Part 2

The portfolio and the department

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Our minister and parliamentary secretary

Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, is responsible for the portfolio. He is assisted by the Hon. Sid Sidebottom MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Mr Sidebottom replaced the Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP as parliamentary secretary and was sworn in on 14 December 2011.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) provides advice and support to the Australian Government on agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry. We deliver a range of programs and services to achieve the government’s objectives and to support stakeholders in these sectors. Further information about our role and functions is provided on page 23.

Within the portfolio, we support the minister and the parliamentary secretary in exercising their governance responsibilities in relation to portfolio agencies, advise on and oversee portfolio legislative and regulatory development, administer special appropriations for portfolio agencies and support advisory bodies.
Figure 9 Portfolio structure at 30 June 2012

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
The Hon. Sid Sidebottom MP

Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Secretary: Dr Conall O’Connell

Regulatory authorities

Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Chief Executive Officer: Dr James Findlay

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
Chief Executive Officer: Dr Eva Bennet-Jenkins

Wheat Exports Australia
Chief Executive Officer: Mr Peter Woods

Statutory marketing authority

Wine Australia Corporation
Chief Executive Officer: Mr Andrew Cheesman

Research and development corporations

Cotton
Executive Director: Mr Bruce Finney

Fisheries
Executive Director: Dr Patrick Hone

Grains
Managing Director: Mr John Harvey

Grape and Wine
Executive Director: Mr Neil Fisher

Rural Industries
Managing Director: Mr Craig Burns

Sugar
Executive Director: Ms Annette Sugden
Portfolio agencies

Regulatory bodies

The portfolio has three prescribed agencies under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 (FMA Act) that have regulatory roles. These agencies are:

- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
- Wheat Exports Australia.

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) is responsible for ensuring the sustainable use and cost-effective management of Commonwealth fisheries. It provides management, advisory, compliance and licensing services and develops operational policies and regulations. The Australian Government and the commercial fishing industry jointly fund AFMA. Costs of managing commercial fisheries under the Commonwealth's jurisdiction are recovered through levies and charges.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority is responsible for assessing, registering and regulating the use of agricultural pesticides and medicines to protect human health and the environment. It is funded almost entirely on a cost recovery basis through fees and levies paid by registered chemical companies.

Wheat Exports Australia (WEA) was established on 1 July 2008 to manage the Wheat Export Accreditation Scheme, which regulates the export of bulk wheat. The Wheat Export Charge and accreditation fees fund WEA's activities. The Australian Government provides grants to meet short-term funding requirements. WEA is accountable to parliament through the minister and to wheat growers through legislative reporting obligations.

Statutory marketing authority

The Wine Australia Corporation promotes the Australian wine industry through marketing strategies and regulation to protect the industry’s reputation. Its activities are funded by industry levies from winemakers and fees for marketing and regulation services. It is accountable to parliament through the minister and to winemakers through the peak industry body.

Research and development corporations

The portfolio includes six research and development corporations that provide leadership and investment in research innovation as well as knowledge creation and transfer for their industries. These corporations are:

- Cotton Research and Development Corporation
- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
- Grains Research and Development Corporation
- Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation
- Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
- Sugar Research and Development Corporation.

Their activities are funded by industry levies and matching Australian Government contributions. They are accountable to parliament through the minister and to their industries through the peak industry body or bodies declared by the minister.

Links to the websites of portfolio agencies are available on our website at www.daff.gov.au/about/portfolio-agencies.
Other portfolio bodies

Industry-owned companies

There are nine industry-owned companies that provide marketing and research and development services for the benefit of their industries. These companies are:

- Australian Egg Corporation Limited
- Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited
- Australian Meat Processor Corporation Limited
- Australian Pork Limited
- Australian Wool Innovation Limited
- Dairy Australia Limited
- Forest and Wood Products Australia Limited
- Horticulture Australia Limited
- Meat and Livestock Australia Limited.

Legislation allows these declared industry-owned companies to receive industry levies and matching government contributions via statutory funding agreements with the Commonwealth. Horticulture Australia Limited also has an export control role.

Other associated companies

Three not-for-profit companies receive Australian Government funding:

- Animal Health Australia Limited (AHA)
- Landcare Australia Limited (LAL)
- Plant Health Australia Limited (PHA).

AHA and PHA are not-for-profit public companies established by the Australian, state and territory governments and the livestock and plant industries. They aim to develop a collective government and industry approach to developing, coordinating and implementing animal and plant health policies and management programs. They are funded by member subscriptions, mostly raised by industry levies.

LAL is a private non-profit company established by the Australian Government to support Landcare activities. It is funded under Caring for our Country.

Advisory bodies

A number of statutory and non-statutory bodies provide independent advice or oversight on policy, program and operational responsibilities.

These bodies include:

- Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
- Australian Landcare Council
- Biosecurity Advisory Council
- Eminent Scientists Group
- Forest and Wood Products Council
- Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel
- National Food Policy Working Group
- National Rural Advisory Council
- Recreational Fishing Roundtable
• Rural Research and Development Council
• Statutory Fishing Rights Allocation Review Panel.

Links to the websites of these advisory bodies are available on our website at www.daff.gov.au/about/portfolio-agencies.

Ministerial councils

Standing Council on Primary Industries

In 2011–12, the department contributed to national approaches in agriculture, fisheries and forestry through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) and later through the Standing Council on Primary Industries (SCoPI).

SCoPI was established as part of a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) decision to reform the ministerial council system. Twelve new standing councils were formed, including SCoPI and a new Standing Council on Environment and Water. As part of the reform process, the remits of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council and the PIMC were withdrawn. PIMC’s final meeting was held on 28 October 2011 and SCoPI held its first meeting on 27 April 2012. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is the chair of SCoPI.

SCoPI is now the peak forum to pursue and monitor issues of national significance affecting Australia's primary production sectors, as directed by COAG priorities. It deals with issues that require a sustained and collaborative effort across all jurisdictions and addresses areas of shared responsibility and funding for Australia's primary production sectors. Figure 10 shows the structure of SCoPI and its committees.

Figure 10 Standing council structure at 30 June 2012

SCoPI is developing and implementing policies and strategies to achieve agreed national approaches to biosecurity, productivity and sustainability of primary industries (including fisheries and forestry industries) and food security. It encourages greater collaboration between jurisdictions and promotes continuous improvement in the investment of research and development resources nationally.

The Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC) supports SCoPI in the achievement of its objectives. PISC is chaired by the secretary of DAFF and comprises the department heads or chief executive officers of all government agencies in Australia and New Zealand that are responsible for primary industries policy issues. The department’s continuing work through SCoPI and PISC is reported in Part 3: Report on performance.
Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation

The department contributes to the development of food regulation policy and food standards through COAG’s Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation. The forum was launched in September 2011, replacing the former Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council. It comprises health ministers from New Zealand and the Australian, state and territory governments, as well as ministers from related portfolios. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is a forum member.

The secretary of DAFF is a member of the Food Regulation Standing Committee, which coordinates policy advice to the forum and ensures a nationally consistent approach to the implementation and enforcement of food standards (see Program 1.10, page 134).

Natural Heritage Ministerial Board

The Natural Heritage Ministerial Board is a joint ministerial decision making body for the Caring for our Country initiative (see Program 1.2, page 62). It comprises the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. The board oversees the administration of the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Account under the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997.

Reporting

This annual report covers the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry only and has been prepared in accordance with the 2012 Requirements for annual reports for departments, executive agencies and FMA Act bodies. It includes:

- the annual report required under subsection 26(1) of the Natural Resources Management (Financial Assistance) Act 1992 (see Appendix 11)
- the annual report of the National Residue Survey program, required under section 10 of the National Residue Survey Administration Act 1992 (see Appendix 12).

Portfolio agencies table their own reports, which are available on their websites.
Our department

A new mission, vision and goals for DAFF

On 14 November 2011, the secretary launched DAFF’s new Strategic Statement to underpin our collective direction, priorities and activities.

The statement sets out DAFF’s mission, vision, goals and the culture to which we aspire. Our new mission summarises what we are here to do and for whom we do it:

- **We work to sustain the way of life and prosperity of all Australians.**
- **We advise the government and our stakeholders how to improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of our portfolio industries.**
- **We help people and goods move in and out of Australia while managing the risks to the environment and animal, plant and human health.**

We have a vision—for the Australian people; for our portfolio industries; and for ourselves as a department. The work we do is defined in our goals in the areas of resources, productivity and markets. These goals remind us how the diverse work we do makes a difference in these three areas. They help drive decisions about our priorities and where we direct our efforts.

Our culture recommits us to promoting and upholding the Australian Public Service (APS) Values and Code of Conduct and describes the kind of workplace we want to be. To support the strategic statement, we also launched a new People Strategy. The people strategy describes how we can foster our culture and our capability to meet the government’s priorities for the department in a changing workplace.


Planned outcomes

DAFF had two planned outcomes in 2011–12:

**Outcome 1:** More sustainable, productive, internationally competitive and profitable Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries through policies and initiatives that promote better resource management practices, innovation, self-reliance and improved access to international markets.

**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.
Role and functions

To achieve our planned outcomes, DAFF works throughout the entire supply chain, from producer to consumer. We:

- work with the Australian Government to develop and deliver policies and programs that help our portfolio industries
- provide biosecurity services offshore, at the border and onshore to protect the environment, people’s health and our portfolio industries
- work through our biosecurity services to maintain Australia’s favourable pest and disease status
- provide export certification services to support access to overseas markets for Australian agricultural commodities
- protect and develop the natural resource base on which our portfolio industries rely
- negotiate access to international markets for our animals, plants, seafood and associated products
- provide independent and integrated economic and scientific research, analysis and policy advice
- represent the Australian Government at international meetings relating to the portfolio, to promote sustainable resource management, build agricultural productivity, protect Australia’s biosecurity and support free trade.

Collaboration and partnerships

We work in partnership with other Australian Government agencies, particularly the departments of:

- Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
- Defence
- Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Health and Ageing
- Human Services
- Resources, Energy and Tourism
- Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

We also work in partnership with the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and the Australian Public Service Commission. We collaborate with state and territory agencies in developing national approaches through the work of ministerial councils. We collaborate with other countries through bilateral and multilateral engagement and our involvement in international and regional bodies.
Case study
Putting out the welcome mat

When Air Force One touched down in Canberra and Darwin in November 2011 and United States President Barack Obama was whisked away in a motorcade, the department’s biosecurity staff had done a lot of work behind the scenes to facilitate his arrival.

Visiting Guests of Government and their entourages, like other passengers arriving in Australia, pose potential biosecurity risks. To accord them the special courtesies associated with their positions, our staff work closely with key government agencies, high commissions, embassies and consulates in the planning and clearance of aircraft, personnel and equipment.

In 2011–12, we supported 28 Guest of Government arrivals, including The Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, President Obama and leaders attending the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth.

DAFF staff will generally meet with the advance planning teams for a Guest of Government visit and undertake joint on-site assessments of the ports of arrival.

A DAFF detector dog supervises the arrival of Air Force One in Canberra

Photo: DAFF.
Legislation and regulation


Portfolio legislation enacted during 2011–12 includes:

- **Horse Disease Response Levy Act 2011**
- **Horse Disease Response Levy Collection Act 2011**
- **Horse Disease Response Levy (Consequential Amendments) Act 2011**
- **National Residue Survey (Excise) Levy Amendment (Deer) Act 2011.**

Portfolio bills introduced during the year and currently before parliament include the Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2011; the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2012 and the Wheat Export Marketing Amendment Bill 2012.

We developed more than 50 subordinate legislative instruments during 2011–12, including changes to the controls, levies, fees and charges for Commonwealth fisheries, meat and livestock export and other primary industries.

The department’s Legislation and Regulatory Reform Committee (formerly named the Legislation and Deregulation Committee) continued to monitor the development of portfolio legislation and is overseeing the department’s sunset legislation project. The project involves a review of all portfolio legislative instruments before their sunset date (the date the legislation expires), which is generally 10 years after they are made. As part of this project, DAFF facilitated the repeal of 102 redundant legislative instruments in 2011–12. The committee will oversee the review of the remaining legislative instruments prior to their sunset date, ensuring they are necessary, relevant, easy to understand and managed consistently.
Our executive

Dr Conall O’Connell has been secretary of DAFF since May 2007. He has a PhD and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons I) from Queen’s University, Belfast. The secretary is responsible for the efficient and effective operation of the department and acts as the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine. His other roles include:

• chair of the DAFF Executive Management Team (EMT)
• chair of the Primary Industries Standing Committee
• chair of the PISC National Biosecurity Committee
• chair of National Management Groups for nationally coordinated emergency responses to pest and disease incursions
• member of the Food Regulation Standing Committee
• departmental Parents’ and Carers’ Network Champion.

Mr Phillip Glyde joined the department in November 2006. He has an honours degree in natural resource management from the University of New England and a Bachelor of Economics from the Australian National University. Phillip has oversight responsibility for the work of the Trade and Market Access and Agricultural Productivity divisions and ABARES. His other roles include:

• member of the EMT
• chair of the EMT People Management Committee
• member of the EMT Change Management Committee
• member of the EMT Investment Committee
• chair of the PISC Animal Welfare Committee
• Commissioner of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
• departmental Disability Champion.

Three deputy secretaries assist the secretary across a range of issues and departmental functions and oversee the work of particular divisions.
Ms Rona Mellor joined the department in February 2010. She has a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Queensland.

Rona has oversight responsibility for the work of the biosecurity divisions and the Information Services, and People and Service Delivery divisions. Her other roles include:

• member of the EMT
• chair of the EMT Change Management Committee
• chair of the EMT Information and Communication Technology Committee
• member of the EMT Investment Committee
• deputy chair of the DAFF Audit Committee
• chair of the DAFF Biosecurity Reform Steering Committee
• co-chair of the DAFF–Customs Strategic Working Group
• deputy chair of the PISC National Biosecurity Committee
• member of the Strategic Border Management Group
• departmental Attendance Champion.

Mr Mark Tucker joined the department in February 2012. He has a Bachelor of Science (Hons) majoring in Marine Zoology.

Mark is DAFF’s chief operating officer and also has oversight responsibility for the work of the Climate Change, Sustainable Resource Management, Government, and Finance and Business Support divisions. His other roles include:

• member of the EMT
• chair of the EMT Investment Committee
• chair of the EMT Legislation and Regulatory Reform Committee
• member of the EMT Change Management Committee
• member of the DAFF Audit Committee
• chair of the National Employee Consultative Committee
• chair of the PISC High-Level Group on Drought
• chair of the PISC National Agvet System Policy Taskforce
• departmental Indigenous Champion
• departmental Information Champion.
Divisional roles and responsibilities

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) is the department's research arm. It provides professionally independent research, analysis, commodity forecasting and data across the fields of economics, science and social science. A statement on ABARES’ role and professional independence was published on our website in 2012. ABARES shares its outputs and findings with government agencies, industry, research bodies and other relevant groups for the benefit of the Australian community.

Agricultural Productivity Division

The Agricultural Productivity Division aims to make Australia's agricultural and food industries more globally competitive and profitable. The division has several branches, each with responsibility for a specific industry sector, such as crops, wine, horticulture, wool, meat, dairy and the food value chain. The division works collaboratively with industry, portfolio agencies, governments and the community on activities to enhance industry development and reduce market impediments.

Biosecurity Animal Division

The Biosecurity Animal Division works to maintain and enhance trade and market access for animals and animal products. The division provides certification for the import and export of live animals and animal genetic material to international standards. It works collaboratively with Australian industries, governments and the community to strengthen Australia's animal disease prevention, preparedness and response capabilities, as well as providing leadership and strategic direction on domestic and international animal welfare issues.

Biosecurity Food Division

The Biosecurity Food Division is responsible for developing strategies to gain, improve or maintain overseas market access for a range of food and animal products. The division encompasses market access and maintenance services and is responsible for the coordination of Australian policy and technical input into international food standards. In consultation with Australian governments, industries and the community, the division also monitors Australia's food standards code and oversees the national management of export food programs.

Biosecurity Plant Division

The Biosecurity Plant Division works to maintain and enhance trade and market access for plants and plant products. The division provides certification for the import and export of plants and plant products to international standards. It works collaboratively with Australian industries, governments and the community to strengthen Australia's plant pest and disease prevention, preparedness and response capabilities, as well as providing leadership and strategic direction.

Biosecurity Policy Division

Biosecurity Policy Division develops long-term, strategic policy initiatives for Australia's biosecurity. It works collaboratively with Australian industries, governments and the community to ensure the development and implementation of a risk-based approach to managing biosecurity risk offshore, at the border and onshore. The division works with Australian industries, governments and the community to prepare for, and support the management of, post border incursions.
Climate Change Division

The Climate Change Division develops policies and implements programs to improve the capacity of Australia’s primary industries and producers to adapt and respond to climate change while improving productivity. It is particularly concerned with issues of drought and farm adjustment, sustainable management and use of Australia’s forests and emissions mitigation and adaptation to climate change across our portfolio industries. The division works closely with other policy areas across the department to ensure DAFF maintains a well-developed understanding of challenges in different regions.

Finance and Business Support Division

The Finance and Business Support Division provides leadership and advisory services in financial management, business support and shared corporate services for the department. It also administers all cost recovery processing. The division contributes to the department’s planned outcomes by providing high quality, timely and cost-effective services and technical advice to the divisions, staff and stakeholders.

Government Division

The Government Division works collaboratively across the portfolio and with stakeholders to foster a coordinated approach to portfolio priorities and to support the department’s work. It delivers policy analysis, coordination and advice and support services to the minister and parliamentary secretary, their offices, the executive and divisions. The division’s work includes secretariat functions, parliamentary support, communications, business assurance and risk management and other strategic coordination functions.

Information Services Division

The Information Services Division is responsible for all information and communication technology (ICT) functions and activities within the department. It provides ICT applications support and development capability for all divisions and develops and maintains ICT strategic planning, enterprise architecture and information management.

Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer

The Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) is affiliated with the Biosecurity Animal Division. The OCVO facilitates the development of national policies and strategies and the provision of scientific advice to minimise the potential impacts of diseases on Australia’s animal population. It is also responsible for supporting and enhancing trade and market access for animals and animal products. The OCVO liaises with public health, environmental and veterinary experts and agencies to advocate cooperation between the animal, human and environmental health fields.

People and Service Delivery Division

The People and Service Delivery Division strengthens the focus on investing in our people and reforming our business. It brings together people capability and management, biosecurity reform, regional management and program and project management functions. The division oversees the delivery of services through the department’s regional network.

Quarantine Operations Division

The Quarantine Operations Division manages the national biosecurity service delivery for the clearance of cargo, shipping, mail, vessels and passengers—including setting policy and standards—and administers quarantine third-party arrangements, both in Australia and internationally. The division works with the Australian state and territory governments, industry and the community to manage Australia’s national biosecurity system to minimise the threat of introduction of exotic pests and disease.
Case study
The Tiger Teams of Talisman Sabre 2011

Exercise Talisman Sabre is Australia’s most important combined military activity with the United States (US) military, occurring biannually in Australia. Most activity occurs in and around the Shoalwater Bay Training Area in Queensland, the Northern Territory and the Coral, Timor and Arafura seas, with around 28 000 military personnel participating.

The biosecurity requirements placed on Australian, US and other foreign military forces’ equipment coming into Australia are consistent with those applied to commercial machinery imports. Machinery needs to be thoroughly cleaned so that it is free of soil, plant material and live insects. This high risk biosecurity material has the potential to introduce exotic pests and diseases into Australia.

DAFF, through collaboration with the US military and the Australian Defence Force, undertook significant work to identify possible improvements to assist the US military in meeting Australia’s biosecurity requirements. One improvement was the implementation of US Marine Corps ‘Tiger Teams’.

The US military established dedicated ‘Tiger Teams’ to prepare and clean equipment for Talisman Sabre 2011. These teams were trained on site at the US military base in Okinawa, Japan, by Australian DAFF officers experienced in the preparation and cleaning of equipment.

The implementation of the ‘Tiger Teams’ was acknowledged as a success by both the US military and DAFF, substantially reducing preparation time and costs compared to the 2009 exercise. The innovative ‘Tiger Teams’ project was listed as a finalist in the Institute of Public Administration Australia Queensland public sector awards category for Best Practice in Federal Government. The institute recognised this as an ‘outstanding example of excellence in public administration and management’.

DAFF continues to work closely with the US military to ensure equipment, cargo and personnel coming into Australia are managed effectively, ensuring Australia’s biosecurity is maintained.

Pfc. Lawrence J. Simpson, a combat engineer with Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, was one of the DAFF-trained ‘Tiger Team’ cleaners for Talisman Sabre 2011

Photo: Lance Cpl Garry J. Welch, courtesy of the United States Marine Corps—www.marines.mil.
Sustainable Resource Management Division

The Sustainable Resource Management Division works to strengthen the capacity of Australian primary producers and other land managers to use and manage natural resources sustainably and improve the national approach to weeds management. It provides policy advice and manages programs aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural, fishery and aquaculture sectors. The division also administers the Caring for our Country initiative, including Landcare.

Trade and Market Access Division

The Trade and Market Access Division pursues international market access for portfolio industries through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement. The division is responsible for ensuring that Australia’s obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and under free trade agreements are met. It facilitates regular formal bilateral meetings and supports engagement with the WTO, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The division maintains the overseas network of DAFF posted officers and supports high level representations on market access issues.
Our stakeholders

Communicating with stakeholders

During 2011–12, we continued to work closely with a range of industry consultative committees, peak bodies and community groups, to consult on issues and progress initiatives. Our stakeholder engagement is reported in Part 3: Report on performance.

Our communication efforts support the delivery of the department’s policies, programs and information to stakeholders, clients and the community through channels that include the internet, publications, reports, communiqués, conferences, media releases, social media and face-to-face forums.

The release of our new Strategic Statement (see page 22) was supported by several actions to increase the recognition of DAFF’s role and work among stakeholders, overseas trading partners, customers and the community; strengthen communication and engagement activities; and make it easier for people to work with us.

These actions included changes to the titles of the key service delivery areas of the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) and ABARES, to better reflect their position within the broader department.

The AQIS title has been retired, while maintaining a focus on biosecurity. This follows the government’s decision to retain biosecurity management within the department and the shift towards biosecurity across the continuum—offshore, at the border and onshore. It also reflects the contribution that biosecurity services make to the goals of the department—Resources, Productivity and Markets.

AQIS was a title used to describe border quarantine activities. The business of the department has changed and a sole focus on quarantine no longer reflects the diversity of our biosecurity business and the way we need to work with industry, other agencies and the community into the future.1

The work of ABARES has a high degree of public and professional recognition and is regularly quoted for its forecasts and analysis. With this in mind, the ABARES name has been retained but is more closely identified with the department and is now known as DAFF ABARES.

Changes to communication materials to support the new arrangements included a new design for our website and publications. Changes to signage, vehicles and uniforms are being made through business-as-usual activities to minimise costs. We are working with industry and stakeholders to support the transition.

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1 AQIS was disestablished as a separate business operation under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 during the year and is no longer required to have a set of financial statements prepared in accordance with the Finance Minister’s Orders. Its financial statements have been integrated into the department’s financial statements as shown in Part 6.
A key priority was to increase our use of social media to communicate with our stakeholders and the broader community. We used Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to increase the availability of content presented at the annual DAFF ABARES Outlook conference held in March 2012. Conference sessions were streamed live for the first time, enabling audiences to engage in real time with presenters and content.

The @DAFFnews (formerly @DAFFmedia) Twitter account was established to increase our ability to notify stakeholders and respond to critical issues. We also communicated to stakeholders through DAFFnews, our weekly email newsletter, providing a snapshot of news, publications and events from across the portfolio.

Through ABARES, the department provided professionally independent world-class research, analysis, advice and reports for government and private sector decision makers on significant issues affecting Australia’s primary industries. In 2011–12, ABARES produced 108 publications (see Appendix 8). These ranged from short newsletters and updates to complex and sometimes highly technical documents and reports. This includes the flagship publication Agricultural commodities, which is produced quarterly.

News media are important for communicating with our stakeholders and building general awareness in the community. In 2011–12, we prepared 238 media releases for distribution, responded to 1519 media inquiries and drafted 32 speeches for the minister, parliamentary secretary and departmental officers.

We have a centrally managed public inquiries email inbox to help stakeholders and clients communicate with us. A total of 20,020 inquiries was received in 2011–12.

We also chair the Biosecurity Incident National Communication Network—a network of communication officers representing biosecurity agencies from the Australian, state and territory governments and agricultural health organisations. The network provides nationally coordinated public information during biosecurity incidents.

Service charter and complaints

Our client service charter sets out our commitment to deliver a high level of service. It complements the APS Values and Code of Conduct and reflects our own values of professionalism, fairness, respect, integrity and openness. The charter identifies our service responsibilities and standards and tells clients how to give feedback or make complaints. The DAFF client service charter is available on our website at www.daff.gov.au/about/publications/client-service-charter.

The department has a supplementary client service charter for the provision of biosecurity services. In 2012–13, a single national register will be implemented to incorporate our service responsibilities and standards across the department. The new system is being developed on the principles set out in the Ombudsman’s Better practice guide to complaint handling and will provide improved accountability, tracking and reporting capabilities. The biosecurity client service charter is available on our website at www.daff.gov.au/aqis/about/reports-pubs/service-charter.

In 2011–12, the department received a total of 237 compliments and 397 complaints through its biosecurity client service charter. There were no complaints received by the rest of the department through the DAFF client service charter mechanism. Other feedback is received through the department’s public inquiries inbox and is referred to the divisions. Each area of the department analyses and uses trend data from this feedback for planning.
Social inclusion

The Australian Government’s Social Inclusion Framework aims to create ‘a stronger, fairer Australia’, by giving all Australians the resources and opportunities they need to participate fully in our society.

DAFF contributes to social inclusion by working to sustain the way of life and prosperity of the people and communities that take part in, and depend on, our portfolio industries. Our programs:

• support education and training to help primary producers increase their self-reliance and ability to manage the impacts of climate change and market variability
• assist industries to deal with change in their operations
• provide immediate financial assistance for farming families that face hardship
• support community engagement, including participation by Indigenous people, women, young people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The continuing support for Landcare is a good example of the way we give individuals and communities a voice in natural resource management. There are more than 6000 Landcare groups across Australia, funded through Caring for our Country. These groups support community engagement, understanding and actions in the development and adoption of sustainable land management practices (see page 66).

Other examples of support include:

• the move from Exceptional Circumstances drought assistance to the Transitional Farm Family Payment, to support all farming families facing financial hardship (see page 51)
• continued funding for the Rural Financial Counselling Service, to provide free financial counselling to primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses in hardship (see page 146)
• a Contractors Voluntary Exit Grants Program, to help operators leave the Tasmanian native forest industry (see page 77)
• the Community Networks and Capacity Building program, which builds leadership and representation skills among young people, women, Indigenous Australians and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (see page 50).
• support, training and employment for Indigenous groups to enable participation in sustainable resource management and the recording of traditional ecological knowledge (see page 65).

As an employer, we are supporting social inclusion through the implementation of a new DAFF Diversity Strategy and Action Plan 2012–16. The plan aims to implement programs to attract and retain Indigenous employees, employees with disability, mature age workers and employees from minority groups and to continue to integrate workplace diversity principles into our business (see page 208).
Case study
Program for Australian women farmers recognised internationally

The National Rural Women’s Coalition (NRWC) online E-Learning and Leadership Program was hailed as a resounding success at the 56th session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March 2012.

The program, funded by the department under the Recognising Women Farmers Grant, gave women living in regional Australia the opportunity to take part in online learning without having to travel.

‘As a group we all log on at the same time each week and have the opportunity to interact with industry leaders who support us to learn new skills and develop our knowledge,’ said Mount Prospect farmer, Gabrielle Fraser, who signed up to develop her abilities to contribute to the family farm and her rural community.

With no downtime, fuel costs or child-minding expenses, participants from all over Australia logged on in the evening to learn from industry’s best via a series of live webinars. An experienced mentor was paired with each participant to support learning and to facilitate the implementation of a personal project that involved an on-farm or rural community-based project.

At the UN session, a live webinar was able to link women farmers from all over the world in a two-hour interactive session. Speakers at the NRWC event included Elisabeth Broderick, Australia’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner; Sandra Stoddart, NRWC chief executive officer; and Darriea Turley, NRWC President. Ark Publishing in the United Kingdom is showcasing the project in a new textbook as an example of innovation and best practice of flexibility in delivery of training to remote areas.

Australia’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner
Elisabeth Broderick addresses the group at the UN session while National Rural Women’s Coalition chief executive officer Sandra Stoddart looks on

Photo: DAFF.
Changes to disability reporting in annual reports

Since 1994, Commonwealth departments and agencies have reported on their performance as policy adviser, purchaser, employer, regulator and provider under the Commonwealth Disability Strategy. In 2007–08, reporting on the employer role was transferred to the Australian Public Service Commission’s *State of the service report* and the *APS statistical bulletin*. These reports are available at www.apsc.gov.au. From 2010–11, departments and agencies have no longer been required to report on these functions.

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy has been overtaken by a new National Disability Strategy, which sets out a 10-year national policy framework for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers. A high level report to track progress for people with disability at a national level will be produced by the Standing Council on Community, Housing and Disability Services and will be available at www.fahcsia.gov.au.

The Social Inclusion Measurement and Reporting Strategy, agreed by the government in December 2009, will also include some reporting on disability matters in its regular *How Australia is faring* report and, if appropriate, in strategic change indicators in agency annual reports. More detail on social inclusion matters can be found at www.socialinclusion.gov.au.
Ministerial and parliamentary support

We support the minister and parliamentary secretary by providing policy advice; delivering programs; managing, coordinating and advising on portfolio parliamentary business; providing administrative, budgetary and operational support; and communicating policies and programs to stakeholders.

All program areas of the department contributed to these activities during the year. These are reported in Part 3: Report on performance.

**Ministerial correspondence**

There were 284,415 items of ministerial correspondence registered in 2011–12, which was 556 per cent more than last year (see Figure 12). Most of the correspondence registered during the year was campaign-related and included a large volume of correspondence received, but not registered, in 2010–11, following the *Four Corners* report on live animal exports, which aired on 30 May 2011. More than 278,356 items of campaign correspondence, mainly relating to live animal exports, had been registered as at 30 June 2012.

We prepared 9,707 responses to ministerial correspondence, of which 1,627 were for signature by the minister or parliamentary secretary and 8,080 were for departmental response.

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Figure 12 Registered items of ministerial correspondence

![Graph showing registered items of ministerial correspondence for 2009–10, 2010–11, and 2011–12]
To support the minister and parliamentary secretary effectively, we strive to maintain ambitious targets for quality and turnaround of ministerial correspondence. The department aims to have less than 5 per cent of responses for the minister’s or parliamentary secretary’s signature returned for redrafting for quality-related reasons. In 2011–12, 11 per cent of items were returned, although only some of these were for quality-related reasons.

We also aim to have no overdue responses to ministerial correspondence. During the year, 5 per cent of responses sent to the minister were reported as overdue. We continue to give a high priority to improving quality and timeliness through developing staff and improving systems.

Questions on notice

In 2011–12, we prepared 765 responses to Senate Estimates questions on notice, within the timeframes set by the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee (see Figure 13), and 40 responses to parliamentary questions on notice (see Figure 14).

Figure 13 Responses to questions on notice at Senate Estimates hearings

Figure 14 Responses to parliamentary questions on notice
Under our new Strategic Statement, the vision for our department is ‘a smart place, with smart people’. In 2011–12, we continued to look for ways to improve the way we do business, both inside the department and working with our portfolio industries and stakeholders.

**Marshalling scientific expertise**

Our scientists provide us with a professional scientific research and implementation capability, using strong links to key science functions across government and other organisations. Their tasks cover a broad spectrum, from operations and surveillance through to risk assessment and science research. Our science underpins our ability to support the prosperity, health and wellbeing of Australians into the future.

In March 2012, the secretary released a briefing on the importance of science to the department’s work and called for a Science Strategic Plan. The strategic plan will strengthen the way we use science to achieve our portfolio objectives and provide a framework and vision for science in the department. The plan will address key issues such as:

- the role of science in our business, current capability and future needs
- supporting, attracting, developing and retaining high-quality scientific staff
- our dialogue and relationship with other key scientific organisations.

**Assuring our business**

Business assurance is part of our risk and assurance framework and is designed to ensure that systems and processes are effective and efficient. The department is working through the internal audit program to develop a risk and control framework that will provide assurance on key strategic and operational risks. This framework will be implemented in 2012–13.

During the year, 25 biosecurity service delivery programs (offshore, at the border and onshore) undertook assurance activities. These helped identify improvement opportunities and provided an appropriate level of confidence that our processes are effective, well documented and being followed by staff. We use the findings of assurance activities to identify any emerging risks across the biosecurity continuum.

**Improving import conditions information management**

The Biosecurity Import Conditions (BICON) database is replacing the Import Conditions (ICON) suite of applications. The ICON database is used to manage and publish Australian import conditions for plant, animal, mineral and human commodities. It is also used to produce and manage permits relating to the importation of goods into Australia.
The new BICON database will present information in context to make import conditions more accessible and understandable for users and will provide enhanced search functionality through the addition of scientific name and tariff code search features. The key benefits will include improved consistency and transparency of biosecurity decision making; increased industry compliance with biosecurity import requirements; and increased efficiencies in the areas of permit issuing and clearance of goods.

BICON will provide a knowledge and rules base that can be used to improve supply chain integration and support the automation of commercial entry processing. It will also provide a new approach to setting import conditions and ensuring these are efficient and consistent for both internal and external users.

**Building a better business model**

Throughout 2011–12, we continued to deliver a number of business and process improvement projects to support DAFF programs. In particular, we developed a biosecurity business model to help the department evaluate the degree of change resulting from the new biosecurity legislation and the export and biosecurity business reforms. The new model assists us to plan for investments and effort in key business processes.

Building on the biosecurity business model project, we have started work on a DAFF business model. The model will represent the end-to-end business processes, services and programs that support the delivery of our outcomes. The DAFF business model supports a common language in describing our business and can be used to scope and evaluate the impact resulting from changes to our portfolio, programs and regulatory services.

We have also completed a variety of other business improvement projects across a number of branches, including:

- livestock industries and agricultural and veterinary chemicals
- export standards
- passengers and mail
- industry arrangements and performance.

We developed formal training programs in process mapping, analysis and improvement, as well as implemented coaching and mentoring programs in the practical application of these skills.

**Improving levy compliance**

In 2011–12, DAFF completed its first risk-based levies compliance program. The new program has already realised a number of benefits, including increased revenue and commodity coverage; and shorter inspection cycles for high risk and key industry agents selected as part of the annual record inspection program. This change in approach has enabled the levies compliance team to significantly reduce the number of operational record inspections, divert resources to the strategic compliance program and undertake more cost-effective monitoring activities.

**Encouraging internal engagement**

To support engagement with staff and create a better informed work environment, the department launched two dialogue forums in 2011. The ‘Let’s talk’ forums and ‘Leadership Dialogue Sessions’ continued through 2011–12.

The ‘Let’s talk’ forums provide a two-way discussion between staff and senior managers on current issues relevant to our work and the wider APS. A total of 11 forums were held across DAFF, looking at how we can embed our desired workplace cultures. Input from these sessions is informing the delivery of our People Strategy, launched in November 2011. Feedback has been extremely positive and shows these forums are highly valued (see page 201).
The ‘Leadership Dialogue Sessions’ support a conversation between the executive and senior managers. A total of 11 sessions were held in 2011–12, focusing on preparing staff for changes resulting from biosecurity reform. Around 200 managers and team leaders from across the department participated in sessions in Sydney, Perth, Cairns, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Darwin and Canberra, with participation rates increasing with each session.

The development of change communication channels and capability was a focus in 2011–12. In September–October 2011, the department conducted an online employee survey to inform this work. More than 1800 employees from across DAFF participated in the survey. It examined general staff attitudes towards workplace change and their awareness of key change activities in the department. The survey also looked at levels of satisfaction with, and preferences for, change communication activities, messages and channels. The results are being used to build skills and develop support tools for face-to-face communication about change. We also introduced a weekly electronic bulletin, providing key messages for managers.

The department consulted and communicated extensively with staff during the first half of 2011–12 to develop and implement a new enterprise agreement. Communication support for each iteration of the agreement included consultation, the release of internal communiqués and fact sheets and staff information sessions around the country. The final vote achieved a record participation rate of 71.5 per cent of eligible staff, with 90 per cent of respondents voting in favour of the agreement.

**Improving information and communication technology**

During the year, the department successfully upgraded its desktop standard operating environment to Windows 7, submitted its ICT Second Pass Business Case to government and completed a tender evaluation for the provision of secure internet gateway services. DAFF has been appointed as a lead agency under the Australian Government Internet Gateway Consolidation Program and will supply shared internet gateway services to 11 client agencies.

We successfully released three systems into production—the Manual of Importing Country Requirements (MICoR), the Audit Management System (AMS), and the Tracking Animal Certification for Exports (TRACE)—to support our export certification reform program (see Program 2.1, page 167).

The department transferred its primary data centre to Hume in the Australian Capital Territory, utilising the whole-of-government Data Centre Facilities Panel. We also implemented an Apple iPad project and initiated an iPhone trial, providing senior executive officers with an enhanced mobile computing solution. This is increasing productivity through ease of access to email and calendars and significantly reducing paper use through the provision of electronic meeting papers.

DAFF approved the following ICT business cases:

- **Government-to-government electronic certification for Phytosanitary Certificates between Australia and New Zealand.** This is a proof-of-concept project that will reduce paper handling and eliminate duplicate screening of certificates.

- **A new Vessel Monitoring System to track international vessels entering Australian waters.** This new tracking system will result in time savings for seaport inspectors and incorporate functionality from the Australian Ballast Water Management Information System, to allow streamlined assessment of ballast water management risks.

- **Corporate electronic records management.** Electronic recordkeeping will support the department’s information and recordkeeping agenda and enable compliance with the whole-of-government Digital Transition Policy.
• Implementation of an integrated Plant Exports Management System. This new system will facilitate electronic storage, transmission and reporting of inspection data, delivering the following benefits to both DAFF and industry:
  – reduced dependency on paper-based manual processes
  – increased efficiencies in the authorisation processes for export certificates through potential automation
  – enhanced data monitoring and reporting capabilities
  – reduced cost and duration in data transmission, storage and retrieval activities
  – enhanced end-to-end traceability in the export certification process.

The Self-Assessed Clearances Paperless Initiative project received an Australia Day Innovation Award and was nominated for the Institute of Public Administration Australia’s Prime Minister’s Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management. This project delivered a range of benefits to the organisation and its external clients in the air freight industry.

**Innovation**

DAFF continues to support a culture of innovation in various ways: through its innovation initiative, I-Gen; the hosting of events that encourage the sharing of ideas; and through collaboration with other organisations.

Examples of ideas generated in the past 12 months and fed through I-Gen include: working with National ICT Australia Ltd (NICTA) to trial new camera software linked with imaging spectroscopy to detect biosecurity risks in grains and plants; and improving and upgrading the biosecurity awareness training material to include e-learning products.

DAFF was joined by many agencies to host Innovation Week 2012 from 2-8 June. Under the theme ‘collaboration’, this event was a practical example of how the public, private, non-government and academic sectors can work together and share ideas to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Australian Public Service. More than 800 people attended the 16 discussions, workshops, seminars, tours and networking sessions hosted by DAFF during this week.

In addition, the department continues to host the increasingly popular DAFF Seminar Series. This provides the opportunity for staff to share, discuss and learn about relevant ideas and practices from within, and external to, DAFF.

Upon request, DAFF has provided 18 public and academic institutions with information about its innovation model. It has also provided information and seminars on its mentoring program to various public sector agencies—an idea that came out of I-Gen.

The department continues to be an active participant in the Public Service Innovation Network.
Cameo
A lot to Crowe about

How can an entomologist in Brisbane on any one day identify a bee on a shipping container in the Townsville docks, a snail in Gladstone and termites in a yacht in Darwin? By cloning the entomologist? No, it is much simpler than that. ‘Just’ connect a microscope to the internet so that the entomologist can identify what the microscope sees.

Bill Crowe has worked with the department for 18 years; he is the National Entomology Coordinator, based in Brisbane. Bill was a key player in the roll out of remote diagnostics, implementing a national network of 15 microscopes to provide a consistent approach to diagnostics, advice and training for our biosecurity inspectors across Australia. The online microscopes enable biosecurity officers to upload a specimen for expert identification, significantly reducing the time needed to identify and address potential threats.

Bill’s efforts were recognised with the system shortlisted in the 2011 Prime Minister’s Innovation Award and his strong team leadership and guidance was recognised through a 2012 DAFF Australia Day Innovation Award.

Bill is continuing his work in remote diagnostics by collaborating with cargo staff on a national surveillance pilot in Brisbane, focusing on targeted pest and disease detection at wharves, break bulk depots and air cargo facilities. Subject to the success of the pilot, a national surveillance strategy is scheduled to be implemented later in 2012.

The use of remote diagnostics is saving time and money for stakeholders and for DAFF by facilitating the timely movement into Australia of goods that do not pose a biosecurity risk. This is achieved through reductions in voluntary fumigations, storage, the cost of keeping goods on the wharf and handling fees at the border.

DAFF officer Bill Crowe using the remote diagnostics equipment to identify a bee found on a shipping container

Photo: DAFF.
Corporate realignment

The need to reform Australia’s biosecurity system has had DAFF looking at every aspect of the way it does business, including its internal corporate functions. In November 2011, we introduced a new structure for those functions, aimed at streamlining our business, building a more integrated department and ensuring we deliver resources to priority areas. The new structure is reflected in our organisation structure on page 25.

By standardising business systems and processes, the corporate realignment provides the opportunity to reduce spending, reduce duplication and work more efficiently. These changes to our corporate functions also offer benefits to our people, providing new opportunities to broaden their career paths and pursue professional development.

The corporate realignment also involved the establishment of our Information Services Division, in recognition of the important part played by ICT in our current and future business.

Managing freedom of information requests

In November 2011, we formed a taskforce to review our freedom of information (FOI) management, to ensure it reflected best practice.

In February 2012, the Executive Management Team endorsed the move to a centralised model for managing FOI requests. The reforms will streamline processes and improve the quality and consistency of decisions relating to FOI access and charges. The reforms are also expected to generate efficiencies and savings, some of which will be invested in training and better systems.