

27 April, 2008-04-27

Mr. Roger Beale AO (Chairman)
Quarantine and Biosecurity Review Secretariat
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
GPO Box 858, Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr. Beale,

**Australian Registry of Wildlife Health Submission
Quarantine and Biosecurity Review**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Australian Government's Quarantine and Biosecurity Review. Please find attached a submission focused on biosecurity issues related to wildlife and invasive species, on behalf of the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health.

The Taronga Conservation Society Australia (TCSA) operates Taronga Zoo and Taronga Western Plains Zoo and has a long history of involvement in wildlife health related programs, education and research. The TCSA has a six year history as the lead hosting agency of the Australian Wildlife Health Network (AWHN - an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry), and a 23 year history of operating the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health (ARWH).

The Australian Registry of Wildlife Health operates as a national resource and education centre, collecting, archiving and disseminating information and diagnostic materials related to healthy and diseased native and feral animals. The Registry conducts and contributes to wildlife health research. The Registry also functions as a major diagnostic centre, investigating outbreaks of sudden death or disease on behalf of wildlife managers, conservation departments, state agriculture departments, threatened species programs, wildlife rehabilitation groups, the RSPCA and zoos. The wildlife and invasive animal caseload of the Registry exceeds that of all of the state and commonwealth agriculture laboratories combined (Ladds, 2005).

In July 2007 the Registry hosted a workshop regarding Wildlife Health and Biosecurity. This workshop brought together high-level representatives from agriculture, human health, plant health, and the environment (including Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer, the CEO of Animal Health Australia, CEO of CSIRO's Australian Animal Health Laboratory, a Director of the Department of Education Science and Training, the CEO of the Australian Biosecurity CRC,

Taronga Conservation Society Australia

Taronga Zoo, Bradleys Head Road, Mosman, PO Box 20 Mosman, NSW, Australia, 2088

T 02 9978-4749 F 02 9978-4516 E krose@zoo.nsw.gov.au

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Australian Registry of Wildlife Health www.ARWH.org

Director of Clinical Studies of the Department of Health and Ageing, and the Chief Defence Scientist of the Department of Defence Science, Technology Organisation).

Workshop participants agreed that wildlife and invasive species health needs to be fully integrated within the national biosecurity system. It was also agreed that building upon the solid foundations of the AWHN and ARWH provided an excellent means for the incorporation of wildlife health, including feral and invasive species, into a broad, national biosecurity framework. These programs have been very successful in bolstering wildlife and invasive species biosecurity, yet their funding base is fragile, and possibly vulnerable.

Workshop participants agreed to seek funds through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) to enhance and integrate the capability of the AWHR and AWHN to improve biosecurity in Australia. However, it was recognised that this source of funds was quite limited with respect to timing (2010-2011) and scope, leaving many biosecurity outcomes unattainable.

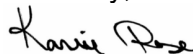
The attached submission has been compiled from extracts of the Wildlife Health and Biosecurity Workshop Proceedings and other documents prepared by a working group composed of workshop participants. The submission focuses on the economic, social and environmental implications of wildlife health in relation to national biosecurity, and a gap analysis of the current wildlife biosecurity system in Australia (addressing many of the questions posed in the Quarantine and Biosecurity Issue Paper).

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Quarantine and Biosecurity Review. If you have any questions regarding the material enclosed in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We also extend an open invitation to the Review Panel to tour our facilities, review our programs, meet our scientists and program managers, and discuss biosecurity issues related to wildlife and invasive animals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Karrie Rose DVM, DVSc
Manager, Australian Registry of Wildlife Health