

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

I am a veterinarian specialising in avian health. I have several clients interested in importing fertile eggs of both commercial and fancy poultry as well as several clients interested in the development of new conditions for the importation of fertile eggs of other species, such as pheasants, and live birds of various species, such as parrots.

Among my clients is also the Peak Body for birdkeeping (aviculture), the Associated Birdkeepers of Australia Inc. (ABA).

The ABA website is at:

<http://www.birdkeepers.com.au/>

I have been authorised by the ABA to act on their behalf in relation to this matter.

I am also listed with DAFF as a stakeholder in the matter of the new post-entry quarantine facility.

I submit the following comments.

1. Capacity

The project appears to propose three simultaneous batches of fertile eggs and two simultaneous batches of live birds. The capacity of each section does not appear to have been spelt out.

2. Future provision

Although the website says that the new avian facility is designed to provide for both current and future needs, I am not convinced they have taken into consideration possible changes that may result from:

1. Increase in the frequency of import batches of fertile eggs or live birds desired by importers
2. Increase in the size of import batches of fertile eggs or live birds desired by importers
3. Revision of the protocols for commercial poultry by Animal Biosecurity
4. Revision of the protocols for fancy poultry by Animal Biosecurity
5. Revision of the conditions for private avian import facilities
6. Possible new protocols for live birds such as parrots etc.

3. Expansion

It is not clear how the facility could be expanded to meet future additional needs. A diagram of a future expansion would help to project how this could be achieved. It appears to me that the unit could be lengthened in each direction, North and South, by adding modules, but storage and amenities rooms are in the way of that. Some explanation would be helpful.

4. Section separation

Although there is little detail provided about isolation between sections of the facility, I believe it is important to explain how separation is to be effected so that the degree of isolation between sections can be evaluated. The confidence of users in the biosecurity level is important in their assessment of their future use of it.

5. Communications

Although I have been listed as a Stakeholder for some time I have often become aware of matters affecting the project by the kindly assistance of others and have not been contacted direct on such occasions. This experience includes the notice of this activity of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

I anticipate that the Committee will take these views into consideration.

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