

Agriculture Victoria

Statement of Expectations

January 2018 - June 2019

Evaluation Report

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Accessibility

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture Victoria is part of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)(the department)¹. As a Victorian State Government regulator, Agriculture Victoria is subject to the requirements of the Department of Treasury and Finance's Statement of Expectations (SOE) Framework for Regulators (the SOE framework). The Victorian Government's Ministerial Statement of Expectations (SOE) is a formal and public statement that establishes an agreement between responsible Ministers and their regulators regarding performance expectations to improve regulator outcomes and reduce costs on regulated parties. The regulator's SOE Response Letter is a formal statement by the regulator that outlines its intent to meet the expectations of its responsible minister. The SOE Response Letter is made in response to the SOE.

A key objective of the SOE framework is to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness in the administration and enforcement of regulation to facilitate increased business investment and economic activity in Victoria. Under the SOE framework there is a mandatory requirement to evaluate the SOEs of regulators. In accordance with the Department of Treasury and Finance's *Guidelines for Evaluation Statement of Expectations for Regulators* (the DTF Guidelines), the Agriculture Victoria SOE evaluation sought evidence to determine Agriculture Victoria's progress against its SOE targets and assess how well the SOE is contributing to better regulatory practice.

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA'S STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

In January 2018, the Minister for Agriculture issued a SOE for Agriculture Victoria's regulation of biosecurity, animal health and welfare, and domestic animal matters within the department relating to the following areas:

- Timeliness
- Risk based compliance strategies and operational plans
- Compliance related assistance and advice
- Role clarity
- Cooperation among regulators
- Stakeholder consultation and engagement
- Clear and consistent regulatory activities
- Evaluation

PURPOSE

This report evaluates the Agriculture Victoria SOE as per the guidelines of the SOE Framework and in relation to:

- The Agriculture Victoria's SOE development processes
- The delivery of improvements and targets identified in Agriculture Victoria's SOE response
- The impact the SOE has made towards achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness in Agriculture Victoria's administration and enforcement of regulation.

¹ The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) transitioned to the Department of Transport and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) as of 1 January 2019. Agriculture Victoria is part of DJPR.

BACKGROUND

Agriculture Victoria is focused on supporting the Victorian agriculture, food and fibre sector. Agriculture Victoria's approach to regulation is underpinned by a range of legislative and policy frameworks to guide program planning and responsive service delivery. Agriculture Victoria undertakes work in the areas of:

- *Emergencies*: prevention and preparation for response and recovery from emergencies including serious pest and disease outbreaks; chemical use incidents; as well as animal welfare in transport, flood and bushfire emergencies.
- *Animal health*: safeguarding Victoria's livestock and other animals from pests and diseases; protecting human health from zoonotic diseases (such as Q fever); maintaining and improving market access for animal food and fibre exports; developing policy and standards for industry.
- *Animal welfare*: ensuring the ethical treatment and care of all animals (including livestock, research animals and domestic animals); managing, reviewing and developing codes of practice, guidelines and standards; providing advice and support to relevant stakeholders.
- *Plant health*: safeguarding Victoria's horticulture and food industries from pests and diseases; ensuring food security; maintaining and improving market access for agricultural exports; developing policy and standards for industry, engaging with industries and communities to enhance their understanding of biosecurity issues and obligations.
- *Invasive plants and animals*: prevention and preparedness for new high-risk invasive species; the eradication or containment of new high-risk species when possible; and minimising and managing the impact from invasive plants and animals that are already widespread and threaten the productivity of the state's primary industries, its biodiversity, the natural environment and social amenity.
- *Chemical use and residues*: regulating the use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals to prevent harm to human health, the environment, trade and market access, and animal health and welfare, and to provide a regulated market to facilitate appropriate access to safe and effective chemicals.
- *New regulated industries*: investment in new and emerging agricultural industries requiring policy development and regulation (including commercial poppy crops for therapeutic purposes and the seed sprout industry for food safety purposes).

Agriculture Victoria has a legislative responsibility for administering the following legislation and associated regulations;

- *Agriculture and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994*
- *Livestock Disease Control Act 1994*
- *Livestock Management Act 2010*
- *Plant Biosecurity Act 2010*
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*
- *Stock (Seller Liability and Declarations Act) 1993*

Agriculture Victoria is responsible for elements of the following legislation:

- *Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 (Parts IVA and IVB)*
- *Food Act 1984*
- *Forests Act 1958*
- *Wildlife Act 1987*

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Within the SOE framework there is a mandatory requirement for departments to evaluate the SOE of the regulator(s) within their portfolio. DTF Guidelines have been published to assist with the mandatory evaluation requirement of the SOE Framework. Within the Guidelines it is specified that evaluations be divided into two stages: process-based evaluation, and outcome-based evaluation. Against each evaluation stage, the following questions have been provided to guide the evaluation:

- How appropriate was the process for developing the SOE?
- Did the regulator deliver the improvements and targets established in the SOE and regulator SOE Response Letter on time and on budget?
- What difference did the SOE make towards achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness in the administration and enforcement of regulation?

The evaluation involved a combination of performance data and qualitative interviews with senior managers and reviewed a range of sources to assess its performance against the improvement targets, including:

- Case studies from program managers
- Policy reports and internal project material
- The Biosecurity Evidence Framework (BEF)
- Annual performance report
- Interviews with senior managers
- Evaluation reports and independent reviews

These sources of data enabled the evaluation team to make an assessment as to how the regulator prepared the SOE and SOE Response Letter and provided information on the status and quality of implementation of the improvements in the SOE Response Letter. Senior managers and program leaders were interviewed to obtain progress updates on the improvements. The evaluation was conducted by the Regulatory Improvement team within the Biosecurity and Agriculture Services branch. This team is structurally independent from the team that developed the SOE and provided a degree of independence in the evaluation process.

PROCESS EVALUATION

Key Findings

Prior to the development of the SOE, Agriculture Victoria organised a joint information session with DTF regarding the SOE framework requirements. The information session informed Agriculture Victoria of the activities needed to meet the minimum standards of good regulatory practice, as well as provided guidance on developing performance improvements and targets for the SOE Response Letter.

Following the information session, Agriculture Victoria formed an internal coordinating committee to oversee the coordination of the Agriculture Victoria SOE. The coordinating committee convened a workshop to complete a Regulator Self-Assessment with senior program managers. A conceptual framework was developed based on the Self-Assessment to identify strategic priority areas for the SOE. The committee also drew on strategic documents and reports to assist with the Self-Assessment. The evaluation team found that the Regulator Self-Assessment significantly informed both the SOE and the SOE Response Letter. The Minister's office also played a key role.

The evaluation found that the internal coordinating committee was instrumental in ensuring relevant stakeholders were informed about the SOE and consulted on various targets and decisions. The committee ensured that long-term

improvement goals were consistent with other departmental strategic documents, such as the Agriculture Victoria strategy. Once the SOE and SOE Response Letter were developed the committee concluded.

The evaluation found that Agriculture Victoria implemented the DTF guidelines in the development of the SOE and the SOE Response Letter. This included:

- Consultation with the Minister’s office in the development of the SOE
- Development of Regulator Self-Assessment and consultation with relevant stakeholders
- Publishing of the SOE and the SOE Response Letter on the departmental website
- Publishing of the Annual Performance Report on the departmental website

Agriculture Victoria used appropriate governance processes in developing the SOE and SOE Response Letter, liaising with DTF, forming an internal coordinating committee, and engaging with the Minister’s office. This produced an SOE and response with strong operational focus that gives effect to the SOE Framework’s objective of reducing regulatory burden on stakeholders.

There is an opportunity for future SOEs to further consider existing data sources and reporting systems. For example, while Agriculture Victoria has a system for data capture and performance management, the Biosecurity Evidence Framework (BEF), SOE targets and metrics available in the BEF could be further aligned.

OUTCOME EVALUATION

1. Timeliness

<p>Ministerial Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate the timeframe within which most applicants can expect a decision on permit, licence, certification and registration applications. • increase the number of online services such as permits, licences, approvals, certification and registration forms for approval to at least 25 percent of application processes, prioritising those that are high volume to generate the greatest time savings for regulated parties. • All new services should be available online.
<p>Ag Vic Improvement Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop principles to guide the design and implementation of digital administrative processes for applications and information management, including e-capability and information provision. • Prioritise online capability for the remaining licence, permit, certification and registration application processes by regulated parties. • Increase the number of biosecurity application processes that are available online to at least 10, focussing on identified priority areas. • 100 per cent of new application processes introduced will be made available online in the first instance.

Key Findings

The evaluation found evidence that Agriculture Victoria has taken steps to better enable digital services to enhance the capacity for regulated entities to obtain licences or permits in a timely and efficient manner. Approximately 40 types of permits, licences, approvals, certifications and registrations are currently administered by Agriculture Victoria, of which 20 per cent are currently available online to regulated parties and end users. This places Agriculture Victoria in a strong position to meet its target of 25 per cent of processes available online by the conclusion of the SOE.

The evaluation identified that the online processes currently available have had significant community and industry uptake and are lodged online and completed within a shorter processing timeframe when compared to the processing time of hard copy applications. Current online applications made available by Agriculture Victoria include:

- Animal Property Identification Code applications
- Plant Property Identification Code applications
- Purchase of livestock electronic identification tags
- Agriculture Chemical User Permit applications with four endorsement types
- Bee keeper registrations

Agriculture Victoria is currently evaluating the remaining licence, permit, certification and registration application processes to determine the potential benefits for the digitisation of these processes. While this will assist Agriculture Victoria in transitioning to greater use of online and digital technology, further planning could be undertaken for migrating administrative services online and provide a stronger basis for performance evaluation in the future.

2. Risk based strategies

<p>Ministerial Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a regular review cycle for biosecurity compliance strategies. • Identify where additional data is required to inform risk-based strategies. • Develop policy and identify legislative gaps relating to the management of state-wide marine pests.
<p>Agriculture Victoria Improvement Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update all risk-based compliance strategies. • Review and update all risk-based compliance operations plans. • Investigate gaps in current legislative powers and provisions to effectively address marine pest biosecurity for Victoria. • Develop a marine pest biosecurity policy that includes priority areas for data collection.

Key Findings

Agriculture Victoria applies a risk-based approach that consists of: evidence and science-based frameworks; partnerships among governments, industry, natural resources managers and communities; effective preparedness, surveillance, traceability and diagnostics; and contemporary regulatory approaches.

In the SOE, Agriculture Victoria committed to reviewing its risk-based compliance strategies and plans. Agriculture Victoria applies a graduated compliance response to its regulatory activities to ensure the proper prioritisation of responses as well as the proportionality of compliance actions that are taken. The compliance behaviour of regulated individuals and businesses is considered in relation to general risk of harm and where there are higher risks, responses will escalate to higher levels of intervention and enforcement.

At the time of this evaluation Agriculture Victoria had completed a review of its biosecurity compliance strategies and determined that rather than update individual strategies, it would develop an overarching compliance strategy that reflects contemporary best practice with alignment to risk-based approaches. This approach would use a single strategic model which would ensure a consistent approach to the development of program-themed compliance plans.

Agriculture Victoria is also developing a ‘marine’ module under its Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework to document and communicate its responsibilities in marine pest management. Further clarifying roles and responsibilities across agencies to improve the coordination of risk assessments, surveillance and incursion response planning will be important milestones for this area of work moving forward.

3. Compliance related assistance and advice

Ministerial Expectations

- Improve the clarity and currency of guidance to regulated parties to ensure it is comprehensible and easy to understand.

Agriculture Victoria Improvement Response

- Prepare a plan to review current website content to ensure advisory material for regulated parties is current, relevant and accessible.
- Implement first stage of website content review.
- Introduce an ongoing monitoring program of website content to ensure information remains contemporary to legislative requirements and appropriate for use. This will include engagement with end-users to determine their ongoing information requirements as appropriate.
- Collect stakeholder information and report on the accessibility and effectiveness of available advisory information relating to EID of sheep and goats in Victoria. Report responses to any recommended improvements.

Key Findings

Agriculture Victoria provides advisory material to regulated parties via online platforms, such as its website, and has progressed the review of this material to assist community awareness and understanding. In reviewing this material, Agriculture Victoria developed an approach to audit, review and assign web content to authors in the current website platform to ensure content is regularly reviewed.

The Agriculture Victoria website provides real-time, accessible advice to key regulated communities and industries. For example, in the transition of the Victorian sheep and goat industry to new mandatory electronic identification (EID) requirements, Agriculture Victoria reported that stakeholders found the available advisory material to be very effective and relevant.

Agriculture Victoria is achieving positive and demonstrated improvements in providing guidance material that is clear, current and is appropriate for regulated communities and industries. The material provided to communities and industries is largely provided in written and interactive/video platforms. Some national and international regulators are operating on systems that draw on data analytics and artificial intelligence to assist communities and industries in meeting compliance requirements. The implementation of Sheep and Goat EID requirements is an example where Agriculture Victoria is exploring how these technologies can be applied to regulatory arrangements.

Agriculture Victoria could explore expanding this approach into other areas and examine how partnering with expert agencies could facilitate further use of advanced technologies. For example, Agriculture Victoria could consider the potential to work with research networks such as Data 61 to explore opportunities around developing more advanced compliance related assistance and tools.

Electronic Identification (EID) of Sheep and Goats in Victoria

The Victorian sheep and goat industry commenced the transition to mandatory electronic identification (EID) for sheep and goats as of 1 January 2017. The introduction of the EID requirement is a world-leading process in the optimisation of traceability of livestock in Victoria.

Agriculture Victoria is working closely with stakeholders to provide information about the new regulatory requirements through online information and videos, on-farm workshops, targeted communications and guidance materials.

Agriculture Victoria has reported large-scale compliance with EID mandatory requirements, as well as strong industry ownership in saleyards and among livestock agents.

4. Role clarity

Ministerial Expectations

- Develop coordination agreements for the regulation of new industries, to support the clarification of the roles and responsibilities between departments and any agencies, including authorisation requirements.
- Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities should be clarified for primary production – related food safety incident management and documented and clarified for animal welfare as part of the animal welfare reform project.
- Continue to use the Biosecurity Evidence Framework to demonstrate the effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and continuous improvement of regulatory performance.
- Information is made publicly available to ensure that the public and industry are aware of the work undertaken by DEDJTR, to build trust with stakeholders and ensures transparency of role clarity in DEDJTR operations.

Agriculture Victoria Improvement Response

- Review current agreement on operational arrangements between DEDJTR and Victoria Police for regulating poppy and hemp production.
- Develop an agreement with Department of Health and Human Services for Agriculture Victoria staff to be authorised under the *Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities between DEDJTR and Department of Health and Human Services for primary production related food safety incident management under the *Victorian Food Act 1984*.
- Publish a statement clarifying the arrangement between the RSPCA Victoria and DEDJTR in relation to animal welfare on the Agriculture Victoria website to provide the public community with an overview of the different roles and responsibilities of the respective organisations.
- Document the Victorian enforcement framework for animal welfare in Victoria and identify where greater clarity is required.

Key Findings

Agriculture Victoria has entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) arrangements with agencies to promote role clarity and reduce potential duplication of its regulatory function. These MoUs allow Agriculture Victoria to work with partner organisations to minimise regulatory burden, reduce overlap and improve operational processes and practices within regulators. The evaluation found that defining roles and responsibilities has led to better co-ordination of regulatory activities and is fostering a consistent compliance approach across different regulatory agencies.

There are indications to show that Agriculture Victoria's MoUs are encouraging minimum standards and clear benchmarks to all parties on regulatory initiatives. Agriculture Victoria is establishing organisational arrangements with other agencies to ensure transparency in decision making, accountability of roles and responsibilities and is working towards good regulatory practice.

Department of Health and Human Services

In May 2018 an MoU with DHHS was signed to enable Agriculture Victoria staff to be authorised under the *Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*. This collaborative agreement is already showing some positive results in compliance activities, including joint investigations. The MoU has strengthened the regulatory framework between these agencies and helped to foster stronger ties between operational staff.

Animal Welfare Enforcement Framework

The evaluation found that Agriculture Victoria commissioned an independent review on the Victorian enforcement framework for animal welfare in Victoria to identify where greater clarity is required. The review identified that the current enforcement framework is complex and there is a need for greater clarity in roles and responsibilities.

There are multiple enforcement organisations with overlapping roles and responsibilities across different animal types, which leads to public confusion and compromises the ability of agencies to receive and address animal cruelty reports and investigations.

Consequently, Agriculture Victoria will need to consider a functioning regulatory regime that is effective and efficient with clear objectives and linked with functions and mechanisms to coordinate with other regulatory organisations.

RSPCA (Victoria) MoU

As part of Agriculture Victoria’s commitment to clarify its role with other regulatory agencies it has signed an MoU with the RSPCA (Victoria) which clearly describes the roles and contribution of each agency. Through the MoU, Agriculture Victoria and the RSPCA (Victoria) acknowledge and agree that the division of responsibility for animal welfare cases is implemented and managed through the triaging of animal welfare reports received from the public and other relevant sources. This ensures each party attends to reports in respect of animal welfare cases for which they are responsible under the MoU.

5. Cooperation amongst regulators

Ministerial Expectations

- Plan and conduct at least one emergency simulation exercise each year to test incursion and emergency response plans, processes and systems.
- All exercises should be evaluated and provide responses to any recommendations developed for consideration.
- Agriculture Victoria to work collaboratively with other regulators, establishing clear actions, to manage the risk with the aim of increasing community reporting.

Agriculture Victoria Improvement Response

- Conduct at least one disease emergency exercise per year in consultation with other state and federal departments as required.
- Undertake a monitoring and reporting program in association with at least one other regulator to increase community reporting of high risk invasive animal activity in Victoria.

Key Findings

Disease Emergency Exercises

Agriculture Victoria conducted multiple biosecurity disease emergency response exercises during 2018 to ensure high-level regulator response capabilities. Emergency response exercises involved attendance from several key Victorian agencies and included:

- Exercise Bee Prepared – an emergency exercise relating to a simulated incursion of the apiary pest *Varroa mite*
- Exercise Coombes – an emergency exercise relating to a simulated incursion of the plant bug *Lygus lineolaris*

Agriculture Victoria monitors and assesses the performance of all its emergency disease exercises. Exercise assessments are reported on, with recommendations to assist in developing and refining the regulator’s pest and disease emergency response capabilities. In conducting the Bee Prepared and Coombes exercises, Agriculture Victoria engaged with state and federal agencies to ensure that effective and rapid disease response processes are well established to limit the potential economic, environmental and social impacts of high-risk pest and disease incursions on communities and industries.

Exercise Bee Prepared

The national ‘Bee Prepared’ apiary emergency response exercise was undertaken in March 2018 with Plant Health Australia and Agriculture Victoria, as well as with members of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council. The exercise tested key processes and response capabilities in relation to an incursion of the apiary pest *Varroa mite*. Key findings from the emergency exercise were evaluated and addressed by Plant Health Australia and Agriculture Victoria.

In June 2018, Agriculture Victoria responded to a positive detection of *Varroa mite* in cargo at the Port of Melbourne. The rapid and effective response of Agriculture Victoria to the *Varroa mite* detection was bolstered by the capabilities and currency of processes and skills attained from the ‘Bee Prepared’ exercise and was widely supported by the apiary industry.

Community Monitoring and Reporting Program – Illegal Wildlife Trafficking

To maximise the quality of its regulatory regime, Agriculture Victoria is enhancing its cooperation with other regulators, such as the DELWP and Crime Stoppers Victoria (CSV) in the pursuit of its regulatory objectives.

Agriculture Victoria has been working collaboratively with DELWP and CSV to conduct a public awareness campaign about the effects of illegal wildlife trafficking in Victoria. The campaign encourages the public to report any information that may assist investigators in restricting illegal trade in exotic pest animals in Victoria to CSV. This has led to improved coordination such as an agreement where CSV will take reports of wildlife crime on behalf of DELWP and Agriculture Victoria.

Agriculture Victoria could explore further opportunities to expand its partnership approach with DELWP and CSV to other areas.

Illegal Wildlife Campaign

The Illegal Wildlife Campaign was undertaken in partnership between Agriculture Victoria, DELWP and CSV to raise awareness regarding illegal animal trade. With increased accessibility to international networks via the internet, Victoria is increasingly being exposed to this illegal market. The campaign has been successful in generating public interest using a variety of mediums including:

- Facebook videos and posts
- Twitter via the provider Tribe
- A hard launch at the Melbourne Zoo
- Regional media event
- Traditional TV and print
- Targeted Gumtree advertising
- Establishment of reporting pages on the CSV website

CSV has estimated that the campaign generated \$1.3 million worth of advertising value and 13 Intelligence Reports during the campaign and a further 11 reports received since the campaign finished. Intelligence reports received have led to the seizure of exotic animals that were being illegally kept and traded in Victoria. A video produced for the campaign can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPMtDVrmWSI>

6. Stakeholder consultation and engagement

Ministerial Expectations

- Consult and engage stakeholders in a coordinated, effective, and clear manner.
- Expect stakeholder feedback on all regulatory reviews.
- Identify areas to strengthen current approaches to stakeholder engagement to assist in future consultation programs.
- Engage stakeholders about reforms on Animal Welfare.

Agriculture Victoria Improvement Response

- Identify and plan opportunities to increase consultation and engagement with key stakeholders (including but not limited to consultative committees, representative bodies, product manufacturers, producers, and exporters) regarding new regulatory reforms.
- Undertake stakeholder consultation on 100% of regulatory reviews.
- Provide feedback to all parties making submissions on proposed regulatory reviews within two months of the comment period closing.
- Engage with stakeholders about reform of Victoria's animal welfare legislation through written documents and face-to-face consultation.

Key Findings

Agriculture Victoria has overseen several high-level consultations relating to significant regulatory reform initiatives. Of note is the consultation that was undertaken with over 200 representatives from diverse groups to develop Victoria's first Animal Welfare Action Plan. This consultation included representatives from agriculture groups, veterinary and professional associations, recreation and sports groups, local governments, enforcement agencies, animal welfare

organisations covering domestic pets, horses and wildlife. The information gathered from this consultation process will help inform the reform and modernisation of Victoria's animal welfare legislation.

Animal Welfare Victoria also undertook targeted stakeholder consultation to gather information to assist in reviewing the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*. Consultations took place over four weeks and information from stakeholders was received via fourteen face-to-face meetings, twelve teleconferences, three paper surveys, three e-mail campaigns and the use of online questionnaires. Feedback was received from 62 organisations or individuals.

Agriculture Victoria also consulted with the following stakeholder groups on regulatory reform initiatives:

1. *Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016*

- 42 stakeholder meetings held by the Department/Minister for Agriculture between the introduction of the legislation and when the house amendment was introduced. Over 25 stakeholders were consulted.
- Following introduction and passing of legislation, consultation feedback was emailed to consultation participants and every council officer (approximately 400) and every known Community Foster Care Network participant (approximately 200).

2. *Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Regulations 2018*

- Direct consultation undertaken with affected stakeholders, with feedback requested on a draft policy from a wide range of stakeholders including the RSPCA (Victoria) and all 79 Local Government Authorities.

3. *Draft Code of Practice for the keeping of Racing Greyhounds*

- A Draft Code and Regulatory Impact Statement were made available on the Agriculture Victoria Website for consultation on 14 June 2017. Over 1300 submissions were received electronically by 14 August 2017. Each submitting person received an individual response letter with an attached statement of reasons for the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds.
- Three roundtables and one teleconference with industry and animal welfare experts were subsequently held in October and December 2017.

These examples demonstrate that Agriculture Victoria understands the operational importance and public interest value of seeking the different perspectives of its stakeholders.

7. Clear and consistent regulatory activities

Ministerial Expectations

- Agriculture Victoria interacts with the public and regulated parties in a consistent way, being:
 - Helpful
 - Respectful
 - Impartial
 - Proportionate
 - Predictable
 - Transparent
- Identify options for a new case management system for Animal Health and Welfare to centralise compliance systems, processes, and data management.
- Be responsive to lessons learned through emergency responses and exercises, by implementing changes to improve the effectiveness of future responses.
- Agriculture Victoria is expected to consult with the Red Tape Commissioner, business and the broader community, as appropriate.

Agriculture Victoria Improvement Response

- Identify options for a new case management system for animal health and welfare to centralise compliance systems, processes, and data management.
- Monitor the implementation of changes that have been made in response to evaluation of emergency responses and exercises.

Key Findings

Animal Welfare Case Management System

Agriculture Victoria is implementing a new central compliance case management system for Animal Health and Welfare (AHW) to achieve the improvements and targets it set out in the SOE. This new case management system enhances data collection and tracking of inspections and investigations.

Compliance activities and outcomes have previously been recorded on the Animal Disease Management Information System (ADMIS) contained in BioWeb, Agriculture Victoria's central platform for operational support. Expanding compliance activities and responsibilities under the *Food Act 1984* imposed increasing demands on regional staff and management with limited resources, placing achievement of regulatory outcomes at some risk. Agriculture Victoria identified that ADMIS had limited capacity to support increased reporting demands and more sophisticated management of compliance activities.

As a result, a new system, Compliance Max, was designed based on the needs of the AHW compliance working and reporting environment. Compliance Max was implemented in May 2018 and provides accountability, transparency and efficiency in managing regulatory compliance activities by:

- Being a centralised system of all AHW regulation and compliance activities.
- Assisting managers to achieve timelines and requirements to meet statutory obligations, policy and departmental requirements and AHW operations plans.
- Linking this centralised system to existing and future 'feeder' systems to reduce duplication of data entry and enhance staff efficiency and time management.

Over three thousand cases have been loaded onto the new system.

Emergency Response Evaluation Outcomes

The evaluation found that Agriculture Victoria undertakes various continuous improvement process to ensure that recommendations identified from emergency responses exercise evaluations are adopted and implemented.

Agriculture Victoria evaluates various performance measures in relation to biosecurity emergency responses and response exercises. Recent evaluation reports of emergency responses and response exercises include: Giant Pine Scale response; Anthrax response; Bee Prepared emergency response exercise; Varroa mite detection response; and the South West fire response.

Emergency response evaluation reports are made available to Agriculture Victoria staff through the BioWeb online platform. Agriculture Victoria is committed to the ongoing implementation of best practice emergency response processes to ensure high level emergency response outcomes. An Emergency Preparedness Committee is in place with to prioritise and track the implementation of actions arising from responses and provides communication regarding the progress of this work to Agriculture Victoria staff.

8. Reporting

Ministerial Expectations

Report on:

- Current baseline levels for performance targets set in this SOE.
- Activities to be undertaken to reach the performance targets and improvements set out in this SOE.
- Incorporate SOE performance targets will be incorporated into DEDJTR's Corporate Plan, and SOE published on Agriculture Victoria's website.
- Within two months of receipt of SOE, Agriculture Victoria will respond to this SOE, outlining how it intends to achieve the performance improvements and targets set in this SOE.

Agriculture Victoria Improvement Response

- Evaluate the performance improvements and targets contained in the SOE.

Key Findings

Agriculture Victoria has reported on its baseline levels of performance in its 2018 SOE Annual Performance report. It responded to the Minister's SOE within two months of receipt and reports on specific improvement targets through project reporting. Agriculture Victoria is continuing to use the BEF to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of its regulatory performance (for example, the BEF informed the SOE Annual Performance report).

CONCLUSION

Agriculture Victoria is progressing the improvement targets in the SOE, with most improvements on track for delivery by 30 June 2019 and established structures and processes in place to deliver its improvement targets. Measurement of the impact of the improvement targets in the SOE for this evaluation has necessarily been limited to the data and information available to date, noting that many of the targets continue to be implemented as the SOE does not expire until June 2019. As a result, the time between the implementation of targets and associated outcomes will vary and as such the evaluation team accepts the limitations of an outcome-based assessment at this stage of the SOE process. It may take a number of years before the impact of some improvements are fully realised and measurable.

APPENDIX 1 – SOE IMPROVEMENT TARGET PROGRESS SUMMARY



Complete




















In Progress



Delayed

Ministerial Expectation Criteria 1: Timeliness			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
1.1	Develop principles to guide the design and implementation of digital administrative processes for applications and information management, including e-capability and information provision.		Agriculture Victoria has adopted the Whole-of-Victorian-Government Digital Standards Framework to guide all future digital service design and development.
1.2	Prioritise online capability for the remaining licence, permit, certification, and registration application processes by regulated parties.		During 2017-18 new online templates were developed for animal sale permits, declared bird organisations and approved commercial dog breeder applications. Tag online service underwent significant upgrading and increased utilisation in 2017-18 with the introduction of electronic sheep identification in Victoria. Over nine million tags were sold online in 2017-18. MAX External Forms was developed to support effective high value
1.3	Increase the number of biosecurity application processes that are available online to at least 10, focussing on identified priority areas.		Agriculture Victoria has eight authenticated online processes in active use. Two additional services have been developed for issuing permits for biosecurity emergency responses.
1.4	100 per cent of new application processes introduced will be made available online in the first instance.		No new application processes were introduced during 2017-18. Any future application processes will be developed with online delivery as a key element of service
Ministerial Expectation Criteria 2: Risk Based Strategies			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
2.1	Review and update all risk-based compliance strategies.		All risk-based compliance strategies are being reviewed and updated.
2.2	Review and update all risk-based compliance operations plans.		All risk-based compliance operational plans are being reviewed and updated.
2.3	Investigate gaps in current legislative powers and provisions to effectively address marine pest biosecurity for Victoria.		A range of desktop scenarios have been developed to test the legislative coverage for marine pests and legal advice is being sought.
2.4	Develop a marine pest biosecurity policy that includes priority areas for data collection.		A draft marine pest module under the Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework has been developed.
Ministerial Expectation Criteria 3: Compliance related assistance and advice			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
3.1	Prepare a plan to review current website content to ensure advisory material for regulated parties is current, relevant and accessible.		Audit, review and assigning of web content to authors within the current website platform. Initial focus is on 2,500 pages of biosecurity-related content.

3.2	Implement first stage of website content review.		An initial audit of biosecurity-related web content identified opportunities to make improvements to ensure content is regularly reviewed and updated.
3.3	Introduce an ongoing monitoring program of website content to ensure information remains contemporary to legislative requirements and appropriate for use. This will include engagement with end-users to determine their ongoing information requirements as appropriate.		Initial focus is on 2,500 pages of biosecurity-related content. Authors have been tasked with the responsibility for periodic review.
3.4	Collect stakeholder information and report on the accessibility and effectiveness of available advisory information relating to EID of sheep and goats in Victoria. Report responses to any recommended improvements.		The process to appoint an external evaluator to conduct a mid-term project evaluation is being implemented.
Ministerial Expectation Criteria 4: Role Clarity			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
4.1	Review current agreement on operational arrangements between DEDJTR and Victoria Police for regulating poppy and hemp production.		Hemp and poppy production agreements have been reviewed and the ongoing arrangements between DEDJTR and VicPol have been confirmed.
4.2	Develop an agreement with Department of Health and Human Services for Agriculture Victoria staff to be authorised under the Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981.		A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between DEDJTR and DHHS for Agriculture Victoria staff to be appointed as authorised officers under the <i>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981</i> .
4.3	Clarify roles and responsibilities between DEDJTR and Department of Health and Human Services for primary production related food safety incident management under the <i>Victorian Food Act 1984</i> .		DEDJTR and DHHS have agreed to a protocol for the management of food borne illness outbreaks for on-farm investigations.
4.4	Publish a statement clarifying the arrangement between the RSPCA Victoria and DEDJTR in relation to animal welfare on the Agriculture Victoria website to provide the public community with an overview of the different roles and responsibilities of the respective organisations.		Animal Welfare Victoria is working to publish the new Memorandum of Understanding on the website in 2019.
4.5	Document the Victorian enforcement framework for animal welfare in Victoria and identify where greater clarity is required.		Agriculture Victoria engaged an independent consultant to review the Victorian enforcement framework for animal welfare.
Ministerial Expectation Criteria 5: Cooperation amongst regulators			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
5.1	Conduct at least one disease emergency exercise per year in consultation with other state and federal departments as required.		Exercise Coombes was conducted over two days in May and June 2018 with a scenario based on an incursion of the tarnished plant bug (<i>Lygus lineolaris</i>), a pest insect with a wide range of commercial host species.
5.2	Undertake a monitoring and reporting program in association with at least one other regulator to increase community reporting of high-risk invasive animal activity in Victoria.		From July to December 2017, Agriculture Victoria partnered with DELWP and Crime Stoppers Victoria to run the 'Trafficked, Traded, and Traumatized' campaign.

Ministerial Expectation Criteria 6: Stakeholder Consultation and engagement			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
6.1	Identify and plan opportunities to increase consultation and engagement with key stakeholders (including but not limited to consultative committees, representative bodies, product manufacturers, producers, and exporters) regarding new regulatory reforms.		During 2017-18, Agriculture Victoria increased consultation and engagement with key stakeholders for various regulatory reforms.
6.2	Undertake stakeholder consultation on 100% of regulatory reviews.		During 2017-18, Agriculture Victoria consulted on all regulatory reviews.
6.3	Provide feedback to all parties making submissions on proposed regulatory reviews within two months of the comment period closing.		Agriculture Victoria provides feedback to all parties that make submissions on regulatory reform.
6.4	Engage with stakeholders about reform of Victoria's animal welfare legislation through written documents and face-to-face consultation.		Agriculture Victoria is progressing work to engage with stakeholders to reform Victoria's animal welfare legislation.
Ministerial Expectation Criteria 7: Clear and consistent Regulatory activities			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
7.1	Identify options for a new case management system for animal health and welfare to centralise compliance systems, processes, and data management.		Compliance MAX, a web-based case management platform, has been designed and implemented and is used by Animal Health and Welfare authorised officers for compliance case management.
7.2	Monitor the implementation of changes that have been made in response to evaluation of emergency responses and or exercises.		Evaluation reports on emergency responses and exercises are managed in a web-based platform called BioWeb. An Emergency Preparedness Committee prioritises and tracks actions on lessons learned and provides communication to Agriculture
Ministerial Expectation Criteria 8: Reporting			
Improvement Target		Status	Status Detail
8.1	Evaluate the performance improvements and targets contained in the SOE.		Agriculture Victoria is evaluating its SOE development process and its progress towards delivering the improvements and targets identified in the SOE response.