

**Premier and Minister for Reconstruction  
The Honourable Anna Bligh**

**Sunday, July 10, 2011**

**Queensland and New South Wales join forces to combat Hendra**

Queensland and New South Wales biosecurity and health authorities are forming a cross-border alliance to fight Hendra virus.

The Taskforce has been formed after discussions this week between Queensland Premier Anna Bligh and New South Wales Premier Barry O'Farrell.

Ms Bligh said the Queensland-New South Wales Government Taskforce would meet urgently to discuss the current Hendra outbreaks and ensure a consistent and coordinated approach in responding to the disease.

The taskforce will include Chief Veterinarians, Chief Health Officers and Chief scientists from both states as well as a CSIRO representative.

This includes:

- Biosecurity Qld Managing Director Kareena Arthy
- Qld Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Rick Symons
- Qld Chief Medical Officer Dr Jeanette Young
- Qld Chief Scientist Dr Geoff Garrett
- Head of Australian Animal Health Laboratory Professor Martyn Jeggo

The Premier said by bringing together these experts and leaders we could work more closely together to try to reduce the incidence and the impacts of Hendra cases.

"Hendra virus is affecting both states and there is a lot to be gained by sharing knowledge and experience," Ms Bligh said.

"In the past fortnight, it has been confirmed at five properties in both south east Queensland and northern NSW resulting in the deaths of seven horses and leaving more than 40 horses under quarantine while they are monitored daily.

"32 people across both states are now waiting for further test results to hopefully clear them of any infection.

"While Queensland and NSW have already been sharing information on this disease, this Taskforce will formalise that relationship and the response."

Premier Bligh said the Taskforce would work hard on three fronts.

"We will be analysing the situation in both states to better understand the outbreak, identifying areas for further collaboration and undertaking longer-term planning for managing the disease and its impacts," she said.

"Due to our exposure to the virus since 1994, Queensland is advanced in its research, response and communications around Hendra virus and it is important to share this knowledge and experience for mutual benefit.

"For example, last year the Queensland Government released an Australian-first veterinary guide to support our vets in identifying and reporting the disease. This package has a strong focus on personal protection for vets and is invaluable for vets nationwide.

"Queensland is also fortunate to have world leading researchers such as Dr Hume Field, who is a recognised flying fox expert and has done a great deal of work in studying Hendra virus.

"In addition, the Queensland Centre for Emerging and Infectious Diseases (QCEID) - a joint Biosecurity Queensland-Queensland Health research centre - has made important contributions to the ongoing research into Hendra virus.

This growing knowledge bank will help our interstate partners with future joint research."

Up to date information on Hendra virus is available at [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au), including important workplace health and safety information for horse properties and other horse related businesses.

For more information contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au)