

REVIEW INTO EQUINE WELFARE

CANBERRA RACING CLUB

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thoroughbred Racing in Australia is a self-regulated sport. With any form of self-regulation comes great responsibility.

Principal Racing Authorities (PRA's) exist in each state or territory of Australia and are tasked with the administration of Thoroughbred Racing. It is the responsibility of these PRA's to ensure that Thoroughbred Racing is conducted in a manner that ensures there is appropriate oversight of integrity and safety. Safety should be seen in this sense as referring to both the human and equine participants.

The Canberra Racing Club is the PRA within the Australian Capital Territory. In early 2021 the Club appointed its first Equine Welfare Officer. In honoring its commitment to ensure the safety of its equine participants, the Club has proactively requested a review of Equine Welfare management at Thoroughbred Park, the home of the Canberra Racing Club.

This review focuses on the current functions and mechanisms in place with respect to training and racing. In addition it will examine the mechanisms in place to ensure the welfare of all equine athletes after they leave Thoroughbred Park for retirement.

The Canberra Racing Club is undertaking this review not only to ensure that it can display to its participants and any person with an interest in Equine Welfare that it is operating at the highest possible standard, but with a view that it may identify issues or solutions that will benefit the industry on a larger scale.

The Australian Capital Territory may be the smallest geographical area to have a PRA, but that doesn't mean it can't have the biggest impact with respect to advancements with Equine Welfare and ultimately be seen as a leader in this regard.

The Canberra Racing Club welcomes the interest that the ACT Government has taken in Equine Welfare. The Canberra Racing Club acknowledges that Equine Welfare is paramount to a strong and prosperous Racing Industry and that the club must continually review its practices in line with community expectations.

Thoroughbred Racing is a heavily regulated sport with all training and racing activities operating under both national and local rules. All Jockeys, Trainers, Stablehands and Trackwork Riders are licensed with PRA's and owners of racehorses are registered.

When a foal is registered with the Australian Studbook as being born, the breeder of that foal is then subject to the Rules of Racing. From this point Stewards acting on behalf of the PRA are granted the power to know the location of the horse at anytime and are granted access for the purpose of conducting a welfare check on the horse.

PRA's have the power to trace and monitor a Thoroughbred from birth to its first home on retirement from the Industry. Should a horse for any reason leave this first home on retirement, the chain of traceability and access to the horse may break.

To ensure the best welfare outcomes for all Thoroughbreds that retire from the ACT, the Canberra Racing Club must examine how it can better trace these horses and ensure its regulatory officers have the appropriate access when required.

The Canberra Racing Club has a commercial arrangement via a Deed of Agreement with Racing NSW to provide all integrity functions. These functions include the provision of not only Stewards but other supplementary staff in the form of investigators and dedicated welfare veterinarians. The duties undertaken by these staff include welfare checks of retired Thoroughbreds in the ACT.



“The Canberra Racing Club is exceeding all benchmarks in respect to the investigation of all in-training injuries and near miss events”



One of the many horses who utilise the heated equine pool at Thoroughbred Park each day

Given the Canberra Racing Club's will to ensure the welfare of Thoroughbreds from birth to life beyond the track, further powers and systems are required to assist with traceability and access on retirement. This review has detailed a number of recommendations. Implementation of some of these recommendations will require assistance from the ACT Government. The Canberra Racing Club is hopeful that the ACT Government will see the merit in these recommendations and assist the Canberra Racing Club in furthering Equine Welfare standards.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

Whilst the recommendations below identify areas of potential improvement, many of these can be applied to racing nationally. As a PRA, the Canberra Racing Club is functioning at a high level with respect to its in-training and racing protocols when compared to other PRAs nationally. As a club however the Canberra Racing Club is exceeding all benchmarks in respect to the investigation of all in-training injuries and near miss events and the quarterly audits of all stable premises. There is no formal requirement for the club to perform these tasks under the Rules of Racing. The motivation is to improve Equine Welfare through the mitigation of risk in what is a hazardous industry. No other club or PRA has been identified as having a similar system with respect to the reporting of all in-training injuries and stable audits being conducted at such frequency.

Whilst the Canberra Racing Club has some of the strongest rules with respect to the protection of retired Thoroughbreds and is a financial contributor to a large retirement scheme ensuring every horse has a place to go on retirement, it historically has not published this information online. Given there are many people with a particular interest in the welfare of the equine athletes, the Canberra Racing Club has now made this information available so the community is aware of the comprehensive measures the Canberra Racing Club has in place for horses beyond racing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RETIREMENT, TRACEABILITY AND ACCESS TO THOROUGHBREDS

Recommendation 1) The club should approach the ACT Government to investigate the possibility of having all Thoroughbreds domiciled within the Australian Capital Territory registered with Access Canberra.

Recommendation 2) The club should approach the ACT Government to investigate the possibility of granting Inspector powers (refer Division 7.3 Animal Welfare Act 1992) to Canberra Racing Club, Racing NSW Stewards and Veterinary Officers for the purposes of conducting welfare inspections of Thoroughbreds within the Australian Capital Territory that are not domiciled within a licensed Thoroughbred facility (stable, training premises or racetrack). The Canberra Racing Club should investigate the possibility of making its specialist equine staff available to assist local authorities with welfare investigations of non-thoroughbred horses within the Australian Capital Territory.

Recommendation 3) The club should approach Racing Australia to introduce an address database to assist in the recording of addresses for retired Thoroughbreds.

Recommendation 4) The club should consider creating a suggested code of conduct or guidelines for trainers and owners with respect to the sale or gifting of a Thoroughbred to a non-licensed person. Such code of conduct or set of guidelines should include;

the need for a seller/gifter of a horse to make reasonable enquiries as to whether the person buying/receiving the horse has the resources and knowledge to adequately care for a Thoroughbred.

the seller/gifter to disclose any significant veterinary or behavioural issue that may impact a person's ability to properly care for and handle a particular horse.

INJURY REPORTING

Recommendation 5) The Canberra Racing Club should continue to work with the Racing Australia Equine Welfare Working Group to pursue the creation of a self-reporting mechanism for trainers within the Single National System with respect to in-training thoroughbred injuries.



Who's Giggling Now had three race starts, never getting within 10 lengths of a winner. He lives now as a hobby horse with Ciara Grace (pictured) on a small farm stay in Fitzroy Falls.

“The Canberra Racing Club and Racing NSW are the only principal racing authorities to introduce a local rule preventing a Thoroughbred from being directly or indirectly sent to a Knackery or Abattoir”



REVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES AND LOCAL RULES

Recommendation 6) LR114. (5) (b) – This rule relates to a horse been transferred to a property that does not meet the minimum standards prescribed by the Canberra Racing Club. It is recommended that the Canberra Racing Club bring its standards in line with best practice and adopt the Minimum Standards and Guidelines of Equine Welfare published by Racing NSW.

PROCESS

This review has examined the available welfare policies, procedures and functions available from each Principal Racing Authority in Australia and also the welfare policy document from Racing New Zealand. It also encapsulates a review of all websites from each PRA with respect to Equine Welfare and retirement programs. In addition the report will consider the key findings from a recent state government report in Queensland into the management of retired Thoroughbreds in Queensland.

Racing NSW – *Minimum Standards & Guidelines of Equine Welfare*

(<https://www.racingnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Minimum-Standards-and-Guidelines-of-Equine-Welfare-Final-2020-V1.pdf>)

Racing Victoria – *Equine Welfare Strategic Plan*

(<https://www.racingvictoria.com.au/the-horse/equine-welfare/equine-welfare-strategy>)

RWWA – *The Western Australian Racehorse Welfare Plan*

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission – *QRIC's Animal Welfare Strategy Summary*

Thoroughbred Racing SA – *Equine Welfare Framework*

(<https://racingsa.com.au/industry/thoroughcare-sa>)

New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing – *Thoroughbred Welfare Assessment Guidelines*

(<https://loveracing.nz/OnHorseFiles/NZTR%20Thoroughbred%20Welfare%20Guidelines%202020%20Final.pdf>)

Inquiry into Animal Cruelty in the management of retired Thoroughbred and Standardbred horses in Queensland (Terry Martin SC and Dr Peter Reid)

Government Response – Horse Feasibility Study



“All Thoroughbred racing and training activities at Thoroughbred Park are conducted under the rules of racing. The rules provide a strong national mechanism for racing to maintain welfare standards with the ability to penalise a person found in breach of any of the rules”

1. REVIEW OF CURRENT MECHANISMS FOR DEALING WITH EQUINE WELFARE ISSUES

1.1 RULES

Thoroughbred Racing in Australia is essentially a self-regulated sport. Racing Australia is the national body for Thoroughbred racing in Australia. One of the functions of Racing Australia is to administer and maintain the Rules of Racing. Regulation of the Racing Industry is the task of the Principal Racing Authorities (PRA's). Each state and territory through its PRA is responsible for the administration of the Rules of Racing. Stewards are employed by PRA's to ensure compliance, conduct investigations and where applicable issue charges and penalties.

In the case of the Canberra Racing Club, through a commercial agreement and under the provisions of Rule of Racing AR 19(g), the Stewards operating in the Australian Capital Territory are delegated powers by Racing NSW and Canberra Racing Club. Through the commercial agreement, Racing NSW provide the Canberra Racing Club with all regulatory and integrity functions. This includes access to other resources that would supplement the Stewards operations such as investigators, veterinarians, detection dogs and forensic laboratory services.

All Thoroughbred racing and training activities at Thoroughbred Park are conducted under the Rules of Racing. The rules provide a strong national mechanism for racing to maintain welfare standards with the ability to penalise a person found in breach of any of the rules. The Stewards acting on behalf of a PRA have the power to reprimand, fine, suspend or disqualify a person. In more serious cases or where a person's participation in the Racing Industry is not desirable, a PRA itself has the power to “warn off” under AR16(a). To warn off is to exclude a person from the Industry.

Stewards are granted powers under the rules to assist them in their duties. The Stewards are given the power to search and enter upon any premises which is occupied or under the control of a licensed person (person licensed within the Racing Industry) and are granted the power to take possession of any horse for the purpose of conducting whatever tests/examinations are deemed necessary.





Whilst numerous rules can be linked to Equine Welfare, AR231 (1) within the Rules of Racing provides a strong base with respect to the obligations of any person who is in charge of a horse (Thoroughbred);

- *Division 5 – Misconduct in relation to the care and welfare of horses*
- *AR 231 Care and welfare of horses*

(1) A person must not:

(a) commit or commission an act of cruelty to a horse, or be in possession of any article or thing which, in the opinion of the Stewards, is capable of inflicting cruelty to a horse;

(b) if the person is in charge of a horse – fail at any time:

(i) to exercise reasonable care, control or supervision of the horse so as to prevent an act of cruelty to the horse;

(ii) to take such reasonable steps as are necessary to alleviate any pain inflicted upon or being suffered by the horse;

(iii) to provide veterinary treatment to the horse where such treatment is necessary for the horse; and/or

(iv) to provide proper and sufficient nutrition for the horse.

AR 231 provides the Stewards with a broad scope to deal with incidents that are not captured under other rules which describe specific instances. Importantly this rule is not designed to only capture a horse that is active within the Racing Industry, it can be applied to a retired horse or breeding stock. Likewise it is not restricted by being applicable only to a Trainer, owner or other licensed person. Any person in charge of a horse can be charged under this rule.

The Canberra Racing Club (the Principal Racing Authority in the ACT) maintains its own local rules which supplement the Rules of Racing. Under the Rules of Racing a PRA is permitted to create its own rules however cannot “rescind or alter” any of the Australian Rules.

Division 4 – New rules AR 9 Only Racing Australia to make new rules

(1) Racing Australia and only Racing Australia may make new rules forming part of these Australian Rules, or rescind, vary or amend any provision of these Australian Rules.

(2) Without limiting subrule (1), Racing Australia may, at any time, rescind, vary or amend any list of prohibited substances (or exemptions or thresholds) set out in these Australian Rules.

(3) A PRA may not make new rules (other than Local Rules) or rescind or alter these Australian Rules, and a PRA which does not comply with this requirement shall ipso facto cease to be a PRA.

If a PRA is to introduce a local rule, careful consideration must be given to any potential conflicts that may arise with respect to the application of AR 9. In summary a local rule cannot act in a way that a Rule of Racing is then rescinded or altered. It should be noted that the Rules of Racing are inclusive of rules in relation to prohibited substances (administration, possession and detection), horse traceability, permitted gear/devices/plates, veterinary conditions and reporting obligations, whip use and permitted whip types.

On review of the national sets of local rules, the Canberra Racing Club and Racing NSW are the only PRAs to introduce local rules covering circumstances whereby the euthanasia of a horse is permitted under strict veterinary advice and place a prohibition on transporting horses directly or indirectly to a knackery or abattoir (or similarly disposing of a horse). The Local Rule is provided below;

LR 114. The Canberra Racing Club is party to the Racing NSW Equine Welfare Fund and racehorse retirement program.

(1) The purpose and objective of this Local Rule 114 is to ensure the welfare of thoroughbred horses from birth, during their racing careers and on retirement.

(2) A registered owner, trainer or any person that is in charge of or has in his or her possession, control or custody of any horses (Eligible Horses, Unnamed Horses and Named Horses) must ensure that any such horses are provided at all times with:

(a) Proper and sufficient nutrition and water;

(b) proper exercise;

(c) stabling and paddocks of a standard approved by Canberra Racing Club, which are adequate in size, which are adequately maintained and kept in a clean and sanitary condition;

(d) veterinary treatment where such treatment is necessary or directed by Canberra Racing Club.

(3) A registered owner, trainer or any person that is in charge of or has in his or her possession, control or custody of any horses (Eligible Horses, Unnamed Horses and Named Horses) must exercise reasonable care, control and supervision as may be necessary to prevent any such horse from being subject to cruelty or unnecessary pain or suffering.

(4) A registered owner, trainer or any person that is in charge of or has in his or her possession, control or custody of any horses (Eligible Horses, Unnamed Horses and Named Horses) is not to euthanize or destroy a horse (or permit a horse to be euthanized or destroyed) unless a registered veterinary surgeon has certified in writing that it necessary on welfare or safety grounds or for reasons approved in writing by Canberra Racing Club or unless under extreme circumstances where it is necessary for a horse to be euthanized immediately and the decision is subsequently confirmed by a veterinary surgeon.



(5) Further to AR64-JA(1), where a decision has been made to retire a horse, or not to commence racing an Eligible Horse, and that horse has been domiciled in the Australian Capital Territory for the majority of its life:

(a) the Manager, in addition to any forms to be lodged with Racing Australia pursuant to AR64-JA(1), is to lodge with Racing Australia the Retirement Notification form, such form to include details of the retirement option, where that horse will be located and contact details of the new owner (if that horse is being transferred to a new owner);

(b) that horse is not to be transferred to a location which does not meet minimum standards prescribed by Canberra Racing Club to ensure the ongoing welfare of that horse and the owners are required to provide Canberra Racing Club with all information and assistance (including access to the proposed location) in order to enable Canberra Racing Club to assess that those minimum standards are met;

(c) the owners are to make all reasonable endeavours to find a home for that horse that meets minimum standards in any of the following options:

(i) breeding purposes;

(ii) equestrian, working, pleasure or companion horse;

(iii) any other option approved by Canberra Racing Club

(d) in the event that the owners are unable to find a home for that horse, having used all reasonable endeavours, then the remaining options for that horse are:

(i) an official retirement or retraining program (either operated by Racing NSW or approved by Racing NSW in writing);

(ii) any other option that ensures the ongoing welfare of the horse approved by Canberra Racing Club or Racing NSW in writing;

(e) the horse is not to be, directly or indirectly, sent to an abattoir, knackery or similarly disposed of;

(f) the horse is not to be sold/gifted at a livestock auction not approved by Canberra Racing Club or Racing NSW; and

(g) if that horse is in need of veterinary treatment (including ongoing veterinary treatment), it is not to be transferred to a new home until that veterinary treatment has been provided or Canberra Racing Club or Racing NSW is satisfied that it will receive that veterinary treatment.

(6) any person who fails to comply with LR114 (1)–(5) commits a breach of these Rules and may be penalised. [Rule effective 29 March 2018]

Given the close working relationship between the Canberra Racing Club and Racing NSW, the Canberra Racing Club adopts local rules introduced by Racing NSW in most cases. In this case LR 114 was introduced on 29th March 2018.

Rule LR 114 (5) (b) refers to minimum standards prescribed by the Canberra Racing Club. It is noted that this rule essentially mirrors the Racing NSW local rule that was introduced on 1st October 2017 (Racing NSW LR 114). Racing NSW publish the Minimum Standards & Guidelines of Equine Welfare. The Canberra Racing Club will formally adopt the NSW guidelines to give some clarity with respect to this rule and ensure Stewards are given confidence with respect to any charge listed under this particular sub-rule. The guidelines published by Racing NSW are comprehensive. They not only address the essential provisions of nutrition, exercise, appropriate accommodation and identification of injury and disease, but provide advice to those not familiar with the complexities of the Rules of Racing and the requirements concerning rehoming and sales and auctions prohibitions.

The corresponding Racing NSW local rule contains an additional portion to subrule LR114 (5) (b);

(ii) that horse is not to be transferred, sold or gifted upon retirement or thereafter, to a person who is placed on the Racing NSW Excluded List for rehoming of thoroughbreds. [subparagraph added 1.5.20]

This rule relates to a list published on the Racing NSW website. Racing NSW provide the following information with respect to persons placed on the list;

The Excluded List has been introduced to prohibit thoroughbreds that have been domiciled in NSW for the majority of their lives from being transferred, gifted or sold to a person that has not complied with required equine welfare standards or with the Rules of Racing. If a person is placed on the Racing NSW Excluded List, that person will not be able to receive or have in their care a thoroughbred that has been domiciled in NSW for the majority of their lives. The rule is effective 1 May 2020.

As of the 26th February 2021, 11 persons are listed on the Racing NSW Excluded List. Whilst this list is known to be distributed to Canberra trainers through industry releases, it is incorporated into a Racing NSW local rule and at this time it is not adopted by the Canberra Racing Club. Given the likelihood of Canberra Thoroughbreds retiring to a property in NSW, the Canberra Racing Club should adopt this local rule with reference to the Racing NSW Excluded List. Whilst there is no public information available as to the reasons a person is placed on the list, it is to be assumed that Racing NSW have through intelligence or other means, assessed the welfare risks as being too great to allow that person to receive Thoroughbreds. It should also be noted that a person on that list is identified as an owner of a pet food store and Knackery.



1.2 POLICIES

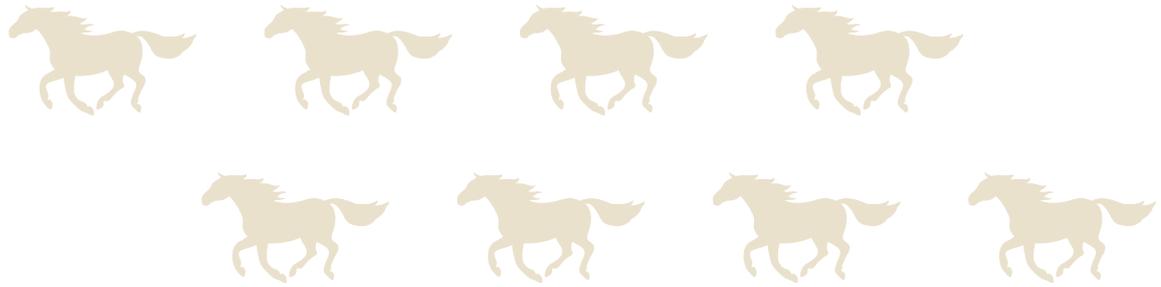
Whilst the Rules of Racing supplemented by Local Rules act as a frontline tool for Stewards to deal with Equine Welfare matters, PRAs also publish policies and guidelines for certain racing and training activities. These policies and guidelines provide advice as to how the club manages certain situations or activities that may involve heightened levels of risk. Many impact Equine Welfare directly.

The Canberra Racing Club has a Track Regulations document published on its website which incorporates a number of policies relevant to Equine Welfare. Such policies include:

- *Animal Welfare Policy*
- *Racing in Hot Weather Policy (adopted in full from Racing NSW)*
- *Restricted Visibility Trackwork & Jumpouts Policy*
- *Thunderstorm Policy Regarding Trackwork*

The Animal Welfare Policy was implemented in 2009 and was last revised in 2018. This policy makes reference to the Rules of Racing and Local Rules described above as well as *The Animal Welfare Act 1992*. A policy statement outlines the club's commitment and the advice it relies upon when developing policies relating to equine welfare in racing, training, and activities associated with racing and training and retirement. The extract below which is taken from that statement, outlines the firm stance the club takes with respect to instances of welfare failures;

It is the policy of the Club to ensure that appropriate standards for the welfare of licensed thoroughbred racing animals are maintained. Further, the Club believes that any person who does not abide by the minimum standards for welfare of licensed thoroughbred racing animals has no place in the racing industry. Accordingly, all persons are placed on notice that breaches of established animal welfare standards will result in their approval to operate at Thoroughbred Park suspended immediately and all breaches will be reported to the licensing authority.



“The club has a water misting system in the shaded tie up stalls which assists with cooling”

It is important for a PRA to have a welfare policy statement available. Whilst this policy is online and publicly available, it lies within a trackwork regulations document. It also contains evidence of the financial commitment that the club makes to the Racing NSW Retirement Fund with a portion of prizemoney set aside. This is important information given the desire for people to gain information about what racing is doing with respect to Equine Welfare matters. The club should separate this information and have it more easily accessible and locatable through a dedicated Equine Welfare area on the website.

Critical to the welfare of both horses and jockeys is the *Racing in Hot Weather Policy*. This policy covers raceday activities when the forecast maximum temperature is 35°C or higher or the “WBGT shade” is 28°C. The latter reading refers to a combined reading of temperature, humidity, and air movement. Whilst over the summer of 2020/2021 the policy was not invoked on any level given the milder temperatures, previously the Canberra Racing Club have invoked both level 1 and level 2 protocols during race meetings held in summer. Level 1 requires additional measures in place to ensure the welfare of both horse and rider which includes minimised time in open areas by abandoning pre and post race parades. The club has a water misting system in the shaded tie up stalls which assists with cooling and a motorised water cooler operates at all meetings occurring under level 1 or level 2 protocols. Whilst the club has not had to abandon a race meeting due to extreme heat conditions, on the 8th January 2020 the club in conjunction with Stewards abandoned a race meeting due to the hazardous air conditions associated with a major bushfire event. It is noted that no PRA has a policy on air quality requirements for racing or training and there are clearly risks associated with any form of exercise occurring in an environment where air quality is reported as hazardous. On the 18th January 2019 the club conducted a meeting under Level 2 protocols and brought all racetimes forward to earlier in the day whereby races were conducted outside of the hottest times of the day. This impacted heavily on wagering turnover but ensured the meeting was conducted in the safest environment for both horses and participants.

Whilst not incorporated into the trackwork regulations document, the Stewards at the Canberra Racing Club operate under a number of Racing NSW Policies that directly impact upon equine welfare;

- *Racing NSW Policy on Major Fractures or Other Major Orthopaedic Injuries (2014)* – in summary this policy details steps that a trainer must take following a horse returning from a fracture injury. Importantly the Stewards need to be receipt of a specialist clearance certifying that a horse is fit to perform fast work prior to being brought back into training.
- *Minimum Requirements for Dealing with Raceday Equine Emergencies (2014)* – this policy provides an outline of the staff and infrastructure required on track for all racedays with respect to equine emergencies. It should be noted that the Canberra Racing Club exceeds these requirements.
- *Racing NSW Policy on Notification of Veterinary Conditions (2020)* – this policy provides clarity with respect to a trainers obligation under AR 105 to report any condition that may affect a horse’s performance and in turn give the Stewards and Veterinary officers the opportunity to make further enquiries as to a horses fitness to race.



1.3 INTERNAL FUNCTIONS

Whilst many functions relating to Equine Welfare at Thoroughbred Park are captured by Racing NSW, the Canberra Racing Club have a number of internal functions that are performed by Canberra Racing Club staff rather than Racing NSW Stewards or Officials. For many years the Canberra Racing Club has employed a Work Health Safety Manager to investigate and report on any injury to a person occurring on the grounds. These investigations can result in recommendations being made and changes to operations or protocols. In 2021 with the appointment of the Equine Welfare Officer, the Canberra Racing Club requested that all Equine injuries or significant near miss events be subject to a similar investigation. Since the introduction of this system, a number of near miss and actual incidents have been subject to investigation with numerous recommendations being made and adopted by the club including changes to the Equine Walker operations, Equine Pool operations and traffic related matters within the stable compound.

To assist with the process of investigating all Equine injuries occurring on course, the Canberra Racing Club requested Trainers report any such occurrences to the Equine Welfare Officer. Upon receipt of this advice the Equine Welfare Officer will make an assessment as to whether an investigation is warranted or whether the incident/injury is simply recorded if it is unlikely any further information will be of value. Whilst the club has communicated to Trainers that it is a requirement of them to report injuries and significant near miss events, at this stage the Canberra Racing Club has not created a local rule to confirm a Trainer's obligations with respect to injury reporting to the Equine Welfare Officer. The Canberra Racing Club should monitor compliance carefully in this regard and if there is doubt as to the level of compliance not being satisfactory, the Canberra Racing Club should consider its right to create a local rule which would assist with enforcement.

“With the appointment of the Equine Welfare Officer, the Canberra Racing Club requested that all Equine injuries or significant near miss events be subject to investigation”

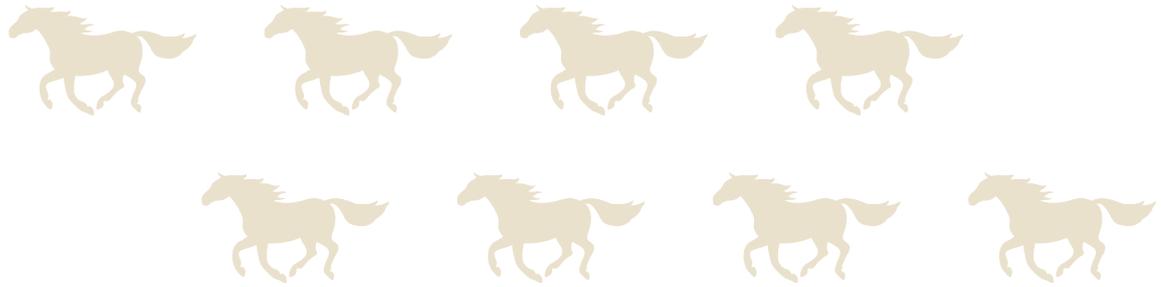


22-year-old *Saturday Fever* (or Jason) pictured with long-time owner Louise Milton.

“Racing Queensland is the only other PRA which has a requirement to report all in-training injuries however they are not investigated at the level the Canberra Racing Club is undertaking with formal reports with recommendations being provided to the Chief Executive Officer”

The reporting of injuries and conduct of investigations produces valuable data with respect to the nature of injuries. The Canberra Racing Club are maintaining records in this regard as the data in time may identify a piece of infrastructure that is over-represented with respect to the number of injuries sustained or nature of injuries. Racing Queensland is the only other PRA which has a requirement to report all in-training injuries however they are not investigated at the level the Canberra Racing Club is undertaking with formal reports with recommendations being provided to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration. Whilst raceday injuries and catastrophic injuries are well captured under the rules, there is little current data that racing can rely on with respect to in-training injuries that are not of a catastrophic or fatal nature.

The Canberra Racing Club conducts quarterly audits of all on-course stable premises. These audits are conducted by the Work Health and Safety Manager and the Equine Welfare Officer. These quarterly audits commenced in August 2020 and focus on ensuring that each premises is safe for both horses and handlers to occupy and work in. With respect to Equine Welfare, the audits ensure each horse (including non-racing stock) is in satisfactory condition and has access to appropriate hydration and nutrition. It also ensures that each stable premises is free from hazards and where appropriate, written orders are made whereby a trainer/stable owner must rectify the issues identified by the WHS Manager and Equine Welfare Officer.



“The club has some of the strongest local rules in Australia with respect to Equine Welfare in that a stance was taken to ensure no horse is to end up in a Abattoir or Knackery”

The Canberra Racing Club stabling precinct is comprised of a number of buildings that were built in the 1960's so it's critical that this infrastructure is maintained to a safe standard and is regularly inspected.

The club provides three tracks utilized for training purposes (two sand tracks and the Acton synthetic track). Whilst these tracks are maintained by the club, all tracks are subject to an independent audit three times a year to ensure consistency, drainage and levels are all within acceptable parameters. Independent contractors are also engaged to conduct weekly inspections and repairs of the Equine Walkers which are used extensively.

1.4 ONLINE INFORMATION

The Canberra Racing Club has recently added an Equine Welfare area to its website. The club has some of the strongest local rules in Australia with respect to Equine Welfare in that a stance was taken to ensure no horse is to end up in a Abattoir or Knackery. Whilst information on the Local Rules with respect to Equine Welfare and the Animal Welfare Policy were previously available within the Track Regulations document, they were not easily located. This newly published information informs the community regarding the club's Equine Welfare practices and can be easily accessed from a link on the Club's home page.

In 2021 the club published a series of media releases detailing the subsequent post-race careers of a number of former Canberra racehorses. These stories should be archived and available online within a dedicated Equine Welfare area. Whilst the successful and champion horses should be celebrated and clearly generate interest, the club should endeavor to also take an interest in lesser performed horses in their post-race careers. A successful racing career is not a prerequisite for a horse to enjoy a quality life beyond racing and the Industry needs to demonstrate this.

If a picture can tell a thousand words, one can't underestimate the impact a video can make. Both the Australian Turf Club and the Victorian Racing Club have dedicated Equine Welfare areas inclusive of videos detailing not only the lives of retired thoroughbreds but informative videos with respect the care of horses in training. It must be acknowledged that these are large metropolitan clubs that are well resourced to produce such media.

2. RETIREMENT AND TRACEABILITY

When a Thoroughbred enters a racing stable, it enters a system where it can be traced by Racing Authorities throughout its racing career. A trainer must lodge what is known as a Stable Return for any horse entering their stable. A Stable Return also advises of the status of a horse and must list a horse's location if it is domiciled at a location other than the Trainer's licensed stable premises. The Stable Return indicates if a horse is active, spelling or retired.

On May 1st 2021, Racing Australia introduced new traceability rules to capture horses from birth. Breeding stock (stallions, broodmares and foals) can now be traced with "mare returns" and "foal ownership declarations" required to be lodged with the Australian Stud Book within 30 days of the foal's birth. This new ability to trace from birth will give PRAs the ability to capture horses that for various reasons do not enter a racing stable. Managers of a horse must comply with the traceability rules from the birth to retirement stage or risk having any horse under their ownership refused registration under the rules of racing.

Division 5 – Breach of traceability rules

AR 313 Breach of traceability rules

(1) Without limiting any other rules or powers under these Australian Rules, if a person breaches any rule in this Part 14 the person may be penalised by a PRA or the Stewards.

(2) If a person provides any false or misleading information in respect of any form lodged or notification made under any rule in this Part 14, the person may be penalised by a PRA or the Stewards.

(3) Without limiting any other rules in this Part 14, if a person fails to lodge any document or provide any notification in accordance with any rule in this Part 14, Racing Australia, the Australian Stud Book, a PRA and/or the Stewards may:

(a) restrict that person or any relevant horse from participating in the thoroughbred racing and breeding industry; and/or

(b) restrict the payment (including payments under bonus schemes) or awarding of any prize to that person, until the relevant form has been properly lodged or the relevant notification has been properly made.

Note: By way of example, Racing Australia may refuse to register a horse, or a PRA may refuse to accept a nomination for a horse, which is owned by a person who has failed to lodge a retirement notification form in respect of another horse owned by that person in accordance with AR 297.

(4) Without limiting any other rules in this Part 14, if a person fails to lodge any document or provide any notification in accordance with AR 302, AR 303 or AR 304, the Australian Stud Book may refuse to accept any future Mare Return, Stallion Return or Declaration of Service (as applicable) from the relevant person or in respect of the relevant horse.

This strong measure is necessary as a deterrent. The ability of a PRA to trace its stock from birth is critical to both welfare and integrity. A PRA is now clearly empowered on lodgment of a mare or foal return to enter upon a property to conduct any welfare assessments necessary with respect to breeding stock.

The same cannot be said for horses on retirement when they formally leave the racing industry. Currently when a horse is retired the trainer or authorized manager must notify Racing Australia of a horse's retirement. At this time Racing Australia is notified of the new location of the horse and the details of the person whose care the horse is now under. In its most recent published annual report (2019/2020), Racing Australia provided national statistics with respect to the circumstances surrounding a horse's departure from the Racing Industry and any subsequent career. The figures suggest that 60% of horses that leave the



industry are categorized as "equestrian/pleasure/working/companion horse". 19% are identified as entering the breeding industry, 10% are listed as being euthanized, 7% died (natural causes), 2% are listed as entering an official PRA retirement program and 2% are listed as "other".

More than half the horses identified as leaving the racing industry, fall into a category whereby PRAs may have lost the ability to trace a horse any further in the event of any subsequent transfer of ownership or location. Horses unlike some domestic animals are not registered through any local government function. They are essentially seen as livestock. PRAs have not only lost the ability to trace the horse, but the power to enter a property to conduct a welfare assessment is no longer clear. Whilst people may still allow PRAs to enter their property and conduct an assessment in good faith, a person who is attempting to conceal an obvious welfare issue would be unlikely to grant access.

In 2020 the Australian Government provided a written response to a Senate Inquiry into the Feasibility of a national horse traceability register for all horses. Whilst the proposed register relates to all horses, Recommendation 8 of that report is specifically aimed at retired racing Thoroughbreds;

Recommendation 8 (National Traceability)

The committee recommends that the national horse traceability working group, in partnership with the racing industry, work towards the development of a national horse traceability register that compliments efforts by the racing industry to track retired horses.

The magnitude of attempting to create a national horse register cannot be underestimated and ultimately states and territories will be responsible for its administration locally should it one day become a reality.

All PRAs in Australia face the same difficult scenario when it comes to tracing a retired horse beyond its first owner after leaving the industry. In the ACT and NSW, where rules are in place prohibiting a horse being transported to a Knackery or Abattoir, there is a strong desire to better empower Stewards, Veterinarians, and Inspectors to not only know the location of all horses domiciled in their state or territory but to have proper



26-year-old ex-racehorse *Go Errol* currently lives at his place of birth, Mane Lodge in Sutton.

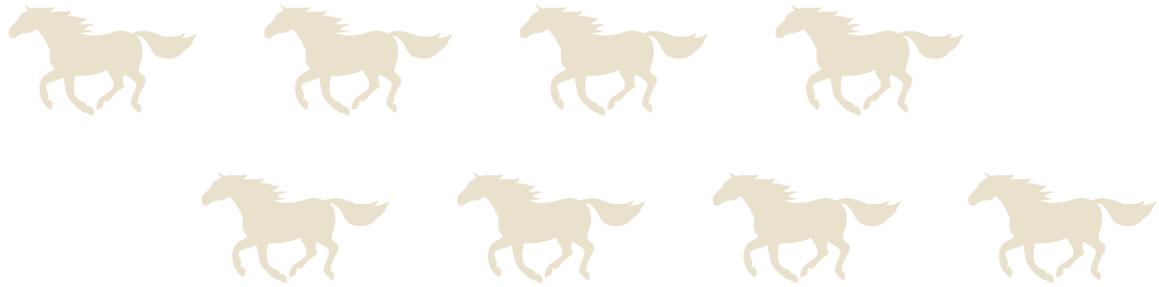
lawful access. Given the size of the ACT, the task of attempting to account for and register all horses domiciled within the territory is not as daunting as it is for other states and territories. Given the recommendations with respect to the development of a national horse register, the ACT has an opportunity to implement a method of registration for all horses and set the precedent nationally.

Some PRAs have created programs where people can voluntarily register their Thoroughbreds. The incentive to join is access to benefits, including educational material and access to clinics and events. In August 2020 Racing and Wagering Western Australia launched the Off The Track Western Australia passport (OTTWA) which is available for both Thoroughbreds and Standardbreds. Racing Victoria recently launched their Off the Track Community. This program automatically registers every Thoroughbred on retirement and allows for previous owners of a horse to register their details in the event that a horse requires further support at some stage. Whilst these programs assist PRAs with the ability to track more Thoroughbreds on leaving the industry and improve promotion of Equine Welfare, as a means of tracing all thoroughbreds to detect any welfare issues, they are limited. A person attempting to conceal a welfare issue is highly unlikely to register with such a system.

Whilst traceability is a national problem, one state has overcome the issue of accessing retired stock. Racing South Australia has one member of its Equine Welfare Department appointed as an Inspector under the Animal Welfare Act. This has not only given the PRA the proper power to enter upon a premises but has developed a working relationship between the PRA appointed Inspector and RSPCA Inspectors. The Canberra Racing Club should have a person/s appointed with the appropriate powers in the ACT. This is an insurance policy that could one day prevent a potential poor welfare outcome.

In the context of the Canberra Racing Club and its current ability to manage and inspect retired Thoroughbreds, local Stewards and dedicated welfare veterinarians conduct inspections of retired horses in the Australian Capital Territory. The club receives daily reports from Racing Australia notifying of any horse that has been retired whilst under the care of a licensed trainer in the ACT.

In 2020, 136 thoroughbreds that were last listed as being in the care of a Canberra trainer were notified by Racing Australia to the Canberra Racing Club as being retired. Of those 38 horses were listed as being retired



for breeding purposes, 75 were retired for equestrian/pleasure horse purposes, 4 were reported as being sold through a horse sale, 2 were listed as being entered into an official PRA retirement program, 9 horses were listed as being euthanized, 3 were listed as died (natural causes) and 5 were listed in a category as "other". It should be noted that of the horses that were listed as euthanized or died, a number were horses retired prior to 2020. When a previously retired horse is later notified as being deceased to Racing Australia, this generates a notice to the PRA where the horse was last registered to train. It should be noted that this data is only reaching authorities when the person in charge of a retired horse is aware of the provisions regarding the notification of a horse death to Racing Australia. In reviewing the data received by the club in 2020, some horses whose deaths were reported were of considerable age (19 years old) and were long retired from the industry.

A review of the 2020 data with respect to Canberra retired Thoroughbreds indicates that 7 horses retired to a location within the Australian Capital Territory. Many horses were retired to nearby rural localities such as Yass, Bywong, Gundaroo and Murrumbatemen. On viewing the data with respect to the notified address of a retired horse, it is obvious that the data is entered through a free text field. This creates an opportunity for erroneous data to be entered. In 2021 where many online platforms are able to use an address database, the Club is recommending for Racing Australia to have a defined map database to be incorporated into any notification with respect to traceability.

In 2020 the Canberra Racing Club has received a number of enquiries from persons seeking to purchase or receive retired Thoroughbreds. Whilst it is encouraging to see people who have an interest in owning a retired Thoroughbred, a person gifting or selling a horse should make reasonable enquiries as to whether the person receiving the horse has the knowledge and resources to care for a Thoroughbred. The following extract from the *New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing – Welfare Assessment Guidelines* paints a picture as to what is financially required to care for a Thoroughbred after racing;

Off the track Thoroughbreds may be sold for a nominal sum. A low value horse may attract adopters who may not have the financial capability to provide sustained adequate care. This creates the potential for poor welfare outcomes. The average cost of keeping a recreational sport horse in New Zealand is significant (\$12,000pa), so potential adopters must be realistic about their financial ability to support a horse.

It is in the best interest of the horse involved if a seller/gifter can provide the acquirer of a horse with as much information as possible with respect to any specific traits or injuries a horse may have. This will ensure that the person acquiring the horse can consider as to whether or not this horse is suitable for them and if they have the means and experience to properly care for it well into the future. There is currently no formal requirements or guidelines with respect to the gifting/selling of retired Thoroughbreds and this is something that the Canberra Racing Club should provide.

An owner of a Thoroughbred has obligations under the rules to make reasonable attempts and enquiries to find a suitable home for a Thoroughbred on retirement. For various reasons, there will always be horses that cannot be rehomed due to dangerous behaviours or ailments. If a home cannot be found for a retired Thoroughbred that predominantly raced in NSW and the ACT, that horse can be accepted into the Racing NSW Retirement scheme which does not exclude horses for behavioural issues or chronic injuries. ACT trainers and owners have access to this scheme through the Canberra Racing Club's financial contribution to the fund.



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