

Summary of EA Members, Officials, Coaches, OCs, Clubs, Show-Societies Surveys Results

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Summary of Survey Findings

Equestrian Australia's (EAs) National Health and Safety Manager (Meredith Chapman) developed and disseminated two surveys during the latter half of 2020 and the early months of 2021, inviting all EA members and our Coaches, Officials, Organising Committees, Affiliated Clubs, Societies, and commercial affiliates to participate. The purpose of these surveys was to understand participants views on selected topics and provide an avenue for them to report any concerns and suggest areas for improvement for EA Health, Safety and Welfare management, to assist in future proofing our equestrian sport.

Both surveys included between 12-14 questions, responses were anonymous, and all participants were requested to make comments about what was important to them right now, regardless of their individual discipline interests. Survey 1 target audience was our Athletes and a total of 173 participated. Survey 2 was for EA Officials, Organising Committee members, Affiliated Clubs, School/Show Societies and commercial affiliates, with a total of 263 completing the survey.

The primary participants that completed both surveys were from the equestrian disciplines of Dressage, with Eventing and Jumping having the next highest level of engagement. Participation from all other EA disciplines were rather low.

The participants who completed these surveys included our Athletes for Survey 1, who were predominantly females (88.96%) with a representative age group between 41-60 years. Only 9.52% of the whole cohort reported participation in Interschool equestrian activities. Survey 2 participants were predominantly from the areas of Officials and Coaching.

Both survey groups were keen to receive Health, Safety and Welfare information with a combined response of 77.94%.

Majority of our EA Members, Volunteers, Officials, and Coaches currently seek EA Health and Safety information from our website. However, these surveys identified that Athletes prefer information via email, whereas our Officials, Coaches, Organising Committees and Clubs seek information from EAs Website, followed by an EA newsletter.

Both groups of survey participants reported Health, Safety and Welfare issues or concerns to their respective Organising Committees, followed by their State Branch,

then Officials. Of concern was 13.43% of our Athletes do not report any issues or concerns to anyone.

Questions about the preferred level of Medical Service Provisions (MSP) were included in both surveys and the results identified that at equestrian competitions and training activities first-aid support was necessary and preferred. Both survey groups suggested Paramedic and Ambulance as their secondary choice of medical support.

Given the benefits of MSP and support a question was asked; would you support a small levy to assist in sourcing these services? Both survey groups unanimously reported a combined rating response of 76.02%, being yes. When asked how would this medical levy be best achieved? The response again from both survey groups was reported as '*included in the entry fee*' with a combined rating response of 77.31%.

Finally, Athletes were asked what else do you need? 58.28% responded with the answer '*a confidential reporting process*'. For Officials, Coaches, Organising Committees, Affiliated Clubs and Show Societies 71.88% agreed a simple risk assessment tool to assist of the engagement of suitable MSP would be of benefit. 71.37% identified more Health and Safety training is needed, and this is supported by the response from those who have participated in the EAs new incident reporting processes that only 47.86% found it easy to understand and implement.

A review of survey one (1) participants (our Athletes) general comments identified some of the following key points and priorities of concern (see Table 1)

1. The management of Horse Welfare was highlighted as being, the most predominant issue where more training, reinforcement, and support for official sanctions is necessary:
 - *Guidelines framework re horse welfare*
 - *Riders too heavy for their horses*
 - *For horses, I'd love to see tight nosebands banned*
 - *Greater enforcement of rules at lower levels. At the lower levels I've heard of lots of small rule breaking like using a dressage illegal bit or giving the horse a banned calming supplement because they know no one is checking. By not checking, EA is being permissive to this kind of thing at the lower levels and allowing the attitudes that think it is ok to do those type of things to continue rather than be stamped out.*
 - *More drug testing*

2. Suitable and safe venues:
 - *Consistent surfaces and or dangerous surfaces*
 - *Proper access and disabled access to all facilities. Toilets , yards, stables, office, and best access available to viewing areas. i.e., XXXX has terrible access to just about everything and it is a national centre*
 - *Practical things like water readily available on hot days. Safe arenas and surrounds*
 - *Safe areas to ride , other riders acting irresponsibly esp. in warm up areas*
 - *More attention on footing/surfaces fit for galloping on or riding in general*

3. Access to adequate MSP and staff that are suitably trained:
 - *Greater reassurance from our governing bodies and organisers that appropriate safety and medical support is available at events. i.e., that this area has not been sacrificed due to lack of resources human or money.*
 - *Having the right medical people at events first aid people are not sufficient to have at any horse event as they aren't qualified enough for the dangers involved in the sport*
 - *No proper medical services at an event.*
 - *If private companies are employed, we should have fully qualified medical support on the grounds at all times.*
 - *It is not within the safety of riders/volunteers/ officials to only have medical personnel with minimum training.*
 - *No person's health & safety should be compromised by cost of hiring the correct services, especially for a cross country event.*

- *I think seeing the doctor and ambulance at the eventing events is very comforting as a parent and Dr XXXX is extremely personable for all parents , I don't really have a list of the most important because I think EA are doing well in that area probably due to past history and probably due to the fact that we know more about head knocks etc.*
 - *More drug testing for horses and riders*
4. Rider-horse-match, capability assessments:
- *Ensuring riders do not ride above their level*
 - *Freedom to compete at my comfort level*
 - *Safety of young riders riding young horses for owners that can't cope*
 - *Riders not riding within their capabilities and not being realistic about their own level of competency*
 - *Parents pushing their kids to ride at levels out of their comfort zone or above their level of skill.*
5. Mental health and wellbeing support:
- *Free online mental health, lecture accessible to all members nationwide from psychologist following every significant incident to help riders cope with emotions around horse rider death etc. and the extreme sport we take part in. Could also include media training for all members things like how to deal with trolls online, personal/bullying and also activists attacking the sport etc.*
 - *I'm concerned about welfare of riders who fall &/or are potentially concussed at events - it is my understanding that currently competition rules require the (potentially concussed) rider to present for medical clearance rather than organisers exhibiting a duty of care to follow up these cases. Many riders travel to events alone - I fear the scenario where someone is concussed and returns to their float alone where they deteriorate medically. I understand welfare checking in such cases would create another job for organisers, but I would be happy to contribute to payment for an extra first aider to cover this.*
 - *A mental health program sounds great. Zoom support would also be a great way to get it out there as a rider may need it during a competition or emergency*
 - *Improving safety culture - ability to raise concerns*
 - *Bullying +++*
 - *Peer pressure*
 - *Confidential reporting procedure*

Other comment themes included environmental concerns, especially hot and extreme weather conditions, COVID concerns, more educational and training opportunities for coaches, officials and everyone within equestrian sport, event safety support, concussion, culture within our sport, improved complaints management and a code of conduct for Athletes and rule education and more.

Sharing some profound Athlete comments:

- **Safe riding over winning a ribbon**
- *I take responsibility for my own actions and decisions & expect others to do the same. I remain informed of legal requirements for my own HS&W as well as for those of my horse & others around me. I communicate effectively & politely to ensure the safety of myself, my horse & those around me*
- *Riders should have to undertake online rule and theory tests before upgrading as an added measure to remind what to do in emergency situations or how to behave when given a particular direction from an official. Or at the very least free online courses/quizzes on welfare and safety rules, and training on how to fall, rules around concussion ...*
- *Responsible for myself, responsible for my horse and acceptance that I am responsible for my health, safety, and welfare*
- *Competitors need to take responsibility for their own safety. If they are unhappy with the footing or something else, don't start.*
- *I want EA to identify any horse registered with it that has been invoked in an incident or accident for any person who purchases that horse.*
- *Keep current standard it's working fine.*

A review of survey two (2) participants general comments identified some of the following key points and priorities of concern (see Table 2)

1. Horse Welfare was again identified as the most predominant issue where more training, reinforcement, and support for official sanctions is necessary:
 - *Welfare - not enough access to training programs for riders that focus on equine ethology, welfare and ethical training practices*
 - *Horse welfare officers at all events size matters, use of whips and tight nosebands*
 - *More information on horse nutrition and fitness*

2. Risk management support for Organising Committees and Clubs:
 - *Ensuring there are qualified Health and Safety people on site*
 - *People not understanding what their roles and responsibilities are when organising events, no transparency, no clear outlines about risk management strategies*
 - *Making things easy & accessible & ensuring all events follow the EA guidelines. More communication with clubs*
 - *Meredith Chapman:*
 - *Club engagement, need EA sponsored clinic to create the documentation and systems required for our club*

3. Rider safety and falls:
 - *Safety procedures and training in how to falls*
 - *More strict qualifications to prevent over facing*
 - *Riders on anxious horses and incorrect gear*

Of similar concern to point number three was adequate horse-rider match:

- *Prevent amateurs and unexperienced riders riding green horses. In Australia only happens, this is highly risky combinations. Most amateurs and unexperienced riders should ride mature horse.....the basic rule of riding is not widely respected*
 - *Riders under the level of the grade....needs to have a rider's category (not as horses) riders needs to be assessed and grade into categories*
 - *Fitness of horse and ability of rider... MERs exist for this however a more comprehensive vetting could be employed*
4. Medical Service Provisions:
 - *Madate adequate coverage*
 - *Medics or Paramedics on site for an event is a priority though cannot be mandatory by all Clubs due to cost of circa \$600 a day!*
 - *Have the EA protocol on "Graduated Return to Sport" on the medical clearance form riders get to return to sport.*
 - *Cost of quality providers, only use them at events large enough to cover the cost through entries levy's*

- *Adequately trained staff - first aid is entirely insufficient for a fall from a horse, and this concerns me. You need a paramedic with ambulance on site so that if required advanced life support equipment and pain relief is available*

5. More training and resources:

- *Bullying. Training for officials and coaches for managing bullying and clear consequences for infractions. Yellow and red cards don't work as most officials are reluctant to issue them even when warranted*
- *To continue to maintain my skill and efficacy as a coach/trainer through on going teaching, attendance at relevant courses, clinics, ongoing reading and study, interaction with other coaches, professionals both equine and in regard to bodywork[human] and the psychological aspects of teaching*
- *Risk assessment training of committees - this needs to be undertaken so assessments to ride in prevailing weather etc can be assessed using a matrix to keep everyone safe*
- *Para Equestrian Coach Training- A Module included in Coach Training Syllabus or as an elective*
- *Lack of training opportunities for lower-level horses or riders without the pressure of a competition to compound nerves and inexperience. More "events" for training only.*
- *Access and training support for stewards... believe that it may soon be compulsory to have steward at our events. Before this happens there needs to be provision and financial support for more steward training especially in regional areas*
- *Competitors not knowing the rules. For example, that you can't get back on your horse after a fall until you have been checked by first aid. This applies in either the competition arena or the warmup. Maybe a little video or Slide show of the updated rules each year when they renew their membership as was done this year.*

All other comments centred around concussion management, adherence to COVID requirements, official authority, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), competition surfaces, venue, facility requirements and environmental management, riders not following rules and so much more.

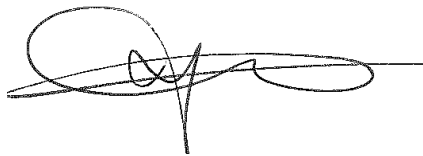
Conclusion

I would like to thank all the survey participants who took time-out of your busy lives to complete this important survey, to communicate your thoughts and concerns about Health, Safety and Welfare within our equestrian sport. Please note the survey results within this report only represent a small sample of EA member interests, however the findings within this survey report are invaluable. I would like to reassure all our members and affiliated clubs that we have reviewed every survey including individual comments. What is refreshing is that the majority our survey participant comments are items that EA have already identified as important, and we will continue to work on many of these items during 2022 and beyond.

EAs National Health and Safety team currently includes two employees, and our reach is across all EA disciplines. Please remember Health and Safety have a general email safety@equestrian.org.au and we would like to encourage you all to send your thoughts and any questions to us via this email.

I would like to leave you with a comment made by one of our Athletes which summaries one of our goals within the EA Health and Safety team. '***Safe riding over winning a ribbon***'

Thank you again

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Meredith Chapman', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Meredith Chapman
(EA National Health and Safety Manager)

Table 1

| | SURVEY 1. Questions: Athletes | Results |
|-----|---|--|
| Q1 | What is your primary discipline? | Of all EA Disciplines the top 3 to participate in the survey was 47.82% Dressage 26.70% Eventing 17.39% Jumping |
| Q2 | Do you compete at Interschools? | 90.47% No 9.52% Yes |
| Q3 | What is your age group? | 25.88% = 51-60 years 24.71% = 61-70 years 20.0% = 41-50 years 8.23% = 15-20 years 8.23% = 21-30 years 8.23% = 31-40 years 3.52% = >70 years 1.17% = < 14 years |
| Q4 | Your gender? | 88.69% Female 10.71% Male 0.59% Binary |
| Q5 | Would you like to receive EA Health, Safety and Welfare information? | 73.37% Yes 26.62% No |
| Q6 | Where do you currently go to find out about EA Health, Safety & Welfare information? | 69.10% EA Website 21.98% Facebook 1.57% Emails 4.71% Other 2.62% Don't want Info |
| Q7 | How would you prefer to receive Health and Safety information? | 43.41% Emails 29.18% EA Website 17.89% Facebook 2.33% SMS 7.39% MyEA 0.77% Don't want Info |
| Q8 | Who do you currently report Health, Safety & Welfare issues or concerns to? | 32.01% OC 17.78% Official 13.43% No One 11.46% State Branch 9.88% Coach 7.90% Rider Rep 4.34% Other 3.16% State Discipline |
| Q9 | What type of medical service (e.g., first aider, paramedic, ambulance, registered nurse, doctor etc) would you like to have available at competition events ? (Chose 1 or more) | 32.96% First Aid 27.03% Paramedic 24.81% Ambulance 10.37% Doctor 4.81% RN |
| Q10 | What type of medical service (e.g., first aider, paramedic, ambulance, registered nurse, doctor etc) would you like to have available at clinic and/or training days for your discipline interest? (Chose 1 or more) | 65.60% First Aid 17.46% Paramedic 5.82% Ambulance 4.76% Doctor 4.23% RN 2.11% None |

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| Q11 | Would you pay a small levy (e.g., \$5 - \$10) for medical services (e.g., for first aider, paramedic, doctor etc)? | 79.04% Yes |
| Q11a | If 'Yes' to Q9, what is your preference? | 75.78% Included in entry fee 24.21% Include in membership 11.71% any contribution is tax deductible |
| Q12 | What type of Health, Safety and Welfare support do you need from EA? | 58.28% a confidential reporting process 27.27% Nothing 14.43% Mental Health support/program |

Table 2

| | SURVEY 2. Questions: Coaches, Officials, OCs, EA Affiliated Clubs/Show Societies | Results |
|-----|---|--|
| Q1 | What is your primary discipline? | Top 3 EA Disciplines to participate in the survey were 57.85% Dressage 24.14% Eventing 20.31% Jumping |
| Q2 | Please select from the below options any or all that apply to your involvement in Equestrian sports | 48% Officials 41.54% Coaches 20% Support Services (medical, vet, volunteer etc) |
| Q3 | Would you like to receive EA Health and Safety Information? | 82.51% agreed yes |
| Q4 | Where do you currently go to find out about EA Health and Safety information | 83.27% EA Website 31.18% EA Newsletter 30.42% EA Facebook |
| Q5 | How would you prefer to receive Health and Safety information? | 35.63% EA Website 27.97% EA Newsletter 17.62% Other: Emails |
| Q6 | Who do you currently report EA Health and Safety issues or concerns to? | 57.75% Organising Committee 33.72% State Branch 21.71% Officials |
| Q7 | What type of medical service provision (e.g., first aid, paramedic, ambulance, etc) would you like to have available at your relevant equestrian competitions? (Choose 1 or more) | 62.21% First Aid 51.53% Paramedic 32.44% Ambulance 14.12% Doctor |
| Q8 | What type of medical service (e.g., first aider, paramedic, ambulance, registered nurse, doctor etc) would you like to have available at clinic and/or training days for your discipline interest? (Choose 1 or more) | 78.99% First Aid 24.51% Paramedic 9.73% Ambulance 3.11% Doctor |
| Q9 | Do you support all participants/competitors paying a small medical service provisions levy (e.g., \$5 - \$10) for medical services at competition and training days (e.g., for first aider, paramedic, doctor etc)? | 73.00% Yes |
| Q10 | If 'Yes' to Q9, what is your preference? | 78.85% Included in entry fee 9.62% Include in membership 6.73% Include where any contribution is tax deductible |
| Q11 | Would a simple risk-assessment tool to engage medical service providers for your event or training activity be helpful? | 71.88% agree yes |
| Q12 | Are you aware, can you find, and do you understand EA's Member Protection Policy (MPP) | 44.66% agree yes |
| Q13 | If you have participated in EA's NEW incident reporting processes using Form 08 (incident report) and Form 09A (concussion advice) how do you find the process? | 47.86% Easy |
| Q14 | What type of Health and Safety support do you need from EA, other than what your Discipline or States are providing ? | 70.37% More Training 19.91% Access to Mental Health |

