



DCCC Meeting 91 - 7 March 2022

MINUTES

1:00pm - 3:00pm

Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Lee Cale (Chair)	Assistant Secretary, Cargo Operations (VIC, SA, WA, TAS) & PEQ, Biosecurity
Peter Timson	First Assistant Secretary, Compliance and Enforcement
Barbara Cooper	Assistant Secretary, Pathway Policy, Cargo and Conveyances, Biosecurity Operations
Andrew Patterson	Assistant Secretary, Cargo Operations (NSW, QLD, NT, ACT) & Regulatory Assurance, Biosecurity Operations
Leanne Herrick	Principal Director, Industry Partnerships and Engagement, Biosecurity Operations
Holly Buckle	Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Compliance, Compliance and Enforcement
Anna Brezzo	Assistant Secretary, Enforcement, Compliance and Enforcement
Rachel Short	Assistant Secretary, Funding and Revenue, Enabling Services
Jo Laduzko	Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Response and Reform, Biosecurity Strategy and Reform (Guest, item 3.1)
Paul Hollingsworth	Director, Conveyances Maritime & Reg Capability, Biosecurity Operations (Guest, item 4.2)
Sonia Zarik	Director, Conveyances Maritime & Reg Capability, Biosecurity Operations (Guest, item 4.2)
Paul Douglas	Director, Cost Recovery Biosecurity, Funding and Revenue (Guest, item 5.4a)
Gregory Carroll	Australia Post
Paul Bagnall	Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers
Dianne Tipping	Export Council of Australia
Tony McDonald	Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries
Carolyn Macgill	Food and Beverage Importers Association
Sal Milici	Freight and Trade Alliance
Peter Van Duyn	International Cargo Handling Coordination Association
Zoran Kostadinovski	International Forwarders and Customs Brokers Association of Australia
Michael Gallacher	Ports Australia
Melwyn Noronha	Shipping Australia Limited

Secretariat

Amy Mason	Industry Partnerships and Engagement, Biosecurity Operations
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Apologies

Col Hunter	First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Operations Division
Peta Lane	First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Strategy and Reform
Craig Birchall	Board of Airline Representatives Australia



Agenda item 1 - Chair's introduction and welcome

Lee Cale welcomed all members, observers and guests to the Committee's 91st meeting. No declarations of conflicts of interest.

The DCCC welcomed Zoran Kostadinovski as an official committee member representing the International Forwarders and Customs Brokers Association of Australia (IFCBAA) following Paul Damkjaer's decision to step down as member.

Members were advised that prior to the meeting, Mr Kostadinovski had proposed an item for discussion on the department's Finance System and how to ensure it is viable for the future. This will now be considered out of session. No other business items were raised by members.

Agenda item 2 - Minutes and actions

The minutes of the 90th meeting were accepted without change, with members acknowledging most action items from previous meetings have been completed or closed.

Agenda item 3 - Items for discussion and decision

3.1 National Biosecurity Strategy

Members noted the National Biosecurity Strategy (the Strategy) consultation draft is now open for public comment. The strategy sets out six priority areas for building a shared biosecurity culture, stronger partnerships, a highly skilled workforce, greater coordination of preparedness and response activity, sustainable investment into the biosecurity system, and for an integrated trade system.

Jo Laduzko welcomed feedback on the consultation draft from members at the meeting.

Mr Kostadinovski advised IFCBAA would provide commentary outside of the meeting, including recommendations for advancing priority actions in the shorter and longer term.

Mr Milici indicated he was part of the reference group for the Strategy with Freight and Trade Alliance's main interest on stronger partnerships and sustainable investment. Cost recovery was also critical and should be considered from a preventative stance rather than reactively.

Mr Noronha also noted the importance of stronger partnerships, but with states and territories and international partners for a more proactive approach to managing biosecurity offshore.

Members were encouraged to send any additional comments to the project team at nationalbiosecuritystrategy@awe.gov.au, or via the DCCC Secretariat.

3.2 Industry behaviour and compliance report

Ms Cale advised that work was continuing to develop this report. Ms Cale acknowledged this was taking longer than anticipated and was largely due to the need to identify and source data from multiple systems, ensure the data sources are accurate and build data models that could be converted into a meaningful product for industry. Ms Cale also noted this work required expertise from the Biosecurity Analytics Centre. A first cut report would be provided to members out of session once ready.

Members noted the agenda paper included proposed key metrics for inclusion in the report. Ms Cale indicated that the metric for 'timeliness of lodging documentation in COLS for assessment' is on hold while the department continues to work with industry on how this could be better measured.



Ms Macgill asked for the number of consignments to be included to better understand the extent of non-compliance activity, and educative approach required. The report should also cover data on manned depots. Mr Patterson agreed to investigate the latter, noting there were complexities with capturing this data.

Mr Kostadinovski suggested the department also examine inconsistencies between the minimum document requirements, import permits and BICON to determine why documents may be being submitted incorrectly. Also, broker statistics to see where errors were occurring to inform broker training, or whether greater focus should be placed on influencing the behaviour of importers and holders of Approved Arrangements.

Ms Cale asked members to consider ways to improve industry to government information exchange at DCCC meetings. This included members providing real time observations or data on emerging trade related issues that may impact the industry and potentially the department's service. While this exchange occurs now in an ad-hoc fashion, there is value in formalising it through a standing agenda item at future committee meetings. Members were encouraged to provide this information via the DCCC Secretariat in advance of meetings where this was possible.

Action: Secretariat to circulate the Service Standards report to members out of session.

Action: Mr Patterson to explore inclusion of manned depot data in future reports.

Action: Secretariat to include industry information exchange session as a standing agenda item for future meetings.

3.3 COVID management

Mr Patterson reported that the impact of COVID-19 on departmental resources has lessened, enabling significant improvement in the delivery of assessment and inspection services since January 2022. Unfortunately, some delays were now occurring because of recent floods.

Members noted from mid last year biosecurity inspection officers have worked from home and travel directly to inspection sites, allowing an additional two to three inspections to be completed per day. Assessment officers in NSW continue to work from home including to minimise WHS risks associated with commuting to work given the high volumes of overtime being worked.

The decision to remove the requirement for the department to be notified of all COVID-19 cases at third party premises (TPP) was welcomed.

Mr Patterson advised members that the impact of the floods in NSW on biosecurity inspection activities had been limited to some rural areas where a small number of officers has been unable to attend work. Broader activities in metropolitan areas and in other pathways such as in the mail and airport environment continued as normal.

The impact is more significant in Queensland where the department is seeing a lot more cancellations around Brisbane and surrounding suburbs. Most were at the request of industry with further cancellations and delays expected as the flood water recede and TPP sites become operational. The department is also working through internal processes for making decisions or issuing directions about goods subject to biosecurity control that might have been damaged by the floods.

Agenda item 4 - Presentations

4.1 Overview of the Compliance System

Mr Timson delivered a presentation on the compliance system including an overview of the different functions across the Compliance and Enforcement Division, relevant legislation and frameworks such as the department's Regulatory Practice Statement, Compliance Policy and Future Ready blueprint.



Members noted the aim of the Compliance Policy is to inform stakeholders about the department's approach, including how it intends to use education and incentive schemes to facilitate good behaviour, and how it will respond to deliberate non-compliant behaviour or criminal activity.

Mr Timson indicated the aim is to transform the way the department manages compliance in the year ahead through greater engagement with regulated entities and by making it easier for those entities and other businesses to understand and comply with our regulations. Members could expect to see results from this transformation towards the end of 2022. Key components included a single window of compliance and machine learning under a department related activity management System (DREAMS) and the alignment of fit and proper person (FPP) assessment processes with similar government schemes including the Australian Border Force's Trusted Trader program.

Ms Tipping expressed appreciation to the department for progressing alignment with ABF, particularly on FPP and in the export space in relation to aviation security requirements, as the Export Council of Australia had been pushing for this for several years.

Members noted the importance of cross government collaboration and coordination to streamline trade regulation under the Government's Simplified Trade System (STS) and Deregulation Agendas. The development of a national single trade window would also assist with international engagement.

4.2 Regulatory uplift and Biosecurity Training Centre

Mr Hollingsworth advised Biosecurity Operations Division currently has more than 60 separate projects underway across its systems, people and technology that will cut across and improve regulatory capability.

Members were informed of the current state of the department's regulatory workforce and the six key areas that had been identified to achieve a more agile and competent workforce by 2025. These included a greater focus on capability and coaching; decision support material; workforce recruitment and planning; learning and development; internal assurance and compliance; and pathway modernisation and technology. This work is supported and informed by the Regulatory Practice Statement and Compliance Policy mentioned previously, and the Professional Regulator Capability Framework.

The department has been working with a delivery partner to develop a workforce plan. A recruitment program has also been undertaken at many levels to recruit staff with the right attributes and skills. In November 2021, the division on-boarded 96 new officers, who are currently undergoing training as part of their probation. A further recruitment round will see these numbers increase through May and June.

Members noted the department has developed a legal training program for building legal organisational capability (BLOC) for staff to understand the legal environment they work in and simple decision making. Biosecurity Operations Division is the first to go through the training program and has also developed a six-month Biosecurity Foundation Program as an intense induction training to provide biosecurity officers with comprehensive skills and knowledge to undertake their roles.

Ms Zarik informed members of the decision to establish a Biosecurity Training Centre as an important change vehicle to develop and deliver more effective training; embed continuous improvement. The training centre would comprise a central hub with facilities in each state capital to provide a network to service local biosecurity officers and provide specialized pathway training. While the initial focus would be on departmental officers, the centre could eventually be open to research partners, industry, and Australia's near neighbours.

Members were advised the department would be engaging a vocational or tertiary institution as a strategic partner for the design and use of training facilities following an open tender process. The department is currently evaluating the tenders, expecting to have the training centre up and running by July 2022.



4.3 Automation of document assessment

Members viewed a presentation on the document assessment process and how the use of BOTS and automation would remove some of the highly manual, resource intensive work currently undertaken by assessment officers. With automation, all documents submitted would be automatically categorised and assessed by the BOTS through complex algorithms, and only those with anomalies would be paused from moving to the next stage pending the provision of correct information from brokers/importers.

The same technology is being used for Self-Assessed Clearances (SACs) and would be implemented at the end of March. Implementation of the automation of min docs will follow shortly after (approx. May/June).

Full benefit realisation would however still rely on industry lodging documents correctly.

Ms Cale accepted Mr Kostadinovski's offer to work with the department on communicating where brokers are not meeting the minimum document requirements.

Agenda item 5 - Updates for noting (discussion by exception)

Members noted updates on the proof-of-concept trial for new supply chain import arrangements (green lane trial); progress of the first annual plan to deliver against the nine strategic actions under the Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030 strategy; ongoing cargo operational reforms; progress of the Biosecurity Portal; 2021-22 MYEFO budget measures under the STS reform agenda; BMSB and khapra beetle responses; non-compliance statistics; and biosecurity financial reports. Member were also provided with a high-level summary of some of the department's international engagement and collaborations.

Noting the proposed green lane arrangements would not suit all businesses, Mr Milici advised caution due to the potential to inadvertently create two classes of importers. Ms Herrick advised green lanes were just one of the options available to industry to achieve reduced intervention, noting many of these focused on commodity risk rather than controls across end-to-end supply chains. The department acknowledged the need to maintain services for those importers who did not qualify for these schemes.

Mr Kostadinovski noted the most important function for industry is the frontline workforce, praising the department for trying to better equip its officers to make faster and more accurate decisions, streamline processes through automation and in working with other agencies towards a 'tells us once' single trade window.

Mr Van-Duyn sought clarification for the reason for ceasing the BMSB 120hr post treatment window requirement for goods treated from 1 December 2021. Ms Quan noted the post window treatment was set some years ago and is now under review because of difficulties in satisfying the requirement where goods were gated, particularly in the northern hemisphere.

Mr Kostadinovski indicated he had previously met with Barbara Cooper and Ben Rowntree on the 120hr post treatment window, and the delays being experienced, and would welcome advice on the status of the review.

Ms Brezzo advised members that the *Biosecurity Amendment (Enhanced Risk Management) Bill 2021* is expected to be debated by the Senate in March 2022 and if endorsed, would increase penalties for 30 criminal offences and civil penalty provisions under Chapter 3 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* that were not covered by the *Biosecurity Amendment (Strengthening Penalties) Act 2021*.

Action: Barbara Cooper to provide an update on the BMSB 120hr post treatment window requirement following the review.

Action: Anna Brezzo to update members on the outcome from the Senate debate via the DCCC Secretariat.



Agenda item 6 - Other business

Ms Cale thanked members for their time and participation during the forum. The next meeting will be held in July and is expected to be face-to-face.

Both Mr Noronha Ms Macgill offered to host the next meeting at their respective offices.

Action: Secretariat to work with members on arrangements for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 3:10pm.

Summary of action items

Item no	Action	Responsible Owner
3.2	Circulate the Service Standards report to members out of session	Secretariat
3.2	Explore inclusion of manned depot data in future industry behaviour and compliance reports	Andrew Patterson
3.2	Include industry information exchange session as a standing agenda item for future meetings	Secretariat
5	Update members on the outcome from the March 2022 Senate debate on the <i>Biosecurity Amendment (Enhanced Risk Management) Bill 2021</i>	Anna Brezzo/DCCC Secretariat
5	Provide an update on the 120hr post window requirement following the review	Barbara Cooper
6	Work with members for hosting the next meeting location	Secretariat