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Australian Government

Inspector-General of Biosecurity

Inspector-General of Biosecurity Strategy 2025–30

6 May 2026

This strategy sets the direction for the Inspector-General of Biosecurity from 2025 to 2030. It is intended to provide a clear, current and practical statement of purpose, priorities and ways of working.

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Vision

An effective and efficient biosecurity system that benefits all Australians.

Purpose

The Inspector-General of Biosecurity and her office provide assurance over Australia's preventative biosecurity risk management systems through independent reviews of the performance of functions, and the exercise of powers, by biosecurity officials of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department).

Our work supports continuous improvement of the national biosecurity system by identifying what is working well, where gaps or risks remain, and where practical improvements are needed.

Independence

The Inspector-General of Biosecurity is an independent statutory officer appointed under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

The Inspector-General is independent of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Director of Biosecurity and other biosecurity officials within the department in deciding what to review, how reviews are conducted and the priority given to each review.

That independence is central to the credibility of the role. It gives stakeholders confidence that review findings and recommendations are impartial, evidence-based and focused on strengthening the system as a whole.

Strategic context

Australia's biosecurity system operates in an environment, which is growing more volatile and demanding. Risks are becoming more complex, more interconnected and faster moving, shaped by changing trade patterns, increasingly complex supply chains, technological change, rising expectations for transparency and accountability, and the need for stronger coordination across policy, regulation, operations and assurance. Growth in cargo volumes, mail, aircraft movements and international traveller numbers is increasing pressure on the system, while the rising incidence and spread of pests and diseases globally, including in key trading partners and our broader region, is increasing the likelihood of threats emerging across multiple pathways and in new forms.

In that environment, the Inspector-General's role is to provide trusted, independent and system-level assurance over the effectiveness, integrity and resilience of Australia's preventative biosecurity arrangements. Our reviews must remain rigorous and evidence-based, while also being practical, proportionate and forward-looking. They must be able to assess whether the system is keeping pace with changing risks, whether key controls are working as intended and whether policy, regulatory, operational, intelligence and assurance functions are working together in a coherent and effective way.

We will continue to focus on the areas that matter most to the strength of Australia's biosecurity system, including the capacity of pre-border, border and immediate post-border arrangements to prevent, detect and respond to emerging threats. In doing so, we will support continuous improvement across the system and help ensure Australia's biosecurity arrangements remain fit for purpose in a more dynamic and risk-exposed global environment.

Our strategic priorities, 2025–30

- 1. Deliver trusted, independent assurance:** We will undertake high-quality reviews that are evidence-based, balanced and focused on system performance. Our work will test whether biosecurity arrangements are operating effectively, efficiently and as intended, and whether they are positioned to meet current and emerging risks.
- 2. Focus on system-wide risks and emerging issues:** We will prioritise review topics that have the greatest potential to strengthen the biosecurity system. This includes issues that cut across the biosecurity continuum, emerging risks that may not yet be well understood, and areas where integration, governance, technology, capability or implementation can be improved.
- 3. Support practical improvement:** We will produce findings and recommendations that are clear, well-founded and capable of supporting action. We will focus on improvements that are realistic, proportionate and directed to better outcomes for the biosecurity system, rather than change for its own sake.
- 4. Strengthen transparency and stakeholder confidence:** We will communicate clearly about our role, our review program and the purpose of our work. We will engage constructively with stakeholders across government, industry and the broader biosecurity system, and we will continue to publish review reports to support transparency and public confidence, subject to legislative requirements.
- 5. Take a future-focused approach:** We will not only assess whether the system is working now; we will also consider whether it is adapting to future needs. This includes whether the system is making effective use of technology, information, data, capability, governance and assurance to respond to the risks and opportunities ahead.
- 6. Work efficiently and minimise disruption:** We will conduct our work in a way that is organised, targeted and respectful of operational pressures. We will have regard to minimising disruption to the performance of functions and the exercise of powers by biosecurity officials and other stakeholders during reviews.

How we will work

We will be guided by the following principles in everything we do:

- **Consultative:** We will listen carefully and engage respectfully with those who operate within, depend on and contribute to the biosecurity system.
- **Evidence-based:** Our findings and recommendations will be grounded in relevant evidence, sound analysis and fair consideration of different perspectives.
- **Independent:** We will maintain our independence in selecting, planning and conducting reviews, and in forming our findings and recommendations.
- **Constructive:** We will focus on practical improvement and clear insight, recognising that the aim of independent assurance is to strengthen the system.
- **Transparent:** We will explain our role, our review priorities and the basis for our conclusions as clearly as possible, while meeting legislative requirements.
- **Proportionate:** We will be mindful of operational impacts, request information reasonably and tailor our approach to the scale and significance of the topic under review.
- **Future-focused:** We will look beyond immediate issues to consider whether the system is positioned for long-term effectiveness, resilience and trust.

Our focus across the biosecurity system

The Inspector-General's work is grounded in viewing biosecurity as an integrated system. As a system, it is critical that the parts work effectively together. The Inspector-General reviews may examine matters including governance and accountability, regulatory frameworks and policy settings, strategy, operational delivery, assurance and verification, technology and digital enablement, infrastructure, workforce capability and capacity, information and data management, stakeholder engagement, and the implementation and follow-up of plans and recommendations.

The Inspector-General's key focus will be on:

- **Systems:** Is the system working effectively and efficiently? Do the parts operate together or against each other?
- **People:** How do people operate within this system? What are the key elements of the capability, capacity, behaviours and decision-making of people within the system and how do we influence these to ensure the system operates efficiently, consistently and as intended?
- **Problems:** What are the big issues within the system – the problems that stop the system operating as intended. Will these problems change in the future and have some of them been persistent and difficult to move?
- **Regulation:** How aligned are current biosecurity regulatory approaches with best practice regulation?

The Inspector-General may also review the process for conducting a Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis (aka BIRA) when requested under the legislative framework.

What success looks like to us

We aim to be recognised as a trusted source of independent assurance and practical insight for Australia's biosecurity system.

Success will be reflected in the following outcomes:

- findings and recommendations contribute to stronger governance, better decision-making and more effective biosecurity arrangements, and are seriously considered, responded to and used to inform improvement by the department
- review topics are targeted to the areas of greatest strategic value and system risk
- review reports are timely, clear, credible and useful
- stakeholders understand the Inspector-General's role and have confidence in the quality and independence of our work
- our work helps the system remain adaptive, resilient and ready for future challenges.

How we will measure progress

We will monitor our performance through practical indicators such as:

- publication of a clear review program and timely updates where priorities change
- completion of reviews to an appropriate standard and within planned or agreed timeframes, where feasible
- quality, clarity and accessibility of published reports
- breadth and quality of stakeholder engagement during reviews

- the practical relevance and actionability of review findings and recommendations
- evidence that our work is informing discussion, accountability and improvement across the biosecurity system.

Review and refresh

This strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current, practical and aligned with the legislative framework, the Inspector-General’s review program and the evolving needs of Australia’s biosecurity system.

A formal refresh should be considered at least every 2 years, or earlier if there is a significant change in context, priorities or operating arrangements.

Contact

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