



Press Release – 2 March 2017

**To: The Management Committees of all Racing Pigeon Federations, Combine Entities, Country Clubs, One-Loft Races and Fancy Pigeon Associations.**

**Re: Update 5: Highly infectious Rotavirus outbreak in Australia.**

Dear All,

This update is in two halves:

- Rotavirus vaccine development, availability and need for funding
- General update from CVO and DPI

**Rotavirus development and availability**

- Work on developing a rotavirus vaccine commenced 4-weeks ago. On the 28<sup>th</sup> February Dr Colin Walker met with Dr Travis Beddoe and Dr Mark White at Agri-bio in Melbourne to further discuss progress on the development of a vaccine.
- The good news from this meeting is that it is highly probable a rotavirus vaccine will be available to the fancy in the latter half of 2017 – see Dr Walker’s update [www.melbournebirdvet.com/pigeon-virus-update.aspx](http://www.melbournebirdvet.com/pigeon-virus-update.aspx)
- **Scenarios are:**
  - a. Best case: there may be delayed racing and showing later this year (Q3) with the fancy having inoculated their birds with the new vaccine;*
  - b. Likely worst case: the vaccine may be ready (Q4) to ensure we can all show and race next year.*
- Dr Walker, who is not making any charges for his considerable input, has advised that:
  - a. He will be making an application for an Australian Research Council linkage grant which he confidently expects to be approved;
  - b. If the grant is successful, the government will match every dollar required to be made by the pigeon community with two dollars;

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- c. It is very difficult to estimate the cost to the pigeon fraternity, but it may need to raise \$60,000 to meet its share of costs associated with producing and testing a rotavirus vaccine. Fanciers can keep up to date with progress via Dr Walker's website – see above link

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the all Australian pigeon fanciers, the work being undertaken by Dr Walker, Dr White and all the scientists involved in the development of a rotavirus vaccine.

### **Funding for Rotavirus Vaccine**

The ANRPB reiterates the message of 4 January and 25 January press releases that we need a “war chest” to co-fund vaccine trials and testing.

***The need for a vaccine is paramount given the continued spread of rotavirus; together with possible legal ramifications.***

Logically all pigeon fanciers should contribute as they are all “owners” of our hobby and sport.

1. Should every racing and show fancier contribute \$25 the “war chest” (ANRPB Disease Management Fund) will have sufficient funds to meet the target figure of \$60,000.
2. ANRPB Treasurer Grant Paterson reports that the ANPA (fancy pigeons) have already made a commitment to the ANRPB Inc. “Disease Management Fund” at the same level as is being requested by the racing pigeon fraternity.

As the urgent financial support of all clubs and federations is imperative the ANRPB looks forward to a speedy response to this initiative;

Please make funds payable to ANRPB Inc.

Or for electronic transfer;

**BSB: 032 173**

**Account No: 600027**

Please ensure that you clearly note name of club or federation.

The ANRPB will also gratefully accept and acknowledge donations from individuals.

Cheques can be posted to:

**ANRPB Inc. Hon Treasurer**

**Grant Paterson**

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**1/25 Halloran Drive  
JERRABOMBERRA NSW 2619**

Email receipts will be sent, marked ANRPB Inc. Disease Management Fund

All contributions will be publically acknowledged via ANRPB Inc. website; [www.anrpb.org](http://www.anrpb.org)

The ANRPB wishes to thank the many clubs and federations who have already contributed to the Disease Management Fund. They should ignore this follow up - reminder.

### **General update from CVO, DPI**

Further to ANRPB Press Releases of January and February 2017 the following update applies;

- The Australian Chief Veterinary Office (CVO) issued a Rotavirus update on 14 February. The CVO stated that *“the pigeon industry is advised to implement biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of the disease. This includes reconsidering gatherings and movements (including racing) of pigeons, and practicing good personal biosecurity.”* The AVO also advised of “challenge trials” with poultry to ascertain whether or not the rotavirus may impact on the chicken industry. Fanciers are encouraged to read the full AVO Rotavirus update.
- The NSW Department of Primary Industry (DPI) issued a Biosecurity Bulletin on 14 February advising that *“protecting pigeon welfare should be a priority consideration in all decisions regarding the management of the rotavirus pigeon disease issue.”* The NSW DPI also advised that fanciers should *“avoid mixing pigeons (e.g. racing, shows, sales) from unaffected and affected lofts until there is a suitable rotavirus vaccine available in Australia.”* Fanciers are encouraged to read the full NSW DPI Biosecurity Bulletin.
- Continued spread of Rotavirus - The rotavirus has now been confirmed in Queensland, in the Wide Bay area at Gympie One-Loft, 150kms north of Brisbane. Additional confirmed reports in Victoria at Dandenong and Cranbourne south east of Melbourne. In South Australia a metro Adelaide loft has reported suspected rotavirus deaths of 54 birds.

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**Summary:**

**Please be patient and confident with the excellent work being done to develop a rotavirus vaccine. This week's news is extremely heartening that it is highly probable we will have a vaccine later in the year. We will keep you informed as new information comes to hand.**

**Please support the fund raising for the vaccine development. Check to see that your Federations/Combines/Clubs have paid the \$25/head to the Disease Management Fund. Give them a push... please. All those who have contributed will be acknowledged on the ANRPB Inc. website.**

A final point – to those many Australian pigeon fanciers who have lost birds to this horrid rotavirus our thoughts and good wishes are with you. Later, after we have a vaccine, I'm sure the fancy will pull together to support those genuinely decimated with offers of new stock.

Yours sincerely

For and on behalf of the Australian National Racing Pigeon Board Incorporated.

Stephen Eggleton  
Chair - ANRPB Inc.

*This update drafted by Stephen Eggleton, Greg Kakoschke, Grant Paterson and approved by the ANRPB Inc.*

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