

## Horse Welfare update August 2024

The wellbeing and care of our horses is paramount to our community. We all share a collective responsibility to ensuring that everyone involved with horses recognises and upholds standards for horse welfare, including in competition, training and care.

Recently the FEI conducted a Horse Sport Forum where Horse Welfare was one of the key themes. They outlined a new vision and mission together with an action plan for Horse Welfare, which includes six key focus areas training and riding, tack and equipment; recognising physical and emotional stress; accountability, enforcement and knowledge; the other 23 hours (the life of horses outside of competition); competitive drive; and recognising where a horse is not fit to compete.

The Equestrian Australia (EA) Board recently asked the EA Health Safety and Welfare Committee to seize the opportunity to leverage the work done by the FEI to develop further initiatives and produce an integrated Horse Welfare program for Equestrian Australia. Representatives from a number of disciplines, our FEI National Head Vet, members of the Health Safety and Welfare Committee and EA staff participated in a workshop on all aspects of Horse Welfare. From this the Committee identified next steps to ensure a wholistic approach to welfare and wellbeing. Feedback from this and internal consultation will be incorporated into the program and the outcomes communicated with members once complete. It is expected that this will take place by the end of September.

In the meantime, it is important to note that EA subscribes to the FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse and strongly endorses the notion that at all times that the welfare of the horse must be paramount. Commitment to ensuring the positive aspects of horse wellbeing, as well as reporting and managing breaches is essential both for our horses and the sustainability of our sport.

Reporting a horse welfare related concern can be done through our complaints portal “Horse welfare” section, by emailing [integrity@equestrian.org.au](mailto:integrity@equestrian.org.au).

For further information, please email [safety@equestrian.org.au](mailto:safety@equestrian.org.au).

George Proimos

Chair, Health, Safety and Welfare Committee