



**THOROUGHBRED
BREEDERS**
A U S T R A L I A

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THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS CONFIRM SUPPORT FOR LEVY BILLS

Thoroughbred Breeders Australia (TBA) today confirmed its support for the Horse Disease Response Levy Bills currently being debated in Federal Parliament.

The legislation proposes a levy scheme whereby the horse industry contributes towards the costs of responding to any future disease outbreak. President of TBA, John Messara, said that the legislation was needed to provide certainty and security for all horse sectors.

“Passage of the bills through Parliament is the first step towards the horse industry signing the Emergency Animal Response Disease Agreement (EADRA) which commits the Government to fighting any future diseases in conjunction with industry.

“Without a signed EADRA there is no compulsion on any Government to contribute to the costs of containing and eradicating any future diseases.

“The strong differences of opinion about how a levy would apply should not defeat the legislation but be left for debate and negotiation involving all interested parties and the Government.

“All horse sectors have a vital interest in working with Government to secure their industry against the crippling costs of disease.

“As things presently stand, the financial burden of future horse diseases falls entirely on industry, and Government intervention is purely by grace and favour,” Mr Messara said.

Mr Messara said that TBA took issue with Nationals leader Warren Truss’ comments in Parliament suggesting a multi-tiered levy based on capacity to pay. “Mr Truss is singling out the thoroughbred and performance horse sectors in a way he hasn’t previously for any other primary industry.

“All horse sectors benefit from the eradication of an emergency pest or disease through lower ongoing disease management costs. A pony club horse is as susceptible to disease as a thoroughbred.

“TBA believes that a levy payable in the event of a disease outbreak should be broad-based so that the burden does not fall unfairly on too few horse owners.

“On that basis, TBA is keen to openly and constructively engage with other horse sectors and the Government to reach agreement on a fair and equitable levy mechanism.

“However, there has to be a degree of good faith demonstrated by the Federal Opposition and other parties in the Senate by passing the legislation currently before the Parliament. Without the legislation in place, there can be no levy scheme and no signed EADRA. For any horse owner, that is a risk not worth taking,” Mr Messara said.

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