

Final report

Management of animal health standard steering committee

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Abstract

The Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data Through the Supply Chain was drafted in 2016. Since then, there had been no amendments made to the standard despite the continuation of advancements in animal health data collection. This project was initiated to ensure the standard was aligned with contemporary animal health practices. The objectives of this project have been successfully achieved. The working group for the management and updating of the Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain has been established and has been holding meetings since April 2021. The development of this working group included a Terms of Reference and completing a closed call to nominated providers. The management and maintenance of the Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain has been directed by the working group including significant amendments and additions. The working group has finalised and endorsed a second version of the standard which has been presented to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee and was provided industry endorsement in August 2022. This industry endorsed standard allows for consistent collection and reporting of animal health disease and defect data through the supply chain; the key foundation block required for future advancements in this area.

Executive summary

Background

The *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data Through the Supply Chain* was drafted in 2016. Since then, there had been no amendments made to the standard despite the continuation of advancements in animal health data collection. This project was initiated to ensure the standard was aligned with contemporary animal health practices.

Objectives

The objectives of this project were:

- Establishment of the Animal Health Standards Steering Committee
- Manage and maintain suggested amendments and additions to the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* as directed by the Steering Committee.
- Develop recommendations to be endorsed by the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee on the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain*.

The objectives of this project were all achieved.

Methodology

The working group for the management and updating of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* was established and has held meetings since April 2021. The development of this working group included a Terms of Reference and completing a closed call to nominated providers. The management and maintenance of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* has been directed by the working group including significant amendments and additions.

Results/key findings

The working group has finalised and endorsed a second version of the standard which has been presented to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee and was provided industry endorsement in August 2022.

Benefits to industry

An industry endorsed standard allows for consistent collection and reporting of animal health disease and defect data through the supply chain; the key foundation block required for future advancements in this area.

Future research and recommendations

A communication and adoption strategy need to be developed and delivered for this Standard and the working group needs to continue to ensure maintenance of this Standard.

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1. Background

The *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data Through the Supply Chain* was drafted in 2016. Since then, there have been no amendments made to the standard despite the continuation of advancements in animal health data collection.

This project was for the initiation, management, and maintenance of a committee (Animal Health Disease and Defects Working Group) to facilitate amendments and additions to the standard as identified by stakeholders. The working group was to make recommendations for amendments to the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* that was then to be submitted to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee (AMILSC). These recommendations were then required to be ratified by the AMILSC prior to inclusion in an updated version of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data Through the Supply Chain*.

Please note that the contract for this project refers to the establishment of a ‘steering committee’. Therefore, where sections of this report are required to be quoted from the original contract (i.e. project objectives), the terminology ‘steering committee’ has been used. As the steering committee is being established as a working group, all future references throughout this report will refer to the ‘Animal Health Disease and Defects Working Group’ or the ‘working group’.

2. Objectives

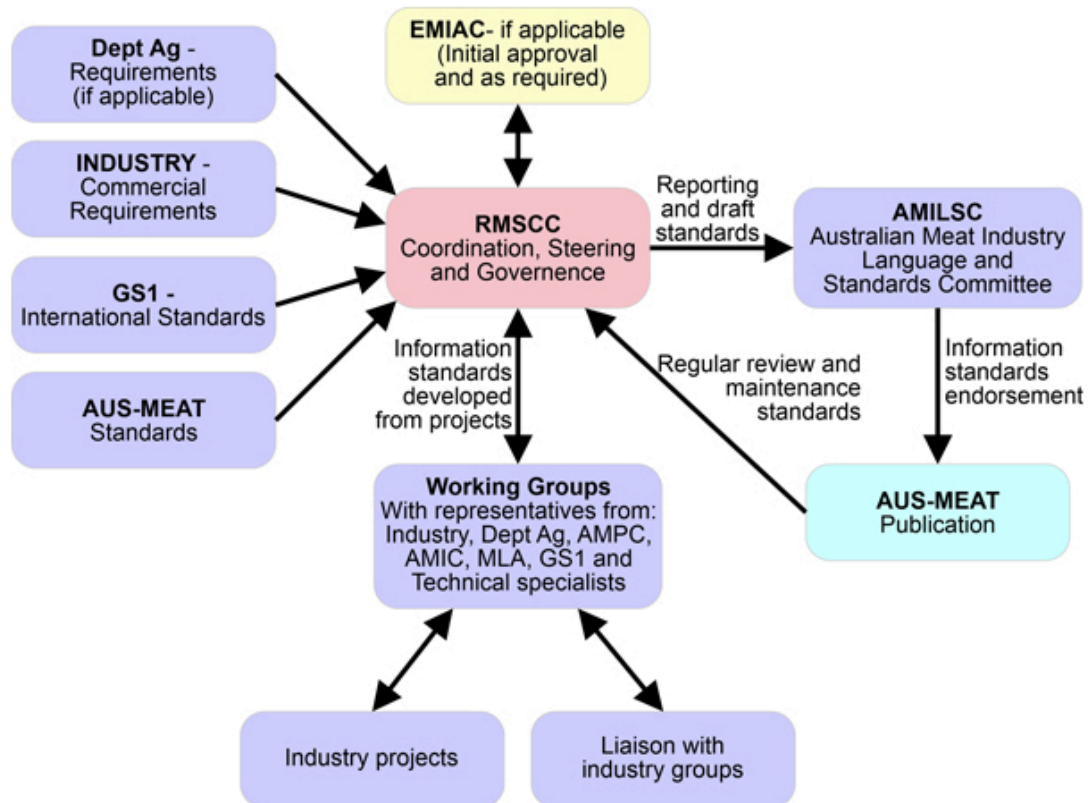
The objectives of this project were:

- Establishment of the Animal Health Standards Steering Committee. This included developing a Terms of Reference for the committee and completing a closed call to nominated providers.
- Manage and maintain suggested amendments and additions to the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* as directed by the Steering Committee.
- Develop recommendations to be endorsed by the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee on the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain*.

The objectives of this project were all achieved.

3. Methodology

The initial consideration was that the Animal Health Disease and Defects Working Group would sit as a working group under the Red Meat Supply Chain Committee (RMSCC). The role of the RMSCC is to provide a pathway for reporting to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee (AMILSC) and a communication pathway to government and industry on projects and initiatives on information standards for the red meat supply chain. The below diagram indicates the pathway to publication of standards and the relationship between working groups (e.g. Animal Health Disease and Defects Standards Working Group), RMSCC and AMILSC. AUS-MEAT were contacted for guidance on the process for establishing a working group under RMSCC and the pathway to AMILSC.



The Terms of Reference - including code of conduct and membership of the working group (Appendix 1) and the Draft process and template for suggested amendments to the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* were provided to MLA for review and approval, and amended as requested by MLA.

Working group members were contacted and agreed to be part of the working group.

The six meetings of the working group were held over 2021-22. For each meeting agenda and papers were drawn up and circulated, the meetings held and chaired, and the meeting minutes drafted and circulated for comment. The action items for the meetings were worked through by Food and Veterinary Services, Management for Technology, Meat and Livestock Australia and other working group members.

During these meetings the working group considered 56 amendments to the standard. The main changes to the standard were:

- Addition of attributes (diseases and defects) in line with existing practices and AS4696.
- The addition of grass seed scores for sheep carcasses
- Addition of supply chain items
- The inclusion of description/definitions and colloquial names to assist with consistent implementation
- Refinement of the codification of the standard

In addition, Food and Veterinary Services

- Held a meeting with Australian Pork Limited to ensure that the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and*

Defect Data through the Supply Chain is adopted by the pork industry and aligns with the work conducted by the pork industry in the Health 4 Wealth Project.

- Ensured additions and amendments from MLA adoption projects were considered by the working group for inclusion in the Standard.
- Papers were drafted for the EMIAC Food Safety and Animal Health Subcommittee.
- Papers were written to support industry endorsement.
- Papers to accompany the updated Standard were drafted ready for circulation to industry explaining the changes made to the standard.

The working group redrafted the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* over the life of the project. Discussion of Industry endorsement of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* occurred within the working group over this period. All organisations within RMSCC were represented in the working group and all representatives were asked to ensure that their represented organisations are comfortable with the redrafted version of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain*. The aim of this confirmation was for the redrafted standard to be presented directly to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standard Committee (AMILSC). The working group members unanimously endorsed the new version of the standard.

Food and Veterinary Services prepared a paper for the AMILSC including an offer for Management for Technology and Food and Veterinary Services to continue to manage the standard and working group for no cost. This paper was provided to MLA-ISC and a decision was made that MLA continue to manage the standard. It was clearly explained that this would mean the need for future contracts and fees for Management for Technology and Food and Veterinary Services to continue similar work as per this project contract.

A finalised version of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* (Appendix 2) with the Working Group's endorsement was presented to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee by a representative of ISC and Elizabeth Wilcock of Food and Veterinary Services for Industry endorsement at the August 2022 meeting.

The final working group meeting under this contract was held on 17 November 2022. The main discussions were on the 'where to from here?' for the standard and the working group, with no clear direction provided.

4. Results

AUS-MEAT were contacted for guidance on the process for establishing a working group under RMSCC and the pathway to AMILSC. AUS-MEAT were supportive of the project and stated that the working group needs to be formed and then recommended by industry for inclusion to the AMILSC and RMSCC structure. It was decided by the first meeting of the working group, to work through the technical amendments to the draft standard to then present a more complete version of the Standard to AMILSC for endorsement.

Appropriate members were contacted and agreed to be members of the working group. MLA provided feedback on the proposed membership list, with the list of members expanded at the request of MLA. These additional members were contacted with MLA-ISC support. Everyone contacted in regard to being a working group member was supportive of the project and accepted a place on the working group. During the first working group additional members were identified and

invited to future meetings. In addition, working group members changed where people represented organisations and roles changes and additional MLA staff were invited from time to time as required. Appendix 1 reflects the changes in working group members.

The terms of reference and code of conduct for the working group were drafted. MLA provided feedback on the terms of reference. These changes were incorporated into the draft terms of reference.

The six meetings of the working group were held over 2021-22. 56 amendments were considered by the working group.

Amendments agreed by the working group to the standard were:

- the name of the standard be changed to *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain*.
- the scope of the standard be amended to reflect the content of the standard and the change of name.
- a disclaimer detailing the conditions under which the data is collected and how this data is intended to be used.
- that diagnostic conditions can be added to the standard if they are supported by the Australian Standard – AS4696 and a disclaimer would be used to detail the data and reporting coming from the system.
- for both summary and linked granular codes for diseases and defects, i.e. to allow for a multiple level of scale of disease and defect codes to be linked to a summary code.
- consistent coding i.e., Abscess is 01 despite the organ the abscess it is on.
- for the use of company codes
- the addition of colloquial names to allow for greater adoption and alignment of data collected with the standard.
- the inclusion of grass seed abscess severity scoring
- to align the conditions collected by the pork industry (such as ascarid, colitis and ileitis) identified through the Health-4-Wealth project
- to include conditions being used by the red meat industry include (such as Cadmium or export requirements, pregnancy and the breakdown of the green offal to its parts) identified through MLA adoption projects
- to align with the National Sheep Health Monitoring Program and the Enhanced Abattoir Surveillance Program.

Additionally, the working group requested development of:

- An information paper for the EMIAC Food Safety and Animal Health Subcommittee to be written by Food and Veterinary Services.
- A form for amendment requests concerning how the data is captured, to be developed by Management for Technology available at https://www.rmscc.com.au/scis_5_r1.php?rt=Disease%20and%20Defect%20Condition%20Recording%20and%20Reporting%20Messaging and that the initial amendments form was amended to ensure that sufficient information is provided to the working group to allow for defensible decisions to be made.
- Mapping of the current draft standard against the National Sheep Health Monitoring Program by AHA and MINTRAC.
- Mapping of the current draft standard against the Enhanced Abattoir Surveillance Program.

- An information paper/presentation providing deidentified case studies of use of animal health data and cost analysis to be written by Food and Veterinary Services. AMIC also requested the inclusion of how many plants are involved and how far the standard is being used.
- A paper on the options with advantages and disadvantages of how dog bites can be added to the Standard.
- Clarification on whole body bruising, vaccination lesions and knotty gut as additional attributes to the standard.
- Consultation on the release of the next version of the standard, including risk analysis.
- Papers to be provided for the Peak Councils and industry organisation to support the endorsement of the redrafted version of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* by Australian Industry Language and Standards Committee. These were all developed and presented to the working group.

The working group members were asked to review the redrafted standard and provide any comments back to the Secretariat in the view that a final version be presented to the AMILSC for endorsement. Members representing industry organisations were also asked to seek support from these organisations of the draft ready for its presentation to AMILSC. In some cases, papers were drafted to support discussions within these organisations for example for the Australian Meat Industry Council and Australian Pork Limited.

A finalised version of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* was presented with the Working Group's full endorsement to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee for industry endorsement at the August 2022 meeting. This endorsement was received.

5. Conclusion

The objectives of this project have been successfully achieved. The working group for the management and updating of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* has been established and has been holding meetings since April 2021. The development of this working group included a Terms of Reference and completing a closed call to nominated providers. The management and maintenance of the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Disease and Defect Data through the Supply Chain* has been directed by the working group including significant amendments and additions. The level of work required to manage the working group and update the standard was significantly underestimated, however was successfully completed. The working group has finalised and endorsed a second version of the standard which has been presented to the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee and been provided industry endorsement in August 2022.

5.1 Key findings

This project delivered an industry endorsed standard that allows for consistent language to be used in the collection and reporting of animal health disease and defect data through the supply chain; the key foundation block required for future work in animal health across the supply chain.

5.2 Benefits to industry

The meat and livestock industry are supportive of this area of work, and there are great financial benefits for the industry to be gained. Consistent collection and reporting of data is paramount for trust in the data to support changes in on farm practices, which in turn are required for any of the benefits to be realised by processors who are required to collect the data. This industry endorsed standard allows for consistent language to be used in the collection and reporting of animal health disease and defect data through the supply chain; the key foundation block required for future work in animal health across the supply chain.

6. Future research and recommendations

It is strongly recommended that MLA and ISC decide how to manage this standard moving forward given continual periodic amendments will be required as can be seen from the significant amendments required since the development of the original draft 5 years ago.

Further work identified to be completed:

- A strong communication plan is required when a new release of the Standard is issued.
- That consultation must occur around the impact of the version change to industry and the risk analysis document developed to facilitate this.
- The development of business rules for the transfer and use of data
- Adoption work to ensure implementation of the new standard.

7. References

RMSCC n.d. *Home*. Viewed 9 February 2021, <https://www.rmssc.com.au>

8. Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1: Animal Health Disease and Defects Standards Committee – Terms of Reference (TOR)

Animal Health Disease and Defect Standards Working Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

This working group has been developed to manage and maintain the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain*.

Aims

The working group aims to keep the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* up to date and in the most user-friendly format. In managing and maintaining the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* the following fundamental questions will be considered for any amendments:

- What value is there to the supply chain in collecting this attribute?
- Is it an attribute that is confirmed at the point of collection?

This Terms of Reference sets out the terms of the working group, its role, member's responsibilities and the overall governance of the working group.

Roles and responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the working group are to:

- Meet the purpose of the group and the progression of projects, identified in the working group's work plan.
- Discuss challenges or issues with the draft *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* and come up with options around how to resolve these.
- Review and make recommendations around the process for making changes to the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* to Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee (AMILSC).
- Provide recommendations of amendments to the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* that will be submitted to the Red Meat Supply Chain Committee (RMSCC) to feed into the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee (AMILSC).
- Provide recommendations to the Red Meat Supply Chain Committee (RMSCC) to feed into the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee (AMILSC) for endorsement of

the Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain.

- Bring amendments forward for industry to consider to the *Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain* that will be submitted to the Red Meat Supply Chain Committee (RMSCC) to feed into the Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee (AMILSC).

Membership

The working group will be chaired by Dr Elizabeth Wilcock (Food and Veterinary Services Pty Ltd). The working group members are appointed based on individual expertise in the area of animal health disease and defect knowledge, and the use of the standard in the Australian meat supply chain. MLA, and AMPC are also part of the working group due to their involvement in the Health 4 Wealth Rural R&D for Profit project. A list of members is provided as Attachment 1 at the end of this document.

Upon a vacancy to the group a new member with equivalent expertise will be sought. From time to time invitations may be made to select individuals or organisations to attend Working Group meeting as observers to provide additional expertise.

Observer organisation

The working group will include the following observer organisations (**observers**):

- Australian Pork Limited (APL)

Observer organisations may nominate one (1) representative (**delegate**) to observe working group proceedings.

The Chair is to be notified no later than 7 days before the meeting of the delegate who will attend the meeting. The Chair will review all representatives at the start of the meeting and will remind observers of their role.

Observer organisations have no decision-making authority on matters considered by the working group.

All working group documents and matters considered and discussed during the working group are to remain confidential unless otherwise instructed.

Observer organisations will fund their own attendance at meetings.

Secretariat and resourcing

Food and Veterinary Services Pty Ltd will act as the Secretariat for the working group. The Secretariat role will be performed by someone other than the Chair.

The Role of the Secretariat will be to:

- Prepare meeting agendas, papers, reports and meeting minutes
- Provide well researched, complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner to the members
- Give members reasonable time to consult with stakeholders in order to make key decisions
- Conduct an induction with new delegates appointed to the working group

MLA will ensure adequate resourcing of the working group including:

- Venue for meetings
- Teleconference facilities as requested

Any remuneration and/or travel expenses must be agreed and approved by MLA in consultation with the Working Group Chair prior to eligibility for membership of the working group and to ensure any reimbursement.

Role of individual working group delegates

The role of individual working group delegates includes:

- Understanding the operations and challenges around ante and post-mortem inspection, and the use of the standard in the Australian meat supply chain
- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the industry they are representing and be able to bring forward issues for consideration based on that consultation.
- Being fully prepared for each meeting, having read the documentation in advance
- Making every reasonable effort to attend each meeting
- Being equipped and capable of working through issues and solutions

Code of conduct

In performing the duties and responsibilities of the working group, delegates will:

- Act in the best interests of the industry
- Have a duty of care and diligence in fulfilling their functions
- Treat all fellow stakeholders with courtesy and respect
- Be open and honest during discussions
- Work constructively with all members and delegates towards achieving consensus on decisions
- Not make improper use of information acquired as a member, delegate or observer of the industry working group

Agenda items, minutes and papers

Meetings will be conducted based on an agenda. Requests for amendment are to be forwarded to the Working group Secretariat at least a week (7 days) prior to the committee working group meeting i.e. before the second Thursday of January, April, July and October. Contact details for the Working Group Secretariat are admin@foodandvetservices.com.au

All requests and committee working group papers will be forwarded to committee members the Friday (5 days) before the working group meeting for consideration prior to the meeting.

Minutes will be circulated to the Working Group 7 days after the meeting.

Meetings

Meetings will be held quarterly on the third Thursday of the month in January, April, July and October. These meetings will be predominantly held by video or teleconference. If an in-person meeting is required, a month's notice will be provided.

Conflict of interest

The process for reporting and managing ‘conflicts of interest’ will be emphasised at meetings. All delegates of the Working Group should identify and declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest affecting them, including conflicting loyalties which may arise at any time throughout their involvement with the Working Group. Any declarations should be reported in the Minutes. A conflict of interest register will be maintained and reviewed at each meeting.

Dismissal

Delegates who are absent without notification to the Chair from two successive meetings will be deemed to have resigned from the Working Group. Where a Working Group delegates’ conduct is considered to be inappropriate or they do not follow the Working Group Terms of Reference, the Chair or Working Group may recommend that delegate be dismissed from the Working Group and a replacement appointed.

Reporting, public announcements and media

Delegates of the Working Group shall refrain from making or causing any comment or statement concerning any working group matter to any member of the media. The Working Group secretariat or chairperson will coordinate such comments through MLA media channels.

Term of the Working Group

The term of the working group is for a 2-year period. After this time, a review will be conducted to determine whether the group will continue.

Review

The terms of reference and associated documents will be reviewed every 2 years.

Attachment 1: Animal Health Disease and Defect Working Group Members

Organisation	Area of Expertise	Role and Representation
<i>Food and Veterinary Services Pty Ltd</i>	<i>Co-Author of the Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain. Registered Veterinarian with experience in veterinary public health, regulation of the meat industry, research in animal health data collection.</i>	<i>Chair Required to consult with and represent the third-party meat inspection companies. Management of the Committee Secretariat</i>
<i>Management for Technology Pty Ltd</i>	<i>Co-Author of the Australian National Standard for the Development, Collection and Reporting of Animal Health Data through the Supply Chain. Experience in data standard development, research in animal health data collection and management across the supply chain.</i>	<i>Member Required to consult with and represent the software providers.</i>
<i>MINTRAC</i>	<i>Experience in meat inspection, training and development of meat inspectors, research in animal health data collection.</i>	<i>Member</i>

Organisation	Area of Expertise	Role and Representation
<i>Apiam Animal Health</i>	<i>Registered Veterinary with experience in cattle medicine, specialising in feedlot management and research.</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Teys Australia</i>	<i>Registered Veterinary with experience in veterinary public health, regulation of the meat industry and processor requirements.</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>DAWE</i>	<i>Representative of DAWE. Registered Veterinary with experience in veterinary public health and regulation of the meat industry, on-site processing experience.</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>MLA</i>	<i>Representative of MLA and Health 4 Wealth Project.</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>AMPC</i>	<i>Representative of AMPC and Health 4 Wealth Project.</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>APL</i>	<i>Representative of APL and Health 4 Wealth Project.</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>AMIC</i>	<i>Representative of AMIC</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>AHA</i>	<i>Manages the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project.</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>PIRSA</i>	<i>Manages the Enhanced Abattoir Surveillance Project in South Australia</i>	<i>Member</i>

8.2 Appendix 2: Finalised and Industry Endorsed Standard

[RMSCC \(Version 2\) Disease and Defect Condition Recording and Reporting Data Set](#)