

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to make a submission regarding the horse industry levy.

I am a recreational owner/rider/enthusiast, and own 5 horses. One horse is lifetime-registered with the Australian Stud Book as a thoroughbred. She is currently having a break from breeding duties. One horse is unable to be registered with any breed or type society as his parentage is unknown. He had an accident in May and is unlikely to be ridden again. He's been retired to the back paddock and I hope that he will live out his days there. I also have a Welsh pony who is currently unregistered and is likely to remain that way - she is not of breeding quality and is here to babysit the bigger horses and for my children to ride.

I have two Irish Sport Horse mares who are currently pre-registered with the Irish Draught & Sport Horse Society (IDSHS). One mare has acquired a health condition and has been spelling for the past 12 months. We're not sure if she'll ever be ridden again, and is facing retirement. Hopefully the other mare will be accepted as an appendix Irish Draught, and will be bred back to an Irish Draught stallion in the future. This is very important, as the Irish Draught is an endangered breed. Currently, there are only 1500 Irish Draught brood mares and approximately 200 Irish Draught stallions.

The problem that the equine industry faced in August 2007 was largely brought about because of the relaxation of quarantine rules and non-adherence to quarantine procedures. In the first instance, quarantine rules were relaxed significantly to allow thoroughbred shuttle stallions to perform stud duties in both the Southern and Northern hemisphere. Prior to the thoroughbred industry lobbying the Government, horses had lengthy stays in quarantine. Coupled with AQIS's inefficiencies in following biosecurity protocols, this led to the equine industry being brought to its knees when EI hit Australian shores.

Now I, as an individual, am facing hefty levies because of the inefficiencies of the Government to properly administer and monitor quarantine in Australia. I have heard figures of \$100-400 per horse being levied on all horse owners. I simply cannot afford this. I believe that the introduction of such a levy will cause an influx of horses onto the market, putting downward pressure on prices, and will ultimately lead to horses being sent to knackeries or being euthanised at their home property.

I have followed the Hendra Virus outbreak in Queensland. It seems that neither the State nor Federal Government have learnt anything from EI. The Federal Government needs to realise that as soon as a levy is introduced, the equine industry is going to want value for money. And that includes correct handling of disease outbreaks, and not the dogs breakfast that we have seen with both EI and Hendra. Quite frankly, I can't see that happening.

There are questions that remain to be answered. Is it true that all horses will be required to have a passport with them at all times? Is it true that horses will be required to receive an annual EI vaccination (apparently the cost is around \$100 per shot)? What happens if there are no disease outbreaks over an extended period - what

happens to the levy collected? What happens to all those horses and ponies whose owners cannot afford the levy?

I am facing the extinction of my hobby, which has played a major part of my life for over 20 years. I do not derive any income from my horses. The pony club movement, which has nurtured many Olympians, will also face extinction. The only winner from this levy is the racing industry. The racing industry and Government are tied at the hip via betting revenue, so it is easy to see why the Government will introduce a levy that is amenable to the racing industry.

However more questions arise - what happens to racehorses when they finish their racing careers? Sure, the mares might get shipped off as broodmares, but the geldings are more than likely to end up at knackereries because recreational riders aren't going to be able to afford an annual levy - and failed or ex-racehorses generally end up with recreational riders after their racing careers are finished.

I sincerely hope that the Government considers the ramifications of this levy, and how it will affect ALL horse owners - not just race horse owners.

With regards,

Simone Brinsmead