

17 July 2026

Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Via: Online Submission System

RE: Submission to the inquiry into the Biosecurity Amendment (Improving Operational Efficiency) Bill 2026

Greenlife Industry Australia welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Biosecurity Amendment (Improving Operational Efficiency) Bill 2026.

About Greenlife Industry Australia

Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) is the national peak body representing Australia's nursery and green life production sector, encompassing production nurseries, retail nurseries, landscape suppliers, allied businesses, and the broader plant supply chain. The industry contributes billions to the Australian economy each year and underpins essential national priorities including urban greening, biodiversity restoration, climate resilience, and the supply of high-quality plant material to horticulture, landscaping, and environmental markets. GIA works closely with government, research partners, and industry stakeholders to strengthen biosecurity, support workforce development, and ensure the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of Australia's green life sector.

Introduction

The nursery and greenlife sector is deeply reliant on a robust, efficient and trusted biosecurity framework. Our members operate within highly regulated import pathways and supply chains that underpin national priorities including urban greening, biodiversity restoration, climate resilience and horticultural productivity. Efficient biosecurity operations are essential to maintaining these outcomes.

GIA broadly supports the proposed amendments, which strengthen Australia's biosecurity system by improving the speed, accuracy and consistency of information collection, and by embedding procedural fairness into legislation for industry participants. However, for our industry participants that rely on the legal importation of live plant materials through Australia's air and sea ports in luggage, practicalities should be taken into account. This is detailed further within this submission.

Support for Digital Traveller Declarations and Mandatory Information Requirements

GIA supports the amendments in Schedule 1 of the proposed Bill, which introduce a mandatory obligation for travellers to provide prescribed biosecurity information and documents at or by specified times, including through digital technologies such as the Australia Travel Declaration (ATD).

The Bill's explanatory memorandum makes clear that the current system reliant on paper-based Incoming Passenger Cards and one-on-one interactions at the border, is no longer fit for purpose in a high-volume, high-risk environment.

However, legal live plant consignments in luggage, by our industry participants often rely on final inspection, packing, phytosanitary certification and transport arrangements that are only completed immediately before departure, meaning importers may not receive final documentation until the day of travel. A digital declaration must be flexible enough to accommodate legitimate late-stage documentation, rather than creating compliance barriers for operators acting lawfully. Australia also cannot assume uniform reliability in offshore phytosanitary certification; while some exporting authorities apply strong scrutiny, this is not consistent across all pathways. For this reason, the critical biosecurity control point for live plant material remains the Australian arrival pathway, declaration, inspection, treatment where required, secure movement and post-entry quarantine. The digital declaration framework should reinforce this pathway by improving accuracy and efficiency, not introduce friction that makes lawful importation more difficult or risks diverting consignments away from compliant channels.

The Bill enables earlier, more accurate and more complete information collection, reducing reliance on discretionary decisions and manual processing. This is essential for modern biosecurity operations.

In GIA's view the Bill will:

- Improve accuracy and completeness of traveller information, reducing errors inherent in paper-based systems.
- Enable earlier risk assessment, allowing agencies to more effectively identify high-risk travellers and goods before arrival.
- Reduce congestion and touchpoints at the border, supporting smoother passenger flows and more efficient screening.

Support for Mandatory Notices of Intention (NOI) for Approved Arrangements

Approved arrangements are central to the operation of production nurseries, quarantine facilities, and import pathways.

GIA also supports the amendments in Schedule 2, which require the Department to issue a Notice of Intention (NOI) before refusing, varying, or imposing conditions on an approved arrangement under Chapter 7 of the Act.

Currently, NOIs are issued as an administrative practice. The Bill elevates this to a legislative requirement, ensuring procedural fairness and transparency for biosecurity industry participants.

The memorandum states:

“The amendments would support procedural fairness to applicants... ensuring sufficient time for applicants to make statements relevant to a decision before a deemed refusal takes effect.”

For Greenlife Industry Participants, many of whom operate under approved arrangements, this change provides certainty and consistency in regulatory decision-making, clear opportunities to respond to proposed refusals or conditions, protection against deemed refusals occurring without adequate engagement and improved transparency, strengthening trust between industry and government.

Conclusion

GIA appreciates the opportunity to provide input and welcomes further engagement on this matter if required.

To discuss this submission, please contact Sean Cole, CEO at sean.cole@greenlifeindustry.org.au or on 0435 991 370.

Yours sincerely,



Sean Cole,
CEO