

20 April 2016

The Agriculture and Environment Committee Hendra Vaccine Inquiry
C/- Mr Rob Hansen
Parliament House
Brisbane
Queensland 4000
Phone: 07 3553 6660

By email: robert.hansen@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Hansen,

RE: Veterinarian Submission to Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry

My name is Dr Kylie Crawford, and I am an equine veterinarian located at Anstead, Queensland. I have been in veterinary practice for 16 years and am a registered specialist in equine surgery. I wish to address the following Terms of Reference in the Qld Parliament's Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry:

- The incidence and impact of adverse reactions by horses following vaccination and the reporting of adverse reactions and economic impacts of the Hendra vaccine.
- The development, trials and approval processes of the vaccine
- Who bears the risks of HeV infection and who incurs the costs and receives the benefits from each risk mitigation option.

As an equine hospital and ambulatory practice we have administered over 7,000 doses. I have done a substantial portion of these myself. I have not personally experienced nor heard of any significant adverse reactions to the vaccine. I have heard of a small proportion of clients experiencing swelling and pain at the vaccination site, similar to any other routine injection. These cases resolved with phenylbutazone administration.

I believe that the vaccination is safe, effective and reliable. Dr Middleton's research has proven the effectiveness of this vaccination beyond doubt. I have been involved personally in two outbreaks of Hendra Virus. I know or knew 4 people who contracted the virus. One of my close workmates and another colleague died. I still regularly still see a vet nurse and a stablehand that continue to suffer as a result of the consequences of the virus. I watched 8 horses die or be euthanased. I personally euthanased affected horses. Knowing the suffering that this virus results in people and horses, I find it incredulous that people could choose not to vaccinate their horses. Hendra virus may be a rare disease for horse owners. However, for equine veterinarians who are treating sick horses on a daily basis, this risk is not low. There is variation in practice policy in seeing unvaccinated horses in Queensland. Every veterinarian should have the right to refuse service on safety grounds if they choose.

I have personally been harassed by work health and safety in both Hendra outbreaks I was involved in. I was sat down in formal inquiries, threatened and was bullied. They could not attribute any blame to myself in my handling of horses and people. I continue to watch one of my friends and colleague's emotional distress and breakdowns as she is repeatedly harassed by prosecutors.

I am so disappointed that scientific facts can be disregarded as a result of the actions of a small group of highly motivated, anti-vaccination parties that have started a fear campaign. Horse owners are now scared, with no scientific justification. The Queensland government's silence in supporting and

promoting this proven safe and effective vaccination is very disappointing. Furthermore, their prosecution of veterinarians attempting to look after the welfare of horses is even more disappointing. Human and horse safety is taking a second place to concerns founded entirely by unproven social media slander.

This is no different to human anti-vaccination activity. At least in this situation governments are taking action to increase vaccination of children against these fatal diseases. A similar position should be adopted by government in relation to Hendra vaccination of horses.

Yours sincerely,

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