

To Whom it May Concern,

As a Pony Club Instructor and member/associate of numerous horse groups including:

- \* Tewanin-Noosa Pony Club
- \* Sunshine Coast Show Jumping Club
- \* Cooroy Pony Club
- \* Pony Club Association of Queensland
- \* North Coast Active Riders Group
- \* Monbulk-Clematis HRCav
- \* Yarra Glen & Lilydale Hunt Club
- \* The Equestrian Federation of Queensland
- \* The Equestrian Federation of Australia

I speak for many of my associates when I submit the following:

- The 2007 outbreak of Equine Influenza was caused by the relaxation and privatisation of quarantine standards by the then Federal Government.
- \* The State and Federal Governments' reaction to this epidemic was out of proportion to the threat that the disease proposed. This WAS NOT foot and mouth disease, thankfully, because the Governments' response failed miserably to contain EI.  
**Let us hope that this exercise has educated the authorities in how to successfully contain any future viral outbreaks.**
- \* At one stage 30,000 horses were infected. At that stage only five infected horses had died. This is probably at par with natural attrition. Horses that were infected have made a good recovery.
- \* The expensive and extensive measures used in controlling this outbreak did immeasurable damage to the equine industry, with many retailers, farriers and other equine industry specialists going out of business. The horse world is the poorer for the implementation of the lockdown - a complete over-reaction. If all affected individuals were to demand full compensation from the Federal Government the cost of fair compensation to them for losses incurred would be astronomical.
- \* Recreational horse owners are still being punished for this failure in government policy. They are still being required to produce unnecessary paper work long after the disease has passed. They have less horse professionals to service their horses, and to add insult to injury they are being threatened with bearing the cost of this inconvenience.

The cost of the EI lockdown, or any future epidemic, should not be borne by horse owners. The fault lies fairly and squarely with the Federal Government. That of course means the tax payers of this country. They are being asked to pay for bad decision-making on the part of the previous Government.

In an effort to ensure good governance in the area of quarantine, I suggest that the tax payers of Australia not be asked to bear these costs. Instead, the Parties who put forward Warren Truss as Minister of Agriculture ie the Liberal and National Parties, and who allowed our quarantine regulations to be made so lax as to let this virus loose in Australia, be charged with covering the costs of this failure in policy-making.

**Quarantine standards in all areas of agriculture must be returned to the stringent high levels that previously existed, or we as a nation will suffer immeasurable financial damage.**

**Yours Sincerely,  
Joy Ringrose**