

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of the On-site Humane Euthanasia Program – Equine (the **OHEP**) is to support the provision of appropriate end-of-life care for retired racehorses in circumstances where the attending veterinarian considers euthanasia to be the most appropriate course of action and the owner(s) of the horse are unable to afford veterinary euthanasia services.
- 1.2. In such circumstances, the OHEP enables veterinarians who provide euthanasia services to seek reimbursement from Racing Queensland (**RQ**), up to a prescribed amount, for eligible euthanasia expenses for eligible horses.
- 1.3. In supporting the provision of on-site end-of-life care in such cases, the OHEP also aims to reduce the incidence of retired racehorses being sent to saleyards or abattoirs/knackereries in circumstances where, in the opinion of the attending veterinarian, on-site euthanasia at the horse’s usual location would provide a better welfare outcome for the horse.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. The OHEP applies to eligible horses in accordance with the criteria and definitions contained in this document.
- 2.2. Horses owned by, or in the care of, licensed or registered industry participants, including racing owners, **are not** eligible horses under the OHEP. Industry participants are subject to specific obligations in relation to equine welfare pursuant to the *Australian Rules of Racing* and the *Australian Racing Harness Rules*.
- 2.3. Veterinarians are welcome to contact QOTT via telephone on (07) 3869 9777 (select option 6) or via email at [offthetrack@racingqueensland.com.au](mailto:offthetrack@racingqueensland.com.au) to confirm eligibility of a horse for the OHEP.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1. The following definitions apply:

Applicant	The <i>Veterinarian</i> who attended and subsequently euthanased an <i>Eligible Horse</i> and applies to <i>RQ</i> for reimbursement under the OHEP.
Eligible Horse	A horse that meets the eligibility criteria specified in section 4.1 of this document.
Licensed or Registered Industry Participants	A person who has a licence required by or issued pursuant to the <i>Australian Rules of Racing</i> or the <i>Australian Harness Racing Rules</i> .
Owner	The person declared as the owner of an <i>Eligible Horse</i> on the “ <i>OHEP Application Form</i> ”. For the sake of clarity, <i>Licensed or Registered Industry Participants</i> and <i>Racing Owners</i> <b>are not</b> “ <i>Owners</i> ” for the purposes of the OHEP.
QOTT	Queensland Off-The-Track, <i>RQ</i> ’s official equine aftercare program.
Racing Owner	A person with an actual interest, beneficial interest or share in a thoroughbred or standardbred horse, as evidenced by a relevant entry in Racing Australia records or Harness Racing Australia records.
RQ	The Racing Queensland Board trading as Racing Queensland (ABN 80 730 390 733).

Specified Expenses	Expenses associated with the euthanasia and disposal of an <i>Eligible Horse</i> as those terms are defined in this document.
Veterinarian	A veterinarian registered with a relevant Australian Veterinary Surgeons Board.

## 4. Operation of the OHEP

### 4.1. Eligible Horse

4.1.1. A horse will be considered an eligible horse in the circumstances where all of the following apply:

4.1.1.1. the horse is a thoroughbred or standardbred horse that has been, or is eligible to be, registered for thoroughbred racing or harness racing in Australia;

4.1.1.2. the horse is domiciled at an address in Queensland at the time of euthanasia;

4.1.1.3. the horse is **not** owned by, or in the care of, a licensed or registered industry participant or racing owner;

4.1.1.4. the horse is the subject of a veterinary certificate\* that certifies that euthanasia is, in the opinion of the attending veterinarian, in the best interests of the horse on the basis that the horse is subject to either an:

4.1.1.4.1. intractable condition or serious injury, such that the horse's quality of life is, or is likely to be, poor and, in the opinion of the attending veterinarian, euthanasia is the most appropriate course of action in the circumstances; or

4.1.1.4.2. unacceptable body condition score and the attending veterinarian is satisfied that the owner lacks the means to appropriately care and provide for the horse such that, in the opinion of the veterinarian, euthanasia is the most appropriate course of action in the circumstances; and

4.1.1.5. the veterinarian is satisfied that the owner is unable to afford the required veterinary euthanasia services.

4.1.2. A horse is also considered an eligible horse under the OHEP if:

4.1.2.1. it is the subject of a direction to euthanase issued by the RSPCA, the police or any other authorised state or territory government entity; and

4.1.2.2. the criteria detailed in sections 4.1.1.1, 4.1.1.2, 4.1.1.3 and 4.1.1.5 are also met.

For the avoidance of doubt, behavioural and/or physical unsuitability for rehoming in the absence of the criteria described in section 4.1 of this document also being met, will be considered insufficient grounds for reimbursement under the OHEP.

**\* NOTE:** A veterinarian who is the owner of an eligible horse or is a family relation of an owner of an eligible horse, is not permitted to provide a veterinary certificate under the OHEP, or make application for reimbursement under the OHEP, for an eligible horse. For the purposes of this clause a family relation includes relationships based on blood, marriage, adoption or foster care and may involve parents, children, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws.

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## 4.2. Specified Expenses

- 4.2.1. The OHEP offers a capped amount of reimbursement towards the cost of euthanasia and disposal of an eligible horse. Accordingly, where the OHEP applies, the following expenses are eligible for reimbursement:
  - 4.2.1.1. the costs associated with euthanasia of the eligible horse up to a maximum of \$500.00 (including GST), which may include veterinary consultation and mileage; and
  - 4.2.1.2. the costs associated with the disposal of the deceased eligible horse by commercial providers of such services up to a maximum of \$600.00 (including GST), where such disposal services are arranged by, and invoiced to, the veterinarian but excluding individual cremation and return-of-ashes services provided by commercial pet cremation providers offering equine cremation services.
- 4.2.2. The maximum total sum for reimbursement available under the OHEP for any individual eligible horse is \$1,100.00 (including GST).
- 4.2.3. RQ, at its sole and absolute discretion, may approve or deny an application for the reimbursement of costs associated with the euthanasia and/or disposal of an eligible horse, up to the aforementioned thresholds and occasionally beyond those thresholds in extreme circumstances (as decided by RQ at its sole and absolute discretion).
- 4.2.4. For the avoidance of doubt, the following are ineligible for reimbursement under the OHEP:
  - 4.2.4.1. Costs associated with procedures other than veterinary consultation and euthanasia, such as diagnostic procedure(s) and/or treatment(s).
  - 4.2.4.2. Costs associated with disposal of a deceased eligible horse, including transport to a facility at which the disposal service is provided (if relevant), where the arrangements are not made by, and invoiced to, the veterinarian.
  - 4.2.4.3. Costs associated with individual cremation and return-of-ashes services offered by commercial pet cremation providers, including transport to such facilities, regardless of who arranges, or is invoiced for, such services.
- 4.2.5. Reimbursement is available for both euthanasia and disposal of the deceased eligible horse under the OHEP, however euthanasia-only applications will be accepted for an eligible horse where the owner elects to arrange the disposal of the deceased eligible horse independently of the veterinarian. Disposal-only applications will not be accepted.
- 4.2.6. While it is anticipated that the reimbursement will cover the cost of the euthanasia and disposal in many circumstances, the actual cost of and payment for any veterinary treatment and procedure, including euthanasia and disposal of a deceased eligible horse, remains a matter between the owner and the veterinarian performing those services.

## 4.3. Owner and Veterinarian Obligations

- 4.3.1. The decision to euthanase an eligible horse is made by the owner, in consultation with the veterinarian.
- 4.3.2. The owner and veterinarian should agree upon arrangements for the disposal of the deceased eligible horse prior to euthanasia, including having confirmed the suitability of those arrangements with the relevant local council, if relevant. The following options may be considered, depending on local availability and permissions:
  - 4.3.2.1. burial, composting, cremation or burning (subject to fire ban or restrictions) on rural property;
  - 4.3.2.2. transport to a waste facility that accepts dead livestock; or



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- 4.3.2.3. cremation by commercial pet cremation providers offering equine cremation services, noting the matters raised in section 4.2.
  - 4.3.3. Any decision to seek reimbursement under the OHEP is a matter for the veterinarian.
  - 4.3.4. Any and all costs exceeding the maximum amount of reimbursement set out in section 4.2 are a matter between the owner and the veterinarian and RQ accepts no responsibility for any debt which the owner may otherwise accrue with the veterinarian.
  - 4.3.5. Where an owner does not involve the veterinarian in arrangements for disposal of the deceased eligible horse, it is the owner's sole responsibility to arrange for, and pay all the costs in relation to, the appropriate removal and/or disposal of the deceased eligible horse.
  - 4.3.6. All persons dealing with horses should make themselves aware of measures to protect against and manage Hendra virus risks. Details are available at: [https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au\\_hendra-virus](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au_hendra-virus).

#### 4.4. Application and Reimbursement

- 4.4.1. Applicants can apply to RQ for reimbursement under the OHEP by:
  - 4.4.1.1. completing the "OHEP Application Form" and submitting the completed form to RQ within 14 business days from the date of euthanasia of the eligible horse; and
  - 4.4.1.2. ensuring that they provide all relevant supporting information and documentation required by RQ including:
    - 4.4.1.2.1. clear identification of the eligible horse by:
      - 4.4.1.2.1.1. racing microchip number (if present - noting microchipping of foals to be registered for racing became a requirement in 2003 for thoroughbreds and 2017 for standardbreds); and
      - 4.4.1.2.1.2. official racing name (if known); and
      - 4.4.1.2.1.3. photos of left and right shoulder brands\*\* (thoroughbreds); or
      - 4.4.1.2.1.4. photos of neck brands\*\* (standardbreds); and
    - 4.4.1.2.2. one of either:
      - 4.4.1.2.2.1. completion of the veterinary declaration stating that euthanasia was, in the opinion of the veterinarian, in the best interests of the eligible horse; or
      - 4.4.1.2.2.2. a direction to euthanase the eligible horse, issued by the RSPCA, police or any other authorised state or territory government entity; and
    - 4.4.1.2.3. completion of the declaration of euthanasia for the eligible horse; and
    - 4.4.1.2.4. clinical notes from the veterinarian detailing the reason(s) for euthanasia in accordance with the eligibility requirements set out in section 4.1.1.4 or 4.1.2.1; and
    - 4.4.1.2.5. an itemised tax invoice addressed to RQ for the specified expenses incurred.

**\*\* NOTE: Photos of brands must be sufficiently clear to enable identification. Hair over the brand(s) may need to be clipped in some cases.**



4.4.2. Applications to seek reimbursement pursuant to the OHEP must be submitted to RQ via email at: [offthetrack@racingqueensland.com.au](mailto:offthetrack@racingqueensland.com.au).

4.4.3. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

#### 4.5. Consideration of Application

4.5.1. In the circumstance that RQ is satisfied that:

4.5.1.1. the euthanasia and disposal of the eligible horse is eligible to be funded under the OHEP in accordance with the terms of this document;

4.5.1.2. the applicant has complied with the application process set out in this document; and

4.5.1.3. the applicant has completed the relevant details for the safe transfer of funds, as directed by RQ (i.e. the *Eftsure* process); then

4.5.2. RQ will make a single, lump sum payment to the applicant within fourteen (14) business days, via electronic funds transfer (EFT), to the registered bank account of the applicant (as per RQ records).

4.5.3. In the circumstance that RQ is **not** satisfied with any or all of the matters detailed in this document, RQ will notify the applicant they are **not** eligible for reimbursement under the OHEP.

4.5.4. All decisions made by RQ regarding applications under the OHEP are final and binding on the applicant and are made at the sole and absolute discretion of RQ. There is no appeal process and RQ's decision is final.

## 5. Review, Variation or Discontinuation of the OHEP

5.1. RQ may review, amend or discontinue the OHEP from time to time. RQ will notify you of any changes by posting an updated version of the OHEP on the Racing Queensland website (<http://www.racingqueensland.com.au/>).

## 6. Version History

Current Version:	2.0	Date Made:	14/04/2026	Effective Date:	01/05/2026
Document Owner:	EGM Veterinary Services and Animal Welfare			EGM Approved:	28/04/2026
Enquiries to:	Senior Animal Care Manager			Due for Review:	01/05/2028

Version	Effective	Document Owner	Changes Made
1.0	16/10/2025	EGM Veterinary Services and Animal Welfare	New Program.
2.0	01/05/2026	EGM Veterinary Services and Animal Welfare	Pilot concluded. OHEP to be continued.