

# AQIS Bulletin



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine  
and Inspection Service

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## QANTAS wins National Quarantine Award



Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Tony Burke, MP, with Major Emmet O'Mahoney, Australian Defence Force Joint Movements Control Office (Public Sector Award winner 2008) and Dianna Andrade, QANTAS (National Quarantine Award winner 2008) *Story on page 2*

## Rob Delane arrives as AQIS Executive Director

Mr Rob Delane started on 3 November as Executive Director for AQIS and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, overseeing biosecurity.

Mr Delane has extensive experience in biosecurity policy, regulation and operations, most recently as Deputy Director General (Biosecurity and Research) in the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia.

'I'm looking forward to the opportunities for Australia's biosecurity and quarantine services as they continue to evolve in a rapidly changing operating environment.

'Many of the challenges we face require national solutions involving strong partnerships and effective collaboration with the States/Territories and our major client groups,' Mr Delane said.

## Good report card on Callinan implementation

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has received the first assessment report on its implementation of the Government's response to the Callinan Inquiry into the 2007 horse flu outbreak.

Professor Peter Shergold, AC, was engaged to oversee progress of the Government's response to the Inquiry recommendations.

Professor Shergold found that planning and implementation of the Government's response, led by AQIS and Biosecurity Australia, were of a high standard and being undertaken with a necessary sense of timeliness.

*Story continued on page 3*



Readers who wish to comment on any item published in the *AQIS Bulletin*, or to seek further information, can contact the editor by e-mail: [pr@aqis.gov.au](mailto:pr@aqis.gov.au) or by post:

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The *AQIS Bulletin* is issued free to individuals and organisations involved in quarantine and inspection matters.

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## QANTAS wins National Quarantine Award

A QANTAS team responsible for the clearance of returning Olympic and Paralympic athletes from the Beijing games has won the Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council (QEAC) National Quarantine Award 2008.

The award was presented by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Tony Burke MP, at Parliament House on 2 December 2008.

QANTAS was chosen for its substantial co-operation with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), embodying a shared responsibility for quarantine and biosecurity.

QEAC Chair John Crosby said, 'QEAC hosts the annual awards ceremony to acknowledge individuals, organisations and groups that have made an outstanding contribution to Australian quarantine and biosecurity management.

'There were 37 nominees from across Australia and eight regional winners nominated for the national award' Mr Crosby said.

Among the regional winners were the Anindilyakwa Rangers from the Northern Territory who use their unique training and knowledge of the region to monitor pests and diseases; Vikki Miteff who promotes quarantine messages through her community radio station in Tasmania; and Joshua Roberts, a seven year-old Victorian boy who alerted AQIS to seeds contained in a gift sent by his grandparents in England.

Speaking at the awards, Minister Burke said 'We must remain vigilant and maintain rigorous quarantine and biosecurity systems to help protect our agricultural and fishing industries from pests and disease.

'I encourage all Australians to recognise

their role in protecting the health of Australia's plants and animals', Mr Burke said.

The new AQIS Executive Director, Rob Delane, who was the MC at the ceremony said, 'We cannot be everywhere—community, government and industry partners play a vital role in helping to protect Australia.

'These partnerships are crucial to our ongoing biosecurity integrity'.

The Minister also presented the 2008 Quarantine Public Sector Award, which recognises an outstanding quarantine or biosecurity achievement by a government organisation. It went to the Australian Defence Force Joint Movements Control Office in Darwin, for holding pre-deployment quarantine briefings for troops.

For more information see [www.aqis.gov.au](http://www.aqis.gov.au)

## MAFBNZ and AQIS—a trans-Tasman alignment

The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) is working closely with the MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ) Cargo Directorate through a trans-Tasman Operational Working Group to build greater alignment and knowledge sharing between the two agencies.

Both parties are investigating a mutual recognition agreement. Mutual recognition is the system by which one government agency accepts that the systems of a second government agency achieves an equivalent outcome.

AQIS officer Patricia Thornhill, Manager, Sea Cargo Unit of Imports Clearance, is liaising with MAFBNZ Cargo Directorate to agree on the terms for the operation of the trials. This included a full documentation assessment of import conditions/standards and processes as well as site reviews both here and in New Zealand.

Two initiatives have been proposed for trialling. The first is MAFBNZ inspection of used passenger vehicles in Japan for export to Australia. The proposal investigates having MAFBNZ inspectors perform the same offshore inspection they currently operate for NZ bound vehicles for those heading to Australia. At present vehicles bound for Australia are all inspected on arrival. AQIS aims to

recognise New Zealand's Import Health Standard processes for used vehicles.

Patricia visited MAFBNZ in Auckland in September to review the used vehicle inspections regime at the Auckland wharf



**AQIS officer Patricia Thornhill (centre) and MAFBNZ officer Debbie Beer (second from right) observe a used vehicle inspection**

looking at both pre-cleared vehicles and the full inspection process.

The second initiative is AQIS inspection and assurance of nominated risk goods for export to New Zealand. This trial will look at international companies with commercial stores in Australia and New Zealand that hold goods in large distribution warehouses located in Australia. Any goods that are imported into Australia are subject to the AQIS import requirements and undergo a clearance process. These same goods are repackaged and forwarded on to commercial stores in New Zealand, where on arrival they are subject to MAFBNZ import requirements and are required to undergo the MAFBNZ clearance process. MAFBNZ seeks to recognise the AQIS import clearance procedures and assurances that the third party can demonstrate supply chain risk management and that the distribution centres have adequate measures in place to prevent cross contamination and re-infestation.

On Saturday 18 October, the first pre-inspected shipment arrived and representatives of MAFBNZ and a car carrier representative from Japan were present to witness the AQIS verification inspections.

'All inspections went well and overall cleanliness of the vehicles was very good.' Patricia said.

## Birds know no borders

Story by Debbie Smith

Pre dawn light, cold mornings, patience and evasive birds all contributed to a record catch for the annual wild bird survey for Far North Queensland.

These surveys are conducted as part of AQIS monitoring for exotic bird diseases including Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) commonly known as 'bird flu'. In September this year a team of AQIS's Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) staff sampled wild birds captured around Hasties Swamp and Gallo's dairy farm at Atherton on the tablelands west of Cairns.

In total 287 serum samples were collected for HPAI serology and 286 cloacal swabs collected for scientific testing at an animal health laboratory in Geelong. Thankfully, no evidence of exotic disease was evident in any waterfowl examined during the survey.

This year's team consisted of AQIS officers Beth Cookson and Tim Kerlin from Cairns and John Curran from Broome as well as other AQIS staff from 'up-north'. The capture and release activities were overseen by Chris Hassell, a consultant from Global Flyway Network (GFN) in Broome. The GFN is a partnership between researchers worldwide, devoted to long term, usually demographic, work on long distance migrating shorebirds.



The NAQS team secures Magpie geese after netting them at Hasties Swamp, Far North Queensland

AQIS plays an important role in monitoring for exotic bird disease risks to Australia through surveillance and catch and release activities from Cairns to Broome. Waterfowl, including Magpie geese and Plumed Whistling ducks are more resistant to the effects of the virus and are therefore more likely to be hosts of the virus compared to other species. For this reason places where large numbers of these birds congregate are identified as target areas.

The birds were captured using a technique called 'cannon netting'. Nets, as large as 27 metres in length, are attached

to projectiles which are fired out of cannons loaded with gun powder. The nets were set and disguised on the shores of wetlands and creek beds.

HPAI is a viral disease that affects bird's respiratory, digestive and nervous systems. In countries where the disease is present it affects both wild and domestic populations, with chickens, turkeys, pigeons, geese, swans and ducks vulnerable. Importantly, migrating or nomadic wild birds can also carry and spread the virus without showing signs of sickness and so provide a valuable focus for AQIS monitoring activities.

## Good report card on Callinan implementation

*Continued from page 1*

Several recommendations have been completed including:

- revised interim quarantine measures and import conditions
- upgraded facilities at the Melbourne and Sydney international airports and Spotswood and Eastern Creek quarantine stations
- updated work instructions for quarantine officers and private sector personnel
- new interim horse fees at Government quarantine stations of \$165 a day for throughbred stallions and \$65 a day for all other horses

Dr Kevin Dunn, the recently appointed Interim Inspector General of Horse

Importation, visited Eastern Creek and Spotswood Quarantine Stations, and completed inspections and audits of overseas pre-export quarantine facilities in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Macau.

An Expert Group on horse importation, established to provide biosecurity containment and animal welfare advice at the airports and quarantine stations, has already inspected facilities at Melbourne Airport, Spotswood and Sandown Quarantine Stations.

Biosecurity Australia announced a new horse import risk analysis and is inspecting quarantine operations at a range of pre-export and post-arrival facilities.

AQIS and Biosecurity Australia are working closely with the horse industry,

importers, airports, airlines and freight handlers to implement the recommendations. AQIS has also established a formal consultative process through the Horse Industry Consultative Committee to ensure that industry issues are considered when implementing the Inquiry recommendations.

Professor Shergold's report is the first of six assessments that he will provide to Minister Burke on the implementation of the government's response to the Callinan Inquiry, with the final report to be delivered by June 2010.

The report and further information on the government's response to the Inquiry are available at: [www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/about/eiimplementation](http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/about/eiimplementation)

## CODEX

Public information about Codex meetings, agenda and standards and related texts included in the Codex Alimentarius is available on the internet. The web address for Codex Australia is [www.codexaustralia.gov.au](http://www.codexaustralia.gov.au)

For further information phone 02 6272 5692

## SPS

The World Trade Organization's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures provides a regular forum for consultation and for the implementation of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, in particular international harmonisation of SPS measures.

For copies of the documents listing Notifications phone 02 6272 5252

## International plant protection convention

The IPPC is an international treaty to secure action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products and to promote appropriate measures for their control. It is governed by the Commission of Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), which adopts International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures.

For further information phone the Australian IPPC Secretariat on 02 6272 4837

## REDLINE

If you believe someone you know has broken Australia's quarantine, meat or food inspection laws, we want to hear from you!

AQIS Compliance staff need your help to identify and prosecute people who are breaking our quarantine and inspection laws. We value contributions from concerned citizens—because everyone has a part to play in helping AQIS protect our primary industries, environment and way of life.

**Call 1800 803 006**

or write to:  
AQIS Redline  
GPO Box 858  
Canberra ACT 2601

## Machinery officers fine-tune their skills

Story by **Maryanne Kepui and Emma Cooney**

Defence force personnel often work in dirty conditions where they, and their equipment, are exposed to all sorts of environmental contaminants that are of quarantine concern to Australia.

AQIS inspects and clears an increasing amount of commercial machinery and military equipment. Machinery officers deal with onshore activities daily and are routinely asked by commercial and military clients to travel offshore to perform quarantine inspections.

The Machinery and Military National Coordination Centre (M&M NCC) manage the operational aspects of importing this equipment and provide advice and support to all AQIS regions.

In September the AQIS Machinery and Military Working Group held its annual two-day workshop in Brisbane to re-accredit regional machinery officers.

The Australian Defence Force Joint Logistics Unit allowed the AQIS officers to undertake their practical exercises and perform mock inspections on military equipment at the Bulimba and Enoggera barracks in Queensland.

The annual workshop ensures that AQIS officers in smaller states, who may not see large amounts of machinery or military equipment, have the experience to conduct effective inspections with a consistent application of import conditions and standardised procedures nation-wide.

In the past 12 months, the Brisbane based M&M NCC arranged and coordinated offshore activities resulting in the deployment of AQIS officers overseas for over 1300 days. These inspections could not have taken place without the specialised skills of AQIS machinery officers.



**AQIS officers Arnold Berber (front) and Daniel Roberts are put through their paces, inspecting an Australian Defence Force LandRover**

### Did you know...

In a single hour AQIS processes:

- 1200 incoming passengers
- 260 high volume, low value air cargo items
- 170 sea cargo containers
- 50 air cargo containers

*To our clients and stakeholders,  
wishing you all the best for the Festive Season*



## For more information about AQIS services, contact:

	ANIMAL QUARANTINE	PLANT QUARANTINE	EXPORT INSPECTION Meat/dairy/fish	EXPORT INSPECTION Fruit/veg/grains	IMPORTED FOOD INSPECTION
NSW	02 8334 7436	02 8334 7422	02 8334 7488	02 8334 7447	02 8334 7475
VIC	03 8308 5072	03 8318 6977	03 8308 5094	03 8308 5101	03 8318 6902
QLD	07 3246 8731	07 3246 8766	07 3246 8743	07 3246 8603	07 3246 8715
SA	08 8201 6007	08 8201 6007	08 8201 6035	08 8201 6035	08 8201 6025
WA	08 9334 1555	08 9334 1555	08 9334 1555	08 9334 1555	08 9334 1555
TAS	03 6233 3352	03 6233 3352	03 6233 3528	03 6233 3352	03 6233 3032
NT	08 8920 7008	08 8920 7020	08 8920 7021	08 8920 7021	08 8920 7020
ACT	02 6272 4361	02 6272 3518	02 6272 4273	02 6272 5776	02 6272 4783