



Collaboration for innovation

By LYN O'CONNELL, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture

At the Department of Agriculture, we are always exploring different initiatives and new technologies to keep Australia free of many of the world's worst pests and diseases.

We regularly collaborate with industry and recently also tapped into the creativity of small to medium businesses to better manage hitchhiking pests and contaminants on or in shipping containers.

Every year over three million containers arrive at Australian ports. With the volume of cargo entering Australia expected to double between 2015 and 2030, biosecurity risks will also increase. It is vital that we use new and diverse tools to work smarter.

We sought ideas through the **Australian Government's Business Research and Innovation Initiative**, which provides financial assistance to help businesses test and refine their designs.

This was a great opportunity to test the market for novel solutions and the business community didn't let us down.

I was delighted to see we received a large number of inventive proposals for the container initiative. The following companies have now been given funding to progress their idea to the next feasibility stage.

- Industry Spec Drones Pty Ltd—use of Integrated CS-Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), Hyperspectral Imaging and Gas Detection to detect biosecurity threats
- iugotec Pty Ltd—AI-Driven Biosecurity Threat Sensing System
- Silverpond Pty Ltd—using Autonomous Systems to improve current biosecurity inspections
- Trellis Data Pty Ltd—Biosecurity Automated Threat Detection System.

We will work closely with these companies and other industry stakeholders on the impact of their proposed solution.

I can't wait to see the outcomes.

New chapter for international ports and airports in Australia

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* recognises that biosecurity risk is elevated where international aircraft, vessels and goods arrive. Like the *Quarantine Act 1908*, the Biosecurity Act requires all international vessels and aircraft to arrive at a first point of entry unless permission has been granted to arrive elsewhere.

The two Acts differ in that ports and landing places must now meet specific legislated criteria. These criteria are intended to ensure that operators at first points of entry have processes, systems and facilities in place to effectively manage biosecurity risk. Ports and airports were given three years to meet the new criteria which ended on 16 June 2019.

Under the Biosecurity Act, a determination recognising a port or landing place as a first point of entry can only be made if the Director of Biosecurity, in consultation with the Director of Human Biosecurity, is satisfied that:

1. the prescribed requirements in the regulations have been met
2. the level of biosecurity risk is acceptable.

Rather than being included in a list of proclaimed ports and landing places, each first point of entry now has a separate legislative instrument, a *Biosecurity First Point of Entry Determination*, which details its specific arrival permissions. These permissions reflect the port or landing place's business-as-usual operations and are included only where operators have provided evidence of full compliance with regulatory requirements.

Check the determination for a first point of entry before planning vessel or aircraft movements or the importation of goods.

First points of entry may be approved for the arrival of general goods or specific goods. This information and any conditions will be listed on the determination. If approval for the type of goods is covered by the determination, they may be unloaded.

Apart from general permissions, each first point of entry determination may include one or more Biosecurity Entry Points. Biosecurity Entry Points are only named where there is additional infrastructure required to manage the biosecurity risk associated with a particular type of aircraft, vessel or good.

Where a Biosecurity Entry Point is named for the type of goods you are planning to import you must ensure those goods are unloaded only at the designated Biosecurity Entry Point. The exception to this requirement is where we have granted prior approval for the goods to be unloaded at an alternative location.

Some determinations may not include Biosecurity Entry Points. For example, if a determination lists a general permission for waste and there are no Biosecurity Entry Points for waste then those goods can be unloaded anywhere within the first point of entry.

It is important to note permissions listed in first point of entry determinations do not override commodity-specific import conditions or other legislative restrictions or controls. Make sure you check the relevant import conditions in BICON.

Determinations for first points of entry can be accessed using the search function on the Federal Register of Legislation. For more information on first points of entry biosecurity regulation contact us at biosecurityfirstpoints@agriculture.gov.au.

