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Report Type:	Summary of an Independent Review of EAs Implementation of the Recommendations from the 2019 Coronial Inquests in Eventing. Report prepared by Nick Hunter Consulting for Sport Australia. (Sept 2021)	Report No:	10

Dear Members,

Some of you may be aware that Equestrian Australia's (EAs) Health and Safety Management System and National Health and Safety Manager (NHSM), have recently undergone an independent (external) desktop audit of EAs implementation of the recommendations from the 2019 Coronial Inquests into fatalities in Eventing. During September 2021 Sport Australia engaged a consultant who has over 25 years of experience with Government supported sport programs, supporting them to deliver good value to Government, and ensuring that the Governments interests and requirements are met.

Below is a summary of the findings within the report provided by Sport Australia:

Methodology:

The review included a desktop audit of EA documents and interviews with EA's National Safety Manager.

The desktop audit examined thirty-three key EA documents relating to health, safety, and risk management.

Where possible, the documents were evaluated against relevant codes, standards, and requirements, including the Coronial Recommendations, Workplace Health and Safety Codes of Practice, and comparable industry codes such as the Australian Adventure Activity Standard.

The reviewer also examined the constitutions and by-laws of EA and each of its member state branches, and the memorandum of understanding that is in place between all of them.

The interviews with EA's National Safety Manager were primarily for clarification of material in the documents, and her feedback on the progress of actioning the coronal recommendations

Progress:

EA has taken a methodical approach to addressing each of the recommendations. By August 2021 twenty-five of the Coroner's thirty-one recommendations have been completed, and the remaining six are in progress.

Key to actioning the recommendations has been EA's National Safety Manager Meredith Chapman, who commenced with EA in January 2020. Meredith is a consultant and academic with more than 17 years' industry experience in workplace health and safety. She has brought a high level of rigour to addressing the recommendations.

Similarly, EA's Board has been proactive in enacting changes. In its Risk Appetite Statement of March 2021, the Board announced that it is committed to providing the highest standards of health, safety and welfare for its athletes, spectators coaches, officials, volunteers, and horses through entry level

to high performance, in all disciplines and for all aspects of participation, competition and horse management. It has arguably demonstrated its commitment through the actioning of the coronial recommendations.

The health, safety and risk management policies and procedures that EA has now developed are collectively of a high standard when referenced against other industry codes, such as the Australian Adventure Activity Standard that applies to adventure sports. The reshaped policies and procedures acknowledge and address state and federal regulatory requirements.

They also provide comprehensive guidance to EA's members and stakeholders on how to ensure competition environments and equipment are appropriate, safe, and fit for purpose, and that event organisers and officials have the appropriate skills and experience.

They also help EA, its member branches and event organisers with identifying and understanding the abilities and needs of participants and the importance of timely and clear safety communications. Corresponding education tools in safety and risk management have been developed for EA's officials, coaches, organising committees and clubs. The national rollout of these is a work in progress. Overall, EA has made good progress in addressing the Coroner's recommendations.

Summary of Findings:

The quality of the completed actions is generally of a high standard, equipping EA with a comprehensive set of safety and risk management policies, procedures, and documents for running events. There is a moral and legal imperative to ensure a safe environment for all participants and animals in Australian equestrian sport. Therefore, the effective actioning of the Coroner's recommendations require the consistent adoption, support and implementation of EA's safety policies and procedures nation-wide.

The health and safety of participants and animals should not be subject to interjurisdictional disagreement or contention.

The review identified two potential impediments to the national implementation of the safety policies and procedures.

- 1) The governance documents belonging to each of EA and its member state branches don't enable easy adoption of new whole of sport policies and procedures across all levels of the sport. EA's constitution also doesn't enable it to sanction or discipline a state branch that doesn't comply with national policies. EA could, therefore, be beholden to the state branches and their affiliates in its efforts to implement uniform event safety standards across Australia.
- 2) The size of the task in managing the implementation, ongoing education of members and compliance across seven state branches, combined with the necessary specialist knowledge of workplace health and safety and its application in the equestrian environment requires more than one full time and one part time employee in a national office. To effectively action safety policies at state level requires adequate resourcing in each state.

Each of these potential impediments must be addressed to ensure a single approach to safety that has nation-wide adoption, support, and accountability.

Key Audit Recommendations:

- 1) Coronial Recommendations: EA complete its implementation of the remaining six coronial recommendations and then provide a report to Sport Australia on all of the actions taken to address all thirty-one recommendations and
- 2) Governance: EA and its state branches urgently consider and implement measures to improve policy and procedural alignment through the sport. This is to better enable the timely and effective adoption and implementation of whole of sport policies and procedures at all levels of the sport and ensure a stronger chain of responsibility for safety.

Overall, it was very reassuring to identify that works completed to date by the NHSM and the EA Board were of a high standard when compared to other organisations and following reference to sports governance and legislative standards.

I would like to also acknowledge the efforts of others within our organisation who provided support to myself by way of discussions, assistance in developing documents and processes and sharing your expertise and guidance.

EAs Health, Safety and Risk Management certainly requires a team effort and for us to maintain our industry benchmarked high standards, we will need to continue to proactively work together and communicate respectfully and regularly.

Thank you

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

Meredith Chapman
EAs National Health and Safety Manager