

Robert Verhey [Robert.Verhey@lgsa.org.au]  
PigMeatInquiry email account  
Preliminary submission to Pigmeat Inquiry

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the Pigmeat Industry.

The Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW are the representative body for local councils in NSW. At the 2004 Shires Association Annual Conference it was resolved:

“Due to the high probability of the importation of pig diseases and apples into Australia the Shires Association be requested to make urgent representations to the NSW State Government to support the Australian Pork Industry’s action to revoke the Biosecurity Australia’s new quarantine regime for importation of pig meat into Australia”.

The resolution resulted from a motion by Corowa Shire Council. The Conference noted “that for many years Australia has had rigid quarantine systems to protect against foreign plant and animal diseases being imported into Australia. The Biosecurity Australia’s recent decision to relax quarantine regulations to allow imported pig meat into Australia has the high probability of introducing exotic pig diseases into Australia. The decision means that within 10 years there is a 95-99% likelihood Australia’s pig herd will be devastated by such diseases as Post Weaning Multisystemic Wasting Syndrome (PMWS) and Australia’s superior health status will be gone forever. This disease has cost the pig industry in Europe \$A1.5 billion and killed 8 million pigs. In the United States, PMWS costs the pig industry \$US600 million a year. The decision by Biosecurity Australia was made as part of the Free Trade Agreement at the expense of quarantine issues. There is no way the Australian Pork Industry can absorb the costs of a PMWS outbreak which would see an estimated 15% cost resulting in a \$55.3 million loss in productivity and a \$189 million fall in gross domestic produce annually”.

In line with the resolution, representations were made to the NSW Minister for Primary Industry, the Hon Ian Macdonald MP, who indicated support for the Shires Association position.

I realize that the closing date for preliminary comments was 6 October, and I apologise, the existence of this Inquiry has only just come to my attention. It is hoped that the endorsed view of councils in rural NSW can be considered in the further deliberations of the Productivity Commission Inquiry.

Thank you

**Robert Verhey**

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**From 1 November the LGSA will be relocated at Level 8, 28 Margaret St Sydney.  
Phone numbers, email addresses and postal address remain unchanged.**