

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1883
Asked on Thursday, 27 November 2008

MR HOPPER asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

Will he detail the selection process used in the appointment of Dr Nigel Perkins to independently review the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries response into recent Hendra virus incidents at Redlands and Proserpine?

ANSWER:

Dr Nigel Perkins was appointed as an independent consultant to review the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) response to Hendra virus incidents on the basis of his technical expertise, previous experience and availability.

Dr Perkins is the Director of AusVet Animal Health Services. He also directs the disease surveillance program for the Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre for Emerging Infectious Disease.

His extensive experience as a veterinary epidemiologist and expert knowledge of the Hendra virus mean that he possesses the technical skills and knowledge required to assess all the elements of the complex response at Proserpine and Redlands.

Following the case of Hendra Virus at Peachester in 2006, the DPI&F commissioned Dr Perkins to review its operating procedures and the appropriateness of its actions. This review was undertaken to a high professional standard. Dr Perkins provided a detailed report, and the recommendations were used as part of the DPI&F's continuous improvement approach to Biosecurity.

Dr Perkins was considered best placed to build on this previous experience in reviewing the recent response and evaluating the DPI&F implementation of his previous recommendations.