

LYME DISEASE CONFIRMED IN AUSTRALIA

Article from the Sydney Morning Herald 19/8/1989

"Medical researchers have confirmed that Lyme disease, a newly recognised and insidious mystery illness transmitted by insects, is found along the whole of Australia's east coast. A bizarre disease that can cause life-long suffering, it is now known to affect both people and animals in Australia. Given that its known range embraces the nation's major population centres, it shows every sign of becoming an important public health issue.

The spread of confirmed cases now ranges along the coast from, Queensland to Victoria and Flinders Island, according to the director of microbiology at Liverpool Hospital, Dr Rosemary Munro.

"That's roughly the distribution of the paralysis tick," Dr Munro said.

Neither the insect carrier (or carriers) nor the spirochete that causes the disease has been identified so far. But there is no doubt that a form of Lyme disease exists here, or that many people and animals are exposed to it: it is becoming increasingly clear, as well, that many cases go unrecognised, or are misdiagnosed.

The first tests on a sample of 400 NSW blood donors have shown that more than one in 50 people has been exposed to the spirochete, according to scientists at Liverpool and Westmead hospitals.

NSW Department of Agriculture veterinary researchers are also about to report the first Australian cases of the disease in cattle. On the veterinary side, the Glenfield team believes the economic consequences of Lyme disease in livestock will probably prove to be minor and sporadic.

Mr Jim Rothwell, Mr Bruce Christie and colleagues at the department's Glenfield regional veterinary laboratory have detected two cases in cattle at a Camden dairy farm – one cow was so crippled with arthritic joints it had to be put out of its misery – and others on the South Coast."

With acknowledgement and HUGE thanks to [The Black Dot Project](#) for the many hours of committed digging up of the hidden history of Lyme disease in Australia. Your time and energy is very much appreciated!