**EV HENDRA POLICY PRESS RELEASE**

The Board of Equestrian Victoria has heard the strong messages from our members expressing concern at the Hendra By-Law promulgated by EA, the operation of which has presently been deferred pending completion of the Review by the EA Hendra Technical Advisory Panel.

Zoetis Australia Pty Ltd currently holds a permit for the supply and minor use of the Equivac HeV Hendra virus vaccine for horses. The permit is in force from 4 August 2014 to 4 August 2015. The permit is for “minor use” because the testing and assessment procedures undertaken by APVMA are still ongoing.

EV does not understand why it is appropriate for EA to promulgate a by-law in practice mandating use of this vaccine for any horse which EA members wish to compete, especially in national competitions, prior to completion by the APVMA of the testing and assessment of the vaccine. EV’s view is reinforced by the absence of the publication of a fully reasoned risk assessment together with the underlying evidence and where there is no compensation scheme in place for harm resulting from use of the vaccine prior to it gaining full regulatory approval.

EV is further concerned as to why the by-law is appropriate when none of the relevant government regulatory bodies have felt that such a mandatory approach should be adopted across the industry as a whole in the way, for example, that they dealt with the outbreak of Equine Influenza a few years ago.

EV believes that the approach to Hendra ought to be a risk based approach, founded on evidence, and applied across the whole industry by the appropriate regulatory authorities. Where members desire to use the vaccine they should of course be free to obtain any protection that the vaccine offers, but at this stage it ought be a matter of choice.

The Board of EV will vigorously present the concerns expressed by its members to EA. The Board of EV further believes that no further steps ought to be taken to give effect to the development of the proposed by-law until the Panel has published their recommendations together with all of the evidence upon which they are based and both the members and the individual states have had an opportunity to consider and engage in a robust and genuine discussion.