



The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for the Environment

MC14-034088

Ms Shona Macskasy
Secretary, Koi Society of Western Australia
c/o PO Box 91
MIDLAND WA 6936

16 JAN 2015

Dear Ms Macskasy

I refer to your letter of 21 November 2014 concerning koi herpes virus (cyprinid herpesvirus-3) and the potential to release it into the Australian environment as a biocontrol for carp. The common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) is considered the worst aquatic pest in south-eastern Australia, particularly within the Murray-Darling Basin, and it continues to expand its range as new regions and catchments are colonised. Carp are found in natural waterways in all states and territories except for the Northern Territory. It has been demonstrated that carp have a significant impact upon numerous aspects of aquatic ecosystems, including water quality and biodiversity.

The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre has undertaken an eight year study on the efficacy of the cyprinid herpesvirus-3 (CyHV-3) as a possible biocontrol agent for carp. The research undertaken at CSIRO's Australian Animal Health Laboratory has demonstrated that CyHV-3 is quick and efficient at killing carp, with most carp dying within 24 hours of demonstrating symptoms of infection. The research has also demonstrated that CyHV-3 is carp specific, supporting the overseas evidence of it not causing sickness or disease in any other species including the closely related goldfish.

Ornamental koi carp are unfortunately also susceptible to CyHV-3. However, as the virus is waterborne, the biosecurity and fish husbandry measures already employed in Australia to protect domestic koi carp from CyHV-1 (carp pox) will significantly reduce the chance of CyHV-3 infecting domestic koi stocks. Before any decision is made to release the virus, the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre are developing release and monitoring protocols and a clean-up strategy, and will engage the general community and stakeholder groups, such as the koi hobby community and industry.

When the research phase is completed, I am advised that there will be a comprehensive statutory process through the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) for registration of CyHV-3 as a biocontrol agent for carp. The APVMA process will include a detailed scientific assessment of CyHV-3, and a public consultation period. Another part of this process is an assessment of the potential impact of the virus on the Australian environment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

If approved and registered for use, CyHV-3 offers the opportunity to reduce the carp population by up to 80 per cent in the Murray-Darling Basin, thereby transforming the health of our inland freshwater ecosystems. Over time, the remaining carp population will become less susceptible to the virus so it will be necessary to continue using traditional control techniques as well as support new research into innovative control technologies.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Greg Hunt