Dissenting Report by Australian Greens

There is no doubt that the outbreak of equine influenza was crippling for the horse industry in Australia and devastating for owners and riders. It is clear that Australia must be better equipped financially and administratively to deal with such disease outbreaks in future.

The Greens believe that compulsory registration of all horses is necessary and would provide a national database which would enhance the capacity of animal health authorities to act in the event of a horse disease outbreak.

The Greens do not oppose the collection of a levy but we do not share the optimism of the government that all equity issues will be taken care of in the regulations. The devil will be in the detail. Without seeing the regulations, we remain to be convinced that the concerns of community recreational owners and riders regarding costs and how onerous the collection of the levy will be, will be addressed in an equitable way.

Whilst the majority report says, "It is too early to condemn the proposed legislation without consideration of the regulations that will follow", we argue that it is too early to support the proposed legislation without consideration of the regulations that will follow. The Greens requested that the government provide to the Committee the draft regulations before we finalised the report or dealt with the legislation but the Government declined.

Therefore we do not support the passage of the legislation at this time and will reconsider it, if and when, the government has finalised the regulations. Such regulations must be accompanied by the framework for, and date of implementation, of a national registration system.

We note that the Government has provided draft regulations to a number of other pieces of legislation before Committees have finalised reports on the legislation and should have done so on this occasion.

Senator Christine Milne
Deputy Chair Rural and Regional and Transport Committee

Senator Rachel Siewert
Australian Greens Senator