



## MEDIA RELEASE

The Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC) welcomes the outcome of the Primary Industries Ministers Council (PIMC) meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

PIMC gave the different sectors of the Horse Industry the opportunity to work together and with Government and the Opposition to find acceptable levy mechanisms in order that the Emergency Animal Disease Agreement (EADRA) can be signed and the Levy Bills re-introduced to Parliament.

The Horse Industry can work in a cooperative manner as evidenced by the coordinated actions of many members of the different sectors of the industry which culminated in PIMC rejecting voluntary vaccination against Equine Influenza.

It is now up to the same people to work together and with Government to ensure as broad a cross-section of the industry as possible will support suitable levy mechanisms.

AHIC has received legal advice from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry that a number of different levy options are feasible. A response from the Australian Government Solicitor is still required on Constitutional matters and AHIC trusts that in light of 23<sup>rd</sup> April's PIMC meeting this will be promptly provided.

AHIC is working with its Industry Liaison Committee and the other peak bodies to look at ways in which the impost of any levy will be minimal and yet sufficient funds will be collected over a 10 year period to repay the costs of eradication of any new disease incursion.

AHIC fully supports PIMC's commitment to the strengthened biosecurity protocols for horse importation. These are the first line of defence against exotic horse diseases and are not only vital to protect against Equine Influenza but more importantly against fatal diseases such as African Horse Sickness and the Equine Encephalitides. The Horse Industry needs to keep the momentum generated through the "Say No to Vaccination" campaign and agree to suitable levy mechanisms and then we can join the livestock sectors which have an EADRA in place. This ensures certainty of a joint "across Government and industry" response to any disease incursion.

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