



# Junior Biosecurity Officer program

## Narrative

### Stage 1: International Mail Gateway Facility (Main character: Scout)

'Zoom!'

Scout dashed alongside the conveyor belt, eyes sharp and tail wagging as he looked at the mail waiting to be checked before it entered Australia.

'Watch ou-!' Blaze and Dusty tried to warn their energetic friend, just as he tripped over his own paws and landed on his chin with a thud.

The three friends had been waiting eagerly at the Melbourne Gateway Facility, watching as the mountain of mail from all over the world grew higher. Scout's excitement got the better of him before he broke away and raced around the room.

Today was their first day on the job. Scout, Dusty and Blaze were the newest Junior Biosecurity Officers, ready to help protect Australia from pests and diseases that might be hiding in mail from overseas.

Scout stood up, gave himself a big shake and trotted back to the belt. A small, lumpy package caught his eye. It was wrapped in brown paper with a bright pink label that read, 'To Mia, love from Overseas Granny x'.

He tilted his head thoughtfully. 'Team, we've got one to inspect. Let's follow protocol.'

Blaze nodded and pointed toward the X-ray machine nearby. 'Let's screen it first. The X-ray will show us what's inside without unwrapping it.'

A biosecurity officer carefully placed the package through the X-ray. As the image appeared on the screen, Blaze's ears perked up. 'Looks like something plant-shaped.'

Scout took the package to the inspection bench. 'Our friends from Australia Post will open it safely and we'll be able to confirm.'

Inside the package was a tiny plant sitting in a colourful, decorated pot. Scout's eyes widened. 'Whoa—a cactus!' he said, giggling. 'Good thing it didn't poke me!' He held up his gloved hands. 'It's lucky I was wearing all my safety gear—just like we're supposed to during inspections!'

'It is a thoughtful gift,' said Dusty, 'but even gifts need checking.'

Blaze glanced at a fact sheet on imported plants. 'Remember, plants from overseas can carry pests or diseases that could harm our farms, gardens and bushland.'

Scout nodded seriously. 'That's why we check carefully. This protects Australia's environment, animals, and people. Even family sending special gifts must follow the rules.'

The Junior Biosecurity Officers gathered around the cactus, thinking carefully. Should Mia be allowed to receive it in the mail, or will it have to be disposed of to keep Australia safe?

**Challenge**

Can Mia keep the cactus, or not? What should the Junior Biosecurity Officers do next?

Now it's your turn to help Scout, Dusty, and Blaze decide.