

**Submission No. 08**

(Quarantine Facility)

Date: 19/03/13

Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works regarding a Future Post Entry Quarantine facility at Mickleham, Victoria

By

Luv-A-Duck Pty Ltd. PO Box 185 Port Melbourne VIC 3207 Australia.



## SUMMARY

This company supports the objectives of the proposal to supply avian quarantine facilities but expresses regrets that stakeholders have been inadequately consulted on a number of matters on which decisions are being made.

On biosecurity grounds, we are opposed to the idea of a facility combining fertile egg facilities being placed in close contact with live bird facilities because of the inherent dangers of staff commingling in shared amenities.

On operational grounds, we deplore the lack of on-site accommodation for trained hatchery and husbandry staff that must be available for emergencies.

The stated objectives of the proposed avian facility development are:

1. Supporting continued access to imported genetic material.
2. Delivering the best value to the Australia Government for its investment over the whole the life of the assets and buildings.
3. Providing a facility that offers effective biosecurity and accommodates PEQ need for the next 50 years.

## SUPPORT FOR AVIAN QUARANTINE OBJECTIVES

Luv-A-Duck robustly supports all three of the stated objectives, especially objective one.

Luv-A-Duck is a fully integrated producer of duck meat and a repeated user of the Torrens Island facility. Luv-A-Duck has future ongoing interest in using the Torrens Island facility and the new quarantine facility when it is built.

## BASIC PROBLEM

The proposed facility as it is currently proposed is of limited value to Luv-A-Duck as most organizations perceive the risks of cross-contamination between units is seen as just too high.

## LACK OF PREVIOUS CONSULTATION

Luv-a-Duck is concerned that the currently proposed combined avian facility at the new Mickleham quarantine site has not taken fully into account any of

### LUV-A-DUCK PTY LTD

ABN 38 048 033 035  
ANZ Banking Group Limited  
A/C No. 013 395 2607 24195

### Head Office

228 Ingles St. Port Melbourne  
Victoria 3206 Australia  
Telephone 03 8645 1220  
Facsimile 03 8645 1272  
[admin@luvaduck.com](mailto:admin@luvaduck.com)

### Livestock Office

PO Box 205 Nhill  
Victoria 3418 Australia  
Telephone 03 5365 1000  
Facsimile 03 5365 1099  
[nhilladmin@luvaduck.com](mailto:nhilladmin@luvaduck.com)

### Processing Plant

PO Box 205 Nhill  
Victoria 3418 Australia  
Telephone 03 5391 4900  
Facsimile 03 5391 4950  
[processing@luvaduck.com](mailto:processing@luvaduck.com)

### National Sales

Sydney  
Adelaide  
Perth  
Gold Coast  
Melbourne

### For all enquiries

PO Box 185 Port Melbourne  
Victoria 3207 Australia  
Telephone 03 8645 1220  
Facsimile 03 8645 1272  
Freecall 1800 64 9000  
[www.luvaduck.com](http://www.luvaduck.com)

the concerns raised by all the avian stakeholders who currently use the existing Torrens island facility. The issues and concerns have been voiced very strongly and include concerns about biosecurity risks, capacity and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the day to day operations of the proposed facility. Stakeholders agree that Australia's \$442 billion agricultural industries are still at some risk with this new \$379 million quarantine facility.

Stakeholders have not had any access to feasibility studies which must have been used to arrive at the current floor plan proposal. The avian stakeholders have not been able to have any practical input to the facility's design since the concept was first disclosed.

Luv-A-Duck is very concerned and disappointed that the united voice of industry stakeholders and other avian quarantine facility users have not been incorporated into the facility concepts as the design has progressed through to the 30% stage. Luv-A-Duck has been represented at all briefings and little advice has been included in the changes needed. None of the people who have used the current Torrens Island quarantine facility regularly have had any input into the planning of the practical running of the building.

Many housekeeping issues remain unresolved and stakeholders must be convinced the building could be workable. Far more input is required from stakeholders who have physically worked in the avian facilities as they have first hand experiences in the current building's short comings. Their experience needs to be incorporated into the design floor plan, for such things as best use of space, placement of ventilation filters, power points, drainage, handling bird feed and bird bedding etc. as well as ease of removal of birds and manure at the end of the importation.

At no briefing meeting has a fully detailed plan been provided (only a scaled 1-400) showing no measurements on it or details.

## **BIOSECURITY**

### **Opposition to combined facility**

Stakeholders in the avian industries have been opposed to the concept of a combined hatching egg and live bird facility since it was first proposed approximately four years ago. A consolidated facility for fertile eggs and live birds may appear to have operational and economic advantages, but we question whether the same level of biosecurity can be maintained as currently exists with the two separate facilities. Luv-A-Duck is concerned at the lack of transparency regarding the biosecurity grounds on which decisions are being made and the building's projected life span of fifty years.

### **Shared amenities**

Luv-A-Duck is not comfortable with the concept of common utilities staff amenities and shared corridors. Sharing any space with pigeon imports is a special worry as pigeons have a poor track record of disease outbreaks within

the quarantine facilities. In 2005 Newcastle disease and avian influenza were detected from pigeons in the Spotswood facility. In 2010 Newcastle disease was again detected in pigeons.

In addition to being very concerned about exotic disease agents impacting on mixed importations using the facility (and possible issues this may cause such as extra laboratory testing), we are also concerned that there is a real risk of inadvertently picking up a new bacterial or viral strain of a common poultry pathogen not of quarantine concern and introducing this back into our commercial operation.

Commingling of staff members in the common amenities and corridors is a further biosecurity risk. While the commercial poultry industry staff members follow strict policies of remaining separate from other poultry and pet birds, we could never be confident that hobbyists, unfamiliar with the restrictions involved, would follow the same rigorous procedures regarding biosecurity that commercial company employees do.

### **ON-SITE ACCOMMODATION**

We are also upset that no on site accommodation will be available for avian poultry importers as there is a crucial need to respond immediately to incubation issues. Our current experience from Torrens Island suggests that the inability to respond rapidly to alarms is a real issue.

Submitter:

Glenn Fraser Bsc.

Senior Livestock Technician