



Communiqué

DAFF Cargo Consultative Committee (DCCC) Meeting 103 — 30 April 2026

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Cargo Consultative Committee (DCCC) Meeting 103 was held on 30 April 2026 at Agriculture House, 70 Northbourne Avenue, Canberra, and via videoconference.

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Operations Division.

Inspector General of Biosecurity reviews

Members received an update from the Inspector General of Biosecurity, Dr Melissa McEwen on two reviews currently underway:

- documentation requirements for biosecurity risk assessment, and
- the use of technology in biosecurity operations.

The scope of the reviews was outlined, with a focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the biosecurity system, including consideration of the interaction between documentation requirements, technology systems and operational decision making.

Members were advised that industry engagement will be a key component of both reviews, including a Have Your Say consultation process and targeted discussions. Members welcomed the opportunity to contribute insights and practical examples from operational settings.

Digital modernisation and the STEPS program

The department provided an update on the Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing System (STEPS) program, including recent delivery outcomes and enhancements to digital tools supporting cargo assessment, compliance and information sharing.

Members were briefed on delivered and upcoming products, including improvements to approved arrangement management, industry reporting tools, provider registration and the Biosecurity Activity Reporting Tool. Opportunities for ongoing industry engagement and feedback were discussed.

Biosecurity operations, compliance and service delivery

Members received an update on operational performance across cargo pathways, including service standards, compliance activity and approved arrangements. The department highlighted progress in meeting service standards and outlined areas where further improvement is being pursued, supported by digital uplift and process improvements.

Risk based compliance and audit approaches were discussed. Members noted the importance of transparency, consistency and ongoing engagement in compliance and enforcement activity across different pathways.

Departmental priorities and reform agenda

The Deputy Secretary, Biosecurity Operations and Compliance Group, Ms. Justine Saunders APM, discussed departmental priorities for the year ahead, emphasising biosecurity as a national resilience priority in the context of evolving global risk.

Deputy Secretary Saunders highlighted a strong focus on progressing national biosecurity reform, continuing regulatory uplift and modernisation, and strengthening border capability through digital and intelligence led approaches. Members were briefed on the need for an agile and resilient biosecurity system to respond to changing trade pathways, geopolitical instability and emerging pressures on supply chains. Ongoing engagement with industry was emphasised, and members were encouraged to participate in upcoming consultation processes.

Forward focus for DCCC

Members discussed the development of a strategic forward workplan for the committee, including priority themes for future meetings. These included risk-based policy settings, digital enablement, documentation and data sharing, compliance settings, and preparedness for emerging risks.

Members noted the value of DCCC as a forum for early engagement on significant policy and operational reforms.

Reports tabled

The following reports were tabled prior to the meeting:

- Cargo Operations Update
- Compliance Activity Snapshot
- Compliance Audit Report
- Approved Arrangements Update
- Finance Update

Close

The Chair thanked members for their constructive engagement and contributions and reaffirmed the department's commitment to working collaboratively with industry to support effective biosecurity outcomes while facilitating legitimate trade.

The next meeting of the DAFF Cargo Consultative Committee (DCCC Meeting 104) will be held on **2 September 2026**.

DCCC Industry representative attendees:

- Dianne Tipping, Export Council of Australia
- Carolyn Macgill, Food Importers Group
- Bradley Leonard, International Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association of Australia

- Craig Birchall, Qantas Airways Ltd
- David McDonald, International Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association of Australia
- Paul Bagnall, Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers
- Sal Milici, Freight and Trade Alliance
- Lucy Robinson, Freight and Trade Alliance (Observer)
- Peter Van Duyn, International Cargo Handling Coordination Association
- Krithika Arun, Australia Post (proxy for Tanya Thornton)