Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Payments made to the Inspector General of Biosecurity

In accordance with Section 16C of the Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973

In 2023, the Department identified an issue relating to the methodology previously applied to calculate remuneration payable to the Inspector-General of Biosecurity (IGB) under the relevant Remuneration Tribunal Determination (Determination).

Prior to August 2023, remuneration was calculated on the basis that certain workdays were "meeting days" for the purposes of the Determination. However, initial investigation demonstrated that these workdays should not have been characterised as meeting days, and this may have led to overpayments to the IGB.

Upon identifying the issue, the Department revised its remuneration arrangements in August 2023 and commenced a review of historical remuneration arrangements.

Following that review, the Department identified other past payments that were likely made inconsistently with the applicable Determination. As a result, the Department considers it likely that at least some payments exceeded the remuneration payable under the applicable Determination.

The Department reviewed available records, including a sample of payroll records, available timesheets and supporting documentation, and consulted relevant business areas to determine whether any overpayments could be identified and quantified.

The review found that available records do not contain sufficient information to determine with certainty whether particular activities satisfied the requirements of a meeting day under the applicable Determination. As a result, the Department is unable to determine with certainty the number of relevant overpayments or their total value.

The Department also considered whether a reasonable estimate or upper value of any potential overpayments could be determined. Due to limitations in the available records and uncertainty regarding the application of the Determination to particular activities, the Department concluded that any estimate would be inherently unreliable.

The Department further considered whether additional investigation should be undertaken to identify or quantify the amount of any overpayments. Having regard to the age and quality of available records, the likelihood of obtaining additional reliable evidence, the potential value of any recoverable amounts, the likely costs of further investigation, the efficient use of Commonwealth resources and the equitable treatment of persons who occupied the office of the IGB, the

Department concluded that further investigative work was unlikely to provide a reliable basis on which any potential overpayments could be identified or quantified with sufficient certainty.in accordance with Section 16C of the Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973Australia's food industry stands at a gateway to new opportunities.

Since August 2023, the Department has implemented revised remuneration arrangements for the IGB, including:

Assistance is available in several forms:

- use of a standardised timesheet aligned with the applicable Determination;
- strengthened review and approval processes;
- improved record keeping and supporting documentation; and
- ongoing monitoring of remuneration calculations.

These measures support compliance with the Remuneration Tribunal framework and reduce the risk of recurrence. In addition, the Department is engaging with relevant stakeholders to explore whether greater clarity in the administration of remuneration arrangements can be achieved through other approaches.

Acknowledgement of Country
We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

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