



**Australian Government**

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

## Submission to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

### Inquiry: Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and-mouth disease

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee inquiry into the adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and-mouth (FMD) disease.

#### Drawing on a strong bilateral relationship

Indonesia is one of Australia's most important bilateral relationships, and we enjoy extensive cooperation on many issues vital to Australia's security, prosperity, and long-term strategic interests. Safeguarding the biosecurity of our region is a shared concern for Australia and Indonesia. While we enjoy ongoing strong collaboration between our respective authorities, the COVID pandemic and the twin outbreaks of FMD and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) disease show us we need to do more. At the time of writing, Indonesia has reported 498,148 cases of FMD across 24 provinces, and 1,553,344 doses of FMD vaccine administered. Indonesia has set a target of importing 14 million doses of FMD vaccine, Australia has committed 4 million doses.

Indonesia is home to a substantial Australian diplomatic network, with four posts (Jakarta, Bali, Surabaya, Makassar) across the country and 12 agencies represented, alongside Australia's Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta. DFAT has leveraged this network, including in provinces outside of Jakarta, and our longstanding engagement with Indonesian counterparts to monitor and respond to these outbreaks. Our posts in Indonesia are actively engaged across the Indonesian system to establish relationships of trust to facilitate and coordinate the delivery of Australia's support to Indonesia. This includes ensuring timely vaccine distribution through the facilitation of the required permits and approvals. Most recently, Ambassador Penny Williams PSM called on the Indonesian House of Representatives to discuss Australia's support to Indonesia.

Throughout this effort, DFAT is working with Indonesian partners and counterparts to identify needs and challenges in their response, and to ensure that Australia's support responds to Indonesia's priorities. Indonesia has so far welcomed not only Australia's assistance, but our approach. Our active partnership across various levels of Indonesian government and industry provides a basis for ongoing and future cooperation on a range of matters, including agriculture and biosecurity.

DFAT remains committed to supporting Australia's strongest ever biosecurity response, while responding to the needs of our near neighbours with targeted, responsive support. We do so in the understanding that we have extensive economic, trade, and security interests in ensuring a strong, bio-secure agricultural trading regime in our region. Australia's high-quality agricultural exports support regional food security, including in Indonesia, whilst also supporting a broad range of Australian domestic industries and regional communities along the supply chain. Our

services exports support regional economic recovery from COVID-19. A blanket prohibition on trade and travel, even if temporary, would run counter to these interests.

This action would also weaken Australia's position as an advocate for fair, open and reliable trade. We note that in 2021 our two-way total goods trade with Indonesia was valued at \$15.82 billion, with Australia's exports to Indonesia reaching \$10.87 billion. Wheat exports were valued at \$1.76 billion in 2021, while our live cattle exports were \$594 million. Indonesia's economy continues to grow, as do the opportunities for our exports: our fresh and chilled beef exports have risen 24% year-on-year to \$356 million in 2021-22. Indonesia is forecast to be a top four economy by 2050.

While there are currently no active cases of FMD in Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea, DFAT staff in country are in close contact with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and with host governments to do needs analyses, to provide technical assistance, and to prepare to provide assistance to an FMD response, if required.

#### Supporting a whole-of-government response

DFAT is supporting the implementation of three whole-of-government packages providing support for FMD and LSD response in Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea.

- \$1.5 million for vaccines, funded through DFAT's Overseas Development Assistance, was jointly announced on 14 July by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The first delivery of Australian FMD vaccines arrived on 21 August 2022.
- \$14 million for preparedness, biosecurity, and technical assistance, funded by DAFF and announced on 15 July.
- \$10 million for vaccines and livestock tracing funded by DFAT Overseas Development Assistance and jointly announced on 9 August.

These packages provide to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea:

- Support for vaccine procurement and distribution
- Technical assistance to strengthen laboratory capacity and diagnostic testing
- Support for Indonesia's livestock identification system.

DFAT has also played a role in supporting Australia's biosecurity response. DFAT engagement with Indonesian authorities has supported the placement of foot mats and signage in Indonesian airports, particularly in Bali through advocacy by the Consulate-General. The Smartraveller website provides Australian travellers with updated information on FMD risks and biosecurity requirements. This information has also been shared through DFAT posts' social media channels.

#### Leveraging Australia's partnerships in Indonesia

Australia has well-established development partnerships in Indonesia, including the \$17.5 million Australia-Indonesia Health Security Partnership (AIHSP). To support Indonesia's FMD and LSD response, we are leveraging our experienced program staff, their networks in the Indonesian system, and their relationships of trust. FMD and LSD vaccines procured by Australia will be purchased and imported into Indonesia through the AIHSP, as was done during COVID-19. The AIHSP is also supporting vaccine distribution and delivery, including working with the Indonesian National Disaster Management Agency on coordination efforts.

Our \$5.6 million regional Laboratory Twinning, Biosafety Training and Laboratory Placements Program through the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness is supporting the response in Indonesia through diagnostic capacity building with Disease Investigation Centre Wates, a key Indonesian animal health laboratory.

Australia is also leveraging economic investments to respond to FMD. The Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (PRISMA) is helping provincial governments in Central and East Java to coordinate and plan their response to FMD. PRISMA is also helping with economic modelling of FMD impacts for provincial and national governments.

#### Meeting our trade obligations

Australia is committed to compliance with its international trade obligations, including under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and free trade agreements (FTAs). Under the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, biosecurity measures can only be applied to the extent necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health, as justified by a scientific risk assessment. There are similar obligations in our three FTAs with Indonesia – the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (I-ACEPA), the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA (AANZFTA) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), with the latter not yet in force for Indonesia.

In the event of an FMD incursion into Australia, Australia will be required to notify WTO Members and to work with trading partners to manage the impacts on trade. In accordance with the agreed Australian Government Biosecurity and Agricultural Response Plan, DFAT will assist agencies as part of a whole-of-government coordinated response. The assistance will include providing information to international trading partners; working through disruptions to agricultural exports; and where required, re-establishing export markets.