



Bernie Saunders www.cyberhorse.net.au/tve

19<sup>th</sup> March, 2013.

**Submission No. 07**  
(Quarantine Facility)  
Date: 19/03/13



Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
Po Box 6201  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

**Re: Construction of a new post-entry quarantine facility at Mickleham, Victoria**

The Australian Horse Industry Council puts forward the following submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works in support of the project for construction of a proposed new post-entry quarantine facility at Mickleham.

The Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC) is a national representative body serving the Australian Horse Industry. The main role of the AHIC is to provide a voice for the interests of horses and horse owners in national forums. Through its members, AHIC represents horse organisations, State horse councils, individual horse owners and service providers to the Horse Industry.

**Need for a post-entry quarantine station for imported horses**

Australia is free of important diseases of horses that cause serious health problems, interfere with international trade and/or cause public health problems in other parts of the world. Imported horses are a biosecurity threat and a "high risk species" that require quarantine detention post-entry. However AHIC also recognises that the Australian horse industry requires access to imported genetic material (live horses, semen and embryos) to improve productivity and performance.

A biosecure post-entry quarantine facility for live horses imported to Australia is absolutely essential to protect Australia's favourable horse health status while allowing access to imported genetics.

**Need for government ownership and operation of a post-entry quarantine station for imported horses**

The AHIC supports government ownership and operation of the proposed post-entry quarantine station at Mickleham for the following reasons:-

- government ownership of the proposed quarantine facility offers long term security of tenure without the current need to renegotiate leases
- the facility will replace the only existing government operated post-entry quarantine station for imported horses, the lease on which expires in 2015
- all potential importers of horses will have equity of access to the proposed new facility

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**Australian Horse Industry Council**

ACN 080 921 660 ABN 18 080 921 660

P.O. Box 802, Geelong VIC 3220 Phone: (03) 5222 6650 Fax: (03) 5229 8244  
Email: secretary@horsecouncil.org.au Web: www.horsecouncil.org.au

**Re: Construction of a new post-entry quarantine facility at Mickleham, Victoria, cont'd.**

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- the commercial or conflict of interest considerations of private individuals or organisations will be unlikely to compromise DAFF biosecurity safeguards and operating standards
- a multi-species consolidated and co-located facility will provide "best value" resource and operational efficiencies for government

**Is the proposed Mickleham site suitable for a post-entry quarantine station?**

AHIC considers the 144 hectare site at Mickleham is suitable for the intended purpose because it is:-

- located close to Melbourne airport in an area distant from the domestic horse population
- sufficiently large to allow horse yards/exercise areas within each horse compound
- sufficiently large to incorporate quarantine buffer zones within its own boundaries
- will offer room for expansion to meet future demands for delivery of quarantine services

**Design of the horse compounds**

AHIC understands that grooms will have 24/7 access to horses undergoing quarantine but accommodation for grooms will not be provided. The exclusion of accommodation for grooms is of great concern to some of our members.

It is not clear from the current site plan or from floor plan of the horse compounds whether there will be any official supervisory presence in close proximity to the horses overnight. To ensure that horse welfare is not compromised, if grooms are not permitted to stay on-site overnight, AHIC considers that at the very least there should be an official "nightwatchman" on duty in each compound so that grooms can be alerted promptly if problems arise. Consideration should also be given to installing closed circuit TV in each stall so horses could be monitored remotely off site.

AHIC also notes that it is unclear whether or not there will be an overnight official presence in the horse compound to ensure that any person accessing the facility at night follows biosecurity procedures correctly.

It is noted that the intention is to provide facilities at the new site that will meet the needs of the next 50 years with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptability of the infrastructure into the future.

Some of our member organisations have requested that a multi use/purpose training facility for any breed of horse be incorporated in the planning of the facility to allow foreign horses imported for competition, access to training facilities to maintain competition fitness.

AHIC congratulates the Government on its foresight in establishing this new facility. We look forward to continuing to work with Government and the Horse Industry towards the goal of keeping Australia free from exotic disease incursions while at the same time providing the industry with the best possible facilities to enable Australia to internationally benchmark the performance of our horses.

Yours faithfully,  
**AUSTRALIAN HORSE INDUSTRY COUNCIL**

**Greg Bailey**  
**President**