of the National Aquaculture Strategy 2017.
 - The department met with seafood industry members during Seafood Directions in September 2024.
- The department also engaged with industry members to develop the *Australian Government Aquaculture Statement* and is planning consultation with the aquaculture industry during the National Aquaculture Strategy 2017 review process.

Engagement with DCCEEW

- Noting that the reconsideration decision is a matter for the Minister for the Environment, the department has been working, where possible, with the relevant areas in DCCEEW to support a sustainable industry in Macquarie Harbour while ensuring the conservation of the Maugean skate.
- Engagement has included:
 - Provision of a submission from Minister Watt to Minister Plibersek on 2 February 2024. The submission was made in response to a request for comment from DCCEEW on behalf of the Minister for Environment in accordance with the reconsideration process in the *EPBC Act*.
 - Contact with the Environment Assessments Division, within DCCEEW to understand the legislated reconsideration process and regulatory constraints under the *EPBC Act*.
 - Contact with the Marine Species Conservation Section, Ocean and Wildlife Branch within DCCEEW on other Macquarie Harbour matters not specifically related to the reconsideration decision assessment process (e.g. conservation matters such as, engagement with the National Maugean Skate Recovery Team).

Aquaculture research trial in the Bass Strait (Commonwealth waters)

- The trial is limited to 3-years from the date of commencement and is being led by the Blue Economy CRC. It will investigate the viability of offshore aquaculture beyond three nautical miles, potentially opening more areas for the aquaculture industry.
- The Blue Economy CRC has proposed a specific trial site 6 nautical miles (12 km) off the coast of Burnie. In addition to salmon and Kingfish aquaculture, seaweed and shellfish may also be investigated. Public consultation from 4-24 February 2022 on the chosen site raised no evidence-based concerns for the trial proceeding in that area.
- The proposed research trial activity was referred on 24 July 2024 under the *EPBC Act* and is currently undergoing assessment by DCCEEW. A referral decision is expected by 1 November 2024.
- The Blue Economy CRC released the trial site variation (within the Fisheries Arrangement Area set out in the Memorandum of Understanding) and the research activity for public consultation on their 'Have Your Say' webpage. Consultation closed on 30 September 2024.

BACKGROUND

- Following three requests under the *EPBC Act*, the Minister for the Environment is obliged to reconsider a 2012 *EPBC Act* decision governing the expansion of salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour.
- The 2012 *EPBC Act* decision determined that the proposed expansion was 'Not a Controlled Action if undertaken in a Particular Manner', with requirements outlined to ensure no significant impacts on Maugean skate populations or the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.
- 2023 Conservation Advice for the Maugean skate identifies the primary threat as habitat degradation particularly due to sustained reduced dissolved oxygen levels alongside hydroelectric power generation modifying river flows and impacts from climate change.
- Between June and November 2023, the Australia Institute, Fitzgerald and Browne Lawyers (on behalf of the Bob Brown Foundation) and the Environmental Defenders' Office (on behalf of the Humane Society International Australia and the Australian Marine Conservation Society) requested reconsideration of the 2012 decision on the basis of new information that aquaculture may be significantly impacting the endangered Maugean skate.
- In June 2023, the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) recommended the Maugean skate be nominated for uplisting to the critically endangered category of the *EPBC Act* and prioritised for reassessment. Formal public consultation on this listing assessment closed on 26 September 2024, with an initial statutory deadline of 30 October 2024. This deadline was recently extended to 30 October 2025. The

Minister for Environment then has 90 days after the recommendation is provided to make a decision.

- Questions in relation to the listing process should be directed to DCCEEW.
- Reconsideration of the 2012 decision is being undertaken by the Minister for the Environment in line with the EPBC Act, through DCCEEW, having regard to relevant comments received through the stakeholder consultation process.
- DCCEEW have provided advice to the department that:
 - The Minister for the Environment must reconsider the 2012 decision and either:
 - confirm the 2012 EPBC Act decision; or
 - revoke the 2012 EPBC Act decision and replace it with a new referral decision.
 - No specific statutory timeframe applies to the reconsideration process. However, the EPBC Act requires the decision to be reconsidered as soon as practicable after the end of the consultation period.
 - Consultation closed on 2 February 2024. Around 2,500 submissions were received.

Recent fish deaths in Macquarie Harbour

- There has been media interest in data released by the Tasmanian Government on Macquarie Harbour salmon and trout mortality rates between the time periods of September 2023 and March 2024. Reports are that 1,149 tonnes of fish died in the harbour in this period, which represents 11 per cent of the estimated maximum stocking density of the harbour.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agvet Chemicals Fisheries and Forestry Division

ACFFD03**FORESTRY PROGRAMS**

Program	Funding Source	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	TOTAL
National Institute for Forest Products and Innovation (NIFPI)	Administered <i>Terminates 2026-27</i>	\$1.0m ⁱ	\$24.0m	\$25.0m	\$25.0m	\$25.0m	-	\$100.0m
Accelerate Adoption of Wood Processing Innovation Program (AAWPI)	Administered (allocation)	\$14.73m ⁱⁱ	\$31.64m ⁱⁱⁱ	\$35.0m	\$25.0m	-	-	\$106.37m
	Administered (committed)	\$14.73m	\$31.64m	\$33.53m	\$20.83m	-	-	\$100.72m
	Departmental	\$0.90m	\$0.52m	\$0.51m	\$0.60m	-	-	\$2.93m ^{iv}
	Total (administered allocation + departmental) <i>Terminates 2025-26</i>	\$15.63m	\$32.14m ^v	\$35.50m	\$25.60m	-	-	\$109.32m
Support Plantation Establishment (SPE) Program	Administered	-	\$6.95m	\$22.43m	\$27.43m	\$16.96m	-	\$73.77m
	Departmental	\$0.3m	\$3.24m	\$2.78m	\$2.80m	\$3.04m	-	\$12.46m ^{vi}
	Total <i>Terminates 2026-27</i>	\$0.3m	\$10.2m	\$25.2m	\$30.2m	\$20.3m	-	\$86.23m
Extension of Regional Forestry Hubs	Administered <i>Terminates 2026-27</i>	-	-	\$0.6m	\$4.0m	\$4.0m	-	\$8.6m
Protecting Australia from Illegally logged Imports	Departmental <i>Terminates 2023-24</i>	\$2.8m	\$1.6m	-	-	-	-	\$4.4m

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Program	Funding Source	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027-28	TOTAL
Support for training and accreditation in forestry sector	Administered <i>Terminates 2025-26</i>	\$0.3m	\$1.7m	\$4.0m	\$4.0m	-	-	\$10m
Delivering the Government's Commitments on Forestry Strategy Development	Departmental <i>Terminates 2027-28</i>	-	-	\$1.81m	\$1.14m	\$0.20m	\$0.21m	\$3.37m^{vii}
Overall Funding (rounded)		\$20.20m	\$69.45m	\$92.13m	\$89.97m	\$49.21m	\$0.21m	\$321.9m

ⁱ This does not include \$1.54 million that was reprofiled from existing regional National Institutes for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPIs)

ⁱⁱ The 2022-23 administered allocation was originally \$15 million, a \$0.27 million underspend was returned to consolidated revenue.

ⁱⁱⁱ The 2023-24 administered allocation was originally \$35 million, a \$3.36 million underspend was directed to support forestry election commitments (2024-25 Budget commitment).

^{iv} AAWPI departmental funding total includes \$0.4m in 2021–22.

^v Reflects redirect of \$3.362m to 'Delivering the Government's Commitments on Forestry Strategy Development'.

^{vi} SPE departmental funding total includes \$0.3m in 2021–22.

^{vii} This measure includes \$1.784m in state and territory funding

CURRENT ISSUE

- *A Better Future for our Regions and A Future Grown in Australia* was released by the government during the 2022 election. It established the government's commitment to Australia's forest industries aimed at strengthening, supporting and continuing a sustainable forestry sector now and in the future.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The 2024-25 Budget included \$3.4 million to help Australia's forestry **industry to plan for the long term**. This includes reviewing the National Forest Policy Statement, supporting the Strategic Partnership, developing a Timber Fibre Strategy and delivering on the election commitment to conduct a Forestry Industry Roundtable.
 - In 2023, forestry ministers from all jurisdictions agreed to conduct a joint public review of the National Forest Policy Statement, which has not had a full review since its establishment in the 1990s.
 - The Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership has been tasked with leading the development of the Timber Fibre Strategy and an associated industry roundtable.
 - The Fifth Estate Consultancy Pty Ltd has been engaged to support the development of the Strategy.
- The government has awarded a grant to the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to establish the Australia wide **National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI)** (\$100 million) which is operating as *Australian Forest and Wood Innovations* (AFWI) with regional research centres at UTAS in Launceston, the University of Melbourne and the University of the Sunshine Coast.
- The **Accelerate Adoption of Wood Processing Innovation (AAWPI)** Program (\$106.37 million) is supporting wood processors to adopt new and upgraded wood processing facilities to improve available wood supplies, increase production facilities and reduce the industry's carbon footprint.
 - The program is delivering 33 projects totalling \$100.72 million being awarded across Australia which are leveraging approximately \$200 million of co-investment.
 - As at 30 September 2024, \$56.69 million has been released in payments to grantees.
- The **Support Plantation Establishment (SPE)** Program (\$73.76 million) is supporting the establishment of new long-rotation plantations to secure future domestic wood supply and contribute to Australia's emissions reduction commitments.
 - The program's third round opened on 11 October 2024 and closes on 5 November 2025.

- To date, \$15.72 million has been awarded in grant funding to establish 27 new plantation projects totalling over 8,200 hectares in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.
- Additional funding of \$8.60 million for the 11 **Regional Forestry Hubs** will extend their operation for a further 2 years, until June 2027 and introduce the delivery of activities to promote the outcomes of forestry research, particularly from the AFWI.
 - The current funding for the Hubs ends in August 2025. The additional funding allocation is available in 2024-25. Grant variations have been offered to each of the 11 Hubs.
- The **Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership** has met three times, on 1 June and 3 August 2023, 6 August 2024, and is expected to meet in November.
 - The Partnership is a mechanism to consult and exchange advice and information between the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and stakeholders in the forest and wood products industry and is providing advice to the Minister about a Timber Fibre Strategy.
- The government committed to combat **illegally logged imports** (\$4.4 million) through trialling timber identification methods to verify claims of species and/or origin and exploring IT solutions for due diligence e-declarations.
 - A trial of timber testing and internal exploration of IT solutions have been completed. The department is considering results from both projects and will quantify likely costs and make recommendations on implementation once the illegal logging legislative reforms are in place.
- ForestWorks has been appointed to deliver the **Forestry Workforce Training Program** (\$10 million). ForestWorks was appointed following an approach to market through AusTender.
 - The program will support the forestry and wood processing sectors through the delivery of qualifications, competencies, or credentials to meet the specific training and accreditation needs of the forest and wood products industries.
- The **Wood Volumes Analysis** was funded under the 2023-24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) decision.
 - The intention is to deliver a wood volume analysis that considers the portfolio of supply options available to meet Australian demand for forest and wood products.
- The work will be undertaken in tranches through to quarter 1 of 2025 and will cover domestic supply, domestic demand and international trade.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division

APD01**AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE**

2024-25 Budget measures ¹	Financial Year (figures GST exclusive)			
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Total
<i>Administered - National Farm Safety Week</i>	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$375,000
<i>Administered - AgCAREERSTART</i>	\$100,000	\$411,000	\$0	\$511,000
<i>Administered - AgConnections</i>	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$1,000,000
<i>Departmental</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Overall Expenditure	\$725,000	\$1,036,000	\$125,000	\$1,886,000

CURRENT ISSUE

- Access to labour is a longstanding issue in agriculture and related processing businesses, exacerbated by tight labour market conditions across the economy.
- Agricultural stakeholders are concerned about the impacts government policy is having on its ability to access labour.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- We work collaboratively across portfolios and with industry and unions to ensure the workforce needs of agriculture are understood and considered.
- 2024-25 Budget allocated \$1.9 million over three years to assist industry in attracting talent and building foundations of a skilled and safe workforce. This includes:
 - \$0.5 million to support the continuation of the AgCAREERSTART gap year employment program for an additional two years.
 - o department is progressing a variation to the existing funding agreement to deliver this funding.
 - \$0.4 million to fund National Farm Safety Week activities aimed at reducing farm injuries and fatalities for an additional three years.

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- department is progressing a variation to the existing funding agreement to deliver this funding.
- \$1 million to support the new AgConnections pilot program over two years. This pilot aims to increase the number of highly skilled graduates entering the sector by facilitating agriculture-related industry connection, work experience placements and other opportunities for university students.
 - Grant applications were open from 17 September to 15 October 2024 – department is currently undertaking assessment of applications.
- We have boosted the skill levels of industry with over 19,600 enrolments from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024 in agriculture related courses under the fee free TAFE initiative².
- The tripartite Agricultural Workforce Forum continues to discuss workforce issues and potential solutions in the agriculture and processing sector, including:
 - direct engagement on the regional migration review including the Working Holiday Maker program.
 - forming part of an industry Advisory Group that has informed the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Food Supply Chain Capacity Study.
 - providing insights into the scoping project for an Agricultural Trade Apprenticeship pathway undertaken Skills Insight.
- The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme continues to provide a critical contribution to farms and meat processing facilities with over 28,000 workers as at August 2024, with the number of approved employers continuing to grow².

KEY DATA

- Agriculture Workforce³: 285,600 people are employed in agriculture as their main job (August 2024).
- Working Holiday Makers⁴: 192,631 WHMs in Australia as at 30 September 2024.
- PALM scheme²: 16,105 workers in agriculture and 12,135 in meat processing, out of a total of 30,805 PALM scheme workers in Australia as at 31 August 2024. 481 PALM scheme approved employers as at 31 August 2024.

SOURCES

1. Budget Factsheet – Foundations for the Australian Agricultural Workforce.
2. Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey – August 2024.
4. Department of Home Affairs.

BACKGROUND – Key initiatives and issues

Agricultural Workforce Forum (the Forum)

- Established in November 2023 as a successor to the Agricultural Working Group (the Working Group) to continue tripartite engagement on agricultural workforce issues.
 - Five meetings over November 2023 to October 2024.
 - Chaired by Secretary Adam Fennessy, with (former) Minister Watt and Assistant Minister Chisholm attending.
 - Key areas of focus for the Forum include attracting workers to the agriculture sector, skills and training, migration, workforce data, worker protection, inclusion and housing and accommodation for regional workers.
- The Working Group met 10 times from October 2022 to September 2023 and included discussions with the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Minister for Skills and Training.

PALM scheme

Exploitation of workers

- We are aware of the recent media regarding comments by the President of East Timor and the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and the recent report by the Anti-slavery Commissioner for NSW, regarding concerns of exploitation of workers under the PALM scheme.
- The welfare and wellbeing of PALM scheme workers is of central importance to the government and our Pacific and Timor-Leste partners.
- The PALM scheme settings aim to balance the needs of employers with strong protections for PALM scheme workers. Addressing risks of exploitation is central to new scheme settings.
- Exploitation of workers is not tolerated, including where workers are coerced to leave the scheme, or their migrant status is used to threaten and coerce.

Refer detailed questions on the PALM scheme to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Changes to the Deed and Guidelines

- We are expanding and improving the PALM scheme, and the government has committed nearly \$440 million across successive budgets to deliver on this promise.
- New PALM scheme Deed and Guidelines were introduced mid-2023.
- Includes several changes to improve conditions and strengthen workplace protection for workers.

- Pay parity: employers to pay PALM workers the same full rate of pay as other workers performing the same type of work at the same workplace.
 - Clarifications on industry experience requirements, labour market testing and portability arrangements along with making interim standdown provisions permanent.
 - Employers must offer long-term workers full-time from 1 October 2023.
 - Employers must offer short-term workers average 30 hours per week (averaged over four weeks) and from 1 July 2025, minimum 30 hours per week every week.
 - Minimum net pay guarantee of \$200 per week after tax and deductions.
 - If less than 20 hours offered in a week, employers must cover the cost of the worker's accommodation and transport for that week.
 - Employers to provide access to Welfare and Wellbeing Support Person (ratio of 1 to 120 workers) within 200km of worker placement.
- The government is closely monitoring the impact of recent changes to PALM scheme settings and is committed to ensuring it delivers for all stakeholders.

Refer detailed questions on the PALM scheme to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

PALM data

- The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations recently published historical PALM scheme data, providing the full suite of data and ensuring stakeholders have access to reliable and transparent information when they need it.
 - This followed a quality review undertaken in early 2024 that identified errors in previously reported worker data.
 - The PALM scheme continues to provide mutual benefits for Australian, Pacific and Timor-Leste economies and communities.
 - Worker participation will vary from month to month and be affected by a range of factors including seasonal patterns or workers returning home for holidays.
- The government remains committed to responsible and sustainable growth of the PALM scheme to meet industry demand and the aspirations of partner countries.

Refer detailed questions on the PALM scheme to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Review of Regional Migration Settings Discussion Paper

- Government released the Review of Regional Migration Settings Discussion Paper (the discussion paper) on Friday 21 June 2024.

- Feedback is helping inform migration settings for visas important to regional Australia, including the Working Holiday Maker program, Designated Area Migration Agreements, and Regional Skilled visas.
- The migration system is complex, and the government is looking to simplify settings where possible while addressing worker exploitation and ensuring migration continues to support the need for essential skills in regional Australia.
- Submissions are now closed. The Department of Home Affairs is undertaking a stakeholder consultation process, with 26 virtual consultations and around 20 in-person sessions already completed.
- Government is considering feedback received. Any changes are subject to government priorities and will take into consideration stakeholder views, immigration risks, labour market impacts and protections for vulnerable workers.
- The discussion paper ruled out limiting the Working Holiday Maker program to a single year, as was suggested by the independent Migration Review.
- No decision has been made on removing the specified work (known as the '88 days') requirement for those seeking second or third Working Holiday Maker visas.

Refer further questions to the Department of Home Affairs.

Vietnam Labour Mobility Arrangement (VLMA)

- Australia and Vietnam in March 2022 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the now-ceased Australian Agriculture Visa program. Implementation arrangements for the MOU were signed by both governments on 1 March 2024.
- The VLMA will enable up to 1,000 Vietnamese workers to work in agriculture and related industries, including meat processing, fisheries and forestry, in Australia for up to 4 years.
- Only PALM scheme Approved Employers are eligible, and the PALM scheme's Deed and Guidelines will apply.
 - Vietnam will not be a full participant in the PALM scheme.
- An Expression of Interest process for employers was recently completed (closed 27 September 2024) with applications currently under review. Further EOI processes may be undertaken in the future.
- Work is progressing in Vietnam on recruitment pathways with the first workers estimated to arrive in Australia in late 2024.
- These arrangements will complement other policies and programs that are supporting farmers to meet their workforce needs such as the PALM scheme, fee-free TAFE places, and other visa pathways.

Refer further questions to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division

APD02**COMPETITION****CURRENT ISSUE**

- Australians are facing increasing cost-of-living pressures.
- The Australian Government is working to address competition issues, including across the agricultural supply chain, to help combat the rising cost-of-living.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Competition is critical for lifting dynamism, productivity and wage growth, and putting downward pressure on prices.
- The department is working across government to ensure that producers are treated fairly and receive appropriate remuneration for their hard work including working with Treasury on the Review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct and will soon commence reviews of both the Dairy and Horticulture Codes of Conduct.
 - As part of the Review of the Food and Grocery Code of conduct, Minister Watt convened industry roundtables with producers and processors to help the independent Reviewer, Dr Emerson, hear directly from industry stakeholders (15 and 21 February 2024 and 1 May 2024)
- The government has committed to implementing all 11 recommendations of the independent review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct including making the code mandatory and introducing penalties and enforcement actions.
- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) released its Supermarket Inquiry interim report 27 September 2024 noting consumer and grocery suppliers' concerns that some of Australia's supermarket retailers have considerable market power and are engaging in practices which disadvantage both their customers and suppliers.
 - The ACCC has committed to undertaking in-depth case studies of key grocery supply chains in the next phase of its inquiry – these will shed further light on the issues raised across the supply chain in the interim report
- The government committed \$30 million in additional funding to the ACCC to help the regulator combat misleading and deceptive pricing practices and unconscionable conduct in the supermarket sector.

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- CHOICE, Australia's leading consumer advocacy group, was provided with \$1.1 million over three years to develop and publish quarterly supermarket price comparison reports providing consumers with clear, reliable information about different supermarket prices.
- All of these actions will support consumers and improve transparency for producers and processors, so they have improved information to use in their contractual negotiations with the retail sector.

BACKGROUND

ACCC Supermarket Inquiry 2024-25

- On 1 February 2024, the Australian Government directed the ACCC to conduct an inquiry into Australia's supermarket sector, examining:
 - the approach to setting prices in the supermarket sector
 - competition in the sector
 - non-price aspects of competition in the sector, including loyalty programs.
- An issues paper was released on 29 February 2024 seeking views on key issues related to grocery retailing and supply chains.
- The ACCC ran a consumer survey to better understand their engagement with supermarkets and conducted industry roundtables with farmers and suppliers across Australia.
- An interim report was released 27 September 2024. The interim report does not make any findings or recommendations.
- A final report is due to be provided to government by 28 February 2025.

Interim report – ACCC Supermarket Inquiry 2024-25

- The interim report outlines the issues and concerns gathered through:
 - submissions to the issues paper
 - consumer survey responses
 - feedback from fresh produce supplier roundtables.
- Suppliers have raised strong concerns about their trading relationships with supermarkets including:
 - the prices they receive (often below cost of production)
 - their inability to negotiate
 - a lack of transparency in supply processes
 - disproportionate levels of risk on suppliers compared to supermarkets

- payments that suppliers are required or pressured to make (e.g. promotions).
- The ACCC has not yet reached conclusions about suppliers' concerns.
- The interim report recognises:
 - the depth, extent and complexity of concerns related to the supermarkets
 - the spectrum of supplier and consumer experiences and that not all concerns are held uniformly.
- Next steps include:
 - formal hearings across October and November 2024
 - gathering more information, potentially using compulsory information gathering powers
 - undertaking in-depth case studies of key grocery supply chains
 - examining prices and margins along those supply chains – to the extent possible.
- The ACCC has sought feedback on the interim report.

Food and Grocery Code of Conduct Review 2023-24

- In 2024, the government appointed Dr Craig Emerson to lead the second independent review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.
- The review assessed the:
 - effectiveness of the code provisions in achieving the code's purpose
 - impact on commercial relationships between supplier and retailers
 - whether the code should be made mandatory and include penalties.
- On 24 June 2024, the government released the final report of the independent review.
- The final report made 11 recommendations including:
 - making the code mandatory
 - introducing significant financial penalties for non-compliance
 - placing greater emphasis on the fear of commercial retribution.
- The government supported all recommendations from the review and is currently working to implement those recommendations.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division

APD03**COMPETITION ISSUES IN THE CHICKEN MEAT INDUSTRY****CURRENT ISSUE**

- In April 2024, the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) released a report claiming market power imbalances between processors and growers within the chicken meat industry and calling for a mandatory code of conduct.
- The Australian Chicken Growers' Council (ACGC) is strongly advocating for the immediate implementation of a mandatory code of conduct.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- We are aware of the issues raised in the NFF's report and of the calls from chicken growers for a mandatory code of conduct in their industry.
- We have been engaging with stakeholders across the supply chain to understand the concerns.
 - The department has met with the ACGC on several occasions, most recently on 22 October 2024.
 - The department has also met with representatives from processors.
- A code of conduct is a complex regulatory instrument that requires robust, quantitative evidence of impacts and net benefits.
- As part of its Supermarket Inquiry, the independent Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is undertaking a series of in-depth case studies including into the chicken meat supply chain. This includes:
 - structure and competition at each level of the industry
 - margins, pricing practices, what suppliers receive, and what retailers charge
 - buyer power and factors that impact or support efficient supply and pricing.
- The ACCC inquiry has powers under the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* to seek information that might not be provided under other inquiries.
 - The final report is due to government by no later than 28 February 2025.

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- Outcomes of the ACCC's work will help advance understanding of the issues in the chicken meat industry and inform any consideration of potential options.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division

APD04**RED WINE OVERSUPPLY**

Funding Source	Financial Year
	2023-24
<i>Grape and Wine Sector Long-term Viability Support Package (departmental) Terminates 30/06/2026</i>	\$3,030,000 (GST Exclusive)
<i>Wine and Grape Sector Regulatory Impact Analysis (departmental) Terminates 24/04/2025</i>	\$470,000 (GST Exclusive)
Overall Expenditure	\$3,500,000

CURRENT ISSUE

- Trade disruptions (China tariffs) and a global reduction in demand has contributed to an oversupply of red wine grapes.
 - growers in inland wine regions are most impacted. These regions represent >70% of production. Growers are suffering financial hardship and stress.
- China's market return has improved export values, but long-term growth in China remains uncertain and demand for wine globally is in decline.
- Industry is calling for government to provide financial support for growers to exit the industry or transition to other crops.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- In March 2024, Agriculture Ministers established a *Viticulture and Wine Sector Working Group* (Working Group) to develop a national approach.
- In October 2024, the Working Group's Final Report was agreed by Ministers; it includes 15 actions and 6 recommendations and is published on the department's website (**Attachment A**).
- The Australian Government is taking forward several recommendations through a \$3.5 million *Long-term Viability Support Package*.

Long Term Viability Support Package

- The package is administered by Wine Australia and comprises:

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- Extending and expanding market development in Japan, China and the US.
- A domestic consumer campaign to promote local Australian wine.
- Research and tools to help growers reach new markets and diversify crops.
- Research into lighter, alternative alcohol products.
- Examining regulatory and competition issues in the wine sector (see below).
- Development of a National Vineyard Register (see below).
- Dr Craig Emerson has been appointed to lead the independent analysis of fair trading, competitive relationships, contracting practices and risk allocation.
 - Dr Emerson will provide advice to Government on whether there is market failure in the sector and on potential regulatory, or other interventions.
 - Final report is expected by the end of the year (Q&A at **Attachment B**).
- Wine Australia has commenced work towards a National Vineyard Register.
 - The Register will collate national data on the area of bearing and non-bearing vines, the age profile of vines, varieties planted and location.
 - This practical tool is long-term ambition of the sector and represents a key priority for rebalancing supply and demand.

Other Support

- The package builds on the work and investment the Commonwealth has already been undertaking for the wine and grape sector including:
 - Financial support measures such as the Farm Household Allowance.
 - Building demand through trade and market access. We have gained re-entry into China, have signed free trade agreements with the UK and India, and are pursuing new markets through Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) funding.
- The Working Group did not recommend a government funded exit package. Previous government intervention in the market was ineffective and had unintended consequences, including the loss of valuable vineyards and an inability for industry to respond to changes in demand.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Working Group Recommendations and Actions

Attachment B – Question and Answer on Craig Emerson's Impact Analysis

VITICULTURE AND WINE SECTOR WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Address mental health and financial challenges

Actions	Responsible lead(s)	Timing*
Ensure wine grape growers are accessing existing support services, such as the Rural Financial Counselling Service, Regional Investment Corporation low-interest loans, Farm Household Allowance and mental health services, by promoting those services.	Australian and state governments, industry representative groups	Immediate and Ongoing
Monitor the efficient delivery and update of the existing support services to identify and resolve any issues.	Australian Government	Ongoing
Provide support for regional community events to support mental health and social cohesion.	Relevant state governments, industry representative groups	Short term
Work with lending institutions to discuss issues raised by industry and community groups and potential solutions.	Relevant state governments	Medium term

2. Address barriers to exit and diversify

Actions	Responsible lead(s)	Timing*
Support grape growers and winemakers diversify their farming enterprises, product development or move to non-traditional revenue streams or alternative alcohol products by providing information and support services.	Australian and relevant state governments, Wine Australia	Short to Medium term
Investigate options to support waste management to avoid environmental, biosecurity, financial and social risks and impacts associated with transitioning from grape production and abandoned vineyards.	Relevant state and local governments	Medium term

3. Provide data and insights for better informed decision making

Actions	Responsible lead(s)	Timing*
Establish a national vineyard register, including future forecasting based on nursery data.	Wine Australia and Australian Government	Long term
Host events and activities on the state of the Australian wine industry to increase awareness of tools and information currently available.	Australian Grape and Wine and Wine Australia	Short to Medium term

4. Examine commercial contract arrangements across the grape and wine sector supply chain

Actions	Responsible lead(s)	Timing*
Investigate the regulatory options available to improve fair trading, competitive relationships, contracting practices and risk allocation across the wine and grape sector value chain, from vineyard to retail shelf.	Australian Government	Medium term

5. Boost demand for Australian wine at home and overseas

Actions	Responsible lead(s)	Timing*
Support Australian wine export businesses to diversify and expand Australia's wine exports through more effective international marketing and improved market access.	All working group members	Ongoing
Build the domestic market for Australian wine and grow opportunities for regional wine tourism.	All working group members	Ongoing
Ensure Sustainable Winegrowing Australia program is future-proofed, and consider concerns about social and governance principles and its value to industry.	Australian Grape and Wine	Medium term

6. Improve industry leadership and long-term strategic direction, supported by investment in research and development

Actions	Responsible lead(s)	Timing*
Explore ways to improve representation of grape growers and their interests on industry boards and committees.	Peak industry representative and advocacy bodies	Medium term
Assess the true demand position of the sector and advise on options to future-proof its supply base to ensure its long-term viability.	Australian Grape and Wine and Wine Australia	Medium term
Review the national wine and grape levy system to assess whether it is fit for purpose and meets the future needs of the sector.	Australian Grape and Wine	Medium term

*Timing: Short-term = under 6 months, Medium-term = 6 to 12 months, Long-term = over 12 months

WINE AND GRAPE SECTOR REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS

QUESTION AND ANSWER

What issues will Craig Emerson be examining?

- The Australian Government is responding to concerns raised by the sector of contractual fairness throughout the supply chain from vineyard to retail shelf.
 - Dr Emerson will examine fair trading, competitive relationships, contracting practices and risk allocation throughout the supply chain.
- Dr Emerson is considering all options to improve fair trading in the sector, including prescribed and mandatory codes and non-regulatory outcomes.

What consultation has occurred?

- Submissions were open through the department's Have Your Say from 18 September to 20 October. More than 20 submissions have been received.
- Dr Emerson visited the Riverland (SA) and Riverina (NSW) in October and met with growers, winemakers and industry groups.
- He has also held discussions with growers and wine makers from the Murray Darling/Swan Hill regions (NSW/VIC), Australian Grape and Wine (AGW) board, AGW Code Management Committee, retailers such as Coles, Endeavour Group and Naked Wines Australia and producers such as Treasury Wine Estates.

What was Wine Australia's process to appoint an independent reviewer?

- This is best answered by Wine Australia, but they undertook a thorough procurement process to appoint the independent reviewer.
- As a statutory research and development corporation, Wine Australia has to comply with relevant requirements of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 and the funding agreement between Wine Australia and the Commonwealth of Australia in accordance with subsection 35(1C) of the Wine Australia Act 2013.
- The assessment considered:
 - Value for money – whether the investment represents efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of resources
 - Risk – whether risk could be actively managed proportionate to the scale and scope of the investment
 - Fit with the requirements

- Actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest.

Why was Craig Emerson appointed?

- Wine Australia undertook a targeted selection process. A number of independent experts were considered with relevant competition policy, law and economics experience.
 - Dr Emerson brings extensive experience in these areas, including most recently his review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.

How much will Dr Emerson be paid to complete this work?

- Total funding administered by Wine Australia is **s. 47G(1)(a)**
 - \$350,000 for the independent expert and subcontractor (Emerson Economics), as well as administrative expenses such as travel and accommodation.
 - **s. 47G(1)(a)** in other project and advisory costs, including additional economic analysis to support Emerson Economics project team.

What is the department's involvement in the review?

- The department has:
 - a contract with Wine Australia to provide funding for the review
 - provided input into the selection process (nominating potential candidates, confirmed no issues with successful candidate and subcontractors)
 - provided secretariat support to the project (help to organise and attend consultations, hosted the Have Your Say consultation page).

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division

APD05**PLANT-BASED LABELLING ELECTION COMMITMENT**

Funding Source	Financial Year	
	2023-24	2024-25
<i>2024-25 Budget Measure (Departmental, absorbed from existing resources) Terminates: 30/06/2025</i>	-	-
Overall Funding	\$1.5 million	

CURRENT ISSUE

- In the 2024-25 Budget, the government committed \$1.5 million over two years to implement the election commitment to improve existing regulations to deliver accurate and clear food labelling so that consumers have informed choice.
 - The commitment responds to long-standing concerns from meat and dairy industries that plant-based protein and dairy products that contain animal imagery or meat terms are deceptive and / or misleading.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The government is taking this commitment forward in two phases.
- Firstly, the department has commissioned Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to undertake consumer research to understand the extent of any consumer confusion.
 - The research is underway and a final report is expected by the end of the year.
- Secondly, the department has established an industry working group to improve existing arrangements.
 - Members are from Alternative Proteins Council, Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Dairy Products Federation and Red Meat Advisory Council.
 - Two working group meetings have been hosted by the department on 18 September and 24 October 2024.
 - The Working Group has been established for a six-month period from September 2024 until March 2025, however we are open to an extension if further work is required, and participants are willing.

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- Improvements to existing regulations will be evidence-based, proportionate to the risk and complement existing regulations.

What are the details of the funding?

- Funding of \$1.5 million over 2 financial years (2023-24 and 2024-25) is being met from within departmental resourcing.
- Funding is for FSANZ to oversee consumer research and for other departmental costs associated with stakeholder engagement (including travel), research, project management and monitoring and evaluation.

Is this the government's response to the Senate Committee's report, *Don't mince words: definitions of meat and other animal products*?

- The response to the Senate Committee's report is a separate process.
- The government is considering the response to the Senate Committee's report.

What is the government doing to protect meat and dairy industries from brand denigration by plant-based protein products?

- The government believes there is room for both traditional animal and plant-based alternative industries to thrive.
 - Allegations or evidence of consumer confusion, misleading claims or unfair business practices can be pursued under Australian Consumer Law.
- Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) *2024 State of the Industry Report* states that domestic consumption of plant-based protein accounts for 0.47% of in-home fresh meat volume sales.
- Data from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicates that consumption of dairy and meat substitutes declined by 7.0% between 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Why was FSANZ contracted to undertake the consumer research?

- FSANZ brings significant expertise in consumer research and as the independent regulator for the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code.
- FSANZ research was procured under a limited approach to market, consistent with the *Commonwealth Procurement Rules, July 2022*.

Why is the government using the APC guidelines as the solution, when they were developed by an industry that seeks to shut down the animal industry?

- No decision has been made on the outcome of this work.
- It is standard practice to start with a voluntary approach before regulating.
- The 2021 industry working group recommended a voluntary approach.
- The working group is considering the guidelines as one option.

BACKGROUND

The government made an election commitment to “support[ing] meat and plant industries through improving existing regulations that deliver accurate and clear food labelling so that consumers have informed choice”. False or misleading labelling claims are dealt under Australian Consumer Law, enforced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and states and territories.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division

APD06**NATIONAL STATEMENT ON FIRST NATIONS IN AGRICULTURE,
FISHERIES AND FORESTRY****CURRENT ISSUE**

- All Agriculture Ministers have agreed to work in consultation with First Nations peoples to develop a *National Statement on First Nations in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry* (the National Statement) that is driven by the principles of self-determination as an ambitious commitment that advances First Nations perspectives, experiences, and interests in the drive for greater Indigenous economic inclusion in the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors.
- The delivery of the National Statement within the first quarter of 2025 as agreed by Ministers is currently on track.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The department is working closely with all state and territory governments to develop the National Statement.
- The Australian Government led national level consultations, with jurisdictions also undertaking discussions with stakeholders to help inform our collective approach.
- The national consultations began on 22 May and are will continue into December 2024. As at 31 October 2024, there were 10 in-person consultations and 13 site visits with 126 stakeholders, as well as 9 virtual consultations held with 83 stakeholders.
 - Consultations were arranged and facilitated by Yaran Business Services.
 - Independent state and territory engagements are not captured in these statistics.
- National in-person consultation occurred in the following locations:
 - Waibene (Thursday Island), Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait), Queensland
 - Garramilla (Darwin), Larrakia Country, Northern Territory
 - Rubibi (Broome), Yawuru Country, Western Australia
 - Pomberuk (Murray Bridge), Ngarrindjeri Country, South Australia
 - Tamworth, Gamilaroi Country, New South Wales

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- Launceston, Tyerrernotepanner Country, lutruwita (Tasmania)
 - Meanjin (Brisbane) Turrbal, Yugerra Country, Queensland
 - Tweed Heads, Ngandowal, Minyungbal people of the Bundjalung Nation, Goodijinburra, Tulgi-gin and Moorung-moobah Country, NSW
 - Gimuy (Cairns), Yirrganydji, Djabugay, Gunggandji, Yidinji Country, QLD
 - Kanny-goopna (Shepparton), Yorta Yorta Country, VIC.
- A survey was released through the department's online *Have Your Say* platform to inform drafting of the National Statement. This ran from 23 September to 18 October 2024 and resulted in 66 responses.
 - Drafting of the National Statement commenced in September 2024 and a subsequent *Have Your Say* campaign will be released in November to seek feedback on this draft.

What will the National Statement do?

- The National Statement will outline the shared position of the Australian Government, states and territories regarding First Nations inclusion in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.
- The National Statement will note key themes identified during consultations, as a basis for potential future action and investment by governments.

BACKGROUND

- The National Statement is a joint initiative of Commonwealth, state and territory governments.
- On 6 October 2023, Ministers agreed at Agriculture Ministers' Meeting (AMM) to task Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC) to develop a National Statement.
- AGSOC agreed that a taskforce of Commonwealth, state and territory representatives be established to drive the development of the National Statement (FNAS Taskforce), with the Department to provide secretariat support to the FNAS Taskforce.
- The FNAS Taskforce first met on 31 January 2024 and has convened seven times during 2024, most recently on 26 September 2024.
- Two AusTender contracts have been established with Yaran Business Services, a Supply Nation certified business, in relation to development of the National Statement:
 - CN4061169 for \$159,000 (GST incl) between 6 May and 31 July 2024
 - o A variation to this contract of \$6,300 (GST incl) was made on 17 June 2024, resulting in a total value for this contract of \$165,300 (GST incl)
 - CN4090628 for \$150,000 (GST incl) between 26 August and 20 December 2024.
- \$202,800 (GST incl) has been spent so far of a total contractual value of \$315,300 (GST incl).

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division

APD07

NATIONAL FARMERS FEDERATION NATIONAL FARMER PRIORITIES SURVEY

CURRENT ISSUE

- In August 2024, the National Farmers Federation (NFF) released the outcome of its second National Farmer Priorities Survey. The survey confirms that farmers remain passionate about what they do but the sentiment towards government has declined.
- Top issues of concern for farmers surveyed were biosecurity, competition, climate change and the phase out of live sheep exports by sea.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The government understands the importance of the agriculture sector not only to the economy but to rural and regional Australia.
 - We have been working closely with industry over the past 2 years and have made significant gains for agriculture in the areas of workforce, trade and sustainable biosecurity funding.
- I am pleased to see that the NFF's survey confirmed that farmers remain passionate about what they do.
- I note the concerns raised in the survey, with the top issues of concern being biosecurity, competition, climate change and the phase out of live sheep exports by sea.
- The survey also makes it clear that more work needs to be undertaken to ensure our farming communities feel listened to, and that they feel their concerns are reflected in the policies coming from the government.
 - We are focused on continuing discussions with the sector to find common ground and form future policy positions.
 - We won't always agree, but we need to continue working together to capitalise on the opportunities that lay ahead.
- The government is already doing a lot to address the issues raised in the survey.

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Biosecurity

- The government has been on the front foot in tackling the issue of biosecurity funding.
 - Last year, we announced our Sustainable Biosecurity Funding model in the 2023-24 Budget, the first in our nation's history, providing \$1.03 billion of additional funding over 4 years and an additional \$267 million ongoing from 2027-28.
 - The government has provided further funding for biosecurity through subsequent measures including enabling biosecurity services at Western Sydney Airport and additional funding for the clearance of international mail.
 - The government has committed to strengthened transparency and accountability of biosecurity funding and expenses through new annual reporting and the creation of the Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel, with members from across industry, environmental and research organisations.
 - In October 2024, the department released the inaugural public report on biosecurity funding and expenditure as part of the 2023-24 annual report.
- Further information in SB24-000169 - Sustainable Biosecurity Funding.
- Further information in SB24-000173 – Biosecurity Key Achievements.
- The Australian Government committed several funding packages in response to the threat of Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) and Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and is supporting prevention and preparedness activities in Australia.
- We continue to take a proactive approach to strengthening our national biosecurity preparedness and response capability, including for diseases such as high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI). Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, including industry and other stakeholders, remains an integral part of this work.

Competition

- The government is working to address competition issues, including across the agricultural supply chain, to help combat the rising cost of living and ensure that producers are treated fairly and receive appropriate remuneration for their hard work.
- The government has initiated several reviews to identify issues affecting competition including the recently completed review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct, the ongoing ACCC inquiry into supermarket prices, and the revitalisation of National Competition Policy.
 - The government committed to implementing all 11 recommendations of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct review, including making the code mandatory.

- Providing the ACCC around \$30 million in additional funding to combat misleading and deceptive pricing practices and unconscionable conduct in the supermarket and retail sectors.

Climate Change and the Environment

- This government is working to ensure Australia's long-term agricultural productivity and food, feed and fibre security by supporting producers to reduce emissions and embrace climate-smart practices.
- The government is developing a plan for a whole-of-economy transition to net zero to reduce the impacts of climate change.
- Of the six sectoral plans that will sit under the broader net zero plan, the Agriculture and Land Plan will identify opportunities for farmers and land managers to contribute to Australia's net zero goal; providing the certainty needed to underpin investments in our low-emissions future.
- The Australian Government is investing \$63.8 million in the Agriculture and Land Sector Plan to support initial emissions reduction efforts.
- Demonstrating the sustainability of Australia's production practices and committing to improvement is crucial to the agriculture industry's advantages and market access for our exports – while also supporting positive climate and environmental outcomes.
- This government is partnering with industry to develop consistent sustainability credentials so the sector can access and grow export markets and capture rewards for sustainable agriculture practice.
- A cornerstone of this is the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework (AASF), with \$9 million invested towards its development.
 - The AASF aims to create alignment across the multiple industry frameworks and be a source of information about whole of Australian agricultural sustainability.

Phase out of live sheep exports by sea

- I appreciate that the phase out of live sheep exports by sea remains a concern for some within the farming community.
- The Australian Government is committed to implementing the phase out in an orderly and managed way.
 - The overall trend in live sheep exports by sea, despite fluctuations, is downward.
- The government's transition plan to phase out live sheep exports by sea provides certainty, time and support for the transition.
- An end date of 1 May 2028 is now law and provides time for sheep producers, the sheep supply chain and trading partners to plan and take action, and for markets to adjust.

- Until May 2028 live sheep exports by sea can continue without caps or quotas and export regulatory requirements, including animal welfare requirements, remain in place.
- The government's transition assistance is to assist sheep producers and the supply chain to make decisions appropriate to their own circumstances to transition away from the trade.

BACKGROUND

- On 3 October 2023, the NFF released their first National Farmer Priorities Survey.
 - More than 1,600 farmers were surveyed - an opportunity for them to provide their views on opportunities and issues facing them, their sector and the rural economy more broadly.
 - The survey confirmed that farmers are passionate about what they do.
- On 21 August 2024, the NFF released the outcome from their second survey.
 - Slightly more than 1,000 farmers responded.
 - The survey again confirmed that farmers are passionate about what they do but sentiment towards government has declined.
 - While farmers have highlighted biosecurity concerns in the survey, including that government is not investing enough, agricultural industries opposed the Biosecurity Protection Levy, designed to secure a direct funding contribution from primary producers to the Commonwealth biosecurity system.
 - The NFF was invited to join the Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel but declined on the basis that the Biosecurity Protection Levy was unresolved.
- **Attachment A** provides an overview of government actions towards the issues raised in the survey.
- A copy of the survey is at **Attachment B**.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – NFF National Farmer Priorities Survey – government actions towards issues raised

Attachment B – NFF National Farmer Priorities Survey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Agricultural Policy Division (APD) G1

APD07

NATIONAL FARMERS FEDERATION'S NATIONAL FARMER PRIORITIES SURVEY

Issue	What is government doing
Protecting Australia's biosecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable biosecurity funding package announced in 2023-24 Budget, with new funding of \$1.03 billion over 4 years, and \$267 million per year ongoing from 2027-28. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivering long-term sustainable biosecurity funding to directly strengthening Australia's biosecurity system and protect our agricultural industries from incursions of exotic pests and diseases. <p>Refer to SB24-000169 Biosecurity Sustainable Funding.</p> <p>Refer to SB24-000173 Biosecurity Key Achievements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Biosecurity Strategy (NBS) was endorsed by all agriculture ministers on 20 July 2022. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides a strategic roadmap to guide the evolution of Australia's biosecurity system to face the increasingly complex biosecurity risks facing the nation. ○ Sets priority areas for strong and efficient biosecurity system. ○ Publicly released by Minister Watt on 9 August 2022. • 6 priority areas identified for collective action: shared biosecurity culture; stronger partnerships; coordinated preparedness and response; highly skilled workforce; sustainable investment; integration supported by technology, research and data. • Australia's first NBS Action Plan is expected to be released in late 2024, following endorsement by all agriculture ministers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developed following extensive consultation with stakeholders and sets the foundation for activities to be delivered under the NBS. <p>Refer to SB24-000168 National Biosecurity Strategy.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responding to emerging threats: the Australian Government committed to several funding packages in response to the threat of Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) and Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and is supporting prevention and preparedness activities in Australia, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional frontline biosecurity officers at mail centres and international airports, including deployment of new biosecurity officers and relocation of detector dogs to support increased surveillance activities. ○ Targeted social media posts to inform travellers of the FMD risk and entry requirements. ○ Increased intervention of mail articles from Indonesia.
Market power of processors / supermarkets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government is working to address competition issues across the agricultural supply chain. ● Government is committed to ensuring Australians are paying a fair price for their groceries and our farmers are getting a fair price for their hard work. ● Government wants to ensure that producers are treated fairly and receive appropriate remuneration for their hard work. ● The government has initiated a number of reviews to identify issues affecting competition, including the recently concluded review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct and Select Committee on supermarket prices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accepted all 11 recommendations of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct review, including that the Code be made mandatory, heavy penalties for breaches to ensure it is effective in addressing the imbalance in market power between supermarkets and their suppliers. Consultation on the exposure draft mandatory Food and Grocery Code, implementing the recommendations of the review, commenced 23 September 2024 and is open until 18 October 2024. ○ ACCC Inquiry in Australia’s Supermarket Sector – the interim report was released 27 September 2024 and notes that all Australians are experiencing an increased cost of living. The interim report notes that increasing grocery prices are a significant contributor to the increasing cost of living and are front of mind for consumers, given the frequency of spending at supermarkets, and amount spent. ○ Two-year Treasury Competition Review will look at competition laws, policies and institutions to ensure they are fit-for-purpose. ○ Together with the states and territories, revitalising National Competition Policy – consultation paper was released for feedback from 26 August to 30 September 2024. ○ Parliamentary inquiry, Senate Select Committee on Cost of Living – submissions closed on 30 October 2024. ○ Commissioned Dr Craig Emerson to examine regulatory and competition issues in the wine sector. Public submissions closed 20 October and a final report is expected by the end of the year.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	Refer to SB24-000147 Competition.
Federal environment laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Positive Plan, government’s response to the Independent Review of the EPBC Act, sets out the government’s commitments to strengthening and streamlining Australia’s national environmental laws. • National Environmental Standards will underpin environmental law reform – improve protections and guide decision-making by setting clear outcomes for regulated activities under the EPBC Act. • Nature Repair Act 2023 came into effect on 15 December 2023. This establishes a framework for a world-first legislated, national, voluntary biodiversity market. The Act provides legislated rules to support transparency and integrity and to foster collaborative efforts to address environmental decline. • Nature Repair Market Scheme is a government initiative that incentivises actions to restore and protect the environment – it encourages nature positive land management practices that deliver improved biodiversity outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishes a marketplace where individuals and organisations can undertake nature repair projects to generate a tradable certificate. ○ Work is underway for the market to open in 2025. <p>Refer further questions on environment laws to DCCEEW.</p>
Roads and transport infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is committed to supporting a strong, secure and sustainable regional Australia. • In the 2024-25 Budget, government committed to invest \$9.5 billion over the forward estimates, and \$16.5 billion over 10 years, for projects that improve productivity, liveability and sustainability, while maintaining focus on ensuring the deliverability of the over \$120 billion, ten-year infrastructure investment pipeline. • Government continues to work with state and territory governments to make upgrades to road and rail infrastructure. <p>Refer further questions to DITRDCA.</p>
Federal climate change policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture, an Australian first, was endorsed by agriculture ministers on 13 July 2023 and presents a unified vision on climate change and agriculture and a shared commitment to work in partnership with the sector. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate-smart, sustainable sector will help farming be more productive and profitable, better protect our environment, increase access to international markets and strengthen our farming communities. • Government is developing a plan for a whole-of-economy transition to net zero to reduce the impacts of climate change. • The Agriculture and Land Sector Plan is one of 6 sectoral plans that will map out decarbonisation pathways by 2050 and seek to maximise the benefits of climate change.

OFFICIAL

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agriculture and land sector has important role to play in helping Australia to transition to net zero, given both a source of emissions and potential to store carbon. ○ The Agriculture and Land Sector Plan will identify opportunities for farmers and land managers to contribute to Australia's net zero goal; providing the certainty needed to underpin investments in our low-emissions future. ○ The Plan is being informed by extensive stakeholder engagement that has included a public consultation process, the Sustainable Agriculture Summit, roundtables and meetings. ● The 2024-25 Budget allocated \$63.8 million over 10 years to support emissions reduction efforts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$28.7 million over 10 years to improve greenhouse accounting, including through enhanced methods and data collection, and development of estimation and reporting standards for agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. ○ \$4.4 million over 10 years for the department to become a formal partner to the Zero Net Emissions from Agriculture Cooperative Research Centre. ○ \$30.8 million over four years to build on the existing Carbon Farming Outreach Program activities including development of a knowledge bank including tailored resources for First Nations peoples and support Rural Research and Development Corporations to connect best practice with extension activities. ● Government also invested \$28.7 million to improve greenhouse accounting, including through enhanced methods and data collection, and development of estimation and reporting standards for agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. ● The \$17.5 million Carbon Farming Outreach Program grants aim to support farmers and land managers to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon. The program is part of the Australian Government's response to the Independent Review of Australian carbon credit units (ACCUs). The review recommended government support rural and remote communities, including First Nations people, to participate in and realise benefits from the ACCU scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to support farmers and land managers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ make informed decisions to lower emissions ○ integrate low emissions technologies and practices into their operations ○ participate in carbon markets and certification schemes. ● The Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) is the government's key investment platform for achieving its natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and environmental protection outcomes. ● Through the NHT, government has established the \$302.1 million Climate-Smart Agriculture Program over 5 years from 2023–24 to drive agricultural sustainability, productivity, and competitiveness through funding a range of climate-smart, sustainable agriculture projects and initiatives.

OFFICIAL

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Includes funding to support farmers, landholders and community groups on the ground through the \$40.7 million national network of Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators and \$6.26 million national network of Regional Soil Coordinators. ● The Future Drought Fund (FDF) is the government’s key investment in drought preparedness and includes \$519.8 million over 8 years for the second phase of the program. ● Government is partnering with industry to develop consistent sustainability credentials so the sector can access and grow export markets and capture rewards for sustainable agriculture practice. Cornerstone of this partnership is the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework with \$9 million invested towards its development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will help government and industry communicate the sustainability status and goals of Australian agriculture to domestic and global markets. <p>Refer to SB24-000156 Climate-Related Budget Measures, SB24-000155 Agriculture and Land Sector Plan, SB24-000154 Natural Heritage Trust and SB24-000153 Drought including Future Drought Fund.</p> <p>Refer further questions on climate change policies to DCCEEW.</p>
Our overseas trading relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To secure overseas markets, we are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building stronger economic ties with India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ○ Supporting greater regional trade cooperations, particularly in Southeast Asia ○ Progressing market access improvements for Australian exports, and ○ Maximising the gains from the Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) after it entered into force on 31 May 2023. This FTA will drive increased trade and economic growth, with tariffs removed on over 99% of our \$10b two-way merchandise trade with the UK. ● Concluded negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE on 17 September 2024 and now moving to early signature – this is Australia’s first FTA with a Middle Eastern nation. The agreement will deliver real benefits for Australian farmers and food producers, with estimated tariff savings of \$50 million per year for our food and agriculture exports. ● Negotiations continue with India for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). ● In the 2023-24 financial year, the department recorded a total of 88 technical market access achievements. The breakdown of achievements includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 29 actions to maintain and 5 actions to restore existing markets. These actions protected markets worth \$4.6 billion.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening 10 new markets and 44 improvements to existing market access. <p>Refer to SB24-000176 Export Statistics and Market Access Achievements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting First Nations agricultural enterprises through initiatives like the Export Readiness Pilot for First Nations Agriculture and the Indigenous Agriculture Partnership Framework (IAPF), enhancing their capacity for global market engagement and export growth. ● The WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (adopted May 2024) strengthens the ability of First Nations producers to protect their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, ensuring that their agricultural products and knowledges are safeguarded in international trade, fostering more equitable global market access.
The phase-out of live sheep exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government has committed to phasing out the export of live sheep by sea from Australia in an orderly and managed way. ● Government's transition plan to phase out live sheep exports by sea provides certainty, time and support for the transition. ● End date of 1 May 2028 is now law and provides time for sheep producers, the sheep chain and trading partners to plan and take action, and for markets to adjust. ● Until May 2028 live sheep exports by can continue without caps or quotas and export requirements remain in place. ● The phase out will not apply to other livestock industries, such as live cattle. Nor will it apply to sheep exports by air. ● \$107m transition support package provides opportunity for individuals, communities and businesses to be resilient, well positioned and ready when the trade ends. ● The government is committed to seeing Australia's domestic and international sheep meat markets continue to grow and offer more opportunities to Australian producers and processors. <p>Refer to SB24-000164 Live Sheep Phase Out.</p>
Local services (health, education, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State and territory responsibility. ● Government is committed to support strong and sustainable regions. The 2024-25 Budget includes, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthening Medicare and the care economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cheaper medicines ▪ Medicare and health services ▪ Improving aged care

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reforming tertiary education –\$1.6b over 5 years to reform the tertiary education system and deliver a future workforce. ○ Investing in a Future Made in Australia - \$22.7b Future Made in Australia package will facilitate private sector investment, creating new jobs and opportunities. ○ Support for small business – Small Business Statement reaffirms government’s commitment to small businesses, with \$641m in targeted support. ○ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – investing \$2.4b over five years in priority areas including jobs, health, education, justice, housing and essential services. ○ Support the most vulnerable – getting NDIS back on track, supporting job seekers with new paid employment pathways, partial capacity to work and place-based projects. ○ Addressing housing pressures – \$6.2b in specific housing initiatives and expands on the National Housing Accord, Housing Australia Future Fund and Social Housing Accelerator. <p>Refer questions to Department of Health and Aged Care, Department of Education, Treasury and Department Social Services.</p>
The Murray-Darling Basin Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government committed to implementing the Basin Plan in full. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrate Australia’s environmental credentials and our commitment to sustainable farming practices. ● The Restoring Our Rivers: Framework for delivering 450GL of additional environmental water, released on 4 July, details how the Australian Government proposes to meet the 450GL target. ● Three principles guide the approach to delivery: enhanced environmental outcomes; minimising socio-economic impacts; and achieving value for money. ● The delivery of the 450GL of water for the environment is occurring through three programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Resilient Rivers Program comprising infrastructure projects and non-purchase water recovery options. This state led pathway is now open. ○ The Voluntary Water Purchase Program. ○ The \$300m Sustainable Communities Program to provide adjustment assistance for Murray Darling Basin communities impacted by water recovery. <p>Refer further questions to DCCEEW.</p>
Access to telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2024-25 Budget, better connections for regional and remote communities – includes \$40m will be invested to support the roll-out of additional community wi-fi in remote and regional Australia. ● The Better Connectivity Plan is a key initiative and part of government’s telecommunications agenda.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Includes \$656m in 2022-23 October Budget over 4 years to improve mobile and broadband connectivity and resilience in rural and regional Australia. ● Forms part of the government’s investment of more than \$2.2b in regional communities. ● The 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review is currently underway and will report to government by the end of this year. <p>Refer further questions to DITRDCA.</p>
Mining / energy developments on farmland	Refer to DCCEEW.
Animal welfare laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government has committed to renewing the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS), with the objective of providing a framework for a national approach to animal welfare. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A renewed AAWS maintains Australia’s commitment to modern, sustainable, evidence and science-based welfare practice, and will support increased access to overseas markets by showcasing and maturing Australia’s national approach to animal welfare. ● The National Statement on Animal Welfare will underpin the development of the renewed AAWS. It will reflect the shared commitment by Federal, State and Territory agriculture ministers to jointly lead the renewal of the AAWS. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Statement will provide a snapshot of the challenges and opportunities in animal welfare in Australia and identify a commitment to working towards a vision for sustainable improvements. ○ Agriculture ministers agreed to work towards the development of the Statement during 2024. ● Delivered Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry, endorsed by all agriculture ministers. ● Government is working with all states and territories via the Agriculture Ministers’ Meeting (AMM) to improve the process for developing national standards and guidelines for animal welfare.
Worker shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Significant progress has been made with regards to worker shortages in the agriculture sector. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working Holiday Makers above pre-COVID levels. ○ Continued demand for PALM workers. ● Tripartite engagement continuing through Agricultural Workforce Forum to pursue solutions to agricultural workforce issues. Key achievements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocacy for and take up of fee-free TAFE – over 19,600 enrolments in agriculture related courses from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024. ○ Food Supply Chain Capacity Study – to be delivered by Jobs and Skills Australia in 2024.

OFFICIAL

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Issue	What is government doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ag Trade Apprenticeship Project – scoping study delivered by Skills Insight. ○ Agreeing principles underpinning labour hire licensing ○ Influencing the Migration Review and Employment White Paper. ● As part of the 2024-25 Budget, the government committed \$1.875m over 3 years to support the agricultural workforce. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$375,000 to fund National Fund Safety Week activities for an additional 3 years. ○ \$500,000 to support the continuation of the AgCAREERSTART gap year employment program for an additional 2 years. ○ \$1m to pilot new, skilled agricultural work liaison pilot program over 2 years. <p>Refer to SB24-000146 Agricultural Workforce.</p>
Workplace (industrial relations) laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government is committed to strengthening the workplace relations system. ● Key legislation passed by Parliament to improve job security, gender equity and modernise workplace bargaining. These also acquit various recommendations made by Migrant Workers’ Taskforce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Other legislation introduced by both Employment and Workplace Relations and Home Affairs portfolios. (Note: broad IR reforms are contentious with NFF). ● Government announced dedicated package of reforms to combat migrant worker exploitation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reforms to <i>Migration Act 1958</i> to enhance sanctions and tools available to enhance employer compliance with migrant worker protections. ○ Co-design process working with unions, business and civil society to explore proposed initiatives that would enable migrant workers to report exploitation without fear of negative impacts on their visa status, and to remain in Australia to pursue workplace justice. ○ Options to address information and education gaps for migrant workers. ● Work on the Harmonised National Labour Hire Scheme is progressing with states and territories. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is planned for Workplace Relations Ministers to consider the final intergovernmental agreement and funding arrangements at their meeting to be held in December. <p>Refer further questions to DEWR and/or Home Affairs.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Cultural heritage laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally, state and territory governments are responsible for protecting Australia's First Nations cultural heritage.• The Australian Government also has a range of laws to protect Indigenous heritage, across a number of portfolios. <p>Refer further questions to DCCEEW, DITRDCA, and AGD / PM&C.</p>
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National Farmer Priorities Survey



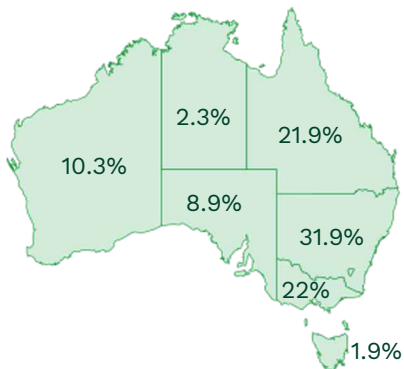
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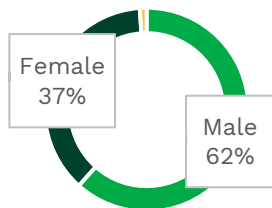
Who responded?

1,026 responses were received in total to this year's survey. They survey was in-field from **6 – 15 August 2024**.

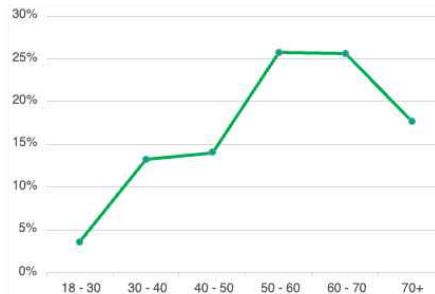
Location



Gender



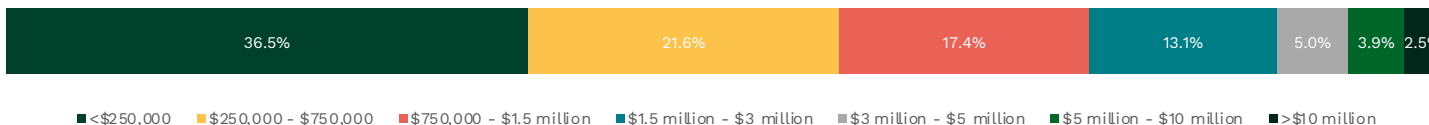
Age



Commodities grown

Beef	26.6%
Sheepmeat	16.7%
Wool	13.1%
Goats	2.8%
Dairy	3.4%
Grains/Oilseeds/Pulses	16.7%
Sugarcane	1.9%
Cotton	2.1%
Rice	0.9%
Fruit	2.7%
Vegetables	2.5%
Nuts	0.7%
Nursery/turf	0.3%
Pork	0.7%
Chicken meat	1.0%
Eggs	1.6%
Forestry	0.7%
Seafood	0.2%
Other	5.4%

Farm turnover



Industry sentiment

LFY 2024

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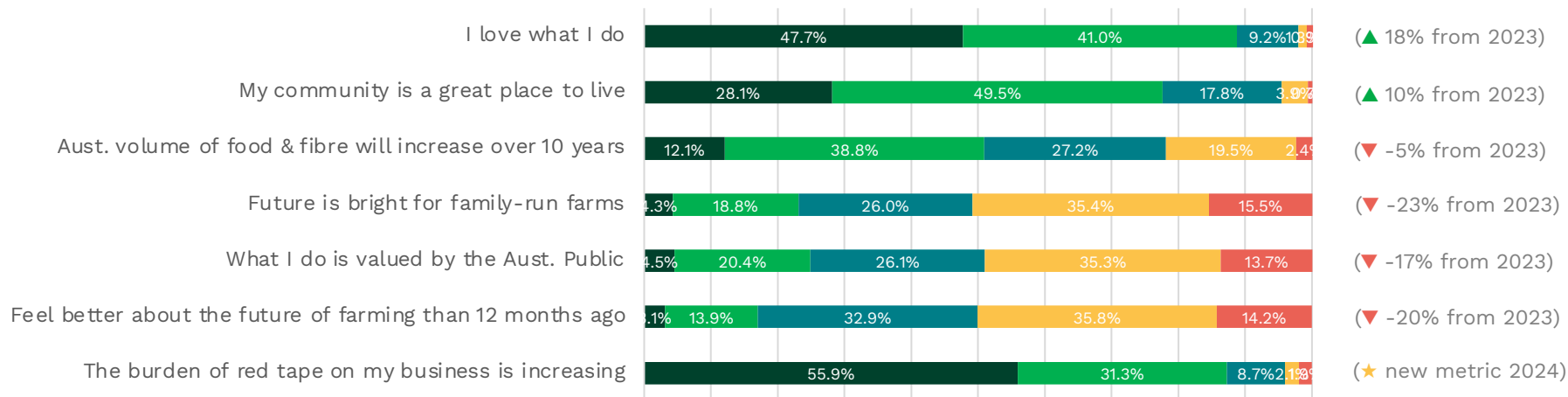
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Australian farmers remain **passionate about their industry**, their work, and their community. This year's survey found 9-in-10 respondents (89%) agree with the statement 'I love what I do', up 18% on the last survey. While more than three quarters (78%) say their **community is a great place to live**, up 10% on 2023.

Farmers are less upbeat about the prospects for their sector, however, with only half (51%) believing the **volume of Australian food and fibre** will increase in the coming decade, down 5% on last year. A smaller number of farmers, at 23%, believe the **future is bright for family-run farms** (down from 46% with that view a year ago), while 25% feel that what they do is **valued by the public** (was 42% previously). Just 17% say the **outlook for farming** is better than a year ago (down from 37% previously), while in a new metric 87% of farmers cited the increasing **burden of red tape** on their business.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Change in % 'Agree' + 'Strongly Agree'



Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree



National Farmers Federation

Issues of top concern

LEX 32621

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Across the board, farmers expressed heightened levels of concern across a broad range of external pressures, with between 76.3% and 94% of respondents either 'very concerned' or 'concerned' by each issue. **Protecting Australia's biosecurity** emerged as the top ranked issue for 2024 (with 94% expressing concern, up from 81.3% in the previous survey), while 93.8% were concerned by the **market power of supermarkets/processors** (up from 83.1% in 2023). **Federal environment laws** also remained top-of-mind for 92.4% of farmers (up from 82%), to round out the top 3 issues nationally.

The largest swings in concern levels, compared to the 2023 survey, were seen in relation to **biosecurity** (up 12.7% on 2023) and **live sheep exports** (up 12.2%).

RANK	ISSUE	VERY CONCERNED	CONCERNED	NOT CONCERNED	% CHANGE FROM 2023
1	Protecting Australia's biosecurity	64.0%	30.0%	6.0%	▲ 12.7%
2	Market power of processors/supermarkets	58.3%	35.6%	6.2%	▲ 10.8%
3	Federal environment laws	54.9%	37.6%	7.6%	▲ 10.4%
4	Roads and transport infrastructure	56.5%	35.5%	8.0%	▲ 10.2%
5	Federal climate change policies	62.4%	28.6%	9.0%	▲ 10.0%
6	Our overseas trading relationships	37.4%	52.5%	10.1%	▲ 9.1%
7	The phase-out of live sheep exports	62.8%	24.1%	13.1%	▲ 12.2%
7	Local services (health, education etc)	47.1%	39.8%	13.1%	▲ 8.1%
8	The Murray Darling Basin Plan	32.4%	52.7%	15.0%	▲ 9.1%
9	Access to telecommunications	41.6%	40.2%	18.2%	▲ 8.8%
10	Mining/Energy developments on farmland	42.1%	39.5%	18.4%	▲ 5.2%
11	Animal welfare laws	38.6%	42.6%	18.8%	▲ 3.2%
12	Worker shortages	31.8%	48.7%	19.5%	▲ 6.9%
13	Workplace (industrial relations) laws	34.0%	45.9%	20.1%	▲ 3.5%
14	Cultural heritage laws	40.6%	35.7%	23.7%	▲ 3.0%

Excludes 'Not Applicable' responses

Denotes Top 3 issues among 'very concerned'



Issues and priorities by commodity



Beef

1. Protecting Australia's biosecurity
2. Market power of processors/supermarkets
3. Federal climate change policies



Sheepmeat

1. Protecting Australia's biosecurity
2. Roads and transport infrastructure
3. Market power of processors/supermarkets



Wool

1. Market power of processors/supermarkets
2. Protecting Australia's biosecurity
3. Roads and transport infrastructure



Dairy

1. Market power of processors/supermarkets
2. Roads and transport infrastructure
3. Federal environment laws



Grains/Oilseeds/Pulses

1. Federal environmental laws
2. Roads and transport infrastructure
3. Federal climate change policies



Horticulture (Fruit/Vegetables)

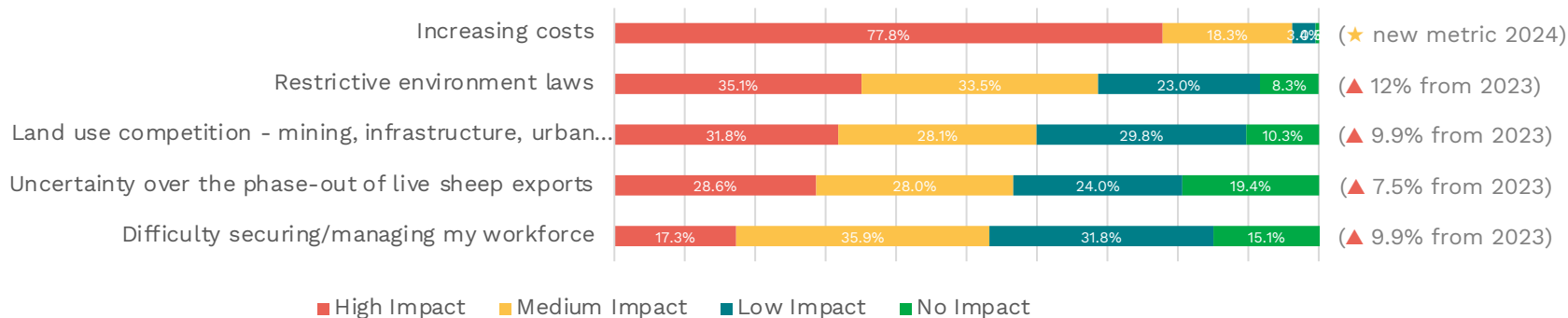
1. Protecting Australia's biosecurity
2. Market power of processors/supermarkets
3. Federal environmental laws



On-farm productivity impacts

Cost increases - a new measure in this year's survey - were voted as having the most significant impact on on-farm productivity, with 96.2% of farmers citing costs as having a 'high' or 'medium' impact on their business. The perceived impact of **restrictive environment laws** increased from last year to 68.7%, with an additional 12% of farmers citing the high or medium impact on the productivity of their business. **Land use competition** from mining, infrastructure and urban encroachment impacted 9.9% more farmers than last year, while a similar increase - recorded in relation to **sourcing and managing farm labour**. The phase-out of **live sheep exports** was also cited as having a high/medium impact by 56.6% of respondents across the country.

11. What is the current productivity impact of the following on your business or region?



Excludes 'Not Applicable' responses

In their own words: sentiment & key issues

In open response answers regarding the industry outlook, common themes included:

- **Regulatory and Policy Concerns:** Many farmers expressed frustration with increasing regulatory burdens and government policies that they perceive as detrimental to their operations. This includes concerns about environmental laws, land use restrictions, and the phase-out of live sheep exports.
- **Economic Pressures:** Rising costs of inputs such as fuel, fertiliser, and wages were raised as significant concerns. Farmers saying they feel squeezed by increasing costs while market prices for their products are stagnant or in decline.
- **Labour Shortages:** Difficulty in securing a reliable workforce is a recurring issue. Farmers cite restrictive visa pathways, lack of training for domestic workers, and the high cost of wages as barriers to hiring.

“If agriculture is expected to 'produce more with less' we need policies and opportunities that support growth and profitability.”

Farmer, WA

“Every business we deal with now seems to be a multinational with poor competitive marketplaces.”

Farmer, SA

“Renewable energy projects devastating the land and the Government both state and Federal allowing it.”

Farmer, NSW

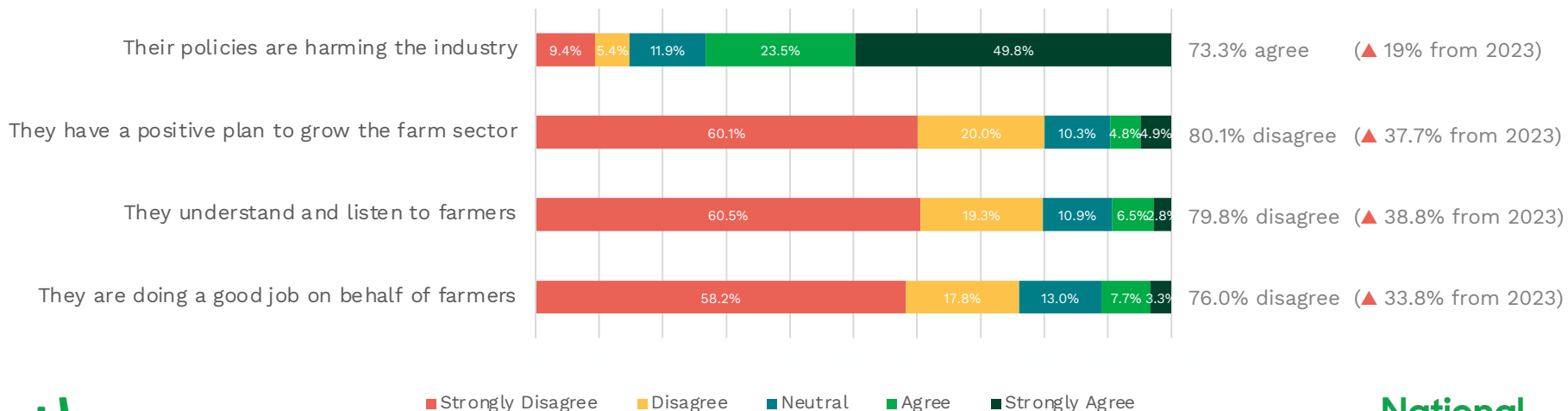


SENTIMENT TOWARDS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

LEX-32631

Sentiment towards the Federal Government has collapsed amid heated policy disputes with the sector. With ratings across four sentiment measures deteriorating by an average of 32% over the course of the past 12 months. Around three-quarters of farmers (73.3%) now say **Federal Government policies** are harming the sector. While just 1-in-10 say the Federal Government 'has a **positive plan to grow the sector**', '**understands and listens to farmers**', or is 'doing a **good job on behalf of farmers**'.

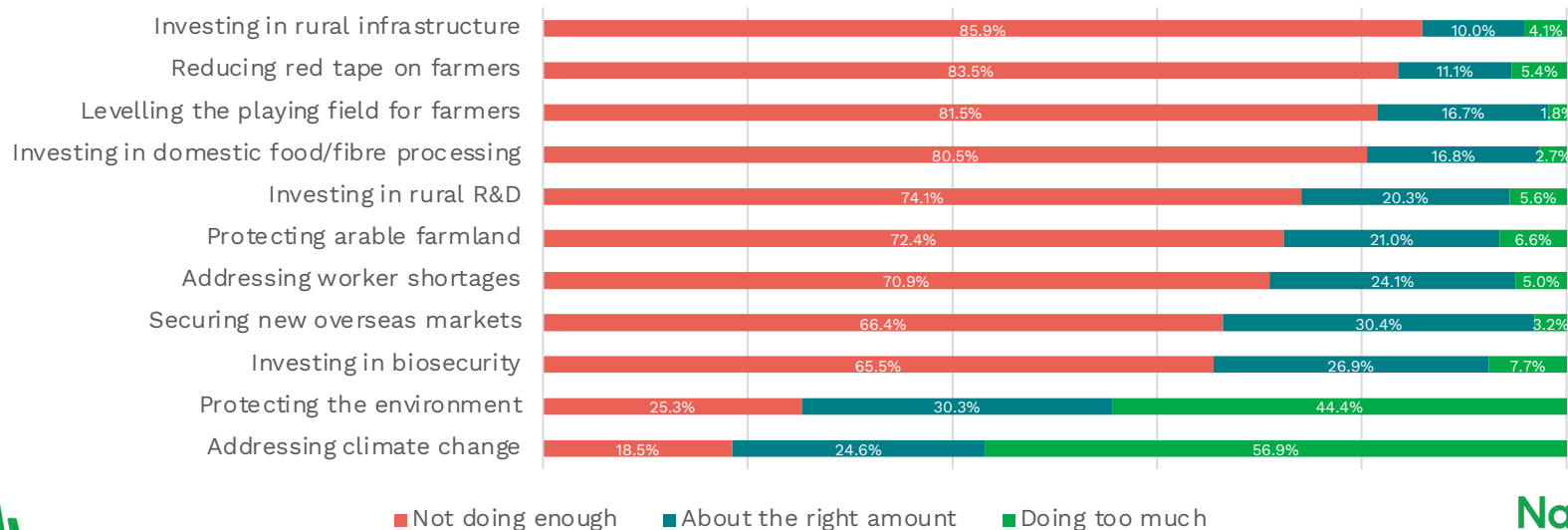
18. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the Albanese Government?



Government focus on key issues

The top 5 issues where farmers believe the Federal Government is 'not doing enough' have remained unchanged from 2023. **Investment in rural infrastructure** remains the top area for improvement (with 85.9% of respondents calling on the Government to do more), followed by **reducing red tape** (83.5%) and **levelling the playing field for farmers** (81.5%). Conversely, the areas polled where farmers believe the Government is 'doing too much' are **protection of the environment** (44.4%) and **addressing climate change** (56.9%) – reflecting concern over the prioritisation of these policy areas.

19. Is the Albanese Government doing enough on the following issues?



In their own words: message to government

The following themes emerged from messages farmers would like to convey to the Federal Government:

- **Government Policies and Regulations:** Many farmers expressed frustration with government policies they perceive as overly burdensome or disconnected from the realities of farming. There is a call for reducing red tape and creating more supportive policies for the agricultural sector.
- **Economic Concerns:** Farmers are worried about rising costs, particularly fuel, fertiliser, and wages, which are not matched by increases in the prices they receive for their products. They urge the government to address these economic pressures.
- **Engagement with Rural Communities:** There is a strong desire for the Prime Minister and government officials to engage more directly with rural communities and understand their challenges. Farmers feel that their voices are not adequately heard in policy-making processes.

“Come out and spend quality time with farmers, not just for a photo opportunity. And listen to what is being said.”

Farmer, QLD

“Collaborate with agricultural businesses and advocates and listen and learn about the constraints of compliance, red tape, and input costs.”

Farmer, NSW

“Stop treating Australian agriculture like the bad guys and stop pandering to your inner-city seats.”

Farmer, WA



Further information



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Farm Resilience Division

FRD01**DROUGHT INCLUDING FUTURE DROUGHT FUND**

Funding Source	Financial Year	
	2023-24	2024-25
Source 1 Administered, ongoing	\$100 million (Future Drought Fund)	\$100 million (Future Drought Fund)
Source 2 (departmental)	\$7.44 million FDF departmental (\$3.2 million provided as part of 2023- 24 MYEFO, \$1.585 million in the 2018-19 Budget, 2.659 million in the 2019-20 MYEFO) \$3.2 million terminates 30 June 2024	\$11.12 million FDF departmental funding varies over the forwards, terminating 2027- 28
Source 2 (departmental, capital, or administered) Ongoing / Terminates [date]	\$3.11 million (Drought Policy departmental – committed as part of the October 2022 Budget measure titled: Ensuring the government is prepared for the next drought) Terminates 30 June 2024	\$3.25 million (Drought Policy departmental – committed as part of the May 2024 Budget measure titled: Prepare for the next drought) Ongoing
Overall Expenditure	\$110.55 million	\$114.37 million

CURRENT ISSUE

- Australia's changing climate is likely to mean more frequent, longer lasting, and intense droughts. We are delivering significant drought policy initiatives to help the Australian Government, farmers and communities prepare and respond to drying conditions.

Contact Officer: Courtney Bryant, s. 22(1)(a)(ii) / Kim Farrant
 Telephone: 02 6272 5744, s. 22(1)(a)(ii), s. 47F(1)
 Last updated: 30 October 2024

SES Lead: Mel Brown

Mobile Number: s. 47F(1)
 SB24-000097

- In its drought statement released on 5 October 2024, the Bureau of Meteorology reported rainfall deficiencies for the 8-month period since February 2024 across agricultural regions of South Australia, south-west Victoria, north-west of Tasmania and small areas south-west and north-west Western Australia.
- In response to the dry conditions, the Victorian, Tasmanian and Western Australian governments have released drought support packages in their jurisdictions.
- The department has been working with state government agencies in affected jurisdictions on joint outreach and communications activities to improve awareness of Australian Government support measures.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The Australian Government is working with farmers, rural communities, the states and territories, and the farm, finance and not-for-profit sectors to build Australia's capacity to withstand drought.
- Key Australian Government measures that farmers can access whenever they are experiencing adverse conditions include:
 - drawing down on their Farm Management Deposit holdings,
 - accessing the Rural Financial Counselling Service for advice,
 - concessional loans via the Regional Investment Corporation and,
 - when individuals have taken a significant financial hit, accessing the Farm Household Allowance.
- There is also mental health and wellbeing support and other forms of community support that can be drawn on when needed. This is in addition to support programs that State and Territory Governments put in place.
- We are delivering a significant program of work so we can manage through drought better. These initiatives include:
 - Implementation of the new National Drought Agreement between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, which was published on 1 July 2024.
 - A new Australian Government Drought Plan, which is expected to be finalised this year.
 - A Drought Response Framework which will facilitate more consistent and timely decisions about government support during drought.
 - Improved communication and engagement, including a National Drought Forum every two years, National Drought Network meetings at least twice a year, and regular engagement with state and territory government agencies, the Rural Financial Counselling Service, industry, not-for-profit, and the finance sector.

- As part of the 2024-25 Budget, the government committed ongoing funding to ensure it maintains its state of readiness for drought. \$13.9 million will be provided over 4 years, with a further \$3.4 million provided per year from 2028-29. This funding will support ongoing delivery of drought policy activities, including the initiatives listed above.
- We are also helping Australian farmers and communities prepare for the impacts of drought through the Future Drought Fund (FDF). The FDF provides secure, continuous funding for drought resilience initiatives.
- On 7 May 2024, the Prime Minister committed \$519.1 million over 8 years for FDF programs (see **Attachment A**). These programs will be implemented progressively from 1 July 2024, following a structured, co-design process.
- The funding will provide:
 - \$28 million over two years from 2024-25 to continue on ground activity through the current Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs (Hubs). Hubs currently deliver activities designed with regional stakeholders to address the challenges of drought and climate variability in their local area. A review of the Hubs will inform any longer-term opportunity for funding, with \$104 million over six years from 2026–27 available.
 - \$83.2 million over five years from 2024–25 to continue the Farm Business Resilience Program to provide farmers, farm workers and advisers with access to learning and development opportunities and continue the Drought Resilience Scholarships program.
 - \$67.0 million over four years from 2025–26 for the next phase of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning program, with a greater focus on implementation of activities in plans.
 - \$60.3 million over six years from 2024–25 to continue and expand the Long-Term Trials program to test drought and climate resilience farming practices and support the adoption of drought resilience innovations.
 - \$40.0 million over six years from 2024–25 for the Resilient Landscapes program to support trials and demonstrate how natural resources management practices contribute to drought and climate resilience.
 - \$37.0 million over three years from 2025–26 for the new Scaling Success program to support previously funded Future Drought Fund projects that demonstrated successful drought and climate resilience outcomes.
 - \$36.0 million over four years from 2024–25 for the FDF Communities Program to support social resilience and the mental wellbeing of farmers and communities.

- \$20.0 million over three years from 2025–26 for the Innovation Challenges Pilot program to accelerate research and innovation in response to drought and climate challenges.
 - \$17.2 million over four years from 2024–25 to continue the Climate Services for Agriculture program and the My Climate View online tool to provide accessible and tailored climate information for farmers and regional communities.
 - \$15.0 million over four years from 2024–25 to partner with First Nations people and communities to support connection to Country through the management of drought and climate risks.
 - \$11.4 million over four years from 2024–25 to support enabling and evaluation activities to deliver drought and climate resilience outcomes.
- A further \$42.2 million over 4 years of departmental funding is also committed to ensure the effective management of the FDF.

BACKGROUND

Future Drought Fund funding and achievements

- As at 30 September 2024, \$342.9 million has been spent. (**Attachment B** has details)
- Examples of key achievements delivered under the FDF are at **Attachment C**.

Future Drought Fund Public Consultation and Productivity Commission Inquiry

- The *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* requires a regular review of progress by the Productivity Commission (PC). The PC Inquiry Report, which outlines 14 recommendations, was tabled in Parliament on 26 September 2023.
- On 20 October 2023, stakeholders were invited to have their say, over a 6-week period, on the forward plan for the FDF. A draft Funding Plan and draft Investment Strategy were released for comment. Submissions closed on 6 December 2023. During the consultation period:
 - over 302 stakeholders attended face-to-face consultation events at one or more of the 20 face-to-face meetings, held in 16 locations around Australia.
 - 21 stakeholders attended one of the two virtual meetings held, including a First Nations specific meeting.
 - 87 submissions and 71 responses to a 'Have Your Say' survey were also received.
- On 9 February 2024, the new *Future Drought Fund Drought Resilience Funding Plan (2024 - 2028) Determination 2024* (the Funding Plan) commenced, It provides a high-level framework to guide funding decisions under the FDF. Key changes include:

- an explicit focus on drought and climate resilience
 - improving engagement with, and outcomes for, First Nations peoples
 - driving effective and long-term change.
- To support the Funding Plan, a Future Drought Fund Investment Strategy 2024-2028 will be released in late 2024, to provide a detailed 4-year plan for drought resilience investments under the Fund.
 - A government response to the PC Inquiry Report will also be released in late 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – FDF media release

Attachment B – Future Drought Fund funding as at 31 March 2024

Attachment C – Future Drought Fund achievements

Attachment A

Joint media release: \$519 million boost to help farmers mitigate impacts of drought

7 May 2024

Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Federal Minister for Emergency Management, Senator Murray Watt

The Albanese Labor Government will invest a record \$519.1 million into the Future Drought Fund to help farmers and regional communities prepare for the next drought and build climate resilience.

The previous Fund under the Morrison Government did not acknowledge climate change as a driver of longer and more severe droughts. Today we have fixed this.

Labor has restructured the Fund and its objectives to get better results for farming families and communities and will provide record funding for it in next week's budget.

Farmers are on the frontline of climate change and the Albanese Government has listened to what they need.

This Fund will provide:

- Better tools for farmers to help mitigate the impact of drought on their farms.
- Strategies for local communities to prepare for and manage risks through drought.
- Increased investment in the existing network of drought hubs.

The programs will start to become available from 1 July 2024.

Communities can find out more by reaching out to the Department of Agriculture online or by phone.

Today's announcement is in response to the recent Productivity Commission review, last year's National Drought Forum, and extensive consultation with stakeholders.

Improving the sustainability of the agricultural sector is a key priority for the sector and the Albanese Government and this investment today responds to the increasing risk climate change is posing to rural and regional communities.

Examples of programs included in the Fund:

- \$235 million to extend the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs, the Future Drought Fund Communities program and the next phase of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program.

- \$137.4 million to extend and improve the existing Farm Business Resilience and Climate Services for Agriculture programs, and the new Scaling Success Program. The Farm Business Resilience program has already helped thousands of farmers with business planning, coaching, and financial literacy training.
- \$120.3 million for programs that trial innovative solutions to build long-term resilience to drought and climate risks.
- Expansion of the Long Term Trials Program, roll out of the revised Resilient Landscapes Program, and implementation of a new Innovation Challenges Pilot to drive the uptake of evidence-based, innovative practices, approaches and technologies.

Quotes attributable to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese:

“It’s vital that we support Australian farmers and producers to be prepared for more severe weather impacts.

“That is why we’re investing hundreds of millions more in the agricultural sector and regional communities to plan and prepare for drought through the Future Drought Fund.

“By doing the work now our rural and regional communities are not just reacting to events as they unfold, but will have considered plans to make them more resilient to climate change.”

Quotes attributable to Agriculture Minister Murray Watt:

“Every morning when farmers around the country wake up, put their boots on and go to work, they are one day closer to the next drought.

“We are already seeing very dry conditions in Western Australia and some parts of Tasmania.

“Time is of the essence when it comes to planning for drought, that’s why we’re investing heavily now in a new and improved Future Drought Fund.

“We’re helping farmers across the country develop business plans to manage diversification in a changing climate, we’re helping regional communities manage drought and other climate risks, and helping individuals get leadership training and mentoring.

“I’ve seen firsthand the great work under the FDF, like trialling new, drought-resistant livestock feed and connecting farmers with the latest scientific advice on reducing drought impacts.

“Our commitment of nearly \$520 million from the FDF supports farmers and farming communities to take steps ahead of time.

“This not only empowers farmers and communities but makes them more self-reliant when drought hits.”

For more information visit: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/future-drought-fund>

Attachment B**FDF funding as at 30 September 2024 (figures have been rounded)**

PHASE 2 Programs	2020 to 2024 Allocation*	Budget Allocation 2024-25 to 2027-28	Spent SINCE 2020	Note
PARTNERING FOR LOCAL SOLUTIONS				
Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs	\$89.1m	\$132.0m	\$89.0m	2-year extension from 2024-25, with a review to inform any longer-term opportunity for funding. The review will deliver a final report to government in early 2025.
Communities	\$40.9m	\$36.0m	\$40.8m	Includes legacy programs (Leaders and Networks)
Regional Drought Resilience Planning	\$36.1m	\$67.0m	\$29.8m	Includes support funding for CSIRO
FIRST NATIONS INITIATIVES				
First Nations Initiatives	N/A	\$15.0m	N/A	Includes supporting activities funding of \$3m
BUILDING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND CAPABILITY				
Farm Business Resilience	\$66.7m	**\$83.2m	\$53.1m	Includes Drought Resilience Scholarships (previously a separate program).
Climate Services for Agriculture	\$33.8m	\$17.2m	\$29.0m	
Scaling Success	N/A	\$37.0m	N/A	
INNOVATING FOR TRANSFORMATION				
Long Term Trials (3 rounds)	\$37.7m	***\$60.3m	\$7.1m	Round 1 contracted in 2022. Round 2 opened in Sept 2024. Applications close on 19 November 2024.
Resilient Landscapes	N/A	\$40.0m	N/A	Program opened in Sept 2024. Applications close on 19 November 2024.
Innovation Challenge Pilot	N/A	\$20.0m	N/A	
MEASURING PROGRESS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING				
National Enabling Activities	\$4.8m	\$11.4m	\$2.0m	Includes MEL and Knowledge Sharing

* Figures do not include proposed movement of funds. Pending approval, this will be updated.

** Figure includes \$10.828m from FBR underspend in Phase 1.

*** Figure includes \$2.315m from LTT underspend in Phase 1.

Programs established under PHASE 1	2020 to 2024 Allocation	Budget Allocation 2024-25 to 2027-28	Spent SINCE 2020	Note
Drought Resilience Commercialisation Initiative	\$10.0m	N/A	\$4.5m	Delivery till 2026
Drought Resilience Self-Assessment Tool	\$9.9m	N/A	\$9.5m	Tool decommissioned
Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants	\$23.1m	N/A	\$23.0m	Grants still being delivered.
Extension and Adoption of Drought Resilience Farming Practices Grants	\$13.0m	N/A	\$13.0m	Delivery till 2025
Innovation Grants	\$28.9m	N/A	\$28.1m	Grants still in progress
NRM Drought Resilience Program (Grants and Landscapes)	\$13.0m	N/A	\$13.4m	Program closed. \$0.4m returned to dept for projects completed under budget.

Attachment C**Future Drought Fund achievements**

Below are examples of activities are undertaken under the FDF:

Farm business resilience —builds the skills and capabilities of farmers to manage all kinds of risks, including drought and other climate risks.	Over 37,000 farmers have benefited from business and risk management learning and development activities.
Regional drought resilience planning — working with regional stakeholders, including local councils, to plan for drought.	Around 70 regions are taking part in the Regional Drought Resilience Planning program.
Practice change — driving adoption of drought resilient farming practices	8 regionally based and focused hubs providing regionally focussed support, with over 125 on-ground activities
	Over 180 projects supporting development, demonstration, extension of drought resilience practices more broadly, including long-term trials
Climate information — helping people understand how the seasonal outlook and changing climate might impact them, and what they can do.	The My Climate View platform is live, providing regional and commodity specific climate information (Climate Services for Agriculture program).
Helping communities prepare for future droughts	30 regions have been through a codesign process to develop a tailored package of support to build community resilience. From this, 121 organisations were allocated over \$10 million in funding.
	A further 75 organisations have received more than \$2 million for projects through the Small Network Grants program to deliver projects that build community resilience to drought.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Sustainability Climate and Strategy Division

SCSD01**NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST**

Funding Source	Sub-program	2023-24 \$	2024-25 \$	2025-26 \$	2026-27 \$	2027-28 \$	Totals \$
<i>Natural Heritage Trust</i> <i>Climate-Smart Agriculture Program</i> (All administered)	Driving impactful on-ground projects	9,570,000	40,040,000	39,971,000	36,037,000	33,023,000	158,641,000
	Supporting national and regional NRM delivery partners	7,027,840	6,934,728	7,091,240	7,252,508	7,418,684	35,725,000
	Supporting a network of Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators	5,355,000	8,451,000	8,704,000	8,966,000	9,235,000	40,711,000
	Improving soil health and natural resources	3,453,000	8,547,000	8,000,000	8,000,000	8,000,000	36,000,000
	Delivering best practice program design and administration	4,861,000	6,663,000	7,190,000	5,629,000	6,650,000	30,993,000
Totals		30,266,840	70,635,728	70,956,240	65,884,508	64,326,684	302,070,000

CURRENT ISSUE

- The government's **\$1.17 billion** Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) is funding the **\$302.1 million** Climate-Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP) for 5 years from 2023-24 to 2027-28 (Budget factsheet at **Attachment A**).

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The CSAP is driving agricultural sustainability, productivity and competitiveness outcomes by supporting farmers to:
 - adopt climate-smart practices that reduce emissions and build resilience to climate change.
 - harness carbon and biodiversity incentives and implement industry sustainability frameworks.
 - improve soil health and protect natural capital and biodiversity.

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- After concluding detailed program-design stakeholder consultations in August 2023, nine grant and procurement investment streams were developed.
 - **\$45 million** Partnerships & Innovation grants.
 - **\$15 million** Capacity Building grants.
 - **\$8.4 million** Soils Capacity Building grants.
 - **\$13 million** Climate-Smart Agriculture Small Grants.
 - **\$8.6 million** Supporting National Landcare Organisation grants (*with a further \$5.9 million from DCCEEW – totalling \$14.5 million combined*).
 - **\$85.6 million** Regional Delivery Partner – Regional Landscape Priority Projects (*with a further \$202.8 million from DCCEEW – totalling \$288.4 million combined*).
 - **\$40.7 million** Regional Delivery Partner - Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators.
 - **\$27.1 million** Regional Delivery Partner – Regional Capacity Services (*with a further \$61.2 million from DCCEEW – totalling \$88.3 million combined*).
 - **\$27.6 million** Improved Soil Health Information, this is made up of **\$21.6 million** for a National Soil Monitoring Program and **\$6 million** to improve the Australian National Soil Information System.

Regional Delivery Partner model

- Of the total \$302.1 million in CSAP funding available over 5 years **\$153.4 million** is being delivered through a whole-of- government panel of Regional Delivery Partners, finalised in December 2023.

Expenditure

- As of 3 October 2024, **\$193 million** of the CSAP has been committed (comprising contracts and funding agreements, and program administration costs).
- Almost **\$28 million** of this commitment has been expended (comprising payments to grantees, regional delivery partners, or where program administration costs have been incurred).
 - All first rounds of grant opportunities under CSAP have now been completed:
 - **\$14.5 million** in funding agreements have been executed with National Landcare organisations (National Landcare Network and Landcare Australia).
 - The **\$45 million** Partnerships and Innovation grants are being negotiated with successful grantees. Further announcements will be made in the coming weeks.
 - The **\$9 million** Capacity Building Round 1 grant selection process is finished, and 13 agreements have been executed. The program was officially launched in October.

- Funding agreements have been executed for the Regional Soils Coordinators and Soils Community of Practice as part of the **\$8.4 million** Soils Capacity Building grants. This includes:
 - **\$6.26 million** to 7 universities and the Grower Group Alliance for a network of 8 Regional Soil Coordinators and
 - **\$2.14 million** to Soil Science Australia for a Soils Community of Practice.
- The **\$4.33 million** Small Grants Round 1 grant selection process is underway, and the Selection Advisory Report and recommended proposals are with the Minister's Office for consideration.
 - The department is developing second and third rounds, up to \$4.33 million each, for coming years.
- A **\$40.7 million** Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator network has been established and is operating in 52 regions.
- **\$5.2 million** for Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning projects have been executed with Regional Delivery Partners.
- 52 requests for **\$85.6 million** in Regional Landscape Priority Projects have been issued to Regional Delivery Partners, and procurement is well advanced.

BACKGROUND

- The NHT is established by the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997 (NHT Act). The NHT Act provides for a Special Account that was initially credited with \$1.35 billion following the partial sale of Telstra. Since 1997, the NHT has funded over \$7 billion in environment and agriculture programs.
- The share of NHT funding is split 32:68 between DAFF and DCCEEW (as it was during the previous phase of NHT funding):
 - **32% (\$302.1 million)** for climate-smart, sustainable agriculture and land management practices.
 - **68% (\$649.6 million)** for environmental protection and natural resource management.
 - DCCEEW has elected to deliver additional portfolio measures via the Special Account with **\$219.8 million** in additional 'top up' into the Special Account funding from other Environment Portfolio funds.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Budget 2023-24 factsheet *Accelerating adoption of climate-smart, sustainable agriculture*



Accelerating adoption of climate-smart, sustainable agriculture



\$302.1 million

The Australian Government is partnering with industry to drive the transition to a more climate resilient, productive and sustainable agriculture sector. We will do this by investing in new programs through the Natural Heritage Trust that build climate resilience, increase market access and agricultural growth, while supporting sustainability outcomes.

What's in this year's Budget

The 2023-24 Budget includes \$302.1 million over five years from 2023-24 for climate-smart, sustainable agriculture investments under the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). The Climate-Smart Agriculture package will drive agricultural productivity, competitiveness and sustainability by supporting farmers to:

- adopt climate-smart practices that reduce emissions and build resilience to climate change
- understand and benefit from participation in carbon and biodiversity markets
- apply natural resource management practices that improve soil health and protect natural capital and biodiversity.

Investments will also strengthen First Nations engagement and participation to enable the agriculture sector to draw benefits from traditional knowledge and support First Nations agricultural enterprise.

Impactful, on-ground, climate-smart, sustainable agriculture projects

Through effective on-ground projects, the government will support farmers to manage climate risks and invest in their on-farm natural capital and effective natural resources management, helping the sector to respond to climate change, better withstand future bushfires, floods and droughts and protect its productivity.

\$158.6 million will be delivered through projects that:

- support the agriculture sector to transition to a low emissions future and foster sustainable agriculture, including climate adaptation practices and emissions reductions technologies, and tools and extension services that support greater engagement in carbon and biodiversity markets
- trial, undertake on-farm demonstrations and implement practices that address local and regional natural resource management priorities and deliver long term sustainable agriculture outcomes.

Improved soil health

Healthy and fertile soil underpins sustainability, improving the productivity and profitability of the agriculture industry and delivering wider community and environmental benefits. Empowering farmers to prioritise their soil health and strengthen their soil knowledge and capability will increase stewardship of their land and provide the tools to restore, improve and maintain soil health. In total the 2023-24 Budget includes \$56 million for soil measures to drive outcomes under the National Soil Action Plan.

Of this total, \$36 million will be invested to:

- design and deliver a new National Soil Monitoring Program to monitor soils nationally. Data collected will be consistent and made publicly available on the Australian National Soil Information System, which will also be improved as part of this funding. The data will support stakeholders to make evidence-based decisions to improve soil health at a range of scales.
- continue to support the Regional Soil Coordinators program and the National Soil Community of Practice, which will facilitate soil extension services and promote soil knowledge sharing and innovation for more effective and sustainable land management practices.

These investments complement the \$20 million *Partnering to Implement the National Soil Action Plan* budget measure. Further details on this initiative are in a separate fact sheet.

Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators

To accelerate the adoption of climate-smart, sustainable agriculture practices, farmers need critical advice from trusted partners. The government is investing \$40.7 million to support a network of Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators to provide the extension services needed to improve farmers' knowledge and uptake of climate-smart practices and understanding of carbon and biodiversity markets to inform critical investment decisions for their future sustainability.

Support for delivery partners

The government recognises the value of a strong network of delivery partners to support farmers to strengthen their sustainability and will provide \$35.7 million to ensure regional NRM delivery partners and peak national Landcare organisations maintain capacity and are primed to deliver climate-smart, sustainable agriculture actions efficiently and at scale.

Why this is important

Australian farmers are adopting new practices to reduce emissions, build climate resilience and strengthen sustainability to respond to climate risks, secure their future and remain globally competitive. Actively managing emissions and increasing sustainability will be critical to maintaining and growing export markets and achieving the industry target of a \$100 billion agriculture sector by 2030.

Accelerated access to innovative technologies and sustainable farming practices will position farmers to strengthen productivity and competitiveness while transitioning to a net zero economy.

The Australian Government is committed to supporting the agriculture sector to sustainably manage the impacts of climate change, including the challenge of increasing food production to meet global demand, while reducing the impact of agricultural production on the environment. Most importantly, the Climate-Smart Agriculture package will ensure Australia's agriculture sector has a secure future and can continue to support thriving and prosperous regional communities.



How much this will cost

	2023-24 \$m	2024-25 \$m	2025-26 \$m	2026-27 \$m	2027-28 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Climate-Smart Agriculture						
Driving impactful on-ground projects	34.784	31.121	29.977	30.279	32.480	158.641
Supporting national and regional NRM delivery partners	6.917	7.052	7.148	7.251	7.357	35.725
Supporting a network of Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators	7.800	8.003	8.147	8.302	8.459	40.711
Improving soil health and natural resources	4.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	36.000
Delivering best practice program design and administration	6.761	5.713	6.240	5.629	6.650	30.993
Subtotal	60.262	59.889	59.512	59.461	62.946	302.070

More information

For more information about the Natural Heritage Trust visit agriculture.gov.au

For more information about the 2023–24 Budget visit budget.gov.au



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Sustainability Climate and Strategy Division

SCSD02**AGRICULTURE AND LAND SECTOR PLAN****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The Australian Government is developing a Net Zero Plan to articulate how Australia can transition to a net zero economy by 2050.
- The plan is being informed by six sectoral decarbonisation plans (announced 18 July 2023), which cover all major components of the Australian economy.
- The Agriculture and Land Sector Plan is being led by Minister Collins, together with Minister Plibersek and Minister Bowen.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES**Why do we need a plan for Agriculture and Land?**

- Activity in agriculture and the land makes up a significant part of Australia's, and the world's, greenhouse gas emissions and sequestration.
- In 2021-22:
 - agriculture contributed 17.9% of Australia's net emissions.
 - Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) was a net carbon sink, contributing -20.4% of net emissions.
- Finding ways to increase the efficiency of agricultural production systems and build carbon stores will make an important contribution to the 2050 goal.

Will the government set an emissions reduction target for agriculture?

- Australia's emissions reduction targets under the *Climate Change Act 2022* are economy-wide.
- The government has clearly stated there will be no emissions reduction target set for agriculture through this process, but that the sector will play a vital role in our economy-wide emissions reductions targets.

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How is the government responding to the Climate Change Authority's (CCA) Sector Pathways Review for agriculture and land?

- Commissioned by the Australian Parliament, the CCA review considers the potential pathways and technology transition for six sectors, including agriculture and land, to support Australia's transition to net zero emissions by 2050.
- The report will be an important resource for government as we work with industry and other stakeholders on the development of the Plan.
- The CCA commissioned modelling from CSIRO which provides additional insights around the potential scale and opportunity of technologies and practices for reducing emissions and increasing carbon storage.

How are stakeholders being involved in developing the plan?

- Stakeholder engagement has been a core part of developing the sector plan.
- As stated by Ministers, decarbonisation must be achieved with the sector, not imposed on the sector.
- The department ran a public consultation process late last year comprising workshops, meetings and a submissions process.
 - Workshops were attended by farmers, experts, representatives from industry bodies, business, finance, First Nations groups, state and territory governments and environmental organisations.
 - The department received over 230 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders reflecting a diverse range of views and issues.
- The Sustainable Agriculture Summit, held 23 May 2024 in Toowoomba, brought together over 150 stakeholders to discuss the plan and ways in which the sector can meet its own emissions goals.
- Consultation is ongoing.
 - For example, the department held two roundtables with supply chain and finance sector participants on 10 & 11 September in Sydney and Melbourne to discuss opportunities to support on-farm practice change through the value chain.
 - The sector plan is also discussed in many of the department's and the Minister's regular meetings with stakeholders.

What are some of the key themes raised by stakeholders in workshops, meetings, roundtables and the Summit?

- To overcome barriers to reducing emissions, stakeholders called for the government to consider:
 - incentives to reward early adopters

- investments to build the capacity of landholders and producers
- investment in innovation and R&D to match the scale of the challenge
- investment in enablers such as standardised emissions accounting and trusted sources of information
- demonstrate and verify co-benefits of carbon sequestration activities
- national and international collaboration to support innovation, research, adoption and national capacity.

How is the government working with states and territories?

- State and territory governments have their own initiatives to address climate change and support emission reductions in agriculture. The plan will build on those initiatives and pursue opportunities for collaboration and coordinated action.
- An example of existing collaboration is the National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture, which was endorsed by Agriculture Ministers on 13 July 2023.
- The department works most directly with states and territories through the Climate Change Task Group, which sits under the Agriculture Ministers' Meeting.

What are the timeframes for developing and releasing the plan?

- The sector plan is part of a broader whole-of-government process.
- The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is coordinating that work and is best placed to address questions about delivery.

Is the government addressing the concerns from the livestock sector regarding the GWP100 metric and agriculture's contribution to Australia's net zero goal?

- Some parts of the livestock sector are calling for methane to be treated differently to other greenhouse gases.
- The National Farmers' Federation has suggested that Australia should report agriculture emissions using GWP* alongside the existing GWP100 standard.
 - These are complex scientific issues. Australia prepares its emission reports in line with international reporting requirements.
 - Further questions about the basis for these metrics should be directed to DCCEEW.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Sustainability Climate and Strategy Division

SCSD03**EMISSIONS REDUCTION BUDGET MEASURES**

Funding Source	Financial Year (\$'000)				Total funding for measure
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	
<i>Building Capacity for On-Ground Action</i> <i>Terminates 2027-28</i>	Administered				
	7,000	7,000	3,000	3,000	
	Departmental				
	287	4,014	1,408	1,460	
Total	\$7,287	\$11,014	\$4,408	\$4,460	\$27,169
<i>Driving Innovation to Reduce Emissions from Agriculture Ongoing</i>	Administered				
	300	300	300	300	
	Departmental				
	245	229	199	182	
Total	\$545	\$529	\$499	\$482	\$2,055
<i>Improved GHG accounting</i> <i>Terminates 2027-28</i>	Administered				
	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,700	
	Departmental				
	323	196	198	253	
Total	\$2,023	\$1,896	\$1,898	\$1,953	\$7,770
Total funding for DAFF					\$36,944

PBS Reference: Table 1.2: DAFF 2024-25 Budget Measures (Page 21)

CURRENT ISSUE

- The Government is implementing foundational measures to support emissions reduction efforts in the agriculture and land sectors. This investment reflects feedback received during Agriculture and Land Sector Plan consultations.

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RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The Australian Government is investing a total of **\$63.8 million over 10 years and \$0.9 million ongoing** through new measures in the 2024 Federal Budget to support emissions reduction efforts in the agriculture and land sectors.
- Of this, \$55.9 million (DAFF¹ and DCCEE² combined funding) is being invested over the forward estimates **of which \$36.944 million is being delivered by DAFF over the forward estimates**.
 - These investments respond to priority order issues that we have heard through consultation on the Agriculture and Land Sector Plan.
 - Implementation will be guided by our continued partnership with industry and creating a joint vision for a world-leading climate-smart agriculture sector that can thrive in a low emissions future.

Building Capacity for On-Ground Action

- **\$27.169 million to DAFF** and \$3.624 million to DCCEE from 2024-25 to 2027-28 is being invested in **building the capacity of farmers, land managers and their advisors** to integrate carbon emissions reduction knowledge and practices into their core business decisions and activities.
 - Funding will expand the existing Carbon Farming Outreach program, to mainstream 'climate literacy' across the sector, and provide clear pathways for farmers and land managers to reduce emissions and sequester carbon. It includes:
 - establishing a 'knowledge bank' providing centralised and freely available training and information resources
 - support for the Rural Research and Development Corporations to develop commodity-specific information for the 'knowledge bank'
 - additional train-the-trainer sessions for trusted advisors.
- DAFF is working with DCCEE on the roll-out of its components of the package.
- DAFF is also finalising grant guidelines relating to commodity-specific information for the 'knowledge bank'.

Driving Innovation to Reduce Emissions from Agriculture

- **\$2.055 million to DAFF** from 2024-25 to 2027-28 (\$4.4 million over 10 years) will fund the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to **partner with the Zero Net Emissions Agriculture Cooperative Research Centre (ZNE Ag CRC)**.

¹ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Portfolio Budget Statement Budget Related Paper No 1.1 pg. 23 and 24

² Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) Portfolio Budget Statement Budget Related Paper No 1.3 pg. 25

- ZNE Ag CRC, established on 1 July 2024 to operate for 10 years, will be a major vehicle for long-term research required to support emission reductions from agriculture.
- Partnership will ensure the Government is actively involved in driving a lower emissions future for the sector. It reflects the important national leadership role the department plays in stewarding a coordinated agriculture R&D system.
- This measure is in addition to the \$87 million in Commonwealth funding announced by Minister Husic in December 2023 to establish the ZNE Ag CRC.
- DAFF is currently working through legal arrangements to formalise the partnership agreement with the ZNE Ag CRC.

Improved Greenhouse Gas Accounting

- **\$7.770 million to DAFF** from 2024-25 to 2027-28 is being invested to **improve greenhouse gas accounting** by supporting the incorporation of voluntary emissions estimate and reporting 'standards' into calculators and accounting tools.
 - This is part of a \$23.1 million package (from 2024-25 to 2027-28 and inclusive of \$0.9 million ongoing from 2028-29) to improve agricultural and land greenhouse gas accounting at the national through to farm level. Other elements are being administered by DCCEEW:
 - improving the National Greenhouse Accounts and data collection processes
 - developing, publishing and maintaining voluntary emissions estimation and reporting 'standards' for the agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.
- Providing this standardised framework and tool for estimation and reporting, farmers and land managers will be supported to 'know their number' and act to 'reduce their number'.
- This will be important in meeting growing **supply chain and financial institution demands** for reliable farm level emissions data, including for climate-related financial disclosures.
 - Refer to SCSD04 for more information about the climate-related financial disclosures regime.
- DAFF is working closely with DCCEEW to deliver this integrated package of measures. A shared reference group (with industry representatives and subject matter experts) has been established that is already providing technical advice into development of the 'standards' and DAFF's investment into accounting tools.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Sustainability Climate and Strategy Division

SCSD04**CLIMATE-RELATED FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES****CURRENT ISSUE**

- Australia's mandatory climate-related financial disclosures regime for large businesses and financial institutions will commence from 1 January 2025.
- Although few agricultural businesses will be required to make climate disclosures directly, stakeholders have expressed concern about how the Scope 3 reporting requirements might result in requests for farm-level emissions data from larger supply chain corporations and retailers.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES**What is the climate-related financial disclosures regime?**

- Climate-related financial disclosures provide transparency about an entity's exposure to climate-related risks and opportunities.
- The legislation requiring disclosures passed through Parliament in September 2024.
- The main climate-related financial disclosure requirements relate to governance, strategy, risk management, and metrics and targets, including information about greenhouse gas emissions.
- All reporting is based on the concept of materiality, where information is only required to be disclosed if it is reasonably expected to affect the entity's prospects.
- Refer detailed questions on climate-related financial disclosures to Treasury.

When will disclosures commence and who is required to report?

- Disclosure requirements will commence for the financial year commencing on or after 1 January 2025.
- Reporting entities are separated into three groups and their obligations are phased in over a period of three years.
 - The first group comprises the largest companies and emitters.

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- Treasury expects approximately 1800 entities (across all sectors) will be reporting once the requirements have been fully phased in.
 - The threshold for reporting is based on the existing and well-understood 'large proprietary company' definition used for financial reporting requirements.
- Many of Australia's large publicly-listed companies already make climate disclosures.
 - Woolworths Group, Coles Group and Bega Cheese Limited for example reported that Scope 3 accounted for more than 90% of their overall emissions.

Why do we need climate-related financial disclosures?

- Several other countries are taking or have taken similar steps.
 - The EU and New Zealand already require Scope 3 emissions to be reported. By 2026, Brazil and Turkey will also require Scope 3 disclosures.
 - The UK, Canada, Japan, China, Hong Kong and Singapore have all consulted on climate disclosure obligations that include Scope 3 emissions reporting.
- A climate disclosures regime that aligns with international best practice will support Australia's reputation as an attractive destination for capital.
- ABARES estimates that 86% of Australia's agricultural exports go to markets which have net zero commitments.

How will agricultural producers be affected?

- Relatively few agricultural businesses will meet the thresholds for mandatory reporting in their own right.
- However, producers may be asked for information to support reporting of Scope 3 emissions by reporting entities.
- There are a range of greenhouse gas emissions calculators available for producers to use and a number of supply chain organisations are supporting producers to better understand their emissions. For example:
 - Producers can use the AIA Environmental Accounting Platform to calculate carbon emissions for a range of commodities, including beef, sheep, grains, cotton, pork, poultry, eggs and sugar.
 - the food and agribusiness bank, Rabobank, has supported over 1100 clients nationally through a 1.5 day course about what emissions mean for their business, how to calculate their emissions and what they can do to reduce them.

How is government supporting businesses with implementation?

- The government has taken steps to give businesses time to build their Scope 3 reporting capabilities. For example:

- Scope 3 emissions reporting is required from an entity's second reporting year.
- reporting entities only need to provide information that is readily available to them without undue cost or effort.
- The government is providing \$28.7 million over 10 years to improve greenhouse gas emissions accounting and reporting on-farm and in the national inventory. This measure will support the sector to better identify on farm emissions and respond to requests for emissions data from the supply chain.

BACKGROUND

- Treasury's Policy Impact Analysis estimated the annual regulatory costs of climate-related financial disclosures to be \$1.15 billion.
 - The costs would be shared among businesses that have at least \$50 million in annual consolidated revenue or at least \$25 million in consolidated gross assets.
 - Costs per business are expected to fall over time and costs will vary depending on the size of the company.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Sustainability Climate and Strategy Division

SCSD05

LAND USE CHANGE AND COMPETITION

CURRENT ISSUE

- Australia's transition to net zero will require new uses of land, including for carbon sequestration, renewable energy infrastructure and production of biofuel feedstock.
- These changes will involve new financial opportunities for farmers and landholders.
- However, early concern is being expressed by some communities and stakeholders about the prospect of large-scale change and the flow on effects for agriculture and regional communities.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

Is the renewable energy transition having an impact on agricultural land and/or production?

- The transition to net zero emissions will require an expansion of renewable energy generation and transmission infrastructure. Some of this will occur on and alongside agricultural land; albeit a small proportion of total agricultural land.
 - The NSW Agriculture Commissioner's *Renewable energy generation and agriculture in NSW's rural landscape and economy* report (2022) found that it was "unlikely that the conversion of land currently used for production will exceed... 0.1% of [total] rural land"
- In most cases agricultural production can continue alongside renewable infrastructure, for example sheep grazing under solar panels, between wind turbines and within transmission easements.

How will the roll-out of energy infrastructure impact farmers and regional communities?

- The department is aware of community concerns about energy infrastructure projects, including the impacts on visual amenity, property values and issues around the conduct of energy developers.
- Where these projects occur, it is critical that landholders are consulted in a considered and transparent manner.

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SB24-000166

- Hosting energy infrastructure can be a new way for landholders to secure reliable, diversified income streams and increase their business resilience.

How are concerns about inadequate community consultation being addressed?

- The government is supporting efforts to facilitate early and transparent community engagement by implementing recommendations from the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner's Community Engagement Review.
 - Implementation is being driven through the Energy and Climate Change Ministers Council, noting that state and territory governments have primary responsibility for land-use planning and management of approvals for energy infrastructure projects.
 - This implementation is being supported by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).
- Key themes of the Review included:
 - equity in the sharing of community benefits
 - making community engagement more efficient through reforms to planning and approval processes
 - improving information sharing about the transition.

How is the Agriculture and Land plan considering land-use challenges?

- The Agriculture and Land Sector plan is one of six plans being developed to support the government's broader net zero planning process.
- The sector plan is examining ways to reduce emissions from agriculture and to increase carbon storage in the land.
- It has a strong focus on ways to achieve those goals whilst improving agricultural productivity, building farm resilience, creating opportunities for the forestry industry and delivering outcomes for nature.
- Land use and land-use change is being considered as an issue in the sector plan as well in other sector plans, such as the energy and electricity plan, the transport plan, and the net zero plan itself.
- The net zero planning process is being delivered by DCCEEW.

Is Australia's ACCU scheme affecting agriculture and agricultural production?

- Australia's carbon crediting (ACCU) scheme will continue to play an important role in the whole-of-economy transition to net zero emissions.
- Alternate income streams from carbon projects can support farm business resilience and provide funds which can be reinvested into the business.

- Carbon projects can also improve land management and sustainability, for example environmental plantings that also provide shelter for livestock.
- Ultimately it is up to individual farmers and landholders as to whether, and how, they want to participate in the ACCU scheme.
- The department has not observed notable impacts on agricultural production at a national level, or on domestic food security, as a result of the ACCU scheme.
- The department works closely with DCCEEW and the Clean Energy Regulator who have policy and regulatory responsibilities for the ACCU scheme.
- More detailed questions on the scheme should be directed to those agencies.

Does the government agree with the Climate Change Authority's projections of land-based sequestration?

- The Climate Change Authority (CCA) sectoral pathways review projected that between 3 and 6 million hectares of new plantings may be required by 2050 for Australia to reach net zero.
- This estimate was based on analysis conducted for CCA and included a range of different assumptions around sequestration rates and uptake by farmers.
- The government is considering the CCA's advice part of its net zero planning process, including development of the agriculture and land sector plan.
- More detailed questions on the CCA's methodology and advice should be directed to the Climate Change Authority or DCCEEW.

How much land sequestration will be needed in Australia's net zero transition?

- Australia will need to increase carbon storage as part of its net zero transition.
- The government has already stated that agriculture cannot be expected to provide offsets for other sectors of the economy whilst they continue business as usual emissions.
- That's why the government is exploring options across the whole economy to reduce emissions.
- The government is also working through the Agriculture and Land Sector Plan on options to deliver sequestration that aligns with agricultural production, builds farm resilience, provides opportunities for forestry and delivers benefits for nature.
- These goals respond to feedback received from stakeholders in consultations on the sector plan development.
- Questions about the broader net zero plan should be directed to DCCEEW.

s. 33(a)(iii), s. 47F(1), s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 33(a)(iii)

s. 33(a)(iii)

S. 33(a)(iii)

S. 33(a)(iii)

S. 33(a)(iii)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Trade and International Division

TID02

TRADE - EUROPEAN UNION DEFORESTATION REGULATION

CURRENT ISSUE

- The European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) seeks to ensure EU commodity supply chains are deforestation free. It applies to cattle (not dairy), cocoa, coffee, palm oil, rubber, soya, and wood, and derived products such as leather and paper.
 - The regulation is a business-to-business requirement which applies to each consignment of the relevant products sent to the EU. There is no requirement for Australian Government competent authority certification of EUDR. Ultimately, the EU is responsible for determining the compliance of international businesses trading with it.
- On 2 October 2024, the EU responded to widespread concerns from trading partner governments, including Australia, a number of their own EU member states and numerous industry organisations, that the EU was not adequately prepared to implement the regulation from 30 December 2024 with the announcement of a 12-month delay to implementation – **Attachment A**.
- The Australian Government, along with other countries, will continue to raise concern about the potential impact of the regulation on international trading arrangements with the EU at the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Committee in Geneva. We will also continue to engage with the European Commission in Brussels to seek further clarity on how Australian exporters can comply with the regulation.
- In addition, the department is supporting a pilot initiative to support beef and leather industry participants to access the geo-location data required by the EU so they can provide it to their EU importer and in turn the EU competent authority. The pilot is voluntary and about 70 businesses are participating.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Australia understands the EU's concerns about the rate of deforestation globally. Like the EU, we understand the critical importance of forests, biodiversity and sustainable land use.
- We have legislation at Federal and State and Territory level to support the conservation and sustainable management of forests and we have international commitments including the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use,

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the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

- Australia's total forest area has increased year-on-year since 2008. We are one of only a few nations to sustain such an increase.
- Despite our strong forest management credentials, we are concerned at the potential cost, complexity and regulatory burden that the EU's proposal may place on Australia's exporters to a market that already has high costs of entry.
- We have been working closely with Australian industry to get a better understanding of how the EUDR may impact on their export arrangements with the EU, including representatives from the beef, skins and hides and timber industries.
- We will continue to engage with the EU in Brussels at a range of levels on various aspects of the regulation, for example, to seek clarity on how to interpret the requirements so that Australian exporters can comply (ie. proving that production was deforestation-free and applying definitions to our land-use contexts); how to register for and use the IT system which is still being built by the EU; how the regulation will be implemented at the border by Member State competent authorities; and what happens in the event of a dispute. We have also provided feedback on the EU's global forest map which incorrectly classifies parts of Australia as forest.
- The department has engaged extensively with our agricultural industries to inform and support their efforts to understand and comply with the regulation. This has included in-market advocacy in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy. We most recently updated industry on developments with a webinar on 26 September.
- The department will also continue to work with likeminded countries at the WTO in Geneva to highlight concerns with the EUDR. We have raised a Specific Trade Concern at the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Committee multiple times this year, including again this week in Geneva (5-8 November).
- Australian industry has recognised these efforts by the government in letters from the Australian Forest Products Association and Responsible Wood thanking the previous Minister for pursuing this matter with the EU (**Attachments B and C**).
- The department also recently concluded a policy taskforce that engaged closely with industry to identify the key issues with industry preparedness and define next steps.
 - This resulted in the AgTrace pilot led by the Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre to assist producers to prove sustainability credentials.
 - We are aware of other industry-driven initiatives, including Cattle Australia's Land Management Commitment, and will continue to engage with them and other potentially affected industries to support Australian industry to comply with the EUDR. Producers can ultimately choose which tools they use to demonstrate compliance with the EUDR.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – EC Press Release on delay to EUDR implementation

Attachment B – Letter from Minister Watt to the EU Environment Commissioner

Attachment C - Letter to Minister Watt from the Australian Forest Products Association

Attachment D – EUDR Background



Commission strengthens support for EU Deforestation Regulation implementation and proposes extra 12 months of phasing-in time, responding to calls by global partners

Brussels, 2 October 2024

The Commission is today publishing [additional guidance documents](#) and a **stronger international cooperation framework** to support global stakeholders, Member States and third countries in their preparations for the implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation. Given feedback received from international partners about their state of preparations, the Commission also [proposes to give concerned parties additional time to prepare](#). If approved by the European Parliament and the Council, it would **make the law applicable on 30 December 2025 for large companies and 30 June 2026 for micro- and small enterprises**. Since all the implementation tools are technically ready, the extra 12 months can serve as a **phasing-in period to ensure proper and effective implementation**.

The **guidance** presented today will provide additional clarity to companies and enforcing authorities to facilitate the application of the rules, coming on top of the Commission's continuous support for stakeholders since the law's adoption. At the same time, the Commission recognises that three months ahead of the intended implementation date, several **global partners have repeatedly expressed concerns about their state of preparedness, most recently during the United Nations General Assembly week in New York**. Moreover, the state of preparations amongst stakeholders in Europe is also uneven. While many expect to be ready in time, thanks to intensive preparations, others have expressed concerns.

Given the EUDR's novel character, the swift calendar, and the variety of international stakeholders involved, the Commission considers that a **12-month additional time to phase in the system is a balanced solution to support operators around the world in securing a smooth implementation from the start**. With this step, the Commission aims to provide certainty about the way forward and to ensure the success of the EUDR, which is paramount to address the EU's contribution to the pressing global issue of deforestation. **The extension proposal in no way puts into question the objectives or the substance of the law, as agreed by the EU co-legislators.**

Additional guidance for effective and pragmatic implementation

The **guidance documents** presented today make good on the Commission's commitment to provide a reference of the recent collaborative efforts, involving stakeholders and competent authorities, to help ensure uniform interpretation of the law.

Key areas covered include details on the functionalities of the Information System, updates on penalties, and clarifications on critical definitions such as 'forest degradation', 'operator' in the scope of the law, and 'placing on the market'. There is also further guidance on traceability obligations.

The **guidance** is divided into 11 chapters covering a diverse range of issues such as legality requirements, timeframe of application, agricultural use, and clarifications on the product scope. All of these are supported by tangible scenarios. In addition, the **latest FAQ, also published today**, features over 40 new additional answers to address questions raised by a diverse range of stakeholders from around the world.

Micro- and small companies benefit from a lighter regime, which is also detailed on a new [dedicated webpage](#).

[Information for the general public](#) on the Commission website has also been updated and reorganised for easier understanding by all.

Transparent country benchmarking and stepped up cooperation with international partners

The Commission is publishing today the principles of the methodology it will apply to the EUDR benchmarking exercise, serving to classify countries as low, standard, or high risk, aiming to facilitate operators' due diligence processes and enable competent authorities to effectively monitor and enforce compliance.

Following the methodology applied, a **large majority of countries worldwide will be classified as 'low risk'**. This will give the opportunity to focus collective efforts where deforestation challenges are more acute.

To help ensure smooth implementation worldwide, the Commission and the European External Action Service are presenting a **strategic framework for international cooperation engagement** on the EU Deforestation Regulation. It identifies five priority areas of action such as support to smallholders, eight key principles such as a human rights-centred approach, and several implementation tools including dialogue and financing. This comprehensive framework will aim to promote a just and inclusive transition to deforestation-free agricultural supply chains leaving no one behind. While **the EU will step up dialogue and support even further**, the partnership's success will also rest on EU partners' commitment to deliver on global targets to halt deforestation.

Completion of the dedicated IT system

The Information System where businesses will register their due diligence statements is **ready to start accepting registrations in early November and for full operation in December**. Operators and traders will be able to register and submit due diligence statements **even before the law's entry into application**.

Since the system's pilot testing with 100 companies conducted in January, the Commission put in place several additional measures, including:

- Creating a single point of contact for IT support for stakeholders
- Development of an interface that allows machine-to-machine connections to the system, without the need for manual data input; more than 250 private stakeholders are developing this feature on their side
- Support to test the geolocation files of stakeholders and providing feedback
- Videos and detailed multilingual user instructions about the system
- Training for interested stakeholders: the first session took place in Brussels on 25 September, and online training will take place from second half of October.

Next steps

With the actions announced today, the Commission considers that **the necessary conditions for smooth implementation will be fulfilled**:

- Today's **additional guidance documents** will complete the wealth of support available to producers, trading organisations and partner countries in their preparations to implement the regulation, while the Commission remains committed to continue dialogue and engagement as necessary.
- Companies and other stakeholders are invited to **complete their connections, testing and training** for the use of the IT System.
- The Commission is intensifying dialogues with most concerned countries, which will feed into the **speedy finalisation of the country benchmarking system** through a proposed Implementing Act **by 30 June 2025**.
- The Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council to adopt the proposal for an extended implementation period by the end of the year.

Background

The EU Deforestation Regulation aims to ensure that a set of key goods placed on the EU market will no longer contribute to deforestation and forest degradation in the EU and elsewhere in the world. Deforestation and forest degradation are important drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss — the two key environmental challenges of our time. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the

United Nations (FAO) [estimates](#) that 420 million hectares of forest — an area larger than the European Union — were lost to deforestation between 1990 and 2020. Based on 2015–2020 deforestation rates, every hour the world is losing over nine times the forest surface of Brussels' Bois de la Cambre, or every minute three times the surface of the Parc Léopold bordering the European Parliament in Brussels.

The co-legislators adopted the law in 2023, with overwhelming majorities both [in the Parliament](#) and [in the Council](#). As part of the preparation of its 2021 proposal, the Commission conducted a public consultation which attracted the second largest number of responses (almost 1.2 million), with the vast majority of stakeholders supporting an ambitious approach including mandatory due diligence.

For more information

[Guidance on EU Deforestation Regulation](#)

[Strategic Framework for International Cooperation Engagement](#)

[Proposal for a Regulation amending Deforestation Regulation as regards the date of application](#)

[Commission website on EU Deforestation Regulation implementation](#)

IP/24/5009

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Related media

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**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

MS24-000158

Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius
Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
European Commission

Dear Commissioner Sinkevičius

I write on behalf of the Australian Government regarding the implementation of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Australia and the European Union are closely aligned on the critical importance of forests, including for biodiversity and climate purposes. We are strongly committed to halting and reversing global forest loss, as a signatory to the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

While Australia shares the Union's objective of combatting global deforestation, we are concerned the EUDR is not the least trade restrictive way to achieve this important objective. The lack of regulatory clarity, slow development of underpinning IT systems, and insufficient preparedness among Member State competent authorities, risks creating new barriers to trade.

Accounting for shipping times, Australian businesses have little more than six months to develop systems to meet the EUDR, with no certainty such systems will be accepted, creating significant regulatory, legal, and financial risk for our agricultural exporters and potential supply chain impacts for Europe.

Australia also shares many of the concerns raised by Member States at the recent Council of Agriculture Ministers meeting. Considering that feedback, as well as similar messages from a multitude of third countries and EU businesses, I respectfully urge you to delay implementation of the regulation until all required arrangements are understood and effectively in place.

In the interim, I note our officials met on 12 March 2024 to discuss Australia's concerns in detail. At that meeting the Directorate General for the Environment noted the EU was looking for flexibilities within the scope of the regulation, and Australia provided four specific requests in this regard which I would like to reiterate to you given their importance. These are:

1. To delay enforcement of penalties until at least 24 months after completing the country risk assessment for all trading partners.
2. To agree not to present a legislative proposal on extending the scope of the EUDR until the proposed system is fully operational and functioning properly, reflecting consultation with third countries.

3. To ensure legally binding guidance to Member State competent authorities is published well before commencement of the EUDR due diligence obligations, and that such guidance reflects the flexibilities shown in the final FAQ document.
4. To establish a mechanism for recurring third country engagement with the EU Member State working group on EUDR implementation to identify and resolve technical issues.

Australia is committed to working with the EU to enhance global action to address deforestation. In doing so we look forward to working with you to ensure the EUDR is implemented in the most practical and least trade restrictive manner possible.

Yours sincerely



MURRAY WATT

06 / 05 /2024

cc: Valdis Dombrovskis, European Commissioner for Trade
Janusz Wojciechowski, European Commissioner for Agriculture
Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism of Australia
The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water of Australia



21 May 2024

Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

E: minister.watt@agriculture.gov.au

Dear Minister

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Murray".

European Union Deforestation Regulation

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) thanks you for writing to the European Union Commission requesting that they delay the implementation of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) for two years.

AFPA strongly supports action to halt deforestation around the globe. Consumers are increasingly seeking confidence that their purchases do not contribute to deforestation. However, the EUDR has been poorly designed, and we believe its EU-centric definitions will disadvantage non-EU countries, where ecosystems operate very differently.

Please find attached an AFPA briefing note on our concerns about the EUDR. Most of these concerns have been raised with your department already. We have been in regular contact with your department about the EUDR for several months.

If you or your office would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me on diana.hallam@ausfpa.com.au or 0409 844 029.

Thank you again for your advocacy for the Australian agriculture sector on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana Hallam".

Diana Hallam
CEO
Australian Forest Products Association

May 2024

AFFPA Concerns: European Union Deforestation Regulation

EUDR Text - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R1115&qid=1687867231461>

How does the EUDR affect Australia's forest products sector?

There are 8 main concerns with the EUDR as drafted in relation to Australian Forestry:

- Another barrier for indigenous peoples and farm foresters
- Forest degradation definition – inappropriate for Australian conditions
- What definition does Australian native forestry fall under?
- Costs in relation to certification
- 'Deforestation' doesn't take into account reversion
- Anti-clear-cutting – inappropriate for Australian conditions
- Complaints process
- General questions

Each concern is set out below.

Another barrier for Indigenous peoples and farm foresters

We note that the two internationally recognized forest management certifications, PEFC/Responsible Wood and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) are proposing voluntary certification modules which will validate EUDR Due Diligence systems.

There is a risk that the EUDR will have negative effects on Australia's farm foresters and indigenous peoples interested in participating in sustainable forest management. Third party certification (PEFC/Responsible Wood and/or FSC) is expensive for small growers, however, without it, many indigenous peoples or farm foresters will be excluded from participating in the market due to insufficient systems to prove deforestation-free status. The EUDR will create another barrier for entry for farm foresters and indigenous peoples.

Forest degradation definition – inappropriate for Australian conditions

The definition of ‘forest degradation’ captures usual Australian native forestry practice which is routinely required following harvest, and is particularly needed following fire to enable regeneration.

Definition of ‘Forest degradation’

(7) *‘forest degradation’ means structural changes to forest cover, taking the form of the conversion of:*

- (a) *primary forests or naturally regenerating forests into plantation forests or into other wooded land; or*
- (b) *primary forests into planted forests;*

Commentary: In Australia, native forestry growers are legally required to regenerate (through planting and natural regeneration) a forest to a natural forest condition, after forest harvesting. This approach to forestry is done to support the many species of plants and animals that have evolved and adapted to natural disturbance patterns (fire and forest pests) so frequent across Australia’s forested landscapes. This is often referred to as ‘Ecosystem based management’ which maintains natural forests across the landscape.

Despite bearing few, if any, similarities to the “plantation” model used in Europe, Australian sustainable native forest management is therefore cast as “degradation” based solely on native forests being replanted/reseeded. Perversely, under this definition countries that make no attempt to regenerate harvested areas would not be subject to this characterization so long as harvested lands are not subsequently used for agricultural purposes.

There is a significant risk that the EU Commission could narrowly interpret the EUDR definition of ‘forest degradation’. This interpretation may not recognize the unique ecosystems present in Australia.

The pre-conceived notions of the EU, that all ‘natural/native’ forests are to be protected simply does not reflect the dynamic and active nature of forests in Australia. Forests are constantly renewed through large-scale disturbance events such as fires. These fires will also become more prevalent as climate change impacts take hold. Sustainable Forest Management in Australia includes the conservation of forests as well as the careful harvest and replanting of forests to support healthy and resilient forests into the future. In the face of worsening forest fires, active forest management will be a critical tool to reduce catastrophic fires, which pose risks to community safety, increased carbon emissions and habitat for many animals.

The EUDR effectively precludes tree planting or re-seeding following harvest in native forestry operations. This will negatively target countries like Australia.

Currently there is no global alignment on a common definition of ‘forest degradation’. It is AFPA’s understanding that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is working towards a more consistent global framework definition for ‘forest degradation’ in advance of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment Reporting for 2030.

Without a globally accepted definition of ‘forest degradation’, many ENGOs opposed to any commercial forestry activity will use an un-nuanced EU definition of ‘forest degradation’ to seek to prevent commercial native forestry activity.

Australia continues to be a global leader in the implementation and monitoring of legal and sustainable forest management and as such, forest degradation is not occurring within our native forestry operations.

What definition does Australian native forestry fall under?

There are three definitions Australian native forestry production could fall under, within the EUDR.

Definition of ‘planted forests’

(10) ‘planted forest’ means forest predominantly composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding, provided that the planted or seeded trees are expected to constitute more than 50 % of the growing stock at maturity; it includes coppice from trees that were originally planted or seeded;

Definition of ‘naturally regenerating forest’

Article 2, (9) ‘naturally regenerating forest’ means forest predominantly composed of trees established through natural regeneration; it includes any of the following:

- (a) forests for which it is not possible to distinguish whether planted or naturally regenerated;*
- (b) forests with a mix of naturally regenerated native tree species and planted or seeded trees, and where the naturally regenerated trees are expected to constitute the major part of the growing stock at stand maturity;*
- (c) coppice from trees originally established through natural regeneration;*
- (d) naturally regenerated trees of introduced species;*

Definition of ‘primary forest’

Article 2, (8) ‘primary forest’ means naturally regenerated forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed;

Commentary: under these definitions (‘planted forest’, ‘naturally regenerating forest’ and ‘primary forest’) it is difficult to determine what category Australian native forests would fall under.

Native Forests for timber production that have been successfully regenerated through the long-standing practice of aerial seed application appear to be considered as planted forests. However they would also meet the definition of naturally regenerating forest (and even primary

forest) as it is often not possible to distinguish whether they are planted or naturally regenerated, particularly as they mature.

The definition and subsequent management of primary forest is particularly problematic. Australia's fire driven ecology means that many native eucalypt forest areas that have traditionally been managed for wood production would fall into this category. That is primary forest is not overly rare in the Australian context, and can be created by a fire event. Given that one of the main silvicultural treatments applied to these forests is aerial sowing, it is likely that products from these forests would be excluded from sale in the EUDR.

Members have also raised that in these times of climate change and drought, the traditional practice of sourcing seed from as locally as possible (as has been the case in Australian Native Forestry) may no longer be universally wise. We are aware of discussions which advocate choosing more drought-tolerant species for re-seeding, which may not suit the climate of a site historically, but are more likely to suit its predicted future climate.

Members are also concerned about plantation of native species being incorrectly identified as 'primary forest' by activists.

'Deforestation' doesn't take into account reversion

The definition of 'deforestation' as drafted doesn't take into account sale of timber on a stumpage basis and removes choice for farmers.

Definition of 'Deforestation':

Article 2, 'deforestation' means the conversion of forest to agricultural use, whether human-induced or not;

...

Definition of 'Deforestation - free':

Article 2, (13) 'deforestation-free' means:

- (a) that the relevant products contain, have been fed with or have been made using, relevant commodities that were produced on land that has not been subject to deforestation after 31 December, 2020; and
- (b) in the case of relevant products that contain or have been made using wood, that the wood has been harvested from the forest without inducing forest degradation after 31 December, 2020;

This definition fails to consider the concept of reversion. Reversion is where agricultural land has been used to grow a plantation tree crop and is then (for legitimate reasons such as poor productivity, market changes) reverted back to agricultural use. Under the EUDR, products from reverted forest will not be permitted to enter the EU market.

Many companies source timber on a stumpage basis from a range of large and small forest growers. In these circumstances the decision to replant areas which companies source timber from is made by the farmer, not the timber harvesting business. This decision to replant or revert could be years after harvesting.

There needs clarity regarding how stumpage sales as these can be managed within the EUDR system as existing frameworks (such as forest certification) are managed by the harvesting entity. Therefore, what level of assurance is required to be gained from the grower that a subsequent crop is to be grown to enable a grower to be assessed as low risk. The regulations talk of adequately, conclusive and verifiable information being required, but not the detail of what such information may be.

Farmer impacts: There are flow on implications to the farmer of this definition of ‘deforestation’. If a plantation forestry must always be replanted by a farmer to ensure compliance with the EUDR (to enable access to a number of markets), this land will reduce in value. This would create yet another disincentive for farmers to participate in plantation forestry. Currently under the Australian ACCU Scheme, farmers participate knowing that they can revert their land back to agriculture after 25 years. Accordingly land values hold value. However, if as a consequence of the EUDR farmers are required to replant to enable access to lucrative markets, we are increasing risk for farmers to participate in farm forestry. This could reduce afforestation in Australia- completely contrary to the intention of the EUDR.

Anti-clear-cutting – inappropriate for Australian conditions

We note:

Preamble (9) “...Forest ecosystems have to cope with multiple pressures caused by climate change, ranging from extreme weather patterns to pests, and with human-related activities that negatively affect ecosystems and habitats. In particular, intensively managed even-aged forests through clear-cutting and deadwood removal can have a severe impact on whole habitats.”

Concern that the management of native forestry in Australia to mimic bushfires is not considered.

Complaints process

It is unclear at this point how the EUDR will deal with complaints from stakeholders in a prompt manner as to not disrupt operations (especially when complaints are ill-founded). Without a clear and quick complaints process, the entire supply chain could be halted immediately by activists.

General questions in relation to plantation forestry and EUDR

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment in Article 10 is extensive, goes well - beyond deforestation and does not provide sufficient clarity as to how these issues will be addressed.

Data definitions

Customers within some of our member supply chains have begun requesting source information to enable compliance with EUDR requirements. To ensure that there is efficient, consistent and reportable data being provided there requires clarity to a fine level regarding what data is needed and the attributes to be assigned to that data.

If central databases are to be developed, we require comfort that any data produced now will be able to be imported into those systems. We are concerned that any data created may need to be recreated once common standards are clarified.

Validation

We note that both Responsible Wood and FSC are proposing a voluntary certification module which will validate EUDR Due Diligence systems. These modules are currently being produced and unlikely to be available for some time.

Given the fact that data is already being requested by customers, it is unclear how assurance can be sought that processes being developed and implemented to meet the EUDR requirements, with the potential risk that product enters the supply chain in good faith, which is subsequently deemed to be non-compliant due to systems issues.

For more information: Diana Hallam, CEO (diana.hallam@ausfpa.com.au).

ATTACHMENT D - EUROPEAN UNION DEFORESTATION REGULATION BACKGROUND

Key requirements

- The European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) requires that certain supply chains are deforestation-free, specifically cattle (not dairy), cocoa, coffee, palm oil, rubber, soya, and wood, and those of derived products such as leather and paper.
- The EUDR will require EU importers to provide their authorities with a due diligence statement and information to demonstrate imports are not associated with deforestation or forest degradation.
- The due diligence statement must include geo-coordinates of the production locations at all points in the supply chain up to the point of slaughter in the case of beef, and information to demonstrate compliance with the relevant laws in the country of production. Australian exporters of affected commodities will need to provide this geo-coordinate data to their EU commercial partners.

Media coverage

- There has been media coverage (including by The Guardian and The Australian amongst others) on EUDR following public comments made by former Minister Watt at Beef Week. Reference has been made to several documents released under FOI related to the department's efforts on EUDR.
- In September, Cattle Australia's 'Land Management Commitment', which recommended government support industry preparedness with mapping, tools, regional development plans and adopting industry-developed definitions of 'forest' and 'deforestation' received mainstream media attention.

Bilateral engagement

- Engagement with the European Commission on the EUDR since 2019 has included:
 - A submission on Australia's Forest Status provided to the EC on 30 June 2023 supporting our advocacy for a low-risk country rating.
 - On 6 May 2024, Senator Watt, in his former capacity as Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, wrote to the EU Environment Commissioner calling for a delay of commencement beyond 30 December 2024 and outlining a range of issues with the EUDR including a lack of clarity, slow development of EU IT systems and insufficient preparedness among Member State competent authorities all of which could potentially have an adverse impact on Australia's agricultural trade.

s. 33(a)(iii)

S. 33(a)(iii)

S. 33(a)(iii)

Industry response

- An industry working group led by Integrity Systems Company (ISC) is investigating how Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program data, including addresses from Property Identification Codes (PICs), could be used meet the EUDR geolocation data requirements.
- Two key challenges will be ensuring privacy is maintained when geolocation data is shared to others in the supply chain and how deforestation status will be assessed from the single point data, which will be required for exporters to do their due diligence.
- Cattle Australia (CA) published a 'Land Management Commitment' in September 2024 to support their industry to demonstrate sustainability credentials such as deforestation-free. The Commitment recommends support for mapping and tools.
- The Commitment also recommends government adopt industry-developed definitions of 'deforestation' and 'forest' with respect to agriculture use to use in our

EUDR advocacy. While the department supports industry efforts to demonstrate its sustainability credentials:

- There would be inconsistency with Australia's own longstanding definitions for forest, deforestation and land use that conform to international reporting requirements, have been agreed with the states, and form the basis of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable forest management reporting.
- The EU's definitions have been prescribed by law, and Australia adopting new definitions of 'deforestation' or 'forest' with respect to 'agricultural use' will not ultimately alter the EUDR's implementation.
- We assess that the most useful method of advocacy is to highlight Australia's strong forest management credentials, and that the approach of the EUDR is unnecessarily burdensome, particularly for nations like Australia that are relatively low risk.

AgTrace pilot project

- The department is supporting industry led initiatives including the AgTrace project led by the Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre which will undertake a pilot to test EUDR compliance with a relevant EU importer and competent authority.
- This pilot aims to clarify EU importer expectations around due diligence requirements and test data sharing systems to reduce compliance burden. It will be conducted via a business-to-business arrangement without government verification.
- Food Agility will collaborate with other industry-led initiatives, including the Integrity Systems Company (ISC) working group and Cattle Australia.

Trade statistics

Relevant Commodity	Export direct to EU* A\$ M (2023)	% total export value (2023)
Cattle meat	146.6	1.2
Skins & hides	42.3	13.4
Wood	20.6	0.8
Rubber	24.0	6.7
Coffee	0.5	1.5
Cocoa	0.56	0.2
Soya	0.1#	
Oil Palm	0.06	3.0
Total	234.7	

Source: ABS 2024

* Processed and unprocessed products. This **does not** include export through a secondary country to the EU and for EUDR HS code products only. # export in 2021 only.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Trade and International Division

TID03**EXPORT STATISTICS AND MARKET ACCESS ACHIEVEMENTS****CURRENT ISSUE**

Recent market access achievements for agriculture, fisheries and forestry exports. The department negotiates technical market access with our trading partners. This includes overcoming barriers to export and agreeing on non-tariff measures such as biosecurity and food safety requirements.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- In the 2023-24 financial year, the department recorded a total of 88 technical market access achievements, including:
 - 29 actions to maintain and 5 actions to restore existing markets. These actions protected markets worth \$4.6 billion¹.
 - Opening 10 new markets and 44 improvements to existing market access.
- Achievements are continuing in the 2024-25 financial year, with the announcement of new access for plums to Vietnam and removing varietal restrictions on grapes to Japan.

BACKGROUND

- In 2023-24, agriculture, fisheries and forestry exports were worth \$76 billion, based on ABARES analysis². This is the second highest value on record, and the highest for livestock and livestock products, specifically, which were worth \$29 billion.
- Australia exports around 70% of its agricultural, fisheries and forestry production to 169 global markets each year.
- Examples of market access achievement in 2023-24 include:
 - Improved access to the China meat market through restoring access for five red meat establishments on 29 May 2024, and three meat export establishments on 11 December 2023. This is a valuable market for our exporters to access, with beef and sheep meat exports to China worth a total of \$3.1 billion in 2023-24.
 - Maintained access for canola to the European Union (EU) through advocating for recognition of the Australian canola industry's low-emissions credentials. Australia's canola exports to the EU were worth \$1.8 billion in 2023-24.

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Last updated: 21 October 2024

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SB24-000176

- Maintained access through assuring Australia's disease freedom status for exports of meat and meat products to Taiwan – Australia's exports of beef, pigmeat, sheep and goatmeat to Taiwan were worth \$401 million in 2023-24.
- New access for live Eastern rock lobsters to Vietnam, which expands existing access for Ornate, Western, and Southern Rock Lobster. In 2023-24, Australia exported \$132 million worth of rock lobsters to Vietnam.
- Improved access for wine to Thailand. Thailand is a growing export market for wine, with exports worth \$58 million in 2023-24.
- New access for Hass avocados to Thailand. Since access opened, \$3.5 million worth of avocados (around 662 tonnes) have been exported.
- Maintained access for queen bees exported to Canada through revised veterinary health certificates. This ensured ongoing trade following the changed *Varroa destructor* (or Varroa mite) status in Australia. Conditions for packaged bees were also updated to recognise resumption of state freedom from small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) in Tasmania. Australia exported \$1.6 million worth of live bees to Canada in 2023-24.
- New market access for Australian honey and edible apiculture products to be exported to Vietnam.
- New market access for kangaroo meat and meat products to Taiwan.
- Reinstatement of market access for sheep meat to be exported to Brazil. Brazil changed certification requirements in 2020. The department negotiated new certificate requirements, including a briefer attestation list based on Australia's disease freedom status.
- Improved access through formalising and reducing regulatory burden for hides and skins exported to Brazil – in 2023-24 Australia exported over \$1.8 million of skins and hides to Brazil.

SOURCES

1. Unless otherwise specified, all trade value estimates are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), with analysis by the department.

ABS (July 2024), [International Trade in Goods](#), ABS Website, accessed 3 October 2024.

2. ABARES 2024, *Agricultural Commodities Report: September quarter 2024*, ABARES, Canberra, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25814/ffgs-mx60> CC BY 4.0.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

ATTACHMENT A: VARIATION IN ACHIEVEMENT VALUES FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT

The trade values provided for these market access achievements vary from the values reported in the Annual Report 2023-24 and on the department's webpage [Market access achievements - DAFF](#). This is because each utilised the most recent, complete year of data available at the time of analysis:

- The trade values provided here are for the 2023-24 financial year, which is the most recent complete year of data as of November 2024.
- In the Annual Report and on the webpage, trade values are based on the 2023 calendar year. This is because at the time results were submitted for the Annual Report (July 2024), 2023 was the most complete available year of data to indicate the value of trade.
 - There is an approximate lag of two months between the end of a month and the release of trade data from the ABS. This means at the time results were due for the Annual Report, data was only available until May 2024.

Below are the market access achievements with both the 2023-24 and 2023 trade values indicated:

1. Improved access to the China meat market through restoring access for five red meat establishments on 29 May 2024, and three meat export establishments on 11 December 2023. This is a valuable market for our exporters to access, with beef and sheep meat exports to China worth a total of \$3.1 billion in 2023-24 [*Previously reported as \$3.5 billion in 2023*].
2. Maintained access for canola to the European Union (EU) through advocating for recognition of the Australian canola industry's low-emissions credentials. Australia's canola exports to the EU were worth \$1.8 billion in 2023-24 [*Reported as \$2.1 billion in 2023, in the Annual Report*].
3. Maintained access through assuring Australia's disease freedom status for exports of meat and meat products to Taiwan – Australia's exports of beef, pigmeat, sheep and goatmeat to Taiwan were worth \$401 million in 2023-24 [*Reported as \$419 million in 2023, in the Annual Report*].
4. New access for live Eastern rock lobsters to Vietnam, which expands existing access for Ornate, Western, and Southern Rock Lobster. In 2023-24, Australia exported \$132 million worth of rock lobsters to Vietnam [*Previously reported as \$120 million in 2023*].

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

5. Improved access for wine to Thailand. Thailand is a growing export market for wine, with exports worth \$58 million in 2023-24 [*Reported as \$60 million in 2023, up 55% on the previous three-year average, in the Annual Report*].
6. New access for Hass avocados to Thailand. Since access opened, \$3.5 million worth of avocados (around 662 tonnes) have been exported. [*Nil changes*].
7. Maintained access for queen bees exported to Canada through revised veterinary health certificates. This ensured ongoing trade following the changed *Varroa destructor* (or Varroa mite) status in Australia. Conditions for packaged bees were also updated to recognise resumption of state freedom from small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) in Tasmania. Australia exported \$1.6 million worth of live bees to Canada in 2023 [*Reported as \$2.9 million in 2023, in the Annual Report*].
8. New market access for Australian honey and edible apiculture products to be exported to Vietnam. [*Nil changes*].
9. New market access for kangaroo meat and meat products to Taiwan. [*Nil changes*].
10. Reinstatement of market access for sheep meat to be exported to Brazil. Brazil changed certification requirements in 2020. The department negotiated new certificate requirements, including a briefer attestation list based on Australia's disease freedom status. [*Nil changes*].
11. Improved access through formalising and reducing regulatory burden for hides and skins exported to Brazil – in 2023 Australia exported over \$1.8 million of skins and hides to Brazil [*Reported as \$1.2 million in 2023, in the Annual Report*].

s. 33(a)(iii), s. 47F(1)

S. 33(a)(iii)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Biosecurity Animal Division

BAD01**HIGH PATHOGENICITY AVIAN INFLUENZA****\$37 million announced on 14 October 2024***

Funding Source	Funding Purpose	Financial Year	
		2024-25	2025-26
<i>Source 1 (administered and departmental)</i>	Boosting response capability.	<i>\$10 million (of which \$0.248 million is departmental and \$9.75 million is administered)</i>	<i>\$5 million</i>
<i>Source 2 (administered)</i>	National communications.	<i>\$10 million</i>	-
<i>Source 3 (administered programs)</i>	Enhancing One Health surveillance – contract extensions for Wildlife Health Australia.	<i>\$7 million</i>	-
<i>Source 4 (administered programs)</i>	Biosecurity and scientific capability.	<i>\$4 million</i>	<i>\$1 million</i>
Expenditure per financial year		\$31 million	\$6 million
Overall expenditure		\$37 million	

*Note: this is part of the \$95 million package, of which:

- \$37 million will be administered by DAFF.
- \$35.9 million will be administered by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.
- \$22.1 million will be administered by the Department of Health and Aged Care.

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\$6.9 million announced July 2024

Funding Source	Funding Purpose	Financial Year	
		2024-25	2025-26
<i>Source 1 (departmental grant)</i>	For the Wildlife Health Australia One Health Surveillance Initiative.	\$2.2 million (funded from 23-24 budget)	-
<i>Source 2 (departmental appropriation)</i>	Granted to Animal Health Australia to support the national response capability for avian influenza in poultry, including investigating the potential of commercial avian influenza vaccines for use in Australia.	\$1.95 million (funded from 23-24 budget)	-
<i>Source 3 (administered programs)</i>	To extend the National Avian Influenza Wild Bird Surveillance Program.	\$726,000 (\$357,500 funded from 23-24 budget) (\$368,500 funded 24-25 budget)	\$412,500
<i>Source 4 (departmental)</i>	Communication with stakeholders, industry and the general public to strengthen awareness and understanding of Australia's biosecurity measures and preparedness.	\$800,000	-
<i>Source 5 (departmental grant)</i>	Granted to Wildlife Health Australia (through variation of existing One Health Surveillance Initiative grant) to support early detection and response capability for H5N1 HPAI in wildlife.	\$580,000 (funded from 23-24 FY budget)	-
<i>Source 6 (departmental appropriation)</i>	To quantify the location, structure, biosecurity, routine husbandry practices, and movement patterns of Australia's commercial poultry industries. Project contracted to Poultry Hub.	\$200,000	-
<i>Source 7 (departmental appropriation)</i>	To better understand the link between the presence of H7 low pathogenicity avian influenza in Australian wild birds and the outbreaks of H7 HPAI in Australian poultry. Project contracted to Deakin University	\$70,000	-
Expenditure per financial year		\$6,526,000	\$412,500
Overall Expenditure		\$6,938,500	

CURRENT ISSUE

- Australia remains the only continent free from HPAI H5N1. However, this strain has spread rapidly between continents, and we must be prepared for the possibility that it could arrive in Australia.
- The Australian Government, in conjunction with national stakeholders, is uplifting national preparedness and enhancing response capability noting preparedness for HPAI as an emergency animal disease has been a national focus for many years.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

HPAI H5N1 Preparedness

- The Australian Government is investing over \$100 million to strengthen surveillance, preparedness and response capability in alignment with a 'One Health' approach.
- On 14 October 2024, \$95 million was announced (in addition to \$6.9m in July 2024).
 - \$37 million over 2 years to protect Australian agriculture by enhancing national coordination of response arrangement and communications, strengthening surveillance and boosting biosecurity capacity and capability across the production sector and environmental biosecurity.
 - \$35.9 million over 2 years to boost and accelerate HPAI H5N1 preparedness planning and protective action by using the best data available to target actions for our most at-risk species and important natural places.
 - \$22.1 million over 2 years to manufacture and store pandemic influenza vaccines that will better prepare and respond quickly to a potential influenza pandemic.
- A dedicated Australian Government HPAI Preparedness Taskforce (the Taskforce) was established in July 2024 to lead and coordinate national activity and is being jointly led by the agriculture, health, environment and emergency management portfolios, to ensure a whole-of-government approach to this cross-sectoral disease threat.
- The Taskforce is actively engaging relevant stakeholders to inform targeted investment decisions, particularly with jurisdictions on enhancing national response capacity.
- The recent Agriculture Ministers Meeting confirmed the collaborative national approach to this disease threat. Particularly through partnering investments between the Australian Government and jurisdictions to further strengthen national response arrangements to this cross-sectoral disease threat.
- In addition the Taskforce led a series of 3 national HPAI preparedness activities as part of 'Exercise Volare', following a commitment by Agriculture Ministers in July 2024.
 - The exercise was undertaken with key partners, including state and territory agencies, Wildlife Health Australia, Animal Health Australia, industry and non-government stakeholders.

- The exercise highlighted strengths of existing arrangements and identified further opportunities to enhance Australia's national HPAI preparedness and response capabilities.
- On 4 October 2024, a public webinar attracting over 1,000 attendees shared key insights and outcomes from Exercise Volare and offered opportunities for the public to engage Australia's HPAI preparedness and response matters.
- The recently announced investment by the Government into HPAI preparedness was informed by Exercise Volare outcomes and will be critical in boosting Australia's preparedness for a potential incursion of HPAI H5N1.
- The Australian Government investment in communication and engagement with stakeholders, industry and the general public will strengthen awareness and understanding of Australia's biosecurity measures and preparedness. Of the \$95 million recently announced, up to \$10 million will support nationally coordinated communications that provide clear, trusted and consistent messaging for stakeholders and the Australian public regarding HPAI H5N1.
- Examples of recent departmental engagement focussed on H5N1 includes a:
 - Dairy Australia webinar in October 2024, noting the detections of in dairy cattle in the United States; the first known occurrence globally.
 - National Avian Influenza Summit hosted by the Australian Chicken Meat Federation in August 2024, which convened experts in animal health, biosecurity, and agriculture on national readiness and response capabilities
 - Animal Health Australia government-poultry industry roundtable in June 2024.
- The Australian Government continues to work with international governments, including the US and the UK to learn from their experiences in managing HPAI H5N1 and with New Zealand on its preparedness activities, including vaccination programs in threatened species.

BACKGROUND

Preparedness for HPAI H5N1 as an emergency animal disease has been a national focus for many years through activities such as the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy and the National Avian Influenza Wild Bird Surveillance Program.

Under the established national response arrangements, the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement provides a framework for an initial response to potentially contain and eradicate an incursion, particularly in production systems. However, this agreement is not scalable to a response in wildlife where containment and eradication are not technically feasible.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Biosecurity Animal Division

BAD02**SALMON IMPORTS****CURRENT ISSUE**

- In September 2024, the department recognised Chile as an approved country to export salmon to Australia under specific biosecurity import requirements.

s. 33(a)(iii)

- The department keeps stakeholders informed about its salmon market access assessment work and has been highly responsive to recent industry enquiries to clarify our obligations to conduct these assessments and explain our processes.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Australia maintains very strict biosecurity measures for imported salmon to ensure local Australian aquaculture industries and the environment are protected from harm caused by exotic diseases.
 - The department reiterates its support for the ongoing viability of the Australian salmon industry.
- As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Australia is obliged to consider requests from our trading partners for market access, as other countries are required to assess Australian agricultural market access requests.
- Australia's commitment to our WTO obligations is essential to maintain our reputation as a fair-trading nation which permits two-way, risk managed trade.
 - Competent authority assessments for aquatic (and terrestrial) animals and their products are a core part of Australia's biosecurity system and the role biosecurity plays to facilitate safe, least restrictive trade in agricultural commodities.

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SB24-000178

- Industry cannot appeal a competent authority assessment as it is a government-to-government process and is not a reviewable decision.
- In September 2024 the department approved Chile. This means Chile can export wild-caught or farmed Chilean salmon and process salmon (from other approved source countries) in a retail ready form for Australia.
 - Australia first received the market access request from Chile in 2000, which was most recently confirmed again in 2016.
 - Australia's assessment has been a robust process undertaken over many years, including in-country assessments to thoroughly examine this request from Chile to ensure that salmon products can be imported safely under strict conditions to manage biosecurity risks.
 - During the assessment, the department consulted with the peak body for the Australian salmon farming industry.
 - In September 2022, the department wrote to the Tasmanian Salmon Growers Association (predecessor to Salmon Tasmania as the peak industry group) setting out the process to date and advising the next step of an in-country verification visit to Chile was going to occur in November 2022.
 - The department also advised Salmon Tasmania in August 2024 that the approval was nearing completion and again in September 2024 advising that the approval was completed.
 - Chile is a significant global producer of salmon.
 - Information provided to the department indicates Chile can export salmon products to Australia that would compete with Australian produced salmon products and/or salmon products currently on the market imported from other approved source countries.
 - The department's biosecurity approval does not mean trade from Chile will commence straight away as the Chilean Government has indicated it will require some additional time to establish conditions for processing export applications.
 - It is important to note that Australian consumers may see the benefits of imports including increased product choice and greater affordability.
- As a further demonstration of commitment to two-way risk-based trade, the department's commitment to progress the Chilean salmon assessment was met with a similar commitment from Chile to progress a systems recognition assessment of our ruminant animal genetics and dairy systems.
 - In 2023, Chile approved Australia's ruminant animal genetics system facilitating germplasm exports. Australia's dairy exports to Chile also benefited from improved market access which removed costly requirements in recognition of our robust regulatory system for dairy exports.

- Subject to our strict biosecurity requirements, Australia has imported raw salmonid products for human consumption from many approved countries since early 2000. These countries include Norway which is the world's largest salmon producer with 52% of global production
 - In this time and despite the presence of imported products, the domestic salmon industry has grown significantly to supply high quality fresh products into the Australian and international markets.
 - The Tasmania Salmon industry remains an important supplier of Tasmanian Salmon to Australians for consumption of healthy and nutritious products, and Australian retailers and consumers continue to demand Australian products.
 - For the 2021-22 FY, Australia's salmon product exports were valued at approx. A \$417 million.
 - The success of the Australian salmon industry has brought many economic and social benefits, including direct and indirect employment in particular to Tasmania.
- The department recognises the concerns of the Tasmanian salmon industry regarding the potential commercial implications of permitting import of salmon products from Chile, at a time of industry uncertainty and concern about the future of salmon and ocean trout farming in Macquarie Harbour.
 - The reconsideration of the 2012 decision governing salmon and ocean trout farming in Macquarie Harbour is a matter for the Minister for the Environment and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).
 - For further information on Macquarie Harbour refer to KIB ACFFD02.

s. 33(a)(iii)

BACKGROUND

- Most approved salmon source countries were assessed during the 1999 IRA period due to existing trade, including Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.
 - While the department has approved several salmon processing countries since the early 2000's, only two countries have received source country approval including Iceland in 2023, and now Chile.
 - **s. 33(a)(iii)**

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division

BSRD01**NATIONAL BIOSECURITY STRATEGY****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The National Biosecurity Strategy (NBS) was endorsed by all Agriculture Ministers on 20 July 2022 and released by the former Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on 9 August 2022 (**Attachment A**).
- The NBS Implementation Plan was published in February 2024 and the first NBS Action Plan is due to be released by end-2024.
- The NBS six priority areas identified for collective action are: shared biosecurity culture; stronger partnerships; coordinated preparedness and response; highly skilled workforce; sustainable investment; and integration supported by technology, research and data.
- As this is a shared national strategy, the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) oversees NBS implementation, working with the NBS Implementation Committee (NIC). The NIC is supported by the NBS Implementation Working Group (WG).
- The NIC and WG comprise a cross-section of biosecurity stakeholders (**Attachment B**). Extensive stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to inform the development of NBS deliverables (**Attachment C**).

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Implementation of the NBS is a priority for the Commonwealth and state/territory governments. Since the NBS is focused on establishing a strong foundation for implementation over its 10-year life span.
- From the outset, a key feature of implementation work has been the involvement of a wide cross-section of biosecurity system stakeholders to inform implementation of the NBS and reinforce a shared biosecurity culture and stronger partnerships.
- The approach has been driven by the NBS implementation principles. The NBS notes that, to be successful, NBS implementation will be an inclusive process that includes collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders to develop, implement and monitor action plan delivery.
- Agriculture Ministers agreed to phase the action planning process under the NBS, to allow sufficient time to undertake comprehensive engagement with stakeholders and build on the initial actions.

- This also reflects requests from stakeholders for more consultation throughout the development of the first Action Plan.
- The draft NBS Action Plan (**Attachment D**) was subject to a public consultation process from 1 to 22 August 2024.
- There was a significant response, with 52 submissions received from a range of stakeholders (for example, National Farmers' Federation, Cattle Australia, Australian Pork Limited, Wildlife Health Australia, CSIRO, Australian Local Government Association).
- Overall, there was broad interest in the Action Plan and most respondents agreed the activities included aligned with the NBS.
- Key issues raised in submissions included requests to be engaged in future NBS implementation activities, and feedback specific to activities for this action plan and future action plans.
- Stakeholder feedback was used to finalise the NBS Action Plan, which was provided to the NIC and the NBC on 26 September 2024.
- The NBS Action Plan was endorsed by Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee at its meeting on 3 October and has been progressed to Agriculture Ministers' Meeting (AMM) for endorsement.
 - Once endorsed the NBS Action Plan will be publicly released.
- Pending finalisation of the NBS Action Plan, the department is progressing work to transition into the next phase to support action delivery, including reporting, monitoring and evaluation activities.
- Some activities are already underway and that given the unpredictable nature of the biosecurity risk environment, these activities will also be responsive to need.

BACKGROUND

- Agriculture Ministers endorsed an approach to implementing the NBS at their meeting on 9 September 2022 including the establishment of the NIC.
- The NBC established the NIC with the South Australian NBC representative as the initial Chair.
- The NIC comprises representatives from governments, plant and animal industries, freight and logistics organisations, environmental groups, research organisations and a First Nations representative body (see **Attachment B** for membership detail). While chaired by a government representative (SA Government), the majority of members of the NIC are from non-government organisations. Agriculture Ministers endorsed the membership of the NIC.
 - The NIC has held 14 meetings to date.

- The NIC is supported by the WG, chaired by a representative from the Australian Food and Grocery Council (see **Attachment B** for membership).
 - The WG met for the first time on 14 July 2023 and has met over 30 times since its inception.
- The Secretariat for both the NIC and WG is provided by the Commonwealth, with costs shared between the Commonwealth, states and territories.
- The NIC oversees the delivery of key deliverables including the NBS Implementation Plan, NBS Action Plan and the communications and engagement strategy. The WG has responsibility for conducting targeted consultation to inform drafting of the NBS Action Plan.
- NBS implementation work undertaken to date includes:
 - The NBS Implementation Plan was published in February 2024. It was developed in consultation with NIC members, WG members and their constituents.
 - A stakeholder survey was undertaken between 28 August 2023 to 13 September 2023 to inform the development of actions for the first two NBS priority areas of shared biosecurity culture and stronger partnerships.
 - A second stakeholder survey was undertaken between 1 to 29 November 2023 to inform the development of actions for NBS priority areas of highly skilled workforce, sustainable investment, coordinated preparedness and response and integration supported by technology, research and data.
 - A public webinar was held on 15 November 2023 to provide an update on NBS implementation and answer any questions in relation to the second survey.
 - Four stakeholder focus groups were held in December 2023 to consult with stakeholders with relevant expertise and interest, hold open discussions, test and generate ideas and build upon early survey insights.
 - Action development workshops were held in February 2024, focusing on each of the NBS priority areas. The purpose was to develop draft actions using survey and focus group data. Attendees included WG members, NIC members and jurisdictional representatives (NBC officials-level contacts).
 - The NIC and NBC endorsed the consultation draft NBS Action Plan and agreed to commence public consultation at its joint meeting on 26 July 2024.
 - The consultation draft NBS Action Plan underwent public consultation in August 2024, via the department's Have Your Say platform.
 - The submissions were published on <https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/national-biosecurity-strategy-actions-on-26-September-2024>. A few submissions were not published due to confidentiality claimed by stakeholders.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – National Biosecurity Strategy

Attachment B – NIC and WG Membership List

Attachment C – Summary of stakeholder engagement

Attachment D – Consultation draft NBS Action Plan

Attachment B

Membership List – National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Committee (NIC)

Name	Jurisdiction / Position	Organisation
GOVERNMENT		
s. 47F(1)	South Australia	Department of Primary Industries and Regions
s. 47F(1)	Victoria	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
s. 47F(1)	Western Australia	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
s. 47F(1)	Commonwealth	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
NON-GOVERNMENT		
s. 47F(1) **	s. 47F(1)	Grain Producers Australia representative from Plant Health Australia
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Cattle Australia, representative from Animal Health Australia
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Australian Food and Grocery Council
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	National Farmers' Federation
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	NRM Regions Australia
s. 47F(1)	TBD	North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Invasive Species Council
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Grains Research and Development Corporation
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Freight and Trade Alliance

*Note s. 47F(1) (PIRSA) was previously the s. 47F(1) until s. 47F(1) department from PIRSA in August 2024. s. 47F(1) will be the SA representative until a replacement s. 47F(1) for PIRSA is finalised.

**Note s. 47F(1) was previously the plant industry representative. s. 47F(1) has now taken over this role on the NIC. Due to s. 47F(1), s. 47F(1) will be s. 47F(1) proxy until further notice.

Membership List – National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Working Group (Working Group)

Name	Jurisdiction / Position	Organisation
GOVERNMENT		
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	s. 47F(1)	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
s. 47F(1)	Queensland	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
NON-GOVERNMENT		
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Australian Food and Grocery Council
Animal Industry		
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Australian Pork Limited (APL)
Plant Industry		
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Australian Forest Products Association
Transport and Logistics		
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	International Forwarders and Customs Brokers Association of Australia (IFCBAA)
Environmental		
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Australian Land Conservation Alliance
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	National Landcare Network
Research Organisations		
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	University of Tasmania
s. 47F(1)	s. 47F(1)	

Attachment C

Summary of stakeholder engagement**Future actions for the National Biosecurity Strategy:****Survey on Priority Areas 1 and 2**

Survey opened 28 August 2023 and closed 4pm AEDT 13 September 2023.

Total consultation 17 days [2 and a half weeks].

Number of written responses	52 responses in total 51 HYS ¹ submissions 1 submission via email <i>*Note HYS webpage says 51 consultations were received in the second survey (this includes the 51 survey responses).</i>
Have your Say page views	555
Document downloads	71

High level analytics of respondents

Sector/s	Number of submissions
Industry	14
Representative bodies	13
Other (including not-for-profit wildlife organisations, other biosecurity interest groups, RDCs)	10
Research organisation	5
Australian Government	5
State, territory and local government	4
Individuals and communities	1

¹ HYS = Have Your Say (departmental online engagement platform)

Future actions for the National Biosecurity Strategy:

Survey on Priority Areas 3 to 6

Survey opened 1 November 2023 and closed 4pm AEDT 29 November 2023.

Total consultation 29 days [4 weeks].

Number of written responses	68 responses in total 63 HYS submissions (60 survey responses and 3 ideas) 5 submissions via email <i>*Note HYS webpage says 65 consultations were received in the second survey (this includes the 60 survey responses and 5 email submissions).</i>
Have your Say page views	1,309
Document downloads	136

High-level analytics of respondents

Sector/s	Number of submissions
Industry (including primary production, freight and logistics, other)	12
Representative bodies	12
Research (including university sector, RDCs, other)	11
Australian Government	10
Individuals and communities	7
State, territory and local government	6
Other	4
Non-government organisation	3

National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan

Public consultation on the draft NBS Action Plan

Consultation opened 1 August 2024 and closed 4pm AEST 22 August 2024.

Total consultation 22 days [3 weeks].

Number of written responses	52 responses in total 33 HYS submission 24 submissions via email <i>*Note some respondents provided responses through both HYS and email.</i>
Have your Say page views	182

High level analytics of respondents

Sector/s	Number of submissions
Industry	4
Representative bodies	13
Other (including not-for-profit wildlife organisations, other biosecurity interest groups, RDCs)	10
Research organisation	6
Australian Government	2
State, territory and local government	5
Individuals and communities	6
Not specified	6

List of respondents*

Submission	Respondent
1	Organisation (De-identified) – survey response

Submission	Respondent
2	Individual (De-identified) – survey response
3	Individual (De-identified) – submission and survey response
4	Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board – survey response
5	Organisation (De-identified) – survey response
6	Australian Barramundi Farmers Association – survey response
7	Edward Eggleston – free text submission and survey response
8	Natural Selection Produce – survey response
9	Not to be published – survey response
10	Steve Korner – free text submission and survey response
11	Not to be published – survey response
12	Australian Pork Limited – survey response
13	Wildlife Health Australia by Rupert Woods – survey response
14	Karolina Wrihy – survey response
15	Australian Organic Limited – submission
16	Individual (De-identified) – survey response
17	Queensland Farmers' Federation – submission
18	AMRRIC (Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities Pty Ltd) – submission
19	AMRRIC (Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities Pty Ltd) – submission (<i>Note this is a duplicate of Submission 18</i>)
20	ARC Training Centre in Plant Biosecurity – survey response
21	Not to be published – survey response and submission
22	GrainGrowers Limited – submission
23	Animal Medicines Australia – submission

Submission	Respondent
24	Seafood Industry Australia – submission
25	CSIRO – submission
26	Australian Land Conservation Alliance – survey response and submission
27	The Australian Science Communicators – submission
28	Not to be published – survey response
29	Not to be published – submission
30	Australian Local Government Association – submission
31	Cattle Australia – submission
32	Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme – submission
33	Not to be published – submission
34	Not to be published – survey response and submission
35	Justin McDonald – submission
36	Individual (De-identified) – survey response
37	Australian Museum Research Institute – submission
38	Sheep Producers Australia – submission
39	Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology – survey response and submission
40	Australian Seed Federation – submission
41	Not to be published – survey response and submission
42	Grain Producers Australia – submission
43	Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA) – submission
44	Public Health Association of Australia – submission
45	James Cook University – submission

Submission	Respondent
46	Plant Health Australia – submission
47	Not to be published – submission
48	Wool Producers Australia – submission
49	Not to be published – submission
50	National Farmers' Federation (NFF) – submission
51	Plant Industry Forum – submission
52	Not to be published – submission

*Note – a total of 52 responses were received, 40 responses have been published, as 11 responses were submitted in confidence, and one response was a duplicate.

If needed:

NBS Stakeholder Engagement Timeline

Key :

white	other consultation activities
orange	NIC activities
yellow	NBC activities
blue	Working Group activities
green	consultation activities for specific priority areas

Date	Activity
9 August 2022	Public release of National Biosecurity Strategy
28 October 2022	NBS Implementation Committee (NIC) meeting 1
1 December 2022	NIC meeting 2
9 March 2023	NIC meeting 3
22 March 2023	Joint National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) and NIC scoping workshop 1
18 May 2023	Joint NBC and NIC scoping workshop 2
14 June 2023	NIC meeting 4
14 July 2023	NBS Implementation Working Group (WG) meeting 1
19 July 2023	NIC meeting 5
20 July 2023	WG meeting 2
25 July 2023	WG meeting 3
28 July 2023	WG meeting 4
4 August 2023	WG meeting 5
8 August 2023	WG meeting 6
11 August 2023	WG meeting 7

Date	Activity
15 August 2023	WG meeting 8
18 August 2023	WG meeting 9
25 August 2023	WG meeting 10
28 August 2023	NIC meeting 6
28 August 2023	HYS Survey on Priority Areas 1 and 2 opened
29 August 2023	WG meeting 11
1 September 2023	WG meeting 12
5 September 2023	WG meeting 13
8 September 2023	WG meeting 14
8 September 2023	HYS Survey on Priority Areas 1 and 2 originally to close – extended by a week
12 September 2023	WG meeting 15
13 September 2023	NIC meeting 7
13 September 2023	HYS Survey on Priority Areas 1 and 2 closed
19 September 2023	WG meeting 16 – Action planning workshop
20 September 2023	WG meeting 17 – Action planning workshop
22 September 2023	WG meeting 18 – Action planning workshop
26 September 2023	WG meeting 19
10 October 2023	WG meeting 20
12 October 2023	NIC meeting 8
13 October 2023	WG meeting 21
20 October 2023	WG meeting 22
27 October 2023	WG meeting 23
1 November 2023	HYS Survey on Priority Areas 3 to 6 opened
2 November 2023	Social media posts – HYS promotion

Date	Activity
3 November 2023	WG meeting 24
10 November 2023	WG meeting 25
10 November 2023	Newsletter article (www.agriculture.gov.au) – Help us bring the National Biosecurity Strategy to life
13 November 2023	Social media posts – NBS webinar promotion
15 November 2023	Webinar – Future actions for the National Biosecurity Strategy
17 November 2023	WG meeting 26
20 November 2023	NIC meeting 9, also attended in part by WG members
23 November 2023	Social media posts – HYS reminder promotion
24 November 2023	WG meeting 27
29 November 2023	HYS Survey on Priority Areas 3 to 6 closed
1 December 2023	WG meeting 28
11 December 2023	NBS Focus Group: Sustainable investment
12 December 2023	NBS Focus Group: Integration supported by technology, research and data
14 December 2023	NBS Focus Group: Coordinated preparedness and response
15 December 2023	NBS Focus Group: Highly skilled workforce
15 December 2023	WG meeting 29
19 December 2023	NIC meeting 10
01 February 2024	WG workshop
06 February 2024	Action Development workshop – Highly skilled workforce

Date	Activity
08 February 2024	Joint NIC11 and Working Group workshop – Shared biosecurity culture and Stronger partnerships
13 February 2024	Action Development workshop – Coordinated preparedness and response
20 February 2024	Action Development workshop – Sustainable investment
27 February 2024	Action Development workshop – Integration supported by technology, research and data
20 March 2024	NBC workshop
9 May 2024	Joint NIC12 and Working Group meeting
19 June 2024	NIC meeting 13
26 July 2024	Joint NBC and NIC14 meeting, endorsed consultation draft NBS Action Plan
1 August 2024	HYS public consultation on consultation draft NBS Action Plan opened
22 August 2024	HYS public consultation on consultation draft NBS Action Plan closed

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division

BSRD02**BIOSECURITY SUSTAINABLE FUNDING**

Current biosecurity budget (as at Budget 2024-25)

Funding source	Subcategory	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	2025-26 (\$m)	2026-27 (\$m)	2027-28 (\$m)
Cost recovery	Existing cost recovery arrangement	350.7	365.7	373.0	388.0	395.7
	Cost recovery – SACs	0.0	27.1	27.1	27.1	27.1
	Australia Post	15.3	15.3	15.6	15.8	16.0
	Defence	0.3	1.1	0.4	1.5	1.5
	Other s74 revenue	12.8	7.9	3.9	3.2	2.7
	Total cost recovery		379.1	417.1	420.0	435.6
Appropriation	Departmental appropriation	373.4	377.1	377.8	337.9	341.9
	Departmental equity injection	13.2	19.8	15.0	2.2	0.3
	Department of Finance gateway review departmental appropriation	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Administered	26.2	26.9	23.4	25.1	26.1
	Total appropriation		412.9	424.0	416.3	365.2
Total biosecurity funding	–	792.0	841.1^a	836.3	800.8	811.3

^a Includes the self-assessed clearance charge. The delayed commencement date of 1 October 2024 may vary the amount of revenue collected. Note: Total values are rounded. Budget numbers include government decisions made up to and including Budget 2024-25.

CURRENT ISSUE

- The sustainable biosecurity funding package was announced in the 2023-24 Budget, providing \$1 billion over the first 4 years, fulfilling the government's election commitment to deliver long-term sustainable funding that goes directly to strengthening Australia's biosecurity system.
- The Government further increased biosecurity funding through the 2023-24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) and 2024-25 Budget to support the establishment of border services at Western Sydney airport and international mail clearance.
- On 31 October 2024, the first Biosecurity Expenditure and Funding Report (**Attachment A**) was published, as an appendix to the department's Annual Report.

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SB24-000169

- This is a significant milestone that delivers on the Government's commitment to increased transparency and accountability of biosecurity funding and expenditure.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

Sustainable Biosecurity Funding

- The 2023-24 Budget delivered the Australian Government's election commitment to strengthen Australia's biosecurity system with new long-term sustainable funding, moving away from the reliance on stop-gap funding.
- The sustainable biosecurity funding package provided funding of \$1.03 billion over 4 years (2023-24 to 2026-27), and \$267 million per year ongoing from 2027-28 to support Commonwealth biosecurity activities undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
 - The package delivered structural reform to biosecurity funding.
- Without this package, existing funding for the Commonwealth biosecurity system would have declined over the forward estimates by 15.9% (\$93.1 million) to \$493.4 million in 2026-27.
- To date, the package has supported:
 - biosecurity policy, operational and technical functions on a sustainable basis, including continuation of the Indigenous Biosecurity Ranger Program
 - improvements to the biosecurity system via the Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing System (STEPS) program – a modern digital initiative to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of biosecurity clearance in cargo pathways, and
 - reliable resourcing for clearance of low value imports through a new cost-recovery arrangement with industry commencing in 2024-25 (*Further information in KIB BOD01 – Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) Charge*).
- The package also included a new but modest Biosecurity Protection Levy, to be paid by agricultural, fisheries and forestry producers, and intended to commence from 1 July 2024 to directly contribute to Commonwealth biosecurity funding (*Further information in KIB BSRD04 – Biosecurity Protection Levy*).
- Enhanced accountability and transparency arrangements were also introduced, including the establishment of the Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel (Panel) and publication of a new annual Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report.
- The Government also increased the current Passenger Movement Charge from \$60 to \$70 per person from 1 July 2024, the first increase since 2017.
- The 2024-25 Budget committed an investment of \$16.9 million over 4 years to ensure the biosecurity integrity of Australia's border remains contemporary and

adaptable to evolving global risks by underpinning biosecurity operations with specialist technology and equipment at Sydney's new international airport.

- The Government has also committed \$21 million over 3 years to help manage the biosecurity risks in international mail.

BACKGROUND

Importers now paying their fair share

- Increased importer fees and charges implemented on 1 July 2023 saw a return to full cost recovery in 2023-24.
 - To ensure importers cover the cost of biosecurity regulatory activities, from 1 July 2023, importer fees and charges were aligned with the cost of delivering biosecurity regulatory activities, indexation of prices was legislated, and a commitment made to an annual review cycle.
 - Fees and charges were increased by 4.1% (by indexation) on 1 July 2024.
- In 2023–24, cost recovery revenue from importers was \$365.0 million (excluding Australia Post).
 - This was \$65.3 million or 21.8% higher than the previous financial year (*Further information in KIB FID02 – Departmental Cost Recovery*).
- From 1 October 2024, a new Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) cost recovery charge on low value (\$1,000 or less) goods imported into Australia by air or sea commenced.
- This charge covers the cost of biosecurity clearance on imported goods that are not currently subject to cost recovery – up to now taxpayers have been paying this cost (*Further information in KIB BOD01 – Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) Charge*).
- The implementation of this charge was delayed from 1 July 2024 to ensure sufficient time for industry to be prepared for implementation.

Biosecurity Protection Levy

- The legislation to introduce the biosecurity protection levy is still before the Senate, as a result, the required legislation is not in place for the levy to have commenced from 1 July 2024 (*Further information in KIB BSRD04 – Biosecurity Protection Levy*).

Transparency and Accountability

- The Government has committed to strengthened transparency and accountability through the creation of the Panel, comprising members from across industry, environmental and research organisations.
 - The Panel has met 3 times this year, with the final meeting for 2024 to be held in December.

National Biosecurity Strategy

- Sustainable investment is one of the 6 key priorities of the National Biosecurity strategy (*Further information in KIB BSRD01 – National Biosecurity Strategy*).

Next steps

- The department will continue to communicate with industry on the sustainable biosecurity funding model and engage on further sustainable biosecurity funding reforms.
- The department will also work with industry to provide advice on potential changes to biosecurity cost recovery models to ensure they are fit for purpose and continue to be aligned to the actual costs of managing biosecurity risk associated with imports.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report 2023-24 (under embargo until DAFF Annual Report is tabled)

S. 47C(1)

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division

BSRD03**BIOSECURITY KEY ACHIEVEMENTS****CURRENT ISSUE**

- An effective and efficient national biosecurity system is central to maintaining Australia's unique environment, our economic future, and our way of life.
- Increases in trade volumes and passenger movements, shifting trade and travel patterns and climate change continue altering risk profiles and making biosecurity risks increasingly complex to manage.
- Despite the omnipresent and evolving biosecurity threats facing Australia, the Australian Government invests significant resources into the national biosecurity system and continues to **successfully** mitigate biosecurity threats.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- Australia's biosecurity system is world-leading. The department undertakes a range of policy, operational, compliance and awareness functions to regulate our borders, and uses international outreach to address risks before they present at the border. Onshore, we work closely with jurisdictions and industry partners to align efforts across the system and implement mechanisms to respond to emergencies.
- Enabling these critical services are biosecurity officers, policymakers, auditors, investigators and scientists who work with importers, exporters, producers, supply chain and logistics businesses, and the community to provide an appropriate level of protection from biosecurity threats.
- While the success of the biosecurity system is typically defined by prevention of biosecurity incursions, this outcome is enabled by the ongoing efforts and achievements of the department and its staff.
- From 2023-24 to early October, the department continued to keep Australia safe by successfully mitigating the impact of biosecurity threats through activities overseas, at the border and within Australia.
- Examples of key achievements from 2023-24 to October 2024 include:
 - **Offshore:** Improved assurance arrangements for offshore treatment providers through the launch of AusTreat

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- Enhanced collaboration and relationships with international and domestic biosecurity stakeholders, highlighted by the 20-year partnership with Indonesia through the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme and the 2023 Northern Australia Indigenous Biosecurity Ranger Forum.
 - **At the border:** Detection and response to priority pests and diseases such as spotted wing drosophila (the number 3 priority plant pest)
 - **Within Australia:** Enhanced national preparedness and response capability for High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 – with just under \$100 million invested in these efforts
 - On 31 October 2024, the department published the inaugural annual biosecurity funding and expenditure report
 - Modernised technology, processes and systems to improve biosecurity outcomes and the regulatory experience for industry through the Simplified Trade and Enhanced Processing Systems (STEPS) Program and rollout of the Traveller and Mail System (TAMS), and
 - Continued support for 14 ongoing national emergency biosecurity responses.
- Case studies outlining the most notable achievements since 2023-24 to early October are outlined at **Attachment A**.

BACKGROUND

- **Table 1** provides an overview of the biosecurity operating environment and the department's efforts to protect Australia from pests and diseases in the cargo, traveller and mail pathways in 2023-24.

Table 1. Biosecurity operating environment and departmental effort in 2023-24

Pathway	Volume	Interventions	Interceptions
Cargo <i>High & low value consignments by sea & air</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 124 million cargo import consignments • 2,586,100 containers arrived in Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 671,500 containers referred to the department for intervention • 623,300 items that had documentation assessed • 274,800 cargo items inspected 	19,400 pests and diseases identified
International travellers <i>Air and sea, including air/ship crew</i>	21.6 million traveller arrivals	7.9 million traveller interventions	368,600 travellers intercepted with biosecurity risk material
Mail	N/A ^a	9.3 million mail items screened ^b	49,200 detections of biosecurity risk material

Source: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry n.d., Biosecurity Analytics Centre Dashboard - Overview – Senate estimates key statistics, Canberra.

a Mail volume unavailable as it is commercial-in-confidence. Refer questions about mail volumes to Australia Post.

b Data from 1 July 2023 to 30 April 2024 only. Data from 1 May 2024 unavailable due to rollout of the Traveller and Mail System (TAMS).

Cargo

- Import cargo volumes have been increasing year on year. In 2023-24, the total import cargo volume increased 38% on the previous financial year. This was driven largely by self-assessed clearance goods valued at \$1,000 or less, which have steadily increased in volume over the past 5 years by an average of 15% annually.
- In 2023-24, total cargo import consignments was more than double the volume of consignments in 2018-19 (126% increase).
- In 2023-24, the number of containers arriving in Australia grew by 4.7% on the previous year and was up 7.1% since 2018-19.

International travellers

- Traveller arrivals have been increasing year on year and are nearly back to the pre-COVID levels from 2018-19.
- In 2023-24, the number of traveller interventions (an interaction or control imposed by biosecurity officers) was greater than any time in the previous 5 years. The number of travellers intercepted with biosecurity risk materials has also increased by 34% since 2018-19.

Mail

- In 2023-24, there were on average 135 detections of biosecurity risk material in the mail pathway each day.
- In 2023-24, the number of detections of items considered high risk for khapra beetle in the mail pathway were 2.5 times higher than in 2018-19.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Case studies of key biosecurity achievements since 2023-24 to October 2024

Case studies of key biosecurity achievements since 2023-24 to October 2024

Overseas

AusTreat

On 1 July 2024, the department marked a major milestone in the regulation of offshore biosecurity treatments with the launch of AusTreat, Australia's new government-to-industry treatment provider assurance scheme.

AusTreat builds on the success of the Offshore Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Treatment Providers Scheme, but also provides a more flexible regulatory framework that will allow the department to expand into future offshore treatment risk pathways.

Biosecurity supporting trade and market access

In 2023-24, Australia's biosecurity status helped the department improve and maintain access to international export markets, including:

Maintaining access for meat and meat products to Taiwan through assurance of Australia's freedom status for 3 animal diseases – classical swine fever, peste des petit ruminants and bovine spongiform encephalopathy. These biosecurity assurance arrangements ensured Australian meat exporters can continue to access a market worth \$419 million in 2023.

Improving access for horticulture to China through reinstatement of the northern Tasmania Pest Free Area (PFA) after 5 years, following outbreaks of Queensland fruit fly in 2018. Annual exports from Tasmania dropped by an average of 40% since suspension of the PFA. Reinstatement of the PFA has been of high interest to Tasmanian horticultural industries as it will enable and/or reduce the cost of export to the Chinese market.

Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme - 20-year partnership with Indonesia

This year, the department is celebrating 20 years of reducing biosecurity risk with the Indonesian Quarantine Authority through the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS). AFAS is a pre-border biosecurity risk management system that supports compliant trade pathways for consignments destined for Australia, while building the regulatory capacity of implementation partners with respect to biosecurity treatments. These efforts assist in managing the risk of pests of biosecurity concern entering and establishing in Australia, while supporting Australia's broader cooperative and economic diplomacy pursuits with Indonesia, in line with the government's commitment to strengthening partnerships within the Indo-Pacific region.

Fruit Fly trapping program in the Treaty Villages of Papua New Guinea

The department supports delivery of the Treaty Village Fruit Fly Trapping Program in the Treaty Villages of Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Western Province. The first phase of this program was established in 2022 and trained Treaty Village Rangers to conduct trapping, collect fruit fly samples and support data management.

The second phase of this program has just commenced with refresher training for the Rangers, introduction of new monitoring and sampling methodologies, and support for the development of diagnostic capability. Work to understand population genetics also forms part of this program and supports understanding of fruit fly movement from PNG through the Torres Strait, providing important intelligence for monitoring and eradication activities conducted in this region of Australia.

The second phase will also expand the engagement activities within the Treaty Villages to facilitate delivery of future activities aimed at improved management of fruit flies, reducing their impact and improving food security in these communities.

At the border

*Response to *Drosophila suzukii* larvae in a consignment of USA cherries*

On 21 June 2024, the department successfully mitigated a serious biosecurity risk when live larvae of *Drosophila suzukii* (spotted wing drosophila), Australia's number 3 priority plant pest, were detected in two consignments of fresh cherries from the USA.

The department took swift response actions, suspending the certification of fresh cherries from the USA pending an investigation of the incident and mandating on-arrival fumigation and inspection for all cherries under biosecurity control or in transit to Australia. Additionally, enhanced inspection measures were applied to consignments associated with the importer.

The incident highlights the effectiveness of our diagnostic capabilities and dedicated staff across the inspection, import operations and scientific services areas in remaining vigilant and taking swift action to safeguard Australian agriculture.

Expansion of industry approved arrangement class 14.4 Rural Tailgate Inspection

Approved arrangement class 14.4 was expanded in February 2024, authorising biosecurity industry participants to perform rural tailgate (RTG) inspections on otherwise impediment-free containers (no other biosecurity concern). The expansion of these arrangements means Australian importers and logistic companies benefit from faster and more streamlined inspection and release of cargo and reduced costs associated with de-hiring of shipping containers.

Enhancing border capability - Traveller and Mail System

The department is enhancing its border capability by modernising systems and processes and has delivered a key border system supporting real time data capture, the Traveller and Mail System (TAMS). TAMS is an improved regulatory and decision-support tool that is used to digitally record outcomes of assessments, inspections and non-compliance activities. This provides the department with improved visibility of the pathway activity for assurance and corporate performance reporting. TAMS was delivered on time and on budget and has been implemented across all international airports, cruise terminals and international mail centres. It has delivered mobile capability to over 500 frontline biosecurity officers, reduced manual processes and enhanced the department's capability to target risks more effectively.

Importantly, the development and delivery of TAMS positions the department to be a technology leader in the Australian Government's digital declaration reforms being progressed under the Australia and New Zealand Prime Ministers' Trans-Tasman Seamless Travel Initiative.

Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing Systems (STEPS)

Through the STEPS program, the department is creating a faster, simpler and more integrated cargo clearance system. STEPS will strengthen biosecurity risk management, benefitting both importers and the department.

In 2023-24, three digital products under the STEPS program were released for industry participants:

1. The Approved Arrangement Management Product (AAMP) which allows around 3,600 approved arrangements to view and update their Approved Arrangement details online.
2. External Verification for eCertificates (EVE) or digital sanitary and phytosanitary certificates went live via the Biosecurity Portal for 1,150 accredited brokers assessing commodities under an approved arrangement.
3. A limited release of the Biosecurity Cargo Status Tracker is giving brokers and importers reliable visibility of cargo being managed by DAFF. Full roll out to all 1,500 accredited brokers will be completed later in 2024.

These products, along with others proposed for delivery in 2024-25, aim to make biosecurity import processes simpler and easier to comply with, modernise and increase digitisation of our services, and increase data sharing in a way that makes sense to both industry and government while maintaining effective biosecurity management.

Within Australia

Australian Government High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Preparedness HPAI preparedness

The Commonwealth has led a national collaborative "One health" approach to strengthen preparedness and response to a potential incursion of HPAI H5N1.

A dedicated taskforce established in July 2024 led the development and establishment of Exercise Volare over August/September 2024 to work across the Commonwealth, States and Territories, industry and the community to stress test our biosecurity system and learn where to direct our effort.

A webinar attended by 1,000 people enabled Government to engage with the public and ensure we all understand how to work together.

This led to a record investment of \$95 million in addition to the previously committed \$6.9 million to provide over \$100 million across Agriculture, Environment and Health portfolios. The investment will uplift our preparedness capability to minimise the impacts of an outbreak on our production sector, threatened species and to protect human health.

This is a great example of a shared responsibility approach to managing a complex threat to our nation. *For further information, refer to KIB BAD01 – High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza.*

Accountability and transparency of biosecurity funding

In early 2024, the department established the Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel, giving key biosecurity stakeholders increased oversight of biosecurity funding and a seat at the table, to guide the department's investment in biosecurity.

On 31 October 2024, the department published the inaugural annual biosecurity funding and expenditure report. The report, is an appendix to the department's annual report, details the funding provided to the department for biosecurity and information on the activities this funding supports. It is the first time the department's biosecurity funding and expenditure has been published in this way.

Collectively, these initiatives provide unprecedented visibility of biosecurity funding and expenditure and give key stakeholders genuine input into priority setting for Australia's biosecurity system.

Northern Australia Indigenous Biosecurity Ranger Forum 2023

From 17-19 October 2023, the Northern Australia Indigenous Biosecurity Ranger Forum was hosted on Mandubarra country in north Queensland. The forum is a key initiative under the Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Program, providing an opportunity to build biosecurity awareness, partnerships, knowledge and capability to perform surveillance activities among attendees.

The forum brought together 268 attendees including 200 rangers from 54 Indigenous ranger groups across northern Australia for plenary sessions, practical hands-on biosecurity workshops, panel discussions and educational activities focused on biosecurity. Feedback on the event from rangers was extremely positive. Some highlights of the forum included:

- yarning circles, where rangers exchanged stories of the work they do on Country and discussed biosecurity initiatives
- biosecurity scientists from the department's NAQS facilitated interactive workshops on plant, animal and aquatic biosecurity
- an expo with a drone display, virtual reality biosecurity videos, and other cultural activities and stalls.

Award winning intelligence

In 2024, the Tactical and Operational Intelligence Section within the Compliance and Enforcement Division, won the Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers (AIPIO) "Intelligence Group of the Year" category for their significant intelligence capability build over the past 12 months.

The Intelligence Group of the Year award '*recognises exceptional performance or innovation in the intelligence profession*' and '*acknowledges outstanding achievements, thought leadership, and the introduction of revolutionary practices within the intelligence*

profession. Other finalists in this category were the RACQs Counter Fraud Intelligence Unit and the NSW Police Criminal Groups Intelligence Unit/Raptor Intelligence Unit.

National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan

Australia's first ever National Biosecurity Strategy was released in late 2022 and public consultation on the inaugural National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan was recently completed. The Action Plan has progressed to Agriculture Ministers for endorsement and once finalised, will be the keystone strategic roadmap for Australia's biosecurity system, outlining activities across six priority areas. *For further information, refer to KIB BSRD01 – National Biosecurity Strategy.*

National biosecurity emergency responses

During 2023-24 to October, the department supported (and cost-shared) 14 ongoing national biosecurity emergency responses – covering plant pests and animal diseases. For example, the response for HPAI H7 in the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales. *For further information, refer to Back Pocket Brief Number EC24-000594.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division

BSRD04**BIOSECURITY PROTECTION LEVY****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The proposed Biosecurity Protection Levy (the levy) is a new levy and charge payable by primary producers, and one part of the 2023-24 Budget measure '*Strengthened and Sustainably Funded Biosecurity System*', which introduced a new sustainable and predictable funding package for Australia's biosecurity system.
- The Bills that would provide for the levy framework are currently before the Senate. The required legislation was not in place for the levy to have commenced from 1 July this year as announced in the Budget.
- The department is working with Government on next steps and engaging with key industry stakeholders on funding alternatives.
- It is not appropriate for the department to pre-empt Government's decisions on the levy.

S. 47C(1)

S. 47C(1)

S. 47C(1)

BACKGROUND

Sustainable biosecurity funding

- The broader sustainable biosecurity funding package announced in the 2023-24 Budget is delivering additional funding of more than \$1 billion over 4 years, and \$267 million per year from 2027-28 onwards, to strengthen our biosecurity system into the future. *For further information refer to KIB BSRD02 - Biosecurity Sustainable Funding.*

Biosecurity protection levy legislation

- The levy primary legislation was introduced to Parliament on 28 February 2024. The Bills passed the House of Representatives on 27 March 2024.
- The package of three Bills was intended to introduce a new legislative framework to provide for the imposition, collection and administration of the new levy. The package includes two imposition Bills and one collection Bill, including:
 - Agriculture (Biosecurity Protection) Levies Bill 2024
 - Agriculture (Biosecurity Protection) Charges Bill 2024
 - Agriculture (Biosecurity Protection) Levies and Charges Collection Bill 2024

Senate inquiry

- The Senate referred the Bills to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee for an inquiry and report.
- The department provided a written submission and appeared at the inquiry hearing. The Committee report recommended that the Senate pass the bills, and Coalition Senators provided a dissenting report.

s. 47C(1)

Funding and administration costs

- The levy was designed as an additional revenue measure to generate around \$50 million in revenue per year, or approximately 6% of overall Commonwealth biosecurity funding.
- Funding to administer the biosecurity protection levy is approximately (figures as at 2023-24 Budget) \$1.1 million per year for the first two years and then \$0.8 million per year from 2025 to 2027.

Stakeholder engagement

- The design details of the levy were informed by extensive and targeted consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including peak farming bodies, state farming organisations, industry representative bodies, research and development corporations (RDCs), current agricultural levy payers and their collection agents, software providers to primary industries, and members of the general public.
- Public consultation was held through the department's online engagement platform between 22 August to 13 October 2023 in conjunction with a number of stakeholder meetings, presentations and forums.
- The department also published information on levy contributions and proposed rates on its website.

Proposal from Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA) and the Australian Peak Shippers Association (APSA) to increase the Full Import Declaration (FID) instead of introducing the biosecurity protection levy

- Revenue recovered through the FID can only be used to fund biosecurity and imported food regulatory activities performed by the department, including risk profiling, surveillance, monitoring compliance, and administration of biosecurity matters, in relation to goods brought into Australia on a vessel or aircraft.
- To use the revenue for other purposes would be inconsistent with the Australian Government Charging Framework and Cost Recovery Policy.
- Fees and charges for regulatory functions are set to only recover the minimum efficient costs of carrying out regulatory activity. As such, FID charges cannot be set at an arbitrary rate, and must align with the actual costs incurred.
- On 1 July 2023, biosecurity clearance fees and charges increased to align to the actual costs of managing biosecurity risk associated with imports.
- On 1 July 2024, fees and charges increased again by 4.1%, in line with indexation and the government's commitment to review annually.

S. 47C(1)

REFERENCES

Please also see - BSRD02 – Key Issues Brief on Biosecurity Sustainable Funding (SB24-000173)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

IDivision: Biosecurity Operations Division

BOD01**2023-24 BUDGET - BIOSECURITY SUSTAINABLE FUNDING: SELF-ASSESSSED CLEARANCE (SAC) CHARGE**

Payment	Financial Year	
	2023-24	2024-25
<i>Departmental</i>		\$27.1 Million
<i>Ongoing</i>		
Overall Revenue		\$27.1 Million

CURRENT ISSUE

- A new industry biosecurity cost recovery charge commenced on 1 October 2024.
- This charge will recover direct and indirect costs incurred by DAFF in managing biosecurity risk associated with imported low value goods (\$1,000 or less) covered by a self-assessed cost declaration (SAC). There were 119.6m SACs in 2023-24.
- The charge rate is 36c per eligible SAC. The Australian businesses lodging the SAC declarations are liable, with payment to DAFF required quarterly in arrears.
- Approximately 70 businesses are expected to have to pay the charge this year.
- The department has engaged comprehensively with affected businesses. Guidance material was published on the DAFF website (3 October) along with the 2024-25 cost recovery implementation statement (11 October).
- The charge was due to commence on 1 July 2024. The start date was deferred to 1 October 2024 to give industry more time to prepare for its introduction. Despite this delay, the previously forecast 2024-25 revenue of \$27.1m is still expected to be collected due to higher than estimated SAC import numbers.
- Certain industry parties have consistently opposed the nature of the charge and its cost of living impact, while also raising concerns about competitive neutrality in relation to Australia Post (StarTrack).

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SB24-000170

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The number and diversity of low value goods imported into Australia has grown dramatically over the past five years – with around 120m low value declarations in 2023-24. This is compared to 85m in 2022-23 and 57m in 2019-20.
- Low value does not mean low biosecurity risk – with a growing number of biosecurity incidents associated with SAC items. For example, mis-declared bonsai plants (some with live invertebrates and soil), succulents and meat products.
- The new SAC charge will enable the department to respond the growing challenges associated with this pathway.
- The new charge commenced on 1 October with the first invoices to be issued in January 2025 for the October-December quarter.
- This new charge closes a gap in our industry cost recovery arrangements, which has seen those participating in the global e-commerce boom making little to no contribution to the cost of managing biosecurity risks.
- The cost and revenue assumptions underpinning this charge will be reviewed in 2025, consistent with our commitment to regularly review our biosecurity cost recovery arrangements.
- It will also be included in the new biosecurity funding and expenditure reports.

Industry readiness

- The department has undertaken general and targeted industry awareness raising and consultation to support detailed design and administration of the new charge. Industry feedback has been considered in the development of the final arrangements.
- The department's recent focus has been on supporting the preparedness of those businesses likely to be directly liable for the charge in the current financial quarter. This is estimated to be around 70 entities.
- In preparation for its implementation, the department undertook data trials through August and September using actual SAC data. This trial indicated a high level of engagement with the department and that businesses accounting for 72.6% of SACs were highly prepared for the charge. Further process trials are running through October and November.
- Over 98% of the total number of SAC declaring entities have been responsive to DAFF's communications.

Opposition to the charge

- It is understood that industry would prefer not to be facing a new cost-recovery charge. The constructive feedback and engagement received over the past 12 months is appreciated and has been important to settling the final arrangements.

- Some businesses have expressed concern at having to pay the charge, proposing it should be applied directly to overseas e-commerce businesses. While alternative options were considered, the current charging approach is the only practicable option.
- This approach reflects the need to ensure equity, administrative efficiency and enforceability in our efforts. It also recognises that neither the Department of Home Affairs nor the Australian Taxation Office undertakes or could currently support comparable charging.
- The SAC charge design means the department engages with approximately 70 Australian resident entities that manage importation of over 100 million declared low value consignments, supported by industry data already being collected.
- The 36 cent charge is modest in the context of total import costs. Whether and how this modest cost is passed on to consumers is a matter for each business. SAC numbers suggest domestic demand is still strong and growing.
- Industry parties have raised **competitive neutrality** concerns in relation to Australia Post. We are also aware of the formal complaint made to the Australian Government Competitive Neutrality Complaints Office (Productivity Commission) by the Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers (Australia) Limited (CAPEC) against Australia Post on 24 February 2022, which remains open.
- The department has recently published industry advice that the SAC charge is applied equally to all SAC reporters (including Australia Post) and that cost recovery arrangements are in place for Australia Post's international mail pathway.
- The department is confident it manages biosecurity risk and recovers biosecurity regulatory costs from Australia Post, in relation to its low value goods and international mail pathways, in a way that does not create competitive neutrality concerns for other businesses in the low value pathway.
- Given the complaint lodged with the Productivity commission, further queries on competitive neutrality concerns with Australia Post are best directed to the Treasury portfolio.

BACKGROUND

- To support the charge legislatively, the Biosecurity Regulation 2024 Amendments: *Extending Cost Recovery to Low Value Goods* (F2024L00694), and *Time for Payment of Charge for Low Value Goods* (F2024L01227) were registered on the Federal Register of Legislation on 17 June 2024 and 27 September 2024 respectively.
- The department considered (and engaged with central agencies) on alternative charging models in finalising the original biosecurity sustainable funding package. None were a complete, readily available, or cost-effective alternative.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Biosecurity Plant and Science Services Division

BPSSD01**PLANT TRADE AND MARKET ACCESS MATTERS****CURRENT ISSUE****Avocado Market Access to China**

- The avocado industry is advocating for new market access outcomes, including in China and through the media.
- The avocado industry campaign is aimed at expediting market negotiations with China.
- This is causing concern with other Australian horticulture industries who have interests in expanding market access to China.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- I met with Avocados Australia Limited (AAL) representatives [s. 47F\(1\)](#) and [s. 47F\(1\)](#) on 27 March 2024. Officials from the Biosecurity Plant and Sciences Services Division (Peter Finnin, FAS) met with AAL on 2 and 11 September, and 10 October 2024.
- My department supports Australian exports and is committed to working with Australian agricultural industries that are ready to trade.
- My department considers requests for market access for horticulture commodities against our prioritisation principles and criteria. The types of factors considered in prioritisation include the context of market dynamics with our trading partners, export readiness of our agriculture industries and growers, and compelling evidence to support a proposal that industry would be able to meet conditions of trade that the trading partner is likely to adopt to address their biosecurity requirements.
- This prioritisation process has been agreed to by industry and industry has active mechanisms to participate in this process.
- This process ensures we are fair, equitable and representative of the whole horticulture industry.
- Negotiating market access is technically complex and sometimes can take years to finalise. It is important that negotiations are seen through to completion.

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SB24-000171

- **s. 33(a)(iii)**
- My department continues to work with the avocado industry, as we do with all our horticulture and plant industries on their market access ambitions, including supporting export readiness for agriculture industries seeking export outcomes.

s. 33(a)(iii)

BACKGROUND

- Other horticultural industry bodies have sought assurances by the department that the established process for determining market access priorities is upheld.
 - They have expressed concern that the messaging from Avocados Australia Limited is inconsistent with these processes.
- Market access involves biosecurity risk assessment and the negotiation of export conditions to ensure that biosecurity risks associated with trade are adequately managed. These assessments and negotiations are technically complex and often lengthy.
 - Industry demand for market access outcomes outstrips available technical capacity of both the department and our trading partners, which drives the need to prioritise these requests.
 - The established prioritisation process is essential in ensuring that the allocation of resourcing is equitable across industries and aligns with the national interest.
- The meeting with the Secretary was followed by a meeting with Avocados Australia Limited at the Senior Executive level on 27 April, 2 and 11 September, and 10 October.
- **s. 33(a)(iii)**

- Recently, DAFF supported Avocados Australia in applying for a special import permit for the China Import and Export Expo. This support included advice on the permit application process, assistance with the export process and the issuance of the required phytosanitary certification.
- The department also engages with the industry including peak bodies, growers and exporters through regular, established mechanisms.

s. 33(a)(iii), s. 47F(1), s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

S. 33(a)(iii)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity Division

PPEBD01**NATIONAL FIRE ANT ERADICATION PROGRAM**

Funding Source	Financial Year					TOTAL
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	
<i>Administered (SPP 188*)</i> <i>Terminates 30 June 2027</i>	\$28.2M**	\$74.1M	\$73.9M	\$79.2M	\$41.0M	\$296.4M

* Part of the total biosecurity emergency response budget item (includes varroa mite and other eradication responses)

** Previously approved under the 10-year plan

CURRENT ISSUE

- The Australian Government response to the Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee's inquiry into red imported fire ants (RIFA) in Australia (due 18 July 2024) was Tabled in Parliament on 28 October 2024 (summary of recommendations and government response is provided at **Attachment A**).
- The Australian Government has confidence in the Program, its current level of resourcing and its delivery by the Queensland Government. As with all biosecurity responses, the combat state is the lead and has operational responsibility for implementing the response plan, with cost-sharing parties through governance arrangements providing oversight and key decision making, including considerations around funding.
- Stakeholders (including local councils) have raised concerns about the efficacy of the approach to suppress RIFA within the suppression zone and the timeliness and adequacy of resources to deliver this program. Landholders in the suppression area are now required to self-treat. The Queensland Government's Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) is providing landholders with training and bait to use on their land.
- Some stakeholders have raised concerns about the safety of the broadscale fire ant treatment, with media reports of sick pets and livestock. A small group of landholders are also preventing field officers' access to properties to undertake treatment. These issues are being addressed by the Program.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- The Government supports many recommendations in the senate inquiry report, and notes the extensive work being led by QLD (as the combat state) to improve the National Fire Ant Eradication Program's (the Program) transparency and governance

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SB24-000172

arrangements (outlined in **Attachment B**), as well as to uplift operational capability since the inquiry was announced.

- The government will implement supported recommendations through the Program's National Management Group consisting of national cost-sharing partners.
- An independent review of the Program is scheduled to be completed in late 2025. This review will consider the program's funding levels and progress of the 2021 Independent Strategic Review outcomes.
 - This timeframe will enable the Program to have been operating at capacity for an appropriate amount of time to ensure there is sufficient data and evidence available to make a meaningful assessment and evaluation of its effectiveness.
- FAST works closely with the Program to enable and incentivise fire ant self-management by all sectors of the community in the suppression area. FAST focuses on equipping all levels of government (including local government), industry and communities in areas awaiting planned eradication treatment, with fire ant treatment products, equipment, skills and knowledge to self-manage RIFA on land they own or manage.
 - FAST is a Queensland Government funded initiative (not nationally cost-shared), established in 2021 with investment of \$37.1 million until 2026. The 2021 Independent Strategic Review recommended the suppression zone be managed separately to the containment and eradication program.
- Fire ant treatment used by the National Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) is assessed and registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). The APVMA has deemed the treatment safe for humans, animals and the environment.
 - Broadscale fire ant treatment contains the same active ingredients as those found in household and agriculture pest control products and have very low toxicity to mammals.
- Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (Qld), the Program is authorised to access and treat all targeted properties. The Program continues to work with landholders refusing access, and from October 2024, eradication and compliance officers will work alongside the Queensland Police Service to gain access to these properties.
 - Eradication of fire ants is only possible if every property is treated. Preventing access poses a risk of undermining eradication outcomes.
- Fire ant detections outside the south-east Queensland (SEQ) infestation area are not unexpected and the Program has procedures in place to deal with such detections.
- The Detections of Importance since April 2024 are:
 - 12 July 2024 - 1 nest was identified and destroyed at the Sunshine Coast Recreation Precinct, Currimundi, QLD

- 29 May 2024 - 4 infected premises (12 nests) at Bells Creek, Sunshine Coast QLD
- 14 May 2024 - 3 nests identified and destroyed at Meringandan West (Toowoomba QLD)
- 18 April 2024 - 65 nests destroyed - Caboolture (QLD).
- 16 April 2024 - 80 nests and 48 secondary nests destroyed Swartz Barracks (Oakey, Toowoomba QLD).
- All outlier detections (Detections of Importance) have been traced back to the SEQ incursion and 'human assisted movement' is the cause of the incursions. All ants and ant nests detected outside the containment zone are destroyed and authorities will monitor until it can be confirmed they have been eradicated.
 - The Queensland Government has strong regulations and compliance for industry and residents to manage the risk of human assisted movement of fire ants, including enforcing biosecurity zones to control the movement of high-risk fire ant carrier material.

Australian Government funding

- All Australian agriculture ministers endorsed the 2023-27 Response Plan and committed to support its budget of \$592.85 million across 2023-27.
- The Australian Government provides 50% of the total cost to deliver the response plan which is \$296.4 million.
- The total Australian Government investment in the program since 2001 is over \$640 million. \$345 million has been paid since 2001 and \$296.4 million has been committed for the four years until June 2027.

Recent achievements

- The 2023-27 Response Plan (developed based on expert scientific advice and the outcomes of the 2021 Independent Strategic Review) intensifies ongoing efforts to contain RIFA to the infested area (to stop further spread) and more aggressive treatment (to shrink the operational zone) working towards eradication by 2032.
 - The Program has uplifted its workforce capacity to deliver the planned treatment. This has seen the workforce and planned treatment area effectively double in size.
 - The Program started its 2024 treatment season early on 5 August 2024 to take advantage of the warmer weather. The program is working towards treating 830,000 hectares during this year's season.
 - Program governance arrangements have been strengthened to support the effective and efficient delivery of the program. The Australian Government participates in all levels of governance.

- The Program has increased communications activities, including development of an animation aimed at increasing awareness. A customer contact centre has also been established with the dedicated phone number 132 ANT (13 22 68).
- The Program continues to make good progress implementing recommendations from the 2021 Review – the status of which is published online.

2023-27 Response Plan triggers

- The Response Plan identifies formal trigger points that determine whether the objectives of the plan remain achievable. These include:
 - Detection of infestations well outside the current program operations area (i.e. Detections of Importance).
 - Supply chain disruptions affecting baits, surveillance equipment, labour, vehicles, aerial services, or IT hardware.
 - Failure of regulation/compliance around human assisted movement leading to re-infestation, and/or spread outside the operational area.
 - Climatic change/weather events impacting treatment program ability to treat and/or increases potential infestation spread (e.g. flooding).
- When a trigger occurs, the Program will assess the mitigating activities to determine the impact on response objectives and recommend any need to change the approach or Response Plan activities to the National Management Group.
- The program operates under a National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA)-like arrangement, as the eradication of fire ants meets its national interest criteria aimed at preventing the potential environmental, social, health and economic impacts of fire ants.
- Further detail is provided in the **PPEBD – Red imported fire ant Back Pocket brief**.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Summary table of recommendations and Australian Government response to the Senate inquiry into the management of red imported fire ants in Australia

Attachment B: NFAEP Governance Arrangements

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Attachment A

SUMMARY: Recommendations and Government response - Senate inquiry into the management of red imported fire ants in Australia

(Summary only – full recommendations and Government Response in Backpocket brief)

Recommendation	Australian Government position and actions underway
<p>Recommendation 1 (paragraph 2.75)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government in consultation with state and territory governments, work to review the current level of funding for the National Fire Ant Eradication Program and whether this is sufficient to eradicate red imported fire ants by 2032, and if not sufficient, investigate the appropriate level of funding required for eradication.</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>As part of the Program’s existing rigorous governance framework, rolling evaluations will be undertaken throughout the delivery of the 2023-27 Response Plan.</p> <p>The Australian Government, through DAFF’s leadership within the Program’s National Management Group (NMG), will deliver a Gate review in late 2025.</p> <p>An independent program review (including an assessment of technical feasibility and cost-benefit of eradication) will also be undertaken in 2026-27.</p>
<p>Recommendation 1 (paragraph 2.76)</p> <p>The committee further recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australian Government, and all state and territory governments commit to providing uninterrupted funding required to achieve eradication. • The Australian Government, and all state and territory governments ensure funds are provided as a whole-of-government response to reflect the seriousness of red imported fire ants on all aspects of Australian life, including health, tourism, agriculture, and environmental. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Any future funding commitments for the NFAEP will be a matter for all Australian governments as cost-sharing parties.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 (paragraph 2.77)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the National Fire Ant Eradication Program to explore options to improve transparency and accountability mechanisms across both the strategic and operational aspects of the red imported fire ant response. In doing so, the committee recommends this includes:</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>Broader industry and stakeholder engagement occurs through the Program’s Industry and Council Collaboration Network, which meets quarterly. DAFF will work with the Program to enhance this forum to broaden engagement with other national stakeholders.</p> <p>The Program publishes:</p>

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SB24-000172

Recommendation	Australian Government position and actions underway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of the full 2023–2027 Response Plan, including funding allocations and priorities. • Timely publication of any outstanding and future key reviews, reports, minutes, and data. • Formal stakeholder and industry involvement within the National Management Group. <p>Increased independence within the governance arrangements, including the reinstatement of an independent chair for the National Management Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual workplans – outlining operational aspects of the program and budget • Quarterly and annual reporting on program delivery (including budget position) • Minutes of the National Steering Committee (2017-2023). <p>Communiqués from the Program’s NMG are published on the DAFF website following each meeting to report on program progress and key discussion items. Response plans (and other documentation including minutes) for national biosecurity eradication responses are not published given the confidentiality of information contained within these plans.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 (paragraph 2.78)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government undertake an independent, rapid review of the actions and recommendations from the 2021 Independent Strategic Review and what has been completed or is in process to be completed. The committee further recommends that the review should report back to the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture within three months and that a report of this review should be tabled in both Houses of the Australian Parliament within 14 days of the provision of this report to the Minister.</p>	<p>Supported in principle</p> <p>This recommendation will be addressed as part of the scheduled Gate review outlined in Recommendation 1 (2.75). The review will be undertaken in late 2025.</p> <p>The Program is also reporting regularly how recommendations from the 2021 Independent Strategic Review have been considered and are being implemented through the response plan. The most recent report (Program Audit 2023) is published on the DAFF website at www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/partnerships/rifa-eradication.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 (paragraph 2.79)</p> <p>As part of this review, the committee recommends that the Australian Government, as the primary funder of the red imported fire ant response, investigate alternate models for delivery to reduce bureaucratic process, improve independence and transparency, improve public engagement and improve the delivery of the eradication program. The committee recommends that all models are investigated, including a statutory independent agency and a nationally led commission.</p>	<p>Supported in principle</p> <p>National emergency response arrangements are continually reviewed and refined to ensure they are streamlined and can effectively respond to biosecurity emergencies.</p> <p>The Program is working to align delivery of the program more closely with other national responses, in line with National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) principles, including through the new governance arrangements.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 (paragraph 3.84 and paragraph 3.85)</p>	<p>Supported in principle</p>

Recommendation	Australian Government position and actions underway
<p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government and all state and territory governments should commit to further investment in research, development, and innovation to improve understanding of red imported fire ants in the Australian context and improve efficiencies through implementation of new technologies and techniques.</p> <p>As part of this, the committee recommends: the National Fire Ant Eradication Program commit to quickly progress the development of innovative and new control and eradication methods and techniques, including environmental DNA (eDNA) markers, biological controls, and RNA-interference (RNAi) technology.</p>	<p>The Australian Government supports the existing allocation of \$17 million (3% of the response plan's budget) for the Program's science program underpinning the eradication response. This includes review and research into current and emerging scientific techniques and processes relevant to RIFA detection, diagnosis and treatment to ensure best practice in RIFA eradication.</p> <p>Under the response plan, \$2 million is currently allocated for innovation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of drones and fixed wing aircraft (in rural areas) for bait dispersal and surveillance, • progressing the use of environmental DNA (eDNA) to identify infestations and provide evidence for the absence of RIFA, • applying big data analytics, bioinformatics and AI to inform operational efficiencies and monitor operational effectiveness. • developing more effective types of bait (including weather-proof), and working with Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to develop a novel RNA-interference bait.
<p>Recommendation 5 (paragraph 3.86)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government establish and fund a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) encompassing independent researchers and academics, private business, industry representatives and governments to bring together the necessary diverse expertise for understanding red imported fire ants in Australia.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 (paragraph 3.87)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the Queensland Government to urgently review the funding and outcomes of the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST), with a particular focus on increasing FAST activities in areas not receiving any eradication or suppression activity. The committee recommends Australian Government work closely with the Queensland Government to commit to additional funding for the FAST to support self-treatment by residents, local governments, and landholders and ultimately,</p>	<p>Noted</p>

Recommendation	Australian Government position and actions underway
support the delivery of the 2023-2027 Response Plan and the 2022–2026 FAST Plan.	
<p>Recommendation 7 (paragraph 4.65)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government, in conjunction with the Queensland Government, collaborate with affected councils within the biosecurity zones and neighbouring areas to ensure community members, residents, landholders and businesses are engaged and understand their General Biosecurity Obligation. This should incorporate community notices having a particular focus on identification, reporting and movement controls.</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>The Program has a well-established education and communication campaign. The response plan has allocated nearly \$40 million to communication and engagement strategies (marketing campaign, industry and stakeholder engagement and digital enhancement), and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A year-round multi-faced mass media fire ant campaign across the entire operational area in SEQ (eradication and non-eradication areas) targeting key audiences including primary producers and the building and development sector. • Market research across target groups and adapting the campaign approach to address compliance concerns and knowledge gaps. • Self-paced online RIFA training for residents, workplaces and pest management technicians. • Engagement events targeting local communities and residents, and hosting stalls at popular locations and events including agriculture shows, sporting events and shops.
<p>Recommendation 8 (paragraph 4.66)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government, in conjunction with state and territory governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an assessment of current public understanding and awareness of red imported fire ants, and their obligations. • Allocate additional funding and resources to undertake a national awareness campaign and achieve greater understanding. The campaign should focus on advertising, education, and engagement on a national approach, with higher resources apportioned according to the level of outbreak and risk. 	<p>Noted</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 (4.67)</p>	<p>Supported</p>

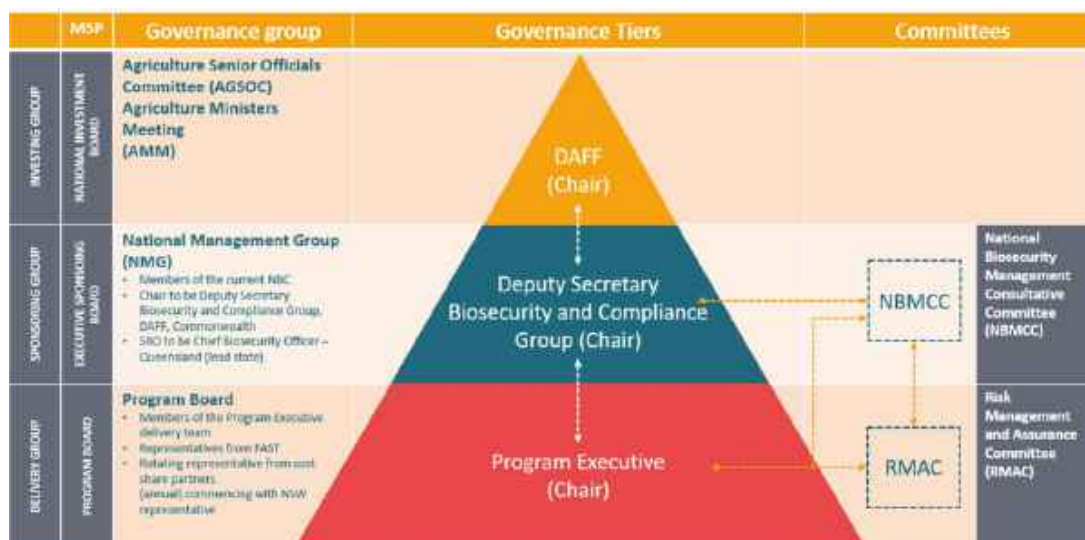
Recommendation	Australian Government position and actions underway
<p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government, in conjunction with the Queensland and New South Wales governments, work to increase compliance with movement controls, including increasing biosecurity spot checks at border crossings. As part of this, all governments should commit to releasing regular reports on identified breaches, including responsible industries and penalty outcomes.</p>	<p>The Queensland (Qld) and New South Wales (NSW) governments have legislative responsibility for compliance and movement controls. They continue to work to increase their presence at the NSW/Qld border, including through the NSW Government's Operation Victa.</p> <p>The Program has a QLD/NSW Communication Coordination Working Group who meet regularly to coordinate and share resources to strengthen awareness and understanding of RIFA surveillance and movement compliance along the border.</p> <p>The Australian Government participates at all levels of the program's governance to support the delivery of the program including supporting work to deliver the Plant Health Committee's Sub-Committee for Market Access, Risk and Trade task to improve domestic movement controls for high-risk carrier material. Given the urgency, the task is now being implemented with the support of the Program, with the NMG approving the use of program funds for the Pest Risk Analysis.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 (4.68)</p> <p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government conduct a review process of the Varroa mite incursion and response, in partnership with the New South Wales and Queensland state governments to identify and study tension points that also exist in the red imported fire ant response, with a view to actively adopt learnings and adjust the response plan accordingly.</p>	<p>Supported in principle</p> <p>Plant Health Australia as custodians of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, worked with cost-share parties to complete the varroa mite response debrief.</p> <p>Key findings from the varroa mite response will be considered in the context of the ongoing responses to RIFA and other biosecurity responses.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Attachment B

NFAEP GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- Australian Government Ministers have overall responsibility for biosecurity eradication responses (under NEBRA) including approval of response plans and associated budgets.
- Key decision making and oversight of the Response Plan 2023-2027 rests with the **NFAEP National Management Group** which is comprised of senior government officers with responsibility for biosecurity with appropriate financial delegation (NBC equivalent).
 - The Chair of the NFAEP NMG is the Deputy Secretary, Biosecurity Operations and Compliance Group, (DAFF - Australian Government).
 - NMG met monthly in 2024 to support the establishment of the 2023-27 response plan, with meetings now being held quarterly into the future.
 - NMG will provide regular reporting through the Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee to the Agriculture Ministers Meeting, who have overall responsibility for the response.
- Overall guidance and monitoring of the NFAEP is undertaken by:
 - the **NFAEP Consultative Committee (NFAEP CC)*** comprised of senior members of state and territory government biosecurity agencies with appropriate expertise in response management. The consultative committee provides technical advice to the NMG and is responsible for assessing whether it remains technically feasible and cost beneficial to achieve the objective of the response strategy.
 - the **Risk Management and Assurance Committee (RMAC)** provides independent advice to the NMG on the risks to achieving the program vision. It provides advice on program assurance and supports the Program Board assess risks.
 - the **Program Board** (Incident Management Team – Qld Government) delivers the response plan within approved annual workplans (budgets, milestones and risk appetite boundaries), and escalates any changes outside of the approved thresholds to the CC and NMG. It includes representatives from the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) and a rotating member from the cost share partners and the Australian Government.



*NFAEP CC is equivalent to NBMCC

Background

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 SB24-000172

- The **2021 Independent Strategic Review** of the NFAEP made several recommendations to strengthen governance and operations to enhance decision-making and minimise delays.
 - To provide the program (QLD) the appropriate autonomy to make efficient and effective operational decisions (within an appropriate threshold).
 - To provide appropriate oversight by government officers with appropriate delegation (financial/biosecurity).

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity Division

PPEBD02**TOMATO BROWN RUGOSE FRUIT VIRUS****CURRENT ISSUE**

- The South Australian Government is currently responding to an outbreak of *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* in the Northern Adelaide Plains region.
- Measures implemented to manage the outbreak and achieve eradication have had unavoidable impacts on agribusinesses, international and domestic trade.
- The government is providing support to state and territory governments, domestic industries, and trading partners to minimise impacts associated with the outbreak.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- South Australia's Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) is leading response activities to a detection of *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* north of Adelaide.
- The outbreak of *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* remains restricted to 3 properties in the Northern Adelaide Plains region of South Australia.
- At this stage, PIRSA is implementing measures that focus on local containment and determining the extent of the outbreak (delimitation).
- These measures have had unavoidable impacts on those businesses directly associated with the response but are necessary to give Australia the best chance of successfully eradicating this pest.
- At this stage, PIRSA are not expecting any domestic shortages of tomatoes or price rises because of *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus*. This may change as the situation evolves in the future.
- This virus is highly infectious can significantly impact tomato, capsicum and chilli industries through impacts on fruit quality, yields, and through trade restrictions. The virus has no known effects on human health.
- This is a challenging virus to contain and eradicate, and the Australian Government continues to provide support to state and territory governments, domestic industries and our trading partners to minimise its impact. This includes working closely with the South Australian Government to support tomato industry workers who have been affected.

BACKGROUND

Current response situation

- The biosecurity aspects of the response are being managed under the nationally agreed Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed.
- Current information indicates that eradication is achievable and PIRSA has developed a response plan for consideration by the technical committee—the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests, and the National Management Group.
- As for all emergency responses it is important and necessary to get the response activities scientifically sound to give the strongest opportunity for successful eradication.
- Seed tracing investigations linked to the SA outbreak have led to a positive result for ToBRFV in two seed lines which were imported into Australia from Türkiye in late May 2024.
 - DAFF is further investigating the importation of the seeds, and the certification associated with them.
- *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* is a National Priority Plant Pest and quarantine pest for Australia and regulations have been in place for imported tomato and capsicum seeds since the implementation of emergency measures in April 2019.
- Tomato seeds for sowing must meet several conditions for import into Australia, this includes mandatory diagnostic testing on seed samples to confirm freedom from of a range of viruses/viroids of quarantine concern – including *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus*. Testing may occur overseas or in Australia
- As a result of potential links to the outbreak in SA, and concerns regarding the accuracy of testing and compliance with import requirements, the department has suspended the acceptance of seed testing certificates for seed for sowing issued from any laboratory in the Republic of Türkiye.
- Issues have been raised due to the major affected industry, the fresh tomato industry, not being a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, as this impacts cost-sharing decisions.
 - The department as a member of the National Management Group has met with and continues to work with the industry on potential options for the fresh tomato industry to contribute to the response.

Impacts to local agribusinesses

- The Australian Government is working closely with the South Australian Government to support tomato industry workers who have been affected, with a focus on ensuring their financial wellbeing during this difficult time.

- Representatives from Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and Services Australia have been present at the Worker Assistance Hub set up at the Virginia Horticulture Centre.
- There will be some unavoidable impacts on businesses directly associated with the response, but at this stage PIRSA are not expecting any domestic shortages of tomatoes or price rises.
 - The department is monitoring the situation and working with industry to better understand any potential supply chain impacts that may arise.
- The tomato industry mostly serves local consumption in Australia. Less than 1 per cent is exported.

Trade – international

- International trade has been affected by the detection of *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* in South Australia and DAFF is working closely with its trading partners to minimise the impact on Australian exports.
 - New Zealand has suspended the import of Australian tomatoes¹ and tomato seeds.
 - New Caledonia suspended trade of fresh tomatoes, capsicums, and chillies.²

Trade – domestic

- Domestic trade is the responsibility of state and territory governments, and trade restrictions have been put in place to prevent potential spread of the virus.
 - Queensland, Western Australia, NSW and Tasmania have implemented various requirements suspending the movement of tomato, capsicum and chilli seeds, seedlings, and tomato fruit from South Australia.
- The Subcommittee on Market Access, Risk and Trade is undertaking a coordinated and science-based risk analysis on the domestic quarantine and market access measures across jurisdictions. This will ensure any domestic movement controls imposed on South Australia are justified and harmonised between jurisdictions.
- The situation in Australia is different from that in the UK and other countries, in that in Australia this virus is under an active eradication response with only three known infected properties. It would therefore be inappropriate for Australia to adopt the requirements of other countries without due consideration to the Australian context, including biosecurity outcome being sought.

¹ According to the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2022/23, 309 tonnes of fresh tomatoes were exported to New Zealand in 2023.

² According to the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2022/23, 200 tonnes of fresh tomatoes and 85 tonnes of fresh capsicums and chillies were exported to New Caledonia in 2023.

- At this point in time Australia is aiming for eradication as the best outcome for Australian growers and exporters to maintain the favourable ToBRFV-free biosecurity status and avoid the burden associated with virus management.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Plant & Live Animal Exports Welfare & Regulation

PLAEWR01**AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY****CURRENT ISSUE**

The Australian Government committed \$5 million across 4 years (2023-24 to 2026-27) to the development of the renewed Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS), with the objective of providing a framework for a national approach to animal welfare in Australia. The final strategy is scheduled to be released in 2027.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

- A renewed AAWS will provide a national approach to animal welfare and signal to Australian consumers and international trading partners that animal welfare is a priority for Australia.
- Commonwealth, state, and territory Agriculture Ministers have confirmed their commitment to jointly lead the renewal of the AAWS, and to develop a National Statement on Animal Welfare during 2024.
- A consideration of modern challenges, opportunities, science and evidence is informing the renewal as well as key learnings from the previous strategy, which lapsed in 2014.
- Funding allows for the development of a strategy that includes a vision, key priorities and practical actions developed and progressively released across six animal group chapters, with the final strategy released in 2027.
- The development of AAWS is being informed by comprehensive engagement with stakeholders. Feedback from a first round of public consultation conducted in the first half of 2024 has been published in a consultation summary. It identifies a range of challenges in Australia's system, but also opportunities, and these are informing next steps including work on the national statement.
- Feedback was received from a broad range of stakeholders across the animal welfare system, including government, animal industries, animal handlers, non-government representative organisations, veterinarians, research bodies, First Nations organisations and the broader Australian public.

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- The renewed AAWS will involve multiple animal types and will examine a range of animal welfare priorities. The Australian Public Service is expected to meet certain standards for engagement¹ and participation and consultation will be broad and comprehensive. During consultation the scope will be clearly defined, and appropriate boundaries will be set, to support effective engagement with and input from the strategy's many diverse stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

- Australian Public Service standards for engagement and participation includes ensuring there are multiple engagement opportunities, clear expectations about consultation objectives, providing opportunities for diverse voices to be heard, being clear about how information and views will be used, and ensuring decision making is underpinned by science and evidence.

s. 47C(1)

- The previous strategy took 5 years to develop, reflecting its complexity, and funding was ceased in 2014 as part of a budget review process.
- The governance structure underpinning the development of the renewed AAWS includes oversight provided by Agriculture Ministers, and also provides for a range of checks and balances and close engagement with the states and territories.
- Animal welfare within Australia is primarily a state and territory responsibility, with the Commonwealth's role being limited to international trade – including export of livestock and meat products and contributing during the negotiation of trade arrangements.
- The Government jointly leads the development of national animal welfare standards and guidelines that provide clarity and consistency for industry, consumers and trading partners. This is achieved through the cross-jurisdictional government representation in the Animal Welfare Task Group (AWTG). This work will continue and be considered during the development and implementation of the renewed AAWS, which will also promote effective standards development.
- Available funding is for the development of a strategy. Implementation is not yet funded. As animal welfare is a shared responsibility in Australia, implementation of actions identified under the strategy will be a shared responsibility, not solely the responsibility of governments.

¹ [Getting stakeholder engagement right | Australian Public Service Commission \(apsc.gov.au\)](https://www.apsc.gov.au/getting-stakeholder-engagement-right)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Plant & Live Animal Exports Welfare & Regulation

PLAEWR02**LIVE SHEEP PHASE OUT****CURRENT ISSUE**

The Australian Government announced it will end live sheep exports by sea in 2028, with this end date enacted in Australian law. The government's focus is now on delivering its transition plan, including \$139.7 million in transition assistance.

The 'Keep the Sheep' campaign and agriculture representative groups continue to call for the policy to be reversed and convey that they either don't want the assistance or that it is inadequate.

KEY FACTS AND RESPONSES

- The Australian Government has delivered on its commitment to the Australian people to phase out live sheep exports by sea– the trade will cease on 1 May 2028.
 - The government has advised that it judges it is necessary to take this action to protect the welfare of sheep and meet the Australian community's expectations.
 - Until May 2028 the trade may continue without caps or quotas and the export regulatory requirements, including for animal welfare, remain in place.
 - Other livestock exports continue, including of live cattle and live sheep by air.
- The government's focus is now on delivering its transition plan. The government's transition plan provides certainty, time to transition and support for the transition.
- An end date of 1 May 2028 is now enacted in Australian law and provides time for sheep producers, the sheep supply chain participants and trading partners to plan and take action, and for markets to adjust.
- The government's decisions on how and when to phase out the trade were based on the advice of an independent panel, which was underpinned by extensive consultation and consideration of over 800 written submissions, a wide range of existing data and specifically commissioned analysis.

Transition assistance

- The \$139.7 million transition assistance package has been designed to assist with planning, responding and adapting to the end of the trade.

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- The government announced \$107 million on 11 May 2024, and a further \$32.7 million taking the total package to \$139.7 million on 15 October 2024.
- It is to assist those impacted to be ready for the phase out in ways that suit their individual circumstances and to position them for the future.
- It is not intended as an exit or compensation package (as sheep production continues).

Partnership with Western Australian (WA) Government

- Minister Collins announced on 15 October that the Commonwealth will work with the WA Government to deliver 2 elements of the transition assistance package; the processing capacity grants and community wellbeing support.
- To give effect to this partnership, DAFF officials are negotiating a schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement, which will set out the objectives, outcomes and reporting requirements of the programs.
- The parameters of the program and timing of when the program will open are matters for the WA Government.

Co-design with industry

- Minister Collins has announced that the government is committed to working with industry through a co-design process to identify and prioritise assistance measures to help plan for, respond to and adapt to the end of live sheep exports by sea.
 - The department is working to identify a suitable facilitator and will look to get started before the end of 2024.
- We will welcome the involvement of a wide range of organisations and individuals in the process.
- The usual guardrails for government funding will apply:
 - have a Constitutional head of power and legislative authority for Commonwealth spending
 - in line with Australia's international trade obligations
 - in accordance with the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles 2024

Delays with establishing programs

- The government recognises sheep producers and supply chain participants are anxious to know the details of and when transition assistance will be available. The detail is being worked through and will be communicated as soon as possible once details are finalised.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Other key issues

OTHER KEY ISSUES

Progress in implementing the transition plan

- Since coming into the portfolio, Minister Collins has:
 - Negotiated an arrangement with the WA government to deliver several elements of the transition assistance package
 - Committed an additional \$32.7 million to the \$107 million transition assistance package that was announced as part of the 2024-25 Budget
 - Established authority for a co-design process intended to identify how specific funding opportunities may best be delivered for sheep producers, shearers, transporters, and others connected to the live sheep export supply chain
 - Approved the grant opportunity guidelines for the first round in the \$4.4 million Enhancing Market Demand Program, with applications open on 8 November, and a \$3 million grant to Meat & Livestock Australia.
- Minister Collins considers the co-design process is important to increase the alignment of assistance with transition needs.
- Since the announcement of the transition package in the budget, the government has also legislated the cessation date to provide definitive certainty for individuals, businesses and communities in the sheep industry and supply chain.

Transition advocacy

- The government's transition plan includes ongoing engagement and communication. As part this the government will appoint a Transition Advocate as soon as practicable.
- A key aspect of the envisaged role for the Transition Advocate is for them to work with industry on their concerns and to identify and understand emerging opportunities and challenges as the transition occurs.
- The Transition Advocate will be an important part of keeping that dialogue ongoing through the transition.
- ***If pressed***, the department has had discussions with industry [Sheep Producers Australia] about a transition advocate model where a small group representing interests across the supply change would be appointed.
- The department is continuing to evaluate the best way to establish this transition advocate function.

Evidence for policy decision

- The Australian Government committed at the 2019 and 2022 federal elections to phase out live sheep exports by sea.

- Various reviews of the live sheep trade have promoted changes to export controls over an extended period. These changes have not entirely removed the risks inherent in the trade of live sheep by sea, and the Australian public continues to hold concerns.
- The government has advised that it judges it is necessary to take this action to protect the welfare of sheep and to meet the Australian community's expectations.
- The government's focus is now on the transition plan assisting sheep producers and the supply chain participants to transition away from the trade.

Sector confidence

- Recent commentary on the policy has identified ongoing loss of market confidence in the sheep industry in Western Australia (WA) due to the phase out policy, even with improved seasonal conditions.
 - The 2024 Sheep Producers Intentions Survey forecasts a drop in flock numbers, particularly in WA.
 - Whilst it is acknowledged that the phase out is one of the reasons impacting the sheep industry's confidence in WA, flock numbers do fluctuate according to a wide range of reasons, the recent poor seasonal conditions and low wool prices would also be contributing factors.
 - The September 2024 ABARES Agricultural Commodities Report indicates that the Australian sheep flock is forecast to decline by 3% to 68.5 million head in 2024–25.
 - Sheep production in WA is interconnected with other farming systems such as cropping, domestic processing, international markets, and seasonal conditions. These collectively function to affect the prices farmers receive for their sheep.
- The Australian Government has stated that it sees a positive future for the WA sheep industry. This optimism is based on:
 - WA sheep slaughter rates in 2022–23 were at their highest point for over 10 years.
 - Long-term global demand for sheep meat is expected to increase. Australia exported sheep meat worth \$4.5 billion in 2022–23.
 - Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) projecting Australia's domestic sheep meat consumption to rise by 7% by 2026 (from the 2023 amount)¹.

¹ MLA 2024, February-2024_mla-australian-sheep-industry-projections

Concern about closing the trade with demand is increasing

- Whilst there has been an increase in demand in recent years, and with trade resuming to Saudi Arabia, annual variations and increases by themselves are not unusual and have occurred in the past.²
 - Despite this fluctuation, the long-term trend is of numbers declining.
 - From 2001-02 to 2022-23, the number of live sheep exported by sea decreased by 90%, from over 6.5 million head to 652,344 head (ABS).
 - The most recent increase in the value of live sheep exported does not indicate a reversal of this trend.
 - There is variability year on year for exports of all agricultural commodities, including live sheep.

Employment

- The 2019 Mercardo report *Value Analysis of the Australian Live Sheep Export Trade* stated there were 3,443 people employed nationally in the live sheep export trade.
 - For WA the report identified 798 on-farm direct FTEs with a multiplier used to identify 2,651 FTEs in total in WA in the supply chain.
 - This total figure is based on an assumed multiplier that is considerably higher than used in other reports about the red meat supply chain.
 - It also reflects employment when the industry was valued at \$252 million in 2017-18 compared to a trade value of \$77 million in 2022-23.
- Other analyses have lower estimates. For example, the WA government submission to the independent panel projected 690 FTE along the supply chain with no reallocation of land to cereal cropping or 387 FTE along the supply chain with reallocation of land to cereal cropping would be impacted by the phase out.
- The recent House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture Inquiry heard evidence from the Australia Meat Industry Employees Union that the government's policy would create between 500-800 direct jobs in meat processing, with many more indirect jobs to flow.

Australia and UAE trade deal recognises animal welfare

- Australia has 2 free trade agreements with animal welfare provisions:
 - Australia-UK FTA - which includes a Chapter on "Animal Welfare and Antimicrobial Resistance". The A-UKFTA entered into force on 31 May 2023.
 - Australia-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement - includes animal welfare in the Cooperation Chapter. Negotiations concluded on 17 September and the agreement will now move to execution both sides.

² Increases in the number of head exported occurred in FY's 2014-15, 2017-18, 2019-20, and an increase of more than 1 million head in 2005-06.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

PA01**AUSTRALIAN PESTICIDES AND VETERINARY MEDICINES
AUTHORITY (APVMA)**

Funding Source	Financial Year	
	2023-24	2024-25
Industry Contributions (departmental) Ongoing	\$41.794m	\$42.164m
Commonwealth Contributions (departmental) Ongoing	\$ 5.905m	\$ 2.260m
Own-source/Other (departmental) Ongoing	\$ 0.258m	\$ 0.301m
Not requiring Appropriation (departmental) Ongoing	(\$ 2.359)m	\$ 2.596m
Overall Expenditure	\$ 45.598m	\$ 47.321m

CURRENT ISSUE

- Ministerial direction on chemical reviews:
 - The APVMA is progressing long-standing chemical reviews in line with the Ministerial Direction (dated 13 July 2023), while continuing to address emerging issues of concern; undertaking two other review processes (neonicotinoid pesticides and anticoagulant rodenticides); and continuing work on prioritisation of future reviews.

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- The consultation period for the proposed regulatory decision on paraquat and diquat opened on 30 July 2024 and will close on 29 October 2024.
- Consultations completed for; chlorpyrifos, neomycin, diazinon and fenitrothion closed on 11 March, 26 May, 11 June and 8 July 2024, respectively.
- The APVMA has taken the final regulatory decision on diazinon (gazetted on 10 September 2024) and chlorpyrifos (gazetted on 3 October 2024).
- Other chemical review activities:
 - The APVMA has also cancelled all products containing chlorthal dimethyl (12 products) on 10 October 2024, based on concerns of imminent risk of serious illness or injury to unborn children through maternal exposure, with a recall of existing products also initiated.
- Agency Performance:
 - Applications for registration or permit authorisation that were finalised within legislated timeframes were:
 - FY 2023-24: 94.6 per cent
 - FY 2022-23: 96.8 per cent
 - FY 2021-22: 97 per cent
 - Performance for Q1 FY 2024-25 was 91.2 per cent.
 - It is anticipated timeframe performance may drop below the target 90 per cent before the end of this financial year due to the increased workloads on the assessment teams with both chemical reviews and on urgent review activities such as the review of chlorthal dimethyl.
- Australian Government Detailed Response to Matthews Rapid Evaluation:
 - The detailed response comprehensively outlines the government's reform agenda for the APVMA and the Australian agvet regulatory system, including reforms already underway, additional policy analysis, and research to be undertaken by department and the APVMA, in consultation with stakeholders.

Board appointments:

- **CEO appointment:** The APVMA Board appointed Mr Scott Hansen as the new Chief Executive Officer of the APVMA with effect from **24 July 2024** for a 5-year term. The appointment was made consistent with the Government's Merit and Transparency Policy and the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992*. Dr Melissa McEwen's last day as Acting Chief Executive Officer was 23 July 2024.
- **Chair appointment:** Dr Catherine Ainsworth has been appointed by the Minister as the new Chair of the APVMA Board with effect from **12 July 2024** for a 4-year term.

- **Board member appointments:** The terms of APVMA Board members, Mrs Maree Gooch, Dr Jeremy Burdon and Dr Steve Jefferies all expire on 29 March 2025.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Enabling legislation and year established: *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992*, established 1993.

Portfolio Budget Statement Outcome: Protection of the health and safety of people, animals, the environment, and agricultural and livestock industries through regulation of pesticides and veterinary medicines.

Description: The APVMA provides regulatory services for the supply of safe and effective agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals in Australia. Through its regulatory action and decisions, the APVMA ensures the registration of agvet chemical products delivers appropriate protections for human health and safety, animals and the environment, and supports international trade.

Staffing: Average Staff Level (ASL) per year in the table below:

Year	Average Staffing Level (ASL)
2020-2021	176.8
2021-2022	176
2022-2023	185
2023-2024	202.9
2024-2025 July to Sept	216.4

Board of management: Yes. Division 2, Part 3 of the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992*. Currently the Board is chaired by Dr Catherine Ainsworth.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Division: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

PA02**AUSTRALIAN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (AFMA)**

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) is the Australian Government agency responsible for the efficient management and sustainable use of Commonwealth fish resources on behalf of the Australian community. AFMA manages and monitors commercial Commonwealth fishing to ensure Australian fish stocks and our fishing industry are viable now and in the future. In doing so, AFMA aims to make sure that healthy and fresh local seafood is available and affordable to all Australians for current and future generations.

Through foreign compliance functions, AFMA works together with other Australian Government agencies and our international counterparts to deter illegal fishing in the Australian Fishing Zone and in international waters where Australia has an interest. In the last two years, Australian surveillance and enforcement assets have responded to increasing incursions by illegal foreign fishers, predominantly from Indonesia, across northern Australia. In addition to on the water enforcement, complementary measures have been implemented to target the issue at its source as part of our multifaceted approach to detecting and deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

CURRENT ISSUE – Climate change and depleted fish stocks

A number of commercially-fished stocks in the Commonwealth Trawl Sector, off south-eastern Australia, are continuing to decline or failing to rebuild despite significant and sustained reductions in fishing effort.

The evidence is growing that these trends are heavily driven by climate change.

KEY FACTS AND RESPONSES

- Several species in the Commonwealth Trawl Sector are not recovering from historic overfishing, are slow to recover, or in some cases, continuing to decline, despite substantial reductions in catch. The main species of concern are Jackass morwong, John dory, Blue warehou, Gemfish (east), School shark and Redfish.
- The AFMA Commission has previously canvassed the root causes of these issues, particularly the impacts of climate change, which may be shifting distribution and altering productivity.
- AFMA has taken comprehensive action over many years to address these stocks including significant catch and effort reductions as well as large spatial closures.

- As the impacts of climate change become better known, and grow, it is expected that some of these stocks will continue to decline, or not recover, even in the face of very low fishing mortality.
- AFMA is working to explicitly incorporate known and modelled impacts of climate change into the management of Commonwealth fisheries.

CURRENT ISSUE – “Spatial Squeeze” – Competition for Marine Access

The Commonwealth fishing sector has growing concerns around increased competition from other users of the marine estate.

KEY FACTS AND RESPONSES

- Significant pressure on retaining and securing access across Australia’s marine estate. Main pressure on the Commonwealth fishing industry come from: offshore renewables and review of marine parks.
- Industry has highlighted concerns with: multiple consultative processes; proper use of its data in making acreage release decisions; and, how its existing access rights are accounted for in decision making.
- Industry is concerned about loss of productive fishing grounds and its ability to adapt to future changes brought about by climate change.
- AFMA has increased its engagement with proponents of non-fishing activities to ensure greater understanding of the prospective impacts on the fishing industry.

CURRENT ISSUE – Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Ongoing issue. Significant increase in illegal foreign fishing (IFF) activity in Australia’s northern waters to a rate not seen for close to 19 years (historical figures at

Attachment A):

- Currently in the 2024-25 financial year (up to 14 October 2024), there have been 71 interdictions of illegal foreign fishing vessels (FFVs) of Indonesian origin. 74 FFVs have been subject to legislative forfeiture and 7 have been apprehended. Where appropriate and possible, AFMA is committed to prosecuting foreign fishers for offences under the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*. In this period there have been 39 Indonesian fishers prosecuted in Australian courts (a further 25 fishers detained and awaiting court at the time of writing), with penalties ranging between 4-year good behaviour bonds to an \$8000 fine on one occasion. There have been 13 FFVs seized and destroyed.
- During the 2023/24 financial year, there were 237 interdictions of illegal FFVs. Of those, 215 were subject to legislative forfeiture (seizure of catch and fishing gear). 213 of these vessels were Indonesian and two vessels were Papua New Guinean (PNG). 22 vessels were apprehended, with 72 Indonesian fishers prosecuted. Penalties in these cases ranged from 12-month good behaviour bonds to imprisonment for up to ninety days. All have since been removed from Australia by Australian Border Force. A total of 58 vessels were seized and destroyed.

KEY FACTS AND RESPONSES

- Whilst IFF activity remains consistent within the Kimberley Marine Park (KMP), there are increased FFV sightings to the east within the Cobourg Peninsula in the Northern Territory. These sightings often reveal established camps on the Australian mainland. This activity poses risks to our border security, protected marine environments and biosecurity interests.
- Indonesian fishers are travelling from further distances within Indonesia to fish illegally within Australian waters. Historically, the East Nusa Tenggara region has been the primary source location for IFF activity in Australia's northern waters, but it is now much wider.
- AFMA interprets this trend as being indicative of the economic benefit of illegal fishing in Australian waters, coupled with high market value of targeted marine species (sea cucumber and shark fin) as continuing to outweigh the impact of Australia's current enforcement options.
- AFMA works closely with Maritime Border Command (MBC) and other government agencies in implementing a multi-faceted response to illegal fishing. This includes enforcement actions at sea, targeted operations and collaborative patrols with Indonesia. This action results in seizure of catch, fishing equipment and disposal of seized foreign fishing vessels. Foreign fishers may also be subject to apprehension and prosecution in Australia.
- The most effective enforcement options, being vessel destruction and prosecution, are contingent upon ABF's ability to detain illegal foreign fishers. ABF continues to advise that detention capacity is significantly limited, with that situation unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.
- The Government has invested an additional \$48.8 million in 2024-25 to support Australian Border Force's efforts to counter illegal foreign fishing. Additionally, AFMA has received an additional \$1.72M in 2024-25 to facilitate prosecutions, oversee an increase in vessel disposals, increase engagement with Indonesia (including delivery of further public information campaigns) and support operational capability gaps.

Attachment A – Historical Foreign Fisheries Enforcement Activity 2000-2024

Year	Apprehensions	Legislative Forfeitures In addition to apprehensions	Total
2000-01	66	30	96
2001-02	98	48	146
2002-03	144	29	173
2003-04	133	83	216
2004-05	203	178	381
2005-06	367	281	648
2006-07	216	5	221
2007-08	156	9	165
2008-09	27	8	35
2009-10	23	0	23
2010-11	14	0	14
2011-12	12	0	12
2012-13	7	0	7
2013-14	26	7	33
2014-15	6	1	7
2015-16	20	2	22
2016-17	15	0	15
2017-18	14	0	14
2018-19	5	0	5
2019-20	4	0	4
2020-21	0	85	85
2021-22	0	337	337
2022-23	6	119	125
2023-24	22	215	237
2024-25*	7	75	81
TOTAL	1591	1511	3102

*As of 14 October 2024

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 24 October 2024 4:31 PM
To: s. 47F(1)
Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) ; s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Independent Observer Program

Hi s. 47F(1),

Please find attached the AS cleared version of the Independent Observer Program brief. Andrew is yet to clear so I will email you with revised versions if he does have edits.

Regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Executive Officer to First Assistant Secretary, Andrew McDonald

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Plant and Live Animal Exports, Welfare and Regulation
GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

FAS MANAGEMENT BRIEF LAE 6

OFFICIAL

September 2024

Independent Observer Program

About the program	Current independent observer deployment policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent observers (observers) accompany livestock export consignments by sea to collect information for the regulator on the implementation and effectiveness of exporters' arrangements to manage the health and welfare of the livestock. • Observers do not play an active role in the day-to-day management of livestock on export vessels. • Where an Australian accredited veterinarian (AAV) is on board the vessel, observers collect information on the AAV's activities and, as authorised officers, may direct the AAV to address animal welfare issues where they arise. • Since recommencing the observer program on 1 May 2022: observers have been deployed on 10 vessels and have accompanied consignments from 8 exporters (as of 30 September 2024) (Attachment B). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department will direct an observer to accompany livestock export voyages by sea for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ voyages departing from ports south of latitude 26 degrees south and crossing the equator ○ the first voyage undertaken by an exporter or vessel following a reportable mortality ○ the first voyage(s) by any new exporter or vessel ○ other long-haul voyages with complex arrangements such as those with multiple ports of discharge, carrying buffalo or enacting management plans (e.g. heavy cattle). • On 20 August 2024, the Inspector General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports (IGAWLAE) published a review of the independent observer program and provided 3 recommendations. • The department is refining the observer deployment policy to incorporate the IGAWLAE recommendations.
KEY POINTS – Pause on deployments to the Red Sea	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployments of observers on livestock voyages travelling to/through the Red Sea or to any ports in Israel remain paused since 10 October 2023 due to the changing and uncertain security conditions. • On 22 November 2023, deployment of observers recommenced to ports in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There was one eligible voyage in December 2024 where the deployment decision was made prior to the recommencement of deployments and therefore an observer was not deployed ○ There have been 3 eligible voyages in 2024; however an observer was not available for one voyage and there was insufficient space for an observer for 2 voyages. • Additional reporting is required for affected voyages in lieu of observer deployment, including photographs of voyage conditions, daily questionnaires and use of environmental data loggers. • 18 voyages departed with Australian livestock for the Middle East region without an observer from October 2023 to September 2024, including 13 travelling to/through the Red Sea or to any ports in Israel and 5 to ports in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf. 	
ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION	
<p>Insufficient vessel accommodation is the main reason for not deploying observers – Smaller vessels are only able to accommodate minimum crew for vessel operation and care of livestock. The department's position is that observers should not displace crew as that may compromise safe operation of the vessel and livestock care.</p> <p>Observer deployments to China – A risk assessment has determined that deployments of observers can recommence on livestock vessels to China. Of the 7 voyages to China in 2024 to date, one observer was deployed on a voyage in January 2024.</p> <p>Summary report publications– The department published 3 observer summary reports on 29 August 2024. These were in a different format to that used previously following amendments to the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i>, dealing with the use or disclosure of relevant or protected information, that came into force on 1 February 2024.</p>	

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**PLANT AND LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS, ANIMAL WELFARE & REGULATION DIVISION
FAS MANAGEMENT BRIEF LAE 6****Independent Observer Program****FURTHER DETAILS:**

- The observer program provides the regulator with information about the effectiveness of exporter arrangements onboard livestock vessels.
- The primary use of the observational data is an information source for the regulator.
- The information gathered by observers is used to address issues and/or non-compliances and to inform longer term policy decisions.
- The information that observers provide is generally of greater detail, identifying additional issues that historically have not been raised in reports written by LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons and Accredited Veterinarians.
- In recognition of the high level of community interest in livestock exports, a summary of the observer's data is published on the department's website.
- Corrective actions are not dependent on publishing summary reports, with issues or non-compliances actioned as soon as feasible after their identification.

KEY POINTS

- Independent observers accompany some consignments of exported livestock during transport by sea to collect information for the regulator on the implementation and effectiveness of exporters' arrangements to manage the health and welfare of the livestock.
- Independent observers do not play an active role in the day-to-day management of livestock on export vessels.
- Deployments of observers on livestock voyages travelling to/through the Red Sea or to any ports in Israel remain paused due to the uncertain security conditions for persons travelling to this region.

Observer deployments

- Under the current deployment policy (see [Attachment A](#)), the department will direct an independent observer to accompany livestock export voyages by sea when they meet one or more criteria:
 - voyages departing from ports south of latitude 26 degrees south and crossing the equator
 - the first voyage undertaken by an exporter or vessel following a reportable mortality
 - the first voyage(s) by any new exporter or vessel
 - other long-haul voyages with complex arrangements such as those with multiple ports of discharge, carrying buffalo or enacting management plans (e.g. heavy cattle).
- The deployment policy does not include any provision for an exemption relating to an exporter's good performance history.

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- The department may also direct an observer to accompany other voyages. Voyages not meeting the specific criteria are generally short haul (<10 days) voyages carrying cattle from northern Australia to Indonesia.
- Following the recent changes in China's policy regarding COVID-19 restrictions and travel, a risk assessment has determined that it is now safe and practical to recommence deployment of observers on livestock vessels to China.
 - An observer was deployed on a voyage to China (cattle) in January 2024.
- Further statistics on observer deployments is at Attachment B.

WHS considerations

- To ensure observers are supported and safe in their deployments, the department provides preparedness training and advice to increase observer's situational awareness and readiness whilst travelling overseas.
- The risks associated with travellers conducting hazardous work or operational activities (i.e. live animal exports, field work, or vessels) are assessed through the completion of a WHS risk assessment and approved by the business area risk owner into the WHS system.
- Current risk assessment documents are reviewed prior to each deployment and address the following:
 - Is there a threat of civil unrest and political instability?
 - Is travel to a war zone or where military action is likely?
 - Is local transportation (air, road, rail) reliable or unsafe at/near destination?
 - Will the traveller be exposed to hostile environments?
- The risk ratings for these questions are provided by DFAT Smartraveller and International SOS and include not only the destination country but also transit destinations. This document is circulated to the traveller and via cyber security, personal security, International Travel and Delegates within the Department.

2023 Calendar year statistics

- 117 of the 210 sea voyages that departed between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023 met the specific criteria for deployment under the current policy:
 - 12 voyages were accompanied by an observer
- Observers were not deployed on:
 - 6 voyages to the Middle East for travel safety reasons
 - 16 voyages to China due to travel and border restrictions
 - 5 voyages as no observer was available for deployment
 - 10 voyages as there was insufficient time to organise deployment
 - 68 voyages as the vessel operator advised there was insufficient cabin space to accommodate an observer

2023 Calendar year Middle East statistics

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- 10 voyages to the Middle East were accompanied by an observer between 1 January and 31 December 2023.
 - 8 of these voyages carried sheep, one being the first voyage undertaken by Emanuel Exports Pty Ltd since its licence was reinstated, with sheep only to Kuwait and United Arab Emirates.
- Observers were not deployed on 11 voyages to the Middle East:
 - 9 voyages with sheep, due to insufficient cabin space to accommodate an observer (4) and for travel safety reasons (5)
 - 2 voyages with cattle only, due to insufficient cabin space to accommodate an observer (1) and for travel safety reasons (1).
- Additional reporting was required for 10 voyages to the Middle East that could not accommodate an observer, including photographs, daily questionnaires and use of environmental loggers.
- One voyage with cattle only to Israel and Jordan departed in August 2023 without additional reporting as it was not considered high risk.

2024 Calendar year statistics

- 82 of the 186 sea voyages that departed between 1 January and 30 September 2024 met the specific criteria for deployment under the current policy:
 - 3 voyages were accompanied by an observer
- Observers were not deployed on:
 - 9 voyages to the Middle East and 1 to Pakistan for travel safety reasons
 - 2 voyages as no observer was available for deployment
 - 13 voyages as there was insufficient time to organise deployment
 - 53 voyages as the vessel operator advised there was insufficient cabin space to accommodate an observer
 - 1 voyage where the department decided not to deploy due to recent deployment history.

2024 Calendar year Middle East statistics

- None of the 12 voyages to the Middle East were accompanied by an observer between 1 January and 30 September 2024
- Observers were not deployed on voyages to the Middle East due to insufficient cabin space to accommodate an observer (2), no observer available (1), and for travel safety reasons (9).
 - All 12 voyages included sheep.
 - There were no voyages with cattle only.
- Of the 12 voyages to the Middle East, 11 of them had an onboard AAV accompanying consignments and 1 had a veterinarian and virtual AAV, then later an onboard AAV.
- Additional reporting was required for all voyages to the Middle East that could not accommodate an observer, including photographs, daily questionnaires and use of environmental loggers.

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Financial year 2023-24 statistics

- 124 of the 246 voyages that departed between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 met the specific criteria for deployment under the current policy:
 - 7 voyages were accompanied by an observer, one of which was a sheep consignment to the Middle East.
- Observers were not deployed on:
 - 9 voyages to China due to post-arrival travel restrictions
 - 15 voyages due to travel safety concerns
 - 14 voyages as there was insufficient time to organise deployment
 - 3 voyages as no observer was available for deployment
 - 75 voyages as the vessel operator advised there was insufficient cabin space to accommodate an observer.
 - This included 2 sheep voyages that sailed to the Middle East. The department required the exporters provide additional reporting for those consignments.
 - 1 voyage where the department decided not to deploy due to recent deployment history.

S. 47C(1)

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- The Inspector General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports (IGAWLAE) published their review of the independent observer program on 20 August 2024, which included 3 recommendations:
 - Recommendation 1: The department should implement its revised deployment policy to enable it to enforce the deployment of at least one independent observer per exporter per year regardless of their risk status.
 - Recommendation 2: The department should develop an ongoing evaluation program to assess whether the IO program is achieving its objectives.
 - Recommendation 3: As a high priority, the department should clearly define the measurements and parameters used to assess animal health and welfare with the intention of providing a basis to test the capability of modern technologies to supplement existing regulatory tools for livestock voyages.
- The department has agreed to implement all 3 IGAWLAE recommendations and are incorporating these recommendations into the revised deployment policy.

Issues identified by observers.

- Where issues are identified by independent observers, the department addresses these directly with exporters at the earliest opportunity and requires corrective actions to be taken where necessary. This includes issues reported by independent observers during a voyage.
- Where issues relate to a particular exporter or vessel, the department directs independent observers on future voyages to undertake additional, specific observations to confirm implementation and effectiveness of corrective actions.

Observational Data

- The department has developed a mobile application to streamline data collection and recording processes for observers. The application was implemented as the primary data collection tool for observers when deployments resumed in May 2022.
- The application is an observational data collection tool and supports a shift from written narrative-based reporting towards an observational data model.
- This shift towards observational data, along with improvement to the timeframes for receipt and analysis of information facilitated by the app, assists with continued effective regulation of the live export trade and facilitates the timely publication of summary reports.
- Observational data focusses on how exporters identify and manage issues that impact or have the potential to negatively impact animal health and welfare, as opposed to general day-to-day observations.
- The department publishes summary reports prepared from the observational data following review and verification of issues identified.
- Raw observational data is complex, difficult to interpret and may contain unverified issues, opinion and commercially sensitive information.
- Exporters are afforded a right of reply to the issues identified in the observational data prior to the preparation of the summary report for publication.
- Where issues are confirmed, they are included in the summary report for publication.
- Observational summary reports appear different to the previous narrative summary reports, particularly where issues have not been identified.

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- If no issues relating to a particular category were noted by the observer, standard words are used to identify that there were no issues identified relating to the category e.g. “Loading”.

S. 47C(1)

Independent observer invoicing

- There have been 2 revisions to the department’s cost recovery framework since the independent observer program was first implemented in 2019. Each revision has resulted in increased fees and charges to effectively recover and avoid future under-recovery for regulatory activities associated with livestock exports, including observer deployments.
- Flight costs remain higher in 2024, compared with pre-COVID years,. For example, Southeast Asian flights have been approximately \$1,600 higher and Middle East flights approximately \$10,000 higher in 2024 than 2018-19.
- Observer flights are often booked within 3 to 4 days of disembarkation in country to accommodate uncertainties with unloading schedules.

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- Flight paths from some markets can be complex, necessitating connecting flights and long travel times. This results in increases to an observer's travel days, which is an added recoverable cost to exporters.
- Independent Observers are entitled to travel business class when their return international flight exceeds 4 hours. This is outlined in the department's travel policy, travel regulation manual and the WoAG document – RM405 – Official International Travel – Use of the best fare of the day. The charge for independent observers' business class travel is noted in the Departmental Charging Guidelines – Biosecurity and Export Regulatory Functions version 5 – released March 2023 for pricing 16 January.

Daily rate for observer deployments

This table shows the charges to industry when an independent observer is deployed. The charges are comprised of a daily rate for the observer and a rate for the support provided to the observer from staff in Australia.

Year	Weekday Daily Rate	Weekend/PH Daily Rate	Audit Support Weekday	Audit Support Weekend/PH
FY 19-20	1290	1890	43	126
FY 20-21	Deployments paused due to COVID-19			
FY 21-22	1740	2340	59	158
FY 22-23	1775	2375	60	160
FY 23-24	1810	2410	62	164

If asked: When will the department recommence deployments of observers on voyages to China?

- In December 2023, the department determined that it was safe and practical to recommence independent observer deployments on livestock vessels to China.
- An observer has been deployed on one voyage to China departing in January 2024.
 - Seven voyages from January to September 2024 met deployment criteria, one voyage had an observer deployed and the remaining did not as there was insufficient cabin space to accommodate an observer.

Additional reporting requirements**If asked: What assurances does the department have for voyage conditions without an observer?**

- Observers form one part of the department's assurance for livestock exports.
- Department veterinary officers perform pre-export inspections on livestock prepared for export to check compliance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) and exporter arrangements.

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- The department receives mandatory reporting from registered establishments pre-export, from stockpersons and accredited veterinarians on voyages by sea and air, and reports from the master of the vessel, to assist with effective regulation of the livestock export trade. This constellation of information informs any regulatory actions required.
- Observers do not have any active role in animal management on livestock export voyages. The primary role of an observer is to perform compliance and assurance monitoring, recording and reporting activities.
- Exporters remain responsible for ensuring their arrangements effectively managed animal health and welfare.
- In 2024:
 - Between 1 January and 30 September 2024, the department required additional reporting for 43 voyages that met deployment criteria where an observer was not deployed(12 were to the Middle East).
- In 2023:
 - Between 1 January and 31 December 2023, the department required additional reporting for 10 voyages that met deployment criteria where an observer was not deployed. All 10 were to the Middle East.
- When deployments were paused between 17 March 2020 and 31 April 2022, the department required additional reporting on 39 consignments, over 35 voyages.
- The key elements of additional reporting include:
 - confirming livestock are loaded onto vessels in accordance with the load plan,
 - information regarding the daily livestock husbandry routine, and
 - information regarding feed, water, bedding and the identification and treatment of sick livestock, and
 - photos and video footage.
- Historical data indicates that observers report significantly more issues than do accredited veterinarians and accredited stockpersons, when an observer is not present.
- The department consulted with LiveCorp regarding trials of alternative arrangements, including body cameras on stockpersons. Progression of this project is currently with LiveCorp.

Publishing summary reports

- Amendments to the *Export Control Act 2020* dealing with the use or disclosure of relevant or protected information took effect on 1 February 2024.
- The department is working through the implications of these amendments before publishing the next quarterly ESCAS reports and full Independent Observer summary reports.
 - In the interim, Independent Observer summary reports will be published with less information than previous publications.
- On 20 May 2024, the department published 4 Independent Observer summary reports for consignments in 2023 with less information than previous publications.

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- On 29 August 2024, the department published 3 Independent Observer summary reports for consignments in 2024 with less information than previous publications.
- The standard publication schedule is to publish finalised independent observer summary reports on a quarterly basis.
- The department has published summary reports for 241 of 242 voyages on which an observer was deployed up until 30 September 2024.
- For reports published from April 2018 to September 2024, issues were identified by observers for 207 of 241 voyages (86 per cent). No issues were identified by observers on 34 voyages (14 per cent).
- Corrective actions resulting from observer findings or other sources of information are not dependent on publishing summary reports, with significant issues or non-compliances actioned well ahead of publication.
- Observational data undergoes an extensive assessment process to verify issues and/or non-compliances and any necessary corrective actions are then taken.
- The department will publish remaining summary reports in accordance with its quarterly publishing approach.
- The primary use of the observational data provided by observers is an information source for the regulator. In recognition of the high level of community interest in livestock exports, a summary report of the observational data is published on the department's website. Under current procedures, observations that occur within normal parameters are not included in summary reports.
- Where issues are noted by the observer and verified, these are included in summary reports under the relevant section, for example:
 - Pant descriptions in report #220
 - Pad conditions in report #231
 - Discharge issues in report #229
 - Temperature recording discrepancies in report #234
- Further information on reporting and publishing is at Attachment D.
- A summary of recently published reports is at Attachment E.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Observer deployment policy

Attachment B - Independent Observer deployment data

s. 47C(1)

Attachment D - Assessment and summary report publication process.

Attachment E - Recently published reports.

Independent observers

Middle East deployments update

On 9 October 2023, the department temporarily paused the deployment of observers on voyages carrying Australian livestock to all ports in the Middle East region due to uncertain security conditions.

On 22 November 2023, the department determined that deployment of observers could recommence on voyages carrying Australian livestock to ports in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf.

Deployments of observers on livestock voyages travelling to/through the Red Sea or to any ports in Israel remain paused due to the changing and uncertain security conditions.

We will continue to monitor the situation and consider the safety and practicality of international travel for observers when deciding to deploy.

Independent observers (observer) are departmental staff administered by us. They accompany voyages of livestock exported by sea.

Overview

Observers play an assurance role within our regulatory system. They monitor, review and/or audit exporter arrangements on-board livestock export vessels.

Their focus is to verify and report on the:

- implementation of individual exporter arrangements. This includes its approved arrangement (AA) and approved export program.
- activities undertaken by the on-board accredited veterinarian (AAV) or accredited stockperson.
- exporters effectiveness at managing animal health and welfare. This includes meeting the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL).

Observers do not take an active role in animal management during the voyage.

Further information on the roles and responsibilities of exporters, AAVs, accredited stockpersons, master of the vessel and observer can be found on the [accredited veterinarians](#) (/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/livestock/accredited-veterinarian) page.

We deploy observers in accordance with [our regulatory framework](#)

(/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/livestock/regulating-live-animal-exports).

We also publish [recent independent observer reports](#)

(/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/livestock/regulatory-framework/independent-observer-reports).

Information for exporters

Observer deployment

You should prepare for an observer to accompany a voyage when:

- the voyage departs from ports south of latitude 26 degrees south and crossing the equator.

- **LEX-32631** it is the first voyage undertaken by you following a notifiable mortality incident.
- it is the first voyage of any new exporter or vessel.
- the voyage is considered a long-haul voyage with any complex arrangements. This includes those with multiple ports of discharge, carrying buffalo or enacting management plans (e.g. heavy cattle).

We will take steps to deploy an observer where a voyage meets a criterion.

We may also direct an observer to accompany other voyages. We will notify you if we require this.

Extenuating circumstances

If there are extenuating circumstances that may prevent an observer accompanying a particular consignment, you must provide us with sufficient evidence for the delegate to decide it is appropriate to deviate from the deployment policy.

- You need to tell us what actions you have taken to prepare for an observer, including discussions with shipping companies/vessel operators about accommodating the observer on the vessel.
- You must provide supporting evidence that there are extenuating circumstances and a statutory declaration that the supporting evidence is true and accurate to the best of your knowledge.
- Depending on the circumstances, supporting evidence may include but is not limited to:
 - Original advice from the vessel operator regarding crew numbers and accommodation spaces onboard the vessel.
 - Detailed reasoning for multiple reef pilots.
 - Recent vessel refurbishments that alter the number of accommodation spaces.
 - Crew contract periods.

If you vary a notice of intention (NOI) in a way that impacts an observer being deployed, or creates extenuating circumstances that may prevent an observer being accommodated, you must contact us at least 10 business days before departure.

Email IO.Reporting@aff.gov.au (mailto:IO.Reporting@aff.gov.au).

Export and vessel operations

If we require an observer to accompany a vessel, export and vessel operations continue as normal. AAVs and Accredited Stockpersons should perform their normal duties.

Observers do not take an active role in animal management during the voyage.

AAVs or accredited stockpersons submit daily reports under ASEL. They provide detail on health and welfare issues during the voyage. You should take timely and appropriate action in response to issues identified in these reports. Do not wait for observer reports, or the publication of summary observer reports, to act.

Fees and charges

There are fees and travel costs for having an observer accompany a vessel.

If a vessel has multiple exporters and consignments we will:

- base fees on the number of head exported by each exporter
- assign travel costs equally between all exporters.

LEX-32631

Further information can be found in our [charging guidelines](#) (/about/fees).

Example scenario

An example of how we charge for an IO to accompany a voyage is provided here.

An IO departs Melbourne and arrives at Broome at 4pm on Monday 6 August for a 13-day voyage to Malaysia:

- the voyage is estimated to depart at 11am on Tuesday 7 August
- due to unforeseen circumstances, the voyage departure is delayed until Wednesday 8 August at 10am
- the IO provides the standard 7 hours and 30 minutes audit service each day
- the IO obtains audit support from Australia for a total of 18 x 15 minute units throughout the audit. This includes 10 x 15 minute units on weekdays and 4 x 30 minute units on weekends
- the unloading of stock is not completed until 10pm on 20 August and the IO departs for Melbourne on the next available flight at midday on 21 August.

This is the breakdown for how the exporter is charged.

Table 1 example scenario charging breakdown

Chargeable event	Itemised charges
Delay at Broome – Tuesday 7 August	1 x weekday audit rate
13-day voyage 8 – 20 August	9 x weekday audit rate
	4 x weekend audit rate
Audit support from Australia	10 x weekday 15 minutes
	4 x weekend 30 minutes
International flight – Malaysia to Melbourne	Airfares
Additional day travel to Australia	1 x weekday audit rate

General enquiries

Call **1800 900 090** (tel:1800900090)

[Contact us online](#) (/about/contact)

[Report a biosecurity concern](#) (/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/report)

Attachment B: Independent Observer deployment data

Table 1: Six-month blocks

Figures correct as of 30 September 2024*

Period	Total voyages	Observers deployed	Observer report finalised (reviewed, corrective actions implemented, summary published)
Jan-Jun 2018**	151	11	11
Jul-Dec 2018	169	48	48***
Jan-Jun 2019	166	90	90
Jul-Dec 2019	183	59	59
Jan-Jun 2020	167	8	8
Jul-Dec 2020	144	0	0****
Jan-Jun 2021	131	0	0
Jul-Dec 2021	112	0	0
Jan-Jun 2022	90	2	2****
Jul-Dec 2022	107	9	9
Jan-Jun 2023	95	8	8
Jul-Dec 2023	115	4	3
Jan-June 2024	122	3	3
Jul-Sept 2024	X 64	0	0
Total	1816	242	241

* These figures represent the number of livestock voyages that departed within the period indicated. For this reason, it does not correlate with the overall number of consignments or number of voyages in other reports such as the

Report to Parliament on the export of livestock by sea due to different reporting parameters used to generate this report.

- ** The observer program commenced in April 2018.
- *** This includes a voyage with an observer that never departed due to stability issues. A summary report was published.
- **** The observer program was paused in March 2020 due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions. Observer deployments recommenced on 1 May 2022 under the current deployment policy (EAN 2019-09) to countries where it is safe and practicable to deploy.

Vessels that have had an IO deployed since 1 May 2022 (number of deployments) Figures correct as of 30 September 2024

• MV Al Kuwait	2
• MV Al Messilah	6
• MV Friesian Express	2
• MV Bahijah	4
• MV Brahman Express	1
• MV Galloway Express	1
• MV Girolando Express	1
• MV Maysora	5
• MV Ocean Swagman	1
• MV Ocean Ute	3

Vessels that departed but have not had an IO deployed since 1 May 2022 (month and year of last deployment) Figures correct as of 30 September 2024

• MV Angus Express	Never deployed
• MV Anna Marra	January 2020
• MV Bison Express	September 2019
• MV Dareen	March 2019
• MV Devon Express	Never deployed
• MV Ganado Express	September 2019
• MV Gelbray Express	August 2019
• MV Gloucester Express	July 2019
• MV Greyman Express	July 2019

- MV Gudali Express August 2019
- MV Jawan March 2019
- MV Nine Eagle Never deployed
- MV Ocean Drover January 2020
- MV Yangtze Fortune December 2019

Exporters that have had an IO deployed between 1 May 2022 and 30 September 2024 (number of deployments)

- Australian Cattle Enterprises 2
- Australian Rural Exports 5
- Bassem Dabbah Livestock 6
- Bondstock Rural Exports 1
- Emanuel Exports 1
- Frontier International Northern 1
- Livestock Shipping Services 7
- Rural Export & Trading (WA) 7

Exporters that exported by sea but have not had an IO deployed between 1 May 2022 and 30 September 2024 (month and year of last deployment)

- ABL Exports Never deployed
- Atlas Exports January 2020
- Australasian Global Exports June 2019
- Edwards Livestock Company Never deployed
- Halleen Australasian Livestock Traders December 2019
- HRM Livestock Never deployed
- International Livestock Export October 2019
- NASNA International Never deployed
- North Australian Cattle Company February 2020
- Rosewood Station Never deployed

- Southern Australian International Livestock Services Never deployed
- Yarra Corporation Australia Never deployed

Table 2: Calendar year

Figures correct as of 30 September 2024

Calendar year	Total number voyages*	Number of voyages with an observer	Number of observer reports finalised (reviewed, corrective actions implemented, summary published)
2018**	320	59	59***
2019	349	149	149
2020	311	8	8****
2021	243	0	0****
2022	197	11	11
2023	210	12	11
2024	186	3	3
Total	1816	242	241

* These figures represent the number of livestock voyages that departed within the period indicated. For this reason, it does not correlate with the overall number of consignments or number of voyages in other reports such as the Report to Parliament on the export of livestock by sea due to different reporting parameters used to generate this report.

** The observer program commenced in April 2018.

*** This includes a voyage with an observer that never departed due to stability issues. A summary report was published.

**** The observer program was paused in March 2020 due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions. Observer deployments recommenced on 1 May 2022 under the current deployment policy (EAN 2019-09) to countries where it is safe and practicable to deploy.

Table 3: Financial year

Figures correct as of 30 September 2024

Financial year	Total number voyages*	Number of voyages with an observer	Number of observer reports finalised (reviewed, corrective actions implemented, summary published)
2017/18**	151	11	11
2018/19	335	138	138***
2019/20	350	67	67****
2020/21	275	0	0
2021/22	202	2	2****
2022/23	202	17	17
2023/24	246	7	6
Total	1761	242	241

* These figures represent the number of livestock voyages that departed within the period indicated. For this reason, it does not correlate with the overall number of consignments or number of voyages in other reports such as the Report to Parliament on the export of livestock by sea due to different reporting parameters used to generate this report.

** The observer program commenced in April 2018.

*** This includes a voyage with an observer that never departed due to stability issues. A summary report was published.

**** The observer program was paused in March 2020 due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions. Observer deployments recommenced on 1 May 2022 under the current deployment policy (EAN 2019-09) to countries where it is safe and practicable to deploy.

S. 47C(1)

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ATTACHMENT D

Assessment and summary report publication process

- Observers are required to provide data to the department detailing their observations from the voyage. This data is then reviewed and undergoes a comprehensive issues management process before a summary report is published on the department website.
 - Observer summary reports are published quarterly (February, May, August and November).
 - Amendments to the *Export Control Act 2020* dealing with the use or disclosure of relevant or protected information took effect on 1 February 2024.
 - The department is working through the implications of these amendments before publishing the next quarterly ESCAS report and Independent Observer summary reports.
 - We hope to publish the reports as soon as practicable.
- Observer data contains a series of observations witnessed by the observer at a point in time during the voyage. As such observers can only attest to what they see during their rounds of the vessel. While this provides the department with valuable regulatory information these observations require cross checking of information.
- The observer contacts a designated departmental officer on a daily basis throughout their deployment. This enables:
 - a daily wellness check of the observer
 - notification to the voyage management team of any significant issues or non-compliance transpiring on the vessel including infrastructure issues so they can be addressed with relevant parties while the vessel is on water.
- Reviewing observer data, summarising the data and publishing summary reports is a comprehensive process undertaken by appropriately trained as well as specialised staff.
- Summary reports provide key observations from the observer data and are not exhaustive. Observational summary reports appear different to the previous narrative summary reports, particularly where issues have not been identified.
 - Details of issues noted by the observer make up the body of the summary report under categories.

- If no issues relating to a particular category were noted by the observer, standard words are used to identify that there were no issues identified relating to e.g. "Loading".
- The highest wet bulb temperature will be included routinely in all observer summary reports published from February 2024.
- Issues and information published in the summary reports have been investigated, and where relevant, verified by supporting evidence provided to the department. For example, where an issue has been raised regarding the health or treatment of an animal the evidentiary media, observer comments and treatment records will be reviewed by one or more department veterinary officers.
- Where issues or instances of non-compliance are identified in the observer's data, procedural fairness processes are undertaken by the department with right of reply provided to relevant parties and regulatory action taken, if necessary, prior to publication.
- A copy of the summary report is provided to exporters prior to publication.
- The summary reports provide the public with an accurate representative account of what has been observed and reported to the department, from the loading of each vessel through to discharge at the destination port.
- Issues raised in observer data are addressed with relevant parties either during voyages, or in the period following the voyage, often prior to receipt of the onboard veterinarian or stockperson's voyage report. Issues identified during subsequent review of voyage reports and observational data are progressed following standard processes.
- Finalisation and publication of the summary report, where possible, does not usually occur until all matters have been addressed, and the department's due diligence processes have been completed (i.e. factual correctness and procedural fairness).
 - Availability of the observer may impact this, for example absences while accompanying another voyage.



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

DEPARTMENTAL ACTIONS TAKEN FOR RECENTLY PUBLISHED OBSERVER REPORTS

s. 47C(1)

Report No.	Vessel	Species and destination	Voyage commencement	Mortality rate Notifiable 0.5% cattle, 1.0% sheep
243	Ocean Swagman	Cattle to China	January 2024	0.17% (12)

s. 47C(1)

Report No.	Vessel	Species and destination	Voyage commencement	Mortality rate <small>Notifiable 0.5% cattle, 1.0% sheep</small>
244	Ocean Ute	Cattle to Indonesia	March 2024	0.21% (10)
245	Friesian Express	Cattle to Indonesia and Malaysia	May 2024	0.11% (2)

S. 47C(1)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Bryant, Courtney
Sent: Wednesday, 30 October 2024 4:54 PM
To: s. 47F(1)
Subject: Fw: current drought events [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: BPB 14 CURRENT DROUGHT EVENTS - AS CLEARED 30102024.docx

Hi ^{s. 47F(1)} our back pocket brief on drought events.

Thanks Courtney

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 4:49:58 PM
To: Bryant, Courtney <Courtney.Bryant@aff.gov.au>
Subject: current drought events [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Please find attached the latest BPB on current events.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY
POLICY GROUP

FRD

TITLE BPB 14 CURRENT DROUGHT EVENTS**KEY POINTS**Drought conditions across Australia

- In its drought statement released on 5 October 2024, the Bureau of Meteorology reported rainfall deficiencies for the 8-month period since February 2024 across:
 - agricultural regions of South Australia,
 - south-west Victoria,
 - north-west Tasmania, and
 - small areas of south-west and north-west Western Australia.
- The long-range BoM forecast issued on 10 October 2024 advised that from November to January:
 - Rainfall is likely (60 to 80% chance) to be above average for much of southern and eastern Australia, and scattered areas of WA and the NT.
 - For much of south-western and central WA, parts of the NT south of the Top End, the Northern Rivers of NSW and south-eastern Qld, rainfall is likely to be within the typical seasonal range.
- Our approach to responding to drought is guided by our long-standing National Drought Agreement with states and territories.
 - Under this agreement, it is the role of the state and territory governments to administer and coordinate drought policies and programs in their jurisdiction.
- As part of our role, the Australian Government has a range of national measures always available to support farmers and rural communities to be better prepared for and to help them manage through drought.
- We have been working with state and territory governments to jointly provide information to ~~farmers and~~ industry groups and farmers about the support that is available to assist those experiencing the impacts of dry conditions.

Question and answer***What Australian Government support is available for those experiencing drought?***

- The Australian Government delivers a range of drought preparedness measures and has hardship support always available for farmers facing drought and other hardships, regardless of when and where conditions dry.
- Key Australian Government measures that farmers can access right now include:
 - drawing down on their Farm Management Deposit holdings,
 - accessing the Rural Financial Counselling Service for assistance,
 - concessional loans via the Regional Investment Corporation,
 - accessing the Farm Household Allowance when individuals have taken a significant financial hit.
 - There is also mental health and wellbeing support and other forms of community support that can be accessed when needed.
- In addition, the Future Drought Fund (FDF) continues to deliver drought preparedness initiatives for farmers and regional communities.

S. 47C(1)

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S. 47C(1)

S. 47C(1)

S. 47C(1)

S.47C(1), S. 47F(1)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: O'Sullivan, Andrew
Sent: Tuesday, 22 October 2024 12:53 PM
To: s. 47F(1)
Subject: RFCS brief
Attachments: BPB 20 RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE (RFCS) -.docx

Hi ^{s. 47F(1)}, attached is the RFCS brief. Let me know if you need anything else.
Andrew

Andrew O'Sullivan
Assistant Secretary
Financial Policy and Business Support Branch
Farm Resilience Division

M: s. 47F(1)

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
70 Northbourne Ave, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
GPO Box 858, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY
POLICY GROUP**BPB 20 RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE (RFCS)****KEY POINTS**

- The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) is an Australian Government initiative that provides free and independent financial counselling to farmers, fishers and foresters and small-related enterprises who are experiencing, or at risk of, financial hardship.
- The Program is delivered by 10 service providers across 12 regions.
- In Financial Year (FY) 2023-24, 6,657 clients received free and independent financial counselling.
 - As at 31 August 2024, 2,510 clients have received support in FY 2024-25.
- The focus of the Program is on case management to assist clients make positive, long term changes to their financial situation. Rural Financial Counsellors work individually with clients to assist them make informed financial decisions about their farm business.
- The Commonwealth has committed \$102.5 million to the RFCS program between 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026.
- On 28 September 2023 the Government announced \$38.8 million to extend the current grant funding round until 30 June 2026. Funding details for service providers is at **Attachment A**.
- On 11 May 2024 the Government announced a \$107 million transition support package to phase out live exports of sheep by sea by 1 May 2028.
- On 15 October 2024 the Government announced a further \$32.7 million for the transition support package to phase out live exports of sheep by sea. The total overall transition package has increased from \$107 million to \$139.7 million.
- Under this package of assistance, Rural West, the WA RFCS service provider, will receive additional funding of \$1.299 million in 2024-25 and 2025-26 to boost financial counselling capacity to assist sheep producers and agribusinesses that are part of the supply chain.
 - As at 31 Augst 2024, 200 clients in WA have received support in FY 2024-25.
 - As at 30 June 2024, WA had 8.26 FTE rural financial counsellors.

- The funding breakdown for the Program extension and additional funding for the WA service provider for FY 2024 to 2026:

Financial Year	2024-25	2025-26
Core funding – 10 services	\$19.197m	\$19.620m
Live Sheep transition funding – WA RFCS service	\$768,000.00	\$531,000.00
Total	\$19.965m	\$20.151m

Question and Answer

Is the current funding allocation sufficient to deliver services given the impact of recent natural disasters, commodity downturns and cost of living pressures?

- The Department carefully monitors the capacity of service providers to respond to demand noting the impact of recent natural disasters, drying conditions and downturns in some commodity prices such as wine and sheep.
- As outlined in the RFCS Grant Opportunity Guidelines, unallocated contingency funding is available each financial year where service providers can apply for additional funding.
- The FY 2024-25 contingency funding round opened on 17 September and closed on 1 November 2024.

Contingency funding allocation

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
\$928,000	\$1.085m	\$1.669m	\$959,850	\$962,950

How many Rural Financial Counsellors are employed under the Program

- As at 30 June 2024 there were 118 FTE rural financial counsellors (Commonwealth and state funded positions) and 18.5 FTE counsellor support staff working on the RFCS program.

Role	Commonwealth Funded FTE RFCS	State Funded FTE RFCS	Totals FTE RFCS
Rural Financial Counsellor	94.5	24	118.5
Counsellor Support Staff	17	1.5	18.5
TOTAL FTE STAFF	111.5	25.5	137

Source: RFCS Service Providers Quarterly Reporting

Do states and the Northern Territory co-contribute to funding the RFCS?

- The Commonwealth has bilateral agreements in place with six states and the Northern Territory to deliver the Program.
- The states and Northern Territory co-contributions are towards core funding and also provide additional funding in response to events.
- The current bilateral agreements cease on 31 October 2024. The Department has circulated bilateral agreements for the extension period of 1 July 2024 to 31 October 2026.
- As at 15 October 2024 New South Wales, Tasmania, Northern Territory and Western Australia had signed extended bilateral agreements for execution by the Commonwealth.

2021 – 2026 State/Territory and Commonwealth Funding Table

Jurisdiction	State/Northern Territory Contribution	Commonwealth Contribution including Core, Bushfire and Funding Boost 2021-26	State / Northern Territory contribution as a percentage	Total Combined Funding
NSW	\$8,412,041	\$34,029,767.26	24.7%	\$42,441,808.26
Queensland	\$4,922,832.66	\$17,954,884.28	27.4%	\$22,877,716.94
Northern Territory	\$166,057.00	\$905,819.55	18.3%	\$1,071,876.55
Western Australia	\$555,000.00	\$10,005,374.82	5.5%	\$10,560,374.82
South Australia	\$2,391,750.00	\$10,099,396.53	23.7%	\$12,491,146.53
Victoria	\$9,048,082.00	\$25,348,168.22	35.7%	\$34,396,250.22
Tasmania	\$800,000.00	\$2,242,791.27	35.7%	\$3,042,791.27

Clearance and contact

Cleared by: Melissa Brown
 Position: First Assistant Secretary, FRD
 Date:

Contact Officer: Andrew O'Sullivan
 Phone: 0466 423 142
 Date: 17 October 2024

S. 47G(1)(a)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 4 November 2024 4:35 PM
To: s. 47F(1) ; Stanion, Joanna; Rosner-Moore, Craig
Subject: SE additional information on the JSA Food Supply Chain Capacity Study [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Attachments: JSA Food Supply Chain Capacity Study BPB.docx

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi ^{s. 47F(1)}

As discussed with Craig. Please let me know if you need further info.

^{s. 22(1)(a)}

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) (She/her)

Workforce, Engagement and Productivity Branch | MOB: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

✉ s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country
GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601

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OFFICIAL: Sensitive

OFFICIAL

JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN CAPACITY STUDY

S. 47C(1)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Sawczuk, Christie
Sent: Friday, 1 November 2024 1:06 PM
To: **s. 47F(1)**
Cc: DLO Collins; Saunders, Justine; Fennessy, Adam; Bishop, Tess; Wellington, Michelle;
s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Background brief - narrative on increased biosecurity ASL, investments/funding and key achievements
Attachments: Background brief - biosecurity ASL and achievements.docx

Hi **s. 47F(1)**

As discussed with Justine, please find attached a background brief for the October Supplementary Budget Estimates with a high-level narrative on increased biosecurity ASL and investments/funding, and related key achievements.

Thank you and please let me know if you need anything else or would like to discuss.

Kind regards

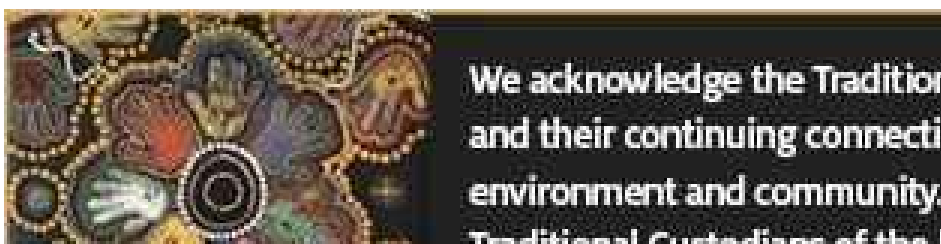
Christie Sawczuk

First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division | **M:** **s. 47F(1)**
E: christie.sawczuk@aff.gov.au | **PE:** christie.sawczuk@protected.aff.gov.au

Senior Program Officer | Executive Support to Christie Sawczuk FAS Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division
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Agriculture House, 70 Northbourne Ave, Canberra ACT 2601
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agriculture.gov.au



Background Brief – Biosecurity Achievements (for Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2024)

- **Overall:** As a result of the **2023-24 Budget** sustainable funding package and other significant biosecurity investments by Government over the last few years, the department has sufficient ASL funding for our **core biosecurity border services**.
- This ensures that the department can effectively manage and mitigate increasing complex biosecurity risks.
 - This complexity is mainly due to continued increased trade volumes and passenger movements, shifting trade and travel patterns and climate change.
- Since **July 2023**, ASL for biosecurity activities has increased by **253 (or 9%)** bringing total ASL to 3047 (as at **30 September 2024**).
- With the 2022 *Bolstering Australia's Biosecurity System – Detector Dog Capability Increase* measure, the number of handlers and detector dogs in our international airports will have increased by **20** by **December 2024**.
 - As at **30 September**, we have **55** dogs and **58** operational handlers.
- While the department has sufficient funding for increased staff, there have been delays with recruiting and onboarding staff.
 - The key reason for these delays is the time it has taken to find, recruit and rebuild the workforce after a period of austerity and cost-savings by the department (before sustainable funding).
 - Once onboarded, it also takes 6 to 12 months for staff to be fully trained.
- Notwithstanding this, dedicated workforce planning and significant recruitment activities in operational locations such as at airports and ports, is underway – with **170** more biosecurity staff (in ASL) expected to be recruited this financial year.
 - This will ensure we can rebuild capacity to support timely service delivery and enhance business improvement priorities.
 - We are also focused on building operational capability to support peak traveller and trade periods.
- **Success:** As we continue recruiting more biosecurity staff, and with more biosecurity investments in other capabilities, such as diagnostic technology, we have already had some major successes.
- For example, we:
 - Established a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5 taskforce and led “a first ever” significant national preparedness exercises and delivered a package of Commonwealth measures to enhance Australia’s preparedness and response capability.
 - This will ensure Australia is better positioned to fight an HPAI H5 incursion that will have detrimental economic, environmental and community impacts.
 - This improved integration demonstrates our ability to effectively collaborate.
 - Detected a serious, exotic insect pest - Spotted Wing Drosophila - on imported cherries earlier this year using rapid DNA sequencing technology (a type of diagnostic technology).
 - In a matter of hours, we acted to protect Australia’s stone fruit and apple industries.
 - Were able to ensure we have dogs operating in all major international airports in different areas – resulting in more interventions for high-risk travellers with biosecurity materials.
 - A detector dog can have up to **10,000** interceptions in their **6 to 7** year career, so having **20** more at our disposal will exponentially increase our effectiveness at the border.
 - Launched the Australian Travel Declaration trial, in partnership with the Australian Border Force, which will enable travellers to provide their border declaration electronically.

Background Brief – Biosecurity Achievements (for Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2024)

- This means biosecurity staff will have information earlier (before travellers pass through airport terminals) and that staff can better ensure high-risk travellers are referred for biosecurity screening and baggage inspection.
- Have deployed novel technologies to improve our surveillance capabilities, including advanced field testing of automated detection technologies at approved arrangement sites.
- Have also established an eDNA reference centre, which has supported ongoing responses to suspected khapra beetle infestations in shipping containers.
 - Which means we can enable fast and effective responses to the risk associated with this very significant pest of grains.