

AUSTRALIAN Horse welfare & well-being toolkit

A resource for horse organisations and event based horse welfare officers



**AUSTRALIAN
ANIMAL
WELFARE
STRATEGY**



Acknowledgements

Horse SA
Racing Victoria
Anthony Hatch
Central Queensland University
Equestrian Australia

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Contents

Introduction	2
Horse Welfare Officer Job Overview	3
Sample Induction Checklist: Horse Welfare Officer	5
Mentoring Horse Welfare Officers	6
Policies, Procedures and Instructions	8
Hot Weather Procedures	11
Tips for Managing a Media Crisis	15
A Guide for Preparing a Horse Incident Management Plan	18
Horse Incident Response Checklist	24
Handling Deceased Horses with Dignity	25
Sample Template 1: Horse Injury / Accidents	30
Sample Template 2: Horse Injury / Accidents	31
Horse Welfare Officers and Organisations	32
Horse Welfare: Recording Organisational Continuous Improvements	37
Managing Grief over the Death or Injury of a Horse at an Event	38
Being a Successful Negotiator	39
Self-Improvement through Reflection	40

FOR ORGANISATIONS

Introduction

Horse welfare is about considering the positive wellness or well-being of horses associated with your organisation and event.

Often people think of horse welfare as concerning only what is commonly described as a “welfare case” - a horse which has very poor body condition or been treated very badly. There is in fact, much more to welfare than extreme cases of neglect.

Welfare includes:

- ✓ Event conditions and infrastructure
- ✓ Horse tack and competition equipment
- ✓ Fitness programs to suit the level of competition
- ✓ Horse organisation policies, procedures and education programs.

Society is changing its attitude towards the care and well-being of domestic animals. Horse event organisers must be aware of the increased expectations around how horses are to be cared for and treated as valued members of our wider community.

Welfare includes seeing to the care and well-being of the horse in relation to all of its physical, mental, social and physiological needs both on and off the sport or recreation “playing field”.

Horse organisations will be familiar with welfare requirements as found in their rulebook; however, equally important for a balanced approach are the range of educational, role model and mentoring approaches employed by the club and organisational leaders for their members.

The Australian Horse Welfare and Well-being Toolkit will help organisations who wish to continuously improve their approach to horse welfare through the appointment of volunteer Horse Welfare Officers.

Benefits flow both ways from the appointment of a Horse Welfare Officer:

- ✓ The organisation is seen as being progressive and shows concern for horse welfare by word and deed
- ✓ Feedback provided by the Horse Welfare Officer may help improve event management and process making for even better run events in the future
- ✓ Horse owners feel confident knowing they have support and good processes in place
- ✓ Horse owners feel confident knowing they have a committee that is interested in the welfare of their animals, and events will be well run and safer as a result.

This Toolkit can be used as needed, in full or in part, as an element of a continuous improvement model for your horse organisation and members.

Horse Welfare Officer Job Overview

Background

A Horse Welfare Officer position, appointed by a not-for-profit organisation, may be paid or voluntary. The job can be shared or more than one position appointed. To support recruitment, induction and ongoing job role review, a job description is an essential tool.

Overall Purpose of the Job

Plan, coordinate and review the horse welfare and well-being program for the organisation, including events.

Key Event Responsibilities

- ▶ Liaise with event organisers to ensure preparations and plans are in place related to horse welfare including sufficient water, first aid kit and emergency transport
- ▶ Liaise with veterinarians, competitors and owners to share information related to horse welfare before, during and after the event
- ▶ Liaise with veterinarians and the event committee during an event on aspects related to horse welfare, including accident and incident management
- ▶ Collect data on horse related accidents and incidents
- ▶ Follow organisational procedures for collation of information and preparation of reports relating to horse welfare and the event.

General Responsibilities

1. Collection of data on horse activity related injuries, accidents or deaths
2. Provide advice to support development of an organisational position on horse welfare
3. Manage, review and where appropriate, promote organisational horse welfare documentation and policies
4. Network with peak research bodies, stakeholders and members concerning horse welfare and well-being, providing a conduit to disseminate information
5. Through the achievement of effective implementation and coordination, build public awareness concerning horse welfare strategies and developments
6. Coordinate regular reviews of the organisation horse welfare policy, rules or related documents in the light of the emerging science and organisational data collected.

Knowledge and Skills Required

- ▶ Sound knowledge of horse management, health and behaviour
- ▶ Sound knowledge of the organisation/event and its rules and policies
- ▶ Understanding of and empathy for issues related to horse welfare
- ▶ Proven ability as an effective communicator, inclusive of written communication
- ▶ Strong computer skills including the Microsoft Office suite of applications or similar
- ▶ Proven relationship building abilities
- ▶ Ability to work autonomously
- ▶ Current Driver's Licence.

Notes

This job description is a guide only and organisations conducting events will need to tailor job descriptions including to whom the position reports.

The job description may also include expectations of attending meetings and events, the structure and processes for reporting to the organisation, training courses to be attended, any claimable reimbursements and other factors that may affect the job role.

Sample Induction Checklist: Horse Welfare Officer

Name: _____ Date of commencement: / /

Job role: Horse Welfare Officer Name of club/event: _____

- ☐ Copy of Job Description
- ☐ Structure of the organisation running the event
- ☐ Structure of how the event is being run and under what rules
- ☐ Volunteer sign in /out register
- ☐ Organisational policies and procedures
- ☐ Introduction to the Event Secretary, Risk Management Officer, Technical Delegate, Veterinarian and other identified roles with which the role may interact
- ☐ Workplace Health & Safety - duty of care to self and other workers, risk assessments
- ☐ Personal Protection Equipment
- ☐ Safe work practices, incl. how to operate equipment provided, manual handling
- ☐ How to report a human and a horse accident/incident
- ☐ Emergency Plans and Procedures
 - ▶ Fire evacuation and assembly points
 - ▶ Horse related incident responses
 - ▶ Other emergency plans that may be documented
- ☐ Workplace Hazards
 - ▶ What to do if a hazard is identified and how to report
 - ▶ Standard Operating Procedures
 - ▶ Safety Data Sheet location
- ☐ First Aid – location of boxes and notice of who are First Aiders

Signature of person being inducted: _____ Date: / /

Signature of person providing the induction: _____ Date: / /

Mentoring Horse Welfare Officers

Mentoring is a valuable tool to ensure knowledge is passed on to others in a uniform way, ensuring more people are available to draw on to fill the position when needed.

Mentors may be accessed from all areas of the organisation and effort should be made to look widely for people that may have the relevant skills (e.g. parents, friends), and mentors can in turn identify suitable candidates as potential new Welfare Officers. Mentors can also be sourced from outside the organisation, or shared between organisations.

Mentoring involves imparting knowledge in a non-threatening environment, adapting it to the situation and person(s) involved, and giving relevant, constructive and honest feedback.

Voluntary organisations often already do mentoring informally with a whole range of roles e.g. shadow judging. The role of Horse Welfare Officer is another of these roles.

Mentoring may apply to:

- ▶ creating places or “shadow roles” for new animal welfare officers, up skilling existing officers
- ▶ dealing with difficult situations, e.g. distress/grief if an accident has occurred
- ▶ assisting organisers to cover situations (e.g. hot weather)
- ▶ raising public awareness about horse welfare.

Skills and knowledge

Mentors must have comprehensive knowledge of animal welfare, horse management and behaviour and first aid in the context of the horse event being conducted.

Mentors also need to be aware of the relevant event organisational procedures and rules, regulatory requirements e.g. animal welfare, workplace safety, relevant state government and organisational codes of practice.

Effective communication skills are required, including having more than one way of sharing information (written, discussion, practical demonstration, use of online resources) and eliciting and interpreting feedback, including:

- ▶ empathising, listening and understanding
- ▶ ability to adapt style according to the individual being mentored, their skills and the situation
- ▶ seeking and providing constructive feedback
- ▶ reading and interpreting policies and principles
- ▶ effective planning and time management skills
- ▶ ability to engender confidence, maintain trust and confidentiality and demonstrate commitment and ethical behaviour.

It is important that the mentor establish a relationship through effective communication.

Confidence, trust and rapport will aid transmission of information, ensure better retention of individuals and may encourage others to become officers.

Mentors are an asset to any organisation. The ability to provide support to people taking on roles related to horse welfare is invaluable.

Mentors may come from outside your own volunteer network. Mentors can work across a number of different types of horse events and organisations.

Promoting positive choices

Mentoring plays a strong role with competitors and owners too.

- ▶ **Promote sharing of good practice** e.g. upload horse fitness training plans to the club website
- ▶ In the management of horses, promote discussion around improvement of how things are done, especially when based on scientific research such as the fitting of saddles, bridles and equipment
- ▶ Share any useful information you come across, maybe on the club Facebook page - tit bit messages, links to YouTube clips or useful websites and articles of interest
- ▶ When you hear of free or affordable workshops, let others know
- ▶ Share promotions for conferences, training workshops and seminars, discuss if the club can subsidise attendance by members at the events
- ▶ Recognise and reward members who are good role models or who mentor others
- ▶ Promote all aspects of asking for advice. Provide different ways to do this from personal contact to noticeboards or reminders in newsletters.

Policies, Procedures and Instructions

All horse organisations need to have policies and procedures that guide how decisions are made and how the work is done.

Well written policies and procedures ensure organisational accountability, transparency and the ability to meet legislated requirements. They are fundamental to quality assurance and quality improvement programs - that is - running a great horse organisation!

- ▶ **Policies** document the guiding principles by which service is provided and members / staff / volunteers are protected, in addition to what records are required to be kept and how they need to be managed, e.g. a volunteer reimbursement policy
- ▶ The **Procedures** detail specific step-by-step directions as to how the policies will be enacted, how the business will be conducted and how the service will be provided, e.g. how volunteers need to claim for reimbursement, how the treasurer will reimburse
- ▶ **Instructions or Guidelines** are the “how to do”. Instructions tell staff / volunteers who does what, why, where, when and for whom. Instructions are task specific, capture rules for operation and can be released as directives. e.g. in the case of reimbursement the club has a standard form to complete.

The first task in initiating **policy development** for any horse organisation will be to identify all legislation that applies in relation to the topic being covered. In the case of horse welfare the Australian Horse Welfare Protocol has links in the back of the document relating to legislation in each state.

Writing a policy

Remember, policies are your public commitment to quality and provide a broad guide to actions and decision making while allowing discretion. They also may be required in order to fulfil a legislated requirement, therefore relevant legislation(s) need to be identified and noted within the policy.

In relation to horse welfare, there may be a number of policies e.g. hot weather, emergency management, horse behaviour.

Acceptable policy specific information headings for the policy include:

- ▶ Drafting officer
- ▶ Responsible officer
- ▶ Scheduled Review date
- ▶ Version number
- ▶ Approved by Board on [date].

Acceptable headings within the policy body include:

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Policy (description and definition)
- Policy specific headings may be applicable and the number of such headings will vary for each policy
- Legislation
- Authorisation.

EXAMPLE: SAMPLE POLICY

ABC Horse Activity Club	HOT WEATHER POLICY	Policy No: 014
Effective from: 01.02.13	Approved by Board: 01.01.13	Responsible Officer: J Green
Last updated: 01.01.13	Review Date: 01.02.14	Version No: 002
Introduction: A hot weather policy Purpose: To support the conduct of events on hot weather days. 1. About Heat and Risk Factors 2. Horses 3. People 4. Facilities 5. Recommendations 6. References		
President:		Date:

Below are links that may also be useful on how to set up your policies

- ➡ Worksafe <http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/contentPages/docs/labrWritingPolicy.pdf>
- ➡ Our Community http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards/boards_article.jsp?articleId=1453
- ➡ AFL Victoria <http://www.aflvic.com.au/index.php?id=8>

Writing a procedure

A procedure states what will be done to implement the policy.

A procedure:

- Identifies which policy(ies) it relates to
- Identifies all the people who are to act
- Describes the actions required
- States what event will initiate the actions
- States when the actions are to occur
- Reflects the sequence of events
- Is written in plain English, using short familiar words
- May be written or pictorial e.g. flow charts, photographs.

To write a procedure:

- Check that it is fundamental to your quality of service and builds on an existing policy
- Format the text to best convey the procedure - written, diagram, photograph, flow chart
- Use the standard procedure format
- Identify any gaps in the procedure by trialling the procedure with a user who was not involved in its development
- Redraft the procedure on the basis of the trial
- Refine and forward it to the relevant person for authorisation and distribution.

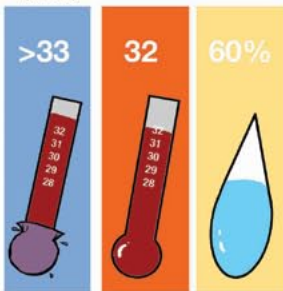
The procedure is structured to provide details of:

- Purpose and scope: specifying purpose of procedure, the area covered, exclusions
- Responsibility for implementing procedure: specifying who will implement the procedure
- Sequentially exactly what must be done and noting exceptions
- Documentation to be used with the procedure and attaching examples of completed documentation, if appropriate
- Records created as a result of using the procedure, where they are stored and for how long
- Authorisation and date: signed and dated by the person authorising the procedure.

For horse organisations that rely on volunteers, the use of pictures, diagrams and “ready reference” quick guides are recommended.

Hot Weather Procedures

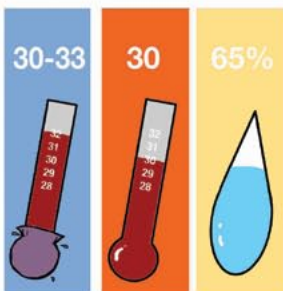
Wet bulb
Globe
temperature
(WBGT)
Temp C
% Relative
Humidity



Event Alert

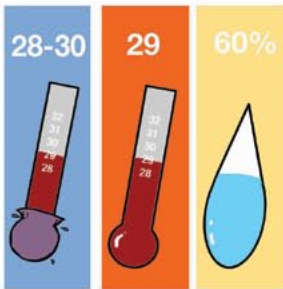
EXTREME

- Competitions **SHOULD** be held in cooler parts of the day; between 7-11am or after 4pm
- Schedule most demanding competition/ or competition phases when it is cooler
- Very high risk and probably not compatible with safe competition. Seek veterinary advice



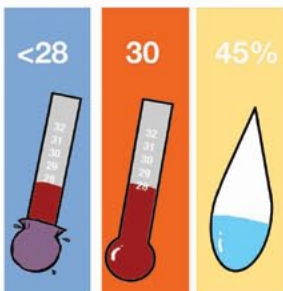
HIGH

- Competitions **SHOULD** be held in cooler parts of the day; between 7-11am or after 4pm
- Horses involved in speed and endurance events will require aggressive cooling measures



MODERATE

- Use shaded areas for competition & warm up
- Avoid non-grassed riding surfaces
- Reduce overall competition effort for horse
- Competition and PA announcements. Frequency of announcements increase with event alert risk



LOW

- Enjoy the event



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To assess the risk of heat stress in horses, the FEI uses the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) Index. WBGT information is published on the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website under the Thermal Comfort Observations webpages www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal_stress/. WBGT information is published on the BOM website for each Australian State and Territory with regional indices. For the full version of the Equestrian Australia Hot Weather Policy 2011 visit www.equestrian.org.au

Writing an Instruction

To write a work **instruction**, use the same structures and processes that were used to write procedures. Work instructions will have separate numbering to the policies and also separate to the procedures. Work or task instructions should be kept in a manual relevant to the job where the instructions are applied.

Sample Instruction

ABC Horse Activity Club	INSTRUCTION: HOW TO SET UP THE HORSE STALL FANS	Instruction No: 010
Effective from: 01.02.13	Policy Ref: Hot Weather Policy	Responsible Officer: J Green
Last updated: 01.01.13	Review Date: 01.02.14	Version No: 006
<p>Introduction: The horse stall fans are borrowed from the adjacent racing club for hot days. This is the instructions on how to collect, install and return to storage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. About the fans2. Contacting the racing club to arrange collection3. Where the fans are stored4. Diagram for installing fans5. Electrical safety notes6. Cleaning and maintenance prior to storage7. Reporting repairs and replacement		
Authorising Officer:		Date:

Managing **policies and procedures manuals**: Policies should be freely available, in a policy and procedure manual and online, whereas procedures and instructions are usually treated as in-house documents.

New inductees (paid or voluntary) need to be given access to the policies and any questions they may have that need to be answered. They also need to be given access to the relevant procedures and instructions, with suitable training provided.

Monitoring policy implementation success

Policy development, review and amendment are ongoing management requirements. Policies are required to be living documents as they must reflect changing organisational needs, service changes and legislative changes.

Policies can assist an organisation to achieve quality improvement by ensuring they capture best practice and reflect increased intelligence gained through monitoring the performance against objectives throughout the organisation.

There are many considerations that can influence the outcomes of policy implementation:

- ▮ staff / volunteer and capacity constraints
- ▮ organisational or management weaknesses
- ▮ lack of commitment of stakeholders
- ▮ delayed or insufficient mobilisation of funds
- ▮ cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, etc.

Some different techniques for monitoring the policy implementation are:

- ▮ Input monitoring (training, staffing availability, back filling during training, availability of equipment required for new procedures resulting from the policy implementation)
- ▮ Activity monitoring (quality of training)
- ▮ Output monitoring (training provided to all staff / volunteers and fully understood?)
- ▮ Follow up reviews of policy knowledge, competency based training (evaluation of understanding achieved by training attendees)
- ▮ Watching for incident / accident reporting that indicates that the policy implementation has not been successful (in circumstances where the policy objectives are in the interest of improving staff / member / volunteer safety and wellbeing).

Policies that are written, approved and promoted to members of horse organisations are common. Effectiveness can be improved by training, education and report monitoring

Setting Up a Policy Register

A **Policy Register** is a tool to assist in the management of your policies. It is more than a simple list of which policies exist: it highlights suggested review dates and with whom the responsibility sits for such reviews. In typical horse organisations, this rests with the committee.

A Policy Register needs to include the following information as a minimum:

- ▮ Header / footer / title
- ▮ Organisation name and logo
- ▮ Document Title (Policy Register)
- ▮ Date the register was last updated
- ▮ File path and file title
- ▮ Headers for list of policies (may be contained within a table)
- ▮ Policy Number (column header)
- ▮ Policy Title (column header)
- ▮ Responsible Officer (column header)
- ▮ The date the policy was adopted (column header)
- ▮ Policy Review Date (column header)
- ▮ Contents of policy register table / columns
- ▮ Each policy must be individually listed and the relevant details included for each policy, as per the column headers.

Sample Instruction

ABC Horse Activity Club		POLICY REGISTER		Last updated: 06.05.13
No.	Title	Responsible Officer	Date Policy Adopted	Policy Review Date
013	Hot Weather Policy	J. Green	01.02.13	01.02.14
014	Volunteer Reimbursement	P. Apple	06.05.13	06.05.14

Filepath/ABC Horseactivityclub/secretary/2013

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is another way of identifying effectiveness of policy objectives.

It is the process of determining

- ✓ who is the very best
- ✓ who sets the standard;
- ✓ and what that standard is.

Benchmarking helps horse organisations to understand and evaluate their current position in relation to “best practice” and how to achieve performance improvement.

When “lessons learnt” from a benchmarking exercise are applied, they facilitate improved performance in functions within the horse organisation.

Benchmarking needs to be adopted as part of an ongoing improvement process with the goal of keeping abreast of ever-improving best practice.

Benchmarking within the organisation is typically conducted by defining quantitative and qualitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measuring progress over time toward achieving set standards or standards of excellence.

The acronym SMART is often used to describe KPIs.

- ✓ **S**pecific
- ✓ **M**easurable
- ✓ **A**chievable
- ✓ **R**elevant
- ✓ **T**imely

Example: **Key Performance Indicator:** *The horse event incident response team will improve response time by 50% over the next 6 months.*

- ▶ The KPI is measured by recording how long it takes between notification of an incident needing to be responded to, arriving at the scene and setting up screens
- ▶ After discussion with the incident response volunteers, provision of training and further planning it is believed that a response time of one minute to anywhere on the grounds is achievable
- ▶ Setting targets for the improvement of response time is seen as relevant, for both horse welfare and the positive image of the club
- ▶ Time will be recorded over the next three events. Using debriefs after each event it is believed that this target can be met by our major event on 1 December.

Where policies are consistently implemented by organisations in order to meet legislated requirements (such as Workplace Health and Safety), it is possible to use data analysis techniques to ascertain trends across organisations. This would also apply to evaluation of data collected through horse accident/injury and death reports.

Tips for Managing a Media Crisis

Professional horse organisations may engage a media company to manage promotions relating to specific events, however most make the best of the volunteer skills available.

Even the smallest clubs have volunteers with the skills to promote upcoming events and report on successful events. This may include posting photos to social media and preparing positive wording to send to local papers.

It is when things go wrong, when a “crisis” occurs, that management of the media becomes critical to protecting the reputation of your organisation and event, including its reputation relating to human and horse welfare.

Not all events run smoothly all of the time. There may be an occasion where bad news, an accident or other crisis needs to be proactively managed by the organisation. This includes situations where a horse is seriously injured or may have died.

When things go wrong, they can go very wrong, very quickly. Official (professional) and unofficial media (competitors, followers) will put out information about your event with the click of a smartphone camera.

By creating an official channel, event organisers can work quickly and proactively to manage the situation to make sure your side of the story is put forward.

Preparing a Communication Plan

The first step is to prepare a crisis communication plan, which need only be a page. The plan should address:

- ▶ Who is your organisation/event spokesperson? Is there more than one?
- ▶ Does your spokesperson have ready access to the crisis plan?
- ▶ Can all members of the management committee reach this person quickly in the event of a crisis?
- ▶ Has the person who answers phones or opens doors at your premises or away from your premises been informed of the appropriate responses? Media are trained to get information – where official information has not been made available, they will use any information and photographs/video to hand
- ▶ What is the agreed process before any statements can be made to the media? e.g. does this provide an opportunity for key persons involved in the event to meet quickly and confidentially? Free technology tools such as Google Hangouts can be used to arrange a quick online “face to face” meeting but these should be rehearsed beforehand
- ▶ How will the key people access data and information they may need to underpin any statements being prepared? Be aware that any channel may be abused – emails should be written as though they were public information
- ▶ What channels will be used to provide information to media and the public? Again, technology tools such as an online Newsroom and Facebook Page can be used to quickly disseminate correct information to both individual journalists and the general public
- ▶ Do you have a list of key media that need to be kept informed, including up-to-date contact details?
- ▶ Have you rehearsed your issues management process and responses? It is relatively easy to find case studies online and reading previous media coverage and responses should form part of your crisis management plan.

Communicating with Media

You may not have the chance to talk to your communication team when a crisis arises. You may not even know a crisis has occurred before media approach you. Media can literally park on your doorstep. Should this occur, it is ideal to enlist the services of a third party who can inform the media that you are being briefed fully on the events leading up to the crisis and the crisis itself and will speak to them as soon as possible.

Be aware that TV camera operators are trained to capture your emotions – maintain a calm and confident demeanour. Be suitably serious, as circumstances dictate.

When addressing the media, the organisation/event spokesperson needs to consider any questions put forward by the media before answering, responding only with facts and the agreed statements. Do not be drawn into putting blame on anyone or answering questions based on hypothetical situations.

Here is a media checklist:

1. Acknowledge that an incident/crisis has occurred
2. Stay calm and composed
3. Stick to the agreed statements
4. Only state the facts
5. Show concern by words and deeds
6. Be aware of any legal implications that may arise from the incident, keeping comments measured.
7. Only speak about what you know. A police officer or lawyer may be an appropriate person to hand over to during the interview if a very serious incident occurred
8. Correct or challenge errors or opinions
9. Avoid “no comment” replacing with other phrases such as, “I can’t answer that until I receive the full report/have spoken with the right person”
10. Do not at any time appear defensive or aggressive.
11. Thank the media for their time.

Pre and Post Competition Briefing

- ▶ During a pre-competition briefing for competitors and stewards, have a structured section dedicated to media and welfare aspects
- ▶ Remind participants who the media spokesperson is for the event
- ▶ Introduce the Horse Welfare Officer
- ▶ Send a reminder about social media policies endorsed by the organisation, encourage positive images of the event on personal social media pages and forward “official” images from the event’s own pages
- ▶ Debriefs post event also need to include specific sections on welfare.

Website Checklist

Journalists will refer to an organisation’s website to gather background information. This is an ideal opportunity to have positive information readily available.

- ▶ Is the organisation’s animal welfare policy and any other public statements related to welfare available on your website?
- ▶ Do public documents, such as your organisation/s Annual Report, contain statements about horse welfare investments?
- ▶ Is there a page dedicated to welfare, or do members and visitors have to trawl through layers of information to reach your policies
- ▶ Is newsletter information about attending a professional development seminar or upcoming training session readily available?

Pre-arranged media statements are key sentences prepared in advance so that in the heat of the moment a positive image can be put forward by your horse organisation.

Links: ➡ http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1520

A Guide for Preparing a Horse Incident Management Plan

The aim of preparing a plan is to ensure an appropriate, controlled and coordinated response to all levels of incident that will ensure the best possible outcome for those unfortunate enough to be involved in the incident and those who may witness it or be required to manage it.

There are varying degrees of incident all of which require some level of action therefore it is considered necessary to establish these levels of response on an agreed basis to enable an easy understanding of what is required.

1. Cover and Contents

The Plan should have a cover page stating the name of event, date, location and Responsible Person followed by a contents page.

2. Define the levels of Incidents

Sample definitions

Incident

An incident is defined as where either rider or horse need medical or veterinary intervention but are both able to return to their stable unassisted.

Serious Incident

A serious incident is defined as an incident where either the horse or rider is unable to continue due to injuries sustained.

Major Incident

A major incident is defined as an incident where:

- ▶ the injuries to the horse are such that it may need to be euthanased
- ▶ the injuries to the rider, such as serious head or spinal injuries, are to the level that they may be life threatening
- ▶ a member of the public sustains an injury that can be deemed related to the actions of an official or competitor.

The following section gives a few tips as to what may need to be considered as part of a written and practiced plan for a "Serious" incident involving a horse only. Full plans will need to include riders, volunteers and spectators.

3. Identify the Horse Incident Management Team

These volunteers have taken part in training sessions to understand and execute their roles.



Horse Event Incident Controller (IC): This is a critical role. This person is in charge of the incident scene; therefore someone who has been trained in incident response scene management is ideal. The Incident Controller role oversees safety, operations, planning and logistics or works closely with others who have been delegated to undertake one or more of these roles. In the case of a Serious or Major Incident, the horse event IC will hand over to the emergency services IC on their arrival.

Immediately an incident occurs, the IC will assess the scene, establish and maintain a management structure, identify risks (in fact dynamic risk assessments run continually), monitor and review safety and welfare. Tasks also include developing, monitoring and reviewing a response specific Incident Action Plan, manage communication, conclude the incident and debrief.

The IC will also advise the event manager to stop the horse event as a whole or just one particular section, depending on the type and location of the incident. The IC will request that screens are put in place around a horse that is down or visibility injured, secure the area, appoint a horse handler for each horse involved, and determine if it is just first aid, or the ambulance, police or veterinarian that is required.

Logistics Officer: This person will have easy access to information about the horse, the owner and the rider. They will have copies of any incident plans, site plans showing access/egress points, and a long list of contact numbers – in other words, all the administrative information related to the event. This person will work under the direction of the IC, supporting communication by relaying any messages, including public safety messages, to the ringmaster, PA system or stewards.

Safety Officer: This person works under the direction of the IC to ensure people remain in the incident safety zones and, where possible, wear personal protective equipment. In the case of a Serious Incident, the Safety Officer will hand over to the emergency services Safety Officer on their arrival. The Safety Officer taking part in the management of the incident may or may not be the same person who is appointed Safety Officer for the whole event.

Veterinarian: A qualified veterinarian to work as part of a response team to sedate and treat horses.

Veterinary Support: This volunteer will assist the veterinarian by carrying equipment and taking care of drugs and tools while the vet is attending a Serious Incident. Previous veterinary nurse training is ideal but not required. An ability to follow instructions from the IC and the veterinarian is essential.

Nominated Horse Handler: The nominated Horse Handler is an experienced person who is able to follow instructions instantly and work as part of a team. This person must be identified and nominated in advance of the event.

Incident Reporter: This person records aspects of the incident scene: the response, people involved in the incident, weather, time of day and general observations. This information will support a post-event incident report, investigation or insurance claim and can be evaluated by the committee to look for ways to make improvements.

Incident Photographer: This person photographically records all aspects of the incident scene, the response and the surrounding aspects (sun, ground surface, hazards) to support information collected by the Incident Reporter. Ideally the reporter and photographer are two different people, but often this is not possible.

Horse Ambulance and Driver: Drives a dedicated horse ambulance. Must be a competent driver and be able to follow instructions.

Horse Welfare Officer: This role is broad. The Officer observes the incident response and management and provides a supporting role. This includes ensuring that after the incident, the horse is cared for appropriately and taken home or to an equine clinic in a timely manner.

Human Welfare Officer: The appointed Member Protection Officer/Child Safety Officer for the club or event should have the skills to also be on standby to provide general human welfare services. In consultation with the IC and Police, they may call in further professional counseling support or other services if needed when a serious or major incident occurs.

Equipment Officer and Equipment: This volunteer will need to source a range of items to have ready to use should an incident occur.

Media/Communications: The event media liaison officer will play a key role in communication of information about the incident to the spectators and media. Statements can be prepared in advance relating to event cancellation and such topic areas as serious injury or death of a horse or rider.

The media officer will work with the *event spokesperson* who is generally the most senior representative available from the event organising committee, e.g. President or Event Chairperson. It cannot be the Incident Controller or other role directly involved in management of an incident.

The media liaison officer will prepare information about the incident and, with approval of the President or Event Chairperson, undertake such tasks as information for PA announcements, arrangement of interviews, posting of internet information on the official event website and may arrange more general short notice briefings for key personnel and a press release.

The Media Manager needs to have in hand;

- general office stationery
- copies of the program, schedule and other event information
- relevant rider and / or horse biographies (if not available, a copy of entry form)
- previous event results
- history of event, including numbers of any previous major incidents
- general facts and figures.

Horse Incident Management Team Personnel		
Title	Name	Mobile
Event Director/Chief Steward		
Medical Officer / First Aider		
Horse Incident Safety Officer		
Logistics Officer		
Veterinarian		
Veterinarian Support		
Horse Handler		
Incident Investigator		
Incident Photographer		
Equipment Officer		
Horse Ambulance Driver		
Horse Welfare Officer		
Human Welfare Officer		
Event Secretary		

5. Establish an Incident Operations Centre

For a larger event, space will need to be dedicated to support a range of incident responses, including a biosecurity threat. This is in addition to a normal “control centre” as run at three day events, large shows or endurance rides.

The room or area needs to be set up as an office as well equipped as possible, with power, communications, desktops, maps and information about the courses, access to event participant information. A person will need to be responsible for the pre-event preparation of this room.

It should be established in a secure, quiet area where it is difficult to be overheard. If necessary have a person posted on the door to maintain security. At most events, it may be the secretary's room that is prepared in advance, and is taken over should a serious or major incident need an operations centre. Provision needs to be made in advance for the Secretary to continue work in a temporary environment.

6. Describe How the Volunteers will respond to an Incident

It is important to write down how your event volunteers will undertake a response to an incident.

7. What Reports are expected to be completed in relation to each Incident?

For every incident, however minor, the Officials involved should complete an Incident/Accident Report Form.

Advice and reports may also need to be prepared for the insurance company and potentially for the insured horse.

Serious and Major incidents will require reports for the national sporting organisation and maybe WorkSafe or equivalent state department.

In the case of a human fatality there will be a Police investigation. The Incident Investigator will need to work with the Police on the day to support gathering of information.

8. Ensure there is a Debrief

Before dispersing, the Horse Incident Response Team should hold an internal incident debrief to confirm in everyone's minds precisely what happened and to arrange how to progress.

Agree upon a spokesperson to liaise with any other Investigation Committee and prepare a complete incident dossier including all relevant paperwork.

The Human Welfare Officer may arrange contacts for counseling. The Horse Welfare Officer may also consider a report related to their role.

Sample Steps for General Officials Responding to an Accident or Incident

1. Identify yourself as an Official to those at the scene if required
2. Undertake an initial risk assessment
3. Call the Event Control Centre (or other Official as pre-arranged) to alert the Event Director to the situation giving an exact location. The Event Director will action the **Horse Incident Response Plan** if needed, stop the event and call in the response team including the First Aider and/or Veterinarian to the scene.

For a minor incident where the rider and horse can walk away, it is unlikely the full Plan will be actioned.

NOTE: If the situation is SERIOUS or MAJOR, use an agreed term e.g. "Code Green" or other term rather than provide a graphic description

4. Support the **Incident Controller** in the early stages to manage the incident until the full response team arrives and takes up their roles
5. After the incident has been concluded, check the course section in your area of responsibility, in order that you can report to the Incident Controller can subsequently provide the "all clear" to the Event Director so that the competition can continue
6. Make some notes in case an Incident Reporter requires your input into a report.

Acknowledgements

Don Crosby, Anthony Hatch NSW Fire & Rescue

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Horse Incident Response Checklist



**AUSTRALIAN
ANIMAL
WELFARE
STRATEGY**



EVENT	DATE	VENUE
Name	Position	Mobile
	Event Director	
	Event Secretary	
	Incident Controller (IC):	
	Logistics	
	Safety Officer	
	Veterinarian	
	Veterinary Support	
	Horse Handler	
	Incident Reporter	
	Incident Photographer	
	Human Welfare Officer	
	Horse Welfare Officer	
	Equipment Officer	
	Media	
	Horse Ambulance	

Address of event (for ambulance)

Emergency Dial: 000

Emergency Disease Watch Hotline: 1800 675 888

EQUIPMENT:

- Hi-viz vests, safety helmets, gloves
- Strong head collar and long lead
- Towels, lifejacket/other horse head protection
- 2 x 3M rescue straps / 2 x 15 M ropes
- Lunging whip or poles with hooks
- Screen/s, tarpaulins, spare ropes
- Rescue glide
- Water and hand washing options
- Communications with event managers
- Horse ambulance with winch

Handling Deceased Horses with Dignity

Horse event organisers and officials have wide ranging responsibilities when organising an event. Along with providing a positive experience for all participants, there will be times when, in spite of all planning, accidents and incidents occur.

As part of event planning, the organising committee will need to give consideration to the management of potential situations which may involve the handling, transport and disposal of a deceased horse in a dignified manner.

Designated event officials need to be familiar with the club policies and procedures relating to responding to an incident, which may also involve handling of a deceased horse. The response team should be well trained, equipped and ready for fast deployment to any part of the venue or course where a horse has access.

It is recommended that an appointed horse welfare officer works alongside the response team to support communications between the veterinarian, owners, event organisers and service providers and follow up with horse related welfare aspects afterwards.

Pre-event Planning

Policies, Procedures, Rules

- Do the rules/policies cover just the competition field or do they include areas associated with the event e.g. wash down bays, float parking
- Are the rules/policies clear about processes involved relating to authorisation processes for euthanasia?
- Are horse owners aware of the rules/policies about euthanasia and how the club will carry these out?
- What are the reporting requirements that have to be completed for the governing body? and/or for the club conducting the event? Insurance?
- Are there requirements for taking samples for the laboratory from the horse at the scene?
- Is a post-mortem undertaken by a veterinary surgeon a mandatory requirement in some or all circumstances? How is this arranged for and paid?
- Is there a communication list of all persons that need to be contacted in relation to a deceased horse readily available e.g. transport drivers able to cater for deceased horses, Technical Delegates, owners, insurer
- Is there documentation to travel with the deceased horse with any instructions for transfer, disposal, post mortem, personal property travelling with the horse or other requirements?
- Is a waterproof ID tag required to be placed on deceased horse?
- Are plans to manage a deceased horse able to be carried out without the owner or authorised representative being present? What is in place to allow this?
- Is all the paperwork, camera and any other items required to meet the rules/policies prepared in advance and readily available at the scene on the day?
- Is this all written down? **Deciding on the day is not an option.**

Equipment

- ▶ All equipment to be checked prior to each event, including winch
- ▶ All equipment to be cleaned and packed after each use
- ▶ How many of each items is needed to cover the event e.g. screens
- ▶ Can you get a screen to any place on the venue where a horse is permitted in less than one minute? This will determine the number of screens
- ▶ Can attending veterinary vehicles and the horse ambulance get to the required places accessed by horses easily and efficiently?
- ▶ What are the resource implications if more than one horse was involved in a single incident or two incidents occurred within a short time frame of each other?
- ▶ Are enough people on roster to make sure that the equipment can be used immediately as required?
- ▶ Who is authorised to be at an accident scene? Do they have ID tags and hi-viz clothing or other forms of identification?

Screens: The purpose of the screen is to shield the horse and its handlers from public view. It is recommended that screens should be approximately 7.5 metres long x 2 metres plus in height and be constructed of light, durable, non-transparent, (preferably wind permeable) material (e.g. fine weave shade cloth). To enable the screens to be held erect around the horse, vertical supports (usually timber, plastic pipe or metal poles) should be attached at about every 1.5mtrs along the length of the screen and at either end.

Horse Ambulance: A fully enclosed horse float with a removable centre divider and an electronic or manual winch needs to be available, or a custom designed horse ambulance. An open trailer, or a trailer whose design allows for people and cameras to easily see inside, even if the horse is covered by a tarpaulin, is not appropriate. The towing vehicle must be suitable to access the required areas in wet weather.

Rescue Glide and Rescue Straps: Increasingly rescue glides are being introduced into Australia to support the transport of injured or deceased horses. If a glide is not available a strong tarpaulin with loops for handles or to insert hooks with handles will suffice.

Tarpaulins: A tarpaulin large enough to fully cover a horse is required. Additional tarpaulins can be used for aiding to move a deceased horse, tool dumps, to cover over sharp edges of broken infrastructure or for other purposes.

Witches Hats, Flags and Markers: An accident scene is a work site. It is also an area that needs to be kept secure with no unauthorised persons permitted to enter. Witches hats can be used to mark horse ambulance access and egress points, placed in a circle quite a bit larger than the area being used by the screen or temporarily mark off broken infrastructure which may also form part of the accident scene. The kit may include “do not cross” tape or other warning signage

Personal Protective Equipment: The event organiser will need to undertake a risk assessment related to the handling of deceased horses and arrange for appropriate PPE to be used. This may include hi-viz vests, gloves, protective overalls, boots and sun protection. There may be identified circumstances where there is a heightened or unknown biosecurity risk so additional items in the PPE kits may need to be available at hand.

Cleaning Up: Veterinarians and volunteers need to be able to wash their hands after handling horses. Ensure that arrangements are made for facilities to be available. Horse accidents may create a need to clean out a float. Consider how and where this is done.

Club rules may require that after every horse /after each event that a disinfection procedure takes place for equipment and ambulance. A basic kit (e.g. heavy duty paper towels, spray cleaner, broom, manure receptacle) should travel with the horse ambulance.

Logistics

When the deceased horse is taken from scene in a horse ambulance, what happens next?

- Does the ambulance leave the grounds? Is a second ambulance available so that the event may continue? What is the minimum number of ambulances the event requires?
- Does the ambulance stay on site, after transferring the deceased horse to another type of transport?
- Is an agreement in place to take deceased horses to a pre-arranged venue e.g. equine clinic? What are the arrangements for advising the venue if a horse is arriving?
- Does the deceased horse stay on site, covered and attended at a secure, isolated part of the facility?
- If the owner wants to take the horse home, is commercial/pre-arranged transport to be used? How will this occur? or if a transfer to the horse owner's float is to take place, is there a pre-arrange secure site arranged to transfer the horse?
- Other options?

Providing veterinary support during euthanasia

The euthanasia procedure for a horse can be a high risk activity. Injured horses can become highly agitated, rear and plunge which may lead to contact with other people or objects. Working behind a screen is working in a type of confined space.

Safety considerations:

- Prepare the horse ambulance, rescue glide, tarpaulins and any other equipment prior to the euthanasia procedure (if time allows, or at the same time)
- The most competent horse handler needs to assist the veterinarian
- Open communication to take place between key people, including talking about how the horse may behave and how this will be managed - including the potential for persons holding the screen being required to move quickly
- A high quality well-fitting head collar and long, strong lead to be used
- A high level of awareness by all persons in attendance about outside distractions, including roadways, spectators, other horses and how this may affect the task at hand
- Awareness around the use of sharps (needles)
- Persons to be trained in Large Animal Rescue/manual handling techniques to reposition the deceased horse
- Placement of a tarpaulin over the deceased horse as soon as possible.

Links

- ➡ Pocket Guide for Horse Organisations and Clubs Horse Welfare (*Includes a job description for a horse welfare officer*) http://www.australiananimalwelfare.com.au/app/webroot/files/upload/files/Pocket_Guide_Horse_Clubs_2011_1.pdf
- ➡ Acknowledgements Racing Victoria www.racingvictoria.net.au
- ➡ Horse SA www.horsesa.asn.au

Horse Injury/Accident Data Collection

Data relating to injuries and fatalities of horses may be required to be collected by the governing body of the sport, the club conducting the event and for insurance.

Data is collected to support each horse organisation undertake reviews for the purposes of

- ✓ Ongoing monitoring
- ✓ Introducing new safety initiatives
- ✓ Improved risk assessments
- ✓ Informing rule, policy or procedure updates
- ✓ Inclusion in educational programs
- ✓ Investment in further research.

In the same way that human data is not made public by many organisations, horse data is kept by the collecting organisation for internal use to improve the sport or recreation activity. In addition, there are requirements to protect veterinary medical records and information relating to owners of horses who are involved in an injury or fatality.

The collection of data allows each organisation to develop their own knowledge base and put their own case forward to members and the public on how their own sport or recreation activity is conducted and is undertaking a continuous improvement program. It is not likely to be appropriate for one horse activity to compare themselves with another.

Horse organisations may however, consider promoting the measures in place to ensure horse welfare is highly regarded as part of conducting their event. The measures may include:

- ▶ Appointment of an event veterinarian
- ▶ Appointment of a horse welfare officer
- ▶ Horse Ambulances, trained volunteers and equipment is available at each event
- ▶ Rules allowing for the refusal to accept a horse not fit to participate prior to, or during an event
- ▶ Rules which allow for horses to be scratched from events without penalty if relating to an identified aspect of horse health and welfare
- ▶ Rules which require a Certificate of Health to be provided by a veterinarian on request of the Stewards/Event Officials
- ▶ Enforcement of anti-doping policies
- ▶ Codes of Practice and policies relating to welfare are available online
- ▶ Inspection of event venue and equipment prior to each use
- ▶ Horse incident management plans
- ▶ Biosecurity and horse health plans
- ▶ Ongoing investment in research
- ▶ Education programs for competitors, officials and event organisers
- ▶ Dissemination of published research to horse event participants and stakeholders.

Any horse sport or recreational activity carries risks; however these can be well managed with planning in advance, supported by volunteer training and ongoing research.

Sample Template 1: Horse Injury / Accidents

For the recording of the circumstances surrounding injuries or deaths of horses. First aid and veterinary treatments may need to be recorded by the attending veterinarian and/or owner separately under the rules of the sport

Date: _____ **Horse Welfare Officer:** _____ **Signature:** _____

Attending Veterinarian: _____ **Signature:** _____

Name of Event		Event Address	
Place of incident		Class /section	
Horse Name:		Age (years):	
Rider/Driver:		Sex:	
Program reference		Owner	

Category of Injury			
Catastrophic Limb Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collapse and euthanasia	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sudden Death	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cranial or Vertebral Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Injury Details								
Which limb(s) or skeletal structure(s)?	LF	<input type="checkbox"/>	RF	<input type="checkbox"/>	LH	<input type="checkbox"/>	RH	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Head	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pelvis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Which bone(s)?	P1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sesamoid/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	MC	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carpal bones	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Radius	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humerus	<input type="checkbox"/>	MT	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tibia	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Skull	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cervical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Type of fracture	Condylar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comminuted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compound(open)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Subluxation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Which soft tissue structure(s)?	SDFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	DDFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	SL	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sesamoidian	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Severe Strain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lacerated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Severed/ Ruptured	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description of injury								

Contributing Factors			
None Apparent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside Interference	<input type="checkbox"/>	Track/Arena/Surface condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of pre-existing injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weather	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments			

Treatments / Euthanasia				
Euthanasia was performed at event	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse removed by equine ambulance for assessment.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse referred to Veterinary Clinic	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treatments				
Name of attending Veterinarian/Clinic				

Samples				
Samples collected	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post Mortem scheduled	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes e.g. any further investigations				

Sample Template 2: Horse Injury / Accidents

For the recording of the circumstances surrounding injuries or deaths of horses. First aid and veterinary treatments may need to be recorded by the attending veterinarian and/or owner separately under the rules of the sport

Date:

Horse Welfare Officer:

Signature:

Name of Event		Event Address	
Place of incident		Class /section	
Horse Name:		Age (years):	
Rider/Driver:		Sex:	
Program reference		Owner	

Category of Injury			
Catastrophic Limb Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collapse and euthanasia	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sudden Death	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cranial or Vertebral Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Injury Details	
Description of injury	

Contributing Factors			
None Apparent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside Interference	<input type="checkbox"/>	Track/Arena/Surface condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of pre-existing injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weather	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments			

Treatments / Euthanasia				
Euthanasia was performed at event	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse removed by equine ambulance for assessment.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse referred to Veterinary Clinic	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treatments				
Name of attending Veterinarian/Clinic				

Samples				
Samples collected	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post Mortem scheduled	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes e.g. any further investigations		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

For Horse Welfare Officers

Horse Welfare Officers and Organisations

The role of Horse Welfare Officer is relatively new to horse organisations and events.

Committees or competitors may feel threatened by the position; therefore Horse Welfare Officers need to take this into account with all interactions by being conciliatory, not dogmatic.

Tips:

- ▶ Familiarise yourself with the event organising committee and key roles
- ▶ Ask to sit in on at least one of the pre-event meetings, so members are familiar with who you are, and offer to explain your role
- ▶ Be familiar with the rules covering the specific event
- ▶ Be approachable
- ▶ Offer information rather than 'tell' people how it is
- ▶ Take a positive standpoint: point out the benefits of doing things in a better way and recognising improvement, rather than talking about what may be going wrong
- ▶ Respect the privacy of the individuals and the organisation. Do not discuss any incidents that may arise with anyone other than those involved and only as needed to organisers – this will help to develop people's trust in you and the position
- ▶ Be clear with the organising committee as to who is making any public statements should an incident arise. The event should have an identified media spokesperson (usually the President or Event Director)
- ▶ Be seen to follow up on things if reported to you, no matter how small
- ▶ Do what you say you are going to do. Your consistency builds trust
- ▶ Liaise. Keep event organisers informed of any potential issues arising
- ▶ Make sure competitors are aware of your role (check it has been published in the program and/or on the notice board, with your contact number).

Should an incident arise:

- ▶ Remain calm, grounded and centered, be clear and consistent
- ▶ Approach quietly, gather information and provide a report, do not make judgement – that is the responsibility of the event organisers based on your advice, the rules and regulations
- ▶ Suspend any biases, assumptions and beliefs when working with people
- ▶ Explain the reasons for your advice and the benefits that might come as a result. Take time to discuss
- ▶ In difficult scenarios, people may resist your attempts to help them. Do not take it personally. Speak softly and calmly, make sure a member of the organising committee is present if there is any likelihood of dissent.

After the event:

- ▶ Give feedback to the organising committee, preferably in writing, which provides positive improvements which might be made, short, medium and/or long term
- ▶ Support incremental change (even though you may be impatient for more/faster change to take place potentially). Different horse sports/organisations have different cultural approaches and are more likely to come on board if encouraged, rather than 'pushed'.

To gain maximum credence in the role, and to encourage more organisations and events to include the role, a Horse Welfare Officer must be:

- ▶ available, a positive role model, empathic and personable
- ▶ provide support and encouragement.

Horse Welfare Officers are a valuable source of support and information. They are selected for their knowledge, confidence, social skills and reliability.

Event Organising Committees

Having a Horse Welfare Officer is a positive for your organisation. *It demonstrates that your committee understands best practice, and wants the best outcomes for the horses.*

Choose your Horse Welfare Officer carefully and they will be an asset to the smooth running of your event. Ensure you pick someone who:

- ▶ has had some training
- ▶ has excellent background knowledge of horse management
- ▶ understands your event procedures and rules
- ▶ is reliable
- ▶ has excellent social and communication skills.

See the opportunities the role provides: there is someone always available as a resource, both for the committee and the public, a dedicated member of the team available to handle difficult situations and difficult people.

Ensure the person in charge of media knows who is in the role. In the event of an incident, it will enable them to put a far more positive spin on the outcome if the organisation is seen to be proactive and in control.

To ensure acceptance of this new role (by competitors and committee):

- ▶ Choose the right person, a positive role model
- ▶ Committee and organisers need to have a basic understanding of the principles under which the Horse Welfare Officer is operating. Make sure the *whole* committee understands the benefits of having this person. Invite the officer to a pre-event meeting so they get to meet

- ▶ Make sure the whole committee understands that they must respect the privacy of individual and hence any report from the officer is confidential. Any statement about any specific incident needs to be made by one predetermined person only. Decide who this is going to be at a pre-event meeting
- ▶ Event organisers must also be positive role models, speaking positively to others about the benefits of this position when the matter is raised, showing respect to the officer, and supporting any decisions reached as a result of the officer's report.

Display the name and contact number of the officer for the day, either on a noticeboard or in the program.

Working with Riders

There are many opportunities for a Horse Welfare Officer to work positively with riders. A recent survey report commissioned by the Australian Horse Industry Council for their national Horse Welfare and Well-being Survey found that horse owners are hungry for more information to improve their horse's welfare and well-being.

Throughout the report are recommendations that could be used as a base by Horse Welfare Officers for sharing research, linking to websites and articles of interest or creating discussion points.

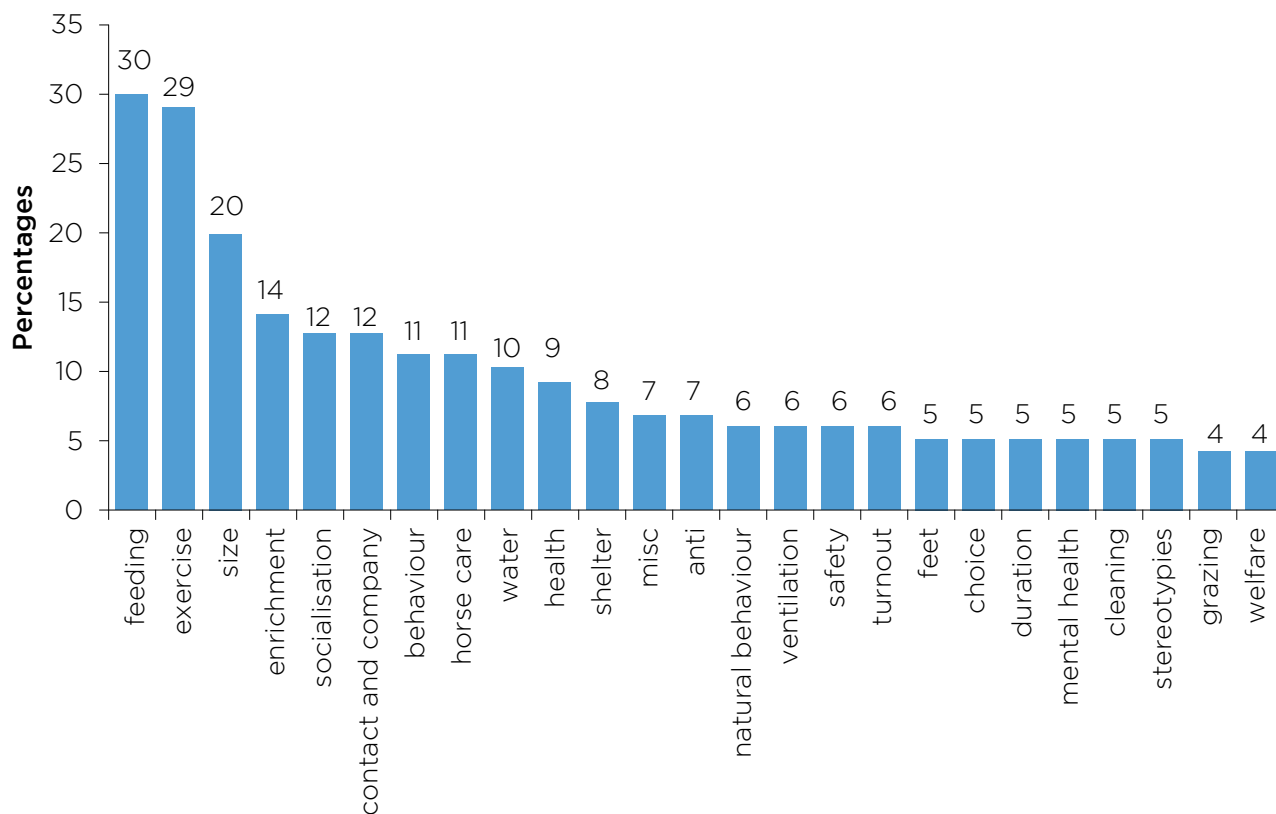
In one survey question, participants were given the opportunity to state what key points they would like to see included in a fact sheet, brochure, voluntary code or other information that could provide guidance. The top 25 topics are given in the following figure (Figure 25). The most common response was feeding, with;

- ▶ 30% indicating that a brochure or advice on this topic would be appreciated. This response includes reference to slow feeding, roughage, grazing, the number of meals per day both in general and the amount required for exercise and discipline needs, and general horse nutrition
- ▶ 29% made comments relating to exercise including appropriate type and amount
- ▶ 20% made comments relating to size. This category included comments about freedom to move, space to run and the minimum and optimum size of stables and yards
- ▶ 14% would like to see information on enrichment. This category refers to reducing boredom, providing variety and stimulation for the horse.

Information can be provided in the context of the sport or recreation activity.

The top 25 issues respondents would like to see addressed

*Excerpt from the Australian Horse Welfare & Well-being Survey Analysis
June 2013 Central Queensland University Fig 25*



Benefits flow both ways from the appointment of a Horse Welfare Officer:

- ✓ The organisation is seen as being progressive and caring
- ✓ Feedback provided by the Horse Welfare Officer may help improve event management and process making for even better run events in the future
- ✓ Horse owners feel confident knowing they have support and good processes in place
- ✓ Horse owners feel confident knowing they have a committee that is interested in the welfare of their animals, and that the event will be well run and safer as a result.

SAMPLE CHECKLIST: HORSE WELFARE AT EVENTS

ABC Horse Activity Club	Checklist: Event Management – Horse Welfare	
Event Name:	Event Date:	
Administration:		
Participants provided with rules, policies and responsibilities relating to horse welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	
On-day contact details for event organising committee, key roles, emergency services	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Written emergency response plans relating to horses (e.g. biosecurity/fire) available	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Written horse accident/incident response plans available	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hazard report forms available for all event officials	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Horse injury/accident forms and incident response equipment checked	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Weather forecast checked and ongoing climatic conditions monitoring arranged	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Participant and horse identification number display requirements clearly documented	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard Operating Procedures for horse handling by on-course officials	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Biosecurity alerts website checked	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Property Identification Code (PIC) provided / included in event registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Infrastructure:		
Horse ambulance(s) arranged	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communication radios on course / with committee / with on-course officials	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quarantine area for sick / injured horses established	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Water / shade stations for horse rehydration / cooling arranged	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Enough incident response equipment to enable effective response to all parts of course	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Field hospital established (if required)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personnel:		
Event Veterinarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Horse incident response team	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Practices:		
Horse incident response team is trained and practiced (time and task efficient)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Incident Controller for horse accidents known and identified	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Animal welfare induction and training for identified officials and helpers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pre and post event vet-checking stations personnel inducted and trained (or event equivalent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
On-course officials and judges trained in risk / incident reporting requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
“Stop” course/event/class procedures training provided to on-course officials and judges	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Post Event Review:		
Debrief with key officials and rider rep. Notes signed off by President/Event Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Incident reports reviewed, notes made and signed off by President/Event Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review of hazard identification and risk mitigation undertaken during event	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emergency equipment cleaned and checked / replacement after use if required	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Authorising Officer:	Date:	

Horse Welfare: Recording Organisational Continuous Improvements

Improvements in horse welfare and well-being within an organisational structure can appear to be slow at times. As a part of the Horse Welfare Officer role, it is important to be in a position to provide evidence based records to the horse organisation for which you work. An annual report is one way to do this.

The report needs to be factual, evidence based and able to be validated by a third party. The report can also be a useful tool to use by the horse organisation committee to demonstrate to members and the wider public if needed, that improvements are being made. The report can be as simple or detailed as the organisation requires.

Below is a sample template only. The report needs to reflect the specific issues and topics pertaining to the type of horse activity undertaken and evidence available.

ABC Horse Activity Club		Horse Welfare Achievement Report 2013	
Author: J Green		Approved by Committee: 01/01/2014	
ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE	COMMENT/RECOMMENDATIONS
ADMINISTRATION			
Hot weather policy	No policy in 2012	Policy endorsed by Board on 01.02.13	Monitor implementation across all member clubs
Biosecurity Plan prepared	2001 Plan out-dated	Revision of plan not yet started	Priority task to complete in 2014
INFRASTRUCTURE			
4 new hose down stalls installed	1 existed in 2012	Photographic	No further action required
PERSONNEL			
No report			
PRACTICES			
Horse incident team improved response time by 50%	Ad hoc team existed in 2012	Refer time record sheet	Investment in training and equipment has been beneficial
Animal welfare training program for officials	In preparation	Draft training course materials	Further funds required to complete project to enable online delivery
EVENTS			
Post event debriefs (horse welfare related)	All 2012 debrief notes summarised	Report provided to Board and key officials	Key recommendation requires changes to xc course track to improve horse ambulance access

Notes

Refer to separate report on horse accidents and injuries.

Add a final line on priority recommendations.

Managing Grief over the Death or Injury of a Horse at an Event

For many, their horse is not just a competition animal but is also a companion and a pet. The bond between humans and animals is strong and the relationship people share with their pets is one of the most important¹.

Research shows that the loss of a companion animal can be as devastating as the loss of a significant human relationship². Grief is a natural response to loss. While feelings of grief will lessen over time, it can be prolonged if the grief process is restricted. Often, the loss of a companion animal is difficult as the pet's death is often trivialised or ignored by others¹.

When dealing with the loss or injury of a horse at an event, it is the role of the horse welfare officer to provide support to the horse owner. If you don't know the person, introduce yourself and explain that you are the horse welfare officer. Find out their name and use it when you speak to them. Remember to speak calmly and to avoid clinical or technical language³.

In the event that the horse owner is unaware of the injury or death, it may be necessary for you to deliver the news to them. Butler and DeGraff (1996) recommend a four stage approach for this 1) prepare the individual appropriately, for instance you may say "Mrs Brown, I have some bad news that may be upsetting for you to hear", 2) Deliver the news, giving a brief explanation "your horse fell and broke it's leg and needs to be put down" 3) Give the individual time to process the information and experience emotions. You can say things like "Take your time" or "All of this is probably overwhelming" 4) determine the next course of action. For instance "Would you like me to call your family?" or "Would you like to come and see your horse?".

Find out how you can provide support for the person. This may be helping them contact family or friends, making arrangements for the person to get home, or something as simple as listening to them or offering them a cup of tea.

It is important to know that people react very differently to bad news or a traumatic event. Do not tell the person how they should be feeling. Do not say anything that may trivialise their experience of grief or trauma. For instance, avoid saying "don't cry", "calm down", or "it was just a horse". It is important that they are able to express their grief naturally. Be aware of any cultural differences that may change the way they deal with traumatic situations or grief. For instance, in some cultures, it is inappropriate to express feelings in front of strangers. The person may be irritable, may withdraw or have a bad temper. This can be a result of trauma so try to not take it personally. It is important to stay calm, polite and friendly³.

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement have a pet loss support centre.

Go to http://www.grief.org.au/grief_and_bereavement_support/bereavement_support_groups/for_pet_loss for more information

See also, 'Psychological First Aid: An Australian Guide':

<http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Red-Cross-Psychological-First-Aid-Book.pdf>

1. Butler, C., & Short DeGraff, P. (1996). Helping during pet loss and bereavement. *Veterinary Quarterly*, 18:sup1, 58-60
2. Anderson, M. (1994). *Coping with sorrow on the loss of your pet* (2nd edition). Los Angeles, Peregrine Press.
3. Mental Health First Aid Training and Research Program. *Traumatic events: first aid guidelines for assisting adults*. Melbourne: Orygen Youth Health Research Centre, University of Melbourne; 2008.

Being a Successful Negotiator

Becoming an effective negotiator is a key skill in the role of horse welfare officer as this involves liaising with different parties with often quite different views and objectives. Negotiating isn't about getting your own way or getting others to agree to your viewpoint, it is about finding a mutually beneficial solution to a problem. Many people negotiate by taking a position and arguing for their position. This is called positional bargaining¹. The problem with positional bargaining is that people become committed to a particular position, and may lose sight of the goal – which is to solve the problem.

The recommended steps for a successful negotiation² are:

- 1. Separate the people from the problem.** Remember that the other people involved in the negotiation are people with emotions, values and viewpoints. Try not to let personality differences get in the way of solving the problem.

Don't confuse negotiation with confrontation; you should remain professional and not become angry or frustrated. Try to be respectful of the other parties by actively listening and acknowledging what is being said.

A good technique is to paraphrase what the other party has said. This shows not only that you are listening but that you understand what the other party is trying to say. It also means that misunderstandings can be identified early on.

- 2. Focus on interests, not positions.** Position is something you decide upon, an end result, while interests are what help you get to this end result². Often people focus too much on what their position is that they lose sight of the interests underlying the positions.

Rather than focus on what each party thinks the solution is, you should find out what their interests are. That is, you should find out what they would like to achieve rather than focusing on how they think they should achieve it.

Try to identify any common interests that might help with negotiating a mutually beneficial outcome.

- 3. Think of other solutions.** A lot of people make the mistake of thinking the 'pie is fixed'. That is, they think that all of the options are already on the table. Try to think of a number of possible solutions rather than searching for just one. This leaves room for negotiating.

Don't rush the negotiation process; take time to consider all of the possible options.

- 4. Use objective criteria.** Make sure the information you use for negotiating is based on objective criteria. You should develop these criteria beforehand based on credible and factual information. These might include scientific judgement, professional standards, precedent, tradition and equality².

1. Doye, D G., Love, R. O., & Hyer, T. R. Negotiation Strategies Fact sheet AGECC-198.
2. Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, New York; Penguin Books.

Self-Improvement through Reflection

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. Confucius

Horse Welfare Officers are often working solo, and according to the survey undertaken as a part of preparing this toolkit; many commence their role without any training.

Self-reflection is not about becoming absorbed in picking on your own faults but more about raising internal awareness or consciousness about attitudes and behaviours you wish to improve on.

Taking time to write down and consider an experience then coming up with manageable, bite-sized actions will help you reach personal goals and become a more effective Horse Welfare Officer.

The template below is only a guide. Keeping a Journal or making voice or notes on an iPad are two other methods of many.

Select an experience to reflect on	
Break the experience down and describe it	
Examine the experience	
Interpret the experience. What are the lessons learnt or insights gained?	
How can the learnings & insights help in my future work as a Horse Welfare Officer?	
Apply the new learnings. Take action to make changes if needed.	



Australian Horse Industry Council

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