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Press Release – 4.00pm - 4 January 2017

To: The Management Committees of All Australian Racing Pigeon Federations, Combine Entities, One-Loft Races and Fancy Pigeon Associations.

Re: Update: Reo-virus outbreak 13 December 2016, Victoria

The purpose of this communication is to provide information to Racing Pigeon Federations so that they can inform their members of:

- Details of the virus: Testing, diagnosis and next steps
- Biosecurity measures each member needs to undertake
- The role of the Australian National Racing Pigeon Board (ANRPB) and funding for trials and vaccine

1. Details of the virus: Testing, diagnosis and next steps

In May 2016 a virus outbreak occurred in WA which was thought to be Adino-virus. Unfortunately, many birds died. Affected surviving birds were now carriers, by agreement for Bio-security purposes, all movement / shipments to the Eastern States from WA were banned until 31 December 2016.

In early December 2016 birds were unfortunately shipped from WA to Victoria. Almost immediately an outbreak occurred. What was determined very quickly was that these newly affected birds did not have: Adino-virus, PMV1, Herpes, but had another virus. Testing from 16 December through to 31 December has now revealed the virus is indeed a strain of Reo-virus. Testing has confirmed that the Victorian virus and the WA virus are the same and are a form of Reo-virus; not Adino-virus as previously reported.

For a detailed account of the timeline and information pertaining to this virus outbreak please refer to Dr. Colin Walker's website, pigeon virus update page. www.melbournebirdvet.com

Or direct link:

<http://www.melbournebirdvet.com/pigeon-virus-update.aspx>

Key points:

- Immediate: Diagnostic work continues – Agri-bio, AAHL
- Immediate: We must control spread of the virus – strict bio-security measures – no inter-loft movement of bird or fanciers



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- Medium: Develop tentative immune protocol to offer fanciers some means of protecting birds
- Longer: trial to develop “best” and proven method of protecting birds

2. Biosecurity measures each member needs to undertake

On Friday 16 December the ANRPB posted on its website the following Biosecurity measures. These measures remain in place and should be adhered to until further notice by all pigeon flyers, no matter where you live.

- Do not introduce new pigeons into your yard
- Do not allow your pigeons to mix with other pigeons
- Avoid visiting other pigeon lofts

It is also an appropriate time to reinforce the protocols for all flyers and pigeon keepers to vaccinate for PMV1. This is essential. Recently we have had cases around the country of PMV1 outbreaks, which is totally unnecessary.

3. The role of the Australian National Racing Pigeon Board (ANRPB) and funding for trials and vaccine

The ANRPB is still in its infancy. Its role is very much at a macro-level dealing with priorities such as Animal Health Australia – AHA (Australian Government) pertaining to the development of a welfare based National Code of Practice; this is well underway. The ANRPB at this time has no mandate to dictate to Federations, Clubs or indeed members within the pigeon fraternity about constitutional or racing matters. This is for the Federations and Club entities. The ANRPB in the short-medium term will provide guidance and best practice recommendations, all of which will be pigeon welfare centric. This was all discussed at the ANRPB National Convention in Canberra 19 November 2016. See www.anrpb.org for details of presentations which can be downloaded.

What will the ANRPB do as regards Reo-virus? The ANRPB will support Dr. Colin Walker and others involved in the testing, diagnosis, trials and quest for a suitable vaccine. This includes being a point of contact to assist with funds on behalf of the Australian Pigeon fraternity to enable testing and trails to be undertaken so we can hopefully obtain a vaccine.

Separately we will be writing to all Federations requesting a financial contribution from the Federations equivalent to a notional amount of \$20 per member as a first tranche of fund raising for the Reo-virus work. Further details will follow regarding this. Please keep a close eye on: www.anrpb.org



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Please stay in touch with your state based ANRPB board member:

VIC	Graham Wark
NSW / ACT	Mark Jeffrey
QLD	Len Vanderlinde
SA / NT	Greg Kakoschke
TAS	Peter Wallace
WA	Kevin Wilson

They can be contacted by email: enquiries@anrpb.org

I would encourage all pigeon fanciers to register their personal details on our website, in the contact section, so we can email you directly with updates and latest information.

In summary:

This is a difficult time for the Australian Racing Pigeon and Fancy Pigeon fraternity. Five-years ago when the PMV1 outbreak occurred we were in a similar time of adversity regarding our beloved pigeons. We worked through this. We dealt with the facts. We supported the science. We arrived at a solution... the PMV1 vaccine and the protocols around this has ensured we have been able to manage this disease and race freely and competitively. Our desire is to create the same outcome for this new Reo-virus. We are using the same scientific team and bodies for Reo-virus as we did with PMV1. Diagnostic testing is happening. Dr Walker is in touch with local and overseas suppliers of vaccines. Local trials will need to happen. Funding for this will be required, all as was done for PMV1.

Please be patient. Please be supportive. Please follow the Bio-security protocols detailed herein. We need a unified approach from the pigeon fraternity at this time. Faceless people on forum's and other mediums deriding the work being done does not add any value; please refrain if you are one of these people.

This is perfect time for all pigeon fanciers in Australia to come together, support each other and to be positive about the work being done to determine a solution for this current Reo-virus outbreak across many parts of Australia.

If you wish to take an active role in the ANRPB please email your local Board member. If you want to help other flyers to vaccinate for PMV1 work in your clubs and Fed's. Many of our



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older members may need some assistance in this regard. Please contact your Fed's to see how you can help.

All the very best for 2017.

Yours sincerely

For and on behalf of the Australian National Racing Pigeon Board

Stephen Eggleton

Chair – ANRPB