

15 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 Sara Calliss, and I am a horse owner and Veterinary Nurse located at WestVETS Animal Hospital Anstead, Queensland. I have been in veterinary practice for 6 years. 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.

I have vaccinated my own horses with multiple doses of the Equivac HEV vaccine with no adverse reactions. As a veterinary nurse at a busy equine hospital I communicate with several horse owners on a daily basis. The Veterinarians who I work closely with have administered over seven thousand doses of the Hendra vaccine and I have not received a single complaint or concern about severe adverse reactions. The majority of our clients who vaccinate against Hendra because they recognize the serious risk associated with Hendra virus and that the single, most effective way to prevent the virus is through vaccination.

I would like to bring to your attention social media sites such as the 'Say no to Hendra Vaccine' Facebook page (which I am a member of), the page fails to provide balanced educated information about the vaccine, administrators of this page share biased information, from unreliable sources. When I tried to become a member of this page for example I was told by one administrator that I would not be accepted because I worked as a veterinary nurse at WestVETS Animal Hospital, under the employment of Nathan Anthony. There are numerous claims of serious adverse reactions without any evidence advertised to the public. Any posts that are made in favour of the Hendra vaccine are generally removed from the page by administration, however negative posts are encouraged. There are also numerous posts from members of the public making derogatory remarks about veterinarians, and also questioning their integrity over supporting the vaccine.

As a veterinary nurse I experience firsthand the concerns of Hendra Virus and the risk it poses to all of my fellow staff members. We frequently treat sick and unwell horses with the possibility of being exposed to the fatal Hendra virus, which can be prevented by vaccination. Since the vaccine has been introduced I feel safe and confident for myself and fellow staff members that we are protected against such a deadly virus. I understand that the Hendra vaccine does not negate the requirement for PPE and the need to maintain other biosecurity practices to our hospitals standard.

Yours sincerely,


Sara Caliss – Veterinary Nurse
WestVETS Animal Hospitals


