



**DCCC Meeting 99 – Minutes**  
**14 November 2024 – 9:30am – 1:00pm**  
**Ai Group – 441 St Kilda Road, Melbourne**

**Attendees:****DAFF**

Chair, Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Operations Division (BOD)
Christie Sawczuk, First Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division (BSRD)
Anna Brezzo, A/g First Assistant Secretary	Compliance and Enforcement Division (CED)
Josephine Laduzko, Assistant Secretary	Cargo and Conveyances Policy and Detection Capability, BOD
Julie Lowe, A/g Assistant Secretary	Cargo Operations (NSW, QLD, NT, ACT) Regulatory Assurance, BOD
Holly Buckle, Assistant Secretary	Cargo Operations (VIC, SA, WA, TAS), BOD
Brett Liebich, Assistant Secretary	Operational Intelligence and Coordination, CED
Martin Moseley, Assistant Secretary	Audit and Assurance, CED
Nick Medway, A/g Assistant Secretary	Investigations, CED
Caroline Gibson, Principal Director	Approved Arrangements, CED

**Guests**

Nin Hyne, A/g Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Digital Reform, Digital Business Division
Caroline Martin, Assistant Secretary	Export Programs Branch, Digital Business Division
Maria Loyman, Assistant Secretary	Finance and Revenue, Finance and Investment Division
Julia Wells, Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Sustainable Funding, BSRD
Paul Douglas, Director	Cost Recovery Biosecurity, Finance and Investment Division
David Nicholls, Director	Biosecurity Strategy Unit, Biosecurity Sustainable Funding, BSRD
Morag Donaldson, Director	Regulatory Support, Office of Chief Regulatory Officer
Ben Rowntree, Director	Sea Cargo Policy and Strategic Engagement, BOD

**Industry**

Dianne Tipping	Export Council of Australia
Carolyn Macgill	Food and Beverage Importers Association
Bradley Leonard	International Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association of Australia
Scott Carson	International Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association of Australia
Paul Bagnall	Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers
Sally Glover	Australia Post
Sal Milici	Freight and Trade Alliance
Peter Van Duyn	International Cargo Handling Coordination Association
Melwyn Noronha	Shipping Australia Limited
Suzanne Fosbery	Ports Australia

**Observer**

Bianca Flint	Freight and Trade Alliance
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**Apologies**

Nick Woodruff, Chief Digital Business Officer	Digital Business Division
Michael Gallacher	Ports Australia
Stephen Pearce	Board of Airline Representatives
Dianne O'Hara	Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries
Craig Birchall	Qantas Airways Ltd.

**Secretariat**

Rodney Malone	Sea Cargo Policy and Strategic Engagement, BOD
Aliva Evana	Sea Cargo Policy and Strategic Engagement, BOD

### **Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and introductions**

#### **❖ Chair – Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary, BOD**

The DCCC Chair, Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary, BOD, opened the meeting by introducing herself to the group as it was her first DCCC meeting as chair.

Holly Buckle provided an acknowledgement of country, welcoming all members attending in Melbourne and virtually.

The Chair confirmed NIL conflict of interest declarations.

The secretariat detailed the apologies for the meeting were:

- Nick Woodruff, Chief Digital Business Officer, Digital Business Division, DAFF
- Michael Gallacher, Ports Australia
- Stephen Pearse, Board of Airline Representatives
- Dianne O’Hara, Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries
- Craig Birchall, QANTAS Airways Ltd.

New DAFF DCCC member was acknowledged:

- Martin Moseley, Assistant Secretary, Audit and Assurance, CED.

The Chair then:

- thanked and acknowledged Andrew Patterson for his strong contribution acting in the DCCC Chair role between herself and former chair Tina Hutchison
- noted that as the head of BOD, she is fully invested in progressing efforts to meet the regulatory obligations effectively and responsively to the changing environment
- noted that she is acutely aware that DAFF’s relationships with industry are more important than ever as we navigate the rapidly changing biosecurity and trade landscape, and emphasised that we are all responsible for a strong biosecurity system and this forum demonstrates industry’s willingness to engage positively on issues and the biosecurity system reforms and initiatives being undertaken
- thanked the Ai Group and in particular Carolyn Macgill for hosting the DCCC 99 meeting
- outlined that during today’s meeting will include updates on the One DAFF Transformation Agenda, the establishment the Office of the Chief Regulatory Officer, the ongoing reforms to DAFF business systems and STEPS, BOD’s strategic priorities, and the DAFF overarching strategic direction
- noted the significant rise in imported cargo and passenger volumes over the last five years that are placing pressure on the biosecurity systems.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Minutes and Actions – DCCC Meeting 98 – 4 July 2024**

#### **❖ Chair – Monica Collins: First Assistant Secretary, BOD**

The Chair confirmed that there were NIL open action items remaining from DCCC 98. All DCCC 98 action items had been completed or included as an agenda item for further discussion in DCCC 99.

It was also confirmed the minutes and communique from DCCC 98 have been published on DAFF website.

## **Agenda Item 3 – Strategic priorities**

### **3.1. – One DAFF update**

#### **❖ Chair – Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary, BOD**

Monica Collins led discussion on the DAFF transformational agenda.

#### **Key points**

In 2023, the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Capability Review and other independent reviews on DAFF's performance and financial sustainability highlighted several areas of opportunity for DAFF to focus. This led to the establishment of the **Integrated Transformation Program** to reform and renew DAFF's capabilities, strategic intent, operating model and culture.

The **Transformation Action Plan (TAP)** was published on 30 November 2023, comprising 10 projects to improve our leadership in policy, enhance our culture and people, strengthen our collaboration and delivery, and resourcing, and risk by 2027.

Highlights of this work include implementation of improved governance processes, ongoing development of a Stakeholder Collaboration and Practice Framework, enhanced workforce planning, and development of digital sustainment investment roadmap.

The **Statement of Strategic Intent** was released in August 2024 and communicates the department's vision and aspirational goals to external partners and stakeholders and plays an important role in departmental planning.

**Organisation Design program** – beginning in March 2024, renews our operating model, enabling an enterprise-wide approach to planning, performance, strategic policy, and regulation. Renewing how DAFF operates is essential in keeping our organisation fine-tuned as it responds to today's challenges and issues, and into the future. DAFF is taking a steady and iterative approach to how we ensure our functions are using a whole-of-department approach to planning, performance, strategic policy, and regulation while ensuring there is minimal disruption to our business-as-usual operations.

These actions are leading to a biosecurity uplift to improve internal effectiveness and efficiencies, which will have flow-on effects to industry.

**Sustainable funding** – The commencement of biosecurity sustainable funding from 2023-24 FY provides more than \$1 billion over four years, and \$267 million per year ongoing from 2027-28. This will allow DAFF to plan longer term and ensure that our capability and capacity is aligned to better address the shifting trade patterns and volumes, and emerging biosecurity risks. This will result in DAFF being better able to address industry's needs, and resource work to enhance risk-based regulation, lessening impact on low-risk import commodities.

DAFF is also working to provide transparency and demonstrate financial accountability through the release of the inaugural *Biosecurity funding and expenditure report 2023-24*, which shows biosecurity-specific financial information as well as information on growing cargo, people, mail and vessel volumes.

**Service Standards** – Over the past five years, the surge in e-commerce has dramatically increased the volume of goods imported into Australia. In 2023-24 approximately 124 million consignments entered the country, marking a 38% increase from the previous year and a staggering 126% increase compared to pre- COVID levels (2018-19). This influx, coupled with budget constraints on recruitment in 2022-23, has limited DAFF's ability to meet service standards for biosecurity clearance in certain areas.

To address this, DAFF has accelerated recruitment efforts with a net increase of 70 new staff joining BOD across Australia this financial year. Additionally, ongoing recruitment initiatives are expected to add 100 more positions by the end of next year.

Beyond recruitment, DAFF is implementing flexible strategies to meet urgent inspection needs, upgrading IT system to enhance import efficiency, and investing in capabilities like diagnostic technologies to bolster capacity. DAFF is also collaborating with industry to encourage importers to actively contribute by submitting accurate documents.

While there is still progress to be made, DAFF is implementing various strategies, including automated document checks and expanding opportunities for industry to self-manage low complexity assessments and inspections.

**Strategic Priorities** – BOD is reviewing its strategic priorities for the next 3 years, focusing on:

- **Enhancing regulatory practice** – to enhance BOD’s risk-based regulatory approach through targeting to areas of greater risk, which will improve service timeframes for low-risk goods
- **Uplifting DAFF’s digital and data maturity** – which will support our risk-based processes. For example, the STEPS program, is improving the effectiveness and efficiencies in the management of biosecurity risks through improved data, processes and systems
- **Strengthening our strategic operational policy capability** – which will support national consistency and overall capability
- **Investing in innovation and modernisation:** to further strengthen our border while achieving greater efficiencies and effectiveness
- **Continue to develop our people, uplift workplace culture and workplace readiness.** This will have flow-on impacts to customer experience
- **Actively managing and uplifting workplace health and safety**
- **Continuously improving our budget management.**

The Chair expressed gratitude to industry for recognising DAFF’s efforts as it undergoes a comprehensive and integrated transformation program. DAFF’s long-term approach to engaging with industry, whether through projects or routine operations, is to strengthen our vision and work together to grow and protect Australia.

### **3.2 – Regulatory Role – Office of the Chief Regulatory Officer (OCRO)**

#### **❖ Morag Donaldson, Director, OCRO**

Morag conveyed an apology from Peta Lane, Chief Regulatory Officer, and led discussion on the establishment of the OCRO.

#### **Key points**

DAFF is establishing this new role to support the continued uplift of regulatory maturity and performance across the department by focusing on four things:

- Strengthen regulatory capability including through a consistent and contemporary approach to the training and development of staff
- Support the development and maintenance of contemporary fit for purpose policies and regulatory tools to support effective decision making and responsiveness
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement of our regulatory systems and processes, learning from past successes and challenges, and
- Support effective engagement with stakeholders, including clear and regular communication of our regulatory objectives and approaches.

OCRO is working to implement an enterprise-wide approach to building regulatory maturity and has conducted a 'have your say' survey as part of a whole of department outreach on regulatory capability and service delivery.

OCRO is also looking into aligning functions across the department to see them managed at a more enterprise level.

There was discussion about what practical changes would industry see from the OCRO's establishment. Morag Donaldson provided an example where industry would see improvement in efficiency and quicker turnaround time.

### **3.3 – Reforms to DAFF business systems**

#### **3.3.1 – Take Farmers to Markets**

❖ **Caroline Martin, Assistant Secretary, Digital Export Programs Branch, Digital Business Division**

Caroline provided an update on the Take Farmers to Markets (TFTM) program highlighting that it is a five-year initiative to digitise and modernise Australia's export system.

#### **Key points**

Key achievements of the TFTM program to date include:

- Export service – A foundational platform for centralising export services and shifting operations to digital services
- Digitised registration and approvals – A streamlined and automated process for registered establishments
- Single quota management system - A unified system for managing tariff rate quotas, improving efficiency and user experience
- NEXDOC – A modernised export traceability system of various commodities, including dairy, eggs, fish, honey, wool, feathers, skins and hides
- E-Phyto with Fiji – Australia's first electronic phytosanitary certificate arrangement, enabling faster border clearances for horticulture and grain products
- TRACE system enhancements – Improved functionality for tracking and reporting notifiable livestock export incidents
- External API Developer Portal onto the new export authentication and access platform (AARM). This is the second service added to the platform and paves the way for third-party software developers to interact with DAFF through a centralised digital front door in the future.

These initiatives aim to support Australia's export industry, maintain a strong regulatory reputation and facilitate paperless trade.

There was discussion around the next steps and opportunities with E-Phyto and traceability. DAFF outlined elements of work that are planned for 2025.

#### **3.3.2 – STEPS 2024-25 priorities**

❖ **Nin Hyne A/g Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Digital Reform Branch, Digital Business Division**

Nin provided a presentation and led discussion on the STEPS program and its 2024-25 priorities.

## Key points

The STEPS team has consulted on proposed delivery for FY24-25, collected feedback and agreed the priorities. The team held 4 industry roundtables covering 6 states and had direct meetings with industry bodies, Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA) and International Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association of Australia (IFCBAA).

STEPS is delivering:

- an Integrated Cargo and Container Platform (ICCP), a new single platform for DAFF to manage the biosecurity risk associated with cargo and containers that will be progressively delivered over the next 2 years
- Cargo Online Lodgement System (COLS) enhancements, making it more streamlined
- Biosecurity Activity Reporting Tool (BART), looking into improving the uptake of the scheme
- Approved Arrangement Management Product (AAMP): rolled out in last financial year
- Offshore Treatment Providers (OTP) systems to help in speeding up applications processes
- Enhanced data and advanced analytic tools and techniques:
  - Cargo processing predictor
  - Biosecurity cargo status tracker
  - Centralised cargo data repository
  - Optimised Intervention-data asset
  - AI assisted document analysis
  - Entity resolution
- Updates on Cargo Status tracker by working closely with customs brokerages
- Roadmap of delivery milestones.

STEPS released three products in June 2024, and an additional enhancement in November 2025. These were:

- **External Verification of eCertificates (EVE):** this is live to more than 1,150 users and is available via the Biosecurity portal
- **AAMP** has been rolled out to around 4,417 staff across all 3600 approved arrangements
- **Biosecurity cargo status tracker:** provided this to six brokerages, totalling 23 participants and 10 DAFF staff in client contact group to ensure the reporting was fit for purpose. Staggered rollout of Release two expected across November and December 2024
- **COLS** data upload size has been doubled.

The next products for STEPS delivery are:

- **ICCP:** the program is taking an incremental approach to transfer the workload from legacy systems
- **BART:** planned to be delivered around mid-2025.

There was further discussion around STEPS and opportunities for industry engagement.

**Action item:** Nin Hyne (STEPS team) to set up a meeting with Sal Milici (FTA) to discuss industry portal registration.

## **Agenda Item 4 – BOD strategic priorities – for discussion**

### **4.1 – Low value air cargo pathway review update**

❖ **Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary, Cargo and Conveyances Policy and Detection Capability Branch, BOD**

Jo led discussion on the low value air cargo pathway review.

#### **Key points**

The SAC pathway reform program aims to improve biosecurity risk management for low value goods. Key initiatives include:

- Risk assessment and assurance – enhancing risk management, assurance and verification processes
- Detection capability – exploring the expanded usage of detector dogs and X-ray technology, including 3D X-ray air cargo proof of concept trials
- Risk recalibration – reviewing risk profiles to remove low-risk items
- Industry partnership – collaborating with the air cargo industry to inspect and release low risk goods
- Intelligence report – developing a report on global e-commerce trade and supply chains for low-value goods.

This program also aims to ensure that biosecurity arrangements, specifically the 14.3 approved arrangement, are fit for purpose and effectively address biosecurity risks.

It was also noted that in the past some approved arrangements have been developed at the request of industry, however, have not always resulted in the most user-friendly processes resulting in low uptake. Moving forward with STEPS improvements will assist to provide better outcomes for arrangements improvements and the development of new arrangements in future.

Industry applauded Adil Waqas and Geena Correa from the Air Cargo Policy team and the STEPS teams for their outstanding work on these projects. There was discussion around engagement with industry around the rollout of the improvements to the 14.3 approved arrangement. Jo Laduzko advised that broader consultation will be commenced when the proposals are more mature, and systems modernised to ensure the expansion of the arrangement goes smoothly.

### **4.2 – Strategic industry engagement – BOD landing page update**

❖ **Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary, Cargo and Conveyances Policy and Detection Capability Branch, BOD**

❖ **Ben Rowntree, Director, Sea Cargo Policy and Strategic Engagement, BOD**

Ben led discussion on the development of the BOD landing page.

#### **Key points**

BOD is seeking to reset how we engage with our external import industry to clearly communicate with, and involve, our stakeholders in the department's response to ongoing and emerging challenges and changes. BOD aims to provide practical communication and engagement with industry.

It is acknowledged the department's website can be difficult to navigate, making it hard to find relevant information quickly and easily. BOD is proposing to create a BOD homepage that would provide a centralised location for BOD to share information and updates with industry and for users to navigate and find direct links to relevant information on the website more easily. The option for a



feedback function for industry to provide ideas and suggestions specifically on policy or project activities has also been raised.

In September 2024, BOD provided an out of session paper requesting feedback from DCCC industry members regarding plans to develop a BOD specific homepage.

Feedback and ideas were sought on the most appropriate links and types of information to be included on the BOD homepage to meet these aims. Significant feedback was received, which is being incorporated into the homepage's development. This included:

- Links to AA requirements and STEPS tracking system
- Incorporation of improved search functions
- Information on inspection and assessment timelines
- Accurate and up to date contact information.

Recent engagement with our communications team has resulted in amendments to how BOD had initially planned to develop the BOD homepage. The intended information and links will now to be incorporated into two existing DAFF webpages, with these webpages being remodeled to be more user friendly and effective.

BOD will reengage with DCCC members as this redevelopment progresses, with a first step being seeking feedback on the two existing webpages to determine what of the current information on these websites is most relevant and useful.

Following establishment of the BOD homepage, the next focus areas will be the development of appropriate import and operational data products, noting the STEPS agenda is looking to support a range of entity specific reporting.

#### **4.3 – Update on compliance-based schemes – CBIS, HCI, Class 19 AA**

##### **❖ Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary, Cargo and Conveyances Policy and Detection Capability Branch, BOD**

Jo provided an update and led discussion on the CBIS, HCI and Class 19AA compliance-based schemes.

##### **Key points**

The department is looking to expand eligible commodities under its compliance based-intervention schemes as appropriate, as well as exploring options to broaden the scope of these arrangements. This includes scope to deliver entity-based compliance schemes.

Existing and future compliance is the key driver to these arrangements, which deliver important efficiencies to the department and industry where the biosecurity risk is assessed as low or able to be reliably managed to low. The STEPS program is expected to add system functionality that supports more flexibility and assurance to arrangements.

The following highlights the achievements over the last six months along with upcoming efforts:

Approved arrangement class 19:

- Class 19.2 expanded in June 2024 to include used clothes, bags, rags; wooden articles and more, with the potential for significant cost savings and efficiency gains
- Upcoming expansion planned for early December 2024 to add scrap metal, gas cylinders and unaccompanied personal effects
- Increased activity: 10 new applications in 2024 and 5 variation applications



- High processing rate: 146,082 entries processed under class 19 (Jan-Sept 2024) with 50.6% eligible
- Excellent compliance: Overall class compliance at 98.6%
- Future plans include scoping for class 19.2 expansion, system enhancements for location changes and compliance framework review
- A potential class 19.3 is under consideration for goods imported under import permits and specific supply chain pathways.

Highly Compliant Importer (HCI) scheme:

- In August 2024, the scheme added machinery, new tyres and whole aircraft
- The green coffee beans case resulted in reduced intervention and inspection hours
- Scoping is ongoing to identify further suitable commodities for HCI
- Aligning in-scope commodities for Approved Arrangement class 19 and HCI
- Developing compliance settings specific to importer/supplier pathways.

Compliance Based Intervention Scheme (CBIS):

- Expanded CBIS onto controlled pathways (herbal tea bags and Australian registered human vaccines)
- The AIMS q- ruler applies CBIS directions and outcomes
- Importer document assessment rate adjusts based on compliance
- Expanding CBIS to more commodities (test kits, human therapeutics, frozen foods)
- Consolidating plant and animal CBIS webpage into one.

Industry thanked DAFF for the work in this space, especially the changes to the permit amendment process. Industry has been asking for it and it's good to see the members getting benefit from it. Industry asked whether DAFF could quantify the savings with the uptake and use of CBIS, HCI and the expansion of AEP COMM. DAFF advised that we do not yet have solid data to determine savings.

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **5.1 – Commonwealth Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report**

- ❖ **Christie Sawczuk, First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division (BSRD)**
- ❖ **Julia Wells, Assistant Secretary, Sustainable Biosecurity Funding, BSRD**

Christie and Julia provided an update and led discussion on the recent release of the Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report 2023-24.

#### **Key points**

The inaugural Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report 2023-24 was published on 30 October as part of the department's 2023-24 Annual Report. The report was also published as a standalone document on the [Sustainable Biosecurity Funding](#) webpage on the department's website.

The report delivers on the Australian Government's 2023-24 Budget commitment to annual publication of biosecurity funding and expenditure, providing greater transparency and accountability on how the Commonwealth biosecurity system is funded and how that funding is spent in delivering biosecurity priorities.

This is the first time overall funding and expenditure information for the biosecurity system has been published in this way and moving forward the report will be published annually following the end of each financial year.

The report complements existing public reporting including portfolio budget statements and DAFF's annual report and corporate plan.

DAFF is committed to issuing the report annually, following the end of each financial year, to ensure ongoing transparency and accountability around biosecurity funding and expenditure.

Industry asked about how SAC cost recovered funding will be managed if volumes go up or down and will it impact the charge per parcel? DAFF advised that there is a built-in review process in the SAC cost recovery pathway to manage variation in declaration numbers and anticipated revenue. If it is identified that the volumes are going up or down substantially the amount per declaration can be reviewed.

## **5.2 – Cargo operations update**

❖ **Holly Buckle, Assistant Secretary, Cargo Operations (VIC, SA, WA, TAS), BOD**

❖ **Julie Lowe, A/g Assistant Secretary, Cargo Operations (NSW, QLD, NT, ACT) and Regulatory Assurance, BOD**

Holly and Julie provided an update and led discussion on cargo operations activities and issues.

### **Key points**

High import volume and inspection activity – Entry lodgements remain high and are expected to increase further with the upcoming BMSB season and Christmas peak. This may impact the department's ability to meet client service standard timeframes for non-urgent commodity inspections in the short to medium term.

To address demand the department has implemented a range of strategies to assist with the management of workload. These include:

- Staffing – 132 new biosecurity officers onboarded with ongoing recruitment and additional training for food assessment officers
- Workload management – surging staff from other states and contractor use for inspections
- Efficiency improvement – risk-based commodity assessments, automation for overtime requests and fumigation record assessment, increased COLS document size limit
- Digital tools – upgraded biosecurity portal and implemented biosecurity cargo status tracker that is currently being piloted by six brokerages. The tool will be progressively rolled out more broadly from 8 November 2024.

Industry can assist in reducing document assessment delays by:

- Maximising the use of Approved Arrangement (AA) class 19 to self-manage documentary requirements for certain commodities
- Ensuring compliant documentation is lodged well in advance of goods arrival
- Including all necessary information in COLS, including additional information field
- Nominating a valid AA inspection location
- Avoiding repeated inquiries about lodgment status
- SAC clients should consider participating in the SAC paperless process.

Industry can assist in reducing inspection booking delays by:

- Choosing “next available” in the preferred inspection period for goods to be inspected during business hours, to improve availability and efficiency for both industry and the department
- Lodging inspection requests through the biosecurity portal, that allows the applicant to manage requests, make changes and see updates instantly
- Using programs that enable self-management of biosecurity inspections, such as AA class 14.4 for rural tailgate inspections.

Biosecurity officers are providing information postcards on Food Import Compliance Agreements (FICAs) and virtual label inspection. Food importers can enter into a FICA with DAFF that recognises documented food safety management systems as an alternative to inspections and testing. For food importers not on a FICA, DAFF can virtually inspect eligible imported foods referred for label and virtual inspection.

Industry thanked DAFF for the update and the range of work to enhance the biosecurity management of imported goods, including the telephony system. There was discussion about the efforts to alleviate inspection backlogs in imported foods, as well as the alternatives available to industry such as virtual inspections. One industry representative indicated that they have been receiving negative feedback regarding virtual label inspections but was unsure of the specific issues.

**Action item:** Julie Lowe to set up a meeting with Sal Milici (FTA) to discuss the negative feedback FTA have received regarding imported food virtual label inspections.

There was also discussion about a logistics company who plans to offer a service to import containers through Darwin and transport them via rail to Adelaide. The impact on DAFF biosecurity resources was raised and DAFF indicated that an understanding of container volumes would assist DAFF in resource planning.

## **Agenda Item 6 – Industry Information exchange**

### **6.1 – Delays in imported seafood inspections**

#### **❖ Carolyn Macgill, Food and Beverage Importers Association**

Discussion was held on inspection delays for imported seafood, especially around Christmas time.

- DAFF provided data assuring that it is currently meeting service delivery standards in QLD and Victoria but running a bit behind in WA and NSW. DAFF has also engaged contract inspectors to share the additional Christmas pressure.

#### **❖ Brad Leonard, International Forwarders and Customs Brokers association of Australia**

Discussion was held on the benefits virtual label inspections would achieve.

- DAFF indicated that it has seen the main increase in virtual label inspections has been in NSW and Victoria, with a large proportion of those managed by DAFF from Queensland. October was a record month for virtual inspection.

### **6.2 – How can DCCC members support DAFF in reducing volume in the document assessment and inspection channels as the challenges of resourcing continues**

#### **❖ Sal Milici, Freight and Trade Alliance**

Discussion was held on ways importers can assist DAFF to reduce document assessment and inspection volumes. It was suggested that documentary non-compliance repeat offenders who create significant delays, be identified and targeted for increased education and/or sanctioning.

- DAFF reiterated the ideas shared in agenda item 5.2.

❖ **Brad Leonard, International Forwarders and Customs Brokers association of Australia**

Brief discussion was held on the compliance rate for commercial aircraft parts and the ongoing need for inspection.

- DAFF indicated that this may be an item for consideration in future a DCCC meeting.

**Action item:** Consider inclusion of 'inspection requirements for refurbished commercial aircraft parts' for discussion at DCCC 100.

**Agenda Item 7 – DAFF information papers**

**7.1 – Biosecurity cost recovery arrangements – Financial performance of FY 2023-24**

❖ **Paul Douglas, Director, Cost Recovery Biosecurity, Finance and Investment Division**

Paul led discussion on the biosecurity cost recovery 2023-24 financial performance.

The department has released its inaugural Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report 2023-24 as part of its commitment to reporting on the progress of sustainably funding a strong biosecurity system. The report provides transparency and accountability to stakeholders on DAFF's management of Australia's biosecurity system.

The cost recovery arrangements recorded a surplus of \$13.8 million.

DAFF is looking into combining the biosecurity funding and expenditure report and the DAFF annual report to be able to provide extra granularity on the cost recovery side of funding.

DAFF is also looking to invest more in tools and technology to improve reporting on our cost recovery arrangements

**7.2 – Compliance Activity Snapshot – CED**

❖ **Anna Brezzo, A/g First Assistant Secretary, Operational Intelligence and Coordination, CED**

Anna responded to questions asked relating to CED compliance activities for the fourth quarter of the 2023-24 financial year.

Industry noted that department entered into nine enforceable undertakings with commercial entities and asked why only one was made public. DAFF indicated that it was not a one-off case of non-compliance, and the entity in question had failed compliance on multiple occasions. Publication was also seen to be able to serve as a reminder to others to remain compliant.

**7.3 – Compliance Audit Report – CED**

❖ **Martin Moseley, Assistant Secretary, Audit and Assurance, CED**

Martin led discussion on the Audit and Assurance Branch's audit activities for the period 1 July to 30 September 2024.

**Key points**

**Audit Approach**

- The department has enhanced the audit methodology including introducing formal process for unannounced audits. In the current reporting period 80% of audits were announced, with only 20% unannounced.

- It was noted that unannounced audits are prioritised using a risk-based methodology, which incorporates a range of information sources including reported non-compliance.
- Unannounced audits have a higher fail rate (16.4%) compared to announced audits (2.1%)
- The branch has developed a consistent methodology to identify and target non-compliant entities, and an increased failure rate is assessed as a result of this methodology, not changes in industry compliance. Where non-compliance is identified, the audit team work with the entity to educate the entity and understand the non-compliance, where entities are cooperative the focus will be to continue to focus on behavioural change to improve biosecurity outcomes.

#### Audit Results

- Between July 1 and September 30, 2024, 249 audits were conducted across 240 premises.
- 2% of premises had at least one critical non-compliance.
- Critical non-compliances related to arrangement compliance, Hygiene and movement KAOs.
- Critical non-compliances pose serious biosecurity risks and may trigger additional compliance actions, including warning letters, infringement notices or suspension.

Industry asked how the branch ensures they are speaking to the right people in an organisation when they are providing support to an entity. DAFF advised that contacts are nominated by the relevant entity, and they need to be at the right level, however, to ensure sign off on remediation is at the appropriate level within the organisation the branch is working with the relevant program and policy areas within DAFF that manage the relationships with the entities. There is currently a project in place to review all audit activities to ensure they are consistent with current requirements of the individual policy and program areas.

#### **7.4 – Approved Arrangement Update (CED)**

##### **❖ Caroline Gibson, Principal Director, Approved Arrangements Program (AAP), CED**

Caroline led discussion on the initiatives underway to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the non-broker approved arrangement system, covering operational updates, AA Class conditions updates and digital initiatives.

#### **Key points**

On 27 August 2024, a 'Have Your Say' survey to gather information on industry operators' interest in an AA for the inspection of imported sea containers for hitchhiker pests.

The AA annual invoices for 2024-25 were issued to biosecurity industry participants (BIP) on 3 June 2024. Since the introduction of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, this process has resulted in timely annual invoicing within the first week of the financial year, achieved through ongoing process refinement and collaboration with multiple participants.

**Class 7.10 Fertile Poultry Hatching Eggs** – AAP is currently reviewing industry feedback received on the revised class 7.10 Fertile Poultry Hatching Eggs conditions. Review of the feedback will support finalisation of the revised class 7.10 conditions in 2025.

**Class 1 AA industry consultation and feedback** – AAP has finished reviewing feedback on the proposed changes to class 1.1 and 1.3 sea and air freight depot conditions. AAP is now working with internal teams to address questions raised in the feedback.

**Class 12.1 Methyl Bromide Fumigation review** – AAP has commenced a limited scope review of the class 12.1 Methyl Bromide Fumigation (MBr) conditions to support the pending implementation of

the updated MBr Fumigation Methodology document. AAP's review intends to align the class 12.1 MBr Fumigation conditions with the updated MBr Fumigation Methodology. The review will also include supporting arrangement documentation such as the Record of Fumigation. A revised set of arrangement documents for class 12.1 will be implemented around March 2025, to align with the planned implementation period for the updated MBr Fumigation Methodology.

**Proposed import pathway for live sturgeon:** AAP and Biosecurity Animal Division met with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) in September 2024 to commence initial discussions for the development of a new AA class to facilitate the import of live sturgeon to produce caviar for human consumption.

**Class 10.6 Biosecurity Waste Vehicle Transport Register:** AAP has finalised consolidating class 10.6 approved vehicle detail into the class 10.6 Biosecurity Waste Vehicle Transport Register. This comprehensive register will be used to identify and manage the approved vehicles used to transport biosecurity waste by industry operating under a Class 10.6 Class AA. The register has been published on the CED Staff Portal and provides immediate benefit to areas within CED through increased visibility and enabling the effective monitoring of biosecurity activities.

**Deregulation of *Plantago asiatica* mosaic virus:** AAP have progressed draft amendments to the class 6.11 bulb conditions and supporting documentation to remove all references to 'Plantago asiatica mosaic virus' (PIAMV). Recent detections of PIAMV in domestic sourced *Lilium* spp. bulbs triggered a referral to relevant state and federal authorities, including the department's Preparedness and Response team in Plant Health Policy, to consider the quarantine status of PIAMV. Referral has resulted in the decision that PIAMV no longer meets 'actionable' status.

**Approved Arrangements Management Product (AAMP)** was fully implemented in mid-August 2024. This application allows biosecurity industry participants to view and manage AA details online, improving information access and administrative efficiency for both industry and the department.

**Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing System (STEPS)** The STEPS program is adding enhancement and functionality to AAMP, including lodging approved applications, query management and access to compliance history. These changes are expected to lead to cost savings and other benefits. There was a 35% reduction in September 2024 in the number of emails sent to the department for approved arrangement details compared to the monthly average.

## **7.5 – Imported Food Trial Update (BOD)**

### **❖ Julie Lowe, A/g Assistant Secretary Cargo Operations (NSW, QLD, NT, ACT) and Regulatory Assurance, BOD**

Julie led discussion on the Imported Food Trial. This agenda item was included following a question raised by Caroline Macgill at the DCCC 98 meeting in July 2024. Team members from Julie Lowe's branch reached out to Caroline Macgill following DCCC 98 to provide additional information that was well received. This update was provided for the benefit of all DCCC members.

#### **Key points**

The Imported Food Trial sees DAFF partnering with industry to streamline the transport of imported food samples to appointed analysts, reducing touch points and handling time by the department. The trial is testing a process where the transport of samples is managed between the importer and appointed analyst with samples are transported directly from the importer's premises.

Trial participants continue to experience a reduction of turnaround time from completion of inspection to release of the food.

Results so far indicate that turnaround times from importers participating in the trial are 1.71 days (average), compared to those not participating in the trial being 2.12 days (average).

Controls such as tamper proof bags are used to maintain the integrity of the samples.

Potential benefits include:

- Saving 10,000+ hours annually of inspecting officer time transporting and managing samples
- Increase inspector availability to perform inspections and increase the available inspection bookings and reduce delays
- Reduce time for samples to reach appointed analysts for testing.

A review has also been conducted on imported food sample management activities to ensure DAFF is meeting all legislative cost recovery obligations. Any fees for chargeable activities are outlined in the *Imported Food Control Act 1992* and the *Imported Food Regulations 2019*, and the legislation is not being amended to add any new fees.

This review is not related to any other cost recovery activities occurring across the department. Importers will be provided notice regarding any changes to the imposition of fees.

**Agenda Item 8 – Other business**

❖ **Chair – Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary, BOD**

No other business raised.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and contribution.

It was acknowledged that the next DCCC is meeting 100 and industry has proposed to do something special. The date will be decided soon.

The Chair closed the meeting at 13:00.

**DCCC 99 Action items**

Action item no.	Agenda item	Meeting 99 Action Items	Owner/s	Status
1	3.3.2	STEPS team to set up a meeting with Sal Milici (FTA) to discuss industry portal registration.	STEPS	Open
2	5.2	Julie Lowe to set up a meeting with Sal Milici (FTA) to discuss the negative feedback FTA have received regarding imported food virtual label inspections.	Cargo Operations (NSW, Qld, ACT, NT)	Open
3	6.2	Consider inclusion of 'inspection requirements for refurbished commercial aircraft parts' for discussion at DCCC 100.	Secretariat / Sea Cargo Policy	Open