Summary of recommendations

The AVA is proposing a number of recommendations to safeguard Australia’s animal industries, prevent infectious diseases, and ensure healthy communities:

Biosecurity protection for animal industries

The Beale Review into Biosecurity and Quarantine identified serious deficiencies in our national defences against animal and plant diseases, and recommended that the Commonwealth should increase its biosecurity investment.

- The AVA is recommending that there is a commitment to the ongoing annual provision of $260 million to fund all of the recommendations of the Beale Review.

- The AVA is recommending that the Commonwealth Government establishes a National Agreement on Biosecurity to link border and post-border activities.

- The AVA is recommending that the Commonwealth Government commits a further $225 million in its first term for investment in infrastructure and IT systems to support Australia’s biosecurity efforts.

Responding to infectious diseases

Around 75 per cent of new and emerging human diseases are zoonoses. These emerging threats, which include Hendra virus, Nipah virus, Menangle virus and avian influenza, require a coordinated response.

- The AVA is recommending that the Commonwealth Government establish and fund an Australian Centre for Emerging Infectious Diseases to enable the nation to deal with domestic and imported emerging disease threats.

(This new centre should be based on collaboration between major animal and human disease research and diagnostic centres, and will increase our ability to respond effectively to a major outbreak of a new disease.)

- The AVA is recommending that there is an industry wide levy established to enable the horse industry to join the Emergency Disease Response Agreement and effectively respond to disease situations like the equine influenza outbreak.

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Healthy communities

Food safety and security - Australia’s standing as a major food producer for both domestic and export markets are reliant on strong biosecurity measures.

- The AVA is recommending full funding of the Beale Review into Biosecurity and Quarantine to safeguard our world-class local and export food industries.

Animal Welfare – the AVA vision, mission and values are based on the pre-eminence of animal welfare. Veterinarians are strong advocates for animal welfare and are best placed to ensure the welfare of domestic companion and production animals.

The AVA believes the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy is a vital Commonwealth initiative to ensure the best possible outcomes for all Australian animal populations.

- The AVA is recommending that the Commonwealth Government commits to the ongoing funding of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.

Rural communities – veterinarians are crucial members of many Australian local communities and help to ensure food safety, assist farmers increase production, help promote the welfare of farm animals, and detect and respond to outbreaks of emergency animal diseases.

Many rural communities are affected by the shortages of rural veterinarians caused by an inability to retain qualified practitioners in rural communities. The AVA believes that Australia needs an incentive scheme to encourage young veterinarians to stay and settle in rural areas.

- The AVA is recommending there is a commitment from the Commonwealth Government to establish a debt-based incentive program for veterinary graduates who commit to working in rural and regional Australia for extended periods.