

AUSTRALIAN VETERINARY EMERGENCY PLAN

AUSVETPLAN

1996

Operational Procedures Manual

Public relations

AUSVETPLAN is a series of technical response plans that describe the proposed Australian approach to an exotic animal disease incursion. The documents provide guidance based on sound analysis, linking policy, strategies, implementation, coordination and emergency-management plans.

Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand

This Operational Procedures Manual forms part of:

AUSVETPLAN Edition 2.0, 1996

[AUSVETPLAN Edition 1.0, was published in 1991]

This document will be reviewed regularly. Suggestions and recommendations for amendments should be forwarded to the AUSVETPLAN Coordinator (see Preface).

Record of amendments to this manual:

There are occasional minor differences in the page breaks between the paper and this electronic version which we can unfortunately not avoid.

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PREFACE

This **Operational Procedures Manual for Public Relations** is an integral part of the **Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan**, or AUSVETPLAN (Edition 2.0). The manual is designed to ensure the fast and effective management of public relations and media liaison at the local, State, national and international levels. In the event of an impending or declared exotic disease emergency, this would involve:

- a system to handle an accurate and up-to-date *outflow* of information to the media and public; and
- readily accessible points of contact for handling *incoming* requests for information from the media and the public.

This manual sets out the disease control procedures which were approved in February 1991 by the then Australian Agricultural Council, out-of-session at meeting 135, for use in an animal health emergency in Australia. It has been upgraded and approved by the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand (ARMCANZ) out-of-session in January 1996.

Detailed instructions for field implementation of the strategies are contained in the other AUSVETPLAN **Operational Procedures Manuals** and the **Management Manuals**. Cross-references to strategies, manuals and other AUSVETPLAN documents are expressed in the form:

Document Name, Section no.

For example, **Decontamination Manual, Section 3**.

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1 WHAT EXACTLY IS 'PUBLIC RELATIONS'?

Public relations (PR) is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.

1.1 Why is PR important in an exotic disease emergency?

Public reaction to an exotic disease outbreak in Australia will inevitably be characterised by a sense of urgency with the situation perceived as potentially damaging or perilous.

Any report of a possible animal disease outbreak in Australia will attract media interest. An actual outbreak of a disease such as *foot-and-mouth disease*, *rabies* or *rinderpest* will be front-page news across the country and in many overseas countries. Effective management of public relations, especially media liaison, at such a time will be crucial to a speedy and satisfactory outcome to the AUSVETPLAN response to the emergency and in the maintenance and rebuilding of consumer confidence in the safety of livestock-based products.

In such an emergency people will fear that something sinister is happening over which they have little or no control. This fear will be heightened by a lack of precise information — a situation that is quite normal at the start of any outbreak. Professionals are trained to cope dispassionately with such ambiguity but it can be terrifying for ordinary citizens. People who are in the dark about the nature and effect of some strange and powerful disease, quite naturally will fear the worst for themselves, their children, their animals and their livelihoods. They could react quite strongly against all Australian livestock and livestock-based products.

Public relations aimed at satisfying the legitimate demands of the public and media for information will go a long way towards calming anxiety based on ignorance and fear. PR will also help to build the public confidence and media cooperation upon which the successful completion of the emergency response will depend. Proper application of the basic principles of public relations in such a situation will ensure the public understands and appreciates the need for emergency procedures that may temporarily have an adverse impact upon them. An informed and supportive community, rather than angry and distressed individuals, will ultimately enhance efforts to deal with the emergency.

During the emergency, and for some time afterwards, public relations efforts will also be crucial in the rebuilding of domestic and international consumer confidence in Australian livestock and livestock-based products.

As with advance planning for eradication and compensation, it is also essential to have in place advance planning for PR. This includes:

- well planned and rehearsed PR strategies;
- easily accessible PR hardware, software and stores; and
- staff trained in PR essentials.

In an emergency there are a number of channels through which communication back and forth between the various 'publics' can be managed. Among these are:

- direct contact with affected or concerned individuals in person or by phone, fax or mail;

- group meetings with numbers of people; and
- the news media.

In an atmosphere of public crisis, the news media can become either part of the solution to the problem or (if mishandled) part of the crisis. The cultivation of a professional working relationship with the media under these stressful conditions is therefore a top priority PR task.

1.2 Where does PR fit in?

Australia's key policies for dealing with the threat of exotic animal diseases are summarised below.

Before any outbreak:

- *prevention* through strict quarantine and international disease intelligence;
- *regulation* of domestic swill feeding and other possible means of transmission;
- *agreement* among Commonwealth/State/Territory governments on
 - the AUSVETPLAN eradication plan,
 - which disease threats are important enough to be in AUSVETPLAN, and
 - the cost-sharing arrangements for eradication and compensation costs for certain major exotic diseases;
- *enhanced preparedness* through training exercises, workshops and overseas study; and
- **public relations** to raise awareness of signs the public should look for and what to do.

In the event of an outbreak:

- *coordination* of Commonwealth, State and Territory responses to exotic animal disease emergencies through the Consultative Committee on Exotic Animal Diseases (CCEAD);
- *compensation* for eligible producers; and
- **public relations** to provide accurate information and give clear directions.

1.3 Exotic disease policy — who decides what?

1.3.1 Long-term decision making

To formulate and coordinate long-term policy for animal health in Australia, including issues relating to exotic animal diseases, the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industries and Energy and all State and Territory ministers responsible for agriculture (as well as the New Zealand minister) regularly meet as the *Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand* (ARMCANZ).

ARMCANZ is advised by several joint Commonwealth/State/Territory committees of senior public servants, veterinarians and scientists. These government advisory bodies

include the *Exotic Diseases Sub-Committee* (EDSC) and its parent body, the *Animal Health Committee* (AHC).

1.3.2 Emergency decision making

In a threatened or actual exotic animal disease emergency, the main advisory body to Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers responsible for agriculture is the *Consultative Committee on Exotic Animal Diseases* (CCEAD) consisting of the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), all State and Territory CVOs, the Head of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) and the Chief of the CSIRO Division of Animal Health.

In an exotic disease emergency CCEAD advises ministers whether:

- there is a confirmed incursion into Australia of an exotic animal disease;
- the disease can be eradicated; and, for the specified diseases,
- the Commonwealth/State cost-sharing agreement should be invoked to eradicate the disease and compensate farmers.

In an exotic animal disease emergency, the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy (DPIE) activates its Animal Health and Welfare Management Committee, which, through the DPIE secretary, reports to the Commonwealth minister.

In the State or Territory of an outbreak, the respective State/Territory CVO is the overall officer-in-charge of emergency operations that have been agreed to by CCEAD and endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers. In the event of an outbreak in more than one State or Territory, the respective State and Territory CVOs are in charge of emergency operations in their respective areas with coordination being provided by the Australian CVO as agreed by CCEAD.

1.3.3 Public relations decision making

In the event of an exotic disease emergency, public relations will be handled at the local, State/Territory and national levels by designated personnel as follows:

- a *local PR officer* — at the local disease control centre (LDCC);
- a *State/Territory PR manager* — at the State/Territory disease control headquarters (SDCHQ); and
- a *Commonwealth PR coordinator* — at the national disease control headquarters (NDCHQ).

On suspicion that there may be an exotic animal disease incident, it is usual for the CVO for the affected State/Territory to contact the Australian CVO in Canberra to request a telephone conference of the CCEAD. Between that time and the actual initial teleconference of CCEAD, it is important for the State/Territory PR manager in the affected State/Territory to be closely involved with the CVO.

During this crucial early phase the CVO may well have also authorised the activation of a State/Territory disease control headquarters (SDCHQ), usually in the State/Territory capital, and the establishment of a local disease control centre (LDCC) near the site of the suspected outbreak. In collaboration with the CVO and the LDCC controller (and their respective technical and resource managers), the State/Territory PR manager will need to see that the staffing and equipping of both the SDCHQ and the LDCC for their effective PR functioning are undertaken in accordance with the suggestions outlined in Section 1.5.

1.3.4 Initial media statement

During this crucial early phase it is also important for the State/Territory PR manager, in collaboration with the CVO and the State/Territory's minister's media adviser, to draft an initial media statement, usually in the name of the State/Territory minister for agriculture/primary industry. After clearance, but before any distribution occurs, the draft should immediately be faxed to the AHC secretariat in Canberra in time for it to be on-faxed to all CCEAD members with the agenda before the initial CCEAD teleconference.

It is not recommended, but it may be necessary, for the State/Territory PR manager to issue a 'holding' release in advance of the initial CCEAD teleconference (to give those media who have sniffed out that something is afoot, a story to run with). Such 'holding' releases (in advance of CCEAD or SDCHQ receiving a positive diagnosis) should be couched in non-alarmist terms such as:

The department regularly monitors the animal health status of commercial flocks and herds in (State/Territory). As a part of this program, a routine investigation is under way involving several samples taken yesterday in (vague part of State/Territory). Such routine monitoring is regularly undertaken as part of a national program to provide government, industry and consumers with reliable animal health information. During 1994, 127 such screening tests were conducted within (State/Territory). All 127 tests confirmed that a high animal health status was being maintained in (State/Territory). [**NB no suspected disease name and no exact location given**].

When there is enough evidence of a confirmed outbreak, CCEAD usually recommends to Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers that the disease can and should be eradicated, that the cost-sharing agreement should be invoked and that an official media statement be issued. Usually the State or Territory minister for agriculture in the affected State or Territory then makes the initial official announcement containing substantive details about the incident. This can then be used by all parties as a sound basis for public comment.

In the event of a serious outbreak of a multispecies disease such as *rabies* or *foot-and-mouth disease* or a simultaneous outbreak of any exotic animal disease in several States, CCEAD or DPIE may well recommend that the ARMCANZ chairperson (the Commonwealth minister) makes the initial public announcement (because of the grave 'national' significance of such a situation and its serious international trade implications).

If the Commonwealth minister agrees to put out the initial release, it is helpful to have the draft State/Territory material to hand so that the Commonwealth release (relevant for all States/Territories) is consistent with State/Territory releases. However, it is not important whether the initial release is made by the Commonwealth or a State/Territory minister. What is really important is that such an inaugural announcement is accurate and is made quickly. All the best PR intentions can come unstuck if too much delay or debate about protocol leads to unconfirmed stories and outbreak speculation gaining the headlines and influencing public sentiment.

During this initial phase, it is vital for the Commonwealth PR coordinator and the respective State/Territory PR managers to be in regular contact and to exchange copies of draft and final media releases. Together they must impress on CCEAD and on ministerial media advisers the need for a definite official statement to be issued as soon as possible.

This initial announcement (see Appendix 1) usually specifies the general location and extent of the outbreak, the type and virulence of the infective agent, the species of animal affected and whether humans can catch the disease. The initial announcement also sets out the quarantine and movement restrictions which apply and the trace-back arrangements being put into place and whether eradication and compensation assistance is being provided by the Commonwealth and other State and Territory governments under the cost-sharing agreement.

The initial media release should also give a public contact for information (now usually the freecall ***Disease Watch Hotline 1800 675 888***) and be accompanied by a fact sheet that provides pre-approved background information of the disease. These background fact sheets are stored in the **AUSVETPLAN Summary Document**; a sample fact sheet is provided in Appendix 2. These fact sheets can be used for all public information purposes, including being used as attachments to local, State and national media releases *provided* CCEAD has agreed that a public announcement should be made at that time.

1.4 Phases of an exotic disease emergency

1.4.1 The 'Alert' phase

This **Public Relations Manual** comes into immediate effect upon advice of an 'Alert' that an exotic disease outbreak may have occurred.

The State/Territory PR manager, on receipt of advice of an 'Alert', will contact the CVO and the Commonwealth PR coordinator and seek the information necessary to produce a draft ministerial media statement on the situation. The draft should have attached to it a fact sheet relevant to the disease that provides technical details (see Appendix 1 for a sample news release). When the draft is cleared by the CVO and the State/Territory minister's press secretary it is NOT released. It is faxed to the Animal Health Secretariat in Canberra for on-faxing to other CCEAD members before the initial CCEAD teleconference.

The State/Territory PR manager will then proceed to SDCHQ and set up the PR unit and will make arrangements (if deemed appropriate) to set up and staff a LDCC PR unit in the affected area.

When approval is received from CCEAD for a public announcement, an agreed media statement can then be distributed. The CVO and the State/Territory PR manager can then also make the necessary immediate responses to media inquiries.

Depending on the CVO's assessment, State/Territory emergency-management authorities may activate the animal diseases emergency subplan of the State or Territory disaster plan. In this case, the State/Territory PR manager will continue to work through the CVO, but will need to coordinate his/her activities with the State/Territory media officer (whose function is to coordinate all disaster media activity on a State or Territory-wide basis) as well as to continue to liaise with the Commonwealth PR coordinator.

1.4.2 The 'Operational' phase

Once the possible presence of an exotic disease is confirmed, key PR activities are carried out as described briefly below.

Commonwealth PR coordinator:

- attends CCEAD teleconferences, relevant DPIE meetings and provides PR advice;
- coordinates the PR efforts of other Commonwealth agencies;
- coordinates Commonwealth and State/Territory PR strategies when the outbreak extends across more than one State;
- liaises with ministerial media adviser;
- drafts, clears and distributes portfolio releases;
- services national news conferences, Commonwealth parliamentary press gallery and Newsnet; and
- distributes, through the AHC secretariat, draft and final media releases back and forward between State/Territory PR managers, CCEAD and the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industries and Energy.

State/Territory PR manager:

- on arrival at SDCHQ, in consultation with CVO, assesses the need for deployment of additional local PR officers at the LDCC;
- assists local PR officers to become established and provide guidance on their role;
- attends to information gathering and release in accordance with guidelines in Section 2.2 and in collaboration with the Commonwealth PR coordinator; and
- ensures the CVO receives immediate copies of all media-related information released (Commonwealth, State/Territory and overseas) – throughout the emergency the State/Territory PR manager attends to State/Territory PR and media requirements and provides media liaison advice to staff of other participating organisations as required.

Local PR officer:

- registers with the State/Territory PR manager immediately on arrival at the LDCC;
- establishes contact with the LDCC controller and LDCC technical manager;
- manage and assists activities of media representatives at the LDCC or in the field;
- relays information to the State/Territory PR manager for release to the news media;
- maintains regular contact with the State/Territory PR manager.

Further information on the roles of the local, State and Commonwealth PR officers is given in Section 2.

1.4.3 The 'Stand-down' phase

Formally, an exotic animal disease emergency ceases to exist when ARMCANZ, on the advice of CCEAD, decides that eradication measures should be wound up. However, the eradication of an exotic animal disease usually takes some weeks with the restoration of full trading activity in live animals, meat and other livestock products probably taking several months after that (see Section 2.3.4).

During the progress towards complete eradication and restoration of full trading, there are a number of 'milestones' that are reached. These events are a good opportunity to communicate with both domestic and international 'publics'.

Such milestones include: the lifting of quarantine; the results of trace-backs being negative; the completing of disinfection on formerly infected farms; the installation of sentinel animals; the restoration of exports from areas of Australia 'zoned' as being clear; formerly infected properties being restocked after the necessary spelling and sentinel period; the formal notification by the Australian CVO to the Office International des

Epizooties (OIE) that the whole of Australia has now met the international standard to be considered 'free' of the exotic disease that caused the outbreak.

By the time most of these milestones are reached, it is likely that LDCCs would have ceased operation and that PR activities would have been devolved by CCEAD to the Australian CVO and the Commonwealth PR coordinator (for issues relating to trade) and to the respective State/Territory CVOs and their PR managers (for issues relating to eradication progress). Following the clearance and coordination procedures outlined earlier, copies of both Commonwealth and State/Territory releases should be sent to the AHC secretariat in Canberra for forwarding to all PR practitioners.

1.5 Contingency plans — the secret of PR success

The staffing, equipment and PR aids required for the successful operation of a PR unit are much the same for the Commonwealth PR coordinator, each State and Territory PR manager and for each LDCC PR unit set up during an emergency.

The Commonwealth PR coordinator and each State and Territory PR manager should ensure that each person likely to be assigned a PR role under AUSVETPLAN in a NDCHQ, a SDCHQ or a LDCC is familiar with their duties by running PR workshops and by assigning staff, on a rotating basis, to exotic disease exercises when they are organised.

The Commonwealth PR coordinator and each State and Territory PR manager should check periodically that he/she is on the list of people set out in his/her department's response plan under AUSVETPLAN as one of the people to be advised immediately there is a suspicion of an exotic animal disease incident. If not already on the list, they should arrange to be placed there and check from time to time that in a departmental re-organisation, or in ignorance of the essential role of PR, the PR manager has not been removed from the contact list.

Immediately following the declaration of an animal disease emergency there may not be time to organise the components essential to a well-run PR unit. These items need to be arranged well in advance and located nearby so that they will be available immediately there is any hint of an exotic animal disease emergency.

The first hours of an exotic disease outbreak will be crucial in establishing a helpful perception among the news media and, subsequently, the community, that the authorities have the capacity to handle the emergency.

For example, the news media once informed of the outbreak, will expect information immediately. Unnecessary delays in getting information to them or contradictory statements made 'on the run' by Commonwealth and State staff will, rightly or wrongly, be quickly interpreted by journalists as a sign of ineptness. This will tarnish future dealings with them.

The Commonwealth PR coordinator and each State and Territory PR manager periodically should check that their department's response plan under AUSVETPLAN contains a list of staff, PR aids and equipment and specifies where it is located for immediate access in the event of an exotic disease alert. Another PR professional would need to be able to step into the role without delay should the PR manager be unavailable. The actual stores and equipment, and the special procedures for after hours access, should also be checked from time to time to see that they are all in working order.

1.5.1 Staffing

In the event of a serious outbreak, the national PR unit and each SDCHQ and LDCC PR unit would require a minimum of three staff to allow for rest and meal breaks on a rotating shift basis to fulfil their 24-hour media liaison functions. Media/PR experience is essential for all staff selected for these roles. The most senior person in terms of experience/and skills should be designated as the PR officer-in-charge.

In addition, for a LDCC PR unit to function adequately, a minimum of three additional front-of-house staff are also required to assist the local PR officer to provide a PR service from the front desk of the LDCC on a 24-hour basis. While not needing experience in media or PR skills, these staff should be chosen for their maturity, knowledge of local conditions and sensitivity to people in distress.

1.5.2 Background material

In advance of an emergency, all PR staff should assemble, or be aware of the location of, suitable display material, brochures, leaflets, data and video clips on animal diseases that pose a major threat to Australia. Master copies for media and public distribution should be kept on file to be ready if needed.

Video clips

The media will require video clips in the professional Betacam format while videos for public use will need to be in VHS. A wide range of exotic disease videos and slides is available from the Communications Section of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) in Geelong.

For television news, Betacam background videos should be in store showing the symptoms farmers and other rural people should look for and how to notify State/Territory veterinary staff (usually via the **1800 675 888 freecall Disease Watch Hotline**). Large coloured maps in the media conference area would also be useful.

Fact sheets

When disaster strikes, both media and the community will want accurate, comprehensive and easily digestible information — fast. Supplies of the AUSVETPLAN disease fact sheets may be copied from the **Summary Document** for general distribution or for attaching to media releases (see Appendix 2)

Maps

Supplies should be prepared of simplified A4-sized, black and white maps of the whole State/Territory and its main regions (sample map, Appendix 4). These should be stylised and clean of all detail except essential towns, rivers and roads so that they can be easily and clearly marked with essential information and photocopied or faxed. Such maps are very useful in demonstrating the quarantined area and the perimeter of the control zone. They are particularly useful in translating the extensive and complicated information on large operational charts into easily understood maps for attaching to media releases, faxing out to affected industries, and as aids to television crews covering the story.

Posters

For farmer meetings, posters should be in stock showing the symptoms farmers and other rural people should look for and how to notify State/Territory veterinary staff — usually the **1800 675 888 freecall Disease Watch Hotline**.

1.5.3 Equipment, stationery and stores

For a national, SDCHQ or LDCC PR unit to function adequately in a serious emergency, it will need to have, or to have immediate access to, the following items.

Equipment

- A fax machine with auto-dialling/faxstream/teletext (or provide full-time secretarial backup).

NB: The Commonwealth PR coordinator has a contract with NEWSNET for faxing news releases to a wide range of media outlets in the event of an emergency. State/Territory PR managers can also access this system, should they wish.

- A computer, software and printer that works (if you are an IBM person, this is not the time to try to learn the intricacies of Apple Mac!!). The PC should have the AUSVETPLAN fact sheets loaded and other background exotic disease material. As a backup it would also be wise to have on hand an electric and/or a manual typewriter and possibly also a portable lap-top computer that is compatible with the available printers.
- A radio (fitted with spare batteries), a television set and VCR for monitoring and recording news broadcasts plus at least one small tape recorder to record news conferences and interviews.
- A telephone (preferably with at least two lines) should be installed in the LDCC, PR area for the sole use of the local PR officer.

The Commonwealth PR coordinator, State/Territory PR managers and local PR officers should have alpha-numeric pagers and wear them on a 24-hour basis during the emergency (or they should have portable phones and/or radios).

- In an LDCC, an area for regular or impromptu media conferences should be set up in or near the LDCC equipped with tables and chairs, a simple backdrop for TV crew, power points or power boards and several STD-equipped telephones for journalists to phone out, copy or to connect to their modems. For media conferences flowing from the SDCHQ and CCEAD, it may be decided to hold them nearby or to take the conference to State, Territory or Commonwealth parliament buildings to facilitate participation by both the minister and the media from the respective press galleries. If it is decided to set up the media conference facility near the CCEAD or the SDCHQ, it would need a list of equipment similar to that outlined above for an LDCC media conference area.

To ease initial contact with journalists, who may have travelled great distances to the outbreak location, the LDCC media centre should be supplied with a coffee-making facility (especially in winter) as well as a fridge and cool refreshments (especially in summer).

Stationery and stores

- Five-days supply of pre-printed media release letterhead (see Appendix 1).
- Public phone books, the department's internal phone book and a media directory or media contact list containing names, telephone and fax numbers, addresses of chiefs-of-staff (newspapers and television) and news directors (radio).
- Access to a courier service (allow for failure of electronic communication), a photocopier and transport (with petrol cards).

- other supplies, including typing paper, pens, correcting fluid, automatic stapler. Particular attention should be paid to supplies of office consumables like photocopy toner, fax paper, spare ribbons, batteries and so on (in remote areas, a shortage of any of these consumables could seriously delay operations).

2 WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

At all levels in an emergency, PR should be supervised by experienced PR professionals, assisted by competent staff. Listed here are the main PR responsibilities of those people in *supervisory PR roles* at the local, State/Territory and Commonwealth levels.

Role	Local PR officer	State/Territory PR manager	Commonwealth PR coordinator
Area of responsibility	With LDCC controller and technical manager decide on a proactive local public information program and a response strategy for reacting to media and other demands; establish local PR priorities. NB: Implement only after State/ Territory PR manager agrees	Advise CVO, SDCHQ director, technical manager and other senior departmental and ministerial staff on PR issues. Attend CCEAD meetings (if in the affected State)	Attend meetings of CCEAD and DPIE committees Advise senior DPIE and ministerial staff on PR issues
Spokesperson	Establish who is local media spokesperson; advise them on strategy	Establish who is main State/Territory media spokesperson; advise them on strategy	Establish who is main Cwltth media spokesperson; advise them on strategy
Coordination	Liaise with State/Territory PR manager, LDCC controller and LDCC technical manager	Liaise with Cwltth PR coordinator and State/Territory disaster PR coordinator Advise and supervise local PR officer/s	Liaise with State/Territory PR manager(s) Liaise with PR managers of DFAT, AQIS, AAHL, Emergency Management Australia and other Cwltth agencies
Set up PR units	Set up LDCC media room; equip, test	Set up SDCHQ media unit and media conference room	Set up National Disease Control HQ media unit and media conference room
Media statements & conferences	Organise front-of-house services for personal and telephone callers Draft local media statements (but not containing policy; see Section 2.1), handouts, maps and other public and media material; clear with LDCC technical manager; distribute Assist LDCC controller or technical manager at media conferences	Advise and supervise other SDCHQ PR and front-of-house staff Draft initial ministerial media statement; clear with State/Territory CVO; fax to AHC, Canberra for CCEAD clearance; distribute final version Draft, clear and distribute subsequent media statements, videos, maps, fact sheets and other public and media information material Organise media conferences	Advise and supervise other NDCHQ PR and front-of-house staff Draft, clear and distribute media statements, photographs, videos, maps, fact sheets and other public and media information material Organise media conferences Activate and use the NEWSNET, INTERNET and DPIE information distribution systems
Liaison with interest groups	Liaise with local industry and interest groups	Liaise with State industry and interest groups	Liaise with national industry and interest groups

2.1 The role of the local PR officer

At the start of an exotic disease emergency, each local PR officer should read this section of the manual as a quick refresher as to precisely what their AUSVETPLAN role is. They should also read the department's *local PR officer's job card or role description*. Taking a few minutes to read these documents could make the difference between success and distress in the whole PR effort.

NB: *If the area of the suspected or confirmed outbreak is close to a State/Territory capital, the roles of the local PR officer and the State/Territory PR manager could well be combined into the one job. If that is the case, the role specified here for the local PR officer would be added to the a job description for the State/Territory PR manager given in Section 2.2.*

2.1.1 What to do before leaving for the LDCC

- *The first priority* will be to open lines of communication with the LDCC controller and the State/Territory PR manager and arrange a system (fax, E-mail, courier — whatever is quick, reliable and works) for the swift carriage back and forth to the SDCHQ of draft and cleared media and public announcements.
- *The second priority* is to check the list of stores, PR aids and equipment that will be needed at the LDCC. These are outlined in Section 1.5. If it is not clear that these will be available at the LDCC, they must be brought.
- *Thirdly*, copies of any Commonwealth, State, Territory or joint media releases that have been issued on the emergency to date must be obtained.

2.1.2 What NOT to do on arrival at the LDCC

- It is vital to remember that in an exotic animal disease emergency there is no such thing as a LOCAL media release or interview. On taking office, no matter how hard pressed, DO NOT put out any releases, give or arrange any interviews or answer any media questions until the State/Territory PR manager gives approval for public announcements to begin (offer to get back to them very soon).
- While the local PR officer has been travelling to the LDCC and setting up shop, the CCEAD, the State/Territory PR manager as well as Commonwealth, State and Territory departments and ministers and a range of Commonwealth agencies that deal with trade and international veterinary issues will have been urgently deciding a coordinated national response to the issue. Notification papers setting out the exact nature of the problem and the national plan of action to combat the incursion will have been prepared and cabled to Australia's main trading partners, overseas and embassies and official international veterinary organisations.
- **At the start it is therefore vital to clear all proposed media actions and releases with the State/Territory PR manager.** The last thing needed is for a 'local' release, innocently aimed at, say, local farmers about stock movement restrictions, to be picked up by AAP, 'beaten up' overseas, and for it to make the front pages of, for example, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the *Washington Post* or the *London Times* and frighten overseas representatives and trading partners. The official version of events will be startling enough — it is important not to add to the stress of our overseas

representatives by ignoring the fact that in an exotic disease situation ALL media releases are international.

- That does not mean that is no place for a local release — quite the contrary — provided that the local plan of action is cleared by the State/Territory PR manager and the LDCC controller, there is a very important role for the local PR officer.

2.1.3 What to do on arrival at the LDCC

- Open lines of communication with the LDCC controller, the LDCC technical manager and your State/Territory PR manager.
- Set up the PR area. It is advisable for a separate PR room to be set up close to, *but not physically in*, the actual LDCC operations room. This is so that media representatives can be invited into, or can invite themselves into, the LDCC PR room without compromising the overall security of the LDCC. The PR room should also be located close to whatever area is to be used for media conferences.
- The PR room should have a telephone with at least two lines, a word processor, access to a printer, a fax and a photocopier and an adequate supplies of paper and other PR essentials. A mobile phone would also be useful.
- All industry, media and essential services contact lists should be on hand (public phone books, personal phone lists, internal departmental phone lists, media guides, faxmaster lists, address label lists, and so on).
- Arrangements should be made to immediately obtain a copy of all official media releases as they become available from Canberra or your State/Territory capital. Once the initial official release is received, a copy should be given immediately to the LDCC controller. This release will become the basis for local releases, for briefing local and visiting media and for responding to public request for information.

In this context it will be important, in consultation with the LDCC controller, LDCC technical manager and your State/Territory PR manager, to initiate a proactive PR agenda.

2.1.4 LDCC PR priorities — proactive

A lot of the time in the LDCC the PR area will be on the ‘back foot’ responding to other people’s agendas — the media, concerned citizens, the State/Territory PR manager and so on. Despite this it is important to establish, in collaboration with the LDCC controller and the technical manager, **a proactive LDCC PR agenda as a top priority** and supervise its implementation by the LDCC PR unit. The messages to be marketed proactively could relate to stock movement restrictions and similar local issues about which local producers, processors and the general public need to have accurate and up-to-date information.

To be an effective supervisor, it may be necessary to delegate some of the more ‘glamorous’ media-servicing work to other LDCC PR officers. If this work is delegated, the less experienced LDCC PR officers will need supervision to see that they do not get ‘seduced’ into becoming too involved with the media by the urgency, bright lights and glamour and forget the main LDCC proactive PR agenda.

The main opportunities for proactive local PR activities will be through the communication channels discussed briefly below.

- *Representatives* of the local and State farmer organisations, processors, stock agents, local government officials and any other VIPs that drop in or make contact can be important channels of informal communication at the local level. However, to conserve LDCC resources, it will be necessary to concentrate on providing only factual information to these representatives. If they want to go into, or debate, policy issues, refer them to the State/Territory PR manager, especially if they are phoning from the State/Territory capital. If they want to go into trade aspects, refer them to the Commonwealth PR coordinator in Canberra. Do not underestimate the capacity of these representatives to influence public opinion — they are as important in the PR equation as the mass media and need to be managed sensitively.
- *Liaison with owners of infected properties* — also an important PR function. At such a time the owner would be under considerable stress and some advice on what to say (and not to say) if approached by the media would be of considerable assistance and could save having to later correct misinformation in the media based on a flustered property owner not responding appropriately to media demands.
- *Concerned citizens* — it is a PR essential to have front-of-house staff at the LDCC to handle visits and telephone calls by concerned citizens. As far as is practicable these worried people must have their information needs satisfied locally by ‘front-of-house’ staff who are well equipped with handouts, good information and calm empathy for people in distress. Front-of-house staff should also know how to refer enquirers to the right person in the LDCC or the SDCHQ for specialised assistance.
- *Disease Watch Hotline [1800 675 888]* — use the local media to advertise the freecall hotline as the number for people to call to report animals with signs of exotic disease or for the latest information on stock movement restrictions. Check with the State/Territory PR manager that there are actually enough qualified people at the other end of the line to answer callers. [NB The availability of this service may vary from State to State.]
- *Local media release* — another important local PR tool is the local media release or interviews with the local press, specialist rural media such as the *Country Hour* and the rural weeklies.
- *Paid advertisements* could also be used in the local papers to show the exact location of quarantine and control areas.
- *Community service announcements* — the nearest regional commercial TV and radio stations could also be approached to see if they will run free announcements concerning the outbreak. (Commonwealth Government commercial TV and radio licences specify a certain amount of time for free announcements for community organisations). These announcements, usually 30 seconds to 1 minute long, could be produced by the station. In this way, the CVO would achieve excellent public communication in a direct and succinct manner.
- *Direct mail* — don’t forget non-media channels such as direct mail. A local printer could run off several thousand letters to producers or householders and Australia Post could be asked to deliver them the next day to all people within a postcode area as ‘To the Householder’ or ‘To the Rural Householder’ mail.
- *Public meetings* (organised by the local PR unit or by local groups) can be addressed by the LDCC controller or the LDCC technical manager and can be useful *provided*

there is little chance of the meeting being hijacked by someone with an axe to grind, eg such as a politician of a different political persuasion to the minister. *Be especially careful* of public meetings that are likely to be attended by the media — they love a good donnybrook but your LDCC controller may not! If the meeting looks likely to be bad for PR, advise LDCC representatives to avoid it.

The time taken up dealing with VIPs, local politicians, distressed farmers, lost children etc, should not be underestimated. Backup may be necessary if the situation worsens.

2.1.5 LDCC PR priorities — reactive

While it is suggested that local PR officers should concentrate, as their top PR priority, on the proactive communication of LDCC PR messages, media representatives have a knack of abruptly and unilaterally rearranging the most meticulously crafted PR agenda. **EXPECT THIS TO HAPPEN.** Don't fight it and waste energy by trying to control the media. Especially, don't try to put them in their proper place at 'Priority 7' on your agenda — you'll fail. They all have their own agendas and see you (a 'public' servant) as being there to help them fulfil that; they really don't care in the least about your PR agenda!

No matter how busy you are, expect to have to promptly service media representatives when they appear or call and be prepared to go with the flow — **their flow** — and you'll succeed. Their agenda will be to get a top story — as quickly as possible. As far as is possible within the LDCC resources, help them to achieve that goal and you will also succeed at your main PR goal: good media liaison and well-informed stories in the media. It may be necessary to channel them gently into media conferences at set times or to arrange media pools for property visits but ignore, fight or try to dominate the media and they will do their own thing anyway, probably breaking quarantine in the process and all chance of exerting any influence over story content will be lost.

Motto: *He profits most who servest best.*

The types of media demands that will need to be met *and still also fulfilling the main priority of proactive local public information activities* include the following.

The TV crews and photographers who want pictures

This could well involve issues of quarantine. It would be best to give these people immediate service and top priority. Take charge of their agendas because if you don't they could well breach quarantine and get all sorts of wrong angles. Offer to provide a 'guide' to 'assist' them get a good story. This could be done one at a time (if staffing resources permit) or offer to take them collectively at a pre-arranged time (with as little delay as possible) to where the action is.

You could also offer to provide Betacam videos locally (if you have remembered to bring them with you) or from the PR Betacam library in your department's head office.

Another option is a 'media pool', ie arrange for one of the crew to get action footage for TV, and another to get still pictures on behalf of all media and for it to be shared. With this approach you will be helping the media and also supervising where they go and influencing the content of their stories.

Media who arrive at the LDCC and want 'on the record' interviews

Again, if there are enough staffing resources and the pressure is not too great, it may be appropriate to service (and manage) them one at a time. However, it is more likely that they will have to be dealt with collectively.

For this it may be necessary to work in close collaboration with the State/Territory PR manager, the LDCC controller and the LDCC technical manager. You will need to agree on who is to be the main spokesperson and whether he/she will be from the LDCC or the SDCHQ. Because of the demands on the time of the LDCC controller it could well be that all parties would nominate the technical manager as the best person to act as the media spokesperson at the LDCC.

NB: It is dangerous to have more than one spokesperson per State/Territory — the media can play one off against the other—‘But your Head Office people are saying this morning that . . . ’

The media will want someone ‘in authority’ so the demands on the time of the LDCC controller or the technical manager will be considerable. In a serious outbreak it would therefore be advisable to attempt to channel all interview requests into one or two media conferences a day held by the technical manager and timed to follow one of the regular situation updates. This would apply to media conferences held either at the LDCC or in the State/Territory capital. Advance warning of the times of these briefings could also help the media.

Media who telephone from out of town

Again, it depends on how hard-pressed the local PR officer, the LDCC controller and the Technical manager are and what issues the media want to go into.

If they want to cover eradication and stock movement issues and there is time to arrange interviews, do so. If they want to go into policy issues, refer them to the State/Territory PR manager, especially if they are ringing from the State/Territory capital. If they want to go into trade aspects, refer them to the Commonwealth PR coordinator in Canberra.

2.1.6 LDCC PR staffing, stress and trauma

If the outbreak is very serious, it is important to make early relief arrangements for PR staff. The LDCC will need a minimum of three PR staff. Don’t try to be all three people. Seek assistance from the LDCC controller and your State/Territory PR manager.

Be alert for the signs of stress in PR staff, including yourself. In a really major outbreak with thousands of stock being put down, distressed farmers, and worried locals needing assistance, the LDCC is likely to have trauma counsellors on hand.

If it all starts to get overly stressful it is a good idea to talk privately with a counsellor or contact someone who normally would fill that role.

For further information on contingency planning and on PR policy and practice see Sections 1.5 and 3.

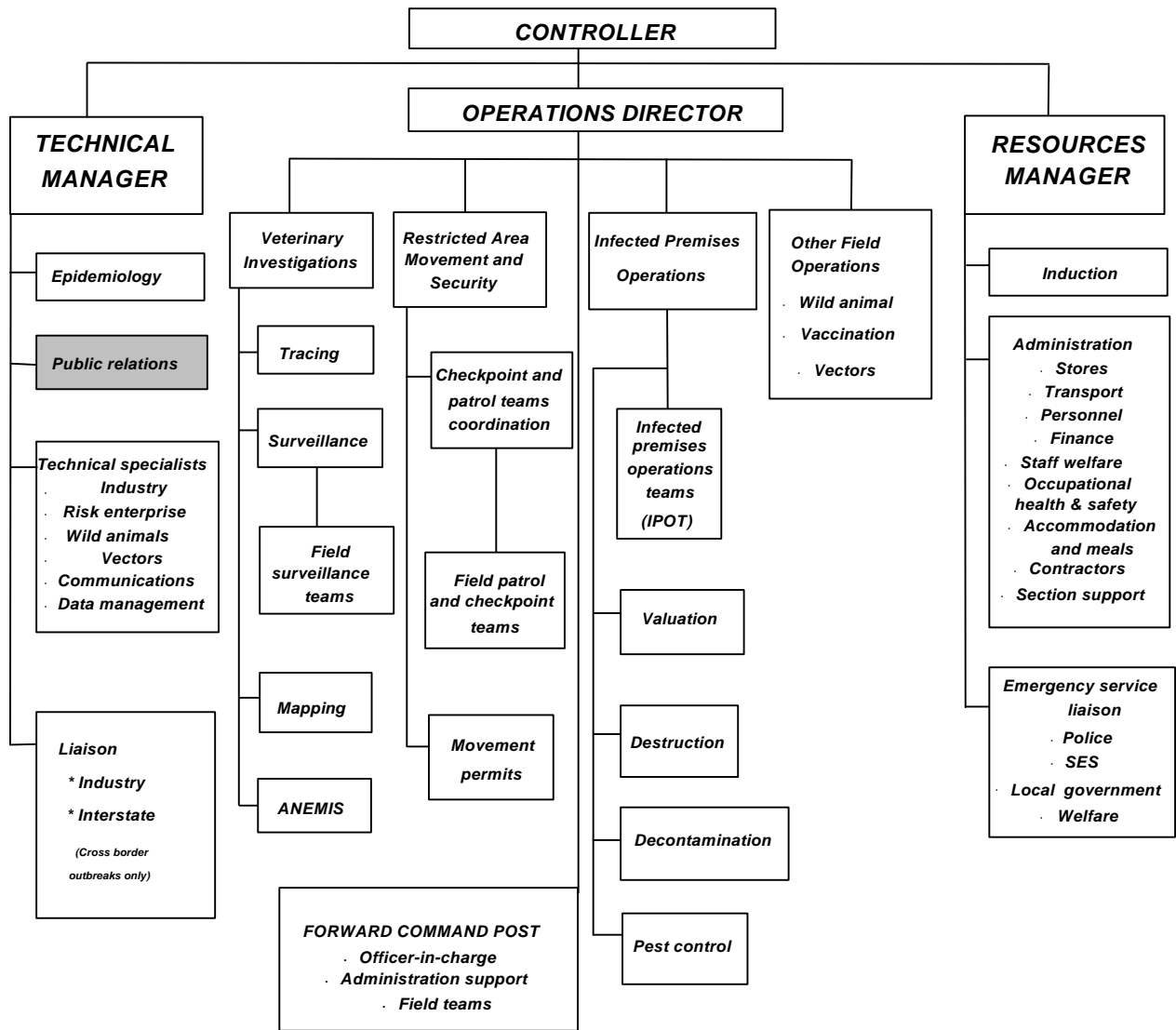


Figure 1 Model local disease control centre structure

2.2 The role of the State/Territory PR manager

2.2.1 Outbreaks in only one State or Territory

Where an exotic disease outbreak is confined to one State or Territory, the PR manager of that State or Territory has responsibility for all public relations concerning the event, its extent and effect, and the official State/Territory response to the emergency. Commonwealth responsibility in this situation will be limited to those matters with national, international or interstate implications.

The State/Territory PR manager should provide his/her Commonwealth counterpart with copies of all draft and final State/Territory news releases. The Commonwealth PR coordinator should provide all State and Territory PR managers, through the Animal Health Committee secretariat, with copies of all Commonwealth, State, Territory or joint draft and final media releases as soon as they are available.

2.2.2 Outbreaks in more than one State or Territory

In an exotic disease outbreak involving more than one State/Territory, the following division of responsibility for media and public relations would come into force.

Commonwealth

Commonwealth media liaison/public relations should relate to the overall extent, effect, and responsibility for the emergency, especially the trade implications.

State/Territory

State/Territory media liaison and public relations should be confined to only those matters relating to that particular State/Territory, especially stock and product movement restrictions, and the extent of the disease in that State/Territory.

2.2.3 At the start of an emergency

The most important initial role of the State/Territory PR manager is to establish good lines of communication with:

- the State/Territory CVO, the SDCHQ director, the SDCHQ technical manager,
- the Commonwealth PR coordinator, and
- the State/Territory minister's office.

The second priority is to:

- supervise the establishment of the State/Territory PR unit, and
- to guide and assist the local PR officers to become established in the LDCC.

The third priority is to participate fully in all the State/Territory decision making and briefing processes.

The State/Territory PR manager should be part of his/her State/Territory participation in the initial and subsequent CCEAD teleconferences. This participation is vital to be fully aware of the background to the emergency and the latest state-of-play and to provide PR advice where and when it will be most needed.

Participation of the PR manager in CCEAD meetings is also to guard against the possibility of inconsistencies in media statements issued by State/Territory and Commonwealth authorities. The Commonwealth PR coordinator and all State/Territory PR managers will also need to alert their departments to the PR implications of any

proposed action that may impinge upon the activities of another authority, and consult where appropriate with the PR officers of those authorities.

For all these reasons, it is also essential for the State/Territory PR manager to be a member of any State/Territory disaster task force convened in the event of an exotic disease emergency.

NB: PR that is ‘bolted-on’ to a decision-making process after it is all over is next to useless. All decisions at such a time have serious PR implications. The role of PR professionals is to provide advice and service about PR. It’s your area of expertise — be proactive and participate as part of the decision-making team.

It is vital that, within each State and Territory, the relevant State/Territory PR manager ensures that all public relations and information dissemination (other than by the minister) is conducted through a single source such as the CVO, SDCHQ director or other designated representative of the department eg the LDCC controller.

NB: It is dangerous to have more than one media spokesperson per State/Territory — the media can play one source off against the other—‘But your people in Bairnsdale are saying this morning that . . . ’

Apart from the minister, the State/Territory CVO would be the person to whom the media would naturally look for authoritative statements on the outbreak. If the CVO is willing and available, this is fine. If not, it is important to have either the SDCHQ director, the SDCHQ technical manager, the LDCC controller, or other senior veterinary officers properly authorised and briefed as the major State/Territory media spokesperson for the duration of the emergency.

For television stations, it may be possible to provide Betacam stock footage on the disease involved in the outbreak. This would come from the department’s PR Betacam library and could be made available at media conferences or to individual stations as requested.

The State/Territory PR manager, together with his/her relief officers, must be able to provide a PR service to the media on a rotating shift, 24-hour basis, if necessary.

2.2.4 Target groups

Discuss with the SDCHQ staff the relevant target groups that need to be kept fully informed of disease outbreak developments. Target groups would include industry bodies (exporters, State/Territory producer groups, Australian Veterinary Association), animal welfare organisations, other government departments, show societies.

A quick response in anticipation of requests for information when news of the emergency breaks will establish your credibility with these groups.

It could also be useful to have a contact list on hand of reliable industry spokespersons whose names could be given to the media looking for ‘industry’ comment. Before referring the media to such people, however, it would be wise to ensure that such industry people are well briefed on the outbreak and, especially, on what issues to ‘hose down’ if they are raised by media representatives keen on putting out a sensational story.

Liaison with owner(s) of infected properties is an important PR function. At such a time the owner would be under considerable stress and some advice on what to say (and not to say) if approached by the media would be of considerable assistance and could save the

need to correct media misinformation based on a flustered property-owner responding inappropriately to media demands.

2.2.5 Regular circular

In the event of a protracted emergency, the publication of a regular circular for media and general distribution may be helpful. It should contain latest information and news of campaign changes. It will quickly become a sought-after source of timely, accurate and factual material — essential at a time when rumour and gossip will abound.

For further information on contingency planning, and on PR policy and practice, see Sections 1.5 and 3.

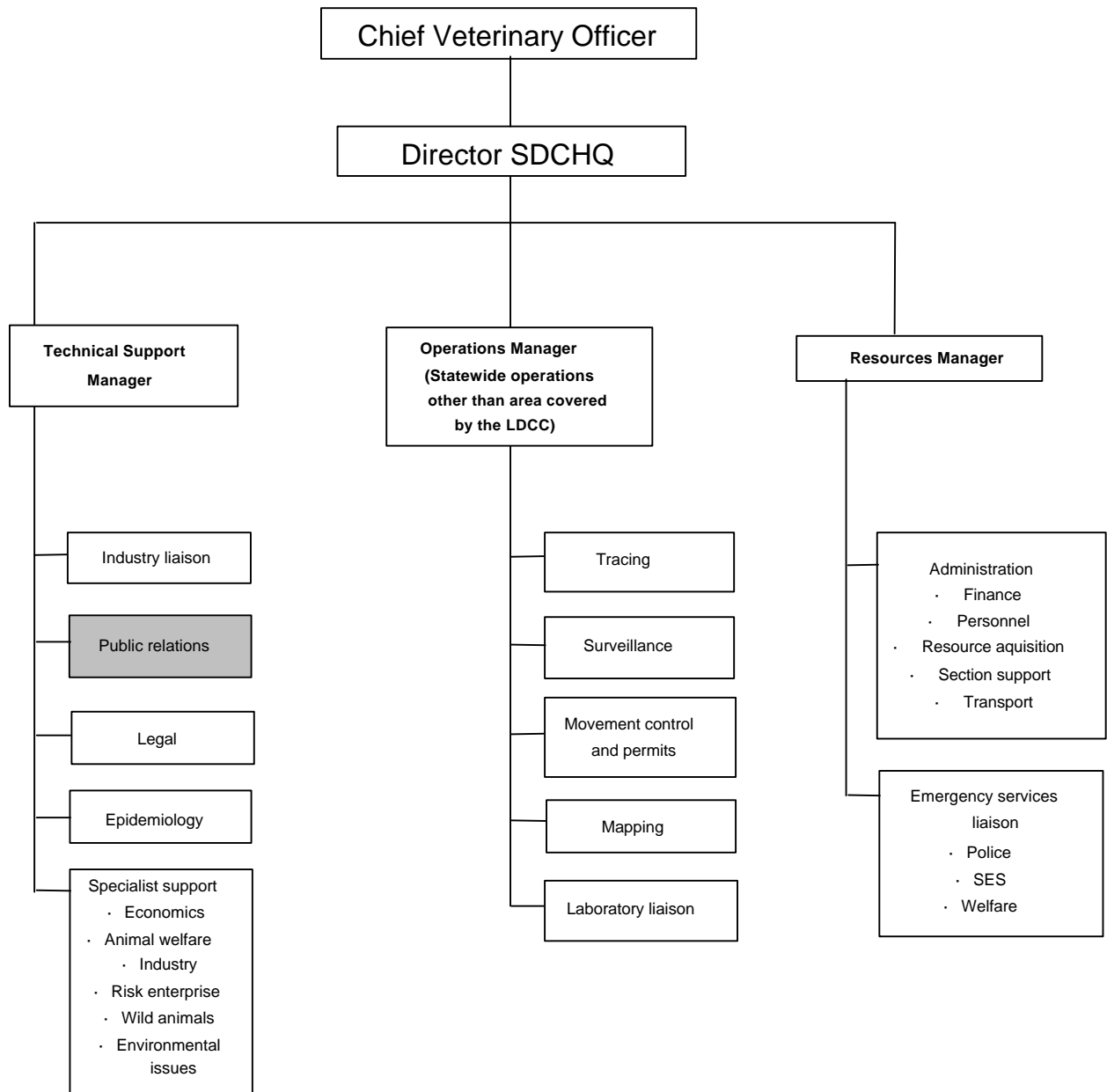


Figure 2 Model State/Territory disease control headquarters structure

2.3 The role of the Commonwealth PR coordinator

2.3.1 Outbreaks in only one State or Territory

Where an exotic disease outbreak is confined to one State or Territory, Commonwealth responsibility will be limited to those matters with national, international or interstate implications and to coordinating PR communication between the relevant State/Territory PR manager and CCEAD.

On receipt of the draft initial State/Territory ministerial statement about the emergency from the State/Territory PR manager (via the AHC secretariat), the Commonwealth PR coordinator arranges for the draft agenda to be faxed to other CCEAD members before the initial CCEAD teleconference.

If CCEAD agrees that an initial announcement should be made at that time and agrees with the content of the draft, the Commonwealth PR coordinator should then liaise with the State/Territory PR manager from the originating State/Territory about release and distribution timing and strategies.

The Commonwealth PR coordinator should also quickly provide his/her State/Territory counterparts with copies of all draft and final Commonwealth or joint news releases and should circulate draft and final State and/or Territory releases to and from the CCEAD and to other States and Territories via the AHC secretariat.

2.3.2 Outbreaks in more than one State or Territory

In an exotic disease outbreak that involves more than one State/Territory, the division of responsibility for media and public relations is:

Commonwealth

Commonwealth public relations, including media liaison, should relate to the overall extent, effect, and responsibility for the emergency, especially the national and trade implications. The Commonwealth PR coordinator should also coordinate PR communication between the relevant State/Territory PR managers and CCEAD via the AHC secretariat.

State/Territory

State/Territory public relations, including media liaison, should be confined to those matters that concern that particular State/Territory only, especially stock and product movement restrictions, the extent of the disease and eradication measures.

2.3.3 At the start of an emergency

As with all State and Territory PR managers, the top initial priority for the Commonwealth PR coordinator is to establish good lines of communication with the Australian CVO, other federal agencies (eg AQIS, AMLC and AAHL) and their PR officers, and with the relevant State/Territory PR managers.

The next priority is to participate fully in all the decision making and briefing processes (including initial and subsequent DPIE Animal Health and Welfare Management Committee (AHWMC) meetings and all CCEAD teleconferences). This participation is vital for all the reasons outlined in Section 2.2, ie so that you can be fully aware of the

background to the emergency and the most up-to-date information and so that you can provide PR advice where and when it will be most needed.

NB: It is dangerous to have more than one media spokesperson at the Commonwealth level — the media can play one off against the other— ‘But the AMLC said this morning that . . .’

It is vital therefore that the Commonwealth PR coordinator ensures that all public relations and information dissemination at the Commonwealth level is coordinated through a single source, such as the Commonwealth minister and/or the Australian CVO or their designated representatives.

2.3.4 Coordination of PR activities with other agencies

The national public relations unit will be part of the functional committee structure reporting directly to the Incident Task Force (see **DPIEVETPLAN**)

As well as coordinating PR advice and activities within the internal DPIE AHWMC structures, the Commonwealth PR coordinator should coordinate the PR activities of the following Commonwealth agencies.

Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL)

During an exotic disease emergency AAHL usually does not issue statements on the work it is doing for the relevant CVOs on diagnosing the infective agent responsible for a suspected exotic disease incident. If asked by the media, AAHL restricts its media comments to a standard reply stating that samples have been received and tests are under way. AAHL leaves any comment on its diagnostic work to the State or Territory for which the tests are being performed. However, on the issue of exotic diseases in general, AAHL is a valuable source of technical and background information and can be used by State/Territory PR managers as a reliable source of ‘outside expert’ information to which the media can be referred.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)

The Commonwealth PR coordinator should work in close collaboration with the AQIS PR manager to ensure that all quarantine and export inspection aspects related to the emergency are considered in relation to media and public information activities connected with the emergency and that a coordinated Commonwealth PR effort occurs.

Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation (AMLC)

The Australian meat and livestock industry, through the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation (AMLC), based in Sydney, is developing a market and consumer confidence PR program that will become operational in the event of an exotic animal disease emergency. The program will have both a domestic and an international focus. In the event of an outbreak, and in the weeks following, it will be important for the Commonwealth PR coordinator to work closely with the AMLC to ensure a coordinated Commonwealth PR effort on trade issues.

Overseas Information Branch

The Commonwealth PR coordinator should work in collaboration with the Overseas Information Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to ensure that all media material aimed (deliberately or incidentally) at overseas audiences should be written simply so as to minimise translation difficulties and the possibility of errors. DFAT media liaison would also need to be coordinated into the

overall Commonwealth PR strategy by the Commonwealth PR coordinator working closely with DFAT PR staff.

Other agencies

- Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health (especially in the event of a rabies emergency),
- Emergency Management Australia, Canberra, (especially when national disaster provisions are activated)

2.3.5 Other PR activities

For television stations, you could offer to provide Betacam stock footage on the disease involved in the outbreak. This would come from the DPIE PR Betacam library and could be made available at media conferences or to individual stations as requested.

The Commonwealth PR coordinator, and/or his/her relief officers, must be able to provide PR services to the media on a 24-hour basis.

Newsnet

DPIE has a contract with the commercial on-faxing organisation, NEWSNET, to fax media releases in the event of an exotic disease emergency. DPIE's Animal Diseases/Incidents Section holds copies of the NEWSNET cover sheet and code, which is used to specify NEWSNET which media in which States and Territories, or overseas, are to receive copies of specific releases. State/Territory PR managers can access the NEWSNET system through the Commonwealth PR coordinator.

The Internet

As technology advances, it is likely that an increasing demand will emerge for exotic disease emergency information to be placed on the Internet (international computer network). If CCEAD or the Australian CVO agrees that it would be desirable to place such information on the Internet, the process for gathering and clearing this data is the same as for other kinds of public and media material. The Commonwealth PR coordinator should ensure that material going onto the Internet is cleared for use by overseas governments, trade bodies and media.

Industry comment

It could be useful to have a contact list on hand of reliable industry spokespersons whose names could be given to the media looking for 'industry' comment. Before referring the media to such people, however, it would be wise to ensure that such industry people are well briefed on the outbreak and, especially, on what issues to 'hose down' if they are raised by media representatives keen on obtaining a sensational story.

For further information on contingency planning and on PR policy and practice see Sections 1.5 and 3.

3 PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY AND PRACTICE

3.1 News media policy

A *proactive approach* should be adopted during an emergency (see Section 2.1.4). The nature of an exotic disease outbreak will be such that the news media will require and expect a constant flow of information — all of it immediately. They can be expected to place unrealistic demands on the time and energies of all personnel involved. They may have scant regard for the difficulties under which the authorities are working to bring the outbreak under control, and may insist on definitive responses to difficult questions. Yet their assistance in bringing the emergency to heel will be invaluable. In this context a flexible media operation becomes imperative. With this in mind, the following policy should apply.

3.1.1 Don't play favourites with the media.

Playing 'favourites' will please one at the cost of getting many more off-side. The media are very competitive and will quickly sense that a competitor has been given an 'edge'. Even if it is felt that, in the past, a particular paper or reporter has been less than fair in their coverage of important issues, don't be provoked into revenge. Be scrupulously fair in providing information and access on an equal basis to all media representatives.

Some may bid for an 'exclusive', earlier access or some other advantage. Their claims may be justified. For instance, some may claim that the time for the scheduled media conferences doesn't fit in with deadlines. In that case the LDCC controller may be prevailed on to alter the times of LDCC in-house situation up-dates so that he/she can be briefed for a media conference at an earlier time of day. Some individual claims may also be justified. For instance, an important rural weekly publication such as *The Land* may have a weekly deadline some hours ahead of the next scheduled media conference. Rather than having *The Land* print out-of-date information, early access to new information may be granted.

Some claims may not be justified — they may be only looking for an 'edge'. Check claims carefully and only grant justified concessions. If you are fair and even-handed (even with media representatives who have made difficulties for the department or minister in the past), you will gain respect and credibility — important assets in dealing with the media.

3.1.2 Why it pays to be first

The Commonwealth PR coordinator as well as State/Territory PR managers may need to remind their departments and ministerial media advisers that, provided a reasonably certain diagnosis is to hand, it is always best to get in first with your version of what is happening — **especially if it is really 'bad' news**. And, in the event of, say, a simultaneous outbreak of *foot-and-mouth disease* or *rabies* in several States, there is clearly a national responsibility to make a public announcement as soon as practicable.

To be reticent is to invite misinformed version to gain prominence as the 'official' version of what is happening. It is always much harder to come from behind and try to correct a

wrong version than it would have been to have taken charge early and be the first with the correct version of the news no matter how painful it is.

In the media being *first* with a story is what counts most. If, in haste, there are errors, the media position is that errors can always be corrected later, in small type — on page 17 — but the news must get out now before someone else publishes it. In the media, being *second* is a hanging offence!

If CCEAD has enough facts on which to go public, advise them that the sooner an official announcement (Commonwealth or State) is made, the better. If officials nervously hang back, a ‘wire-service’ reporter (who last week was switched from the wine column to covering national rural issues) could well get hold of a big story and gazump the whole PR strategy.

A less than well-informed story could then set the tone, not only for the Australian public, but also for other national and international reporters wanting to put together a quick story to meet a deadline. ‘Setting the record straight’ would be very difficult and it would also be a waste of time to complain about incompetent reporters when the real problem was incompetent and short-sighted PR!

3.1.3 The nature of the media

The media’s first responsibility will not be to government authorities battling to contain an exotic animal disease outbreak. Their prime concern will be to produce newsworthy copy for their audiences—‘If it bleeds, it leads!’

Recognition and acceptance of this fact will assist PR officers in understanding and appreciating that the media will have their own job to do during an emergency.

Journalists usually have their own ideas of what information is suited to their particular audiences. PR officers involved in animal disease emergencies should confine themselves to providing the facts promptly and allowing the media to make their judgments as to how it is presented to their audiences.

Most news media will cooperate with reasonable restrictions on where they may or may not go and to whom they may speak during an emergency. Rather than dictate, a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding is the key to successfully dealing with journalists.

Journalists will respond well to professional treatment. They generally will do their best by those for whom they have some respect in terms of competence. By assisting them with friendliness and courtesy, more will be gained than by treating them with contempt.

3.1.4 Handling interviews

- Do not agree to an interview unless you have been fully briefed with the latest information.
- Before consenting to an interview agree on what areas will be covered. In an emergency, the media will be seeking a range of different angles.
- Do not ask for the questions in advance; you will not get them.
- Be wary of early morning phone calls from journalists seeking your views on any matter that might have occurred overnight or before you have heard the details—if you are not aware of the situation, offer to ring back when you are.

- Resist the temptation to give an off-the-cuff reply, or information you are not completely sure of—if you do not know the answer to a question, say so, and offer to get the information immediately.
- Politely but definitely correct any statements made by the journalist that you do not agree with.
- Feel free to answer a question with either YES or NO—you need not always elaborate.
- However, there is no obligation to answer all questions but give the reasons for not answering politely and firmly.

Journalists work to deadlines. Ask what they are and ensure the information is given to them ahead of that time. Return phone calls promptly. Delays in getting information to journalists could result in an inaccurate or incomplete story going to press or appearing to air. If asked for information not immediately available, offer to get it and reply without delay; journalists will sense concealed information—of you appear evasive, they will persist.

The media will not accept censorship of their material. Offer to check the facts with the reporter at the end of the interview, but do not expect any editorial influences over the story once it is completed.

3.1.5 Getting your information across

There is no requirement during an interview to provide only passive answers to questions and only go where the interviewer leads. In an interview, it is possible, up to a point, to take the interview where you want to go and volunteer information that you want to get across.

Present your main points and conclusions first. This introduces the reporter to the ideas you wish to present, and helps him or her to ask leading questions. Avoid jargon and explain difficult terminology and refrain from using emotionally laden words like ‘crisis’ or ‘breakthrough’; they invite sensationalism.

Never release information on the basis of an agreement that it is ‘*off-the-record*’. This is fraught with peril. Treat all conversations with media representatives (even ‘after work’ at the hotel) as all being ‘*on-the-record*’.

If interviewed for television or radio, be brief. Deliver your message in short, clear bursts. The thrust of your statement for the broadcast media should be concise while still containing the main information.

3.1.6 Making the best use of television

Before a television interview, mentally compose two or three main points and turn questions around to make those points. Questions do not always have to be answered literally; they are really invitations that seek comment.

Appear composed, relaxed, hands calm, maintain eye contact, give yourself time to ‘psych up’ and formulate your responses. Do not bang the table or touch the microphones; speak up and sound alive. You have to act slightly larger than life for television to get your message across. Do not look at the camera, it looks artificial.

Do not use notes. The microphone picks up the rustling, and it conveys a poor impression because you have the tendency to read your notes. Never lose your cool, or become argumentative. Try to keep your replies to about 30 seconds.

Remember the KISS principle: *Keep it short and simple.*

If you don't want TV crews to cover the actual 'state-of-play' charts in the SDCHQ or LDCC, ask the PR unit to prepare a colour copy for display at the news conference that shows the main points you wish to make in a simplified and visually attractive way.

3.1.6 Using radio to advantage

Try to relax — people who are nervous often start talking too quickly and pitch their voice higher than usual. Begin the interview by deliberately pitching your voice a little lower than usual. Speak slowly and clearly. Offer no more than is required of a question. Like television, you must give a performance on radio. Be 'larger than life' and a sound animated.

Do not allow your voice to taper off at the end of sentences. Avoid speaking in a boring, low-key, careful, circumspect manner. Respond firmly under pressure. Do not give long complex answers — if it is a complex matter, simplify it. Work out in advance what you want to say and do not get bogged down in too much detail. If it becomes necessary to use a specialised word, or a word in a specialised sense, explain its meaning or the sense in which you are using it.

3.1.7 Electronic eavesdropping by news media

Most metropolitan news media regularly use electronic scanners to monitor emergency broadcast bands, including police, ambulance and fire service radio communications, to pick up items of newsworthy interest.

They have the facility to monitor all emergency frequencies or channels, if required. They will, in all likelihood, use this facility in the event of an exotic disease outbreak.

SDCHQ and LDCC staff using emergency frequencies should be aware that their communications could be monitored by news media.

3.1.8 ID cards for the media

The media should be asked to wear their own accredited identification while covering the outbreak.

3.2 Press releases and handouts

3.2.1 Releases by the CVO (Australian, State or Territory)

As the main sources of factual and veterinary information during the emergency, CVOs are invaluable in being able to give an air of authority and calm to the PR effort. Media speculation can be the cause of panic and unnecessary anxiety in the community. 'On the record' interviews with CVOs are a wonderful antidote to this by providing factual information as to the nature, extent, cause, effects and consequences of the emergency.

CVOs can also provide factual details of the organisations, authorities, methods and overall procedures involved in coping with the emergency

Details of intended or possible further response action by the coordinating authority can also be given. In the absence of the CVO, he/she may authorise a nominated officer to hold on-site news conferences at the LDCC, when this is deemed desirable.

3.2.2 Releases by State/Territory PR managers and local PR officers

PR managers and officers may only release information authorised by CCEAD, their CVO or his/her delegate.

Do not comment on any matter that touches on the activities or responsibilities of any organisation other than your own. Do not express opinions. Deal only with confirmed facts.

3.2.3 Preparing a news release

The first requirement for a successful news release is to have something ‘new’ (and important) to say — otherwise don’t bother. Otherwise the value of news releases when there really is something newsworthy to say will be devalued and you could be ignored.

The next step is to gather all the relevant facts and to decide who is going to make the release and to seek their agreement. In the media, words have to come ‘out of someone’s mouth’ and not seem to come from nowhere. The first paragraph should sum up the whole release in 25 words or less. Arrange the facts after this, in descending order of importance. Use short, punchy sentences with active verbs and no more than one or two ideas per paragraph.

Example press releases

A bad start to a release:

RESTRICTIONS UNDER SECTION 76b OF THE QUARANTINE ACT (1922)

The Minister of State for Primary Industries for the State of Queensland, the Hon. Mary Jenkins MLA, has approved departmental regulations drafted in accordance the Quarantine Act (1922 as amended) that require all owners of stock designated as being in an area in the Shire of Whatisname to the north of Millers Road, to apply (on Form No 33b) to the Chief Veterinary officer for permission under . . .

A better start for a release:

QLD STOCK MOVEMENT BAN

The Department of Primary Industry has imposed restrictions on the movement of any livestock into and out of a quarantine area now in force in central Queensland.

The new quarantine area is 25 km by 35 km in size and is located to the north of Millers Road near Rockhampton (see attached map).

In announcing this today the State’s Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr John Smith, said that the regulations meant that all stockowners . . .

The most important facts are placed first and then short paragraphs are added that outline the balance of the facts and instructions in descending order of importance.

This structure is suggested because, if a subeditor is having a rough day, he can chop the bottom off your handout and fit the first part into any space left over from the sales

manager having had a good day and selling plenty of ads for page 3. So don't save any good points for a 'punchy' big finish. Remember WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW. News releases must contain these six elements. The first four should appear within the first three to four paragraphs. When writing a news release ensure it can be readily understood, is concise, is accurate, commands attention and does not exclude vital information.

Type the news release on preprinted 'News Release' letterhead, one side of the paper only, with plenty of white space around the text (wide margins).

The date should appear on the top righthand side of the page beneath the heading.

News releases should be no longer than one and a half to two pages, at most. A single page is best and usually sufficient. 'Background' sheets providing technical information should accompany the news release.

Provide a name and contact telephone number (business and after hours) at the end of the release.

Identify subsequent pages with two words taken from the heading, eg. '*rabies two*'.

Embargoes (restrictions on publication/broadcast dates and times) should be avoided.

3.2.4 Check-point handouts

One-page handouts for distribution at check-points are useful in providing delayed motorists with important information that may have a bearing on their movements.

Information should be limited to a single-sided sheet of A4 paper with appropriate insignia or letterhead. Provide details of the outbreak, the reasons for the restrictive measures in force, and source(s) of further information. (A sample check-point handout is provided at Appendix 3).

3.3 Holding State/Territory news conferences

Issuing a news release will, in most instances, satisfy the print media's need for information. However, television and radio will require interviews. If there has been a major development, it will necessitate the calling of a news conference.

News conferences can be a useful tool in reaching large numbers of media outlets at once. They have the added advantage of allowing the CVO to present the facts, take questions and allow him/her to return to the emergency at hand without being constantly badgered by media telephone calls.

Once the SDCHQ is activated, and the CCEAD has approved the issuing of an initial media release, the State/Territory PR manager should liaise with the relevant State/Territory ministerial media adviser about the calling of an initial news conference and who should be available for interview.

Should the situation warrant it, further regular news conferences should be called as circumstances dictate. In serious outbreaks it could be advantageous to both the media and the PR manager for these to be held at one or two set times each day (say, just after one of the major situation up-dates in the LDCC).

Unless special circumstances dictate otherwise, a news conference should not be called after 3 pm. This is close to deadline countdown for morning newspapers and evening

television bulletins. Timing of the news conference ultimately will depend on the nature of the information to be issued, and the availability of the CVO or the minister (if appropriate).

Ideally, news conferences should be held either mid-morning (in time for the noon ABC *Country Hour*) or early in the afternoon (to meet morning newspaper and evening TV and radio news deadlines).

Advise media by fax of time, place and subject matter of news conference. Where possible, notify media by telephone of the conference and place copies in the press gallery at parliament house. There is no need for detail. One or two paragraphs will suffice on a NEWS ALERT letterhead. If possible, a minimum of one hour's notice is desirable. It can be done in shorter time but this should be a last resort.

Prepare and have cleared a written statement on behalf of the minister and/or the CVO in the form of a news release. Ensure adequate photocopies are available. Distribute as media arrive. Allow up to 10 minutes for late arrivals. This also gives assembled media time to digest information in the news release. If the CVO is to be the 'talent' at the news conference, introduce him/her and say how long the opening statement is likely to last and how long will then be allowed for questions. Allow a reasonable time for questions and be prepared to enforce that limit.

Television news crews and, to a lesser extent, radio, will want separate interviews with the minister and/or the CVO after the news conference ends. Print media similarly are likely to want to stay behind for two or three more probing questions. If the CVO's time is limited, you should announce at the start of the news conference that there will not be time for separate interviews at its end — that they had better ask all necessary questions in the time allowed following the CVO's opening remarks.

The CVO should then begin with a *brief* statement by elaborating on the news release and then call for questions.

3.3.1 The CVO and news conferences

Be open and candid. State the position clearly and make an effort to see that journalists obtain a clear understanding of the situation. This will usually ensure they give fair and sympathetic coverage.

Where possible, provide information from the viewpoint of the public's interest, rather than that of the authority you represent. The community will look to the authority for assurance that all that can be done is being done to protect their interests.

Avoid answering a question with 'no comment'. Such a response is often interpreted as an admission of cover-up or guilt. It is better to say why you are unable to provide an answer or, better still, say: 'All we know at present is...' and then adhere to facts that have been verified.

Never speculate. It is inappropriate and could backfire. Guesswork can mistakenly be reported as fact, leading to misconceptions that are difficult to counter.

3.4 Media requests to enter infected properties

State/Territory and Commonwealth authorities usually do not divulge the names and addresses of infected properties involved in an exotic disease outbreak. The news media,

however, have difficulty accepting such a policy and will persist until they have the information. If the authority refuses to release the details, the media have a range of contacts from whom the information will be readily obtained. There may be justification on legal grounds for refusing to deny or confirm the name or location of a property.

Entry by media to an infected property must be approved by the CVO and the property owner. There are three options for dealing with this which are described briefly below.

Option 1: Deny access

This is your most likely initial response given the quarantine restrictions and the probability that the owner of an infected property will not welcome publicity.

Your dilemma will be how to deny access and yet to make this palatable to the media. A refusal would be more acceptable if you were to offer the media access to good Betacam stock videos of other outbreaks or infected laboratory animals or, even better, good Betacam material shot that morning by your own video crew (who have quarantine-approved and disinfectable equipment).

A hard-nosed, flat refusal to help in any way with access could be counter-productive and enforceable only with the full backing of the law (police). If the media will not accept the stock Betacam videos (plus an 'on-the-record' interview if your State/Territory PR manager agrees), you will need to consider some form of limited access to maintain media good-will.

Option 2: Restricted access

If the news media know the location of an infected property (with or without the cooperation of the CVO) they will insist on visiting the property. They may or may not seek permission from the CVO. If possible, it is preferable to permit it with restrictions best determined by the CVO with regard to the circumstances. Attempts to restrict their activities will quickly arouse the media's hostility with resultant negative and possibly damaging coverage (*'Minister in disease cover-up'*).

However, should a decision be made to allow entry, ensure that it is supervised and remember that other media outlets will expect the same treatment.

There will be special conditions for the visit laid down by the CVO. The State/Territory PR manager must ensure they are accepted by journalists as a condition of entry to the site.

Warn the CVO that the media will want interviews. This should be arranged if possible. The media should be assembled at a point outside the property boundary where restrictions imposed for the inspection should be repeated. Agreement to those conditions should be sought once again to avoid any misunderstanding about the ground rules.

A media officer should then accompany all media to the property and escort them as a group through the affected area. Allow them sufficient time to video or record interviews. Note that setting up for, and recording, action on video at each location will take at least 15 minutes and should be allowed for.

Option 3: Media pooling

'Pooling' is a term used to describe the practice whereby a representative from each of press, radio and television agrees to cover an event for all other media. The results are then pooled (shared) among media who did not attend. The advantage of pooling is

that the authorities need deal only with a maximum of five or six media representatives.

The State/Territory PR manager must ensure all media understand the arrangement and agree to it. Should one outlet not agree (unlikely) it must be explained to them that they will not receive special treatment. In other words, accept the pool coverage or receive nothing.

The press secretary to the minister responsible for the authority controlling the outbreak should be advised of the pooling arrangement and which media representatives will form the pool. If broadcast and print media agree to form a pool, their representatives will consist of: one newspaper reporter and a photographer; one radio reporter; one television reporter and a camera person and possibly a sound recordist.

Explain to media the requirement to wear special clothing and footwear, to cover and disinfect equipment, and any other special conditions that apply.

3.4.1 Media helicopters

Most news media (especially television) own, charter or otherwise have access to helicopters. This can pose problems for CVOs wishing to restrict media access to infected properties.

State/Territory PR managers should assume helicopters will be used either to ferry journalists to the site of an outbreak or, more commonly, to fly over the site to gather aerial shots. If restrictions are to apply, Commonwealth assistance in declaring a restricted air space in the vicinity of the infected property should be sought and then the media immediately informed by fax. Provide reasons, such as possible dispersal of the virus in the case of foot-and-mouth disease, or that stock will be panicked thereby making control measures more difficult.

3.4.2 Media access to laboratories

All media enquiries about laboratories should be referred to the State/Territory PR manager who will formulate an appropriate response in consultation with the CVO. The two options for dealing with media access to laboratories follow.

Option 1: Deny access

This should be an option of absolute last resort in cases where there is a risk of spreading the disease.

Option 2: Restricted access

Where practicable, the State/Territory PR manager could arrange supervised visits by the media to laboratories for the purposes of getting background television shots/press photos or providing background information on testing techniques.

All visits should be supervised by the State/Territory PR manager or his/her representative in conjunction with the laboratory director.

3.5 Involvement of minister's office

The involvement of the office of the relevant minister must be assumed in any emergency. State/Territory PR managers must have regard to the special requirements of that office when dealing with media/public relations aspects of the control program.

Upon declaration of an exotic disease outbreak, the State/Territory PR manager should contact the minister's press secretary and appraise him/her of the details.

Close contact between the State/Territory PR manager and the press secretary should be maintained throughout the emergency.

There should be agreement on what information will be issued by the CVO and what will be issued by the minister's office. It can be assumed that major developments during the course of the emergency will be publicised by the minister. It is essential that all doubtful items are clarified with the press secretary.

All news releases issued in the name of the CVO must be forwarded immediately to the minister's press secretary BEFORE they are released to the news media. The reason for this is the minister's office may be asked to comment on a statement by the CVO. The minister will be embarrassed if he/she is not aware of the contents of any news release.

The minister's press secretary must be informed of any dealings with the media that are of significance, for example, a media inspection of an infected property.

3.6 Misinformation

There is a maxim that truth is the first casualty in war. During an animal disease emergency emotion will become a wild card. It can lead to specious claims from pseudo-experts, misinformed statements from armchair critics and unhelpful comments and suggestions from those who would perceive benefit for their careers in becoming involved.

Previously published information, no matter how inaccurate, tends to become a matter of public record, and thus self-perpetuating. Every opportunity must be taken to correct mis-statements. Media officers will need to monitor closely all media output to ensure unbiased, informed, accurate reporting of the event.

To correct misinformation, the journalist or organisation concerned, if known, should be telephoned and asked for a re-statement of the facts. Follow up immediately with a written statement of the true position. Ensure the CVO receives a copy. If the incorrect information has been picked up and used by other media, issue a general news release correcting the facts.

As well as regularly monitoring conventional media outlets, the Commonwealth PR coordinator should ask the DPIE librarian to mount a watching brief on the Internet to check that no misinformation is being disseminated via computer networks either within Australia and overseas. If misinformation is detected, CCEAD and the Australian CVO should be informed and the Commonwealth PR coordinator should recommend counter measures (as with conventional media).

3.7 Managing criticism

There will be some critics of the handling of any emergency. It is important to address unwarranted and inaccurate criticism early lest the media begin to suspect that those casting doubts on the operation's effectiveness may have a point. (These guidelines should not be interpreted as an attempt to stifle genuine constructive criticism.)

Consider whether a response will worsen the situation. There are times when silence is the better option. Do not allow your critics to focus on an isolated feature of the emergency. They will always draw attention to that which lends itself most readily to dramatisation. Maintain the high ground while bearing in mind the whole campaign, not one element of it. It may be necessary to provide misinformed critics with a personal briefing.

Identify and target local groups likely to become involved, ie animal welfare, local government, and arrange group briefings.

Malicious criticism is quite different and should be treated as such. It is almost invariably aimed at calling into question the ability/credibility of those involved in the control operation. In the event of its occurrence, personal briefings will be of little use because there is a hidden agenda. An effective means of dealing with this is to arrange for independent, knowledgeable sources to publicly counter the criticism. This will expose the fallaciousness of the criticism, rendering it ineffective. However, ensure the source you are going to use is truly objective.

3.8 Follow up

3.8.1 For the record

When all the immediate priorities are being met, the State/Territory PR manager, in conjunction with the CVO, could arrange for file videos and photographs of the outbreak to be collected as a part of the historical record and also as resource material for future general PR, farmer extension and veterinary officer training. To be compatible with future media use it is important that any TV material be in the Betacam format. You can always later have Betacam converted onto VHS for general use but VHS cannot be upgraded to an acceptable Betacam media quality.

3.8.2 Letters of thanks

It may appear insignificant, but a letter of thanks, especially to the news media involved, will be gratefully received, if only because it is a rare occurrence. Each letter should be signed personally by the CVO. The media constantly receives criticism, but praise is seldom forthcoming.

APPENDIX 1 Sample news release



From the Office of
EDMUND CASEY MLA
Minister for Primary Industries

December 22 1994

MOVES TO CONTROL POULTRY DISEASE

The Primary Industries Minister, Ed Casey, said today that an outbreak of avian influenza had been detected on a poultry farm in the Lowood district of southeast Queensland with the property immediately being quarantined.

Mr Casey said analytical tests carried out at the Australian Animal Health Laboratory at Geelong, Victoria, had given a positive response, with further confirmatory results yet to come.

While viral avian influenza only affects poultry and represents absolutely no threat to human health, it can lead to high mortality levels in flocks.

"This is the first suspected case of avian influenza reported in Queensland, and control of the disease is included as part of the national AUSVETPLAN exotic diseases arrangements involving industry and the Commonwealth and all State and Territory governments," Mr Casey said.

"Veterinary officers from my department are already operating under that plan in consultation with the Commonwealth and the other States.

"Under the plan, a Department of Primary Industries task force has already begun tracing all movements from the suspect property and is checking poultry on other properties in the district.

"This includes a total ban on the movement of all poultry or poultry products from the suspect property.

"My department is working closely with the poultry industry to ensure the outbreak is contained as quickly as possible," Mr Casey said.

Three previous Australian outbreaks of the disease in Victoria had been successfully eradicated. While the source of the latest suspected outbreak had not been confirmed, the virus was generally introduced by wild birds.

Media contact: Lee Duffield (Ministerial Adviser) (07) 239 3120 (work)
(07) 367 0621 (home)

Detailed information contacts: Ian Douglas 018 874 234
Blair Chadwick 015 170 249

Attached: Fact sheet on avian influenza

APPENDIX 2 Sample exotic disease fact sheet

NB: This sample fact sheet is copied from the *AUSVETPLAN Summary Document* It should not be used for public information as it may now be out-of-date.

Only fact sheets copied directly from the regularly updated set of exotic disease fact sheets in the *AUSVETPLAN Summary Documents* should be used for PR purposes.

FACT SHEET: Avian influenza

DISEASE & CAUSE: *Avian influenza* is a highly contagious, viral disease that may cause up to 100% mortality in domestic fowls. The disease is caused by a virus of the Orthomyxoviridae family.

SPECIES AFFECTED: All commercial, domestic and wild bird species are susceptible but disease outbreaks occur more frequently in chickens and turkeys. Infection may be brought into Australia by migratory wild birds. Many species of waterfowl, especially geese, ducks and swans carry the virus but generally show no signs of disease. *Humans are not affected.*

DISTRIBUTION: *Avian influenza viruses* are probably ubiquitous throughout the world in wild waterbirds, with outbreaks of disease occurring as sporadic events. The virus has been the cause of clinical disease in commercial poultry in Australia in Victoria (1976, 1985 and 1992) and Queensland (1994).

KEY SIGNS: The clinical signs are variable and can be affected by the existence of other diseases, the age of the birds, the environment and the severity of the virus itself. In very severe forms the disease appears suddenly and birds die. Some may appear depressed, egg production falls and soft-shelled eggs produced. There may be a profuse watery diarrhoea, combs and wattles may become blue and respiration may be laboured. In less severe forms, the clinical signs may include decreased egg production, depression, respiratory signs suggestive of a cold, swelling of the face, possibly some nervous signs and diarrhoea.

SPREAD: Direct or indirect contact (likely through water) with migratory waterfowl is the most likely source of infection in poultry. Spread can also occur through contact with contaminated equipment or humans. Transmission through the egg is not known to occur, although contamination of the shell does occur. The virus is highly concentrated in the manure and in nasal and eye discharges.

PERSISTENCE OF THE VIRUS: Environmental conditions have a marked effect on virus survival outside the bird. Avian influenza virus can survive for at least 35 days at 4° C in manure. The virus can be readily isolated from lake water where waterfowl are present. The virus can survive several days in carcasses at ambient temperature but up to 23 days if refrigerated. Virus can persist in poultry meat products but is removed by adequate heating.

CONTROL STRATEGY: The strategy is to eradicate the virulent disease by immediate stamping out and disposal of infected and in-contact birds to remove the major source of virus. Additionally there will be strict quarantine and movement controls to prevent the spread of infection, decontamination to remove and reduce the virus and tracing and surveillance to locate the source of infection, locate other infected premises and determine

the extent of the infection. Vaccination is not an option. **NB** The Commonwealth/State cost-sharing arrangements only apply to *virulent avian influenza*.

APPENDIX 3 Sample check-point pamphlet

<p>Primary Industries South Australia</p>	<p>33 Flemington Street, Glenside, SA 5068 Box 1671 GPO, Adelaide, SA 5001 Phone: (08) 207 7888</p>	<p>REGIONAL VETERINARY OFFICERS Central (08) 391 7136 South-East (087) 64 7419</p>
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EXOTIC DISEASE EMERGENCY

**We are sorry
you have been delayed
BUT
it's for a
very good reason**

A serious animal disease has broken out nearby. It may be foot-and-mouth disease.

Unless we can stop it from spreading, it could ruin local farming, cause widespread disruption to Australia's livestock industry, loss of export markets and harm the national economy.

Right now we have isolated the infected animals and experts are working as fast as they can to identify the disease.

You are now on the outskirts of the restricted area. Between you and the diseased animals are buffer zones. It is extremely important that no animals or animal products, especially meat and milk, move in or out of these zones.

If we are to eradicate the disease, whatever it is, **WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

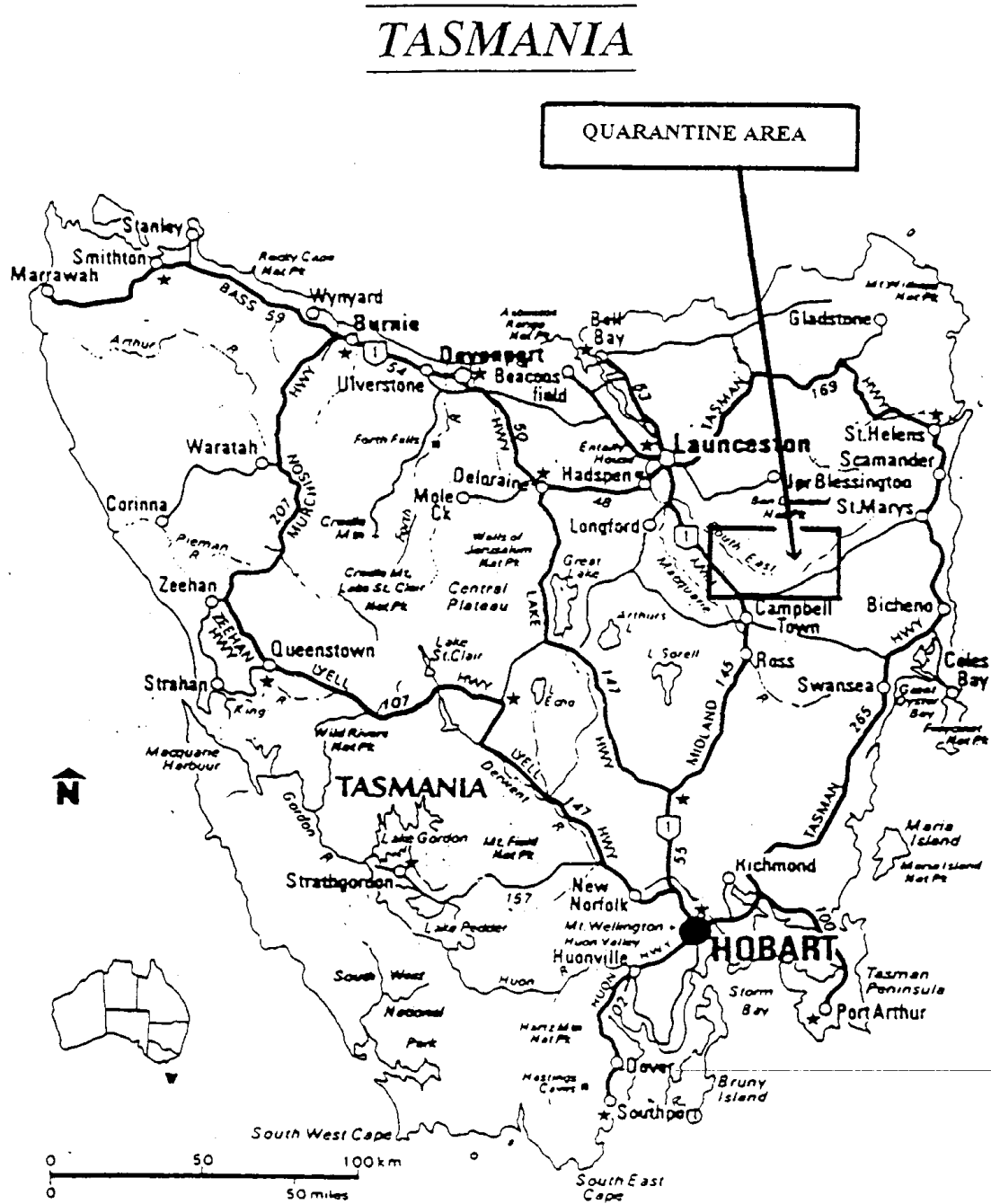
If you have been in contact with animals in the restricted area, please tell us. We can help ensure that you do not play an unintentional part in spreading the disease.

If you live nearby and have animals, please report any sign of sickness among them to the department's regional veterinary officer (LISTED ABOVE).

Information about the nature of the disease and on any changes to quarantines applying in this area will be announced on radio and television and in local newspapers as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX 4 Sample map



GLOSSARY

Agent	<i>see</i> Disease agent.
Animal Health and Welfare Management Committee	An internal committee of senior DPIE staff.
ANEMIS	<i>Animal Health Emergency Information System</i> . A system for the collection, assimilation, actioning and dissemination of essential disease control information using paper documentation and a computerised database.
AUSVETPLAN	A series of documents that describe the Australian response to exotic animal diseases; linking policy, strategies, operations, coordination and emergency-management plans.
Betacam video	The professional quality video format used by television crews and stations.
Chief veterinary officer	The senior veterinarian of each State or Territory animal health authority who has responsibility for exotic animal disease control in that State or Territory.
Chief Veterinary Officer of Australia	The nominated senior Commonwealth veterinarian in the Department of Primary Industries and Energy who manages Australia's international animal health commitments and the Commonwealth's response to an exotic animal disease incursion.
Consultative Committee on Exotic Animal Diseases	A committee of State/Territory CVOs, AAHL and CSIRO, chaired by the CVO of Australia (Cwlth DPIE), to consult in emergencies due to the introduction of an exotic disease of livestock, or serious epizootics of Australian origin.
Control area	A bigger area than a restricted area (possibly initially as big as the State) where restrictions will reduce the chance of the disease spreading further afield. The control area may reduce in size as confidence about the extent of the outbreak becomes clearer but must remain consistent with OIE codes. In principle, animals and specified product will only be able to be moved out of the control area into the free area by permit.
Cost-sharing agreement	Commonwealth/States cost-sharing agreement for the eradication of certain exotic animal diseases.

Dangerous contact animal	An animal showing no clinical signs of disease but which, by reason of its probable exposure to disease, will be subjected to disease control measures.
Dangerous contact premises	Premises that contains a dangerous contact animal(s).
Declared area	A defined tract of land for the time being subject to disease control restrictions under exotic disease legislation. Types of declared areas include <i>restricted area</i> ; <i>control area</i> ; <i>infected premises</i> ; and <i>dangerous contact premises</i> .
Decontamination	Includes all stages of cleaning and disinfection.
Disease agent	The organism that causes the disease.
Disease Watch Hotline	24-hour freecall service for reporting suspected incidences of exotic diseases — 1800 675 888 . [Arrangements may vary between states.]
Disposal	Sanitary removal of animal carcasses and things by burial, burning or some other process so as to prevent the spread of disease.
Enterprise	<i>see</i> Risk enterprise.
Exotic animal disease	A disease affecting animals that does not normally occur in Australia. Also called foreign animal disease.
Foreign animal disease	<i>see</i> Exotic animal disease.
Forward command post	A field operations centre, subsidiary to a local disease control centre.
Infected premises	A defined area (which may be all or part of a property) in which an exotic disease or agent exists, or is believed to exist.
Job card	A written list of tasks to be carried out by an individual in the early stages of an emergency response.
Local disease control centre	An emergency operations centre responsible for the command and control of field operations in a defined area.
Movement control	Restrictions placed on movement of animals, people and things to prevent spread of disease.
National disease control headquarters	A centre established in Canberra from which national disease control actions are coordinated in an exotic animal disease emergency.

NEWSNET	Commercial news – fax network.
Public relations	Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.
Quarantine	Legal restrictions imposed on a place, animal, vehicle or other things limiting movement.
Rehabilitation	Process of adjustment to circumstances prevailing in the aftermath of an exotic disease outbreak.
Restricted area	A relatively small declared area (compared to a <i>control area</i>) around an infected premises that is subject to intense surveillance and movement controls. Movement out of the area will in general be prohibited, while movement into the restricted area would only be by permit. Multiple <i>restricted areas</i> may exist within one <i>control area</i> .
Risk enterprise	Livestock-related enterprise with a high potential for disease spread or economic loss.
Role description	Statement of functions of a position within the overall operation.
Sentinel animals	Animals of known health status monitored for the purpose of detecting the presence of a specific exotic disease agent.
Stages of activation and deactivation	The four stages of an exotic disease emergency.
– investigation	exists when a report assessed as a low probability of an exotic disease is being investigated by animal health authorities.
– alert	exists when a high probability that an exotic disease is present or is confirmed in another State.
– operational	when the CVO determines that an animal disease emergency exists in the State, and operations to contain control or eradicate the disease are implemented.
– stand-down	when the CVO determines that an animal disease emergency no longer exists and operations are wound down.

Stamping out	Eradication procedures based on quarantine and slaughter of all infected animals and animals exposed to infection.
State/Territory disease control headquarters	The emergency operations centre that directs the disease control operations to be undertaken in the State.
Surveillance	A systematic examination and testing of animals or things of unknown disease status to determine the presence or absence of an exotic disease.
Suspect animal	An animal that may have been exposed to an exotic disease such that its quarantine and intensive surveillance, but not pre-emptive slaughter, are warranted; OR an animal not known to have been exposed to a disease agent but showing clinical signs requiring differential diagnosis.
Suspect materials or things	Materials or things suspected of being contaminated by an exotic disease agent.
Suspect premises	Premises containing suspect animals that will be subject to surveillance.
Tracing	The process of locating animals, persons or things that may be implicated in the spread of disease.
Vector	A living organism (frequently an arthropod) that transmits an infectious agent from one host to another. A <i>biological</i> vector is one in which the infectious agent must develop or multiply before becoming infective to a recipient host. A <i>mechanical</i> vector is one that transmits an infectious agent from one host to another but is not essential to the life cycle of the agent.
Vector control area	An area in which the containment, control or reduction of specified vector populations is conducted.
Zoning	The process of defining disease-free and infected zones in accord with OIE guidelines, in order to facilitate trade.
Zoonosis	A disease that can be spread between animals and people.

Abbreviations

AAHL	CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory, Geelong
AAP	Australian Associated Press
AHC	Animal Health Committee
AHWMC	Animal Health and Welfare Management Committee
AMLC	Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation
ANEMIS	Animal health emergency information system
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
ARMCANZ	Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand
AUSVETPLAN	Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan
CCEAD	Consultative Committee on Exotic Animal Diseases
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CVO	Chief veterinary officer
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPIE	Department of Primary Industries and Energy (Cwlth)
LDCC	Local disease control centre
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health [Office International des Epizooties]
PR	Public relations
SDCHQ	State/Territory disease control headquarters

Training resources

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