



**Australian Government**  
**Biosecurity Australia**

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3 November 2006

**BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA POLICY MEMORANDUM 2006/31**

**TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT IMPORTATION OF HORSES FROM MACAU AND  
THE RETURN OF AUSTRALIAN HORSES FROM MACAU**

This Biosecurity Australia Policy Memorandum (BAPM) seeks stakeholder comments on proposed quarantine policies for the temporary and permanent importation of horses from Macau and for the return of Australian horses from Macau after participation in international events. We would welcome stakeholder comments by 4 December 2006.

Currently there are no quarantine conditions for the direct importation of horses from Macau or for the return of Australian horses after competing in Macau. Macau permanently imports horses primarily from Australia and New Zealand, with smaller numbers sourced from the United States, Europe and South America.

Thoroughbred racing, essentially the only equine industry in Macau, is managed under strict quarantine and animal health requirements administered by the Macau government authorities. In July 2000, Macau government authorities requested the establishment of protocols for the importation of horses into Australia from Macau. The Macau Jockey Club (MJC) has also expressed interest in the possibility of racing their horses in Australia. There is also interest from Australia to race horses in Macau.

In response to these requests, Biosecurity Australia has undertaken a review of the existing policy relating to the importation of horses to assess the biosecurity risks associated with the importation of horses from Macau. The review takes into account the latest available scientific information, the good equine health status of Macau including its management of race horses, and information gathered during a visit by Biosecurity Australia to Macau in February 2006. The visit included meetings with Government veterinary officials and inspection of facilities and operational procedures at the MJC.

Draft import conditions have been developed from the information gathered. These are based principally on the existing policy for the importation of horses from Hong Kong, where horses are kept under similar conditions. The proposed requirements also take account of those developed for the recently finalised requirements for the importation of horses from the United Arab Emirates. The conditions recognise factors unique to the nature of the equine industry in Macau, including the geographic location of the industry and facilities, and the quarantine and animal health arrangements.

Further background on the horse industry in Macau is at Attachment A. Draft conditions for the permanent importation of horses from Macau are at Attachment B; draft conditions for the temporary importation of horses from Macau for international racing are at Attachment C; and draft conditions for the return of Australian horses from Macau after international races are at Attachment D.

The proposed conditions include pre-export and post-arrival quarantine periods, testing for certain equine diseases, treatments, vaccination, and declarations by official veterinarians of disease freedom and acceptable health status of horses prior to departure from Macau.

### **Next steps**

Biosecurity Australia would welcome your comments on the attached proposed conditions by 4 December 2006. We will take into account stakeholder comments as we finalise the policy review.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should notify the contact officer listed below. Alternatively, if you wish to be removed from the distribution list, please advise the contact officer.

Information on import risk analyses and policy reviews being conducted by Biosecurity Australia is available on the Internet at [www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au](http://www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au).

### **Confidentiality**

Stakeholders are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to policy memoranda will be publicly available and may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports on the subject matter of the memoranda.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reveal the identity of a respondent unless a request for anonymity accompanies the submission. Where a request for anonymity does not accompany the submission the respondent will be taken to have consented to the disclosure of his or her identity for the purposes of Information Privacy Principle 11 of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

The contents of the submission will not be treated as confidential unless the submission is marked 'confidential' and they are capable of being classified as such in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

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## **BACKGROUND**

Thoroughbred racing has been built into a high profile industry in the Macau Special Administrative Region\* of the People's Republic of China (PRC) over the past twenty years, with strong legislative control from the Macau Government. It is the only equine industry in Macau apart from a small riding school, comprising 6 retired racehorses on another island (Coloane Island). Horses are permanently imported primarily from Australia and New Zealand, with smaller numbers sourced from the United States, Europe and South America. Horses from Macau race in Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong. There are protocols for horses to go to the European Union and the United States of America but no exports have occurred to July 2006.

Macau Government authorities requested in July 2000 'the establishment of protocols for the importation of horses into Australia from Macau'. Macau Jockey Club (MJC) trainers and owners have expressed interest in the possibility of racing their horses in Australia and in July 2001, the Senior Veterinary Surgeon of the MJC provided information to Biosecurity Australia in support of their proposal including

- . an overview of Macau and its resident horse population;
- . health certification for the permanent importation of registered horses into Macau
- . certification for the return of registered horses into Macau after temporary export for racing in the United Arab Emirates and Singapore; and
- . MJC standard operating procedures for the officially approved quarantine isolation facility.

The MJC is also interested in conditions to allow horses to return to Australia at the completion of their racing careers. There are few options for the management of retired racehorse in Macau and many are exported to the People's Republic of China (PRC). The proposed conditions will allow the permanent importation of these horses into Australia.

To assess these and other relevant considerations prior to drafting conditions, a representative from Biosecurity Australia visited Macau in February 2006 to meet with veterinary officials of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau and to inspect facilities and operational procedures at the MJC.

Geographically Macau provides a region for an equine industry sequestered from any other equine activities in the PRC. Macau has a total land frontier with China of approximately 300 metres, and border posts are under tight surveillance such that animal movements across them are well supervised and import restrictions enforced. Legislative control over equine health is currently based on understandings between the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau of the Macau Special Administrative Region and the MJC; proposed new legislation will ultimately vest this control in the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau.

The proposed conditions recognise factors unique to the segregated nature of the equine industry in Macau:

- . the racing industry is the only equine industry in Macau, situated on the island of Taipa; horses have no contact with any other equines except those officially imported to the MJC. There is a small riding school of six retired racehorses from the MJC, operating for members

only on Coloane Island. MJC veterinarians attend and officially control all equine health matters for the Coloane Riding School

- . horses are imported to Macau under strict quarantine conditions, requiring testing with negative results where applicable, for vesicular stomatitis, equine infectious anaemia, equine viral arteritis, glanders, dourine, piroplasmosis and contagious equine metritis and disease status verification by exporting countries
- . competent veterinary supervision which ensures maintenance of the existing health status of horses at the MJC
- . horses in Macau are housed well beyond the limits for mechanical transmission of vector borne diseases of horses which may exist in the adjoining PRC. There is no opportunity for uncontrolled entry of horses or other livestock to the MJC compound
- . stabling facilities and equine management operations are unsuitable for the survival of ticks
- . all horses in Macau are regularly vaccinated for Japanese encephalitis and equine influenza
- . adequate isolation and training facilities are available on-course, so that movement of horses off site is not required for these activities, reducing the potential for quarantine breakdown.

\* Macau, a Portuguese colony since the 16th Century, became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC on 20 December 1999. The Basic Law of the Macau SAR, promulgated by the President of the PRC in 1993 “authorises the Macao SAR to exercise a high degree of autonomy and enjoy executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication, in accordance with the provisions of this Law”. The Instituto Para os Assuntos Cívicos e Municipais (IACM - Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau), within the Gabinete da Secretária para Administração e Justiça (Department of Administration and Justice) administers legislation controlling animals and animal health in Macau.