

Harness Breeders NSW Inc.



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Ms. J Radcliffe
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport
Australian Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

8th November 2010

Dear Ms Radcliffe,

Re : Senate Inquiry into the Australia Horse Industry and the EADRA Agreement

I refer to your letter of 25 October 2010 seeking the comments of Harness Breeders NSW in regard to the inquiry into the Horse Industry and the EADRA Agreement.

In response to your letter my Association does wish to make a comment on the record. The first issue for Harness Breeders NSW is to reinforce our members' strong view that it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, through its agencies, to ensure appropriate and effective biosecurity arrangements are in place in Australia.

The problems that arose in relation to the outbreak of EI in Australia and the implications for the various horse industries and the people who earn their living via the horse businesses should not have arisen. Enough has been said of this but the issue is highlighted again.

Harness Breeders NSW support the position of Harness Racing Australia and so I do not propose to canvass those matters in this letter. Suffice to say that my Association stands beside HRA in its submission to the Inquiry.

The above comments aside I have been asked by my committee to indicate that our Association does not and will not support the premise that Australia should move to voluntary vaccination without first doing everything feasible to protect our biosecurity arrangements and keep EI as an exotic and not endemic disease.

While we regard it a Commonwealth responsibility to safeguard our biosecurity arrangements the Association recognises that if the disease presents again in this country there will need to be a whole of nation response – with financial implications at all levels of government and industry.

The Association appreciates that there will be a need to determine an appropriate system of levies to enable a working fund to be established and be available for an emergency response. The issue is to determine a levy that does not cripple one sector of the industry and ensures a reasonable contribution by all.

The position of Harness Breeders NSW is that a mechanism needs to be determined that will allow the imposition and collection of a levy in the most cost effective and general way possible. Whether that is by way of a levy on feed or other inputs is a vexed question and one which requires further analysis by your Treasury official.

In this respect my Association would not wish to see a severe market distortion due to an inappropriate levy.

I trust these comments are of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Les Camarda
President
HBNSW