



Regulator Performance Framework Report 2021–22

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

December 2022

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The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries proudly acknowledges all First Nations peoples (Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders) and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the country on which we live and work. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and commit to ongoing reconciliation. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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Summary

Under its Regulatory Performance Framework, Queensland Government regulators whose regulatory activities impact business, particularly small business, are required to publicly report annually on their regulatory performance. This document is the report of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (“the Department”).

The Department’s [Strategic Plan 2021-2025 \(2022 Refresh\)](#) outlines the following:

Vision: Queensland is a world leading provider of high-quality, safe and sustainably produced food and fibre.

Purpose: To create value for Queensland by connecting industries, the community and government to grow the economy and safeguard the natural environment.

Objectives:

- Innovative and globally competitive agribusinesses accessing improved practices, data and new technologies to enhance the productivity, profitability and sustainability of food and fibre value chains.
- Prosperous economies providing business and employment opportunities across regions, diversified markets, and value-added products and services.
- A resilient sector with secure production, and value chains that can deal with natural disasters, climate change, biosecurity risks and other emerging challenges.
- Ethical and sustainable production of food and fibre that meets consumer and community expectations for food safety, a safe and a sustainable natural environment and animal welfare and management standards.
- Trusted, capable and connected people who are high-performing, safe, healthy and supported to deliver services and achieve their potential within the Department and the community.

The Department administers the following Acts:

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994

Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966

Animal Care and Protection Act 2001

Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008

Biological Control Act 1987

Biosecurity Act 2014

Brands Act 1915

Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988

Drugs Misuse Act 1986 (Part 5B – commercial production of industrial cannabis)

Exhibited Animals Act 2015

Farm Business Debt Mediation Act 2017

Fisheries Act 1994 (except for Fish Habitat)

Food Production (Safety) Act 2000

Forestry Act 1959 (jointly administered with the Department of Environment and Science)

Racing Integrity Act 2016

Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 (Part 4 Division 2)

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

Sugar Industry Act 1999

Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984

Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936

To achieve regulatory settings that are proportionate to risk and avoid unnecessary burden, the Department develops regulation that:

- is evidence-based using statistical data and other evidence
- is based on research and considered analysis
- is developed in consultation with applicable government stakeholders, road user groups and transport industries.

Rigorous policy analysis is undertaken to fully identify all policy options, prior to advocating for and progressing any legislative amendment. Understanding the role of government and careful prioritisation of activity are critical elements of this analysis.

The level of analysis is also commensurate with the complexity of the problems requiring resolution and includes systematic analysis of potential impacts on stakeholders. This includes the consideration of any potential impacts of human rights that may arise from the regulatory activity and the inclusion of appropriate safeguards to minimise any adverse impacts. All amendments are supported and informed by thorough stakeholder consultation and, where possible, data analysis.

Model practices

1. Ensure regulatory activity is proportionate to risk and minimises unnecessary burden

Supporting principles:

- A proportionate approach is applied to compliance activities, engagement and regulatory enforcement actions.
- Regulators do not unnecessarily impose on regulated entities.
- Regulatory approaches are updated and informed by intelligence gathering so that effort is focused towards risk.

Biosecurity

The *Biosecurity Act 2014* provides powers and flexibility to respond in a timely and effective way to animal and plant diseases and pests. It also manages risks of contaminants in carriers and ensures the safety and quality of animal feed, fertilisers and other agricultural inputs.

The Biosecurity Act expressly provides that one of the primary ways that its purposes are to be achieved is by allowing for risk-based decision-making on approaches to the management of, and response to, biosecurity risks while incorporating the precautionary principle in risk-based decision-making to allow for timely responses to biosecurity risks or to prevent a biosecurity event. It generally limits the exercise of powers to where there are reasonable grounds or where action is warranted and requires the decision maker to have regard to the seriousness or potential seriousness of the biosecurity issue and its impact or likely impact.

In December 2021 the *Biosecurity Regulation 2016* was amended to create an opportunity to allow the use of food scraps normally considered as 'prohibited feed for pigs and poultry' for animal feed if processed in a certain way. Extensive risk assessments were conducted to ensure the objectives of the Biosecurity Act were maintained under the agreed mitigation model while providing an opportunity to reduce regulatory burden and create business opportunity for industry.

The Department uses a number of biosecurity information platforms, such as Pest Central and the Biosecurity Online Resources and Information System (BORIS). These systems provide a platform for management of biosecurity information and spatial data across state and local government, land management agencies, environment groups and industry which, among other things ensure regulatory approaches are updated and informed by intelligence gathering so that effort is focused on risk.

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals and Contaminants

Control of use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals is regulated under the *Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988* and the *Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966*. Technical review of investigation findings are undertaken by a chemical subject matter expert to inform investigation outcomes and proportionality of proposed regulatory compliance and enforcement actions. Regulatory response is proportionate, based on level of risk and antecedent incidents.

Fisheries

Fishing remains an important part of the Queensland economy, culture and lifestyle. It provides significant value to local economies through leisure and tourism related spending. Commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors also generate significant economic benefits and ensure that the whole community can enjoy seafood.

Queensland's *Fisheries Act 1994* provides for the ecologically sustainable development of Queensland's fisheries resources and habitats ensuring they are managed sustainably for the future. The Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027 sets out the Government's reform agenda over 10 years, paving the way for a world-class fisheries management system.

The strategy outlined 33 actions to be delivered across ten reform areas. Actions including harvest strategies for each fishery and use of new technologies more effectively.

In 2021–22 the Department introduced further harvest strategies in accordance with guidelines for how sustainable catch limits should be set and changed. The strategies and their agreed trigger or reference points provide greater clarity and transparency in the decision-making processes. In particular, new catch limits were set for several fisheries based on the new harvest strategies.

In 2022 a new harvest strategy was approved for the Spanish Mackerel fishery bringing the number of active harvest strategies to 17. Urgent management action for the Spanish Mackerel fishery responded to a stock assessment that estimated the biomass to be at 17%. A series of spawning and fishing closures to reduce commercial and recreational take have now been implemented to recover the fishery, whilst allowing important data from fishing activities to be collected. Further regulatory changes are set to be phased in from 1 July 2023.

2. Consult and engage meaningfully with stakeholders

Supporting principles:

- Formal and informal consultation and engagement mechanisms are in place to allow full stakeholder input and government decision-making circumstances.
- Engagement is undertaken in a way that helps regulators to develop a genuine understanding of the operating environment of regulated entities.
- Cooperative and collaborative relationships are established with stakeholders, including other regulators, to promote trust and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory framework.

Agricultural and veterinary chemicals and contaminants

Within Queensland, the Department leverages cooperative and collaborative relationships with other regulators to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory framework by ensuring alignment of requirements across multiple ministerial portfolios.

The Department leads or provides membership to several national agricultural and veterinary chemical and contaminant committees whose charter is to improve and

harmonise national policy and management issues. Prior to its winding up, the Department was an active member of the Harmonised AgVet Chemical Control of Use Task Group (HACCUT) and played a key role in the national harmonisation agenda through this committee.

Animal management (cats and dogs)

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Regulation 2019* provide the regulatory framework for cats and dogs in Queensland to be managed to ensure public safety and to meet community expectations.

Within the Department, Biosecurity Queensland is the lead agency for the administration of the Act; however, most of the Act is enforced by local governments, being the major stakeholders in delivering animal management services within their local areas.

A targeted review of the Act commenced in 2021-22 focussing on issues identified as being of concern to local government elected representatives. The review is directed at areas of dangerous dog management to support effective animal management and the expectations of the community.

The formation of a taskforce consisting of elected local government representatives, the Local Government Association of Queensland and RSPCA has been established to support that action. The taskforce identified the areas for review, consistent with previous meetings with the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities and.

The taskforce is supported by a technical working group of local government members providing stakeholder policy and operational input into the review process and ensuring existing relationships are supported and local government experiences are reflected in Act amendment proposals. The working group is supported by the Local Government Association of Queensland and officers of the Department.

The review is expected to conclude by June 2023 and initiatives resulting from this review to provide continuous improvement for the management of dog attacks in the community by local governments.

Animal welfare—livestock welfare at processing facilities

The Department is leading a national process to develop new Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (AAWS&G) which include standards and guidelines for Livestock at Processing Facilities (Processing Facilities S&G) as agreed to by the Agriculture Ministers' Forum in in 2020.

The national guidelines will provide the basis for consistent national regulation of livestock welfare. In Queensland, standards within the AAWS&G are adopted into Codes of Practice made under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. Guidelines provide information for industry on good practice.

The development of the Processing Facilities S&G involves substantial consultation and engagement with stakeholders. A Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) was established to ensure stakeholders were involved early in the development process. The SAG comprises 16 members representing national animal welfare, meat processing industry, veterinary,

academic and consumer organisations, industry training and auditing bodies, and regulatory stakeholders. The SAG operates under an agreed Terms of Reference and utilises effective online collaboration tools. Four virtual meetings of 3–4 hours each have been held during 2021–2022.

The SAG is one part of an overall consultation strategy which will include direct consultation with other interested stakeholders (which the SAG is helping to identify), and public consultation on a Regulatory Impact Statement (to be developed).

Biosecurity

The Queensland Biosecurity Strategy 2018–2023 is a five-year plan to build the framework for Queensland's future biosecurity system. It was co-developed by the Queensland Government, industry and other partners in the biosecurity system. Under the Strategy, the Department and its partners have committed to collaboration. The goal is a partnership approach that allows all partners to contribute meaningfully to our governance structure, system design and decision making.

The Biosecurity Queensland Ministerial Advisory Council (BQMAC) is an advisory council consisting of independent industry and community members and the Chief Biosecurity Officer of Biosecurity Queensland. BQMAC provides advice to the Minister regarding strategic oversight and direction on Queensland's priorities within the national biosecurity system. BQMAC also works in partnership with stakeholders, supporting discussion and consultation and disseminating information to industry channels. BQMAC met in July and September 2021 and again in July 2022.

In September 2021 the Department held the Queensland Biosecurity Partners Forum online with more than 100 stakeholders in attendance. The forum was focused on the mid-term review of the Biosecurity Strategy and priority actions for the future. Results of a vote on progress against the five shared values of mutual trust, purpose, role clarity, empowering responsibility and collaboration showed the health of the partnership continues to rise, increasing from 3.5 to 3.7 out of 5 since the previous forum.

The partnership approach is also reflected in a range of shared activities including nationally cost-shared responses to pests and diseases, collaborative initiatives, and research and development projects to boost biosecurity capability and preparedness. In 2021-22 the Department formed a Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) in line with the recommendations of the 2021 independent review of the National Fire Ant Eradication Program. The FAST will be focussed on facilitating local government, other Queensland Government agencies and the private sector to undertake fire ant suppression activities in those areas which are not currently the subject of the national program's eradication efforts.

In 2021–22 the Department continued to work collaboratively with the banana industry to support the transition of Panama Tropical Race 4 from government controlled to industry led management. This transition is ongoing, and the Department continues to provide strong support and expert advice on industry development of a protective Code of Practice for banana growing in the infested region.

The Biosecurity Act also includes requirements to consult before taking certain regulatory actions. For example, there is a requirement for consultation with industry or community groups where measures to prevent, control, eradicate or manage biosecurity risks under a

proposed surveillance program or prevention and control program may have a significant effect on members of the industry or community group. In 2021–22 the Department consulted extensively on three biosecurity programs.

In 2021–22 the Department conducted extensive consultation with community groups, recreational hunters and other concerned citizens regarding a new strategy to manage feral deer in Queensland. Feedback from more than 400 responses received during the consultation period was instrumental in finalising the strategy. The Feral Deer Management Strategy 2022–27 was recently released, and the Department has received positive feedback on the consultation process and on the Strategy.

Fisheries

Improved stakeholder engagement is a key reform area for the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027. Amendments to the Act in 2019 now specifically provide that the main purpose of the Act is to be achieved, so far as is practicable, in consultation with all fishing sectors and the community using a transparent and responsive approach for the management of access to fisheries resources.

The Sustainable Fisheries Strategy Expert Panel continues to provide independent advice on best practice fisheries management and science. Fishery-specific working groups continue to provide operational advice and recommendations to the Department.

The Department continues to invest in engagement techniques (including online surveys) to gather a range of stakeholder feedback on fishery issues and to provide more information on how fisheries are managed and why in an attempt to increase community support for fishing rules.

Similarly, the Department invested in new systems to streamline mandatory reporting requirements while reducing regulatory burdens on fishers.

Summaries of consultation outcomes relating to fisheries reforms under the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy, fishing rules and regulatory changes are routinely made available on the Department's website. Significant efforts have been made to improve engagement approaches, with the use of the Department's e-Hub engagement site for consultation and feedback. For the Spanish mackerel reforms, this included considering more than 2,200 public submissions, attendance at port visits with fishers and working group meetings. The Department have continued regular Commercial fishing updates, Charter fishing updates and Aquaculture Updates e-newsletters to deliver targeted information to commercial fishing businesses. This year also saw a return to fishing events and industry festivals across Queensland that were attended by Fisheries staff and thousands of fishery stakeholders.

Forestry

The Department manages, under the *Forestry Act 1959*, the commercial sale of state-owned native forest products and quarry material from State forests, timber reserves, leasehold lands, reserves, public roads and certain freehold lands where the State owns the forest products or quarry material.

To ensure decisions are timely, reasonable, ethical, lawful and in accordance with natural justice, the Department regularly consults with prospective and existing permit holders and stakeholder groups.

The Department is undertaking a review of these stakeholder engagement processes to complete a gap analysis of existing systems and highlight areas for potential improvement. The review will be completed in 2022-23.

Industrial cannabis

The Department is responsible for administering the licensing of commercial production of industrial cannabis under Part 5B of the *Drugs Misuse Act 1986*. Consultation was recently undertaken with licensees and other relevant stakeholders to seek feedback regarding the proposed finer details of upcoming regulatory reforms that had previously been the subject of broader formal consultation.

The Department is an active member of the National Industrial Hemp Regulators Network (AIHRN), having previously chaired the committee, and regularly consults with other regulators within Queensland and counterparts in other jurisdictions.

In 2021–22 the Department held a consultation meeting with licensees and other relevant stakeholders to obtain input about the proposed details of upcoming reforms to enable other types of analysis of industrial cannabis. This engagement allowed the Department to understand the requirements of licensees regarding plant health, agronomic and genetic analysis.

Racing Integrity

The *Racing Integrity Act 2016* aims to maintain public confidence in the racing of animals in Queensland for which betting is lawful, ensure the integrity of all persons involved with racing, and to safeguard the welfare of all animals involved in racing.

A review of the Act in 2019 concluded that the Act was operating well, but recommended changes to the arrangements governing appeals against stewards' decisions under the rules of racing in response to concerns raised by stakeholders.

New arrangements to establish the new Racing Appeals Panel as an independent statutory body were provided for in the *Racing Integrity Amendment Act 2022* which was passed in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 25 October 2022, alongside a number of other amendments to improve the operation of the Act. The new arrangements replace existing internal and external review processes and set statutory time frames within which the review of a steward's decision under the rules of racing must be determined and improve integrity of the racing industry.

3. Provide appropriate information and support to assist compliance

Supporting principles:

- Clear and timely guidance and support is accessible to stakeholders and tailored to meet the needs of the target audience.

- Advice is consistent and, where appropriate, decisions are communicated in a manner that clearly articulates what is required to achieve compliance.
- Where appropriate, regulatory approaches are tailored to ensure compliance activities do not disproportionately burden particular stakeholders (e.g. small business) or require specialist advice.

Agricultural and veterinary chemicals and contaminants

The Department regularly works with the Department of Environment and Science, Queensland Health, and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland to develop joint messaging of requirements where the respective legislative portfolios have complex interactions.

In 2021–22 the Department has invested in the Managing Agvet Chemical Risks in Priority Great Barrier Reef Catchments Project, which undertakes voluntary individual assessments of chemical use activities. The project provided tailored compliance guidance and support to 119 individual stakeholders. It has resulted in significant demonstrated behaviour change of growers engaged by providing guidance regarding practice changes required to meet regulatory requirements, and by facilitating referral to organisations offering further support.

Animal welfare—Rodeos

Biosecurity Queensland inspectors have engaged extensively with rodeo officials, association executives, stock contractors and animal welfare officers to support the Queensland rodeo industry to meet its obligations under the Code of Practice about Rodeos (the code), made under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

The implementation of the code has resulted in awareness of, and improvements in, the welfare of animals at rodeos. Since the code commenced in January 2022, Biosecurity Queensland has investigated possible breaches of the code reported by members of the community and animal welfare organisations. Inspectors have delivered compliance audits at selected events and targeted engagement sessions. The engagement has helped industry leaders and participants see the importance of the code and what it provides for their sport. Associations have been developing internal processes and roles to fulfill their responsibilities.

The Department plans to develop a fact sheet for rodeo participants, associations and officials to clarify specific welfare issues around provoking animals to participate in a rodeo activity.

Biosecurity

The *Biosecurity Act 2014* obligates anyone in Queensland dealing with a biosecurity risk to minimise the impacts of that risk through taking reasonable actions or not taking actions that would exacerbate it. The Department provides significant documentation on the Department's website to clarify the rules, requirements and obligations under the Biosecurity Act.

The Department is committed to ensuring that all Queenslanders have fair access to programs and services regardless of cultural, language and religious backgrounds, and physical ability. A range of materials in a variety of languages have been produced to ensure

biosecurity rules and regulations can be understood by all. The Department also has a language services policy and process for engaging accredited interpreters.

Contestability and flexibility for the private sector has been fostered through compliance agreements and industry accreditation schemes, which leverage industry knowledge about best practice risk management for its particular circumstances. Compliance agreements enable a person to self-manage risks associated with their business activities.

In July 2021 the Department released a new on-farm biosecurity check-in app 'Farm Check-In' assisting people to play their part in protecting Queensland agriculture from the spread of plant and animal pests and diseases. The app assists visitors to manage and understand biosecurity risks before they enter agricultural properties.

The app forms part of an on-farm biosecurity portal which includes information for farm biosecurity planning, and advice for industry and landholders about accessing shared agricultural land.

By scanning a QR code at the farm gate, visitors access an online checklist to help them understand their general biosecurity obligation and identify biosecurity risks. The app also includes links to educational videos and information on good biosecurity practices such as clean-down methods for clothing, vehicles and machinery.

Fisheries

The Department's Fisheries Compliance Strategy promotes voluntary compliance and creates effective deterrents to illegal fishing activities. The compliance program acknowledges the primary means of achieving compliance is through community support for laws. Program principles include establishing partnerships with stakeholders, including other government agencies, to maximise compliance; fostering community support for fisheries legislation by continued communication and provision of information through a variety of fora including social media; and ensuring enforcement is undertaken in a fair, impartial, consistent, transparent, lawful and cost efficient manner, with the degree and type of enforcement action taken commensurate with the nature and severity of the offence. Compliance activities continue to be prioritised according to the assessed risk of offending.

In 2021–22, 16,978 fisheries inspections were conducted with an overall compliance rate of 88.1%. 686 infringement notices and 1,125 cautions were issued. 33 prosecutions were finalised involving 213 more serious offences.

The Department provides a range of information and educational materials to inform fishers on rules relating to size and possession limits, apparatus restrictions, closed waters and other requirements and obligations under the Act. These materials are provided through a suite of delivery channels including:

- direct advice to clients
- formal and informal presentations to community and industry groups and fisheries-related retail businesses
- written communications such as media releases and responses, fishing forums and industry publications
- the Department's website
- social media channels of the Department, industry and partner agencies
- the Queensland Recreational Fishing App

- the Department's Customer Service Centre.

Fisheries Queensland operates the 24-hour, toll-free Fishwatch hotline (1800 017 116). This allows the community to assist in identifying suspected illegal fishing activity. Also, a Fishwatch online form is available on the Fisheries Queensland Facebook page for the community to report suspected illegal fishing.

4. Commit to continuous improvement

Supporting principles:

- Regular review of the approach to regulatory activities, collaboration with stakeholders and other regulators to ensure it is appropriately risk-based, leverages technological innovation, and remains the best approach to achieving policy outcomes.
- To the extent possible, reform of regulatory activities is prioritised on the basis of impact on stakeholders and the community.
- Staff have the necessary training and support to effectively, efficiently and consistently perform their duties.

Agricultural and veterinary chemicals and contaminants

In August 2021, the *Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Regulation 2021* replaced the expiring *Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Regulation 1998*. The new regulation modernised the regulatory environment for stakeholders. It included amendments to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on stakeholders and to removing impacts on stakeholders who hold licenses in multiple jurisdictions, providing clarity of competency requirements, mitigating possible impacts on licensees concerned about privacy and removing restrictions for risks that are now managed via other mechanisms.

Reform of record keeping requirements was prioritised in this reporting period, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Science, to ensure consistency and clarity of record keeping requirements for agricultural and veterinary chemical users across both legislative portfolios.

Consideration has been given to developing a targeted training package to upskill authorised officers who work in agricultural and veterinary chemical compliance and a project to deliver this outcome is anticipated in 2022-23.

Animal management (cats and dogs)

In 2017 compulsory dog breeder registration commenced under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* to promote the responsible breeding of dogs. All dog breeders (unless exempt) are required to register and receive a supply number (breeder identification number – BIN) prior to giving away, supplying, selling or advertising a dog. A supply number allows the tracing of all dogs bred back to the breeder in the event that animal welfare issues are identified.

A dedicated Queensland Dog Breeder Register provides a self-registration portal allowing a breeder to apply for and receive a supply number, on provision of certain publicly available

information. The portal allows a buyer to obtain certain information about the breeder of a dog and to contact the breeder prior to purchasing.

The Department is committed to continually improving the Register. As a result of wide engagement with external stakeholders, the Department has made a number of enhancements to the Register. The enhancements improve the quality of information stored within the Register, minimise the ability to enter “fraudulent” or incomplete information while also ensuring that customers of the Register understand their obligations under the Act.

Further enhancements in 2022–23 will further improve the integrity and usability of the Register. The Department continues to monitor the performance of the Register and consult with stakeholders about its efficiency.

Biosecurity

Under the Queensland Biosecurity Strategy 2018–2023, the Department and its biosecurity system partners have committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning and continuous improvement of the biosecurity system. A mid-term review of the Biosecurity Strategy 2018–2023 was conducted at the Qld Biosecurity Partners Forum in September 2021. Partners indicated that the vision, goals, themes and principles are still appropriate and applicable, and in particular, supported the use of technology and the emphasis on community engagement. A number of areas for future action were identified.

The highest priority legislative actions arising from the *Biosecurity Act 2014* review were implemented in February 2020. Implementation of the review recommendations in relation to training, communications and administration continued in 2021–22, through delivery of updated officer training, and continued improvements in public information and investigations into potential improvement in internal business processes.

In July 2021, public information and tools for the management of Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA) was migrated from the Department’s website onto a dedicated and focused website. The migration involved the identification, review and re-write of 127 web pages. Research conducted prior to the commencement of the migration project showed that only 11% of people said they could easily find the information on the website they were looking for and 33% said they could usually find what they need. Since migration, 84% of users on the new website indicated they were able to find the information they were after. The average pageviews on the original Department-based RIFA web page was roughly 5,000 a month; the new dedicated site now averaged over 36,000 pageviews a month, with the highest month at over 72,000 page views.

Farm business debt mediation

The *Farm Business Debt Mediation Act 2017* provides an efficient and equitable way for farmers and mortgagees to resolve matters relating to farm business debts.

A review of the Act concluded that the is meeting its objectives and its provisions remain appropriate. The review reached this conclusion on the basis of available evidence and extensive stakeholder consultation, including publication of an issues paper, receipt of stakeholder submissions, and webinars and other consultation with stakeholders.

The review did suggest that consideration be given to some minor amendments to clarify some aspects of the operation of the Act and institute regular 10-year reviews. The review report is available at <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2022/5722T962-D642.pdf>.

Industrial cannabis

The Department, in collaboration with regulators in other jurisdictions, continues to monitor risks associated with international and national changes to the scheduling of cannabis extracts and is considering whether reform of regulatory activities is required.

In 2021–22, new licensing application fees implemented a ‘beneficiary pays’ approach, thereby preventing taxpayer and/or cross-stakeholder group subsidisation and removing possible impacts for affected stakeholder groups and the community more generally.

Collaboration and engagement with licensees and other regulators has been undertaken in relation to anticipated reforms to allow greater access to agronomic analysis services for licensees and information sharing which are expected to facilitate better outcomes for regulated entities and the community more broadly.

5. Be transparent and accountable in actions

Supporting principles:

- Where appropriate, regulatory frameworks and time frames for making regulatory decisions are published to provide certainty to stakeholders.
- Decisions are provided in a timely manner, clearly articulating expectations and the underlying reasons for decisions.
- Indicators of regulator performance are publicly available.

Animal welfare—Livestock welfare at processing facilities

The development of the Processing Facilities Standards and Guidelines by Biosecurity Queensland involves substantial consultation and engagement with stakeholders. This occurs through the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) which includes key members from both internal and external stakeholder groups.

The SAG operates under agreed Terms of Reference with clear definitions of scope and responsibilities to ensure focus and transparency are upheld during their discussions. The Department has engaged an independent expert facilitator who ensures that meaningful feedback is elicited from all SAG members.

The SAG is one part of an overall consultation strategy which will include direct consultation with other interested stakeholders (which the SAG is helping to identify), and public consultation on a Regulatory Impact Statement (to be developed). The consultation strategy ensures that interested parties can have a clear view of proposed changes in public policy with regard to livestock welfare at processing facilities.

Biosecurity

Under the Queensland Biosecurity Strategy 2018–2023, the Department and its partners in the delivery of the biosecurity system have committed to consistency, openness and honesty

in their dealings. The Department reports to partners on partnership score evaluated at the Queensland Partners Forum. This score improved again in 2021–22 from 3.5 to 3.7 out of 5 since the previous forum.

The *Biosecurity Act 2014* includes publication requirements to provide transparency about the exercise of functions by the chief executive or their delegate. There were no biosecurity emergency orders made in 2021–22 but there were several movement control orders and notification of these, along with where to obtain a copy, were formally published in the Queensland Government Gazette. In addition, the details of these emergency response measures were communicated widely through the Department’s website, newsletters, social media channels and other engagement tools to ensure the public including affected stakeholders were aware.

Similarly, the creation and updating of biosecurity programs is communicated to the public by notification within statutory timeframes and these are made available through the Department’s website or from nominated offices. Biosecurity maps which define biosecurity zones identified under the Biosecurity Act continue to be published on the Department’s website.

Administrative decisions made under the Biosecurity Act are subject to both internal and external review and information to justify decisions is available to effected parties. Templates and training have been developed for use by all decision-makers in Biosecurity Queensland. These include examples of the type and level of information that decision-makers should provide in their decisions and what is needed for a review.

Fisheries

The Department ensures that decisions made under the *Fisheries Act 1994* (including reasons for the decisions) are communicated to the affected persons within prescribed time frames. The Department publishes a number of resources to promote transparency and accountability in its regulation of fisheries resources, including:

- quarterly compliance report to track its monitoring and enforcement activities
- annual reporting of catch and effort across all Queensland fisheries
- science-based stock assessments and ecological risk assessments for key species that inform management of the resource.

Amendments to the *Fisheries Act 1994* in 2019 included provisions relating to review and appeal of decisions consistent with other contemporary Queensland legislation. Information on how to request an internal review under the Act is now publicly available online. Decisions made under the Act now provide include information about internal review options. Other amendments provide delegated powers from the Minister to the Chief Executive for certain regulatory decisions that align with our harvest strategies. This is evidence of a more responsive and agile decision-making process in operation.

Progress reports on implementation of the strategy are published on the Department’s website. The Year 4 progress report and recent announcement of reforms show that good progress is continuing in implementing the strategy. Almost half two thirds of the actions have been delivered in the five years since the commencement of the strategy.

Communiqués from working group meetings are released publicly on the Department's webpage in a timely manner. Approved harvest strategies are available on the website.

Stock assessments are available on the Department's website. These assessments inform the setting of sustainable catch limits for each species, support harvest strategy implementation and the general sustainable management of fisheries. New departmental/industry project teams have been established with the aim of continuous improvement with assessments providing greater transparency.

Industrial cannabis

The Department has provided additional information on the Department's website to ensure it continues to clarify the rules, requirements and obligations for all industrial cannabis licensees in Queensland. Changes to regulatory requirements have been communicated directly to ensure affected stakeholders understand the new requirements and transitional arrangements.