

DCCC meeting minutes



DCCC Meeting 100 Minutes

3 April 2025 – 9:30am – 1:00pm
Agriculture House, Canberra

Attendees:

Adam Fennessy PSM, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
Justine Saunders APM, Deputy Secretary, Biosecurity, Operations and Compliance Group, DAFF

DAFF

Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Operations Division (BOD) – CHAIR
Christie Sawczuk, First Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division (BSRD)
Anna Brezzo, A/g First Assistant Secretary	Compliance and Enforcement Division (CED)
Josephine Laduzko, Assistant Secretary	Cargo and Conveyances Policy and Detection Capability, BOD
Andrew Patterson, Assistant Secretary	Cargo Operations (NSW, QLD, NT, ACT) Regulatory Assurance, BOD
Victoria Bowen, A/g Assistant Secretary	Cargo Operations (VIC, SA, WA, TAS), BOD
Brett Liebich, Assistant Secretary	Operational Intelligence and Coordination, CED
Martin Moseley, Assistant Secretary	Audit and Assurance, CED
Maria Loyman, Assistant Secretary	Finance and Revenue, Finance and Investment Division (FID)
Kylie Baker, Director	Approved Arrangements, CED

Guests

Julia Wells, Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Sustainable Funding, BSRD
Ben Di Lorenzo, A/g Assistant Secretary	Biosecurity Digital Reform, Digital Business Division (DBD)
Paul Douglas, Director	Cost Recovery Biosecurity, FID
Nalani Gregory, Executive Officer	Assistant Secretary's Office, Cargo Operations South, BOD
Christene Brogden, Director	STEPS Implementation/Biosecurity Digital Reform, DBD
Liz Makalovski, Assistant Director	Cost Recovery Biosecurity, FID
Rochelle Prattley, A/g Assistant Secretary	Animal Biosecurity, Biosecurity Animal Division (BAD)
Kristen Sykes, Assistant Secretary	Animal and Biological Imports, BAD

Industry

Dianne Tipping	Export Council of Australia
Michael Gallacher	Ports Australia
Carolyn Macgill	Food and Beverage Importers Association
Bradley Leonard	Int. Forwarders & Custom Brokers Association of Australia
Tanya Thornton	Australia Post
Dianne O'Hara	Federal Chambers of Automotive Industries
Sal Milici	Freight and Trade Alliance
Peter Van Duyn	International Cargo Handling Coordination Association
Melwyn Noronha	Shipping Australia Limited
Craig Birchall	Qantas Airways Ltd
Stephen Pearse	Board of Airline Representatives
Paul Bagnall	Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers

Apologies

Holly Buckle, Assistant Secretary	Cargo Operations (VIC, SA, WA, TAS), BOD
Caroline Gibson, Principal Director	Approved Arrangements, CED

Secretariat

Rodney Malone	Sea Cargo Policy & Strategic Engagement, BOD
Angela Cressy	Sea Cargo Policy & Strategic Engagement, BOD
Aliva Evana	Sea Cargo Policy & Strategic Engagement, BOD



Agenda item 1 – Welcome and introductions – Chair

The DCCC Chair, Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Operations Division, opened the meeting with an acknowledgment of country; welcoming DCCC members attending in Canberra and virtually; and emphasising the importance of the 100th meeting of the DCCC and significance of the forum for government and industry partnerships.

The Chair introduced members to the DAFF Secretary, Adam Fennessy PSM, and noted his 25 years of public sector experience at state and federal levels.

The Chair handed over to Secretary Fennessy for the DCCC Meeting 100 opening address.

Agenda Item 2 – Secretary Fennessy's address

Secretary Fennessy highlighted the DCCC's historic inception in 1997 and its longstanding, significant role in advancing biosecurity and trade outcomes – key pillars supporting the nation's economy, community and environment - further noting some of the significant portfolio and biosecurity changes since its inception:

- 2010 merging of Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) and Biosecurity Australia under the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- 2011 finalisation of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Biosecurity
- 2012-2014 formation of DAFF's new Biosecurity Services Group (BSG)
- 2014 build of Post Entry Quarantine facility, at Mickleham
- 2016 replacement of the *Quarantine Act 1908* with the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Secretary Fennessy emphasised the importance of the DCCC, and all industry - government partnerships, ensuring the sustainability of Australia's biosecurity system that safeguards the \$100 billion of annual value and \$78 billion reputational advantage for our agricultural exports. Secretary Fennessy also emphasised the importance of advancing the interconnected whole of government initiatives aimed at digitizing and streamlining trade (departments of Home Affairs, AUSTRADE, Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Infrastructure, Health, Defence).

The Secretary acknowledged the backdrop of geo-political volatility impacting global trade, longstanding international trading partners and supply chains. For example, the recent US tariff decisions displacing longstanding trade partnerships and shifting supply chains to impact Australia and regional trading partners with Australia remaining firm on its biosecurity measures and requirements.

Secretary Fennessy talked about the 2023-24 Budget funding allocated for Australia's biosecurity system that clearly signalled the system's importance to the economy and the subsequent establishment of the Sustainable Funding Advisory Panel for transparent government investments in biosecurity.

Issues raised by members:

- The possibility of a change of government and consequent impacts for DAFF and biosecurity. The Secretary noted DAFF is in caretaker mode but there is bipartisan support for Australia's biosecurity system and, following the election, that DAFF's role will be to respond to the priorities of the government of the day.

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- The current context of World Trade Organisation (WTO) relationships. The Secretary reiterated Australia's bi-partisan position of maintaining a focus on the WTO and rules-based-order while operating as a free trading nation who works with like-minded nations.

In closing, Secretary Fennessy emphasised the significant technology and innovation opportunities at the forefront of industry and government business and thanked DCCC members for their valuable contribution to the successful roll-out of digital initiatives under the STEPs program, participation in proof-of-concept trials for screening technologies and for the DCCC's continued, significant involvement across interrelated government trade initiatives.

Agenda item 3 – Minutes and Actions – DCCC Mtg 99, 14 November 2024

The Chair noted the meeting apologies (refer Minutes page 1); confirmed nil conflict of interest declarations; reminded members of the 'in confidence' nature of DCCC discussions and requested any questions members may have about the out-of-session papers circulated on 2 April be directed to the DCCC Secretariat for response.

- The Chair confirmed publication of the final meeting 99 minutes and communique in January 2025
- Members accepted the status of meeting 99 actions as read.

Agenda item 4 – DAFF Biosecurity 2030 Roadmap (biosecurity roadmap)

The Chair introduced Christie Sawczuk, First Assistant Secretary BSRD, to update members on the refresh of the biosecurity roadmap (formally Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030) which was first published in 2021 – and the importance of the underpinning partnerships with governments, states and territories, research commissions, scientific communities and first nations people to support delivery of the biosecurity roadmap's outcomes.

Key Points:

- Drivers influencing the biosecurity roadmap's refresh and publication in October 2024 included: the development of the National Biosecurity Strategy (NBS) (2022); machinery of government changes (2022); the 2023-24 Federal Budget sustainable biosecurity funding package and consequent adjustments to DAFF's strategic operating environment
- The biosecurity roadmap aligns with the NBS 6 priority areas setting out the national vision for a risk-based biosecurity system capable of effectively, efficiently and sustainably protecting Australia's environment, economy and way of life now and in the future
- The biosecurity roadmap's 9 strategic priorities cover all aspects of biosecurity from collaboration both here and overseas to investing in workforce capability, innovations and technologies to support a stronger biosecurity system
- Progress on the Commonwealth's biosecurity priorities, expenditure and funding will be transparently and accountably shared through the annual Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report and the Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel
- The biosecurity roadmap acknowledges the importance of stakeholder collaborations and partnerships, such as the DCCC.



Ports Australia (PA) raised the level and type of collaborations DAFF is undertaking to deliver outcomes under the biosecurity roadmap. PA offered to provide details of the well-attended Pacific Maritime Transport Alliance (PMTA) meeting in Fiji involving Australian Border Force (ABF), pacific neighbours and port leadership for DAFF's consideration. DAFF noted its efforts involving pacific neighbours and port operators in relation to the Sea Container Hygiene System and the potential for the PMTA to support this agenda.

Action:

- 4.1 DAFF to contact PA for details on the PMTA fora for consideration of how it might support the delivery of the biosecurity roadmap outcomes and to engage on Sea Container Hygiene System (SCHS) and hitchhiker issues.
- 4.2 Secretariat to circulate the biosecurity roadmap and presentation.

Agenda item 5 – BOD Three-year Strategy

The Chair opened discussion on the Biosecurity Operations Division's Three-year Strategy (the strategy) to enhance operational efficiency, innovation, and partnerships to build a resilient and adaptable organisation capable of meeting future challenges and delivering services.

Key Points:

- Aligned with the DAFF's portfolio priorities and the 2030 Biosecurity Roadmap, the strategy prioritises BOD's resourcing to 2028
- For stakeholders it encompasses all parts of BOD's business and provides visibility of the focus areas and deliverables
- Departmental and industry collaborations are critical to finding ways to sustainably manage increasing biosecurity service demand e.g. expanded first points of entry, military exercises, changing trade routes, cargo commodities, travellers, coupled with biosecurity incidents and responses, with forecast growth through to the 2028 Olympics.

Key areas for collaboration include (but not limited to):

- Continuing to streamline cargo processing, reducing manual intervention e.g. a new vehicle policy and approved arrangement for oversized tyres.
- Expansion of compliance-based intervention programs and approved arrangements – in response to industry feedback.
- Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) import pathway – streamlining cargo processing and enhancing levels of intervention including biosecurity assessments, inspections and compliance assurance activities.
 - April 2025 will commence the annual review of the SAC charge. Industry parties subject to the charge will also have the opportunity to provide feedback on the charging elements and suggest process improvements.
 - **SAC Assurance Program (SAP)** to enhance air-cargo pathway efficiency and regulatory capability, detector dogs will be deployed as part of core screening business and in December 2025, the trial of 3D x-ray and auto-detection algorithms with FedEx, Sydney and the Australian Border Force will conclude.



Other key areas include:

- Data and intelligence led decision making
- Maturing regulatory practice - commencing a baseline review of regulatory capability
- Telephone software system upgrade - to improve reliability and deliver benefits for industry calls and enquiries
- Enhancing operational scheduling - for departmental officers attending third party sites with stakeholder consultation in 2025
- Front-line staff expansion – part of biosecurity sustainable funding to build a skilled and agile workforce
- Proposed new BOD organisational design to:
 - improve BOD's ability to meet service standards, recruit staff and provide flexible, hybrid work arrangements with realignment of operational branches to group leadership with like-functions and operational staff locations
 - enhance divisional coordination and strategy – divisional support functions will be consolidated under one branch to drive reforms and uplift capability
 - collaborate on border modernisation and trade reforms; border agency relationships will be strengthened.

Members requested a copy of BOD's Three-year strategy and were interested to know how they could contribute ideas and help to innovate, citing the example of the digital Australian Traveller Declaration (ATD). DAFF responded it now had greater capacity for policy areas to triage industry issues based on the best return on investment in further investigating ideas and finding the balance between not impacting the profitability and productivity of the supply chain.

FTA raised the telephony project to be implemented in July with Andrew Patterson committing to providing an update paper for meeting 101 in July.

Action:

- 5.1 Secretariat to share BOD's Three-year Strategy with members once finalised.
- 5.2 DAFF to provide a paper for meeting 101 to update DCCC members on the Telephony Project.

Agenda item 6 – Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing System (STEPS) – 2024-25 outcomes, next steps and deliverables

The Chair opened the STEPS item reiterating the program's importance in delivering effective and efficient biosecurity risk management outcomes for government, BOD and industry.

Ben Di-Lorenzo, A/g Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Digital Reform Branch and Christene Brogden, Director, STEPS Implementation updated members on STEPS.

Key points:

- Industry's engagement has been critical to the successful delivery of STEPS initiatives to date – and will be for upcoming and future STEPS digital rollouts
- All STEPS work stems from the pain points identified for internal and external users

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- Work over the previous 18 months consolidates what STEPS is doing for user groups in their associated supply chain journey and why
- 3 tranches of investment (noting DAFF is currently delivering the first tranche) will modernise the digital platforms and ecosystem underpinning biosecurity operations
- STEPS takes into consideration the related work underway and to be done across the travellers' pathway (ATD); Australian Border Force's (ABF) Integrated Cargo System (ICS); and Department of Infrastructure's Maritime Single Window.

Recap of 2024-25 outcomes

Enhanced and simplified digital channels and expanded industry arrangements

- Cargo Online Lodgement system (COLS)
- Biosecurity Activity Reporting Tool (BART)
- Approved Arrangement Management Product (AAMP)
- Offshore Treatment Providers (OTP)
- External Verification for eCertificates – implemented end of 2024 with expansion planned for 2025.

Enhanced data and advanced analytic tools and techniques

- Cargo Processing Predictor
- Biosecurity Cargo Status Tracker
- Centralised Cargo Data Repository
- Optimised intervention – data asset
- AI-assisted document analysis
- Entity resolution.

Members raised entity resolution and its meaning for DAFF. DAFF responded that entity resolution is about the complete visibility of an entity: their identity; involvement across businesses; and history of compliance. Entity resolution relies on systems, data and intelligence and will connect to work under the whole of government Simplified Trade System (STS) agenda and ABF's Integrated Cargo System and Fit and Proper Persons initiatives.

Morning tea:

The Chair introduced Justine Saunders, Deputy Secretary, Biosecurity, Operations and Compliance Group with a short overview of the Deputy Secretary's background.

Agenda item 7 – Low Value (SAC) Import Pathways – delivering efficient and effective risk management on the low value pathway

The Chair introduced Item 7 stating that due to the SAC import pathway's associated growth, diversity and non-compliance, reforming the pathway is a BOD strategic priority.

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Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary, Cargo and Conveyances Policy and Detection Capability, led the item informing members that the reforms would be staged with industry - initially focusing on people, data, systems and controls with the aim of effectively managing risk and gaining efficiencies in the pathway.

Key points covered:

- Industry will be consulted on what a modern and relevant pathway intervention model should look like against the current context of assurance settings, effort and arrangements that are no longer fit for purpose
- Throughout the design, development and roll-out of the reforms, key considerations will be the international landscape, global trends and the impact and opportunities for industry members from interagency efforts
- The SAC pathway is not small, homogeneous or low risk
- Detections could be commercial or non-commercial. 70 reporting entities are responsible for 99% of the market, which includes business from online e-commerce traders TEMU, Amazon and Ali Baba
- SAC cost recovery revenue will give DAFF the capacity to deliver the effort needed to understand and confidently manage the realities of the pathway through systems, data, service delivery and risk settings
- CED is developing an intelligence report. The analysis is informed by the compliance case management system. Issues reported by industry via the department's website feed into the case management system
- Recruitment is underway for an extra 100 frontline staff across inspections, assessments and client contact
- The program will explore pathway efficiencies through detector dogs and Xray; AI driven screening; reviewing SAC risk profiles; systems management; a statistically significant intervention model commissioned with Centre of Excellence in Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA); integration into ABF's cargo streamlined intervention model; and potential expansion of Approved Arrangement 14.3 for air cargo.

Members were assured consultation and engagement would be ongoing and were invited to reach out with any questions or comments on the SAC reform agenda and to share their views on economic drivers, low value reporting in other countries and risk settings.

Agenda item 8 – Emerging Air and Sea Port Landscape – what does this mean for biosecurity risk management?

The Chair introduced Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary, Cargo and Conveyances Policy and Detection Capability, BOD.

Key points covered:

- Australia has 86 determined first points of entry closely tied to approved arrangements
- The last 18 months have witnessed a significant increase in Australian air and seaports seeking new or expanded international services

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- Between now and 2040, 49 ports are planning new or expanded international operations – with the majority planning to begin operations within the next five years
- While the international operations will vary in size and scale, this equates to an overall increase in entry points into Australia with the commensurate required expansion of DAFF's biosecurity regulatory operations.

DCCC members noted the critical relationship between ports and Australia's economic and social goals. Further stating that the short, medium and long-term development goals need to be strategically managed to deliver biosecurity outcomes and commercial trade imperatives across the breadth of government work impacting port infrastructure development e.g.: the Department of Infrastructure's Framework for New and Redeveloping International Ports; DAFF's review of First Points of Entry policy and administration and upcoming consultation with industry; AUSTRADE's Simplified Trade System; and ABF's streamlined cargo intervention model.

Members' views were sought on considerations for strategically investing in port infrastructure:

- Qantas Australia stated the location of ports are subject to demand, market trends and seasonality
- The importance of joining up government border agency management systems at air and seaports
- Exports Australia raised seaports, and the considerable costs associated with supporting supply chain infrastructure looked for by private, commercial interests
- Commercial opportunities often arise in isolated, thin market areas presenting infrastructure and resourcing challenges
- Ports Australia stated it is happy to liaise with DAFF to understand the areas of concern particularly for more remote areas.

Members were invited to reach out with any questions or comments on emerging sea and airports.

Agenda item 9 – Industry led agenda item

The Chair noted the delayed timing of the agenda item and confirmed that all matters raised for discussion by industry prior to the meeting had been managed out-of-session. Members were invited to raise any additional issues.

No issues were raised.

Members noted an update on the operational workforce was provided in the out-of-session paper 'Cargo Update'. Members were invited to forward any questions about the papers to the DCCC Secretariat.

Agenda item 10 – DCCC Governance Arrangements Review – Terms of Reference & Administrative Guideline Discussion on DCCC future focus, intent, objectives and membership

The Chair opened discussion on the DCCC's Terms of Reference (ToR) confirming it was an initial conversation to gauge the DCCC's views on what works well and what might be done differently.

Key points raised:

- Meeting 100's smaller number of higher-level, strategic agenda items worked well to engage valuable discussion. DAFF intends to continue shaping the agenda accordingly

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- DCCC's purpose could be broader e.g. collaboration is an important term that should be expanded on and explained further
- DCCC could be reserved for discussion of the high-level framework issues potentially supported by separate deep dives on structural issues e.g. SAC and First Points of Entry
- To address significant unforeseen emerging issues, DCCC needs to have the ability to stand-up working groups
- To address operational issues:
 - DCCC needs to have the ability to stand-up short sharp meetings
 - for operational issues able to be resolved out-of-session by the responsible business areas, DCCC Secretariat should record the issues and report the outcomes via a paper at the next meeting for DCCC members' information and awareness
 - the Chair confirmed the approach to managing operations issues be recorded in the DCCC ToR.
- The number of years specified for membership could be revised.

Members were invited to send additional thoughts on the ToR to the DCCC Secretariat and agreed that the ideas would be integrated into a revised terms of reference for discussion at Meeting 101 in July.

Action

- 10.1 Members to email DCCC Secretariat with further suggestions for the DCCC ToR.
- 10.2 Operational issues raised by members and referred to relevant business areas out-of-session are to be recorded by the DCCC Secretariat with outcomes reported in a paper to the DCCC at its next meeting.
- 10.3 DCCC secretariat to revise the DCCC ToR based on members' Mtg 100 suggestions and ideas resulting from Action 10.1 for discussion at Meeting 101 in July.

Agenda Item 11 – Biosecurity Cost Recovery Update

The Chair introduced Paul Douglas, Director, Cost Recovery Biosecurity, Finance and Investment Division to give members a summary update on the 2025-26 Biosecurity Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS) and the year-to-date financial performance of the biosecurity cost recovery arrangement. Members noted the paper provided to accompany the update.

2025-26 Biosecurity CRIS

- The timing of the CRIS release may be impacted by the outcome of the federal election and formation of government
- The biosecurity regulatory fees and charges are anticipated to increase on 1 July 2025 in line with the December 2024 annual consumer price index movement
- Prices will increase by 2.4% as per the pricing table shared with industry through DAFF's "Have Your Say" platform and industry advice notices to stakeholder groups.



YTD financial performance

- Revenue is tracking well with an anticipated reasonably balanced end of year outcome
- SAC arrangements are still bedding down. Alignment with the cost recovery model is expected in the next financial year.

Agenda Item 12 – Other business

FMD update

Members were introduced to Rochelle Prattley, Acting Assistant Secretary, Animal Biosecurity and Kristen Sykes, Assistant Secretary, Animal and Biological Imports to give the update on FMD.

Key points:

- The FMD situation has been dynamic since the 10 January FMD outbreak in Germany followed by Hungary on 7 March and Slovakia on 21 March
- Since then, the Hungarian outbreak's surveillance zone extended into Austria with ongoing monitoring
- Following DAFF's FMD risk assessments, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia were removed from its list of FMD free countries and specific commodity release lists
- Close engagement with impacted importers and companies is ongoing on import permit variations and restricted high-risk products
- Several rapid case-by-case risk assessments facilitated alternate risk management measures for dairy products and products for vulnerable populations, products in transit or those that arrived at the border since the cut-off dates
- Dairy product rapid assessments led to the release of 91 consignments representing 1.1million kilograms valued at approx. \$16.7m
- For vulnerable populations DAFF issued 10 permits for 150 products
- DAFF's website is updated regularly with accurate situational updates acknowledging that with the fast-moving nature of risk assessments and the associated updates, there have been cases where people have acted on information that was accurate at that time but since updated
- World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) is another site to receive global pest and disease notifications
- WOAH recently accepted Germany's notification of declaration of freedom with DAFF now receiving questions about changes to Australia's import conditions
- DAFF informed members conditions are still in place as Australia works with the German authorities on the evaluation process to change conditions.

Action

- 12.1 Secretariat to provide members with links to DAFF's FMD updates and WOAH global pest and disease notifications.

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Closing remarks - Chair

The Chair thanked DCCC members for their attendance at the 100th meeting of the DCCC acknowledging DAFF Secretary Adam Fennessy's attendance and members' valuable contributions to the day's conversations.

The Chair confirmed the aim of refining and improving the agenda to make sure everyone gets maximum value out of the forum and thanked members again for their extremely valuable contributions.

The DCCC reconvenes on Thursday 31 July 2025 with a face-to-face or virtual meeting yet to be confirmed.

Meeting closed: 1:10pm

Action items

Item		DCCC 100 Action Items – 3 April 2025	Owner/s	Status
4	4.1	DAFF to contact Mike Gallacher for details on the Pacific Maritime Transport Alliance fora to consider its potential to support delivery of outcomes under DAFF's 2030 Biosecurity Roadmap and to engage on Sea Container Hygiene System (SCHS) and hitchhiker issues.	Jo Laduzko	Open
	4.2	Secretariat to circulate the DAFF 2030 Biosecurity Roadmap presentation.	Secretariat	Closed – Circulated to industry members with draft minutes
5	5.1	Secretariat to share BOD's Three-year Strategy with members once finalised.	Secretariat	Closed – Circulated to industry members with draft minutes
	5.2	DAFF to provide a paper for Mtg 101 to update members on the Telephony Project.	Andrew Patterson	To be included in Mtg 101 agenda
10	10.1	DCCC members to email Secretariat with further suggestions for the DCCC ToR.	DCCC members	Open
	10.2	Operational issues raised by members and referred to relevant business areas out-of-session, to be recorded by the DCCC Secretariat with outcomes reported in a paper to the DCCC at its next meeting.	Secretariat	To be included in Mtg 101 agenda
	10.3	DCCC secretariat to revise the DCCC ToR based on members' Mtg 100 suggestions, and ideas resulting from Action 10.1, for discussion at Mtg 101.	Secretariat	To be included in Mtg 101 agenda
12	12.1	Secretariat to provide members with links to DAFF's FMD updates and WOA global pest and disease notifications.	Secretariat	Closed – Circulated to industry members with draft minutes