



**The Hon David Littleproud MP**  
Leader Of The Nationals  
Federal Member For Maranoa

4 December 2025

Dr Caralee McLiesh PSM  
Auditor-General  
Australian National Audit Office  
GPO Box 707  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: [ag1@anao.gov.au](mailto:ag1@anao.gov.au)

Dear Dr McLiesh,

I write to request that the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) undertake a performance and financial audit of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry biosecurity programs and activities since the 2023-24 Budget.

The 2023-24 Budget included a commitment of \$1.0 billion over 4 years from 2023-24 (and \$268.1 million per year ongoing). The budget measure included \$845.0 million to maintain biosecurity policy, operational and technical functions on a sustainable basis, including regulation, surveillance, domestic preparedness and response, and international engagement and capability development.

The Government's commitment included 'long-term, predictable and sustainable funding, coupled with increased equity and greater accountability and transparency...', and an annual publication of biosecurity income and expenditure to provide transparency and accountability. The first two annual publications in 2023-24 and 2024-25 did not include a level of detail that provided transparency and accountability on the biosecurity programs and activities being funded.

The recent 2024-25 annual publication included expenditure by pathway which included 47 per cent at the border and 28 per cent for 'across the continuum activities'. Across continuum activities was defined as:

- Delivering whole-of-system strategy, engagement, business administration or law reform activities
- Includes costs that cannot be assigned to a specific stage.

Australia's biosecurity status is a high priority for the agriculture industry, the environment and for all Australian's way of life. Biosecurity is based on a risk-based approach, and the activities put in place and the pests and diseases targeted are critical. Biosecurity risks to Australia also continue to increase with increased travel and trade, and movement of diseases closer to Australia such as foot and mouth disease.


It is timely to undertake this audit, to also assist with reporting transparency on current and future biosecurity programs. The 5-year review of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (20 August 2025) by Dr Michele Allan AO released on 20 August 2025 ascertained that there is a need for greater transparency of national biosecurity funding and the activities conducted using this funding. The review recommended implementing the National Biosecurity Action Plan's 'Sustainable Investment' as priority which includes new public reporting of funding and expenditure by governments and industry.

The recent ANAO audit on the biosecurity workforce and the lack of implementation by the Department of recommendations when questioned at senate estimates has been concerning. In addition, the three reports by the Inspector-General of Biosecurity (7 November 2025) also have concerning findings that is putting Australia's biosecurity status at risk.

Biosecurity is of national importance, and this audit will assist ensure that Australia implements the strongest biosecurity system for Australia's future.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Littleproud', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Littleproud MP  
Shadow Minister for Agriculture