



DCCC Meeting 102 – Minutes

27 November 2025 – 9:30am – 1:00pm

Agriculture House, Canberra

Attendees:

DAFF

Chair – Monica Collins, First Assistant Secretary
Julia Wells, A/g First Assistant Secretary
Graeme Grosse, First Assistant Secretary
Josephine Laduzko, Assistant Secretary
Holly Buckle, Assistant Secretary
Jim Simpson, Assistant Secretary
Brett Liebich, Assistant Secretary
Anna Brezzo, Assistant Secretary
Caroline Gibson, Lead Director

Biosecurity Operations Division (BOD)
Biosecurity Strategy & Reform Division (BSRD)
Compliance & Enforcement Division (CED)
Goods & Conveyances Policy/BOD, DAFF
Cargo Operations South & Detector Dogs / BOD
Cargo Operations West & Maritime / BOD
Operational Intelligence & Coordination / CED
Investigations / CED
Approved Arrangements / CED

Guests

Ben Di Lorenzo, Assistant Secretary

Biosecurity Digital Reform Branch (STEPS), Digital Business Division

Industry

Dianne Tipping
Carolyn Macgill
Krithika Arun
Craig Birchall
Michael Gallacher
Bradley Leonard

Export Council of Australia
Food and Beverage Importers Association
Australia Post (Proxy)
Qantas Airways Ltd
Ports Australia
International Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association of Australia
Freight and Trade Alliance
International Cargo Handling Coordination Association
Shipping Australia Limited
Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers

Observer

David McDonald

International Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association of Australia

Apologies

Martin Moseley, Assistant Secretary
Andrew Patterson, Assistant Secretary
Dianne O’Hara
Stephen Pearse

Audit & Assurance / CED
Cargo Operations North & Response / BOD
Federal Chambers of Automotive Industries
Board of Airline Representatives

Secretariat

Rod Malone
Aliva Evana
Tania Jario

Sea Cargo Policy & Strategic Engagement / BOD
Sea Cargo Policy & Strategic Engagement / BOD
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.

The Chair noted the meeting apologies (refer Minutes page 1); confirmed nil conflict of interest declarations made; 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 26 November be directed to the DCCC Secretariat for response.

The Chair mentioned the regular finance agenda item has been removed as the Biosecurity Funding and Expenditure Report is available on DAFF website.

The papers for discussion by exception circulated prior to the meeting are:

- Cargo Operations Update
- Compliance Activity Snapshot
- Compliance Audit Report
- Approved Arrangements Update
- Summary of operational issues and outcomes raised with DCCC.
- Updates from the Copenhagen Symposium and Sea Container Focus Group (FGSC) annual in-person meeting.

The Chair updated members on the biosecurity business pledge, a national initiative inviting businesses to take proactive steps to integrate practical biosecurity practices into their operations. The pledge was launched at the National Biosecurity Forum on November 5-7. The Chair spoke about how the biosecurity business pledge will raise awareness of biosecurity in supply chains and provide entities an opportunity to reduce biosecurity risk. Taking the pledge commits a business to:

- Reduce risk: Protecting the business from costly disruptions caused by pests and diseases
- Support continuity: Ensuring smoother operations and build greater confidence across the supply chain.
- Lead by example: Joining a network of influential business leaders
- Promote commitment: Showcasing biosecurity practices using branded materials

The Chair thanked Carolyn McGill for raising the topic and commented that by doing so demonstrates a great way of utilising this forum to drive strategic outcomes. The Chair confirmed the website link to the Biosecurity Business Pledge will be shared with members post meeting.

The Chair provided a brief update on the Government’s economic reform work, highlighting:

- Continuing work on reforms identified through the Treasurer’s Economic Reform Roundtable process (which followed Minister Collin’s agricultural productivity roundtable), including those reforms developed with ABF and industry:
- Ongoing delivery of functions to save business time and money through the Simplified Targeting and Enhanced Processing Systems program.



- Work with ABF and Qantas on the Digital travel declaration, including being ready for Western Sydney International Airport, building on the initial work in Brisbane and Sydney.
- Work with ABF on potential pathways for modernising the Integrated Cargo System (ICS) and improving productivity at seaports and airports.
- DAFF's commitment to working with ABF to ensure this work is joined up and we streamline the process for businesses who interact with both agencies.

Regulatory reform:

- Ensuring our regulations are fit-for-purpose is another area of government focus. The Minister for Finance has set a whole-of-government policy objective for Commonwealth regulators to better balance risk mitigation with efficiency, growth and dynamism.
- This requires Ministerial Statement of Expectations to be updated by the end of this year, with this work underway.
- Building regulatory capability is a key focus of BOD's workforce plan this year. This will include an ongoing focus on continuously improving our systems to support efficient and effective biosecurity outcomes.
- An early priority focus is reviewing the Biosecurity (Conditionally Non-prohibited Goods) Determination 2021 with a view to improving efficiency streamlining where possible.

In relation to the DAFF Cargo Consultative Committee (DCCC) Terms of Reference, the Chair noted:

- The updated DCCC Terms of Reference (ToR) has incorporated member feedback from the DCCC 101 and prior meetings and subsequent out-of-session review (October/November 2025).
- All feedback received was supportive with no further changes required.

The Chair thanked everyone for their focus on getting this right for this forum in the current operating context. The updated ToR clarifies our contemporary DCCC purpose, scope and priority areas.

In response to the most recent out-of-session paper, DCCC members have endorsed the updated ToR.

Question: Carolyn McGil enquired if any business has signed up for Biosecurity Business pledge. Julia Wells reassured quite a few businesses have signed up after DAFF held a webinar 2 weeks ago.

ACTION: Julia Wells 's engagement team to reach out to Carolyn McGil with materials/contents for biosecurity business pledge.



Agenda item 2 – Minutes and Actions – DCCC 101

The minutes from DCCC meeting 101 were accepted. All action items were addressed through inclusion in the DCCC meeting 102 agenda or sharing of papers and presentations as agreed.

The Chair confirmed publication of the DCCC 101 communique and the final meeting 101 minutes on 17 November 2025.

Members accepted the status of meeting 101 actions as read.

Agenda 3 – Postcode Review/Land bridging development

The Chair opened discussion on Postcode Classification Review/Land bridging development. Jo Laduzko confirmed DAFF is currently reviewing its policy for classifying rural locations for biosecurity purposes (incorporating a review of current postcode classifications) and managing the risk of imported sea containers being transported between metropolitan areas via rural areas (often referred as land-bridging).

- Imported sea containers can inadvertently carry a range of contaminants that could introduce exotic pests and diseases into our environment, and the imported container pathway is also a significant risk for hitchhiker pest concerns.
- While the department has a long-held policy relating to containers being delivered to areas classified as rural, a policy refresh is needed to reflect the current patterns of movement of containers, which includes those that transverse rural areas on route to other metropolitan locations.
- Additionally, the postcode policy has not been wholistically reviewed in over 10 years, while urban growth, domestic land use and supply chains, sea cargo import pathways, and biosecurity risks and management approaches have all changed significantly.
- Industry consultation will take place on both matters in the first quarter of 2026 to ensure potential impacts and implementation approaches are fully explored. Preliminary DCCC member comments are welcomed as part of discussion of this item.

Feedback received:

Industry raised the following matters (with a focus on expectations of custom brokers):

- Shipping lines often decide to skip a port and rail cargo to its final destination without communicating this to the customs broker.
- Because a customs broker won't know if a container is being railed interstate, placing the reporting burden on the import declaration sets the industry up for failure.
- Industry suggested this reporting should be handled at the Master Bill Cargo report level rather than the individual import declaration.
- DAFF confirmed it would consider this matter and encouraged industry to provide feedback.

Agenda item 4 – SAC Reform Program Update

The Chair handed over to Jo Laduzko to facilitate the discussion.

Meaningful progress has been made in key areas of DAFF's integrated SAC reform program for 2025-26. This program is intended to ensure we are appropriately and efficiently managing risk on this pathway. There are



several substantial reform pieces that will be delivered in the remainder of the 2025-26 financial year. DAFF is committed to continuing stakeholder engagement with industry and ABF regarding reform on the SAC pathway with additional deep dive meetings planned.

Key points were:

- A 'deep dive' workshop was held on 16 September 2025 involving DCCC, industry and ABF to discuss SAC reform, data reform, data needs and biosecurity inspection implications.
- A follow-up workshop focused on data matters is planned for early 2026 alongside collaborative efforts with ABF on cargo reporting initiatives.
- Ongoing work includes developing a new digital document lodgement system and an approved arrangement to allow industry participants to conduct specific inspection activities on behalf of the department.
- Total cargo documentation assessments rose by 16% compared to the same period in 2024-25.
- Low value assessment saw a 33% increase during this period.
- Overall cargo inspections increased by 14%

Agenda item 5 – Highly Compliant Importer Scheme (HCI)

The Chair handed over to Brad Leonard from IFCBAA to facilitate. The Highly Compliant Importer Scheme (HCI) is a voluntary program designed to cut biosecurity inspections up to 50% for compliant importers. However, the scheme may be undermined by practical issues where compliant goods can still require mandatory or broad inspections, leading to extra costs that negate its benefits.

Key industry concerns:

- Industry showed concern that the HCI pathway might inadvertently increase the burden on some importers. Instead of simple tailgate inspections, some shipments are being swept up into more intensive inspections they didn't previously require.
- The department is moving towards a system where compliance must be validated through data and consistent performance.
- Even with high compliance certain sectors like food still require mandatory biosecurity inspections.
- Industry suggested a system where importers apply to demonstrate their compliance. If successful, they could benefit from reduced consulting or intervention.
- The ultimate aim is to create an efficient system that ensures high compliance while providing a "commercial advantage" to those who meet the standards.

DAFF response key points:

Compliance and Inspection reduction:

- DAFF validates compliance against specific requirements. Those who are highly compliant see a reduction in the number of inspections compared to standard procedures.
- The goal of the scheme is to reward entities for being consistently compliant by reducing regulatory hurdles.
- The department focuses on putting items on the HCI list that would normally require inspection, allowing for reduced oversight if high compliance is proven.



Operational Challenges:

- Small scale operators who only complete 3 or 4 entries a year are a challenge for this type of arrangement.
- DAFF requires an evidence-based approach to build compliance confidence. Higher volume allows the department to gain “sustained confidence” in a client’s compliance.

Technical Advantages and Reviews:

- A specific advantage of the HCI scheme is its ability to interface with approved arrangement Class 19, which is available under some circumstances with the Compliance Based Inspection Scheme (CBIS).
- The department regularly reviews commodities and pathways for inclusion on compliance-based schemes.

Risk Management and Integrity:

- There is a concern regarding operators who might try to circumvent rules by strategically ‘opting in’ and ‘opting out’ of the scheme, if it were voluntary, at specific times.
- There is a focus on ensuring systemic outcomes rather than bespoke or specifically requested outcomes.

ACTION: Brad Leonard to provide specific full import declarations to Jo Laduzko relating to consignments thought to have HCI directions that may be considered burdensome to industry.

Agenda item 6 – Compliance and Enforcement Division key issues update

The chair introduced Graeme Grosse, First Assistant Secretary, Compliance and Enforcement Division (CED) to provide an update.

- CED is refreshing its approach to audits by using a risk-based approach that aligns focus with assessed risk and compliance performance.
- Unannounced audits, which commenced during COVID-19, have continued to provide an effective approach to address non-compliance and change behaviours.
- Analysis of remote audits vs announced confirms announced audits yield approximate 3% fail rate compared to unannounced audit rates of greater than 10%.
- Compliance and Enforcement has been implementing intelligence informed, proactive and targeted operations to test and address non-compliance. These have focused on high-risk pathways and actors, ensuring a level playing field for compliant businesses.
- CED continues to look at options to apply the full suite of enforcement tools, including Enforceable Undertakings (EUs), to drive enduring term change and compliance.

Offshore treatments

- AusTreat: 19,338 treatments lodged (~13,000 containers) this BMSB risk season (>1 September 2025).
- AFAS: 27,165 treatments (~36,453 containers) since Jan 2025.
- Treatment providers have reported industry pressure and cost of treatments as key contributing factors to their engagement in non-compliant treatment practices.



- Motor Vehicle Import Program (**MVIP**) (Thailand) 153,000 new vehicles were inspected under MVIP, with approximately 1% identified as having biosecurity risk material and is broadly consistent with seasonal trends observed in Thailand. The presence of risk material on MVIP vehicles has significantly decreased in recent years, following sustained engagement by CED officers and efforts by vehicle manufacturers in Thailand.

Industry expressed a strong appetite for goods compliance update publication from DAFF.

ACTION: DAFF to consider development of cargo non-compliance reporting, with or separate to Australian Border Force

Agenda item 7 – STEPS Update

The Chair introduced Ben Di Lorenzo, Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Digital Reform Branch (STEPS), Digital Business Division to provide a progress update on STEPS. The presenters were Ben Di Lorenzo, Kiran Sonia, Raj Iyer and Kanu Partha.

Key points of the presentation:

- The STEPS Program is transforming Australia's biosecurity import processes, introducing digital-first tools to improve efficiency, transparency, and regulatory compliance for importers, brokers, and industry participants.
- Major product releases, such as enhancements to the Cargo Online Lodgement System (COLS) and ProviderHub, are streamlining document lodgement, inspection reporting, and management of offshore treatment providers.
- Feedback from industry stakeholders has been positive, citing reduced turnaround times, improved information access, and better user experience with digital lodgement and tracking.
- Immediate benefits include faster processing of Carnet and Ship/Aircraft Stores entries, secure access to digital certificates, and improved management of Approved Arrangements through online platforms.
- Key products such as BART, ProviderHub, and ICCP (Integrated Cargo and Container Platform) are on track for incremental release across 2025–26, with further phases delivering self-service workflows and unified business processes for container management, biosecurity reporting, and accreditation.
- The changes support more targeted, risk-based interventions to speed clearances for low-risk commodities, align industry processes with departmental requirements, and reduce the administrative burden of manual or paper-based systems.

Question from industry: Industry asked whether the industry reporting tools are progressing closer to real time rather than 24 hours behind. Ben Di Lorenzo advised DAFF is looking into implementing more frequent updating of the cargo status tracker reporting.

Agenda item 8 – Other Business/ Closing Remarks

The Chair noted to members that Ms Victoria Anderson has been appointed as the Secretary of DAFF.

ACTION: Melwyn Noronha to touch base with Jo Laduzko on the vessel seasonal pest scheme.



Closing remarks - Chair

The Chair thanked DCCC members for their attendance at the 102nd meeting of the DCCC.

The DCCC reconvenes in 2026 with a face-to-face and virtual meeting. Location and dates yet to be confirmed.

Meeting closed: 1:15pm

Action items:

DCCC Meeting 102 – Action Register

| Date of meeting | Action Item | Action Officer | Status | ID no |
|------------------|---|---|-------------|-------|
| 27 November 2025 | Circulate Biosecurity Business Pledge link and comms pack | DCCC Secretariat | Complete | 001 |
| 27 November 2025 | Conduct structured engagement on postcode/land-bridging review. | Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary | In progress | 002 |
| 27 November 2025 | SAC reform – early 2026 data deep-dive; align with ABF | Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary Graeme Grosse, First Assistant Secretary | In progress | 003 |
| 27 November 2025 | Increase refresh frequency of Cargo Status Tracker | Ben Di Lorenzo, Assistant Secretary | In progress | 004 |
| 27 November 2025 | Revisit Vessel Seasonal Pest Scheme with Shipping Australia | Jo Laduzko, Assistant Secretary Melwyn Noronha, Shipping Australia Limited | In progress | 005 |
| 27 November 2025 | Propose 2026 meeting dates (April/Jul/Nov) | DCCC Secretariat | Complete | 006 |