

SUBMISSION: Hendra Virus Vaccine and Its Use by Veterinary Surgeons in Queensland

TO: Agriculture & Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane, QLD 4000

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Manly Road Veterinary Hospital (MRVH) Hendra Virus Policy

Manly Road Veterinary Hospital has a policy of, 'No vaccine, No Treatment', in response to veterinarians, clients and members of the general public (anyone coming into contact with horses) being exposed to Hendra virus - a serious zoonotic, and potentially fatal, disease of horses and people. The MRVH policy also complies with recommendations of Workplace, Health and Safety Queensland, the Australian Veterinary Association, Queensland Health and Biosecurity Queensland which advocate Hendra virus *vaccination of horses as the single most effective way to prevent Hendra virus infection in horses and humans.*

The WHS Act 2011, Section 19(2) states that: "A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is as reasonably practicable, that health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking".

Key points:

- Hendra virus is transmitted from horses to people and from horse to horse.
- The vaccine is the "Gold Standard" to protect people and horses from Hendra virus infection.
- Workplace, Health and Safety Queensland, the Australian Veterinary Association, Queensland Health and Biosecurity Queensland recommend Hendra virus vaccination of horses as the single most effective way to prevent Hendra virus infection in horses and humans.
- The vaccine was developed by a highly regarded Commonwealth Government organisation – CSIRO.
- The very occasional side effects of the vaccine are minimal, comparable to side effects of the human influenza vaccination – slight swelling and local pain/discomfort; readily treated with an anti-inflammatory.
- Vaccination cost is minimal (our cost \$65.89 per vaccine; client cost \$88.00 per vaccination in total, including travel up to 30km). If a client cannot afford this cost, can they afford to have a horse?
- Keep equine veterinarians and nurses in the industry. If we continue the way we are at the moment, this will actively discourage recruitment into these roles as young veterinarians and nurses don't want to put themselves at risk - we will end up with no equine veterinarians or nurses!
- The ideal situation for the health and safety of the horse, the client, their family, the general public and veterinary staff, is MANDATORY VACCINATION of horses in 'at risk' areas'

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