

Elizabeth Hart
eliz.hart25@gmail.com

The Hon. Tony Burke MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
with responsibility for the
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

17 June 2010

Dear Minister

**RE: UNNECESSARY, AND POSSIBLY HARMFUL, VACCINATION OF COMPANION ANIMALS AND THE
APVMA'S POSITION STATEMENT ON VACCINATION PROTOCOLS FOR DOGS AND CATS**

Please see attached an 'open letter' addressed to Dr Allen Bryce, Program Manager, Veterinary Medicines of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, and copied to you, and Australian and international representatives of the veterinary profession and industry.

My letter discusses the problem of unnecessary, and possibly harmful, vaccination of companion animals, a practice that continues in Australia despite the existence of international dog and cat vaccination guidelines warning against this practice for many years. My letter contains internet links to my extensive research and correspondence on this topic.

The APVMA has been complicit in this problem due to its past failure to ensure that manufacturers' prescriptive modified live virus (MLV) vaccine product label revaccination recommendations are evidence based.

Members of the veterinary profession have taken advantage of these non-evidence based revaccination recommendations, and used them as an excuse to coerce pet owners into having unnecessary vaccinations for their pets. Information in the scientific literature, and international dog and cat vaccination guidelines, warning that vaccination should be reduced to minimise the risk of adverse reaction, have been ignored, and crucial information on long duration of immunity and possible adverse reactions has not been shared with pet owners for many years.

While the APVMA has issued a Position Statement on Vaccination Protocols for Dogs and Cats, it appears little has been done to ensure the public is made aware of the contents of this statement. Merely posting information on the APVMA's website does not fulfill the government regulator's responsibility in this matter, particularly as most pet owners *or veterinarians* are unlikely to come across this information on the APVMA's website serendipitously...

After the extraordinary and inexcusable delay in addressing the problem of unnecessary, and possibly harmful, vaccination of pets in Australia, this matter now requires urgent resolution, as pet owners are being forced to unnecessarily revaccinate their pets to access veterinary services, boarding kennels, pet insurance, and pet grooming facilities. Non-core vaccines of questionable efficacy and safety are also being pushed indiscriminately. This is unacceptable and unethical.

In your role as Minister responsible for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, ***I request that you take urgent action to ensure that pet owners in Australia are protected from being coerced into having unnecessary, and possibly harmful, interventions for their pets.***

I look forward to your early response.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Hart

Att: - Open letter to Dr Allen Bryce, Program Manager, Veterinary Medicines, APVMA
http://users.on.net/~peter.hart/Open_Letter_to_Allen_Bryce_APVMA_June_2010.pdf
- Letter to the Editor, The Veterinarian on the topic of companion animal vaccination
http://users.on.net/~peter.hart/Letter_to_the_Veterinarian_June_2010_E_Hart.pdf
- Open letter to Dr Mark Lawrie, (past) President of the Australian Veterinary Association
http://users.on.net/~peter.hart/Open_letter_to_the_AVA_re_continuing_unnecessary_vax_May_2010.pdf