



VICHANSARD

Whole Speech (Daily Hansard - Proof Version Only)

Title **Equine influenza: control**
House **ASSEMBLY**
Activity **Adjournment**
Members **SYKES**
Date **30 October 2007**
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[Dr SYKES \(Benalla\)](#) -- My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Agriculture, and the action I request is that the minister extend the assistance measures available to not-for-profit organisations and others impacted by the outbreak of [equine influenza](#), and in particular that he extend the cut-off date for eligible shows and horse events from 31 October until autumn 2008.

By way of background, [equine influenza](#) has caused extreme emotional and financial pain to horse owners and associated businesses and families throughout Australia. The government response has focused in particular on the thoroughbred industry, which, whilst welcome, has caused great anger and anxiety amongst other horse industry groups such as pony clubs, eventing horse clubs, adventure tourism operators and pleasure horse owners.

I have had many personal representations, telephone calls and emails from affected people, including contacts from the Clydesdale society, the Euroa Pony Club, eventing horse owners, the High Country horseriding operators and local show societies.

Also, over the past couple of weekends I have attended local shows at Benalla, Myrtleford and Euroa, and while these shows have been a great success the absence of horse events has substantially pulled down the attendance -- and therefore the takings and therefore the profits. That comes at a time when we are under enormous pressure due to the continuing dry. On Sunday I attended the opening of the new Euroa Pony Club facilities at Longwood. It is a great credit to many people down there, and in particular to Suzie Batten. Everyone has been impacted by [equine influenza](#).

I have also spoken to other people such as Sue Smith, who runs a saddlery shop in Benalla. She is also a horse seller and the mother of an international equestrian competitor, Emma Smith. Their business has dropped back by 75 per cent -- I repeat, 75 per cent. I have also had individuals such as Jennifer Bird and Bernadette Hern contact me. Rosie Rae contacted me on behalf of the Mansfield Show society, as well as Steve Baird, who, along with his wife, Kathy, conducts horse riding on the magnificent Bogong High Plains.

The request is quite simple. What we are asking for is that the Minister for Agriculture extend the period of eligibility for grants to show societies and other not-for-profit organisations to ensure that upcoming shows such as those at Mansfield and Alexandra -- and, I believe, Heathcote and Echuca -- will all be able to claim for the cost of conducting their events and for

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the loss of profits caused by the outbreak of [equine influenza](#). I also request that the minister turn his attention to increasing the availability of vaccine and support for other businesses, families and individuals severely impacted by [equine influenza](#).