

# **Horse Disease Response Levy Bill**

**NATIONAL CAMPDRAFT COUNCIL OF  
AUSTRALIA**

**Submission to the Senate Review Committee for Rural  
and Regional Affairs and Transport**



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20<sup>th</sup> September 2008

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISIONS OF THE HORSE DISEASE RESPONSE  
LEVY BILL AND RELATED BILLS**

I write on behalf of the National Campdraft Council of Australia with comment to your Committee's inquiry into the above bills.

The National Campdraft Council of Australia is the peak body representing Campdrafting in Australia and comprises four Campdraft Associations that operate throughout Australia with a total membership of over 10,000 members and those members conservatively own 50,000 to 60,000 horses.

Campdrafting is a uniquely Australian Horse Sport that is part of rural Australia's heritage and dates back to the late 1800's. In rural Australia it is part of the fragment that binds the country together and allows country people to get together to discuss the issues affecting their day to day lives including the long lasting drought and many other relevant issues.

Campdrafting is now recognized as a National Sport in Australia through the Australian Sports Commission.

Campdrafts are run to raise much needed funds for charities and Community Organizations across Australia and with over 300 Campdrafts run throughout Australia over a year a large amount of funds are donated to many needy and worthwhile causes.

The Pleasure and Performance Horse sector is unlike other industries that can continually sell stock to recover costs. To try and compare this Industry to the Sheep Cattle or Goat Industry where you can quantify sales past a property's front gate to set a levy mechanism in place is just not appropriate or warranted.

The above Bills that have now passed through the House of Representatives are more about shoring up support for the levy and having a system in place for collecting any future levy rather than having a system that is fair and equitable to all horse owners.

The Pleasure and performance horse Industry and recreational horse owners would own the majority of horses in Australia but have minimal representation to Government.

The Horse Industry revolves around the Thoroughbred and Standard bred Horses, ie Australian Racing Board Industry and Harness Racing Authority yet they make up only 20% of all Horses in Australia.

The Pleasure and performance horse Industry currently believes that if they sign the EADRA then they are committing themselves to a future of ongoing levies that will be paying for 80% of the costs of something that we have no control over or input into with the levies being collected by a body that we also have no control over or input into how those funds are expended.

Government does not generally recognize the Pleasure and Performance Horse sector as an Industry unlike the Thoroughbred Racing Industry and Harness Racing, as we get no tax benefit for the millions of dollars expended by horse owners and cannot generally claim business expenses for simply owning a horse yet they are looking to have the Industry agree to signing the EADRA.

In the pleasure Horse industry we spend millions of dollars on equipment from Trucks, Fuel, saddles and riding equipment to stock feeds, horseshoes and specialist training, on horses that generally only have one or two sales in their lifetime.

The N.C.C.A. is the peak body representing Campdraft Interest throughout Australia and we are not against The Australian Racing Board and Harness Racing Australia signing the EADRA with Government if they want the levy introduced to avoid any future shutdown of their industry but we advocate that they should only be signing for the Industries they represent.

The Pleasure and Performance Horse Sector's only access to comment and put forward its views to Government on Horse Industry matters is through the Australian Horse Industry Council.

The AHIC has misrepresented the Interests of Pleasure and Performance Horse owners throughout Australia and Campdraft Members in particular by advocating to the Government that the Pleasure and performance Horse owners fully supports the introduction of these bills.

This is simply not correct.

The N.C.C.A. has consistently opposed the introduction of any levy for Pleasure and performance Horses.

The AHIC set up an Industry Advisory Committee in February 2008 to comment and advise the AHIC on major issues affecting the Horse Industry. At a meeting of that Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008 representatives from 12 of the 14 Associations represented opposed the introduction of any levy with one Association opposed to a levy for the EI outbreak and only one Association supporting the introduction of a levy.

The Associations opposed to any levy included The National Campdraft Council of Australia, The Thoroughbred Breeders Association, The Australian Stock Horse Society, The Australian Pony Club Association and the Queensland Horse Council as well as others.

The AHIC is supposedly the peak Industry representative for the Australian Pleasure and performance Horse Industry and many of the Industry Associations have stated their objections to the misrepresentation by the Chairman of the AHIC Mr Barry Smyth to Government and Minister Burke.

Such was the frustration of the member Associations that it culminated in a representative group including the Queensland Horse Council, Australian Campdraft Association and Australian Pony Club holding discussions in late June with Minister Burke's senior advisor together with the Member for Flynn Mr Chris Trevor in Canberra to outline the reasons for opposing the bills.

The Minister Mr Tony Bourke realizes that there is not widespread support for the concept of a levy collection system for registered horses in Australia however he has still pushed on with the concept even though the support is obviously not there. We ask why?

Our only answer is that Government appears to be only listening to that part of the Industry that generates the income to Government, The Commercial Thoroughbred Racing Industry. If that Industry wants to take the risk of introducing another exotic disease into the country by importing horses and utilizing Shuttle Stallions then they should be prepared to bear the total cost of an outbreak for putting the whole equine Industry at risk.

The Australian Racing Board, The Australian Harness Racing Council and the AHIC are the only peak Horse Industry representative bodies that are eligible to become signatories to EADRA.

The N.C.C.A is simply seeking to have a fair and equitable discussion on matters that affect our sport and the Pleasure and Performance horse sector as a whole.

The N.C.C.A also believes that if all the recommendations of the Callinan inquiry are actioned by the Government and the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service there should not be a requirement for any further impositions on Horse owners as all the bio security measures should ensure there is no repeat of any future disease outbreak.

In the unlikely event that there is an outbreak, our members would simply follow the protocols learnt from the last outbreak and shut down the movement of horses until such time as it is safe to operate again.

As the Pleasure and Performance Horse owners of Australia own the majority of horses in Australia it is only fair that we get a proper hearing of our views on this most important matter.

We reiterate that the views of the AHIC are not the views of the broader Pleasure And Performance Horse Industry and there needs to be a broader consultative process to arrive at a fair and equitable solution.

We ask that the views expressed above are simply the views of the broader Horse industry and should be conveyed to Government in the same matter and any decision taken should incorporate those broader Industry views.

We would welcome the opportunity to fully discuss with the members of your Committee the issues we have raised above together with other matters that will affect this purely Australian Sport of Campdrafting.

Yours sincerely



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