



Meeting Record

Representatives of NSW Health met with Lyme disease advocacy group representatives at the NSW Health head office at 73 Miller Street, North Sydney on 13 September 2012.

A range of important issues were discussed related to Lyme disease in the areas of research, laboratory diagnosis, surveillance, clinician awareness and training, and treatment. A number of requests were put to NSW Health and these are outlined below, together with responses and actions that NSW Health has committed to undertake.

- 1. That Health Departments acknowledge the evidence that Lyme disease and co-infections exist in Australia.**

Lyme disease has been diagnosed in Australia. There is good evidence that Australian ticks transmit infectious diseases, such as Queensland Tick Typhus and Flinders Island Spotted Fever, and they can also cause tick paralysis and allergic reactions. Doctors in NSW should keep an open mind about the possibility that ticks may transmit Lyme disease in NSW.

ACTION: NSW Health will review the current Lyme disease resources available on the NSW Health website to ensure that these do not discourage clinicians from keeping an open mind about the possibility of locally-acquired Lyme disease.

- 2. That resources be made available to improve Lyme disease and co-infections testing procedures in Australia to international standards.**

Standards for testing laboratories are set by the Commonwealth. Local laboratories should follow internationally validated testing procedures to diagnose patients with Lyme disease. Such tests are currently available through two public laboratories in NSW.

ACTION: NSW Health will request the Public Health Laboratory Network of Australia to review whether resources are sufficient and appropriate for Lyme disease testing in Australia.

- 3. That resources be made available for research into tick-borne and other vector-borne illnesses in Australia.**

NSW Health encourages researchers to submit proposals to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to investigate tick-borne and other vector-borne illnesses in Australia.

ACTION: NSW Health will write to the NHMRC to communicate the concerns raised by Lyme disease advocacy groups in Australia about the need for support for research into tick-borne and other vector-borne illnesses in Australia.