



Junior Biosecurity Officer program

Narrative

Stage 3: Post-Entry Quarantine facility (Main character: Blaze)

The morning sun streamed through the windows as Blaze walked calmly into the Post Entry Quarantine (also known as the PEQ) facility. As the team's wise leader, Blaze knew every day brought new challenges – and new chances to protect Australia.

He was joined by his two teammates: Dusty and Scout. Together, they formed a skilled team of Junior Biosecurity Officers, helping keep Australia safe from pests and diseases that could arrive with animals and plants from overseas.

Today, Luna the cat was arriving from overseas. Before she left, Blaze explained to Luna about what to expect at the PEQ, using his calm, friendly manner to reassure her. 'This place is safe and comfortable,' he said. 'Animals and plants from all over the world spend time here when they arrive, so we can make sure they're healthy and not showing any signs of disease before they start their new life in Australia.'

Before starting his shift, Blaze went to check on Luna. He watched as a biosecurity officer gently patted her and made sure she had food and fresh water. The biosecurity officer caught Blaze's eye and nodded. 'We look after every animal here and keep a close eye on them. If anything seems wrong, we act quickly to keep everyone safe.'

Happy that Luna was settling in, Blaze turned his attention to a shipment of rare plants that had just arrived. These plants were to be sent to gardens and farms across the country, but first they needed to spend time in quarantine. Blaze knew that both plants and animals could carry hidden threats: tiny insects, seeds, or diseases that could harm Australia's unique environment and agriculture.

Blaze kept a close watch on the new arrivals. He noticed something unusual: several plants had developed odd spots on their leaves and were starting to wilt, even though the temperature was cool. Blaze knew that it is especially hard to make sure plants don't have diseases, so they can spend more than a year in quarantine. They can appear at any time, even if the plants seemed healthy at first. 'That's why quarantine is so important,' Blaze reminded himself. 'Experts need time to run tests and observe.'

It was time for leadership. Blaze gathered the team and explained the situation. 'We have a problem. Some of these plants are showing strange symptoms. We need to investigate what's causing it.'

The stakes were high. If a new pest or disease escaped quarantine, it could threaten Australia's crops, gardens, native plants and animals. But Blaze knew that with teamwork, careful observation, and following the right procedures, the PEQ team could protect Australia's way of life and precious environment.

With a steady voice, Blaze encouraged the team: 'Let's think this through, check every detail, and work together. We'll get to the bottom of this.'

Challenge

Can you help Blaze and the PEQ team investigate and decide what to do when a group of imported plants start showing unusual symptoms during quarantine?

What steps would you take to protect Australia's environment, agriculture and animals?

Now it's your turn to think like a biosecurity officer and wise leader. What would you do next?