

## Notice to Participants – *Ehrlichia canis* detected in dogs in areas of Northern Australia

---

Ehrlichiosis is a bacterial infection that is spread between canines through brown tick bites, and occurs around the world, particularly in tropical and subtropical regions. It is a NOTIFIABLE DISEASE in Western Australia.

Infection with *E. canis* (Ehrlichiosis) was confirmed for the first time in Australian dogs in May 2020 in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and June 2020 in the Northern Territory. The disease has also been detected in a small number of dogs in the Gascoyne and Pilbara.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is conducting surveillance for the disease and has imposed conditions on dogs moving out of northern WA to reduce the risk of the disease spreading to southern WA.

**Participants are notified that before a greyhound can be transported from the Northern Territory for the purposes of entering, or returning to, a kennel in Western Australia, DPIRD requires that certain biosecurity measures have been completed and submitted for approval PRIOR to the entry permit being granted, and any greyhound movement occurs.**

Any trainer intending on transporting a greyhound(s) to the Northern Territory and returning to WA will need to contact DPIRD on (08) 9368 3929 or [animalbiosecurity@dpiird.wa.gov.au](mailto:animalbiosecurity@dpiird.wa.gov.au) to gain specific information regarding the import permits and testing requirements for greyhounds travelling from the NT to southern WA.

Relevant general information on Ehrlichiosis can be found at <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/ehrlichiosis>

### More about Ehrlichiosis

*E. canis* is a bacterial infection that is spread between canines (including domestic dogs and wild members of the canine family such as foxes) through brown tick bites. Apart from detections in imported dogs this disease has not been previously diagnosed in Australia. The brown tick is mostly associated with tropical and subtropical environments and is widely distributed throughout Australia. As the tick can complete its entire life cycle indoors it has the potential to establish populations in colder climates also. Dogs do not transmit the disease to each other. The disease is maintained by a cycle of transmission between ticks and dogs.

Initial symptoms of infection with *E. Canis* include fever, discharge from the eyes and nose, poor appetite, lethargy and weight loss. The early stage of infection usually lasts for two to four weeks. In the later stages of infection (50-100 days), dogs may show signs of bleeding disorders, pale gums, swollen lymph nodes (glands under the neck and other sites around the body) and further weight loss.

Any suspicion for *E. canis*, particularly in greyhounds from Northern Australian areas or after known tick-exposure, should be investigated by your veterinarian. *E. canis* can be diagnosed by a blood test. If treated quickly, symptoms will generally improve within a few days and without long term effects. Because there is no vaccination, tick control is the most effective means of preventing the disease.

*E. canis* primarily causes disease in dogs; and infected dogs cannot pass the disease directly to humans. However, in rare cases, infected ticks may transmit *E. canis* to people. Infection usually causes flu-like symptoms in humans, ranging from mild body aches to severe fever, within a week or two of the tick bite.

***E. canis* is a notifiable disease. This means that it must be reported to DPIRD. Your veterinarian will be able to do this if *E. canis* in a greyhound is suspected or confirmed.**

If you have any questions or concerns, speak to your veterinarian or contact [vets@rwwa.com.au](mailto:vets@rwwa.com.au)

June 2021