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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Hendra Virus Interagency Communications and Engagement Framework is to establish an agreed and consistent process between Biosecurity Queensland, Queensland Health (QH), Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) when communicating or engaging with the public, partner agencies/organisations and workplaces in regards to Hendra virus prevention and control.

1.2 Objective

The objective of the Hendra Virus Interagency Communications and Engagement Framework is to ensure there is a coordinated and consistent interagency approach to communications and engagement relating to Hendra virus.

1.3 Background

This framework recognises that effective communications and engagement require:

1. clarity on the behaviour(s) required to mitigate a risk
2. provision of targeted enablers that assist the required behaviour(s) to occur
3. motivation of the responder to implement the required behaviour(s).

Effective communication and engagement is facilitated by the active exchange and consideration of information from stakeholders. This enables the appropriate message to be provided in its most relevant form for the recipient which maximises the likelihood of the recipient being motivated to behave in a particular manner.

The accuracy of the message, intended audience and how it is tailored and delivered will influence how well the message is heard, understood and motivates the specific target group.

1.4 Scope

The scope of the Hendra Virus Interagency Communications and Engagement Framework includes the agreed approach by Biosecurity Queensland, QH, WHSQ and EHP when communicating and engaging with members of the public and external stakeholders including veterinarians, horse owners, horse industry, health partners, business and other government departments in regards to the prevention and control of Hendra virus in Queensland. The framework focuses on enabling:

- provision of accurate, timely and consistent Hendra virus information particularly in regards to human and animal content
- development, implementation and evaluation of strategies to ensure communication or engagement is specifically targeted to and reaches the required audience in the most acceptable format.

This framework is intended to be used both in the inter-Hendra virus incident period and during a Hendra virus incident.
The Interagency Communications and Engagement Framework is underpinned by the four core aspects of incident management which are, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

- Prevention – maximise opportunities to equip the community with the means to detect, prevent, or minimise the impact of a potential or anticipated Hendra virus incident.
- Preparedness – prior to any incident occurring, assess risks and develop and/or revise plans and standard operating procedures to enable appropriate and timely action to be taken.
- Response – reduce community anxiety and equip people to protect themselves, other people and their animals during a Hendra virus incident through the provision of targeted, accurate, accessible, timely and consistent advice.
- Recovery – Assist people directly affected by a Hendra virus incident to resume usual activities as soon as possible after an incident has occurred.

1.5 Out of scope

Individual agency internal incident management communication and engagement is out of scope of this framework.

This document refers to but is not responsible for maintaining the currency of Hendra virus specific fact sheets, technical documents and guidelines found in:

- section 3.4.1 table 1 - generic fact sheets
- section 3.4.2 table 2 - operational documents and incident specific information requirements
- appendix 1.

2.0 KEY PRINCIPLES

Key Principles

As Hendra virus infection is a recently emerged, serious and potentially fatal zoonotic disease, there is often concern among the horse industry and wider community whenever an incident occurs. The availability of timely, accurate and consistent information is a key component for the success of managing the risk of Hendra virus infection in Queensland.

The key principles underpinning effective Hendra virus risk management communication and engagement include:

- Consistent communication from all government agencies to:
  - facilitate increased public confidence in the whole-of-government response
  - reduce the impact on animal, human and workplace health
  - minimise misinformation.

- Targeted communication strategies may need to be developed and implemented during a Hendra virus incident to reinforce the rationale for public and/or industry compliance.

- A suite of current Hendra virus resources is available for the public and partners on agency websites and internet sites.
• Regular cross agency revision of documents/communications is to occur:
  • as new evidence is appraised
  • as recommended by the Technical Advisory Group
  • and/or every six months.

The responsibilities in regards to Hendra virus prevention and control communication and engagement are as follows:

• Biosecurity Queensland is responsible for animal health advice
• QH is responsible for human health advice
• WHSQ is responsible for workplace health and safety advice
• EHP is responsible for providing advice on protected native species.

3.0 COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

3.1 Communication and engagement outside an incident

As Hendra virus is a zoonotic disease with serious consequences, it is important that agencies involved provide accurate and consistent information at all times by:

• maintaining interagency contact lists
• reviewing existing community resources
• reviewing and revising interagency resources
• maintaining formal liaison between agencies through the six monthly zoonotic disease interagency forum
• sharing new information as it becomes available.

3.2 Communication and engagement during an incident

3.2.1 Notification of a suspect or confirmed Hendra virus horse

Biosecurity Queensland will notify QH and WHSQ by telephone within 24 hours of any of the following as per the Multi-agency Coordination Hendra Virus Standard Operating Procedure (SOP):

• a horse with confirmed Hendra virus infection
• a horse where heightened suspicion of Hendra virus infection exists on clinical/epidemiological grounds
• a suspect or exclusion case where notification is appropriate e.g. human contacts have been advised to contact their public health unit or significant external attention is anticipated.

Following confirmation of a Hendra virus positive horse, Biosecurity Queensland will notify the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

Immediately upon notification of a heightened suspicion or confirmed horse, agencies will review Hendra virus information resources including website content and links to ensure the currency and accuracy of information. Updates should include relevant plans, standard operating procedures, protocols, fact sheets, frequently asked questions, letter and alert templates.
3.2.2 Notification of suspected or confirmed human Hendra virus diagnosis

- QH liaises with Biosecurity Queensland and if appropriate, WHSQ and/or EHP to prepare a joint media release and possible media conference.
- Appointed agency spokespersons liaise with QH appointed agency spokesperson to ensure human health information is consistent with QH advice if it is provided to any media conference by another agency.
- Each agency ensures collaborative messaging and updated scripts for call centres, website pages and fact sheets.
- Agencies will refer any media enquiries regarding that department’s area of expertise to the relevant agency for response.

3.2.3 Media during a Hendra virus incident

A media release/ statement may be required from one or more agencies. Content should be referred to the appropriate agency in order to be assessed for consistency and accuracy prior to release.

When joint media is required, the lead agency will liaise with relevant agencies to prepare the media release, press conference and associated materials in a timely manner. If agencies are not able to provide required information to meet required deadlines the request will be escalated to the Multi-agency Threat Assessment Team (MATAT) chair.

To ensure a collaborative and coordinated whole-of-government media response to facilitate increased public confidence, each agency will:

- identify and prepare key media spokespersons
- ensure that media officers from each agency collaborate to incorporate intelligence from the most recent agency situation report into joint media responses
- ensure information provided via all modes of communication (social media channels including Facebook and twitter) is consistent and in alignment with the principles of the communications framework.

3.2.4 First contact/ joint interagency visit to affected property

The first visit to an infected property is an opportunity to provide face-to-face contact with persons affected by the Hendra virus incident in order to:

- identify human contacts
- identify animals at risk
- undertake animal and contaminated equipment tracing
- listen to concerns and provide appropriate advice and reassurance
- identify communication and logistical pathways for the property and human contacts.

Each incident will be assessed to determine the scope of response required including whether there is a need for an initial joint interagency site visit by Biosecurity Queensland and QH staff.

Where a site visit by QH is not immediately required QH will commence contact tracing by phone.

The provision of appropriate and accurate information is important to minimise the risk of disease transmission, establish an appropriate public health and biosecurity response and facilitate a high level of public confidence in a coordinated whole-of-government approach.
Workplace Health and Safety Queensland will also be available to provide information and advice as needed.

Those undertaking the first visit to the infected property will provide appropriate interagency resources as listed in Table 1 and 2 (see section 4).

Biosecurity Queensland provides specific advice on animal and property management to minimise the risk of further spread of Hendra virus on the property and adjacent properties.

Depending on assessment outcomes, QH provides specific information on human health including risks for Hendra virus, symptoms, testing recommendations, appropriate medical management and psychosocial support. QH provides referral letters to a medical officer (GP or hospital emergency department) for testing and provides incident specific information to facilitate any ongoing management required.

WHSQ provides specific advice on the workplace health and safety aspects of Hendra virus and makes initial and ongoing contact with relevant persons and businesses to provide advice and monitor and enforce compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

3.2.5 Immediate contact with surrounding residents/properties

Contact with the community in the immediate neighbourhood may also be required depending on the location of the infected property to:

- identify any additional human or horse contacts of the Hendra virus positive horse
- advise the neighbourhood of the situation
- advise on measures to reduce animal and human disease transmission risks
- allay concern.

It is standard operating procedure that Biosecurity Queensland engages residents and businesses within a 1km radius of the known Hendra virus infected property. This radius can be tightened or expanded, based on a range of risk factors including risk of disease transmission and the location of the infected property.

Residential density and available resourcing will be key considerations for determining whether contact is best through telephone, direct visits or a combination of both. Other communication methods (such as flyers or postcards) may be considered as an alternative method of engagement if there is high residential density and depending on the level of understanding of Hendra virus within the community. The Biosecurity Queensland Community Engagement Manager will determine the most appropriate strategy in consultation with QH.

3.2.6 Interagency communication and engagement processes

Representatives from each agency are to convene a meeting (e.g. by teleconference) to plan the targeted engagement strategies as soon as practicable after a Hendra virus incident is confirmed. Representatives should include people responsible for media, communications, engagement and/or planning roles from each agency and will be appointed by their respective agency Incident Controller or other appropriate person.

Agency key contacts (and/or appointed delegates) will:
determine their first point contact for communication and engagement matters and advise the lead agency. Contact details for each agency key personnel are to be provided to the Multiagency Agency Threat Assessment Team (MATAT) chair for collation and distribution to all agencies.

ensure a kit of current communication and engagement materials and information is readily available to operational responders.

ensure each agency contact details are included on all Hendra virus public information. This may include relevant contact details, hotline and internet site details.

ensure templates (e.g. letters, communiqué) for key stakeholders (veterinarians, horse organisations) are available for use/distribution as required.

establish a process to ensure timely review and update information during an incident response.

determine technical information is reviewed and approved by content experts in the respective agencies.

ensure a communications officer from each agency is responsible to coordinate the review of information.

upload all public information to appropriate agency websites as soon as practicable; e.g. media releases; public information; community engagement information and events; fact sheets; and frequently asked questions.

ensure agency websites are monitored throughout the incident to ensure that consistency is maintained and links between agency websites are working.

ensure respective agency call centres are provided with consistent and accurate scripts. The process for reviewing and updating scripts will be managed by a designated person (e.g. communications manager) in each agency. However, interagency review of information will be important to ensure consistency and accuracy of messages. The script should include referral pathways for questions outside the scope of the call centre.

Agency call centres include:

- Queensland Health - 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Customer Service Centre (CSC) which carries Biosecurity Queensland information -13 25 23
- Workplace Health and Safety Infoline -1300 369 915
- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection Infoline - 1300 130 372

3.3 Evaluation of Communication and engagement strategies

At the end of an incident the communication and engagement strategies implemented should be reviewed as part of the incident debrief. Issues and/or recommendations identified are to be progressed to the interagency communication and engagement workgroup to be addressed.

3.4 Targeted engagement strategies

It is important to identify and implement the best method of seeking community acceptance of responsibility to help reduce the spread of infection from animal to animal and from animal to human for each Hendra virus incident. Biosecurity Queensland has found that direct engagement between government staff, community and industry groups is the best way to achieve this.
Targeted engagement strategies that require a multiagency response should be developed collaboratively with clear objectives and endorsed by participating agencies (with commitment and approval of required resources) prior to implementation.

A range of strategies to reach the target community could be considered including:
- working with local media
- information centres located at nearby government centres and offices
- neighbourhood doorknock
- working with community leaders in the equine industry to promote compliance with measures to reduce the risk of horse/human disease
- mobile information vans and information tables
- visits to local events in affected areas
- visits to local businesses in affected areas

Each agency must ensure that orientation, ‘just in time’ training and briefing is available as required for officers from all agencies involved in interacting with the community to ensure up-to-date, quality information and advice is provided to the public and industry.

### 3.4.1 Target audiences for interagency communications

Specific information may be targeted to recipients including:
- contacts of the affected horse(s)
- horse owners
- private veterinarian and staff/students
- onsite property owner/manager/staff/volunteers/family/visitors
- horse industry peak bodies
- horse-related businesses (e.g. farriers, equine dentists)
- horse carcass transporters and disposal contractors and/or operators of earth moving equipment used for horse carcass burial and disposal
- government agencies
- general practitioners
- concerned members of the general public.

Initial advice as appropriate for each target group may include:
- disease transmission
- infection control including personal protective equipment
- human health risk
- psychological counselling
- media management
- workplace health and safety
- Biosecurity Queensland, WHSQ and public health unit contact details
- information on possible quarantine/ biosecurity controls
- translated material may need to be made available for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups (see Translating and interpreting services section 3.3.2 Table 2).

### 3.4.2 Private practitioner information (GPs, Veterinarians)

Queensland Health will provide the following information to specific stakeholders as required:
- Medical officers - clinical advice may need to be updated and disseminated throughout an incident as significant new information/evidence emerges.
- QH disseminates changes to Hendra virus clinical advice to GPs via the General Practice Queensland (GPQ) urgent public health alert system and internally to hospitals via Emergency Departments and Infectious Disease Physicians as required.
- Public health unit staff liaise directly with general practitioners to provide advice and guidance as required.
- Health care workers:
- Pathology service providers:
  - QH has a procedure in place with pathology service providers should a home/site visit be required for pathology collection.

- Biosecurity Queensland provides updates about emergency animal health incidents, including Hendra virus communiqués, to registered veterinarians that have provided their email address to the Queensland Veterinary Surgeons Board. Biosecurity Queensland informs key horse industry stakeholders about Hendra virus incidents via SMS text alerts, communiqués, media releases and meetings.

- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland will provide workplace health and safety information to veterinarians and other private practitioners as required. This may include:
  - providing the Hendra virus information for veterinarians fact sheet on the WHSQ website
  - using other WHSQ electronic communications (e.g. eSAFE)
  - liaising with the Australian Veterinary Association and Equine Veterinarians Australia
  - working with Biosecurity Queensland where necessary to formulate or distribute information via Biosecurity Queensland databases (e.g. veterinarian communiqués).

### 3.5 Resource kit

Standard resource kits containing generic and/or targeted information as appropriate are to be compiled and available to all agency staff engaged in a Hendra virus response. All information contained in the resource kits is to be contemporary and endorsed.

Resource kits will contain appropriate information for the specific audience as outlined in tables 1 and 2:
# 3.5.1 Table 1: Generic fact sheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hendra virus fact sheets available for distribution as appropriate</th>
<th>First responder to the infected property</th>
<th>Human contacts of infected horse</th>
<th>Neighbourhood doorknock</th>
<th>General public</th>
<th>Targeted (specific)</th>
<th>Resource location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### 3.5.2 Table 2: Operational documents and incident specific information requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources for staff use including:</th>
<th>Resources recommended for a specific audience (✔)</th>
<th>Resource location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• administrative forms to collate incident specific information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• guidelines and FAQs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• incident specific requirements for human contacts and affected properties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>First responder to the infected</strong></td>
<td>First responder to the infected</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human contacts of infected horse</strong></td>
<td>Human contacts of infected horse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood door-knock</strong></td>
<td>Neighbourhood door-knock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General public</strong></td>
<td>General public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. | Biosecurity Queensland notification form (initial incident specific information provided to QH from Biosecurity Queensland on notification of a HeV positive horse) | ✔ | Appendix to the Multi-agency Coordination Hendra Virus SOP |
| 2. | Biosecurity Queensland Hendra virus – Property Management Plan (provided by Biosecurity Queensland to owners of infected property) | ✔ | Biosecurity Queensland |
| 5. | QH Line list template for door-knock/community contacts (Form for QH staff to document residents) | ✔ | |
4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH AGENCY

All agencies will collaborate to ensure a whole of Government coordinated communications, engagement, media and public information strategy through:

- collaborating to ensure that all communication, media, fact sheets, call centre scripts, web pages/links, frequently asked questions are accurate, consistent and contemporary across all agencies;
- ensuring that joint agency engagement activities requiring support and/or assistance from other agencies are planned with and agreed to by those agencies prior to implementation;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>contacted/properties visited when undertaking contact tracing)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Under review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>QH Hendra virus frequently asked questions</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Biosecurity Queensland/Queensland Health contact details for media management support (contacts/affected properties i.e. neighbours if required)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Interagency - Neighbourhood doorknock CE job card (details operational community engagement roles, responsibilities and requirements)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>QH contact details for psychological counselling (as required contacts only)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>QH relevant public health unit contact details</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• maintaining linkages with relevant agencies to ensure Hendra virus human health information is reviewed regularly and remains contemporary in the intra-incident period.

### 4.1 Queensland Health

QH is the responsible agency for human health advice and:

• reviews and updates QH Hendra virus infection clinical public health guidelines and other human health advice as required, and makes available to clinicians throughout an incident
• reviews, updates and makes available appropriate Hendra virus information for clinicians, stakeholders and general public
• ensures a robust system is in place to communicate with medical officers and infectious disease physicians throughout an incident.

### 4.2 Biosecurity Queensland

Biosecurity Queensland, a service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is responsible for animal health advice and:

• reviews and updates Biosecurity Queensland Hendra virus infection veterinary guidelines and other animal health advice as required, and makes available appropriate advice for special interest groups and the general public.
• reviews and updates Biosecurity Queensland Hendra virus infection veterinary guidelines and other animal health advice as required, and makes available to stakeholders throughout an incident.
• Ensures a robust system is in place to communicate with key stakeholders such as veterinarians, industry and allied industries throughout an incident.

### 4.3 Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, a service of the Department of Justice and Attorney General, is responsible for workplace health and safety advice and:

• reviews, updates and makes available Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Hendra virus information for key stakeholders such as veterinarians and horse related businesses
• ensures a robust system is in place to communicate with key stakeholders such as veterinarians and horse related businesses throughout an incident.
• monitors and enforces compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

### 4.4 Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is responsible for providing advice on protected native species.
5.0 Document review

This document should be reviewed annually and/or after significant new findings have been identified regarding Hendra virus. This will include reviewing the adequacy and modalities of providing Hendra virus prevention information to stakeholders in both incident response and the non-incident period.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 List of additional resources
### Appendix 1 - List of Additional Documents/Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of document</th>
<th>Link</th>
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</table>