

340 Catherine St
Lilyfield, NSW 2040
10 April 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

Complaint about the Quality of Quarantine Services at Eastern Creek, NSW for Review of Australia's Quarantine and Biosecurity Arrangements

I write to draw your attention to what I consider to be inadequate provision of services at the Eastern Creek quarantine facility.

I moved with my two cats from Hong Kong on the 10th January 2008 where I had been employed as a professor of law. Both cats shared a cage for 32 days at the quarantine facility at Eastern Creek. My first visit to the facility was approximately four days after the cats arrived in Sydney. I was appalled to see the condition of the cage and the state of the cats. Both cats were visibly stressed and had lost weight. The cage was filthy as was the bedding. There was insufficient litter in the one tray for two large grown cats. The water was dirty and there was inadequate food. I was so concerned about the situation that I attended the facility four times a week until the cats were released.

Fortunately, the situation improved as I got to know the new staff who had been hired shortly after or at the time my cats were quarantined. Unfortunately the staff had not received adequate training to be able to comfortably discharge their duties effectively. On a few occasions when I visited the facility I discovered that there was no litter in the tray or there was an empty litter tray (apparently the staff were on what appeared to be an extended tea break).

About halfway through the cats' quarantine period, I noticed that one of my cats had a very red anus. When the quarantine vet attended at my request, he assured me there was not problem with the cat. Nevertheless shortly before I took the cats home, I noticed that both had had runny bowels that lasted several days. At the time I took the cats home, I was told that several cats had had runny tummies and that I should keep an eye on my cats. The next day I took one cat to the vet because he had a runny tummy and was unable to urinate. Both cats were placed by the veterinarian on a restricted diet for several days before their health improved. At no time did any staff in the quarantine facility inform me that other cats had been ill when they fell ill; nor did the staff take any preventative measures to deal with the stomach problem (eg feed the cats chicken, etc).

My cats have moved from Canberra to Canada to Hong Kong to Sydney. The move to Australia was the most stressful for them most likely because of the numerous problems that they faced while in quarantine. If the facility had been a private cattery, I would not use its services nor would I recommend that any one else did. The service and the facilities were unsatisfactory and not up to a professional standard.

If you would like further information about my complaint, please contact me by email (Mlebrun@cuhk.edu.hk or mjmlb23@yahoo.com) or by telephone 0406030117. Had I confidence in the management of the facility, I would have written this letter of complaint to them. I did not. I now feel more confident knowing that there is a review of their activities.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

M J Le Brun