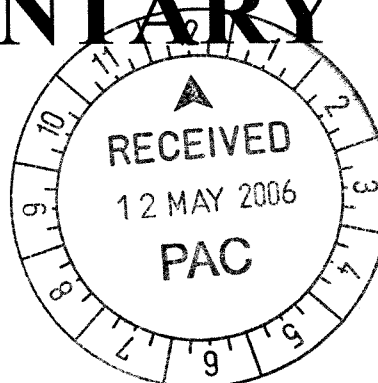


# SUBMISSION

TO

# PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY



## INQUIRY INTO MANAGING ANIMAL AND PLANT DISEASES

**Prepared for:** NSW Legislative Assembly Inquiry

**Conducted by:** Public Accounts Committee

**Submitted by:** FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

**Contact:** Chairman  
Mr Peter Reilly  
"Reillys Run"  
Nelungaloo. NSW 2876

**Phone:** 02 68645134

# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

"REILLY'S RUN"  
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5<sup>th</sup> May 2006

The Committee Manager  
Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

## **Managing Animal And Plant Diseases. Call For Submissions.**

Dear Madam,

Enclosed are copies of some relevant letters and documents regarding the ten-year OJD debacle in Australia. We have been nothing more than a laughing stock in the eyes of the rest of the world regarding this issue. All previous Enquiries, Hearings, Reviews etc into OJD have solved nothing simply because they dealt with the politics and not the actual disease itself.

All this fits neatly into your ITEM (3) MIS-Management of endemic diseases.

It remains to be seen whether your committee has the intestinal fortitude to actually tackle the issue head on by demanding a Royal Commission be held to bring all the perpetrators of this negligent and outrageous programme to justice. Then, and only then, can proper compensation be awarded to all the victims.

If this issue is not laid to rest fairly and equitably you can forget about ever dealing with an exotic disease outbreak in Australia. So bitter are many NSW Sheep Producers over OJD that they certainly won't bother reporting any suspicious disease cases to DPI or RLPB bureaucrats until it is too late.

Without the cooperation of producers any battle against exotic diseases is futile. Now is the time for the NSW Government to toe the line and measure up to its responsibilities by righting the wrongs of the past decade of disaster that was the OJD programme.

Yours sincerely,



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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29<sup>th</sup> January 2003

The Hon. Richard Amery MP  
Minister for Agriculture  
PO Box K220  
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Dear Minister,

You are no doubt well aware of the continuing and seemingly endless controversy the OJD issue is causing in the NSW sheep industry. You would also be aware that in December 2000, the former Chief Vet, for NSW, Dr Dick Jane acknowledged:-

- 1) That the eradication of OJD from Australia was not achievable.
- 2) That its continued spread was therefore inevitable.

Your approach has been that this is an industry problem and Government should only implement the decisions made by industry. That is correct; but to allow for a decision to be made democratically, all sheep producers in NSW must vote – something that has never been allowed to happen on this issue.

Several organisations have claimed to represent the industry but none speak for all producers. To this end we have had a lengthy discussion with the Director General of your Department, Dr Richard Sheldrake, who suggested we write and inform you of our desire to involve all sheep producers in a referendum. Our group has been inundated with support from all over NSW by producers wanting a say on this matter. They are all frustrated with farmer organisations and endless committees not giving them a say and also avoiding the central issue on OJD.

That central issue is:- Creating a non-discriminatory fair and equitable level playing field whereby the entire NSW industry **fully** funds the whole programme if it is to continue. That **must include fully compensating** all producers disadvantaged by the programme's trading restrictions. For too long many producers have been given a no-cost trading advantage while dumping the full cost of all trading losses resulting from discounted sales onto affected producers.

As a Minister in Government you are well aware projects are not completed unless fully funded. If the majority of producers feel a fair and equitable non-discriminatory programme is vital to our industry – let's get on with it and **all pay in full**, similar to the very successful BTEC programme.

If on the other hand the majority do not feel the programme is important enough to warrant that expense then **we do not have** a programme. We have deregulation with unrestricted vaccine usage wherever producers feel the need, as is the case with other

non-eradicable diseases eg Enterotoxaemia etc. OJD of course would then no longer be a notifiable disease.

If the NSW industry decides on Deregulation there is no doubt all States except WA would have little choice but to follow suit. In the interim period, any NSW producers who feel interstate trade is of vital importance to their businesses can test to comply with interstate requirements. These producers can pay their own way instead of expecting affected producers to foot the bill, as is currently the case.

The task is clear – industry must choose its preferred method of ending the discrimination once and for all. Many have been reduced to ruin while others have enjoyed a free ride. This situation must end by way of a referendum. We would ask you to clear the way for it to commence.

By necessity it would need to be in the following format:-

That a poll of **all** NSW sheep producers be held to facilitate the removal of the discriminatory aspects of the current OJD programme by either:

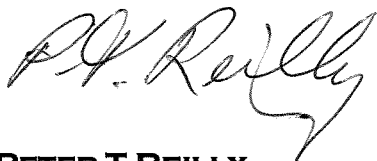
A) Requiring the NSW industry to fund full compensation for all producers financially disadvantaged by the programme's trading restrictions.

OR

B) De-regulate OJD in NSW thereby removing trading restrictions.

We look forward to an early resolution of this matter.

Yours Sincerely,



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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11<sup>th</sup> February 2003

The Hon. Richard Amery MP  
Minister for Agriculture  
PO Box K220  
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Dear Minister,

Following our letter to you of Jan 29, 2003 regarding OJD, we are forwarding additional information as follows.

You are no doubt aware a huge rally took place in Forbes on February 4<sup>th</sup> attended by 3 000 Sheep producers. Speakers included the world's two largest sheep processors, woolbrokers, veterinarians, grass roots sheep producers including those financially ruined by the OJD programme.

The Rally adopted the following resolutions

1. Vote of no confidence in NSW Agriculture, The NSW Farmers Association and the NSW OJD Advisory Committee for their handling of the OJD issue in NSW that has resulted in widespread, unnecessary discrimination against NSW sheep producers.
2. That a poll of all NSW sheep producers be held to facilitate the removal of the discriminatory aspects of the current OJD Programme by either;
  - a) Requiring the NSW Industry to fund full compensation for all producers financially disadvantaged by the programmes trading restrictions. OR
  - b) De-regulate OJD in NSW thereby removing trading restrictions.
3. That the meeting requests those who have organised this meeting to use any action – drastic if necessary – to have these motions implemented.

A petition signed by 1200 sheep producers requesting a full industry poll, supported by Motion 2 above, is enclosed. A further petition signed by the owners of three million sheep has already been handed to you by the NSW OJD Action Group.

Media reports have highlighted the widespread anger and frustration shown by those at the rally regarding the handling of OJD in NSW. Furthermore some very unsavoury information surfaced at the rally that indicates the programme is fast sinking into a state of cancerous decay that will have a long-term disastrous effect on the sheep and wool industry in this State.

It now appears that:-

1. Illegal trading across zone boundaries and interstate is rife and set to explode with the breaking of the drought.
2. Stock theft and subsequent widespread illegal movements across zones will also explode
3. An underground network of disgruntled producers apparently have been assisting disease spread to force NSW into a single trading zone sooner rather than later, something they see as inevitable anyway.
4. Several Protected Zone producers have vowed to cross over into forbidden zones in an attempt to source sheep at the drought's end. They have stated there will be no choice.

The OJD issue has, and will continue to see the NSW sheep industry in uproar and you are presiding over that. It is imperative that you act in accordance with the wishes of industry to bring on a referendum of **all producers** as requested in our previous letter and this one, both supported by the enclosed petition.

The industry is speaking to you and it must be heard. We are tired of hearing that this programme is 'What industry wants'. Interstate concerns are only raised when they consider NSW is endangering their position. They are never to be found when the compensation issue is raised which obviously indicates disease containment (which is not achievable anyway) is not their real agenda.

We in NSW must decide collectively by referendum our preferred method of halting the endless discrimination, destruction, financial ruin and in some cases suicide that this programme has delivered to the sheep industry in this State.

**It is vital you give your urgent attention to this matter.**

Yours sincerely,



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

c.c. Dr Richard Sheldrake  
Director General  
NSW Agriculture  
Locked Bag 21  
ORANGE NSW 2800  
Fax: (02) 63913321

# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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10<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Ms Jane Littlejohn  
Executive Officer  
NSW OJD Advisory Committee  
PO Box 1068  
SYDNEY NSW 1041

Email: dawsdj@bigpond.com.au

Dear Ms Littlejohn,

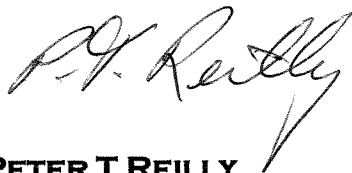
Thank you for your prompt reply to my letter and for explaining the very limited powers you and the OJD Advisory Committee have at your disposal. The fact the Committee can only advise the Minister means none of us have a problem as that is all we as industry want done.

As explained in my previous correspondence, Industry has decided it wants a referendum; something that has been denied it so far. So it is basically a case of the Committee passing that message on to the Minister by way of advice.

Regarding the last paragraph of your letter, there is really no point in your committee involving itself in any further details as its powers are so limited. It will be much more appropriate to discuss detail directly with the Minister when we, the industry, meet with him to finalise arrangements for the referendum.

Having witnessed a vote of no confidence in your committee carried at two recent rallies, it is essential no attempt is made to try and stand in the way of the desire of Industry to exercise its democratic right through a referendum.

Yours sincerely,



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

Cc: Ms Felicity Henderson  
Mr Joe Lane

"Reilly's Run"  
Nelungaloo  
NSW 2876

7<sup>th</sup> April 2003

The Editor  
The Southern Weekly

Dear Madam,

Pat Abraham of NSW Agriculture, in his OJD Opinion Column 7<sup>th</sup> April 2003, states that OJD is an industry issue and concludes it is not what he thinks that is important, but what industry wants.

Truer words were never spoken – problem is however Industry has never been consulted on the OJD issue. The call for a referendum and a signed petition by thousands of producers at recent rallies is being conveniently avoided by the multi-layered bureaucratic and committee driven OJD machine, all of whom are still attempting to play God with the sheep industry. Even Mr Abraham, a 'committee member' states the importance of producers making 'an informed decision'.

Sorry Mr Abraham – 'being informed is not a prerequisite for voting eligibility in Australia. All the knowledge in the world gives you one vote – the same as Joe Bloggs next door.

In case he hadn't noticed however, industry has all the information it needs on the OJD issue to make a so-called 'informed decision'. WE are well aware of the following:

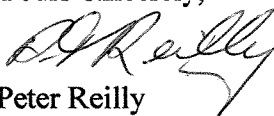
- The Canberra meeting (December 2002) was light years behind when it agreed that given the current tools, eradication of OJD is not possible. That fact was acknowledged in December 2000 by your former Chief Vet, Dick Jane, who even then was only stating what had been concluded by an industry committee in the early 90's.

Forget about the tools for eradication Mr Abraham, the other two sides of the eradication triangle are missing, namely funding and producer support, meaning eradication is not achievable any time. That is why every other sheep producing country lives with OJD and vaccinates as required.

- Without eradication and/or compensation, the OJD programme was flawed from the outset regardless of the known distribution of the disease, let alone the unknown.
- Vaccination is not a form of regulation (N.B. 5 in 1 for enterotoxaemia etc). Vendor declarations can be market driven (at purchaser's request) not mandatory.
- Regarding OJD there are no such things as an effective programme, level of risk, balance between disease control and trading options – there are only OJD bacteria which are here to stay; and GUDAIR VACCINE: the rest is unwanted baggage which has been fed to industry for years by your bureaucracy in the hope we would remain uninformed so as not to threaten the Empire building process.

Sorry Mr Abraham it's time for a referendum. We have all the information we need and then some.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Peter Reilly



# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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8<sup>th</sup> April 2003

The Hon. Ian MacDonald MP  
Minister for Agriculture  
PO Box K220  
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Dear Minister,

Enclosed are copies of two letters regarding OJD forwarded to your predecessor Richard Amery earlier this year. With an election looming he chose to give industry the run around rather than deal with the issue. The continual upheaval on OJD will not subside until you act to allow all producers a say by way of a referendum outlined in the letters mentioned above.

The numerous committees and organisations, along with endless reviews, enquiries and so on have been nothing but an impediment to the sheep industry who have never been consulted on the OJD issue.

We look forward to some long overdue action from your office as a result of your recent appointment as Minister.

Yours Sincerely,



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

# OJD – Made Simple -April 2003

The OJD story is very simple. The only thing you need know about it is that the eradication of OJD from Australia is not achievable. It then follows continued spread is inevitable. Both these facts were acknowledged by NSW Agriculture's former chief Vet, Dick Jane, in December 2000. Every other sheep producing country came to that conclusion years ago – so the disease has never been an issue

**What we have now is simply a political argument between two polarised groups.**

1. Those who have had their sheep trading restricted to various levels and for various reasons supposedly for the benefit of the whole industry but who are losing money as a result of being on the wrong side of a line on a map.
2. Those who happen to be on the right side of a line on a map and are therefore enjoying a no cost trading advantage simply because much of their competition in (1) above can no longer compete with them due to trading restrictions.

**Blind Freddie can obviously see that Group (1) want deregulation so they can get full value for their sheep but Group (2) want continued regulation to give them an ongoing no cost trading advantage so they can cream the market.**

The problem therefore is the unlevel playing field which no committee or group responsible for the OJD programme has had the strength to face up to.

**There are many of course who have a vested interest in seeing it isn't solved, as their jobs will disappear.**

The only solution is the creation of a level playing field which can only be achieved by either

- a) requiring the whole industry to fund full compensation for those disadvantaged by the programme's trading restrictions

**or**

- b) Deregulate – thereby removing the trading restrictions.

Every sheep producer needs to vote in a full industry referendum on the above. Everyone has been sidestepping the hard decision since Day One. The programme has to be either fully funded or scrapped.

**Pay up or shut up.** It's time to face the tough decision. Until this referendum takes place, the arguing and upheaval will never end.

Heres to democracy,

Peter T Reilly.

**P.S. The Chrohn's Disease Furphy.**

- 1) Worldwide science has never proven a link between OJD and Chrohn's
- 2) More importantly because OJD bacteria cannot be eradicated, anything that may ever be linked to them is here to stay anyway. Establishing a link still leaves you nowhere and achieves nothing. It's like linking gravity to plane crashes!!!



# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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26<sup>th</sup> April 2003

The Hon. Duncan Gay MLC,  
Shadow Minister for Agriculture  
C/- Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY. NSW. 2000

Dear Mr Gay,

As the recently appointed Shadow Minister for Agriculture, you are no doubt acutely aware of the ongoing controversy over OJD in NSW.

**Industry has been calling for a referendum of all producers** on the issue to finally allow it the say that has been denied it by endless Committees and Bureaucrats standing in the way. These self interest groups are nothing more than an impediment to industry and need to be swept aside allowing the issue to be resolved.

If your team is to ever regain power in NSW, you will need to help **promote democracy in the bush instead of Dictatorship**. It's time for a full industry vote on OJD.

Yours Sincerely,



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

# ***Forbes OJD Action Group***

**Media Release**

**2 May 2003**

## **FUTILE OJD SURGERY**

"The interests of the sheep industry are not being well served by the recently released AWI funded OJD report from Evan Sargent. His frantic attempt at emergency surgery on the dying OJD programme is futile." Peter Reilly, Chairman of Forbes OJD Action Group said today.

"Trying to prop up this programme with new models, separate risk categories, degrees of regulation and the like – all terminology that has been worn out after numerous attempts to re-jig a programme that was doomed from the outset through lack of funding for compensation is ridiculous. Why did AWI Ltd waste woolgrowers' money to fund this 'go nowhere' project when we are all aware the current programme is flawed?" Mr Reilly continued.

"Fiddling around the edges with a Sargent Model will not create a level playing field for all sheep producers. Only a full industry referendum to decide between a programme with full compensation or deregulation with unrestricted vaccine useage will do that." Mr Reilly said.

"It is essential the newly appointed Agriculture Minister, Ian MacDonald brings on a referendum as a matter of urgency. The constant arguing and upheaval in the sheep industry will not subside until a referendum takes place" Mr Reilly concluded.

***All Enquires to:***

***Peter Reilly, "Reilly's Run", Nelungaloo. 2876. Tel. 02 68645134, Mob. 0428 638559***

# ***Forbes OJD Action Group***

**Media Release**

**5 May 2003**

## **OJD DEBACLE WORSENS**

"Last week the NSW Farmers Association announced it will seek a new direction for the OJD Programme in NSW. Details released so far are riddled with conflicting statements only adding more confusion to the current mess." Peter Reilly, Chairman of the Forbes OJD Action Group commented today.

"Questions remain over whether this proposal means Deregulation or not? Zoning to go or maybe not? OJD to remain a notifiable disease but with no regulatory action? saleyard segregation or not? and so on.

This confusion certainly hasn't solved the problem for affected producers and now those in Protected Zones are protesting about it as well. The NSW Farmers proposal has created an even bigger minefield than before," Mr Reilly said.

"On top of that NSW Agriculture Minister Ian Macdonald has announced that Richard Bull is to hold a review into OJD due for completion in July. Add to that the NSW OJD Advisory Committee's suggestion of its own little review and you have a recipe for total disaster.

For years we have had nothing but Enquiries, Reviews, Task Forces, Adjustments to the Programme, Ways Forward, New Directions – you name it. All have failed and so will the latest attempts to re-invent the wheel." Mr Reilly added.

"None of these proposed actions will solve the problem simply because they continue to avoid the central issue of consulting the whole industry by bringing on a referendum of all 30,000 sheep producers to vote on the only two alternatives capable of solving this impasse; namely

- A fully funded regulatory programme with comprehensive compensation for all affected producers
- OR
- Deregulation with unlimited access to vaccine.

Thousands of producers at rallies earlier this year demanded a vote along these lines. Letters of support have been received from over fifty major rural based organisations, banks and other businesses.

Instead of the Minister, the Advisory Committee and NSW Farmers playing politics with people's lives over this issue, they should all be supporting the clear message that the wider industry wants a vote and it's time it took place." Mr Reilly concluded.

***All Enquires to:***

***Peter Reilly, "Reilly's Run", Nelungaloo. 2876. Tel. 02 68645134, Mob. 0428 638559***

# OJD Opinion - May 2003

**By Peter Reilly    Chairman – Forbes OJD Action Group**

Ovine Johnes Disease (OJD) is a minor disease of sheep present in every sheep producing country in the world. None have ever eradicated it or developed a successful eradication programme.

Vaccination has proven to be the only viable option in dealing with it. The fact that Australia embarked on a seemingly endless regulatory programme for OJD following the Morris Hussey report was a course of action, which could only be described as insane.

The seven internationally accepted requirements and preconditions for a disease programme of control and eradication are;

1. Knowledge of the epidemiology.
2. Diagnostic feasibility
3. Cost benefit analysis, with recognition of the socio –economic importance of the disease.
4. Availability of resources, trained personnel, disease free replacement stock, and funding for compensation.
5. Public health significance.
6. Ecological consequences.
7. Suitable legislation.

From the outset, the NOJDP (National Ovine Johnes Disease Programme) has created continual upheaval and unrest throughout the sheep industry simply because non-eradicable diseases and regulation are not compatible.

There have been endless committee meetings, hearings, reviews – all to no avail as they have attempted to arrive at a political compromise to accommodate all participants and in doing so have completely lost sight of the actual disease, OJD.

As a consequence, this programme has wreaked continual havoc on the sheep industry. Studs and commercial flocks have been sent to the wall; properties sold up. There have even been marriage breakups and suicides reported as a result.

The inevitable spread of the disease and more particularly draconian regulations and trading restrictions have resulted in open revolt by NSW sheep producers. They see this as their only avenue to rid industry of this ridiculous farce simply because the bureaucratic empire that is the NOJDP uses every method available to sidestep the issue and pass the buck.

The civil unrest as reported in NSW recently will continue and be stepped up until this monumental disaster collapses under its own weight. Politicians and bureaucrats are now in the hot seat and will be relentlessly pursued until they act to clean up the mess.

Two very successful protest rallies have been held in Forbes and Wagga, NSW. A combined total of over 4000 people attended both.

Feedback at the rallies included reports of:-

- Widespread illegal trading both within NSW and across State borders. This will explode when the drought breaks.
- Stock theft will only add to the above and neither can be policed.

OJD has been reported in all states – it has no boundaries. There is therefore no excuse for any trading restrictions either intra or inter state. Those that are in place are being openly abused – a situation which will only worsen.

In 1980 there was one confirmed case of OJD in Australia. In 1990 – 35 cases and in 1995 – 80 cases. In 1995 the NSW Steering Committee was formed with the aim of eradicating OJD. By the end of 2001 the best estimate was over 3 800, maybe as many as 5 000, with infected flocks in every state. How can we ever think that this programme is working?

**The NSW Auditor General last week slammed NSW Agriculture for their handling of the OJD programme. The report states there is a distinct lack of leadership and an oversupply of committees.**

Both the sheep industry and Governments in all States should be moving swiftly to remove this ridiculous burden nationwide, allowing the return to normal trading. Vaccination will do the rest, as it does with Enterotoxaemia (pulpy kidney) and other similar diseases. Reports from Central NSW, where vaccination has been underway for some years, show OJD can be reduced to insignificant levels as opposed to using draconian regulation which is going nowhere. It's time sanity prevailed.

END.



# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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9<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Ms Felicity Henderson  
Chairperson  
NSW OJD Advisory Committee

Email: [dawsdj@bigpond.com.au](mailto:dawsdj@bigpond.com.au)

Dear Ms Henderson,

Your correspondence regarding OJD is to hand. The Advisory Committee 'Sham' Review is simply an exercise in survival whilst still attempting to shut industry out. Only a few handpicked producers are attending your circus and any proposed questionnaire will not solve the problem – it has all been done before.

**As usual, you are ages behind as Industry has already decided what is:-**

- a) **Practical** – Gudair vaccine by the length of the straight.
- b) **Affordable** – Affected producers are forced to afford the full cost of this flawed programme whilst the rest are handed an 'affordable' no-cost trading advantage. Without Compensation the NOJDP was never ever 'affordable'.

You have two motions on the table – one regarding deregulation now or the other if Industry Unity is not achieved. You have been incapable of decision making for years and remain so by wasting time in not dealing with these motions.

The AHA proposals are **more bureaucratic rubbish** dumped on the scene without proper industry involvement. **Industry has spoken some months ago.** The OJD Landscape has changed forever – you need to catch up. NSW Farmers heeded the warnings given at the huge producer rallies. They have modified their position accordingly. All that remains for them to do is state more clearly the finer details of their current approach. Industry will not unite until it is clear that a totally level playing field is the aim of the exercise.



**You have not and will not succeed by trying to suppress one section of industry for political purposes. Deregulation of OJD is inevitable as it cannot be eradicated or contained. You are only wasting sheep producers' time and money.**

Comments attributed to you in last week's 'Land' newspaper show how totally lost you are – "Producers at Warren were not yet ready to accept a vaccinate and trade option, and were also wary of allowing unrestricted vaccine use in the Protected Zone"

How very convenient for the Warren producers to **NOT BE READY** for what they **DON'T WANT**.

**What about the rest of us?**

- 1) We at Forbes were **NOT READY** to be fenced in and unable to freely trade in October 2002 - BUT IT HAPPENED.
- 2) Studbreeders over many years were **NOT READY** to be quarantined for a non-eradlicable disease and as a consequence are still suffering financial losses in some cases exceeding \$1million.
- 3) Those producers who have been forced to sell properties due to bank foreclosures or those who have reportedly suicided as a result of this monumental Debacle, I'm sure were **NOT READY** either.

So if the Warren producers and all their allies are **NOT READY** to be relieved of their **cosy little trading advantage** – then it's about time they started paying compensation for the damage it is doing to the rest of us – for their so-called benefit.

And if you don't possess the Leadership skills to straighten them out, then it's time you walked. **Just go – Industry certainly doesn't need you** – it made that quite clear some months ago, moving a vote of no confidence in you and your committee.

**You are nothing more than an embarrassment to the sheep industry in NSW.**



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

c.c. Minister for Agriculture  
Pat Abrahams - NSW Ag  
Joe Lane - NSW Farmers Association

# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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15<sup>th</sup> June 2003

The Hon. Duncan Gay MLC,  
Shadow Minister for Agriculture  
C/- Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY. NSW. 2000

Dear Duncan,

Thank you for your letter of May 22, 2003 and also for your efforts in seeking to arrange a meeting with the Minister for Agriculture.

It does seem unfortunate however that you have been unable to gather sufficient information to ascertain that OJD management is in fact extremely simple. You really only need to know one thing about it and that is "the eradication of OJD from Australia is not achievable". From there the rest falls into place in less than an hour.

Should you require further information on any aspect of OJD, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime thank you again for your efforts.

Yours sincerely,



**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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21<sup>st</sup> July 2003

The Hon. Ian MacDonald MP  
Minister for Agriculture  
Level 30  
Governor Macquarie Tower  
No. 1 Farrer Place  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter of June 25<sup>th</sup> 2003 regarding OJD.

Your appointment of Mr Richard Bull to review the OJD situation in NSW was certainly a positive step and I would advise that we met with him recently and provided him with much valuable information.

Having Mr Bull report on the situation directly from the sheep industry to you will allow the bypassing of the totally incompetent NSW OJD Advisory Committee who could only be described as the sheep industry's equivalent of Dad's Army.

**Please note the following:-**

1. Over 4,000 producers at Rallies earlier this year moved a vote of no confidence in the Advisory Committee.
2. Committee members were never elected by industry – some have been there for five years plus, without any mechanism for their removal.
3. In all that time they have proven themselves incapable of decision making in the area of problem solving.
4. The few competent people who ever served on the Committee resigned early on in frustration over the lack of action.
5. The most knowledgeable people on OJD out there in industry have never attempted to join the Committee due to its ineffectiveness.
6. Any group who could spend close to six years not solving a problem as simple as the OJD one, should have been sacked long ago.

In summary there was absolutely no point in our group attending a regional meeting held by the Advisory Committee when their lack of knowledge would, as always, attempt to shut out the greater knowledge of the wider industry.

And no, they certainly didn't consider our proposal for a referendum. They simply rejected it and ran for cover in the knowledge that it was the solution to the problem and would leave them with egg on the face after years of continual procrastination.

You would no doubt be aware that this ridiculous OJD programme is slowly but surely tearing the heart out of the Sheep industry in NSW. Despite Senate Enquiries, Mid Term Reviews, Surveys and so on, no one has moved decisively to end the carnage.

Before this programme existed there was no problem. OJD has continued to spread regardless of all regulatory measures. After it and all its hangers-on have been banished to the ends of the earth we will simply have, as we have had for decades now, just another sheep disease – OJD – but now with an extremely effective weapon against it – GUDAIR VACCINE. We don't have a National Programme for Enterotoxaemia – we simply vaccinate.

That was all we ever needed to do with OJD before the National Programme was instigated – just vaccinate.

Your Predecessor Richard Amery failed to act to end this nonsense. All that remains for you to do is lead from the front and rid the NSW sheep industry of the greatest debacle it has ever witnessed in its entire history.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. T. Reilly', written in a cursive, flowing style.

**PETER T REILLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**

c.c. Mr Richard Bull

July 2003

## OJD REVIEW PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The current OJD program in NSW is being reviewed and future directions assessed by Richard Bull for the NSW Minister for Agriculture. The review is planned to be completed during August. The following points represent some preliminary conclusions for the future management of OJD in NSW. They are being made public to attract further discussion prior to finalisation of the report.

### Zones

- Zoning would be discontinued as a regulatory mechanism.
- **Agree totally**
- Prevalence mapping would continue on a localised basis, based on previous 1-2 year's results.
- **Disagree – unless all infected flocks are identified and the list updated at least twice yearly (which is impossible), prevalence mapping will only serve to continue the stigma which is the major barrier in preventing maximum control of OJD. Levels of Prevalence are irrelevant anyway – once OJD bacteria are present, it's one way traffic – refer to the situation in the Young RLPB.**
- Exclusion area concept would be available to RLPB's or other local groups to locally manage the disease in their area.
- **This concept is only a miniature version of what we have now which has proven to be a total disaster. There is absolutely no reason why a single producer or group cannot test to interstate requirements. Excluding OJD from an area is not achievable unless there is a natural barrier in place. If there is one, you don't need the exclusion area.**

### Future Trading

- Based on the use of Vendor Decs/Animal Health Statements.
- **Agree as long as they are VOLUNTARY. Pieces of paper offer no defence against OJD infection. Vaccine does.**
- Statement would include factual information regarding management of OJD, vaccination status and testing history.  
**Agree. If purchasers want information, provide it. When the penny finally drops Australia wide, the only useful information on a Vendor Declaration will be 'ARE SHEEP VACCINATED? - YES/NO'**
- The authenticity of the declaration would be supported by increased penalties for false information.
- **Disagree. The Trade Practices Act should suffice for this. The biggest problem is that many producers will be making an accurate**

**statement which, because of the nature of OJD, will in fact be false as they will actually have OJD without knowing it. The Answer – Vaccinate. Pieces of paper create a warm fuzzy feeling but offer no defence against OJD infection.**

- Inclusion on the NVD should be long term goal; maybe as a tear-off section.  
**Can be done but is of minimal value anyway.**
- 
- AHS statements produced in duplicate books for all sheep producers.
- **Agree –keep it simple as AHS are basically useless.**

#### Vaccine

- Vaccine to be available throughout NSW.  
**Agree totally**
- Retailled through normal animal-health product suppliers, such as stock and station agents.  
**Agree totally**
- Need for marker within the vaccine to differentiate between vaccinated and infected.  
**Agree – for those requiring it.**
- Retailers carry some responsibility for ensuring end user familiar with proper usage. ie pamphlet, instruction for use, etc  
**Partly agree – must be a pamphlet which is standard right across all suppliers, otherwise everyone will be putting their own spin on vaccine useage.**

#### Abattoir surveillance

- To be continued, and run by the Department of Agriculture.
- **Disagree totally – this is only job creation as the results are already obvious. OJD is here to stay and cannot be contained. Widespread vaccination will all but eliminate the effects of the disease – we don't need more useless statistics – just VACCINATE!!**
- 
- Results of testing, both positive and negative to be available to producer.
- **Disagree totally - there is absolutely no point in creating ongoing stigma when all flocks are not tested and some showing negative results will actually be infected.**

#### Department's role

- Abattoir surveillance, MAP and TMS testing.
- **Disagree – Ag Dept should only be doing testing requested by flock owners.**

- Prevalence mapping of disease on a localised basis.
- **Pointless as it will work against the positive message needed to maximise the acceptance of vaccinates. It will continue to promote the 'Leper Colony' syndrome.**
- Extension services and education.
- **Agree – should have been their only role since Day One.**
- Research.
- **There is no point in research unless it has an end use that will stack up economically against vaccination which is highly unlikely unless it involves developing a superior vaccine.**

#### **Stock Diseases Act**

- OJD remain notifiable, without regulatory impact.
- **Disagree – there is no point in having OJD notifiable when it can not be eradicated, regulatory action is to cease and vaccine controls it. Enterotoxaemia is not NOTIFIABLE!! OJD is just another disease!!**
- Education of producers affected on options and future management.
- **Covered in Department's role.**
- Increased penalties for false declarations.
- **Covered above. Many Declarations will be inaccurate even though they are truthfully executed. Apart from providing the details of vaccination, they are basically useless.**

### **SUMMARY**

**Not a single credible reason has ever surfaced for the existence of the OJD Programme. All attempts to deal with the endless problems it has created for industry have failed simply because they have been based on trying to find a political solution to a mathematical problem. The Solution lies in dealing with the disease only, not the political requirements of those trying to gain an advantage from the current programme. Total deregulation with unlimited availability of vaccine would deliver the most effective impact on the suppression of OJD.**

**All that remains is for Minister Ian McDonald to take the sword to this programme and allow industry to move on.**



# ***FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP***

**PRESS RELEASE**

**25<sup>th</sup> August 2003**

## **OJD QUESTIONNAIRE SCANDAL**

“The arrogance of the NSW OJD Advisory Committee in attempting to bypass the sheep industry by forwarding a questionnaire to Producers without the key opening question asking whether or not we actually want another OJD programme to commence when the current one ends shows their real agenda”. Peter Reilly, Chairman of the Forbes OJD Action Group, said today.

“This high handed approach by the Committee who were never elected by Industry, but who have continually attempted to impose their will on us in undemocratic fashion now sees them list their predetermined options, all designed to be part of a new programme that Industry hasn't voted into existence yet.

“Where is the ballot paper to allow us to decide whether we want a future programme or deregulation and the obvious questions stemming from that? Where is the blank section inviting any further comment from producers? This committee, now in tatters after a walkout by Stud Breeder representatives last week, has attempted to mislead Industry by referring to Deregulation as a ‘Do Nothing’ option. Vaccination, Testing, Animal Health Statements and so on, can hardly be called ‘Do Nothing’ options; and all are achievable in a deregulated environment.” Mr Reilly commented.

“The fact the Advisory Committee is prepared to try and manipulate producer responses just to keep their travelling circus on the road is outrageous.

Who is to scrutinize the Committee's interpretation of the survey? Where is the audit process? Without the compulsory secret ballot demanded by Industry months ago, this whole Questionnaire exercise is simply a joke.

The so-called information sent out with it has been common knowledge throughout industry for years. Everyone knows Regulation without full compensation has been a total disaster and that a market driven approach coupled with unrestricted vaccination is the only commonsense option.” Mr Reilly added.

“No wonder NSW Agriculture Minister Ian Macdonald commissioned former Shadow Minister Richard Bull to review the OJD situation in NSW rather than rely on this lame duck Advisory Committee to provide answers.

If, after five years of meddling in the affairs of the State's sheep producers, they can only manage a single page Questionnaire containing three questions, all at great expense to the taxpayer, then it is certainly time they were all sacked. They are nothing more than an embarrassment to the Sheep Industry; a fact highlighted by an industry vote of no confidence in them earlier this year.” Mr Reilly concluded.

***All Enquires:***

***Peter Reilly, “Reilly's Run”, Nelungaloo. 2876. Tel.02 68645134, Mob, 0428638559***



# FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP

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15<sup>th</sup> September, 2003.

## **Please find our immediate comments on Richard Bull and OJD Advisory Committee Reports released today. (Three pages in total.)**

1. Richard Bull Report.
2. OJD A/C Report.
3. Reference – recent Press Release.

### **RICHARD BULL REPORT -**

Richard Bull's independent report shows quite clearly that the current regulatory programme and all its hanger-on committees have had no worthwhile impact on OJD. They have failed.

It recommends that Industry and in particular individual producers take the lead in managing OJD.

It recognises the vital role Gudair vaccine plays in this process and has recommended its unrestricted availability.

All of the above we have been saying for ages.

All the general recommendations made in the Bull report could be implemented in a deregulated environment as it is suggested even though OJD remain notifiable – no regulatory action should take place. Basically we don't need a future OJD Programme to control the disease.

Mr Bull stated on the ABC Country Hour that apart from the exclusion area concept, the new approach would be basically Deregulation anyway.

Regarding these areas, if Boards want to live in a fool's paradise and their ratepayers are prepared to fund it, so be it. It will not affect others as does the current programme because there will be NO regulatory zoning.

Exclusion Areas will die a natural death anyway as they are only a miniature version of what we have now and it has failed dismally simply because eradicating and stopping OJD spread has proven unachievable. The situation in the Young RLPB is living proof of that.

It's only a matter of time before all learn that vaccination is the only effective weapon against OJD.

(END)



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15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2003

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS –

The committee is simply a joke. They have spent five years going nowhere and are now desperately trying to play catch up to the Richard Bull report.

Their so-called industry survey was an eleventh hour rushed job, basically only an exercise in image creation. Only 10% of Producers replied to the survey, that number being far less than those who attended the OJD rallies earlier this year. The Survey itself omitted the relevant questions anyway.  
(Refer – Para. 1&3 - OJD Questionnaire Scandal Press Release)

All producers still haven't voted on the OJD issue. We still haven't been asked whether we do or don't want a future programme, and also whether or not we want a committee, and if so, they need to be democratically elected.

The committee has now published eleven pages of repetitive and basically irrelevant material that admits what we have been saying for ages.

1. Regulation has proven to be a dismal failure
2. GUDAIR vaccine is the only weapon worth using against OJD.

Felicity Henderson stated on the ABC Country Hour she wants to spend the next 1 to 3 years on the merry-go-round implementing new policy. After five years of this committee's incompetence, Industry has well and truly had enough.

It should be noted Richard Bull is recommending the Advisory Committees be wound up. We agree, they are nothing more than an embarrassment to the sheep industry, but would suggest their immediate removal and the uptake of Mr Bull's recommendations for change being implemented, as he suggests, as soon as possible.

(Refer – last Para. – OJD Questionnaire Scandal Press Release)



PETER T REILLY  
CHAIRMAN

## **OJD OPINION**

**By – Peter Reilly**

**Chairman**

**Forbes OJD Action Group**

**6<sup>th</sup> October 2003**

### **OJD SHORTFALL**

The recently announced OJD Policy change by NSW Agriculture Minister Ian Macdonald is final acknowledgement that the six-year NOJDP has been a total disaster for the sheep industry. Having reached this point there was absolutely no excuse for not taking the sword to the programme and totally deregulating OJD in NSW. His adoption of a 'soft option' approach obviously designed to accommodate the aspirations of job seeking bureaucrats and ill-informed agri-politicians has delivered NSW a messy ongoing programme that industry doesn't need.

It is worth noting that Industry as a whole has never voted on the OJD issue.

The Building Block document recently released by NSW Agriculture is riddled with unworkable options as opposed to the Bull Report, part of which contained a workable market driven approach which could have been adopted by the Minister.

- Using a points based credit system will be discriminatory and unworkable as there are simply too many different situations including composite sheep mobs to fit any scale. Providing known information with no credits would be more relevant.
- Mandatory Health Declarations cannot be policed and in many cases will be inaccurate anyway. Negative tests are inconclusive as failed MAP testing has shown. As a result many with flocks that are actually infected will be able to legally provide documentation to the contrary. The only totally accurate information will come from flocks that are confirmed infected and/or vaccinated. Voluntary declarations at purchaser's request would have provided all the necessary information that is of any value.
- The exclusion area concept is simply a miniature version of the current discredited programme and is therefore doomed to fail. Interestingly enough it contains a requirement for producers to fund it – an admission the Forbes OJD Action Group's call for producers to fund the NOJDP or scrap it, was correct.
- Abattoir Surveillance is only job creation as all flocks are not either regularly assessed or updated and ongoing results are already predictable as OJD cannot be eradicated or contained. It will therefore only continue the current discrimination and stigma, which is the major barrier to effectively suppressing OJD in Australia.
- Industry leadership and unity will only be impeded by the new approach as there are still too many barriers preventing decision making at the farm gate.
- NSW Agriculture and the RLP Boards role should always have been advisory only. Because of their 'big stick' regulatory role, the relationship between them and producers is at an all time low and it will take years to reverse this situation thanks to the OJD fiasco.
- The removal of regulatory zoning coupled with unlimited access to GUDAIR<sup>(Trademark.)</sup> vaccine are the only aspects of the Minister's statement that will effectively impact on the disease itself and are therefore worth pursuing. This could have been achieved in a totally deregulated environment.

Industry does not need another OJD programme or the bureaucratic red tape and regulation announced by the Minister. The industry unity sought by him and all concerned will not be forthcoming until the latest edition of this monumental disaster of a programme complete with hanger-on committees and bureaucrats is banished from the face of Australia for good.

**END**

529 words



# ***FORBES OJD ACTION GROUP***

**PRESS RELEASE**

**21 June 2004**

## **OJD FUNDING SHAMBLES**

“The current scramble to fund OJD abattoir monitoring is a complete waste of time and resources”, Peter Reilly, Chairman of the Forbes OJD Action Group said today.

“It has already been established conclusively that the eradication and containment of OJD is not achievable. We have a very effective vaccine to suppress the disease and that is where all available funds should be directed”, Mr Reilly added.

“There is absolutely no point in using abattoir monitoring to inform people they have a non-eradicable disease, especially when it does not pick up all infected flocks. It is discriminatory and will only continue promoting the stigma which became widespread under the now discredited six year OJD Programme”, Mr Reilly continued.

“This is simply another exercise in job creation which industry will be forced to help fund, when all we need is unrestricted trading and access to vaccine. The OJD horse bolted years ago so continuing with regulation in disguise is pointless. The only sane approach is to vaccinate and move on”, Mr Reilly concluded.

***All Enquires:***

**Peter Reilly, “Reilly’s Run”, Nelungaloo. 2876. Tel.02 68645134, Mob, 0428 638559**

## **OJD OPINION**

**By – Peter Reilly**

**Chairman**

**Forbes OJD Action Group – 8.7.2004**

### **Clayton's OJD Changes**

The so-called new approach to the management of OJD effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 is just another dose of recycled past mismanagement. Disease prevalence maps reveal a farcical situation in which fence lines in many cases divide Very Low (5) and High (0) risk scores. The Low (3) and Medium (1) scores somehow vanished at the boundary.

As there is no method of accurately assessing all flocks state wide these dividing lines take over from the old Zone boundaries in creating unlevel trading fields without compensation for those disadvantaged. As was the case before, those who have enjoyed an unrestricted trading advantage in the past are now trying to continue with it by still using others as a political shield to do so.

This is a ludicrous situation which will only serve to perpetuate the discrimination and stigma that surrounded the old OJD programme.

We all know that eradicating or containing OJD is a pipe dream. We have been aware for sometime that OJD is endemic in Australia. There is absolutely no justification for the continuation of any policy that divides and disadvantages producers for a non-eradicable disease. We do not have such a policy for enterotoxaemia or drench resistance for example. We have a very effective vaccine which suppresses the clinical effects of OJD to insignificant levels. The disease never was an issue and the problem politics surrounding it need to be left behind.

The new Assurance Based Credits (ABC) Points System is an insult to the intelligence of all sheep producers. It is full of assurances based on flawed regulatory measures already discredited under the old OJD programme.

Sheep MAP testing – Abattoir Surveillance and so on were never worth pursuing or funding.

A short time ago flocks were quarantined for just a single sheep testing positive but now we are told some can be infected and certified low risk for a 1 point score as against a zero for a flock that is not infected. You can also get 1 point for a tested low level infected flock and yet only 1 point for a consignment of approved vaccinates. How crazy is this bureaucratically designed game of Russian Roulette?

Any level of risk great or small is of no value to a purchaser as against nil risk. As there is no mechanism available to guarantee nil risk with OJD, the lowest level of risk you can get is that provided by vaccinated sheep. That leaves us with two categories of sheep – vaccinates and the rest.

Any points based system that one might even consider taking seriously would have vaccinated sheep at the top with all the rest trodden under foot. A vaccinated sheep has lifetime immunity to OJD wherever it may travel and come in contact with the disease; whereas all others, no matter what level of assurance is given, are vulnerable. Pieces of paper and political grandstanding are no match for OJD bacteria.

The sheep industry should be demanding the burial of this latest chapter in the ongoing OJD disaster and the calling to account of all those responsible for designing it. It is obvious most producers will ignore it anyway as it cannot be policed.

Unrestricted trading and the availability of Gudair vaccine are all that is required to see our once great sheep industry return to normal.

**END** 566 words.



## **OJD OPINION**

**By – Peter Reilly**

**Chairman**

**Forbes OJD Action Group**

**11 April 2005**

## **OJD Shambles**

The recent statement by the NSW Farmers Association (NSWFA) supporting the current approach on OJD (Ovine Johnes Disease) shows conclusively that the organisation remains stranded in the dark ages on this issue.

Animal Health Statements that guarantee nothing are mandatory in NSW and SA but not all sections are in Victoria, Tasmania and WA. This is part of the dog's breakfast that is supposedly restricting OJD spread.

The assurance based credits scheme is ludicrous with Victoria allocating 3 points to all, including the unknown or undeclared infected flocks but 0 if you are truthful about it and disclose that your flock is infected. In NSW it's 5 points for flocks over the magic, so called very low prevalence fence-line with no immunity but only 1 point for approved vaccinates with lifetime immunity. How crazy is this bureaucratically designed numbers game, which does exactly the opposite to what it should be doing, namely promoting OJD control.

The so-called market driven approach has had no effect on freeing up trade where it matters as credit points are completely back to front. Those who have vaccinated are still being "shut out" with 1 point, while the trading advantage established under the NOJDP (National Ovine Johnes Disease Programme) remains in place courtesy of the 5 point Clayton's zoning farce. Narromine sheep sale is a prime example of this as it only accepts minimum 5 score sheep - so much for freeing up trade.

The NSW Government should be burying these insane OJD arrangements which are nothing more than a mirror reverse version of the previous flawed programme, and moving quickly to unrestricted trading and availability of Gudair vaccine. It should then, as a matter of urgency, finalise compensation for all those whose lives and businesses were destroyed by the greatest man made disaster ever dumped on the Australian sheep industry. After all the NSW DPI (Department Primary Industries) acknowledged almost four years ago that OJD could not be eradicated or contained. NSW Farmers should be backing full compensation not the continuing OJD shambles which includes the new proposed transaction levy.

We now have a situation where all sheep producers are being asked to pay 20cents/head per sheep, and 10cent/head per lamb sold, to fund bureaucrats in the form of extension officers, abattoir monitoring staff; and also to pick up the tab for some producers who installed new fencing and watering systems which had absolutely nothing to do with OJD control.

It is a well-known fact that this whole programme was a rort basically designed to keep bureaucrats in jobs administering it. No wonder there was a shortfall of \$2.4 million.

Some producers however used this handout to vaccinate with Gudair vaccine, which is fine for disease control – but what about all the rest who had to self fund their vaccination efforts. As usual, it's the same old discriminatory approach that plagued the entire OJD programme from the start.

We are now told that one man – former NSW politician Gary West has decided the fate of the entire NSW sheep industry by using his casting vote at a meeting where no agreement could be reached regarding this proposed levy.

Both NSW Farmers and NSW DPI Minister, Ian MacDonald, need to rediscover the word democracy. The Forbes OJD Action Group has very correctly been asking for years for a ballot of all sheep producers on the OJD issue including trading restrictions, compensation, pointless paperwork, vaccine availability and now this latest levy proposal.

We are fed up with endless committees who are appointed (not democratically elected by all industry) and containing re-cycled members of previous committees, making decisions on our behalf. Instead of hiding behind the current OJD shambles, it's time both the Minister and NSW Farmers fronted the voters. Let **all industry** members decide, once and for all, whether they wish to fund OJD restrictions with compensation for those affected by them, bureaucrats administrative costs, discriminatory handouts for some producers at the expense of others and so on.

This OJD mess has dragged on for years without the sheep industry as a whole ever being allowed a say. We want a vote and the time for that happening is long overdue.

END. - 721 words.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. Heilly', with a stylized flourish at the end.

# ***Forbes OJD Action Group***

**Media Release**

**25 October 2005**

## **OJD ROYAL COMMISSION NEEDED**

“The action taken by Southern Meats (Goulburn) and Fletcher International (Dubbo) to expel OJD inspectors from their abattoirs is certainly long overdue,” Peter Reilly, Chairman of the Forbes OJD Action Group said today.

“There was never any justification in creating jobs searching for a disease which NSW Agriculture had already acknowledged could not be eradicated or contained. The risk based points system that abattoir monitoring was supposedly supporting is a complete farce with mere fencelines dividing areas of 1 – 3 – 5 points and even worse, vaccinated sheep – the only ones with immunity to OJD are at the bottom of the points ladder,” Peter Reilly continued.

“It is now time for a Royal Commission into all aspects of the OJD Programme. The NSW Government, DPI, Rural Lands Protection Boards, NSW Farmers and all other supporters of this monumental blunder should be brought to account for their actions and compensation finalised for the thousands of producers whose businesses were in some way affected or destroyed in the process.

“It is totally unacceptable to expect sheep producers to support the current transaction levy shambles to pay out some 400 or so producers while thousands more receive nothing after having had millions of dollars in losses forced upon them for no reason.” Peter Reilly concluded.

**END.**

*All Enquires to:*

*Peter Reilly, “Reilly’s Run”, Nelungaloo. 2876. Tel. 0268645134, Mob. 0428638559*