



Australian Racing Board Limited

21st February 2008

The Hon. Tony Burke MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
PO Box 6022
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Re: Horse Disease Response Levy Collection Bill and costs of August 2007 Equine Influenza outbreak

I am writing to you about the *Horse Disease Levy Collection Bill* so far as it might relate to the recovery of the costs of the national program to deal with the consequences of the outbreak of equine influenza from the Eastern Creek Quarantine Station in August 2007.

At the outset I congratulate you for taking this action to place the horse industry on a proper footing to participate in the national infrastructure that has been developed for responses to emergency disease outbreaks. You deserve congratulations because you have achieved within 3 months more in this respect than was accomplished in the previous 8 years.

We will be very keen to work with your Department and advisors in understanding the detail of the new legislation, including the administrative arrangements for collection of any levy and the measures that will be used to ensure equity across the whole of the horse sector.

This said, it is important that we make particular mention of the potential use of the legislation in connection with the costs of the national program to deal with the consequences of the outbreak of equine influenza from the Eastern Creek Quarantine Station in August 2007.

As you will be aware the conceptual underpinning of EADRA is that it provides a framework under which the beneficiaries of the eradication or containment of a disease pay an “*appropriate and equitable*” proportion of the costs of mounting a response (EADRA Recitals clause A. (d) (i)). Central to EADRA is the notion of “*biosecurity*”, which the Deed defines as meaning “*a set of measures designed to protect a population from transmissible infectious agents at national, regional and individual farm levels*”.

We believe that it would be fundamentally inappropriate and inequitable for the horse industry to bear the costs of mounting a response to a disease outbreak in circumstances where it had been established that the Commonwealth did not maintain an adequate set of measures to protect the horse population from that outbreak occurring. The findings that are ultimately made by the current Inquiry being conducted for your Government by Ian Callinan AC are likely to provide a factual basis upon which to make such an assessment in this case. I note that this proposition was accepted by the former Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and is the premise upon which the Australian Racing Board has been proceeding.

Congratulations again on the headway that you have made with this legislation and for your other assistance to the horse industry since becoming Minister. Should you feel that it would be useful I am happy to meet with you at your convenience to discuss the matters set out above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RC', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

RC (Bob) Pearson
Chairman
Australian Racing Board Ltd.