



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CARGO CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

71st DCCC Meeting
9.00 am to 1.00 pm
Wednesday 29 July 2015
South East Region - Melrose Office
255 Melrose Drive, Tullamarine VIC

Agenda Item 1 – Chair’s Introduction

Present

Raelene Vivian	Department of Agriculture
Wayne Terpstra	Department of Agriculture
David Ironside	Department of Agriculture
Tina Hutchison	Department of Agriculture
Caroline Gibson	Department of Agriculture
Peter Cook	Department of Agriculture
Rick Hawe	Department of Agriculture
Ben Leitch	Department of Agriculture
Darren Gill	Department of Agriculture
Zoran Kostadinovski	CBFCA (Alternate)
Ben Somerville	CAPEC (Alternate)
Brian Lovell	AFIF
Hart Krtschil	AIWGB
Tony Beaver	FBIA
Leigh Bryant	ACCI
Rod Nairn	SAL
John Warda	ICHCA
Paul Zalai	FTA
John Begley	Ministerial Freight Advisory Council (Victoria)
Observer	
John Chambers	CBFCA
Anita Langham	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
Apologies	
Craig Birchall	BARA
Jock O’Hagan	Asciano
Secretariat Services	
Bernie Murphy	Department of Agriculture

Ms Vivian welcomed members and opened the meeting at 9:05 am. It was noted that no new conflicts of interest were declared by committee members.

An update was provided against the action item from DCCC meeting 70. The action item had been completed. The meeting minutes were accepted by members, noting that comments received had been addressed.

Agenda Item 2 – Membership

Ms Vivian gave an update on the progress of the re-appointment of DCCC members. All standing members whose appointments had expired were reappointed, with the exception of David Anderson from Ports Australia, who no longer holds a position. A request to join the DCCC was also received by the Export Council of Australia and is being considered. Members were also reminded to sign and submit their completed confidentiality agreements.

Ms Vivian provided an update on the Agricultural Productiveness White Paper and the potential implications for biosecurity.

Agenda Item 3 – Service Delivery Operations

Mr Leitch provided an update to the committee on the Cargo Online Lodgement System (COLS), client contact groups, mobile devices rollout, online appointments and improvements to invoicing, payments and receipting. Mr Hawe and Mr Cook also explained the movement to a national process and issues raised such as consistency, culture and staff training.

The committee discussed the effectiveness of the client contact groups and issues faced by clients when phoning the department. Issues discussed included that the operating hours were not always convenient for clients, particularly for those in Western Australia. Members commented on the diversity of enquiries received. Staff would not be equipped to answer all the queries, which would mean having to wait for the enquiry to be escalated and for a return phone call which did not happen in a timely manner.

Members discussed the implementation of COLS, and the time taken to process entries. The anticipated service times are not being met. Overall members were supportive of the approach but service times need to improve to reduce issues experienced by industry. When COLS was released industry were told that processing would be much quicker, but what has been experienced is a slowing down of processing times. Members are able to re-prioritise entries if needed, for example if the cargo has arrived, however this would not need to be done if entries were processed in a timelier manner. Members have also experienced some inconsistencies as a result of national processing, with now a greater range of officers assessing entries.

Members raised that they are eager to have national service standards developed with expected timeframes for their interactions with the department. This included the assessment of entries through COLS, handling of phone enquires through the contact centre, and making bookings for inspections and appointments through the new online booking tool. Members are happy to provide further feedback on what they consider to be reasonable timeframes for action.

The committee discussed improvements planned to the department's invoicing, payments and receipts system. Members welcomed these improvements and commented on several issues regularly experienced by clients including late invoices (which means these expenses

cannot be recovered from their clients), invoices providing little information to explain what the expense incurred was for, and delays in receiving receipts once payment was made.

Members also noted recent delays in the issuing of import permits and that clients have been unable to contact permit assessors in Canberra to answer queries.

Mr Leitch updated the committee on the roll-out of mobile devices, with all staff to have mobile technology by the end of the calendar year. Further improvements to systems are planned, with feedback previously provided by DCCC members being taken into account.

Mr Cook presented to the committee about Service Delivery Operations and the new design approach. The principles underpinning the design:

- National consistency
- Flexible service delivery
- Flexible workforce
- Valuing our people and optimising our national footprint
- No duplicated functions
- Cost effectiveness
- Maintaining or improving performance.

Mr Cook provided details of the new national service streams, location based service streams and the enabling stream. Service Delivery Division will continue to participate in the DCCC and welcomed ongoing feedback about any issues. Work will continue on identifying and resolving competencies of staff, capturing performance data and evaluating service effectiveness.

Key points raised by individual industry members are provided below:

John Begley: Noted that the priority service is operating effectively, with very good response times for air freight and perishable items. Can re-prioritise consignments as they approach arrival, but shouldn't always have to do that. Have had issues where certain goods imported in sets are treated differently to the same goods imported separately.

John Chambers: Raised that COLS itself is not an issue, but the processing behind COLS. Other issues have been identified such as special arrangements in some regions, as a result all staff need to re-inforce import conditions. Industry also have to adjust to the new requirements with a suggestion that the department assist those who are not coping. Mr Chambers also raised ongoing issues with the client contact centre, with officers unable to answer queries in a timely manner.

Paul Zalai: Noted that COLS is good, and hopefully can be improved and service standards resolved. Mr Zalai supported the department reducing other channels such as email and front counter processing. Some issues and delays with issuing of permits have been experienced, though it is expected that implementation of BICON will provide streamlined functionality.

Zoran Kostadinovski: Questioned if the department was adequately resourced to handle the number of entries, and asked about the impacts of job cuts and strike action. Mr Kostadinovski suggested that the department considered service delivery from a client perspective. It was noted that opportunities to increase commodities on AEP would ease pressure on customs brokers and the department. Importance of focusing on risk management of goods, not just

documentation management. Review staffing strategy, increase training levels and allow customs brokers to focus on low risks.

Brian Lovell: Noted that overall the department is on the right track on national service delivery and improved technologies.

Hart Krtschil: Recommended that staff training to be looked at, and to tackle the root cause of issues. Highlighted the importance of an orientation process for officers. Consistency continues to be an issue. Cargo Compliance Verification inspections can have long delays.

Leigh Bryant: Noted that improvements to invoicing are welcomed. Communication can be improved and need to emphasise the importance of timely messages.

Tony Beaver: Noted that food importers do not have initial contact issues as these are managed by their customs broker. Importance of information in ICON, the website and ongoing difficulties in finding information on the website that could be improved.

Rod Nairn: Shipping Australia fundamentals course provides a good overview of logistics. No significant issues of concern relating to service delivery.

John Warda: Learning about the import process and no issues of concern relating to service delivery.

Action item: Service Delivery Operations to provide information to the DCCC on the new invoicing system including timeframes and example documentation.

Action item: Distribute Peter Cook's presentation to the committee.

Action item: Distribute contact details of each Service Delivery stream to the committee.

Agenda Item 4 – BICON

Mr Gill provided an update via telephone. The system is still expected to go live in October, with a pilot to commence in August. Performance of the pilot will determine any changes for the go live decision. Participants in the pilot have been identified and an independent assessment of readiness indicated that the department was ready for implementation. A new import services team has been developed, linked to the department's main phone number. This team will be available to answer any questions on import conditions and permits.

Several members commented on the benefits of the system, including its intuitive design, ability to access information more easily, and better quality output. DCCC Members noted the ongoing engagement and high quality training materials.

Agenda Item 5 – Compliance Updates

Mr Ironside introduced the papers provided. Paper 5.1 Stakeholder Engagement explained the introduction of a central mailbox to allow members to submit comments or queries if they

are unsure who to contact in the department. Members were welcomed to submit any questions or commentary on any issues.

Paper 5.2 Import Industry Advice Notices - Consultation, proposed that the department implement consultation arrangements for industry advice notices, with members provided with 24-48 hours' notice to comment. In the instance of a systems outage or an emergency, consultation may not occur, however members will still be able to submit comments and the notice can be updated if needed. It was agreed to trial the process with discussion to occur at the next meeting. It was noted that where a response is not received by a member, it is agreed that they have no comments or suggestions.

Mr Ironside provided an update on reforms to the Imported Food Inspection Scheme. Proposed changes would introduce a range of reforms, some which would require legislative changes and the introduction of a through chain quality system approach to the management of food safety. The application of Food Import Compliance Agreements has been reviewed and opportunities will make these more available to a greater number of importers. Industry will be consulted on the proposed reforms and a regulatory impact statement will be developed for any legislative changes.

Ms Gibson spoke about compliance arrangements noting that six case studies were progressing. The committee discussed potential impacts of cost recovery changes on industry sectors who are subject to a compliance agreement. Alternative models are being reviewed and costed by the Compliance Division to assist in resolving this issue.

Ms Hutchison updated the committee about upcoming requirements for Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs, information was expected to be published on the department's website soon. The department had also undertaken consultation with the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries. Ms Hutchison also informed the committee about recent protected industrial action undertaken by departmental staff and that further information was expected to be published on the department's website.

Agenda Item 6 – Compliance Quarterly Report

Mr Terpstra noted the inclusion of the Compliance Quarterly Report in the meeting papers. The committee discussed source data and the difficulty in providing that information. It was noted that the full year report would be provided at the November meeting.

Agenda Item 7 – DCCC Work Plan

This paper was noted by committee members.

Agenda Item 8 – Other Business

Ms Vivian spoke about the upcoming Australian Biosecurity Awards, noting that applications open on 3 August 2015. Members were encouraged to submit applications for anyone who would be suitable for an award.

The Export Regulation Review has commenced and members were welcomed to review the information available on the website and to participate in any consultation sessions.

Agenda Item 9 – Next Meetings

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

Next meeting:

- Meeting DCCC 72 – Sydney – Wednesday 18 November.