



# An update on Australia's biosecurity system

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As Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) readers are no doubt aware, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry's Biosecurity Operations Division play a pivotal role in deploying regulatory biosecurity policy and services to uphold the integrity of Australia's biosecurity system. But beyond this lies a mission that impacts every Australian – protecting our agricultural, fisheries and forestry production worth \$94B<sup>1</sup> annually while facilitating vital international trade.

We are witnessing unprecedented changes to international trade relations and long-standing economic partnerships. Global markets are challenging the multi-lateral cooperation and nations are shifting to alternative alliances outside of traditional frameworks like the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The disruptions underscore the inherent volatility of interconnected global trade and supply chains – and inevitable demand for an Australian biosecurity system capable of flexibly responding to change.

In the financial year 2024-25 biosecurity operations continued to service strong growth, with passenger numbers, cargo and mail volumes, and aircraft arrivals all increasing. Additionally, we've seen seasonal pest detections continue to rise and Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks in Europe requiring changes to Australia's biosecurity import conditions. Despite these increased challenges, our biosecurity operations and workforce are better equipped to handle the emerging pressures.

## **Biosecurity Operations Workforce and Systems Enhancements**

Our dedicated workforce, a network of nearly 2000 biosecurity officers and 56 highly trained detector dogs, working across 35 locations, including 3 external territories, continue to profile, screen, audit, assess and inspect millions of consignments, mail, travellers, and conveyances annually. Their combined efforts have led to a five-year average of over 25,000 pest and disease identifications.

We're proud to report strong progress in meeting our service delivery standards. While this progress has been led by an upscaling of our workforce - with the addition of over 200 frontline staff in 2024 – it is also testament to our strong

collaborations with industry and to our efforts to digitally transform how we do business.

These collaborations, through the Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing Systems (STEPS) program, are developing smarter, leaner and more responsive digital platforms and processes that are driving real efficiencies for both government and industry – proving that these partnerships benefit everyone.

One of the most exciting developments has been the progressive roll-out of the Approved Arrangements Management Product (AAMP) to all 3600 approved arrangements that was successfully completed in late 2024. AAMP is an online application enabling biosecurity industry participants (BIPs) to view and update their own approved arrangement details, enhancing information access for industry as well as administrative efficiency for both industry and the department. AAMP implementation has seen a 56% reduction in the number of emails to the department requesting approved arrangement details updates compared to email volumes prior to AAMP's implementation.

Additionally, for Customs Brokers the Cargo Online Lodgement System (COLS) now provides cargo management timeframes and non-compliance findings, while the External Verification for eCertificates (EVE) system enables Customs Brokers to see digital certificates as they assess commodities.

## **Being Future Ready**

Today, rules-based trade and supply chains face unprecedented volatility. Climate change, geopolitical challenges and shifting market dynamics – all demand innovative solutions and adaptive strategies.



Understanding the economic trends and productivity hurdles is essential for developing resilient and sustainable agriculture, fishery and forestry sectors and importantly, effective biosecurity measures that protect their respective supply chains against pest and disease.

The government's priorities are delivered in partnership with industry stakeholders to ensure biosecurity measures work on the ground while also facilitating trade and expediting the clearance and release of cargo and conveyances in transit or at the Australian border.

DAFF has reviewed and updated its Biosecurity 2030 Roadmap in response to these changes in the broader strategic operating environment. The roadmap sets the department's vision and guides the delivery of a risk-based biosecurity system that effectively, efficiently and sustainably protects Australia's environment, economy and way of life, both now and in the future.

The roadmap's nine strategic actions are closely aligned with the six priority areas of the National Biosecurity Strategy, ensuring our work delivers on the Commonwealth's commitments for a stronger national biosecurity system. The nine strategic actions cover all



aspects of biosecurity from collaboration both here and overseas to investing in a skilled workforce and using innovations and technologies to support a stronger system. The roadmap also acknowledges the importance of our collaborations and partnerships with industry stakeholders.

Our ongoing progress against the roadmap will be shared through the annual Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report – maintaining our commitment to stronger transparency and accountability of our biosecurity priorities, expenditure and funding.

Complementing, and informed by the Biosecurity 2030 Roadmap, the Biosecurity Operations three-year strategy has also been developed to provide a comprehensive summary of

the biosecurity operations priorities and anticipated challenges from 2025 to 2028, both within and outside the department. The three-year strategy summarises our purpose, goals, activities, and challenges, along with how our culture, behaviours and staff capabilities will enable us to be successful. The priorities identified in our strategy include enhancing our regulatory practices, uplifting our digital maturity, and investing in innovation and modernisation.

The three-year strategy is designed to enhance operational efficiency, foster innovation, and strengthen partnerships, demonstrating we are committed to building a resilient and adaptable organisation capable of meeting future challenges and delivering exceptional service.

