

# Racing Queensland Limited

## ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

### DATE THE POLICY WAS MADE

This policy was made on 1 July 2010.

### COMMENCEMENT DATE

This policy came into effect on 1 July 2010.

### PURPOSE

The *Racing Act 2002* (Act) authorises Racing Queensland Limited (Racing Queensland) to make policies for the sound management of the industry. Section 81(s) of the Act requires Racing Queensland to make a policy for animal welfare.

The purpose of this animal welfare policy is to ensure the welfare of registered thoroughbred and harness racing horses and licensed greyhound dogs is maintained while they are involved in:

- racing;
- training;
- activities associated with racing or training.

By maintaining the welfare of racing animals, the interests of the public and the participants in thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing activities are protected.

Prior to the retirement of horses or greyhounds from racing, Racing Queensland encourages owners to consider all available retirement options which will ensure the continued good welfare of the retired racing animal for the rest of its natural life.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Racing Queensland is committed to the welfare of racing animals. The maintenance of appropriate welfare standards for thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing animals is critical to the viability of the Queensland racing industry.

The Act defines "welfare" of an animal, to mean protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of the animal, including for example:

- drug control relating to animals,
- the prevention and management of diseases that may affect animals.

Racing Queensland's animal welfare policy has been developed in conjunction with the requirements of the Act and the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

The *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* imposes a duty on a person in charge of an animal, to ensure that the welfare of the animal is protected and maintained. It establishes the benchmark for the protection of animals, protection against cruelty and unreasonable abandonment or release of animals.

Current standards for the welfare of thoroughbred and harness racing horses largely reflect those originally devised by the International Group of Specialist Racing Veterinarians (IGSRV), an association of regulatory veterinarians employed with horse racing authorities around the world.

Racing Queensland, as a member of the Australian Racing Board Limited (ARB), is a member of the National Equine Integrity Welfare Advisory Group (NEIWAG). This group consists of veterinarians and chemists who liaise with the Australian Equine Veterinary Association, control bodies of all states and territories and have links to the International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities. NEIWAG is the principal advisory group to the ARB when developing standards in relation to animal welfare, which includes drug control and disease management. The ARB consults with a variety of stakeholders in the racing industry and animal welfare groups prior to developing rules.

Racing Queensland is a member of Greyhounds Australasia – the national body for greyhound racing, which has affiliations with international bodies, and has a line of communication with the Australian Greyhound Veterinary Association.

Racing Queensland, as a member of Harness Racing Australia (HRA), is a member of the National Equine Integrity and Welfare Advisory Group (NEIWAG) and Animal Health Australia (AHA). It also liaises with the Australian Veterinary Association, and the Australia Equine Veterinary Association. AHA is an advisory group to Racing Queensland when developing standards in relation to animal welfare (particularly in relation to the welfare of harness racing horses).

It is the policy of Racing Queensland to ensure that appropriate standards for the welfare of thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing animals are maintained. Further, Racing Queensland believes that any person who does not abide by the minimum standards for welfare of thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing animals has no place in the Queensland racing industry. Accordingly, all persons are placed on notice that breaches of established animal welfare standards may result in their licence being cancelled.

Any person charged with or convicted of any cruelty or animal welfare offences will immediately be suspended and have to show cause to the Licensing Committee of Racing Queensland why their license should not be revoked.

Racing Queensland will regularly review established legal and scientific information relevant to animal welfare and may make standards, procedures and rules as necessary to ensure the protection of animals. Matters which Racing Queensland may make standards, procedures and rules about may include, but are not limited to:

- the husbandry and keeping of horses and licensed greyhounds in urban surroundings;
- travelling with horses and licensed greyhounds;
- racing in extreme conditions
- racecourse conditions;
- racecourse accommodation for horses and licensed greyhounds;
- misuse of the whip;
- the use of prohibited substances and drugs on horses and licensed greyhounds;
- racing of pregnant mares;
- euthanasia;
- emergency disease management plan:
- veterinary inspections
- vaccinations; and
- biosecurity.

Education and training delivered by Racing Queensland to licensees and other stakeholders in the Queensland racing industry will contain components on animal welfare relevant to the role performed by the person receiving training.

Racing Queensland will undertake regular audits of thoroughbred horses, harness horses and greyhound dogs in the control of licensed trainers, to assess whether the animals are being cared for according to established standards for animal welfare.

Prior to issuing licences to persons involved in caring for thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing animals, Racing Queensland will assess the person's knowledge of animal welfare policies, practices and procedures. Any licence issued by Racing Queensland to a person involved in caring for thoroughbred, harness and greyhound animals, may be immediately suspended in the event that a Racing Queensland employee forms the belief during the conduct of an audit of a licensee, that the safety of animals are in danger and that belief is reviewed and adopted by the Director of Integrity Operations or another person appointed by the Board of Racing Queensland.

Disciplinary action will be taken against persons who fail to ensure that licensed thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing animals are cared for in a manner that ensures that the welfare of the animal is maintained according to established standards.

Increasing focus on the protection of the welfare of licensed racing animals is linked to other policies of Racing Queensland, including education and training and licensing persons and racing venues.

### ***Duty of care***

All persons in charge of an animal owe that animal a duty of care and must not breach that duty of care. Racing Queensland requires all persons in charge of an animal to act at all times in a way which protects the welfare of animals.

In the case of trainers, this duty of care cannot be transferred to another person. If a trainer engages a person, for example, a transport operator to transport horses, the trainer has a responsibility to engage competent persons who abide by the established standards of animal welfare.

### ***Prohibition of cruelty***

Racing Queensland will not tolerate animal cruelty. Racing Queensland Limited will investigate allegations of cruelty to registered racing animals and will institute disciplinary action against a person found to be treating animals cruelly. Where serious breaches of animal welfare, towards either racing or non-racing animals, are discovered or suspected, Racing Queensland will inform:

- an Integrity Officer appointed under the Act,
- an Animal Welfare Inspector appointed under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*;
- any other person having power to enforce animal welfare law.

### ***Notification of diseases***

A person in charge of a racing animal who believes or suspects that the animal has become infected with a notifiable disease must immediately inform the Chief Steward and the government department responsible for biosecurity matters.

## ***Administration of chemicals, drugs, poisons and other treatments to animals***

Treatments must only be administered to racing animals by competent and qualified persons. Treatments must be administered in accordance with the *Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988* (Qld). Registered veterinary chemical products may be administered contrary to label instruction, but only under the written direction of a veterinary surgeon. A veterinary surgeon may use an unregistered chemical product on a racing animal.

A veterinary surgeon may use a compounded veterinary chemical product on a racing animal in a quantity needed for a single course of treatment only. It should also be noted that a veterinary surgeon is required to provide full and appropriate written instructions, about the treatment of an animal under their care, to the person in charge of the animal at the time of the treatment. Racing Queensland may take disciplinary action against person who breach these requirements.

### **APPLICATION**

This Policy applies to all persons:

- having care and control of a racing animal, and
- involved in caring for a racing animal.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- stewards;
- veterinarians;
- race club officials;
- trainers;
- jockeys and riders;
- stablehands;
- barrier stall attendants;
- transport operators;
- farriers;
- breeders; and
- owners.

### **DEFINITIONS**

'Cruelty' has the same meaning as section 18 of the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (Qld), however, activities that are permitted under the Act and/or the rules of racing will not be considered acts of animal cruelty.

This policy adopts the terminology used in the *Racing Act 2002*. Schedule 3 of the *Racing Act 2002* contains a dictionary of words used in the *Racing Act 2002* and may be accessed via the internet at [www.legislation.qld.gov.au](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au), under the tab "R".

### **PROCEDURES**

Racing Queensland has established procedures for activities that relate to the welfare of thoroughbred horses, harness horses and greyhound dogs.

#### **Accredited Facility**

Racing Queensland has entered into an agreement with the Racing Science Centre which is an accredited facility under the Act for the provision of services relating to drug control and animal welfare.

Racing Queensland will, in its discretion, enter into any other agreements with independent facilities accredited under the Act to provide services in relation to drug control and animal welfare for thoroughbreds, harness racing horses or greyhounds.

### **Rules of Racing**

Rules of Racing are made for this policy. The Rules of Racing that have been made and/or adopted for this policy include

- Australian Rules (AR): 44, 45, 53A, 53B, 53C, 64A, 64B,64C, 64D, 64E, 64F, 64G, 64H,137A, 137B, 140A, 140B, 141A, 175(hh), 175(n), 175(o), 177-178D, 201;
- Local Rules (LR): 38, 78, 84.

Queensland Racing rules of greyhound racing provide for the application of this policy. The rules that have been made and/or adopted for this policy include:

- Greyhounds Australasia Rules – 37, 46, 56m 73m 74, 76, 79-84, 106.
- Queensland Rules – 27.

Racing Queensland may make Rules of Racing in relation to any matter to which reference has been made in this Policy.

### **Review**

Review date will be July 2012.

### **Attachment: Animal Welfare – Caring for Horses in Extreme Heat**

### **REVISION HISTORY**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.01	July 2010	Board adopted under exceptional circumstances
1.02	September 2010	Board confirmed this policy continued to have effect

## ATTACHMENT: ANIMAL WELFARE – CARING FOR HORSES IN EXTREME HEAT

### HORSE POLICY

Horses possess an effective cooling mechanism, which relies to a large extent on the evaporation of sweat from the skin. As sweat and water molecules evaporate from the skin these molecules absorb and remove body heat causing the horse to cool.

Occasionally, when there is an imbalance in the amount of body heat generated and heat able to be lost to the environment, a small proportion of horses show signs of **heat stress** or **heat stroke**. Metabolic heat syndrome after exercise is most likely to be seen on days when both ambient temperature and relative humidity are high, and wind speeds are low or absent. These conditions favour build up of body heat load and reduce shedding of body heat load to the environment.

Signs of heat stress include:

- rapid shallow breathing (panting) with flared nostrils
- staggering gait/weakness
- agitated and distressed appearance
- impulsive kicking with hind limbs or striking out with front limbs
- occasionally collapse

A horse's susceptibility to heat stress is not influenced solely by prevailing weather conditions. Other risk factors for horses include:

- travelling long distances prior to competition
- withholding drinking water prior to racing (this is not a recommended practice in hot weather)
- horses with an excitable temperament
- horses not acclimatised to local weather conditions
- horses that are first starters, resuming from a spell, or early in their training program
- horses that sweat excessively, or do not sweat adequately ("dry-coated")

In the event of a trainer being concerned by the manner in which a horse is coping with the prevailing weather conditions before its race (agitation, panting and/or excessive sweating) an approach may be made to the Stewards seeking to withdraw the horse from the race, whereby the Stewards may seek the opinion of the Official Veterinarian before considering such an application.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), through its website, provides regularly updated weather information including thermal comfort and heat stress indicators using a calculated estimate of wet bulb global temperature (WBGT). True WBGT takes into account measured values for temperature, humidity, wind speed and solar radiation. The WBGT estimate that is provided by BOM uses actual measurements of temperature, and humidity combined with estimates of wind speed and solar radiation in calculating WBGT (the estimate assumes a moderately high solar radiation level and light wind conditions).

The Chairman of Stewards acting at any race meeting has the responsibility of obtaining the weather forecast conditions prior to the meeting and monitoring the Queensland Thermal Comfort Observations as provided on the BOM website <http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDQ65214.shtml> throughout the meeting.

## Level 1 Policy

**This policy will apply on all race days where the forecast or ambient temperature is 35°C or above, or the WBGT shade is 26°C or above.**

- Where possible horses should be stabled out of the sun and in areas that are breezy.
- Ensure adequate wash bays and hoses are available to enable rapid post-race cooling of horses.
- Ensure adequate horse drinking water is available.
- Race club officials should be informed to have ice, water, scrapers, sponges, towels and extra water hoses available. Race club staff should provide large bins and ensure that these are continually stocked with bags of ice and water to assist in the cooling of horses.
- Ensure the swabbing stall interior is as cool as possible, by hosing the roof, allowing adequate ventilation and/or providing fans/air-conditioning.
- Tie-up stalls equipped with water misters and/or fans enable horses to cool down throughout the day.
- Consideration should be given to employing an additional official veterinarian to patrol the stable area and monitor recovering horses.
- Stewards will minimise the time that horses are required to parade in the mounting enclosure pre-race, be held behind the starting barrier, or in the mounting enclosure post-race.

Evaporative cooling, particularly sweating, is the most important means of dissipation of body heat for the exercising horse. The liberal application of cold water in shaded, well ventilated places will greatly assist the processes which enable horses to lose excessive body heat on hot days.

Horses can be assisted in cooling down after racing in hot weather by maximising the efficiency of evaporative cooling:

- **“Wet and Walk”** as water evaporates from the skin it removes body heat causing the horse to cool. Increasing air flow over the horse’s skin surface, by walking in shady, breezy areas, improves evaporation rates.
- Horses may need to be hosed and scraped several times in between walking. Scraping of excess water from the coat stops the water acting as an insulating barrier and aids evaporation.
- Bucketing or sponging ice cold water over the horse assists in the recovery of heat-affected horses.
- In very humid and wind-still conditions, it may be difficult with the above methods for sweat and water to evaporate quickly enough for adequate body cooling. In these circumstances the use of air-conditioned stalls (which provide cool and **dry** air) and/or the use of fans (to improve air flow over the horse’s skin surface) should be made available.
- Horses should be allowed to drink as much fresh, clean water of ambient temperature as they require after racing.
- Horses must be allowed sufficient time to adequately cool down before being floated back to their stables.

The **Official Veterinarian(s)** will closely monitor all horses for signs of heat stress:

- In the tie-up stall area prior to presentation in the mounting yard
- In the enclosure pre-race
- On arrival at the barriers
- On return to the enclosure post-race
- While in the swabbing area (pre- or post-race)

If the official veterinarian is concerned about a horse's condition pre-race, they shall immediately report their concerns to the Stewards.

Any horse found to be exhibiting signs of heat stress will be given appropriate treatment.

Appropriate treatment shall include:

- Repeated application of cool water to the entire body of the horse, followed by scraping of excess water from the horse
- Walking the horse in a breezy, shaded area between bouts of hosing,
- Oral and/or intravenous fluid therapy if indicated
- Corticosteroid anti-inflammatory treatment if indicated
- Sedative drugs if indicated
- Use of air-conditioned stall if available
- Use of forced ventilation if available
- Use of ice-water soaked towels applied to the horse's body and changed frequently as towels heat up

The official veterinarian should have an adequate supply of relevant treatments on hand for emergency use.

Race clubs must ensure adequate running water is immediately available to thoroughly and repeatedly wet affected animals in order to maximise conductive/evaporative cooling. An adequate number of hoses should be provided for this purpose in the mounting enclosure and the race day stalls by the Club conducting the meeting. They must ensure that all relevant hoses are connected, have adequate water pressure, and are manned by experienced personnel in the mounting yard.

The chairman of stewards, race club official and licensees will take such action and provide such assistance as is necessary to ensure that the official veterinarian can properly fulfill their duties in accordance with this policy.

The chairman of stewards may issue directions to race club officials and licensees to properly give effect to this policy.

## Level 2 Policy

**This policy will apply on all race days where the forecast or ambient temperature is 38°C or above, or the WBGT shade is 28°C or above.**

Stewards must take advice from the official veterinarian(s) in considering whether to proceed or modify the program for that race meeting.

Modification of a race program might include the advancement of delay in a schedule if it appears likely that extreme weather conditions might ease or be avoided.

Should the **Stewards** determine to continue the racing program, in addition to the measures listed in the Level 1 Policy, they may instruct that:

- An additional official veterinarian be provided
- Additional equipment be provided by the race club to assist the comfort of horses
- An official veterinarian be available post-race at a position for riders to report concerns regarding a horse
- Riders, if they become concerned at the condition of their mount post-race, proceed to the official veterinarian positioned on the track
- A specific air-conditioned stall be set aside for recovery purposes
- The minimum period prior to the race for horses to be required on course may be reduced
- Pre- and post-race parades be abandoned and the period horses are required behind the barrier minimised

The **Official Veterinarian(s)** will, in addition to the duties described in the Level 1 Policy, scrutinise all horses:

- Upon arrival on course, in particular horses identified as having travelled in excess of two hours to attend the meeting. Any horse observed to be showing signs of discomfort pre-race as a result of the hot/humid conditions should have its rectal temperature taken. If a horse is observed with an elevated rectal temperature pre-race (in excess of 38.5° C) it should be monitored and consideration be given regarding its suitability to race
- Detained in the swabbing area (either pre- or post-race) to monitor horses that are sweating excessively or appearing distressed during the sampling procedure
- Immediately post-race, in particular for any horse where its rider becomes concerned about its condition
- Subsequent to the race to ensure all horses have recovered appropriately to permit travel. No horse may leave the course without the approval of the official veterinarian

The chairman of stewards, race club official and licensees will take such action and provide such assistance as is necessary to ensure that the official veterinarian can properly fulfill their duties in accordance with this policy.

The chairman of stewards may issue directions to race club officials and licensees to properly give effect to this policy.