



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and Border Protection

DEPUTY SECRETARY

23 January 2015

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

Inquiry into the Biosecurity Bill 2014, the Biosecurity (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2014, the Quarantine Charges (Imposition-Customs) Amendment Bill 2014, the Quarantine Charges (Imposition-Excise) Amendment Bill 2014 and the Quarantine Charges (Imposition-General) Amendment Bill 2014.

The Immigration and Border Protection Portfolio (the Portfolio) which comprises the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (the Portfolio) thanks the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into the suite of Biosecurity and Quarantine Charges Bills.

The Portfolio supports replacing the existing and out-dated *Quarantine Act 1908* with the new biosecurity framework under the proposed *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Bill), and worked closely with the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture) to develop the Bill.

The Portfolio notes that the new legislation must support the functions and imperatives of all relevant agencies. To that end, the Portfolio will continue to work jointly with Agriculture to ensure our agencies continue to operate efficiently at the border.

The Portfolio and Agriculture will also work through the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper process together to ensure, where possible, effective and efficient visa processing arrangements to facilitate access to agricultural industry labour markets. I look forward to continuing the close working relationship between the Portfolio and the Department of Agriculture into the future.

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The Committee may also wish to note that from 1 July 2015 the Portfolio's agencies will be integrated into a new Department of Immigration and Border Protection which will include the Australian Border Force. The new Department will for the first time bring together into a single policy space traditional immigration and customs border policy. Its remit will include refugee and humanitarian programmes, immigration and citizenship, trade and customs, offshore maritime security and revenue collection. The new Department will lead the policy, regulatory and corporate services for the organisation, including the Australian Border Force.

The Australian Border Force, as the operational enforcement entity within the Department, will focus on our investigations, compliance and detention operations offshore and onshore, across our air and seaports, and land and maritime domains.

Yours sincerely

Dr Wendy Southern PSM
Deputy Secretary
Policy Group