<Insert date>
<Insert Your Name>
<Insert Address>

<Insert your email>

The Hon. Mr Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Health
House of Representatives, Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600
By email: Minister.Hunt@health.gov.au

Dear Minister Hunt,

**Re: TGA Decision Raises Serious Drug Abuse Risk
2.0% Liquid Lidocaine will be available to the public without prescription from 1st Oct 2021**

I write to you to make you aware of a recent decision by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), which will create a serious and real drug abuse risk. I am a qualified and registered veterinarian with <Insert Years> years of experience and I practice in the <region name> of Australia.

The TGA has made a change, effective 1st October 2021, that will see the liquid anaesthetic S4 drug lidocaine (lignocaine,) available as an open-seller to the public, on the S5 Schedule. The product name is ‘Numocaine’. This drug was an S4 Prescription-only drug to ensure that potentially dangerous drugs such as lidocaine are only used correctly and for legally-prescribed purposes.

‘Numocaine’ is a 2.0% concentration lidocaine liquid, packaged in a 100mL bottle with a quick-change cartridge enabling attachment to a rubber-ring applicator for use on sheep. The TGA have based much of their approval on the assumption that the quick-change cartridge makes the bottle of lidocaine tamper-resistant and thus not a threat to public health. I can assure you that this is NOT the case, and I understand the Australian Veterinary Association has supplied a video to your office, showing how easily the bottle can be detached from the applicator (see photo inserted below). If available for ‘open sale’ as a Schedule 5 drug, an uncontrolled number of bottles of lidocaine could be purchased by the public for reasons including incorrect, illegal or dangerous use. Once opened the lidocaine can be abused as an injectable or oral drug, in a variety of methods:

* to cut cocaine by illegal drug dealers. [Ref: Two deaths-NSW Health Aug 21](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/public-drug-alerts/Pages/cocaine-cont-heroin-lidocaine.aspx)
* as an anaesthetic by illegal ‘body modifiers’: [Ref: One dead-ABC News- Sep 21](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-21/body-modifier-brendan-russell-spoke-to-client-before-%20death-%20court/100479178?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_share%20d&utm_source=abc_news_web)
* by lay people to perform DIY surgeries on animals: [Ref: Victorian woman prosecuted for performing illegal caesareans on sheep\_2019](https://www.sheepcentral.com/victorian-sheep-farmer-fined-5000-for-illegal-ewe-caesareans/)
* as an anaesthetic by members of the public acting as amateur doctors.
* as a method of suicide. There are numerous reference in the scientific literature including; [Acute Lidocaine Toxicity; a Case Series](https://www.sid.ir/FileServer/JE/500005201801310), [Suicide due to oral ingestion of lidocaine: a case report and review of the literature](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16787726/), [Fatal Lignocaine Poisoning: Report of Two Cases and Review of the Literature](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/096032718900800512).

The Australian Veterinary Association will be applying to the TGA for an amendment of the Poisons Standard to have this drug once again safely classified as Schedule 4.

Mr Hunt, could you please intervene with the TGA on my behalf, and protect the public from this anticipated drug abuse, by stopping the rescheduling of ‘Numocaine’ to S5 on 1st October 2021.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

<Insert your name>

