

Submission No. 04

(Quarantine Facility)

Date: 19/03/13



AUSTRALIAN RARE POULTRY IMPORTATION SYNDICATE



Incorporated in NSW (INC9890879)

ABN: 15594772109

Meredith Parker

Submission to Public Works Committee re: the Avian facility in the proposed new post-entry quarantine facility at Mickleham, Victoria

I am the Project Co-ordinator for the Australian Rare Poultry Importation Syndicate (ARPIS). Our quarantine programme at Torrens Island is due to commence in April 2013. We are the first non-commercial importers to gain access to the Torrens Island facility.

I have also been engaged by several other non-commercial groups to assist with similar import projects, some involving other avian species.

I have been authorised by ARPIS to act on their behalf on this matter.

I am listed with DAFF as a stakeholder for all matters pertaining to the importation of genetic material of any avian species.

I submit the following comments:

1. Capacity

The fundamental design proposes for up to three batches of fertile eggs, and two batches of live birds, to be processed concurrently. The capacity of each section has not been made clear.

2. Future Demand

Although the website states that the facility has been designed to cater for present and future needs, we have been informed, at stakeholder briefing sessions, that it is only intended to replicate the capacity of current facilities.

The current capacity for fertile eggs is not adequate to meet present demand from industry and the community. Competition for quarantine programmes at Torrens Island is keen, and the waiting list is long.

Consideration should also be given to an increase in demand that may result from:

- Increased size of batches desired by importers
- Revision of protocols for commercial and fancy poultry
- Development of protocols for new species, eg; parrots or pheasants
- Revision of protocols for private avian quarantine facilities
- Revision of regulations regarding acceptable methods of animal husbandry

3. Expansion

We have been told that it will be possible to expand the new facility in modular fashion, but it is not clear how this could be achieved. It may be possible to extend the building lengthwise, but storage and amenities are in the way of this. At the recent stakeholder briefing, the overall plan for the Mickleham site showed that the orientation of the avian compound has been altered to run lengthwise from east to west. This greatly limits the potential for such future expansion.

4. Isolation of compartments

It has been stated that each batch will be housed in individually biosecure compartments within the compound; however there has been little detail given as to how this will be achieved. Confidence in the level of biosecurity is a major factor in users' assessment of the facility, and some explanation of intended isolation methods would be helpful.

It is also necessary for operating policies and procedures to reflect this capability. It would be pointless spending the money to construct biosecurely isolated compartments, if procedures employed do not uphold biosecurity functions, or if DAFF policy does not recognise the individual health status of each batch.

I ask the Committee to take these views into consideration.