# Improving regulatory service delivery and stakeholder engagement: Have Your Say survey assessment

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**Cataloguing data**

This publication (and any material sourced from it) should be attributed as: DAFF 2024, Improving regulatory service delivery and stakeholder engagement: Have Your Say survey assessment, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra. CC BY 4.0.

This publication is available at [haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/regulatory-services-delivery](https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/regulatory-services-delivery).

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**Acknowledgements**

Thank you to all respondents for the feedback provided.

**Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia’s agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

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## Introduction

The Australian Public Service Commission completed a capability review of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in August 2023. The review identified the opportunity for the department to improve the way it undertakes regulatory services and how it engages with stakeholders. The review also identified opportunities for the department to utilise stakeholder knowledge through codesigning regulatory services where appropriate.

The department is committed to making improvements in these areas through its Transformation Action Plan (TAP). The TAP contains 10 priority actions across 5 key areas:

* leadership and culture
* collaboration
* delivery
* people
* resourcing and risk.

To support this work, a stakeholder survey was published on the department’s Have Your Say survey platform to inform 2 priority TAP actions:

* **Priority action 2.1** – commits the department to developing a stakeholder collaboration and practice framework that clarifies stakeholder management and engagement responsibilities.
* **Priority action 3.3** – commits the department to improving regulatory service delivery by developing and implementing a future-focused regulatory strategy that increases the efficiency and effectiveness of our regulatory service delivery and uplifts the capability of regulatory staff.

This paper summarises survey responses and details how feedback will be used to inform ways the department can improve regulatory service delivery and stakeholder engagement.

## Consultation summary

The survey titled ‘Improving regulatory service delivery and stakeholder engagement’ was hosted on the department’s Have Your Say survey platform from 12 August to 30 September 2024. The department encouraged participation by emailing approximately 2,800 stakeholders, supporting survey reach through social media promotion on the department’s channels. The survey attracted 254 responses and 5 email submissions.

### Improving regulatory service delivery

Most survey respondents have been engaged with the department’s regulatory services for more than 3 years (254 responses to survey question).

Table 1 shows that respondents interact with the:

* Biosecurity Act 2015
* Imported Food Control Act 1992
* Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012
* Export Control Act 2020.

A small proportion of respondents did not know what legislation applied to their activities Table 1. The Biosecurity Act, Imported Food Control Act and the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act all regulate imported goods.

Table 1 Legislative domains that respondents interacted with

| What legislation applies to the activities you do? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| *Biosecurity Act 2015* | 228 |
| *Export Control Act 2020* | 83 |
| *Imported Food Control Act 1992* | 112 |
| *Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012* | 56 |
| Unsure | 12 |
| **Total responses received** | **252** |

Table 2 provides a breakdown of how regulatory service delivery stakeholders identify themselves. Approximately half of the respondents are involved in exports with the other half involved in imports.

Table 2 How stakeholders identify themselves

| Which of the following activities best describes your organisation? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Import supply chain participant (including importer, permit holder, biosecurity approved arrangement holder and treatment provider) | 130 |
| Agent and third-party logistics provider (including customs brokers, freight forwarder and stevedores) | 90 |
| Manufacturer/producer | 18 |
| Peak industry body | 22 |
| Export supply chain participant (including exporter, permit and licence holder, accreditation/registration holder, certifying body) | 26 |
| Travelling to and from Australia as a passenger | 7 |
| Other | 25 |
| **Total responses received** | **252** |

Of the 254 respondents, 104 felt that regulatory services were delivered well and 120 had a negative or neutral view on how regulatory services are delivered (Table 3).

Table 3 Stakeholder views on effectiveness of department regulatory service delivery

| How effectively do we deliver our regulatory services? | Count | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all | 15 | 6.7% |
| No | 40 | 17.9% |
| Neutral | 65 | 29% |
| Good | 79 | 35.3% |
| Very good | 25 | 11.2% |
| **Total responses received** | **224** | – |

Table 4details regulatory services that stakeholders considered being done well. Respondents were limited to selecting 3 services from a drop-down list. The top 3 services provided by the department were identified as approved approaches, inspections and accreditations.

Table 4 Best performing department regulatory services

| Which regulatory services delivered by the department do we perform well? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Accreditation | 66 |
| Approved approaches to managing goods, premises, and other things (also known as third party and other approved arrangements) | 83 |
| Audit activities | 53 |
| Clearance of goods | 50 |
| Document assessment | 36 |
| Inspections | 75 |
| Issuing permits | 45 |
| Operational practices and processes | 17 |
| Registrations | 8 |
| Other | 13 |
| **Total responses received** | **211** |

A total of 44.8% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with how the department communicates its regulatory policies, processes and decisions (Table 5).

Table 5 Satisfaction with communication of regulatory policies, processes and decisions

| How satisfied are you with the way the department communicates its regulatory policies, processes and decisions? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Very dissatisfied | 14 |
| Dissatisfied | 40 |
| Neither dissatisfied or satisfied | 73 |
| Satisfied | 92 |
| Very satisfied | 14 |
| **Total responses received** | **233** |

Regulatory services that stakeholders felt could be improved are detailed in Table 6. The main areas identified for improvement included document assessment, inspections, clearance of goods, and operational practices and processes. Respondents were limited to selecting 3 choices from a drop-down menu.

Table 6 Department regulatory services that could be improved

| Which regulatory services delivered by the department can we improve? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Accreditation | 16 |
| Approved approaches to managing goods, premises, and other things (also known as third party and other approved arrangements) | 22 |
| Audit activities | 28 |
| Clearance of goods | 81 |
| Document assessment | 100 |
| Inspections | 91 |
| Issuing permits | 33 |
| Registrations | 6 |
| Operational practices and processes | 49 |
| Other | 27 |
| **Total responses received** | **218** |

Stakeholders used multiple resources to stay informed of their regulatory obligations in Table 7. The top 4 resources used by stakeholders were:

* contacting the department via phone or email
* the department’s website
* BICON
* industry advice notices.

Table 7 Resources used by stakeholders to stay abreast of regulatory obligations

| What resources do you use to understand and stay up to date with your regulatory requirements? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Calling or emailing the department | 120 |
| Department webpages | 154 |
| Australian Biosecurity Import Conditions (BICON) | 151 |
| Industry advice notices | 140 |
| Manual of Importing Country Requirements (Micor) | 40 |
| Market access advices | 22 |
| Meat notices | 6 |
| Newsletters | 51 |
| Engagement or collaboration activities | 34 |
| Attending seminars or webinars | 78 |
| **Total responses received** | **230** |

### Stakeholder engagement

Approximately 60% of respondents know how to initiate an engagement with the department on issues of concern to them. Of the 232 responses 40% reported that they do not know or are unsure how to engage the department on issues that matter to them (Table 8).

Table 8 Awareness of how to initiate departmental engagement

| Do you know how to initiate an engagement with us on issues that matter to you? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | 139 |
| No | 35 |
| Unsure | 58 |
| **Total responses received** | **232** |

Of the 230 responses, 45.7% reported that they have previously engaged with the department on a policy, program or service delivery, with 54.3% reporting they had not engaged the department on these topics previously (Table 9).

Table 9 Prior engagement on policy, program or service delivery

| Have you engaged with us on the development of a policy, program or service delivery? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | 105 |
| No | 125 |
| **Total responses received** | **230** |

Of the 233 responses, 42.5% believe they have sufficient opportunities to engage with the department on issues that matter to them, with 27.9% reporting insufficient engagement opportunities, and 29.6% reporting they were unsure (Table 10).

Table 10 Opportunities to engage with department

| Do you have sufficient opportunities to engage with us on issues that matter to you? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | 99 |
| No | 65 |
| Unsure | 69 |
| **Total responses received** | **233** |

Respondents preferred departmental engagement approaches that focused on information sharing (30.9%) and consultation (27.4%). Deliberative and collaborative engagement approaches were also favoured (24%). Formal partnerships and other forms of engagement were least preferred for this respondent group (Table 11).

Table 11 Preferred ways of engaging with department

| How would you like to engage with us? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Receiving information (e.g. newsletters, webinars, website, social media posts) | 147 |
| Consultation (e.g. surveys, working groups, focus groups or roundtables) | 130 |
| Collaborate and deliberate (e.g. advisory groups, committees, expert panels, workshops) | 114 |
| Partnerships (e.g. formal partnerships between government and organisations) | 76 |
| Other | 8 |
| **Total responses received** | 221 |

Approximately 44% of respondents preferred departmental contacts and newsletters to find out about engagement opportunities. Website and industry communication was also favoured by approximately 38% of respondents (Table 12).

Respondents preferred finding out about engagement opportunities through departmental contacts (22.3%), newsletters (21.9%) and the department’s website (19.8%). Social media engagement, online advertising and other communication channels were less preferred (Table 12).

Table 12 Respondent engagement preferences

| How would you like to find out about engagement opportunities offered by us? | Count |
| --- | --- |
| Departmental contact | 108 |
| Departmental newsletters | 106 |
| Website | 96 |
| Via your industry organisations | 88 |
| Media releases | 45 |
| Social media posts | 17 |
| Other | 13 |
| **Total responses received** | **225** |

Respondents rated their level of agreement with 5 key statements regarding the department’s commitment to engaging and partnering with stakeholders in service delivery and policy making.

* Of the 231 responses, 18.7% did not agree that the department is open to a diverse range of perspectives to inform policy, program and service delivery with 43.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and 37.8% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Table 13).
* 30.9% of respondents did not agree that the department is responsive and willing to try new approaches that are fit for purpose and culturally appropriate. 39.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with 30.6% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Table 13).
* 19.6% of respondents did not agree that the department was transparent, open and honest about expectations, roles, limitations and objectives. 48% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 31.9% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Table 13).
* 30.5% of respondents did not agree that the department was accountable, share information, take responsibility for commitments made and inform people on how they contributed to the final decision. 40.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and 29.2% neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 13).
* 23.8% of respondents did not agree that the department builds relationships through respectful collaboration with stakeholders and the public to achieve the best outcomes. 45.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and 30.8% neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 13).

Table 13 Perspectives on how the department engages and partners with stakeholders

| **Statement** | **Strongly disagree** | | **Disagree** | | **Neither agree nor disagree** | | **Agree** | | **Strongly agree** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (no.) | (%) | (no.) | (%) | (no.) | (%) | (no.) | (%) | (no.) | (%) |
| We are open to a diverse range of perspectives to inform policy, program and service delivery. | 9 | 3.9 | 34 | 14.8 | 87 | 37.8 | 85 | 37.0 | 15 | 6.5 |
| We are responsive and willing to try new approaches that are fit for purpose and culturally appropriate. | 16 | 7.0 | 53 | 23.1 | 70 | 30.6 | 73 | 31.9 | 17 | 7.4 |
| We are transparent, open and honest about expectations, roles, limitations and objectives. | 11 | 4.8 | 34 | 14.8 | 73 | 31.9 | 93 | 40.6 | 18 | 7.9 |
| We are accountable, share information, take responsibility for commitments made and inform people on how they contributed to the final decision. | 22 | 9.7 | 47 | 20.8 | 66 | 29.2 | 73 | 32.3 | 18 | 8.0 |
| We build relationships through respectful collaboration with stakeholders and the public to achieve the best outcomes. | 17 | 7.5 | 37 | 16.3 | 70 | 30.8 | 79 | 34.8 | 24 | 10.6 |
| **Total responses received** | **231** |  | - |  | - |  | - |  | - |  |

## Key issues

In addition to the 254 survey responses received, the department also received 5 written submissions. Key issues raised throughout the submissions included that the department needs to:

* modernise service delivery (through improved technology and data analytics)
* have more consistent and meaningful engagement with industry partners
* mature its regulatory system
* have a lower cost recovery model that rewards businesses who meet standards
* continue to work with industry in developing solutions and develop innovative regulatory solutions
* focus on risk-based regulation
* address clarity and transparency of approval processes
* focus on time reduction initiatives
* standardise processes as much as possible and improve consistency of approach
* increase more frequent audits to drive system change and improvements to documentation assessments
* focus on improving its information communications technology (ICT) systems
* have an equitable cost recovery system
* senior management need to be more accessible to stakeholders
* provide more opportunities to engage, and improve stakeholder awareness of how to engage
* increase consultation and deliberative engagement opportunities
* increase the use of both in-person and digital engagement approaches.

## Learnings

Data collected from the survey will inform how the department undertakes regulatory service delivery in the future. Not only does the data help us improve the way we deliver regulatory services, but it also provides valuable insights on how the department can improve.

Comments that are not within the survey scope have been provided to relevant areas within the department to address where practicable.

For example, many responses raised issues about ICT. While ICT is critical to delivering our regulatory services, it is also part of a larger body of work being undertaken by the department. In these instances, relevant areas within the department are informed of the survey results to ensure issues are considered as part of their broader work.

Survey responses reinforced the department’s emphasis of the crucial role that meaningful stakeholder engagement plays in improving our policies, programs and service delivery. We recognise that stakeholder collaboration is essential to making sure departmental policies, programs and services are fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of the user.

Responses also highlighted opportunities to improve the department’s engagement approaches in-line with Australian Government principles to be more open, responsive, transparent, accountable, informed and collaborative. These important stakeholder insights have identified opportunities to improve our ways of engaging to meet the preferences of our stakeholders.

The department is committed to analysing the results and addressing issues identified. Where appropriate, enterprise-wide solutions will be developed in consultation with stakeholders to improve our regulatory services.

## Appendix A: Survey questions

### Welcome

Trade is rising and rules are getting more complex. We want your views on how to improve our service delivery for biosecurity, exports, imported food, and timber products. We also want your views on how we can improve our stakeholder engagement.

Your insights will help us refine our approach to regulatory service delivery and stakeholder engagement.

You can use this survey to answer questions and upload documents. If you are uploading a written submission on behalf of an organisation, it must be on official letterhead.

Submissions close at **9am (AEST) on Monday, 30 September 2024**.

### Improving regulatory service delivery

1. **How long have you or your organisation engaged with services delivered by the department?**
   1. Less than 3 years
   2. Over 3 years
2. **Which of the following activities best describes you or your organisation? (You can select more than one activity)**
   1. Import supply chain participant (including importer, permit holder, biosecurity approved arrangement holder and treatment provider)
   2. Agent and third-party logistics provider (including customs brokers, freight forwarder and stevedores)
   3. Manufacturer/producer
   4. Peak industry body
   5. Export supply chain participant (including exporter, permit and licence holder, accreditation/registration holder, certifying body)
   6. Travelling to and from Australia as a passenger
   7. Other (please specify)
3. **What legislation applies to the activities you do?**
   1. Biosecurity Act 2015
   2. Export Control Act 2020
   3. Imported Food Control Act 1992
   4. Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012
   5. Unsure
4. **You can make a submission, undertake the survey or both. If you would like to upload a submission, please do so here. It is preferred that submissions are on your organisation’s letterhead.**
5. **Would you like to continue with the survey?**
   1. Yes
   2. No
6. **How effectively do we deliver our regulatory services?**
   1. Very poor
   2. Poor
   3. Neutral
   4. Well
   5. Very well
7. **Which regulatory services delivered by the department do we perform well? Choose up to 3.**
   1. Accreditation
   2. Approved approaches to managing goods, premises, and other things (also known as third party and other approved arrangements)
   3. Audit activities
   4. Clearance of goods
   5. Document assessment
   6. Inspections
   7. Issuing permits
   8. Operational practices and processes
   9. Registrations
   10. Other (please specify)
8. **How satisfied are you with the way the department communicates its regulatory policies, processes and decisions?**
   1. Very dissatisfied
   2. Dissatisfied
   3. Neither dissatisfied or satisfied
   4. Satisfied
   5. Very satisfied
9. **Which regulatory services delivered by the department can we improve? Choose up to 3.**
   1. Accreditation
   2. Approved approaches to managing goods, premises, and other things (also known as third party and other approved arrangements)
   3. Audit activities
   4. Clearance of goods
   5. Document assessment
   6. Inspections
   7. Issuing permits
   8. Registrations
   9. Operational practices and processes
   10. Other (please specify)
10. **What resources do you use to understand and stay up to date with your regulatory requirements?**
    1. Calling or emailing the department
    2. Department webpages
    3. Australian Biosecurity Import Conditions (BICON)
    4. Industry advice notices
    5. Manual of Importing Country Requirements (Micor)
    6. Market access advices
    7. Meat notices
    8. Newsletters
    9. Engagement or collaboration activities
    10. Attending seminars or webinars
    11. Word of mouth
    12. Other (please specify)

#### Future collaboration in regulatory service delivery

1. **Would you be willing to become involved in improving our regulatory service delivery?**
   1. Yes
   2. No
2. **Do you have any further comments to share with us about our regulatory service delivery?**

### Stakeholder engagement

1. **Do you know how to initiate an engagement with us on issues that matter to you?**
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. Unsure
2. **Have you engaged with us on the development of a policy, program or service delivery?**
   1. Yes
   2. No
3. **Do you have sufficient opportunities to engage with us on issues that matter to you?**
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. Unsure
4. **How would you like to engage with us?**
   1. Receiving information (e.g. newsletters, webinars, website, social media posts)
   2. Consultation (e.g. surveys, working groups, focus groups or roundtables)
   3. Collaborate and deliberate (e.g. advisory groups, committees, expert panels, workshops)
   4. Partnerships (e.g. formal partnerships between government and organisations)
   5. Other (please specify)
5. **How would you like to find out about engagement opportunities offered by us?**
   1. Website
   2. Social media posts
   3. Departmental newsletters
   4. Online advertising
   5. Departmental contact
   6. Via your industry organisations
   7. Media releases
   8. Other (please specify)
6. **We are committed to engaging and partnering with stakeholders and the public in service delivery and policymaking. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**
   1. We are open to a diverse range of perspectives to inform policy, program and service delivery.
   2. We are responsive and willing to try new approaches that are fit for purpose and culturally appropriate.
   3. We are transparent, open and honest about expectations, roles, limitations and objectives.
   4. We are accountable, share information, take responsibility for commitments made and inform people on how they contributed to the final decision.
   5. We build relationships through respectful collaboration with stakeholders and the public to achieve the best outcomes.
7. **How could we improve our engagement with you?**