

Noel Riley & Associates Pty Ltd

15 April 2016

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE 4000

By e-mail

Dear Sir

Submission to the Hendra Virus Inquiry

Noel Riley & Associates Pty Ltd is an independent firm of Chartered Loss Adjusters principally involved in the adjustment of insurance claims for horses. Most Equine Insurance Policies covering horses in Australia are underwritten by syndicates at Lloyd's of London and issued direct from London, or by local agents/brokers in accordance with binding authorities they have with individual syndicates.

The underwriters have for some years been concerned about the risks associated with Hendra Virus, including the risks to the general public, the horse owners and the equine professions, which include breeders, agistors, trainers, jockeys, farriers and veterinarians, to name a few. Horses from all over Australia congregate at shows, sporting events, horse sales, etc. If an infected horse was to attend such an event and infect other horses, that were then returned to their homes or sent to their new owners prior to the infection being diagnosed, the consequences could be catastrophic.

With a view to encouraging horse owners to vaccinate their horses and minimise the risk to the public and the equine industry generally, as well as a means of managing the risk to underwriters, the Lloyd's Equine Underwriters group, after lengthy consultation with various interest groups, developed an endorsement that is now universally attached to Lloyd's Equine Insurance Policies. A copy of the endorsement is attached.

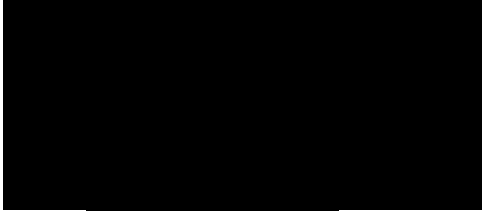
In brief, the endorsement specifically excludes the death of a horse due to Hendra Virus if the horse has not been vaccinated against the virus or the vaccination is not up to date; as well as the death of a horse due to a veterinarian withholding treatment until the horse owner can provide verification that the horse has been vaccinated and the vaccination is current. Some underwriters limit the endorsement by only applying it to horses in Queensland, or horses that visit Queensland, and a copy of the amended endorsement is also attached.

In practice, veterinarians commonly withhold treatment on unvaccinated horses until a negative test for Hendra Virus is received, which has been known to take several days, particularly over weekends and holiday periods.

The Equine Insurance Policy requires the Insured to immediately notify the underwriter of any accident, injury, illness, disease or abnormality whatsoever. We receive around one hundred and fifty appointments from underwriters each year, or around three a week, which is no doubt a small number of the total annual incidents involving horses. However, we have never received instructions in connection with a horse that has had an adverse reaction to the Hendra Virus vaccine.

As previously stated, the consequences of an infected horse attending a national show, sporting event or horse sale and the infection spreading to the horse population at the event prior to the horses returning home or being sent interstate, or indeed overseas, could be catastrophic. It is therefore in the interest of the whole community that all horses are vaccinated against Hendra Virus.

Yours faithfully



Noel Riley ANZIIF (Fellow), FCLA, JP

Encl. Hendra Virus Endorsement
Hendra Virus Endorsement (amended)