



# equine influenza and the Centennial Parklands Equestrian Centre

## fact sheet

The following background information is provided for better understanding of the Equine Influenza outbreak of 2007, how it impacted upon the Centennial Parklands Equestrian Centre (CPEC), what went on behind the scenes at CPEC at the time, and what has happened since the quarantine period was lifted.

### What is equine influenza?

Equine influenza (EI) is an acute, highly contagious, viral disease which can cause rapidly spreading outbreaks of respiratory disease in horses and other equine species. EI is exotic to Australia and has had a major impact on the Australian horse industry.

Humans do not get infected with EI, however humans can physically carry the virus on their skin, hair, clothing and shoes, and can therefore transfer the virus between horses. The virus can also be physically carried on equipment and vehicles.

The main clinical signs of EI are usually a sudden increase in temperature (38.5°C or higher); a deep, dry, hacking cough; and a watery nasal discharge, which may later become mucopurulent. Other signs can include depression, loss of appetite, laboured breathing, and muscle pain and stiffness.

Source: *Department of Primary Industries website*

### Overview of CPEC

CPEC, located in Moore Park, houses up to 200 horses for recreational purposes, with a number of horses competing in local, state and national events.

The Centre operates seven days a week with several equine-related businesses, including horse riding schools and related services (such as veterinary services), as well as more than 100 private clients.

Visit: [www.cpequestrian.com.au](http://www.cpequestrian.com.au) for further information.

### Overview of the Outbreak

In August 2007, the first cases of EI were allegedly detected at the Eastern Creek Quarantine Facility (although it is important to note that the causes and timeline of the outbreak spread are currently being investigated as part of the Australian Government's EI Inquiry).

The first signs of respiratory illness at CPEC were noticed on 23 August 2007. Tests on these horses resulted in a positive reading for EI and the Centre was immediately declared a quarantine zone.



*CPEC and DPI staff following the lifting of the quarantine period*



Under NSW legislation, management of sites placed under such quarantine conditions passes to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). This includes establishment of protocols regarding disinfection, visitation, horse movement and handling and public communication.

The quarantine period at CPEC was lifted on 12 October 2007, however movement of horses was restricted to being within the boundaries of Centennial Parklands. Permits were still required to move horses into or out of the Parklands.

While DPI biosecurity measures were removed, Centennial Parklands now has its own biosecurity standards in place in accordance with the strict DPI standards.

On 28 February 2008, the Minister for Primary Industries, Ian McDonald, announced that: "...horse flu has now been eradicated from NSW". The only remaining requirement was that: "to move a horse prior notification [is required] with a Travelling Horse Statement (THS) and event registration". Information on this can be found on the DPI website.

More than 47,000 horses on 6,000 properties have now recovered from EI infection.

### **Behind the scenes at CPEC**

Behind the closed gates of CPEC there was much activity. As with humans, the older horses seemed to suffer worst. There are several horses that were in their twenties and which battled to recover. Two were rushed to Randwick Equine Centre—one had to undergo colic surgery and the other had to be on a drip for four days. Both horses recovered fully.

Staff and riding schools were working around the clock to care for the horses and control further spreading of the virus. Extreme hygiene measures had to be implemented due to the fragility of the disease. Strict biosecurity measures were implemented for people entering and leaving the property and no horse or vehicle movements were permitted.



*DPI staff test a horse during the quarantine period*

Dee Vodden, CPEC Manager, reported that: "Throughout the six week quarantine period, everyone became exhausted from trying to juggle work, family and caring for their horses."

Horse feed deliveries, cleaning and maintenance schedules, and the removal of horse manure and waste from the Centre had to be tightly controlled.

On Friday 5 October, tests carried out on all the horses in quarantine confirmed the end of this quarantine period, and the horses gradually moving back to the Park for daily exercise.

The Trust and the CPEC management team would like to extend their thanks and congratulations to all those impacted by the EI for their cooperation and patience, especially the staff from the DPI.

### **Recovery mode for CPEC**

Although the effects of the EI have passed at CPEC, the impact on the equestrian businesses, the private clients and their horses will be felt for some time.

In October 2007, the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon Graham West MP, provided a \$50,000 grant for a comprehensive marketing campaign to assist rebuilding the Centre. This included a community day on 9 December 2007, with a range of horse related activities, especially for families.



The occupancy rate at CPEC, down to around 50 per cent immediately after the quarantine period was lifted, has risen to around 80 per cent. Additionally, the riding schools have reported that business has risen to pre-quarantine levels during the recent school holiday programs.

**Further information**

For further information on booking a horse ride or lesson, stabling or other equine-related services at CPEC, please visit [www.cpequestrian.com.au](http://www.cpequestrian.com.au) or phone (02) 9332 2809.

For up-to-date information on the EI outbreak and requirements regarding horse movements in NSW, visit: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au).

For information on the EI Inquiry, visit: [www.equineinfluenzainquiry.gov.au](http://www.equineinfluenzainquiry.gov.au).