

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to the Qld Parliament's Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry  
**Date:** Friday, 22 April 2016 1:06:27 PM

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The Agriculture and Environment Committee Hendra Vaccine Inquiry  
22 April 2016

Parliament House  
Brisbane  
Queensland 4000  
By email: [aec@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:aec@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear AEC Committee Members,

**RE: Submission to the Qld Parliament's Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry**

I wish to make a submission primarily because of my involvement in examining and treating horses at endurance horse events. Currently horses from high risk zones may attend events without being vaccinated against Hendra, but there are concerns about the invasive treatment of such horses.

I wish to address the following term of reference:

- 1. whether the guidelines/procedures required for veterinarians attending horses that are not vaccinated against HeV are proportionate to the consequences;*
- 2. impacts on the equine industry and the economy arising from veterinarians applying a policy not to treat unvaccinated horses; and*

My specific issue is regarding the treatment of horses at events. Current biosecurity procedures for horses attending endurance events require the person responsible to sign a declaration that the horse is healthy, and to take and record rectal temperatures for several days preceding the event, to indicate the absence of a fever. However, the scientific literature describes shedding of Hendra virus from afebrile horses, with little clinical indication of disease, and therefore infected animals which appear clinically healthy may still attend events and be infective to humans and other horses, and develop clinical disease. Veterinarians examining these horses at events can wear gloves, as well as masks and goggles if they choose, and that would seem to be adequate protection in most circumstances for initial examination.

However, if an unvaccinated horse from a high risk zone developed clinical disease, while it most likely would be as a result of the exercise they were doing and not because they had Hendra disease, it may be impossible to differentiate clinically.

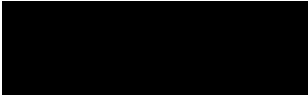
My understanding of Workplace Health and Safety guidelines for dealing with potential Hendra cases is that if Hendra is suspected, then there are obligations regarding veterinarians appropriately protecting themselves and any others with PPE, minimal intervention with the suspected case limited to taking samples for testing, and immediate first aid treatment.

It appears that for unvaccinated horses potentially with Hendra virus infection, ongoing treatment, even if wearing full PPE, is not an option because of the potential for repeated exposure of personnel to the virus, which is contrary to WHS guidelines, and may result in

prosecution. That is, immediately one assumes there is a possibility that the horse may have Hendra, and takes appropriate actions to protect personnel, there cannot be sustained invasive treatment of that horse. It is a distressing consideration, that veterinarians may not be able to provide adequate treatment of compromised horses, for fear of litigation.

If a horse is vaccinated against Hendra virus, the veterinarian has greater protection, from both the health and legal aspects.

Yours sincerely,



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