

# Appendix A: Submissions and comments

We have consulted with DEECA, and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

## Responses received

Agency	Page
DEECA	A-2



Department of Energy, Environment  
and Climate Action

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SEC-240800363

Mr Andrew Greaves  
Auditor-General  
Victorian Auditor-General's Office  
Level 31 / 35 Collins Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000



Dear Auditor-General

**Proposed draft report - *Protecting the biosecurity of agricultural plant species***

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the Victorian Auditor-General's Office's (VAGO) proposed draft report for the performance engagement - *Protecting the biosecurity of agricultural plant species* received 21 August 2024.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) acknowledges the importance of effectively preparing for, preventing, managing and responding to plant pests and diseases in Victoria.

DEECA welcomes your findings and accepts the recommendations detailed in the report. A proposed action plan for implementing these recommendations is attached.

I thank your staff for their work and look forward to a continued productive relationship with your office.

Yours sincerely



**John Bradley**  
Secretary

9/09/2024

Encl. DEECA Action plan – *Protecting the biosecurity of agricultural plant species*



Official - Sensitive

## Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

### Action plan to address VAGO recommendations from report: *Protecting the biosecurity of agricultural plant species*

No	Recommendations	Acceptance	Agreed action	Completion Date
1	Develop a risk-based strategy to guide its surveillance activities. The strategy should cover general and targeted surveillance programs, and document the rationale for selected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• priority plant pests and diseases.</li> <li>• target locations.</li> <li>• surveillance activities' frequency and timing.</li> <li>• required resources.</li> <li>• industry and community roles.</li> </ul>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle <input type="checkbox"/>	DEECA will develop a strategy document to capture existing risk-based practices that guide surveillance activities.	30 September 2025
2	Improve how it plans, monitors and internally reports surveillance activities against its targets	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle <input type="checkbox"/>	DEECA will improve alignment and documentation of how it plans, monitors and internally reports on plant pest surveillance activities with requirements and relevant targets.	30 September 2025
3	Improve how it uses its resources to plan, schedule, monitor and internally reports on arrangement audits in line with its targets	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle <input type="checkbox"/>	DEECA will review the annual audit plan and prioritise work aligned with a documented risk-based strategy. DEECA will continue to work nationally to review relevant audit arrangements to ensure these are risk-based and reflect contemporary assurance approaches aligned with resourcing.	30 September 2026
4	Complete the Emergency Management Workforce and Capability Plan. Document how it will address resourcing requirements and gaps identified in its Model of Cover in the event of an emergency plant pest incursion, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specific training and capability development for Agriculture Victoria staff</li> <li>• recruitment and surge resources</li> </ul>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle <input type="checkbox"/>	DEECA will deliver these recommendations in stages. DEECA will complete the Emergency Management Workforce and Capability Plan to cover all hazards including plant pest emergencies by September 2025. This will be followed by training, recruitment and surge resources to be completed by September 2026.	30 September 2026