



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

AQIS Report to Clients 2004–2005



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

2004–05 REPORT TO CLIENTS

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I have only been in the position of Executive Director of AQIS for about six months, however I can already see that the organisation is in very good shape. I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to help guide the organisation and to work with you, AQIS's clients, in delivering effective and efficient services.

In 2004-05, AQIS achieved a number of key outcomes and successfully addressed a range of significant challenges.

New export control orders were introduced during 2004-05 to cover the export of a range of products, including meat, dairy, eggs and fish. AQIS export certification staff worked hard to ensure that the implementation of the orders was carried out with the least inconvenience to our clients. Another major development for AQIS was the introduction of the post-Keniry review livestock export reforms in December 2004.

Revised protocols for managing illegal foreign fishing vessel inspections were implemented during the year and they address the risk posed to Australia by such vessels in Australia's northern waters.

Avian Influenza (AI) continued to be a focus of activity in order to reduce the risk to Australia's poultry industries and Australia at large. AQIS continues to minimise this risk to the extent possible at airports and seaports through 100% intervention with passengers arriving from affected countries and additional public awareness activities. Additionally, 100 per cent of all international mail is being screened for quarantine risk material including, bird and poultry products. The Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) also plays a significant role in monitoring for AI in wild bird populations in the northern parts of Australia, as well as in our near neighbours.

During the year AQIS also achieved advances with the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS), which reduces the risk of quarantine breaches resulting from ineffective fumigations performed overseas. AFAS training programs were delivered in Thailand, Malaysia and India and negotiations to introduce AFAS in China were completed. The project has already yielded dividends for AQIS. Since its implementation on 15 June 2004, AFAS has led to improved fumigation practices and a reduction in repeat fumigations of Indonesian consignments.

Following the conclusion of AQIS's five year involvement in East Timor, a memorandum of understanding, supporting collaborative activities in quarantine, was signed by Australia with Timor-Leste. These activities will help reduce the quarantine risk in Australia's northern regions.

It has been pleasing also to receive external recognition for our work. In late 2004, AQIS won a category in the Comcover Awards for Excellence in Risk Management 2004 for its work to reduce the risk of AI entering Australia. AQIS was also successful in the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission's 2005 Safety Awards, winning two awards. One award was in the Innovative Solutions category for an entry 'On Vessel Inspection Minimisation Strategies' relating to the implementation of the Bulk Fertiliser Importation and Inspection Protocols. AQIS also received a commended award in the Leadership category with an entry 'Improving Employee Safety at Non-Commonwealth Premises with the use of a Site Register to Minimise Risk of Injury'.

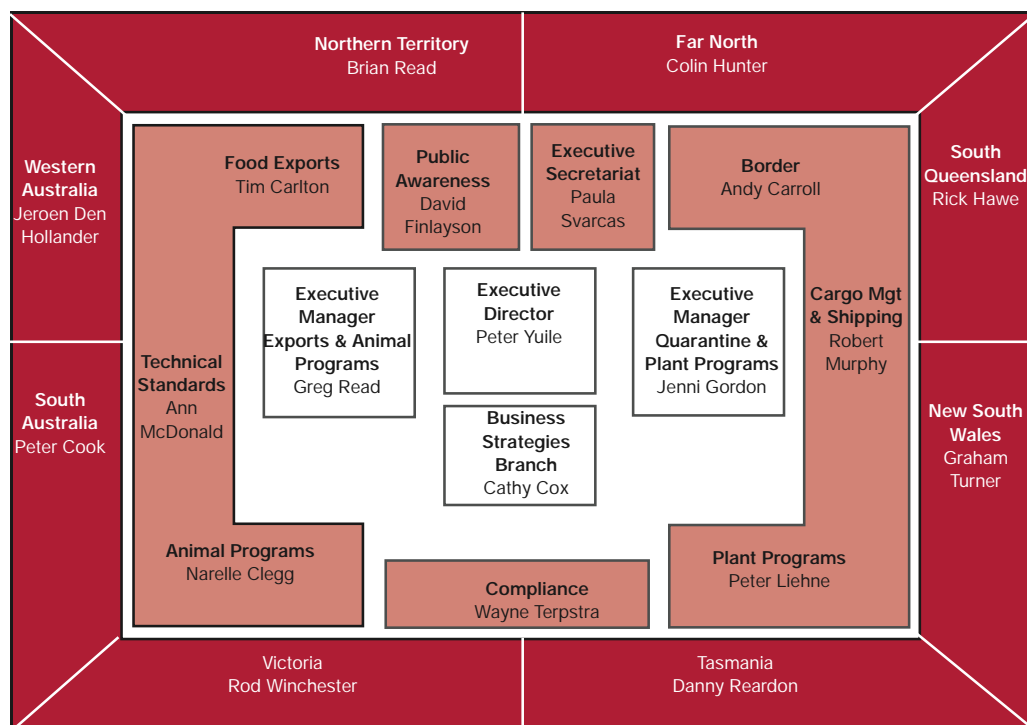
Passenger clearance facilities were improved markedly during the year with the completion of a \$7.7 million upgrade to border clearance facilities at Melbourne Airport and the opening of new offices in Townsville and Perth.

This report provides a summary of AQIS's activities and achievements during the 2004-05 financial year, and I commend it to you. I hope to meet many of you during the year, and am always open to any suggestions on how AQIS can more effectively meet your needs as we fulfil our import and export regulatory responsibilities.

Peter Yuile
Executive Director

AQIS AT A GLANCE

The AQIS organisation chart is designed to be more descriptive than the normal hierarchical diagram. It shows the regions as our front line, our main means of communication with our external stakeholders. There are deliberately no arrows showing reporting lines. The relationships between regions, central office programs and the executive group are dynamic.



AQIS OBJECTIVE

AQIS's objective is to minimise risks to Australia's animal, plant and human health status and maintain market access, through the delivery of quarantine and export services.

WORKING WITH OUR CLIENTS

AQIS endeavours to improve its service quality, value for money and client focus by working in partnership with industry to recognise clients' needs. As a regulatory agency, AQIS is committed to providing our services in ways that consider carefully the business impact on our clients.

Through bodies such as AQIS-industry consultative committees and the Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council, we work in partnership with clients to provide services that reflect the needs of industry and the community in the context of our legislative responsibilities.

AQIS' clients and stakeholders include:

- > our portfolio ministers, and through them, the Government and the Parliament;
- > the Australian community;
- > importers of animals, plants and their products;
- > exporters of animals, plants and their products;
- > passengers, owners and importers of goods passing through airports, international mail and air courier facilities and seaports;
- > industries (and their representative organisations) that rely on AQIS to negotiate national and international agreements and protocols aimed at improving market access and trade; and
- > people and entities interested in food safety, the preservation of our natural environment and human health.

AQIS conducts an annual survey of clients to evaluate their satisfaction with our services.

In 2004 the survey was split between Quarantine and Exports and will be conducted each year on a rotational basis. Export clients were surveyed in early 2005.

The eight export industry groups surveyed in 2005 were grain, horticulture, dairy, fish (land-based), fish (vessel-based), meat, export market managers and organics. The overall results indicate that 88 per cent of export clients surveyed are "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied" with the services AQIS provides. An average satisfaction figure of 7.6 (out of 10) was recorded, indicating that the majority of AQIS is meeting the genuine delivery needs of export clients. AQIS has maintained high levels of satisfaction recorded each year since 2002. Additionally, the survey indicated that the majority of export clients are satisfied that AQIS staff are professional, respectful and open in their dealings.

QUARANTINE AND EXPORTS ADVISORY COUNCIL (QEAC)

QEAC is a non-statutory, independent advisory council that:

- > provides advice to the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Director of Quarantine on major quarantine and export certification policy issues and strategic directions for AQIS;
- > inquires into and provides advice to the Minister on matters referred to it by the Minister;
- > acts as a focal point to ensure effective consultation between AQIS, industry and stakeholders;
- > provides advice on the effectiveness of AQIS's program delivery; and
- > assists AQIS in evaluating its performance.

QEAC comprises members with experience and skills in quarantine services, animal and plant health, importing and exporting, business management, the environment and communications. Mr W. Murray Rogers AM, an experienced business leader, chairs QEAC.

As at 30 June 2005 the members of QEAC were:

- > Mr Murray Rogers, AM Chairman
- > Mr John Crosby Deputy Chairman
- > Dr Joanne Daly Member
- > Mr Robert Delane Member
- > Mr Andrew Inglis Member
- > Mr Hart Krtshcil Member
- > Dr Roly Nieper Member
- > Mr Brain Jeffriess Member
- > Mr Tim Ried Member
- > Mr Lyndy Scott Member
- > Ms Carolyn Tanner Member
- > Mr John Cahill Ex-officio members
- > Ms Joanna Hewitt Ex-officio members
- > Mr Peter Yuile Ex-officio members

The Council met five times during the year.

CONSULTATION WITH INDUSTRY

AQIS maintains close and regular contact with its industry clients through industry consultative committees (ICCs), seeking to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

These ICCs assist with the formulation of efficient and practical operational measures to influence government policy and ensure that business confidence and continuity are maintained in AQIS's delivery of the Australian Government's regulatory requirements.

The ICCs are:

- > AQIS - Aviation Industry Consultative Committee
- > AQIS - Grain Industry Consultative Committee
- > AQIS - Industry Cargo Consultative Committee
- > AQIS - Halal Industry Consultative Committee
- > Biologicals Industry Consultative Group
- > Dairy Export Industry Consultative Committee
- > Export Meat Industry Advisory Committee
- > Export Wild Game Meat Industry Consultative Committee
- > Horticulture Export Consultative Committee
- > Imported Food Consultative Committee
- > Livestock Export Industry Consultative Committee
- > Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy Consultative Committee
- > Organic Industry Export Consultative Committee
- > Post-Entry Plant Industry Consultative Committee
- > Seafood Export Consultative Committee

AQIS 2004 CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Since 1995, AQIS has measured client satisfaction using the AQIS Client Satisfaction Survey. The 04-05 survey was conducted from 29 August to 9 September 2005 with a total of 817 export clients surveyed. Overall, the majority of export clients were satisfied with the service delivery provided by AQIS, resulting in an overall average satisfaction rating of 7.6 (out of ten). This is comparable to the 2004 average of 7.7 (across both quarantine and export clients). One third of clients reported that their satisfaction had improved over the last two years whilst over half said that satisfaction level had remained the same. These figures are consistent with survey results from 2002-2004. Seventy-six per cent of clients reported that they considered our staff to be professional and 68 per cent reported that AQIS adequately consults with clients and industry. A full copy of the report is available on our website. Quarantine clients will be surveyed in 2006.

QUARANTINE

The Australian Government's on going funding for the Increased Quarantine Intervention initiative enabled AQIS to continue to maintain, monitor and, where necessary, strengthen Australia's quarantine border during the 2004-05 period. Effectiveness levels have increased with the development of more sophisticated profiling techniques, ongoing training and targeted recording.

At airports, the intervention target of 81 per cent was maintained for the entire year. The 100 per cent intervention target for vessels, seaport passengers and mail arriving from overseas was also maintained throughout the year. One hundred per cent external inspection of all imported sea containers and an average of 95 per cent for imported air cargo containers was reached. The intervention level for High Volume Low Value (HVLV) air cargo remained steady throughout 2004-05 with an average of 96 per cent.

During the year, AQIS progressed a number of strategies designed to reduce the risk of pests and diseases entering Australia via imported cargo. A national resource model was developed to improve resource utilisation levels and to facilitate timely and effective clearance of goods. Revised approval criteria for all quarantine approved premises will enable greater quarantine integrity and increased protection against pests and diseases.

AQIS's detector dogs at Australia's airports, international mail centres and seaports continued to play a vital role in reducing the risk to Australia from the introduction of exotic pests and diseases. AQIS continued to review procedures and improve the effectiveness of detector dog inspection services. Initiatives included the introduction of on-body detection methods for dog teams operating at international airports, the addition of seeds to the targeted list for 'passive response' dogs and alternative screening methods for international mail.

The Sea Passenger Intervention Review was finalised and AQIS commenced to implement the Review's 23 recommendations. This will lead to improved national consistency of passenger clearance. Illegal foreign fishing vessels pose a new risk pathway for the introduction of exotic pests and diseases. An Illegal Foreign Fishing Vessel Processing Protocol was developed to ensure national consistency in the management of these vessels and their associated risks.

Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy

The Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) aims to reduce the risk to the Australian community by early detection of possible introduction of exotic pests, weeds and diseases.

Border operations in the Torres Strait remained a strong focus of NAQS activity. During 2004-05 officers inspected and cleared luggage from more than 95,000 domestic passengers moving from quarantine zones in the Torres Strait to the Australian mainland.

NAQS on-shore surveillance continued in 2004-05. Asian papaya and New Guinea fruit flies were detected in the Torres Strait and subsequent control strategies were successfully implemented. Monitoring detected movement of bluetongue virus serotypes into new areas, however the new areas were within the known zone of bluetongue virus transmission. Japanese encephalitis was detected, as expected, in sentinel pigs on Badu Island for the fifth wet season in succession. Plant and animal health surveys were completed in accordance with operational plans and the survey schedule aimed at addressing risks over a five year period, remained on target.

In February 2005 NAQS hosted the Quadripartite Committee on Agricultural Health and Quarantine with Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea. Australia signed new memoranda of understanding with Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste which document agreements between the Governments to collaborate on agricultural health and quarantine issues. Scientific teams conducted surveys for pests and diseases with their counterparts in neighbouring countries.

A major focus of overseas activities in 2004–05 was avian influenza, in response to the outbreaks in East and Southeast Asia. This included both assistance with surveys and monitoring activity, as well as with required diagnostic capacity.

Information from overseas activities was used by AQIS and Australia's agricultural industries to assess and mitigate quarantine risks. The pest and disease status of neighbouring countries informed Australia of the quarantine measures necessary at Australia's ports and was also useful in identifying the pests and diseases targeted on NAQS domestic surveys, as well as informing our development assistance activity in their countries.

EXPORTS

New legislative changes for the export of meat, dairy, grain and fish came into effect on July 2005. The legislative changes implement the outcome of the national competition policy review of the Export Control Act (ECA) 1982, that included harmonisation of the domestic and international standards, whilst ensuring that food safety and import country requirements are met. AQIS consulted extensively with its clients and industry consultative committees to ensure a smooth transition to the new legislative arrangements.

Implementation of electronic certification (E-cert) has led to improved security and traceability of export certification. In 2004–05 the United States of America, Canada, Jordan, Singapore, South Korea, Chinese Taipei, New Zealand and the United Kingdom all participated in E-cert trials. Jordan adopted E-cert as part of its clearance process to replace embassy-based authentication of documents for meat shipments.

The Live Animal Export Program introduced new legislation on 1 December 2004 in line with the government's decision to increase regulatory control of the live export industry, as recommended by the Keniry Review. The new legislation requires all livestock exporters to be licensed, and that livestock be prepared in accordance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL). An AQIS-approved shipboard veterinarian is now required to be aboard all live export shipments to the Middle East and must provide daily, as well as end of voyage, reports to AQIS on the health and general welfare of the livestock.

In addition, the Australian Government has signed memoranda of understanding with the major importers of Australian livestock in the Middle East, including Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. These MoUs detail the conditions under which livestock are exported and include the provision that in the event of a dispute concerning the health of the animals, the animals will be unloaded into a quarantine station rather than left on the vessel.

The Meat Program continued to ensure market access for Australian meat exports by implementing and maintaining operational systems that provide an improved level of national consistency in the regulatory control of meat processing across Australia. This improvement is attested to in a range of audit reports produced by auditors from a number of countries, including the United States of America, the European Union, China, Malaysia and Korea, who assessed the export meat system during 2004–05. National consistency in service delivery is being promoted through the implementation of a comprehensive training strategy and the development of a quality system that provides standardised procedures to AQIS staff. New export meat legislation, the Export **Control (Meat and Meat Product) Orders 2005**, commenced on 1 July 2005. In early 2005 joint AQIS and industry training was delivered Australia-wide in preparation for the commencement of this legislation.

The Grain Export Program, in conjunction with the Joint Accreditation Systems of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ), implemented a certification scheme to address the needs of exporters in meeting the importing country requirements for wood packaging. This follows international acceptance of the International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures Number 15 (ISPM 15) established under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The AQIS scheme, the Australian Wood Packaging Certification Scheme (AWPCS), is based on JAS-ANZ accredited third party auditors assessing treatment providers and manufacturers of wood packaging to determine if they meet the requirements specified in the ISPM 15. The new *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Orders 2005* was approved by the Minister, for commencement on 1 July 2005. The Orders simplify the legislative framework by amalgamating the three previous Orders relating to the export of plants and plant products, updating amendments and removing outdated or irrelevant legislation.

The Horticulture Export Program continued to work with industry to protect export markets by ensuring that Australian exports meet importing country requirements. The program contributed to negotiations with Biosecurity Australia and peak industry bodies resulting in new and improved market access for Australian horticulture produce. A significant breakthrough was the export of citrus to Japan from the Riverland under Japan's acceptance of area freedom from Queensland fruit fly. Other improvements to market access included potatoes to Korea, citrus to Thailand and mangoes to China.

In 2004-05, the Organic and Biodynamic Program, in conjunction with the AQIS Technical Standards Branch, commenced a review of the *Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders 1997*, in anticipation of changes to overseas regulations and standards for the inspection and certification of organic produce by certifying organisations. As a consequence of this review, objectives of the legislative amendments include clear-cut requirements for the export of goods labelled as organic and biodynamic under a country-to-country equivalency system, as well as special arrangements such as those offered under an importing country "conformity assessment" scheme.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

AQIS Bulletin

The *AQIS Bulletin* provides a range of information on activities of relevance to industry clients and the community and is published 11 times a year. The newsletter is distributed free-of-charge. Copies can be arranged by phoning (02) 6272 5151 or via the AQIS homepage at www.aqis.gov.au.

Quarantine awareness

The *Quarantine Matters!* national and international quarantine awareness campaign continued to make significant progress during the year. The campaign is aimed at a range of audiences, including international travelers to Australia (both returning Australians and visitors), cargo importers, international mail recipients, students, the travel industry and rural industries.

The campaign uses various forms of media to raise quarantine awareness, including print and electronic advertising, direct marketing, industry expos and displays, news releases and events and special communications to non-English speaking audiences. The messages are directed on-shore and off-shore to reach people before they travel, or export, to Australia. Television, cinema and print advertising featuring the 'Crocodile Hunter', Mr Steve Irwin, continued to be a major and successful component of the campaign. Three new television commercials went to air nationally in May and June 2005, targeting both Australians planning to travel and the recipients of international mail or cargo.

Tracking research of key target audiences during the year showed that overall awareness of the television campaign within the general Australian community was maintained at over 80 per cent. Importantly the campaign messages are getting through, with people's intention to declare items of quarantine concern when traveling increasing by six percent, to a very high 92 per cent, since late 2002, when television advertising was introduced to the campaign.

The *Top Watch* awareness campaign, as part of the Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy (NAQS), has been designed for northern Australian audiences, from Broome, in the west, to Cairns, in the east. It is planned, funded and operated separately from the *Quarantine Matters!* campaign, but there are close links between the two.

Top Watch aims to encourage the reporting of unusual pest and disease occurrences to quarantine officers by local communities, industry groups and visitors in northern Australia. Key campaign activities include weekly radio broadcasts in the Torres Strait and other remote areas, quarantine signage on all inhabited Torres Strait islands, production of annual calendars for the Torres Strait and Cape York, production of a quarterly NAQS newsletter to update key stakeholders, distribution of a quarantine wall-planner in Western Australia and the Northern Territory and NAQS displays / exhibits at agricultural and community shows.

During 2004-05, AQIS continued a range of initiatives to raise awareness about the quarantine risks of AI to Australia. These communications were incorporated into the *Quarantine Matters!* and *Top Watch* campaigns and included additional message-specific advertising, signage and media relations work.

COMPLIANCE AND INVESTIGATIONS

The Compliance and Investigations Program is a strategic and operational team that reports directly to the AQIS Executive Director. This AQIS Program works in partnership with government and industry stakeholders to achieve high compliance outcomes.

The Program delivers a variety of services such as detecting, investigating and prosecuting offenders, the application of integrity standards, educating industry to reduce non-compliant behaviour and the identification and reporting of regulatory risks.

AQIS investigated 881 incidents of suspected/alleged breaches of AQIS legislation and issued 32 letters of warning. Three matters were referred to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP). Prosecutions were successful in four matters. There is one matter currently being considered by the CDPP. No current matters are before the Courts.

During the year AQIS also undertook 33 proactive initiatives which help AQIS identify risks affecting the quarantine and export environment. This approach will continue in 2005-06.

AQIS also maintains an intelligence gathering and risk assessment capability and routinely applies a commodity-based risk assessment/risk identification methodology (CRAM). A total of 11 CRAMs were conducted during the year.

AQIS REDLINE is a confidential, free-call phone hotline for the receipt of alleged breaches of AQIS-administered laws, and 480 calls were received with 74 calls determined as merit calls (calls the agency may not ordinarily have received). These merit calls are subject to further investigation.

AQIS also completed a pilot of a new initiative called 'Industry Compliance Evaluation' (ICE). An ICE involves an informal meeting with a business enterprise to help it evaluate the systems and processes it requires to be compliant with all of its legislative, regulatory and industry practice obligations. Eighteen ICE's were completed during the pilot. All were positively received by industry. AQIS is now examining the prospect of broadening this initiative to a broader range of business operations.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth Auditor General audits AQIS's financial statements and reports his audit findings to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Statements are reported in the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry *Annual Report*, available on the Department's website (www.daff.gov.au) and are conveyed to our clients through AQIS-industry consultative committees. A summary of cost recovered program financial results for the year is provided in the table below.

2004-05

	Revenue (\$,000s)	Expenditure (\$,000s)	Surplus/(Deficit) Before transfers (\$,000s)	Cost Recovery (%) *	Transfer to/from Industry Accounts	Surplus/ (Deficit) After transfers (\$,000s)	Accum. Result	Income Equalisation Reserve	Rebates/ Industry Initiatives
Live Animal Exports	3,650	3,468	182	105%	-	182	(483)	-	-
Grain Exports	10,105	8,706	1,398	116%	(1,398)	-	-	871	1,178
Horticultural Exports	5,400	6,154	(754)	88%	754	-	-	615	146
Dairy	1,431	1,348	83	106%	(83)	-	-	135	141
Fish	4,023	3,839	185	105%	(185)	-	-	131	-
Organics	198	184	14	108%	(14)	-	-	15	-
Post Entry Animal Quarantine	3,912	4,059	(147)	96%	35	(112)	(112)	-	-
Import Clearance	82,315	90,405	(8,090)	91%	8,090	-	-	3,752	-
International Mail	16,947	16,791	156	101%	(156)	-	-	624	-
Post Entry Plant Quarantine	2,057	1,960	97	105%	-	97	(176)	-	-
Airports	72,118	71,861	257	100%	(3)	254	-	114	-
Seaports	10,815	11,148	(333)	97%	333	-	-	211	-
Meat Inspection	61,579	63,908	(2,329)	96%	2,329	-	-	2,264	-
Other	31,935	31,193	742	-	-	742	-	-	-
Total	306,483	315,203	(8,540)		9,702	1,163	(771)	8,732	1,465

* This figure represents the cost recovery percentage of revenue to expenditure. AQIS aims to ensure 100% cost recovery in any one year.

The financial results for most cost-recovered programs were either met by or increased available funding in their Industry Liability Accounts. The exceptions comprised of Live Animal Exports and Post Entry Plant Quarantine, which reduced their accumulated deficit, and Post Entry Animal Quarantine will carry forward accumulated deficits after exhausting their Industry Liability Accounts.

REGIONAL SNAPSHOTS

New South Wales

AQIS New South Wales had approximately 827 staff at the end of June 2005.

The region delivered services for the majority of AQIS programs, including quarantine border services at airports, seaports and international mail centres, animal and plant quarantine services and the certification of exports of live animals, meat, organics, fish, grain and horticultural products.

In the year to 30 June 2005, the region issued more than 35,500 certificates for export meat and inedible products. It inspected 6,719 tonnes of export fruit and vegetables and 3.2 million tonnes of export grain.

Airport staff cleared over 4.5 million arriving international passengers and over 300,000 crew through Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport. Fourteen x-ray machines and 15 detector dog teams supported the quarantine service undertaken by AQIS staff.

Staff at ports inspected close to 3,000 incoming overseas vessels. The external inspection of 100 per cent of imported sea freight containers was maintained, with more than 494,700 containers referred for further treatment due to the presence of contaminants. For break bulk cargo, over 191,000 items were cleared at Port Kembla and Sydney while 350,000 metric tonnes of break bulk was inspected at Newcastle.

The Newcastle Fertiliser National Co-ordination Centre assessed and managed 150 consignments of imported bulk fertiliser, totalling over 4 million tonnes, with no rejections.

Screening of all incoming air cargo was maintained along with enhanced screening of high volume, low value air cargo and the external inspection of air cargo containers. Increased screening of cruise ship passengers and day-trippers was maintained.

Staff at the Quarantine Mail Handling Unit and Clyde Mail Centres screened more than 93 million incoming articles of mail.

The Eastern Creek Animal Quarantine Station quarantined over 3,000 animals, comprising cats, dogs, horses and bees. Over 23,000 crops were received at the Plant Quarantine Station, comprising stone and pome fruits, citrus, grapes, seed lines, clonal grass, high and medium-risk ornamentals and tissue cultures.

Victoria

AQIS Victoria had approximately 533 staff at the end of June 2005.

The region delivered services for a majority of AQIS programs, including quarantine border services across a range of operational locations and certifying exports of live animals, reproductive material, meat and meat products, fruit and vegetables, dairy and grain.

Exported from the region in 2004-05 were over 280,000 live animals, 733,000 doses of reproductive material, over 12 thousand tonnes of meat, 27,500 tonnes of logs and 3.7 million tonnes of grain.

Continued growth of international air passenger arrivals through Melbourne International Airport resulted in over 2 million passengers and their accompanied luggage being processed and cleared. This included 800,000 passengers declaring items of quarantine concern.

The Port of Melbourne processed more than 1,900,000 containers in 2004-05 while 18 cruise vessels were processed through the ports of Melbourne and Geelong. In addition, AQIS inspected 400,000 items of break bulk cargo and 65,000 packs of timber. Approximately 10,000 containers were subject to inspection due to the risk of Giant African Snail.

The Melbourne Airmail Transit Centre screened and cleared 32 million articles of mail.

South Australia

AQIS South Australia had approximately 141 staff at the end of June 2005.

The region experienced growth in import and export activity across most major programs. Fish, grain and dairy exports remained reasonably steady over the year while meat and horticulture exports trended upwards. Despite dry conditions, demand for export grain inspection services remained high. During the year, 5 million tonnes of bulk grain and 330,000 tonnes of grain and hay was inspected and certified for overseas destinations. The exports of fresh citrus to the USA continued to grow and exports of citrus to Japan has commenced under new fruit fly area freedom arrangements. The trend to export citrus fruit is expected to increase as new markets such as China become available.

Total meat production for 2004-05 was 4.5 million head compared to 5.1 million in 2003-04. Increases in sheep/lamb, pig and beef numbers far out-weighed decreases in game meat production caused by drought conditions.

Adelaide experienced a record growth in numbers of airline passengers, increasing to 180,000 for the year. This represents a 25.7 percent increase in international travellers requiring quarantine clearance.

Vessel inspections remained steady with 178 first port vessels inspected at the nine proclaimed South Australian ports. External container inspections also remained steady, with close to 54,000 inspected at the World Terminal.

Far North

AQIS Far North employed approximately 161 staff as at 30 June 2005.

AQIS Far North delivered inspection services for a range of AQIS programs and supplied support for offshore response and inspection activities such as in Timor-Leste, the Solomon Islands, USA, Canada, and New Zealand.

Exports from the Far North region continued to grow during 2004-05, with new commodities and export destinations being identified by local exporters. AQIS assisted with the introduction of mango hand carry packs into the Japanese market. Local mangoes from the Atherton Tablelands were treated using Vapor Heat Treatment (VHT), according to protocols established with the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and sold at the Cairns International Airport to returning Japanese tourists.

The airport maintained 100% intervention on international passengers and crew travelling from Avian Influenza affected countries over the last 12 months. The number of international passenger arrivals grew by 6.4% with additional flights into Cairns provided by Air New Zealand and Continental Micronesia. The region also participated in the quarantine clearance of a large number of military personnel for the Talisman Sabre exercise.

The region assisted in delivering the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) program, which includes the control of goods brought from Papua New Guinea into the Torres Strait Islands under the provision for traditional trading, made available by the Torres Strait Treaty.

Officers from Bamaga and Cairns took part in the Laura Dance Festival which is a biannual event held at the Ang-gnarra festival grounds just south of Laura. This indigenous event attracted Cape York and Torres Strait communities for three days of traditional dance, music and song. This was an opportunity to raise quarantine awareness amongst indigenous communities that live on country, have intimate knowledge of their environment and who can become the 'eyes and ears' of AQIS in remote northern Australia.

Southern Queensland

AQIS South Queensland employed approximately 515 staff as at 30 June 2005.

The Southern Queensland region services clients in the geographical area from Rockhampton in Central Queensland south to Yamba in Northern NSW. All export meat activities for Queensland and the Northern Territory are serviced through the South Queensland region.

Brisbane's Operational Sciences and Exports staff developed a training package in Grains Insect Awareness and Shed Hygiene for industry. The training is designed to help prevent destructive insect infestations and maintain Australia's ability to export consistently high quality grain to world markets.

With a 25 percent increase in incoming passenger numbers at Brisbane International Airport in 2004, there was a need to extend AQIS's work area in the baggage hall. By the beginning of 2005, AQIS had worked with Brisbane Airport Corporation to achieve the installation of four new inspection bays and two new x-ray machines – set up in an innovative configuration which has increased efficiency in passenger processing.

The Queensland-based National Coordination Centre (NCC) for Military and Machinery managed AQIS's response to operation Talisman Sabre – a joint exercise with the US military. The operation required the deployment of 22 AQIS officers to numerous military bases in the US and the Pacific to conduct off-shore inspections of machinery and equipment. The NCC also successfully coordinated AQIS's response to the tsunami in Asia, sending 12 staff to Banda Aceh to pre-clear military machinery for its return to Australia.

AQIS received a Commonwealth Regional Heads Forum Excellence Award for a range of initiatives at Brisbane International Airport.

AQIS initiated and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Queensland State Government, local councils and corporate agencies at the Gold Coast to formalise a strategy for surveillance, control and eradication of exotic mosquitoes around the Gold Coast's ports.

Northern Territory

As at 30 June 2005 the region employed approximately 45 employees.

The site of the new Darwin regional office was selected during 2003-04. The new office will be completed in November 2005 and will be located at Darwin International Airport.

Exports of timber logs from Melville Island commenced during the year, with AQIS staff clearing arriving vessels in this remote port under special arrangements and certifying the export of these consignments.

The region successfully managed a 33 percent increase on last year in illegal foreign fishing vessel interceptions and played a lead role with Australian Government agencies in managing the associated quarantine risks.

The region assisted in delivering the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) program, with involvement in pest and disease monitoring in remote coastal areas, providing training to aboriginal ranger groups on disease awareness and assisted with overseas NAQS surveys particularly in Timor Leste.

There was an increase in Japan Airlines' passenger jet charter flights direct into Alice Springs from Japan during 2004-05. A combination of both AQIS Northern Territory and Far North staff flew to Alice Springs to perform aircraft and passenger clearance.

Alcan in Gove commenced Phase 3 of an expansion project that will result in a \$2 billion infrastructure development due to be completed in June 2006. This project is currently Australia's largest construction development project. The components are pre-assembled in Thailand and Malaysia and will arrive in 22 separate consignments during the period of construction. AQIS staff from Darwin will perform the bulk of the offshore inspections and a Quarantine Approved Premise has been established for the life of the project in Gove by Alcan under AQIS supervision.

Military exercises continue to be regularly conducted in the NT during the dry season and during 2004-05 AQIS staff in Darwin were regularly involved in the inspection and processing of military personnel and equipment of participating foreign defence forces.

Tasmania

AQIS services are provided in all the major regions of Tasmania (north, north-west and south) by staff employed by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries Water and Environment (DPIWE). This arrangement is under a Memorandum of Understanding between DPIWE and AQIS and funded 18 full time equivalent staff during 2004-05.

The Fuji apple exports to Japan continued this year and, although the export volume was low, outturn reports from Japan indicated that the quality of the produce was very good. Cherry exports to Taiwan and European destinations also increased significantly with exports occurring from the three major growing regions of the State. Staff were relocated to ensure client demands for export inspections were met.

The centralisation of AQIS Import Management System (AIMS) and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) processing into Hobart provided efficiencies in other areas of the State, freeing resources to undertake more field work on wharves and in Quarantine Approved Premises (QAPs).

Cruise ship arrivals into the State increased by 75 percent (from 22 last year to 39 this year). Most vessels call to Hobart but a number also call to the northern ports of the State. Where possible, detector dogs are used as part of the vessel clearance.

Western Australia

As at 30 June 2005 the region employed approximately 336 employees.

The relocation of the regional office to the Perth International Airport precinct has been a significant boost for Western Australia. The new premises provide AQIS with a high profile location, raising community awareness of AQIS's presence and role in the community.

More than half of Australia's total bulk grain exports were exported from WA in 2004-05. Over 11 million tonnes was loaded onto ships. Over 700,000 tonnes was exported in small trade grain.

The number of consignments and volume of horticultural exports was down compared with the previous financial year. Strong competition from overseas markets such as China, in addition to a higher Australian dollar, placed extreme pressure on this industry. Exporters have been proactive in searching for new markets.

Operations at Perth International Airport averaged an intervention rate of 96.6 percent for all passengers, with 100 percent for travellers returning from Avian Influenza-affected countries. Passenger entries into Perth increased by 14.2 percent in the last six months of the 2004-05 financial year to 535,000.

In 2004-05, seaports staff in WA inspected 4,600 overseas vessels. Of these, over 4,000 were first port arrival vessels, including two cruise ships visiting the ports of Fremantle, Broome and Wyndham. Inspectors cleared 2,200 permanent disembarking passengers from these vessels and screened 5,200 passengers disembarking for day trips.

Staff at International Post Perth cleared more than 8.2 million mail items, a nine percent increase over the previous financial year. The number of seizures also increased by 14 percent.

A downturn in import clearance activities was noted in WA during 2004-05. However activities in WA's north increased in association with prominent gas, mining and fertiliser developments. Significant exotic borer intercepts were discovered in several consignments of equipment to service these projects.