



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment**

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT CARGO CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES

85th DCCC Meeting

Wednesday 25 March 2020

Teleconference 2.30pm-3.45pm

Attendees

Present

Jagtej Singh	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Acting Chair)
Peta Lane	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Barb Cooper	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Richard Chadwick	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Linda Jennings	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Dan Passer	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Anita Tapper	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Emily Canning	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Lee Cale	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Ben Rowntree	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Carolyn Macgill	Food and Beverage Importers Association
Paul Damkjaer	Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia
Zoran Kostadinovski	Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia
Peter Van Duyn	International Cargo Handling Coordination Association
Stuart McFarlane	Australian Federation of International Forwarders
Paul Zalai	Freight and Trade Alliance
Rod Nairn	Shipping Australia Limited
Dianne Tipping	Export Council of Australia

Apologies

Paul Pak Poy	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Rick Hawe	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Craig Birchall	Board of Airline Representatives
Paul Bagnall	Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers

Secretariat

Dale Jeffery	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Kim Cameron	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Agenda Item 1 – Chair’s introductions

The chair welcomed members to the 85th DCCC meeting being held via teleconference.

The chair called for any other business. No other items were suggested.

The chair advised that papers were circulated prior to the meeting.

Agenda item 2 – Biosecurity arrangement

2.1 Biosecurity Cost Recovery Review

Mr Passer advised not to expect the government to come out for consultation on biosecurity charges while the coronavirus situation is being managed. There are plans to do a full review of the biosecurity arrangement, focusing on determining whether increased charges from 1 January 2020 are meeting the objective, not over or under recovering and improving the harmonisation of fees and charges where possible.

The timeframe for the review is July 2021. Mr Passer advised that a working group is to be formed with industry for the review.

A review of Post Entry Quarantine charging is currently in watch this space at the moment.

Mr Nairn queried the annual review versus full review clarification and questions on fee increases that were implemented on 1 January 2020, noting that the last review was conducted in 2015-16. Mr Passer advised that the department will move to an annual review rather than five yearly.

Action: DCCC members to send their nominations to DCCC Secretariat to join the working group

Agenda item 3 – Biosecurity Operations Update

Ms Cale reported the following:

- Lower than normal lodgements for Imports for February 2020 (20%) compared to 2019. However, 2019 was a remarkable year for BMSB.
- Staff working 80% less overtime than last year due to changes in BMSB policy and system enhancements.
- Automation is in production but not live as yet. IT are currently resolving an issue before it can be rolled out to staff. It was noted that the automation project will be put on hold as IT resources are being re-directed to the department’s business continuity plan due to COVID-19.
- CCG (Client Contact Group) bookings and inspections have increased. Bookings have been trending upwards year on year. January and February saw an increase compared to last year. There has been increase in commodities volumes for imported food, cut flowers, nursery stock and seed.
- Workload and calls in CCG have increased 16% in February 2020 compared to last year.

Statistics:

Assessment Group

- Within service standards
- Bookings – nationally 91% of booking made within service, with average less than one day. NSW 1.1 business days, Victoria 1.2, Queensland 0.5, WA 0.3
- Answering calls 78% against 80%

Inspections Group

- Average wait time for February was 3 days in Melbourne and 5 days in Sydney.
- Imported food impacting ability to meet service standards overall. Rick Hawe is recruiting in this area.

Mr Kostadinovski queried why there is a 20% downturn on volume while there is an increase in COLS bookings.

Ms Cale advised that the LRN's are 20% down. It was noted that there have been some complaints from industry. Upon investigation there continues to be a number of errors coming from importers/ brokers. In taking complaints straight to the Minister, Ms Cale indicated that the minister's office may become concerned if these continue to result in findings of importer errors.

Mr Kostadinovski queried what is happening with the Inspections Group workforce particularly in Melbourne as there is a 5 -10 day delay, and up to two week delay with the management of manned depots, particularly in relation to COVID-19.

Ms Cale advised that the department has had to divert resources to critical need areas such as airports due to COVID-19. There was no intent to remove resources but there may have been some reallocation. Work is currently underway to ensure the department have resources placed where they are required most. Ms Cale will ask Mr Hawe to discuss further offline.

Action: Ms Cale to ask Mr Hawe to discuss Inspections Group resourcing offline.

Ms Tipping asked for an update on what is happening in the export space for logistics, aircraft and staff resourcing.

Ms Cale advised that the department is seeing an increase in the Horticultural area with permit requests up 10%, manual certificates up 20% and food/ RFP up 6% on last year. Grape season has started later this year than last season and the department is dealing with higher volumes than last year. It was noted that during October, November and December the department slipped outside of the service standards. The department is coping with the workload, however industry are expecting quick turn-arounds, sometimes ringing and expecting a response in 30 minutes, although the service standard is 24 hours.

Ms Tipping asked if there is reduced activity.

Ms Cale advised that the department is not seeing reductions in workloads. The department is cross training staff across horticulture and food and is looking at how to improve manual processes so that automation can get working.

Ms Macgill asked about non-essential services and whether there will be a priority put on food imports. The chair advised this will be discussed as part of agenda item 4.1

Ms Lane announced that she joined the teleconference at this point.

Agenda item 4 Compliance updates

The acting Chair advised that item 4.1 Coronavirus will be discussed last.

4.2 African swine fever situation

Ms Cooper advised that the majority of measures are in place across travellers and mail with a focus on BMSB and COVID-19. There are no new countries at this point. The department is currently testing results for an additional country, which will be available in the next 24 hours.

4.3 Brown marmorated stink bug

Ms Cooper advised that the department is providing updates at monthly catch-ups. Overall, this season has been reasonably successful. There has been less detection of live BMSB, down 9% on last year. It was noted that assurance measures are managing the risk.

The department is looking at a review of this season, to assist in determining what can be improved for next season. The 'Have your say' survey has just closed with over 500 submissions received. The department is keen to provide as much notice to industry as possible in terms of measures for next season.

Discussions are being held with Plant Health scientists about whether one to two countries on the European continent may be added. This has not been confirmed. The department is continuing to work through this with Plant program.

Ms Cooper advised there are 211 companies approved for offshore treatments. Approved Arrangements has 15 sites approved and another six applications pending.

Mr Van Duyn asked what the start date for the next season is.

Mr Rowntree advised 1 September 2020 through to 30 April 2021, with all goods arriving up to 31 May 2021.

Mr Kostadinovski asked for more work to be done for class 4.7 and the suitability for goods to be treated, concerned that an overly cautious approach is being taken where goods are going to 4.7 sites when they don't have to. It is difficult without a standard to know if the approved arrangement site is doing the right thing. AA sites are asking for documents that aren't part of the minimum document requirement which makes more work for brokers.

Ms Cooper advised that this will be included in the BMSB review.

Mr McFarlane advised that forwarders are looking at coming together with charter flights to shift air cargo with freight consolidated in Singapore then sea freight (mixed cargo) to Australia. He queried about moving from no BMSB measures to being subject to BMSB requirements when cargo moved to a container.

Ms Cooper advised that the department is currently looking at ways to manage this. Advice to industry will be provided 31 March / 1 April 2020.

Ms Lane advised she is interested in hearing feedback on initiatives we have tried and the benefit of continuing and expanding on those.

Mr McFarlane queried the offshore treatments percentage for FCA and FCL and whether numbers have improved. For approval of additional offshore treatments for next season, what is the likelihood of approval given the COVID-19 situation?

Mr Singh advised that all international travel has stopped and was unable to provide a definitive timeframe. The department will get back to industry but can't provide dates as yet.

4.1 Coronavirus

Ms Cooper advised there are enhanced measures at the border to assist with COVID-19. The Prime Minister announced on 24 March 2020 issues with vessels and crews at Australian ports. The department has been participating in meetings being run by border force, with a focus on cruise ships. Our department is taking advice from the Chief Medical Officer from department of Health and have been responding in accordance with the advice.

Ms Cale advised that the department has been pandemic planning for some time and that there has been contingency planning on various scenarios. Mr Hawe is looking at deploying staff to other areas where needed i.e. imported food inspections.

The department's business continuity plan is in place and we are reviewing and updating what arrangements are needed, ensuring we are ready to go when decisions are being made by the government.

Ms Cale advised that the Assessment Group are prepared if some of the workforce, including bookings staff, have to work from home. The department is currently making sure that the infrastructure is in place for Client Contact Group staff to be able to work from home and take phone calls. In regards to Inspection Group, arrangements are being put in place.

Ms Cooper advised that the department is considered an essential service and we are working hard to maintain our services.

Mr Singh advised that a supermarkets taskforce is being set up with larger supermarkets to ensure the safety and security for staff, customers and the general community. They are progressing more online deliveries as impacts of COVID-19 becomes more widespread. Ms Cale is the department lead and is currently exploring options to speed up border clearance for essential food and groceries to get to supermarket shelves as quickly as possible. The department is working with brokers regarding the early and accurate documentation prioritisation at the border. Meetings with brokers are being held to determine what can be done to expedite imported food clearance and insisting on AEPCOMM usage. The department is asking for industry to give as much notice on what is coming through the pipeline and where it is coming from.

Ms Cale advised there is less demand at the airport and the department is looking at skill sets across the whole workforce to shift people around to meet demand.

Mr Damkjaer asked if treatment providers and supporting businesses are classified as essential service providers.

Mr Singh advised yes, as they are critical to the supply chain. He clarified that the focus will be on food and grocery (toilet paper, tissues and hand sanitiser) commodities for clearance.

Mr Singh invited members to put forward any suggestions from industry on how the department can further support these supply chains.

Mr Zalai commented on the fantastic job being done in these circumstances. In addition to this, an assurance from border force and the department on the safety protocols being implemented for inspectors and auditors entering premises is being requested by industry.

Ms Lane advised that the department is working on information to distribute to people on accessing premises to ensure health and safety protocols are met.

Mr McFarlane asked about getting information into systems and to stevedores as soon as possible.
Mr Singh advised that he will discuss offline with Mr McFarlane and Mr Van Duyn.

Mr Nairn advised that their focus is on getting ships into ports as quickly as possible. Ports are putting a focus on protecting maritime workers from ships. He indicated the need to take care for port workers and officers who are visiting ships to not infect the ship crew. Mr Nairn asked if we can ask them to wear PPE and submit to temperature checks as required.

Mr Singh responded that the department cares about the safety of its staff and the spread of this disease. Communication will be coming out on keeping people safe.

Ms Tipping asked about ongoing information with the rapidly changing environment and all of the different arrangements happening across each of the states and territories, and whether there are ways they can have more instant information.

Ms Cooper advised that situations sometimes don't allow the department to communicate quickly.
Ms Lane advised that the department communicates on a weekly basis on what has changed and how it affects the DCCC members. She will give thought on how to do this more regularly if possible. She acknowledged that this situation is difficult to navigate.

Ms Macgill advised that refrigerated containers are an essential service and that they have been unable to get a hold of them. She also supported what Ms Tipping is suggesting, to get information out as quickly as possible.

Mr Nairn responded that the issues with refrigerated containers is only temporary and is expected to be back to normal in a couple of weeks.

Mr Singh advised that the department will work through what can be provided on a regular basis. Mr Singh advised that if there are any outstanding action items, we will look to pick these up at the next meeting.

Ms Macgill asked if there should be an ABF observer attending DCCC meetings as we do have discussions that cut across issues from both agencies.

Mr Damkjaer and Ms Tipping agreed. Ms Tipping suggested that this is important due to the synergies, and looking at a digital future, it would be good to have everyone on the same page.

Ms Lane asked members if there were any objections to this request to please let her know.

Action: Secretariat to invite ABF to join DCCC.

Secretariat to update TOR.

Meeting closed at 3.46pm