

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

To whom it may concern.

We wish to make our opinion heard on the issue of a proposed "EI Levy". It appears, sadly, that the discussions are revolving around "how the Levy should operate" as opposed to "whether there should be a Levy". This is very sad. We've already paid! I know it's been said but I wonder if it's been heard. We own two horses. We have suffered the IMPACT of the EI, but in no way contributed to the occurrence or threat of such an outbreak. It could be argued (The Callinan Report?) that the outbreak resulted from negligence on the part of those charged with our protection. It could also be argued that the Thoroughbred Industry and other professional sectors, with their routine international travel, constitute THE significant threat.

We regard it as unfair at best that the Rudd Government should be considering forcing the Amateur Horse Community (not "INDUSTRY") to subsidise the Professional Horse Industry, given that this sector is where we can expect future threats to arise, almost exclusively. Further, the Professional Industry actually does, by and large, make profits from their activities.

That said it's nevertheless true that Amateurs do support a significant economic sector, being large consumers of a range of products and services. For example, we have committed to significant capital investment in training facilities. This equipment was purchased from small businesses. We've borne the cost of testing, micro-chipping, and vaccination. Then there's routine fodder, saddlery, hardware, chemicals etc. Amateurs, therefore are "givers" to the turnover of the sector, but not "takers" in any sense.

It is our contention that getting the system right is the only solution to the potential escape of any biological threat, be it EI, Foot & Mouth or whatever. We believe that as taxpayers we already pay for this necessary function. A Levy is a typical, short-sighted bureaucratic response to a small part of a larger problem. *Get the system right and you won't need a response.*

Thankyou for considering our justified concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Peter Lake & Kim McKenna