

Organisation: Harness Racing Australia

Name: Andrew Kelly

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Horse Disease Response Levy Review on behalf of Harness Racing Australia (HRA).

HRA is the peak national body for the sport and business of harness racing in Australia. HRA represents more than 48,400 individuals who are involved in the process of producing and preparing standardbreds for racing in Australia. Of these, there are 24,000 owners of standardbred racehorses who provide significant capital investment into the industry, over 5,900 trainers and drivers and more than 5,500 breeders. The process of producing and preparing standardbred racehorses to compete in the industry is worth more than half a billion dollars in direct expenditure alone to the Australian economy. The majority of this is spent in regional Australia.

In reviewing the Horse Disease Response Levy (the Levy) after five years, it is worth recalling the debate, discussions and options which were considered when the originally established.

Discussions about the design and appropriateness of the levy were rigorous. The levy had to meet the legislative and functional capabilities of an extremely diverse and passionate industry.

Many options were deliberated and modelled from a financial, fairness and application perspective. These options included:

- Horseshoes
- Events
- Imported Horses
- Microchips
- Wagering
- Slaughtered Horses
- Horse Wormers
- Manufactured Horse Feed
- Annual Registration

Of these, the consensus view of all horse industry peak bodies was that Horse Wormers and Manufactured Horse Feed were the two collection points most appropriate for the Levy.

Despite the passing of time, no alternatives have been identified and the current collection points remain appropriate.

It should also be noted by the Department that HRA remain open to the concept of a registration payment option in the future – but only with sufficient comfort and safeguards that place competition and sporting horses on an equal footing with horses used in recreational, commercial and private equine pursuits.

HRA remains a staunch advocate and supporter of the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and AUSVETPLAN. The Levy is a critical component of both documents and I remain available to discuss HRA's position at anytime, via phone (03 9227 3004) or in person.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Kelly
Chief Executive