NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES / NSW LOCAL LAND SERVICES

Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan 2023-2024

Prepared by SABWA

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Part 1: The role of the Strategic Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Alliance

Executive summary

Animal biosecurity and welfare are key drivers of New South Wales (NSW) $23.1 billion-dollar strong[1] primary industries sector. The Strategic Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Alliance (SABWA) is a forum for senior representatives from Local Land Services (LLS) and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Animal Biosecurity (AB), Animal Welfare (AW) and the Biosecurity and Food Safety (BFS) Compliance business units to develop the NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and Annual Business Plan (Part 2). These plans capture and coordinate the suite of joint activities undertaken by both agencies and are underpinned by a memorandum of understanding.

SABWA also provides an interagency platform to identify and communicate emerging risks to the economy, environment and community from diseases and pests that affect animal and aquatic health and welfare. It provides a framework for governance and accountability in the delivery of biosecurity and welfare outcomes.

Reporting through SABWA is limited to projects captured in the annual business plan, however this represents only a small proportion of the joint and independent ongoing work undertaken by DPI and LLS.

The NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare system is greater than the sum of its parts; while DPI and LLS play separate roles, the local relationships, knowledge and understanding that LLS staff hold enables the delivery of biosecurity and welfare outcomes with local relevance that benefit the community and support state and national objectives.

This unique partnership means that NSW is the best placed jurisdiction in Australia for government veterinary surveillance and have considerable resources for response to emergency animal diseases and natural disasters.

Key Agencies

Local Land Services

LLS delivers agricultural advisory, pest animal, animal biosecurity and welfare, emergency management, natural resource management, Travelling Stock Reserve and land management (native vegetation) related services across 11 geographic regions in NSW as a single Executive Agency. The animal biosecurity and welfare functions of the business are provided by a network of authorised officers, including district veterinarians (DVs) and biosecurity officers, that form a critical operational resource for undertaking on-the-ground surveillance and investigation, emergency response and regulatory compliance. Local Land Services work to enhance animal biosecurity, welfare, food safety and National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) compliance at the local level; ultimately working to protect NSW livestock industry export reputation and access. LLS staff bring local knowledge, networks, situational awareness and field epidemiology, herd level animal disease investigation and Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) emergency response capability to the state. They assist in EAD prevention and preparations and undertake EAD exclusions daily throughout NSW, providing biosecurity and wider animal health advice to local producers and on ground intelligence. This workforce is a key and unique resource to be mobilised in an EAD outbreak.

DPI – Biosecurity and Food Safety Unit (BFS)

Animal Biosecurity

The Animal Biosecurity team, headed by the NSW Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), develops, maintains, and administers policies and procedures under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. The team staffs the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline, triages and coordinates the response to calls regarding potential significant animal and aquatic diseases and pests (see Fig. 2). Assistance is also provided in managing the NLIS to ensure there is traceability of animals from paddock to processor. These activities are critical in ensuring the delivery of state and national biosecurity and food safety programs which in turn enables NSW to meet international trade obligations and allows the rapid identification and containment of new and emerging animal diseases. The AB team provides technical support to LLS district vets for notifiable disease management and represents both agencies in national forums for animal and aquatic biosecurity.

Animal Welfare

The Animal Welfare Unit team, led by the NSW Chief Animal Welfare Officer (CAWO), provides technical and strategic advice on management of animal welfare across all animal species in NSW. Key activities in livestock welfare include developing and maintaining the suite of legislative instruments under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* and monitoring welfare outcomes at critical control points in the livestock market chain. AW also administers stock welfare panels which facilitate the resolution of refractory stock welfare cases through a legislated, structured process. The team develop and deliver industry and community planning and education tools.

Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance

BFS Compliance, led by the Director Compliance undertakes operational, licensing and technical functions including conducting field audits for compliance under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and other statutes. The Branch conducts risk-based compliance activities, delivers education, develops resources for authorised officers, partner agencies, industry stakeholders and the community and develops and maintains digital systems to enable biosecurity and animal welfare data collection, management, analysis and reporting. The Branch also supports biosecurity emergency responses.

The NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare System

The goal of a biosecurity system is to "minimise adverse impacts of pests and diseases on Australia's economy, environment and community whilst facilitating trade and movement of plants, animals, people and products" (Intergovernmental agreement on Animal Biosecurity 2019). Optimal animal welfare is critical to delivery of these biosecurity aims and to maintain social licence and market access. In addition, community interest in animal welfare is increasing. Optimal animal welfare standards must be maintained to safeguard the animals, the producers and their livelihoods.

The NSW biosecurity and welfare system can be divided into five elements: preparedness, prevention, detection, response and containment of threats/management of welfare. As outlined in Figure 1., LLS and DPI are jointly responsible for the delivery of core programs and projects under each of these elements. These activities can also be mapped to the key deliverables under the 2022-30 DPI Strategic Plan, 2020-30 LLS State Strategic Plan and 2019-23 SABWA Strategic Plan which dovetail to form a cohesive structure to safeguard the economy, environment and community from diseases and pests that impact animal health and welfare.

While emergency disease or natural disaster responses are irregular in nature, activities in preparedness, prevention, detection, response and containment of threats/ management of welfare are core business activities undertaken by all SABWA partners. To illustrate the value of the partnership between the agencies, Figure 2 provides a case study of a potential emergency animal disease at a saleyard.

Figure 1. Mapping of joint activities and the roles and responsibilities of each agency for the key deliverables under the 2022-30 DPI Strategic Plan in the NSW Biosecurity and Welfare System.

SABWA Agencies key:
LLS - Local Land Services
AB - Department of Primary Industries Animal Biosecurity team
AW - Department of Primary Industries Animal Welfare team
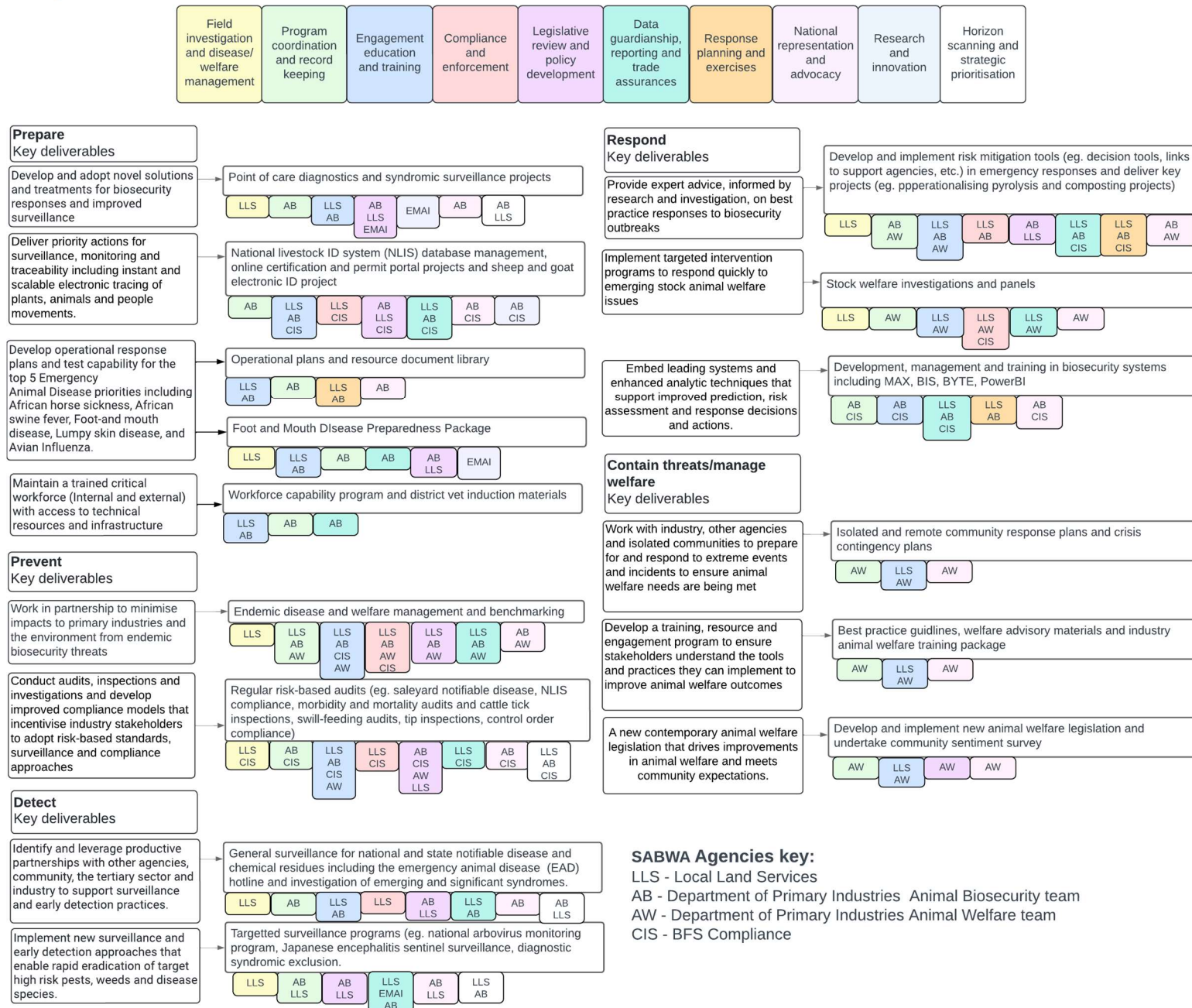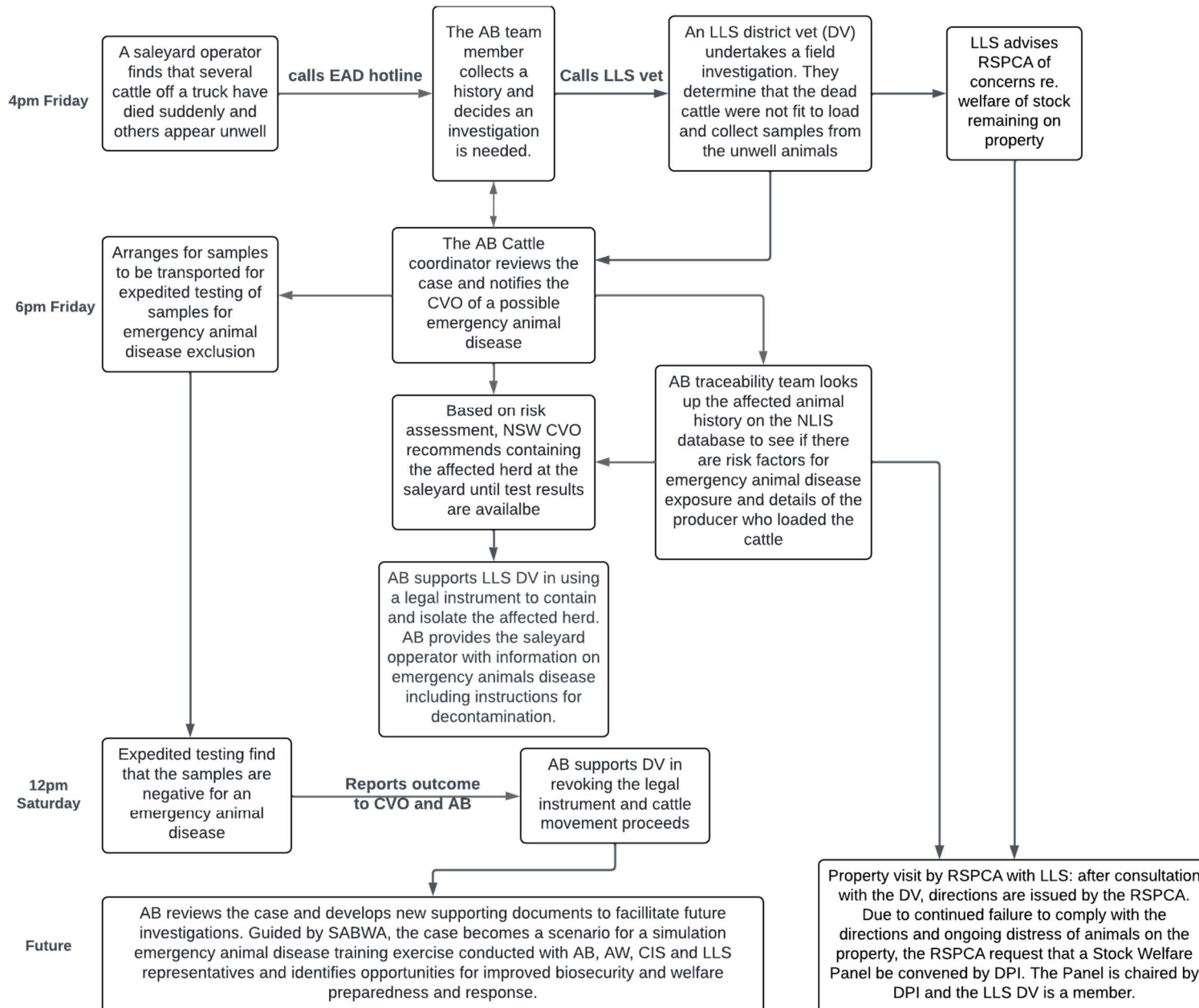CIS - BFS Compliance

Figure 2. Case study demonstrating the joint activities involved in a potential emergency animal disease and welfare incident in NSW per the Reporting Notifiable Pests and Diseases of Animals and Biosecurity Events, Pests and Diseases of Animals – Investigation and Alert Phase of an Emergency Response Procedures and the Animal Welfare Inspections and Enforcement Primefact.

4pm Friday
- A saleyard operator finds that several cattle off a truck have died suddenly and others appear unwell
- *calls EAD hotline* → The AB team member collects a history and decides an investigation is needed.
- *Calls LLS vet* → An LLS district vet (DV) undertakes a field investigation. They determine that the dead cattle were not fit to load and collect samples from the unwell animals
- LLS advises RSPCA of concerns re. welfare of stock remaining on property

6pm Friday
- The AB Cattle coordinator reviews the case and notifies the CVO of a possible emergency animal disease
- Arranges for samples to be transported for expedited testing of samples for emergency animal disease exclusion
- AB traceability team looks up the affected animal history on the NLIS database to see if there are risk factors for emergency animal disease exposure and details of the producer who loaded the cattle
- Based on risk assessment, NSW CVO recommends containing the affected herd at the saleyard until test results are availalbe
- AB supports LLS DV in using a legal instrument to contain and isolate the affected herd. AB provides the saleyard opperator with information on emergency animals disease including instructions for decontamination.

12pm Saturday
- Expedited testing find that the samples are negative for an emergency animal disease
- *Reports outcome to CVO and AB* → AB supports DV in revoking the legal instrument and cattle movement proceeds

Future
- AB reviews the case and develops new supporting documents to facillitate future investigations. Guided by SABWA, the case becomes a scenario for a simulation emergency animal disease training exercise conducted with AB, AW, CIS and LLS representatives and identifies opportunities for improved biosecurity and welfare preparedness and response.
- Property visit by RSPCA with LLS: after consultation with the DV, directions are issued by the RSPCA. Due to continued failure to comply with the directions and ongoing distress of animals on the property, the RSPCA request that a Stock Welfare Panel be convened by DPI. The Panel is chaired by DPI and the LLS DV is a member.

Part 2: NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan 2023-2024

Our vision

Nationally recognised leaders in Animal Biosecurity and Animal Welfare.

Introduction

The NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare (AB&W) Business Plan sets out the joint objectives, strategies, deliverables and key performance indicators (KPI) that DPI and LLS aims to achieve in 2022-2023. The plan delivers against the 2022-30 DPI Strategic Plan, 2020-30 LLS State Strategic Plan and 2019-23 SABWA Strategic Plan.

Successful implementation of the Business Plan is critical for DPI and LLS to achieve regional and state AB&W priorities and fulfil national and international animal health obligations. Successful implementation will result in continual improvement of biosecurity and welfare outcomes, enhance the health and safety of animals and products of animal origin, limit the spread of animal and aquatic pests and diseases, protect and enhance animal welfare and support trade and profitability of primary industries.

Scope

The Business Plan identifies seven joint objectives and respective measures of success to deliver the goals of the Strategic Plan 2019-2023. These objectives are aligned with strategic priorities identified under the Biosecure Industries and Environment and the Food Safety and Animal Welfare strategic outcomes identified in the 2022-30 DPI Strategic Plan and the aligned biosecurity outcomes in the 2020-30 LLS State Strategic Plan. Each organisation has strategies, deliverables and KPIs under their respective area of responsibility.

Strategies and deliverables that require joint delivery by both organisations are included in the scope of this Plan. Where a strategy/deliverable is only relevant to one organisation, it is documented elsewhere in that organisation's planning.

The Business Plan does not include resources or costings required to deliver the plan. Resourcing and budget for this plan is defined in each organisation's budget.

The Strategic and Business Plans have been developed jointly by both agencies to reflect risk based strategic allocation of resources.

How to read this Business Plan

The Objectives and Performance Measures included in this document are relevant to the joint responsibilities and strategic objectives of DPI and LLS. The units that have key responsibilities associated with each activity are listed in the plan, with the activity lead highlighted in bold. Although some units may not be listed with responsibility under an activity, input and collaboration may still be required.

DPI and LLS will report to their respective organisations plus provide a quarterly report on projects/activities status and KPIs to the Strategic Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Alliance.

Implementation of the Business Plan

Each strategy/deliverable is tasked to one or both partner agencies to lead, noting both agencies are involved in all deliverables within this Plan. It is the responsibility of both agencies to ensure that roles and responsibilities are agreed through project plans and other supporting documents and milestones are developed and met within the required timeframe.

Projects/activities are designed to be tasks that can be built into individual staff work plans. For LLS, each regional General Manager is responsible for ensuring activities are implemented and achieved throughout their region. For DPI, the program Team Leader is responsible for the overall

delivery of the program and the project manager is responsible for the project delivery and its associated activities.

Review process

Each quarter, SABWA will review an executive report on the status of KPIs and activities assigned to LLS and DPI. Where a risk or need for improvement is identified, SABWA will make recommendations for appropriate action. At the end of the financial year, SABWA will review and report on the success of delivery of the Business Plan. This report will be used to guide the design and implementation of future Business Plans to ensure strategic outcomes are achieved over both the short and medium terms.

For further information on SABWA please refer to the Terms of Reference.

Summary of objectives

1:	Lead the preparation for and prevention of future biosecurity threats
2:	Coordinate timely and risk proportionate responses
3:	Rapidly and efficiently contain biosecurity threats
4:	Minimise impacts from endemic biosecurity threats
5:	Continuously improve the welfare of animals
6:	Ensure community expectations around animal welfare are met
7:	Develop Strategic Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Plans

1. Lead the preparation for and prevention of future biosecurity threats

Performance measurement:

Success	Outcome KPI	Basis for comparison
Government, industry and primary producers are better positioned to manage biosecurity risks on-farm or within their business operations	Number of notification and reporting of suspicion/detection of biosecurity threats	Performance over time

Deliverable	Output measure (process KPI)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
1.1 Identify and leverage productive partnerships with other agencies, community, the tertiary sector and industry to support surveillance and early detection practices	Number of animal disease and chemical residue surveillance investigations Number of DV syndromic exclusions for notifiable disease investigations	Conduct active and passive surveillance to underpin market access Livestock owners and managers are engaged in meeting their General Biosecurity Duty, ensuring market access for livestock and product is maintained Develop and consolidate partnerships between government and private veterinary professionals	**LLS**, AB **LLS**, AB **AB**, LLS, AW
1.2 Increase engagement with animal industries and build partnerships across the agriculture sector	Number of DPI and LLS /industry engagement activities to support biosecurity	Develop communication and engagement packages with Agricultural industries and communities including saleyard and abattoir managers, private veterinarians, stock and station agents, transporters, online sales platforms in biosecurity risk mitigation initiatives Engage key stakeholders in regional strategic animal biosecurity & welfare planning Develop and deliver exercises based on top 5 EADs and their response plans	**AB,** LLS, AW, BFS Compliance **LLS** **AB,** LLS

Deliverable	Output measure (process KPI)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
1.3 Increase adoption of best practice biosecurity by landholders and producers through extension and compliance	Number of extension, education or training events and number of participants	Conduct and action behavioural research to identify producers' barriers and current knowledge gaps, awareness and capacity to fulfil their biosecurity duties	**AB**
	Number of landholder biosecurity advisory and compliance consultations	Conduct education and training in the community on emergency animal disease prevention and preparedness	**LLS**, AB
		Communicate and deliver animal health and welfare extension material to landholders to increase awareness, knowledge and capacity	**LLS,** AB, AW
		Work with agricultural enterprises and industry to develop biosecurity plans	**LLS**
		Engage with industry to develop enhanced biosecurity practice for key diseases (foot-and-mouth disease, lumpy skin disease, African swine fever, avian influenza, vector borne)	**AB,** LLS

2. Coordinate timely and risk proportionate responses

Performance measurement:

Success	Outcome KPI	Basis for comparison
Diagnostic and surveillance systems including workforce and information systems support surge capacity	Number of times systems are tested and reviewed within response and exercise After Action Review recommendations are actioned	Performance over time

Deliverable	Output measure (Process KPIs)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
2.1 Embed leading systems and enhanced analytic techniques that support improved prediction, risk assessment and response decisions and actions	Number of responses/ simulation exercises utilising MAX	Implement leading systems including MAX, WebEOC etc for all emergency responses Utilise intelligence products across available regulatory and compliance datasets (movement permit, Power BI etc) Develop syndromic surveillance system utilising existing state and national data bases	**AB**, BFS Compliance **AB,** BFS Compliance **AB**
2.2 Develop and implement risk-based compliance activities to enable an effective response to biosecurity threats	Number of joint activities completed, and compliance outputs/sanctions issued	Implement the compliance schedule for the memorandum of understanding clearly establishing roles and responsibilities for compliance activities Improve voluntary compliance and take appropriate action to address offending Identify risks for key response activities that impact on targeted and timely response including destruction, disposal, decontamination, vaccination etc	**BFS Compliance,** AB, LLS **BFS Compliance,** AB, LLS **AB**

Deliverable	Output measure (Process KPIs)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
2.3 Maintain a trained and engaged critical workforce (internal and external) with access to technical resources and infrastructure	Percentage staff completion of key training programs to support NSW biosecurity and emergency response capacity. Number of staff deployed to emergency responses	Undertake training on mass destruction and disposal techniques to improve response efficiency and environmental outcomes	**AB**
		Implement training programs and digital resources to provide education to stakeholders to improve voluntary compliance	**AB,** AW, LLS
		Develop cross regional networks for collaboration	**LLS**, AB, BFS Compliance
		Maintain a register of trained and experienced staff and their availability for responses (WebEOC)	**AB, AW, LLS, BFS Compliance**
		Establish a network of skilled veterinarians with the capacity and capability to assist effectively in emergency responses through engagement and training	**AB,** LLS

3. Rapidly and efficiently contain biosecurity threats

Performance measurement:

Success	Outcome KPI	Basis for comparison
Compliance and traceability frameworks support biosecurity threat mitigation	NLIS compliance monitoring on all species meets national standards of 98 %	Performance over time

Deliverable	Output measure (Process KPIs)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
3.1 Develop improved compliance models that incentivise industry stakeholders to adopt risk-based standards, surveillance and compliance approaches	Number of landholder advisory and extension activities Number of requests for regulatory support and number resolved	Complete a review and strengthen the framework used to deliver priority risk-based activities with agreement on compliance guidelines/procedures based on a consistent model and informed risk-based assessment. Part of the review includes the changing landscape with respect to new and increasing risks BFS Complianceand LLS to establish regional relationships to identify trending issues and enforcement capabilities and upskill through joint operations/ mentoring and the request for Regulatory Support Procedure Develop programs that support achievement of national traceability standards of 98% compliance across all areas of NLIS	**AB**, BFS Compliance, AW, LLS **BFS Compliance**, AB, AW, LLS **AB**, LLS, BFS Compliance
3.2 Strengthen identification, movement and traceability frameworks	Number of extension, education or training events around traceability /NLIS and number of participants reached	Aid and support stakeholders with the rollout of mandatory eID as a complement to the mob-based system	**AB**, LLS, BFS Compliance

Deliverable	Output measure (Process KPIs)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
		Monitor and evaluate compliance to improve implementation outcomes	**AB**, LLS, BFS Compliance
		Develop powerBI reports of traceability to add value to all stakeholders	**AB**
		Improve traceability connectivity and systems founded on existing and new technology, research and data analytics	**AB**
		Engage, one on one with key risk stakeholder groups with respect to current compliance levels	**BFS Compliance**
		Gather intelligence to support a flexible, improved risk-based regulatory system incorporating training and education programs based on findings	**AB,** BFS Compliance

4. Minimise impacts from endemic biosecurity threats

Success	Outcome KPI	Basis for comparison
DPI & LLS in partnership, minimises impacts to primary industries and the environment from endemic biosecurity threats	DPI & LLS maintain and implement endemic disease control programs	Performance over time

Deliverable	Output measure (process KPI)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
4.1 Negative impacts of established pests and animal disease are minimised in NSW	Number of DPI and LLS /industry engagement activities to support biosecurity	Risk based investigation of notifiable diseases and emerging endemic threats	**LLS,** AB
		Extension activities to encourage reporting, and management of notifiable endemic diseases	**LLS**, AB
4.2 Joint DPI/LLS/industry notifiable endemic disease programs delivered	Control programs limit spread of endemic disease within scope of each program	Implementation of the footrot program strategic review.	**AB**, LLS
	DPI & LLS maintain effective control programs for endemic diseases	Placeholder Cattle Tick – deliver an effective cattle tick program i.e., producer awareness, tick inspections etc	**BFS Compliance**, LLS **BFS Compliance**, AB
	Number of extension products developed and reviewed	Monitor compliance with salmonella enteritidis (SE) testing requirements in the SE Control Order. Work in partnership to undertake investigation and resolution of Infected Premises	**LLS, AB**
		Develop and deliver extension programs and materials for notifiable endemic disease including Hendra virus, Brucella suis, Johne's Disease, etc	

5. Continuously improve the welfare of animals

Performance measurement:

Success	Outcome KPI	Basis for comparison
Personnel of agencies involved with livestock industries are equipped with the capability to promote positive welfare outcomes for the animals they interact with	Increased confidence in knowledge of relevant personnel in livestock welfare fundamentals, legislation and related activities 90% of targeted staff complete livestock welfare training course	Surveys conducted pre- and post-completion of livestock welfare training course delivered to LLS and DPI

Deliverable	Output measure (process KPI)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
5.1 Improved understanding of and compliance with animal welfare legislation along the livestock market chain	Number of LHMS reports of animal welfare issues identified at saleyards Reduced deceased livestock at saleyards from NLIS data Number of saleyard engagement events conducted, and participants reached	Develop and deliver livestock welfare training, resources and an engagement program Ensure stakeholders understand the tools and practices they can implement to improve animal welfare outcomes	**AW**, LLS **AW**, LLS
5.2 Implemented targeted intervention programs to respond quickly to emerging stock animal welfare issues	Revised Stock Welfare Panel (SWP) governance, policy and procedure documents developed and published Number of best practice guidelines and advisory materials delivered	AW work with LLS to revise SWP governance documents, policy and procedures AW work with LLS, enforcement agencies and industry partners to develop and implement mitigation activities for high-risk groups Develop best practice guidelines and advisory materials for managing welfare in different settings	**AW**, LLS **AW**, LLS **AW**, LLS

6. Ensure community expectations around animal welfare are met

Performance measurement:

Success	Outcome KPI	Basis for comparison
Increased community confidence that animal welfare outcomes are being continuously improved	Comparative measure on 2 key components: confidence (feeling or belief that one can have faith in or rely on someone or something) and animal welfare (the way an animal experiences, and copes with, its environment)	Baseline established Dec 2022, as means for comparison every 2 years. Next survey to be conducted December 2024

Deliverable	Output measure (process KPI)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
6.1 Industry stakeholders to achieve positive animal welfare outcomes and meet animal welfare standards	Number of joint animal welfare investigations (LLS/POCTA EA*/ BFS Compliance) *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Enforcement Agencies	Conduct risk based joint audits/inspections etc of saleyards/licensed entities Animal welfare complaints are investigated as per POCTA	**BFS Compliance,** AW, **LLS** **AW**, LLS
6.2 A new contemporary animal welfare legislative framework that drives improvements in animal welfare and meets community expectation	New Animal Welfare Act, Regulation and Standards commenced development	Technical expertise provided to support the development of new animal welfare legislation	**AW**, LLS

7. Develop Strategic Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Plans

Performance measurement:

Success	Outcome KPI	Basis for comparison
Each LLS Region has an approved Regional Strategic Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Plan A joint DPI/LLS Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Strategic Plan 2024-2027 is developed	Strategic risk assessments and plans endorsed by CVO, CAWO and LLS CEO	11 completed plans aligning with national, state and regional priorities Strategic Plan agreed

Deliverable	Output measure (process KPI)	Activity	Responsibility (lead in bold)
7.1 Strategic risk assessment for animal biosecurity and welfare in each LLS Region	11 regional risk assessments	Apply standard risk assessment process and practice guidance to inform regional planning process	**LLS**
7.2 Strategic Plan for animal biosecurity & welfare for each LLS Region completed	11 Regional Strategic Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Plans	Regional plans developed consistent with state standards and guidelines, consistent with model deployed for weeds and pest animals. Informed by risk assessment, state strategies and LLS Local Strategic Plans	**LLS**
7.3 Joint Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Strategic Plan 2024-2027 completed	An AB&W Strategic Plan that aligns to DPI and LLS joint strategic direction	Develop an agreed strategic planning and annual business planning framework Strategic Plan endorsed by Agency heads	**AB, AW, LLS, BFS Compliance**

Glossary

AB	Animal Biosecurity
AB&W	Animal Biosecurity & Welfare
AW	Animal Welfare
BFS	Biosecurity and Food Safety
BFS Compliance	Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance
CAWO	Chief Animal Welfare Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
DV	District Veterinarian
EAD	Emergency Animal Disease
eID	Electronic identification
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LHMS	Livestock Health Management System
LLS	Local Land Services
MAX	Livestock health case management system
NLIS	National Livestock Information System
NSW	New South Wales
POCTA	*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*
POCTA EA	*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* Enforcement Agencies
PowerBI	Microsoft Power BI
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SABWA	Strategic Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Alliance
SE	Salmonella enteritidis
SWP	Stock welfare panels
WebEOC	Web-based Emergency Operations Centre

References

1. DPI Performance Data and Insights 2022
2. Dodd et al. 202, Key Result Summary: Valuing Australia's Biosecurity System, CEBRA Project 170713
3. Intergovernmental agreement on biosecurity 2019, DAWE