



DCCC Meeting 92 Communique

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Cargo Consultative Committee (DCCC) met in person on 13 July 2022 at Shipping Australia's office in Sydney.

The Chair opened proceedings by outlining the machinery of government changes that had taken effect from 1 July 2022. This included elements from the previous DAWE portfolio transferring to a newly formed Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; and the reformation of DAFF led by a new Minister, Senator the Hon Murray Watt, and Secretary Andrew Metcalfe. The DAFF Biosecurity and Compliance Group is now led by Dr Chris Locke following Andrew Tongue's retirement. Members acknowledged the professionalism and pragmatism that Andrew Tongue brought to the role and his tireless work to transform and modernise the biosecurity system.

The Chair acknowledged industry's concerns regarding current delays in biosecurity assessment and inspections. While the department is doing all it can to address these delays, some causes are outside of its control. Nor is it possible to eliminate delays altogether due to increasing cargo volumes and multitude of biosecurity threats coming closer to our shores. Members were reminded that there are steps industry can take, including increasing the use of virtual food label surveillance inspections, arrangements that would see them perform low risk activities rather than wait for a biosecurity officer, the Biosecurity Portal for booking inspections online, and the offer of inspections outside of standard business hours and on weekends where available.

Members discussed options for future biosecurity funding arrangements to reduce system costs and incentivise behaviour. The department advised its intent to release an open discussion paper to ensure industry groups, including importers and exporters, and other stakeholders are given the opportunity to put forward concerns/ideas.

Members observed presentations on Australia's biosecurity risks from a plant health perspective; the significant and real threat from foot and mouth disease and lumpy skin disease; the rural tailgate inspection trial; and the trial and arrangement design for a new biosecurity trusted importer program (green lane arrangements). Members were also walked through a proposed cargo report on the status of assessments and inspections, including the number awaiting further advice/action by the importer/broker. The department intends to publish the report on a weekly basis as an education piece to assist the department and industry address non-compliant behaviours.

Discussion progressed to strategic trade related issues, including the need to consider digital solutions, and differentiated approaches to reduce regulatory burden and facilitate the legitimate movement of goods while not compromising biosecurity.

Members were provided with updates on the following:

- the drafting of a national biosecurity strategy
- cargo operational reforms including a Port of Melbourne led trial on a new approach to manage risks associated with imported vehicles, and a trial to screen the external surfaces of arriving containers using cameras on cranes
- new features and enhancements to the Biosecurity Portal and its proposed launch in Victoria on 22 July completing its nationwide coverage
- automation initiatives to improve the import documentation assessment process



- BMSB 2021-22 season outcomes and requirements for the upcoming season
- further actions to address the risk of khapra beetle
- cargo operations and non-compliance statistics
- review of biosecurity cost recovery arrangements.

The Committee will meet again in November 2022.

Industry Attendees

- Greg Carroll, Australia Post
- Craig Birchall, Board of Airline Representatives
- Dianne Tipping, Export Council of Australia
- Tony McDonald, Federal Chambers of Automotive Industries
- Carolyn McGill, Food and Beverage Importers Association
- Sal Milici, Freight and Trade Alliance
- Paul Zalai, Freight and Trade Alliance (observer)
- Peter Van Duyn, International Cargo Handling Coordination Association
- Zoran Kostadinovski, International Forwarders & Customs Brokers Association of Australia
- Melwyn Noronha, Shipping Australia Limited