



The Australian Veterinary Association Limited.

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

Senate Inquiry into the Biosecurity Bill 2014 and Related Bills

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the national organisation representing veterinarians in Australia. Our 8500 members come from all fields within the veterinary profession. Clinical practitioners work with companion animals and horses; and with animals used for food and fibre production, such as cattle, sheep, poultry, and fish and with exotic animals and wildlife. Government veterinarians work with our animal health, public health and quarantine systems while other members work in industry for pharmaceutical and other commercial enterprises. We have members who work in research and teaching in a range of scientific disciplines. Veterinary students are also members of the Association.

The veterinary profession has a clear interest in a strong and effective biosecurity system backed by legislation, to ensure the wellbeing of the nation's animals and people. Thus the AVA welcomes the introduction into Parliament of Biosecurity Bills which are set to strengthen measures that maintain Australia's very favourable animal disease status. Maintaining a robust biosecurity system is key to providing assurances which protect not only our domestic animal industries but also the reputation of our important export markets, which together create billions of dollars' worth of value to our economy.

Australia's veterinarians play a vital role in national biosecurity through treatment and prevention of diseases in companion animals and livestock, monitoring of endemic disease, surveillance and detection of exotic disease incursions, and in responding to emergency animal disease outbreaks. The importance of the veterinary profession to Australia's biosecurity system was highlighted by three recent enquiries: the 2007 Callinan equine influenza inquiry, the 2008 Beale Review of Australia's biosecurity and quarantine arrangements and the 2011 Matthews report on Australia's preparedness for an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease. Veterinarians are also integral to the AUSVETPLAN administered by Animal Health Australia.

The AVA submitted comments on the consultation draft of the new biosecurity legislation in December 2012 (appendix A). Our submission called for a more seamless biosecurity system with enhanced cooperation between the commonwealth, states and territories. The AVA endorses the framework, structure and intent of the new legislation which incorporates critical changes to the way we approach biosecurity risk, including the principle of shared responsibility which is supported. The AVA similarly supports the move to a co-regulatory approach and risk-based assessments, provided these assessments are science-based and systems are monitored to ensure effective outcomes.

The AVA will be pleased to provide further comment during the engagement process for the development of the Biosecurity Bill regulations in 2015.

Yours sincerely

Dr Julia Nicholls
President

Appendix A: Submission on draft Biosecurity Bills, December 2012