

Media Release

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Equestrian Australia secures leading sports administrator to drive rebuild

The Board of Equestrian Australia is delighted to announce the appointment of Darren Gocher as CEO, with a mandate to lead the transformation of the governing body towards a stronger and sustainable future.

Mr Gocher, who takes the reins effective from Monday 31 May 2021, joins Equestrian Australia after some five years at Athletics Australia including the past four years as CEO. During this time, he oversaw a series of major initiatives including the creation of the 'Nitro Athletics' concept and development of a framework to enable the sport's unification across juniors and seniors. Prior to that, Mr Gocher held various senior management positions including with News Corp, KPMG and Yahoo. Mr Gocher's term as CEO is set to run until at least December 2022.

His arrival at Equestrian Australia marks an important step in the ongoing rebuild of the national federation. It follows the selection of a new-look Board in October 2020 and the organisation's exit from voluntary administration through the finalisation of a Deed of Company Arrangement in February 2021.

Equestrian Australia Chair Mark Bradley described Mr Gocher's appointment as a "significant coup" for the sport as the Board sought to put the national body back on a strong footing.

"It speaks volumes for the standing of our sport that we can attract someone of Darren's calibre and experience as we focus on continuing to stabilise and strengthen our position on behalf of the equestrian community", he said.

"Given where the sport has come from in recent years, our members don't just want change, they're demanding it", he said. "Darren's track record of leading organisations to be financially strong and sustainable, with the right risk and governance frameworks in place, makes him the right person for this time".

"That means working to a strategy that has the organisation running efficiently and effectively, while creating a value proposition that sustains and grows equestrian for the longer term", he said.

Mr Gocher said he was looking forward to helping shape an exciting new chapter for the sport.

"The new-look Board has done a tremendous job of steadying the ship and setting the markers for the way ahead. At the heart of it for me will be re-establishing and advancing the sport's fundamentals – commercially and operationally – which includes continuing to develop a culture of safety, health and wellbeing. Given the appetite for change, we can get there if we as a sport work together with an open mind and with a focus on the collective good."

In announcing Mr Gocher's appointment, Mr Bradley acknowledged the contribution of Andrew Hamilton who resumes his role as General Manager, Business Operations and Integrity after acting in the CEO role since late 2019.

"Andrew is a valued and valuable part of the team. He personifies the spirit and resilience across EA that has helped us navigate the recent challenges so we can set about building a better future."

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