Australian Government
Inspector-General of Biosecurity

Annual Report 2025-2026



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Acknowledgement of Country
We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

2025-26 at a glance

October 2025

Transition of Inspector-General of Biosecurity from Dr Lloyd Klumpp to Dr Melissa McEwen

November 2025

Publication of:

- Review of the implementation of the IGB recommendations to improve the Australian biosecurity system
- Environmental biosecurity - management and policy implementation
- Maturity of the department's biosecurity regulatory system

January 2026

Annual review plan published

February 2026

Initiation of the Review of documentation requirements for the biosecurity risk assessment of imported goods

March 2026

Initiation of the Use of technology for biosecurity operations review

May 2026

Finalisation of 2026-2030 Strategic Plan

Completed Reviews

3

Reviews Initiated

2

Meetings with Stakeholders

63

Support Staff

3 FTE

Senate Estimates

3

Field work

Message from the Inspector-General



It was an honour to accept the position of Inspector-General and the first nine months of my tenure has been a time of engaging and learning.

There is a shared commitment to biosecurity from everyone I have spoken to this year – and agreement on its importance. It has been impressive to see the clarity of mission of departmental officers regarding their work, and to see their resilience and willingness to adapt to the tools that they have.

At the same time, there are clearly aspects of the biosecurity systems that could benefit from further attention, particularly as the risks to the country increase in scale and complexity. Work through the documentation review has revealed a need for stronger approaches to verification and assurance, as well as consideration of reducing the complexity of permits and requirements. The review of technology is showing that the department has a multiplicity of systems dedicated to biosecurity, many of which have significant challenges due to age, complexity or interoperability. A key challenge for biosecurity regulation moving forward will be to consider how it can improve its digital and data base to be able to benefit from the revolution of machine learning and artificial intelligence.

I am grateful to my small and dedicated team who have made the work undertaken since I commenced possible and to the support and engagement from the department and the many stakeholders I have engaged with. My expectation is that 2026-2027 will see the completion of several reviews and the start of others, but that my understanding of the biosecurity system and best practice regulation will continue to grow during that time.



Dr Melissa McEwen
Inspector-General Biosecurity

Review Reports

Published

These reviews were published during Dr McEwen's tenure as Inspector-General of Biosecurity and, while she supports the findings and recommendations within them, the work was entirely the product of the previous Inspector-General (Dr Lloyd Klumpp).

Review report no. 2025–26/01

Maturity of the department's biosecurity regulatory system 3 recommendations

The review found that, despite ongoing reform efforts, the department's biosecurity regulatory system remains in a developing stage of maturity, with persistent weaknesses in governance, regulatory assurance and organisational culture. While strategic direction is generally well established, fragmented reforms and inconsistent practices have hindered implementation. The report recommends a coordinated and sustained program of regulatory maturity improvement to strengthen the department's effectiveness as Australia's lead biosecurity regulator.

Review report no. 2025–26/02

Environmental biosecurity: Management and policy implementation 8 recommendations

The review found that environmental biosecurity outcomes are being constrained by fragmented governance, unclear interagency arrangements and a lack of sustained strategic leadership. While the legislative framework is generally sound, weaknesses in coordination between DAFF and DCCEEW, instability in the ACEBO function, and delays in implementing key environmental biosecurity initiatives have reduced effectiveness. The report recommends stronger governance, formalised collaboration and a more strategic approach to environmental biosecurity

Review report no. 2025–26/03

Implementation of Inspector-General of Biosecurity recommendations 6 recommendations

The review found that persistent governance, oversight and information management weaknesses have limited the department's ability to effectively implement Inspector-General recommendations. These shortcomings have contributed to delays, inconsistent tracking and a growing backlog of open recommendations. The report recommends strengthened governance, clearer accountability and improved systems for managing and monitoring recommendation implementation.

Initiated

Review of documentation requirements for the biosecurity risk assessment of imported goods

The review will examine departmental documentation requirements, and the processes supporting their development and application, as they relate to the assessment of biosecurity risks for imported goods (including live animals and biologicals) under the Biosecurity Act 2015.

Use of technology for biosecurity operations

The review will examine how effectively the department is using technology across biosecurity operations to manage risk and deliver intended outcomes. It will assess whether technology investments are addressing priority operational challenges and biosecurity risks, and consider the effectiveness of governance, assurance, capability and operational arrangements that support technology-enabled decision-making and service delivery.

Stakeholder Engagement

Due to the focus on the finalisation of three distinct reports, Dr Lloyd Klump was unable to commit to structured stakeholder engagement at the end of his time in the role. Since beginning in the role, Dr Melissa McEwen has had 63 formalised meetings with stakeholders.

There were 40 meetings with department staff and teams; this includes a number of initial meetings with different teams and areas early on, meetings related to specific information for reviews underway and some more general meetings to gain a better understanding of the workings of the biosecurity system.

There were 23 meetings conducted with external stakeholders. Some stakeholders met with the Inspector-General of Biosecurity on multiple occasions.

Stakeholders engaged with include:

Industry participants

- Banana Growers' Council of Australia
- National Farmers Federation
- Freight Trade Alliance
- Invasives Species Council
- International Forwarders & Customs Brokers Associations of Australia (IFCBAA)
- The Australasian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators neTwork (AELERT)
- Individual customs brokers/freight forwarding companies

Other state, territory and federal government departments

- Australian Border Force
- NSW Independent Biosecurity Commissioner
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)
- Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand

Research, development and review organisations

- CEBRA
- ANAO
- Charles Sturt University
- External consultants

Melissa was also invited to speak at the following forums:

- DAFF Cargo Consultative Committee
- 41st Plant Industry Forum (Plant Health Australia)
- Plant Health Committee
- National Biosecurity Committee

