




Speech by

Jon Krause

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

HENDRA VIRUS; BEAUDESERT HOSPITAL

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.43 pm): I rise to make a statement concerning the most recent incidence of Hendra virus in Queensland. This is of enormous concern to people in my electorate of Beaudesert. While there are many residents in my electorate who own horses and ride them for work and play—I can imagine nothing more serene than trotting through the countryside south of Beaudesert in the border ranges on a clear autumn day—there is also a very important equine and thoroughbred industry in this region. Horses are the tools of the trade, so to speak, of the cattlemen and women who have large properties in my electorate. I have previously spoken in this place about the importance of the government and Racing Queensland moving swiftly to resolve infrastructure issues at the Beaudesert racecourse. It would be remiss of me if I did not raise in this House and with the minister the importance of getting on with the job of researching the Hendra virus with a view to eliminating it by finding a cure for this virus and, in the meantime, taking all steps to prevent further transmission to horses and people.

I welcome the Premier's reiteration in this House yesterday of the LNP's election commitment to fund the supply of personal protection equipment kits to the tune of \$1 million to ensure that vets working with horses where Hendra virus is suspected are able to protect themselves from infection. I urge the government, in particular the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, to continue its support for the prevention of the Hendra virus and the work of the CSIRO in researching a vaccine.

In the Beaudesert electorate memories are fresh of the deaths of several horses in 2011 as a result of the virus, and also a dog called Dusty at Mount Alford. Thankfully no people contracted the virus last year. We in this place must ensure we are taking all the steps we can to prevent deaths, of horses or humans, from Hendra virus. Yet again the LNP is having to undertake remedial work to address issues that should have been dealt with by the Labor Party in government. Labor was asleep at the wheel in relation to Hendra virus throughout its long, dark 14 years in power. It was only in an election year that Labor actually did something to provide the community with any support in this battle. The people of Beaudesert deserve better than this lazy, neglectful approach of Labor. While I am the member for Beaudesert I will ensure that the government takes solid steps to ensure Hendra virus can be contained and, with further research and development, eliminated.

I would just like to add that the staff of the Beaudesert Hospital and the community in Beaudesert despair at the way Labor ripped away services in its time in power. Just a fraction of the \$400 million wasted on the payroll scandal would have gone a long way to restoring or keeping services at the Beaudesert Hospital. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to do the honourable thing and release the legal advice sought by the Minister for Health. If it can save some more money at this stage of the game and actually restore services to the Beaudesert Hospital and other hospitals like it across Queensland, she should release the legal advice requested.