

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry  
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To whom it may concern,

I am writing regarding the impact of the current debate over vaccination over Hendra vaccination in the equine industry.

My wife owns a medium sized equine veterinary business which is currently facing legal action over a Hendra case. I also have a sister who works in a large equine practice at the Gold Coast who has been significantly affected.

The key point is the disease is usually fatal in people and invariably fatal in horses. It has been clearly established by far the most effective way of limiting risk is vaccination. As I am sure you are aware only a full biosuit would provide similar protection and PPE falls well short of this standard. Therefore while it is useful in an emergency, certainly a lot better than nothing, it is not nearly as effective as a first line of protection.

It seems obvious that the horse owner of an unvaccinated horse is automatically guilty of failing to provide a safe working environment so should be the primary person facing action in the case of an outbreak, especially in the case of potential infection of other people including veterinarians.

My wife's business is in the process of implementing a policy of refusing treatment of unvaccinated horses for routine procedures, while maintaining some flexibility so they can deal with veterinary emergencies in unvaccinated animals. This means her clientele are all vaccinating and a few have refused and will have to seek an alternative vet. This in our view enforces a safe work environment and still allows them to be flexible in cases where the animal would otherwise be refused treatment.

The key problem is the situation which has occurred with both my sister and my wife where they attend a suspected Hendra but the owner refuses to comply with the required protocols. This creates the absurd situation where the vet is responsible because they attended for the owner's failure to follow WH&S. Even worse is the emerging situation which is owner's ask if their case could be Hendra, and if the answer is yes they refuse to allow the vet to attend as they are not willing to pay for the costs of meeting WH&S requirements or take the risk of their property being quarantined. Biosecurity has been notified by a number of vets of these types of events and is not interested dealing with the obvious public health risk.

Given the complexity of the issues involved there seems one simple strategy that brings it back to the situation where vets visit, assess the risk and take appropriate measures. This measure is the vaccination of horses.

There is a lot of nonsense about reactions, my family have a horse stud which vaccinates all horses including elderly animals and pregnant mares with no significant reactions. Many of the supposed reactions on facebook are complete fabrications or ridiculous where they are clearly the result of an unrelated illness or underlying health problem.

The impact on my wife of prosecution is extreme, from depression to panic attacks and sleepless nights. She has been a vet on two Australian Olympic/Paralympic teams and for World Cup squads. She is an active and highly respected member of the EVA and one of only five FEI (Internationally qualified) vets in Queensland. She is now considering leaving the profession completely after a lifetime of dedication to horses. A number of very capable equine veterinarians have already left Queensland and more will follow if this is not addressed.

Vaccination is a well understood and effective way of controlling a wide variety of diseases, the concept that somehow Hendra is an exception is beyond my comprehension. In my view the

government should already have mandated vaccination in Hendra prone areas and needs to take a more effective role in this crisis.

Yours sincerely

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