



## **Warwick Town and Country Vets Hendra Virus Policy**

The following document is to inform our clients of the protocol for treatment of all horses by veterinarians at Warwick Town and Country Vets. The purpose of this policy is to minimise the risk of Hendra Virus Infection.

Warwick Town and Country Vets has a strong commitment to caring for their clients and their animals but our absolute commitment is to ensure the safety of our staff and their families so as of July 01 2019 it will be up to the discretion of the vet and staff involved if we will attend or examine any horse that is not currently up to date with their Hendra vaccinations.

### **Hendra Vaccination**

- Warwick Town and Country Vets supports Hendra vaccination
- Vaccination appears to be the single most effective way of preventing Hendra virus infection in horses
- Vaccination is an important measure to prevent equine infection and, as a consequence provides a public health and workplace health and safety benefit
- In vaccine trials, viral shedding was not detected in immunised horses after Hendra virus challenge
- No evidence of Hendra virus replication has been detected in any tissue of vaccinated horses

### **Regular appointments and elective procedures**

- Vets will still be seeing unvaccinated horses for routine calls such as dentistry, ongoing lameness, Hendra, tetanus and strangles vaccinations, reproductive exams, eye examinations, skin conditions, examination of tumours/lumps, wound repairs and other routine examinations.

### **Unwell Horses**

- Any horse that is unwell must be considered to be at risk of having Hendra virus.
- Sick, unvaccinated horses will be seen by Warwick Town and Country Vets at the attending veterinarian's discretion
- We will no longer be performing invasive procedures or treatments on any unwell horse (including using a stomach tube and dental equipment) until a negative Hendra virus exclusion test has been received. This Hendra virus exclusion test is a PCR test performed in the Biosecurity Queensland Coopers Plains Laboratory and requires sending samples (blood sample and nasal swab) to Brisbane with results taking between two and up to five days if over a weekend. This time delay limits treatment options for unwell horses and exposes people and other horses to significant risks
- Any unvaccinated horses that are unwell and require immediate veterinary attention will only be attended to when the welfare of the animal is severely compromised. These animals will most likely need to be euthanased. An exclusion test will be performed and the attending veterinarian will be required to wear PPE which entails and additional cost