



Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**


**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 February 2017

**AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.54 am): I was excited to be given the opportunity to chair this committee. I was looking forward to the opportunity to expand my policy horizons, but here I am talking about vaccination again after coming from the health committee.

**Mr McArdle:** We miss you, too, by the way.

**Mr KELLY:** I take that interjection. I miss you too, member for Caloundra.

**Mr McArdle:** I meant it!

**Mr KELLY:** And I do, too. I will take that one as well. While we have some mirth around the fact that I am here talking about vaccination in agriculture, it is no laughing matter. Vaccination is as important in animals as it is in humans. I will always talk passionately about vaccination. It is one of the most important public health measures that we have ever seen in the history of health care. It is up there with hand washing and public sanitation.

I am really pleased to be in a country where my professional regulation body, AHPRA, now requires that I give accurate evidence based information to patients on vaccination. If I do not, there are consequences for me as a practitioner. Contrast that with the United States where the leader of that country is investigating this myth of a link between autism and vaccination. There is no link. It is a complete myth and there is no evidence of that whatsoever.

I return to this report, which presents the findings of the committee's eight-month inquiry into the Hendra vaccine. I thank committee members for their work on this difficult inquiry. I also thank the member for Mirani, who participated in our seven public hearings. It is obviously a big issue in his area. I also acknowledge the assistance provided by officers of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland Health and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

The committee heard from many equestrian groups, horse owners and veterinarians during the inquiry. The committee sincerely thanks everyone who contributed their views. We accepted 293 written submissions. Many of the submissions are quite detailed and heartfelt. In addition to the submissions, we received dozens of emails from horse owners and interest groups who tracked the work of the committee throughout the inquiry. All of those people are to be thanked for their interest in the inquiry.

Hendra virus remains a risk for horses wherever there are flying foxes. It is a significant risk for people who come into close contact with horses. I think of my own daughters who once a fortnight go to Murarrie for horse riding on the banks of the Bulimba Creek. That is an area where there is a significant flying fox population. Seventy-seven horses and four people have already died from the virus since 1974 so this is a serious matter. Of the 97 horses infected, 77 died from the virus. That is a

staggering rate. The other 20 were euthanased. We have to think about that as we move forward because, as with vaccinations in humans, there will be groups that rail against vaccinating horses, but the reality is that when we look at that death rate it is truly staggering.

All Hendra incidents have occurred in New South Wales or Queensland. There have been no reported cases in other states or in other countries. Thankfully, no horse specimens have tested positive for the Hendra virus at the Biosecurity Queensland lab at Coopers Plains so far this year. I am familiar with those labs, having been an organiser for the union that covers the scientists and the technicians out there. I am pleased to advise that there have been no human infections with the Hendra infections in Queensland since 2009. Horses that get infected with the virus generally die. If people get the virus from an infected horse, they will likely die too and there is no cure. This is very serious. Vaccinating against the virus remains the most effective option for preventing horse and human deaths according to all of the experts the committee spoke to. If people stop vaccinating their horses we will see deaths from the Hendra virus in Queensland again. I particularly note that the people most likely—

*(Time expired)*