



EQUESTRIAN  
AUSTRALIA

# National Clubs & Associations Survey

Summary of Key Findings

FEBRUARY 2026

# Introduction

Equestrian Australia recently conducted a National Clubs and Associations Survey to better understand the experiences, priorities and challenges of affiliated clubs and associations across Australia.

The survey received **51 complete responses**, providing direct insight from those responsible for delivering equestrian sport at a local and state level.

This summary outlines the key findings, supported by the data.

## Understanding the Percentages

Some questions in this survey allowed respondents to select more than one answer (for example, disciplines delivered, roles held, or the five biggest opportunities or risks).

For these questions:

- Percentages show the proportion of clubs or associations that selected each option
- Totals will exceed 100%, because each club could select multiple responses

This reflects the reality that many clubs deliver multiple disciplines, rely on volunteers in several roles, and face more than one opportunity or risk at the same time.

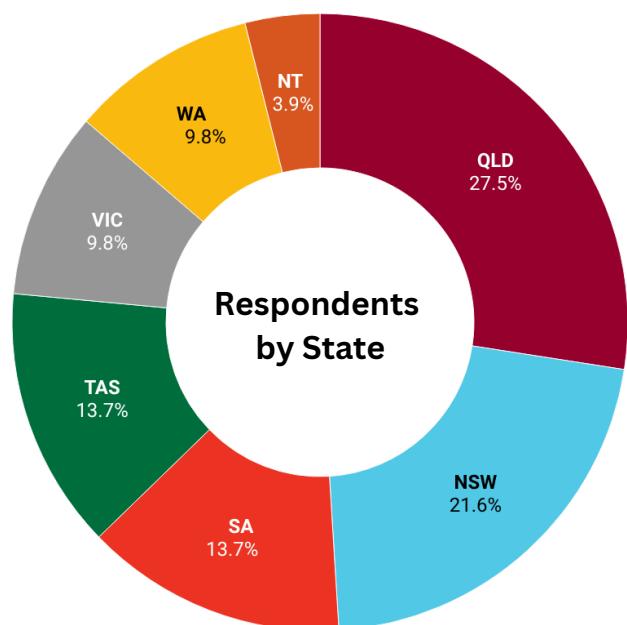
Where questions required a single response only, percentages total approximately 100%, allowing for rounding.

## Who Responded

### *Geographic distribution*

Responses were received from all States and Territories:

- Queensland: 27.45%
- New South Wales: 21.57%
- South Australia: 13.73%
- Tasmania: 13.73%
- Victoria: 9.80%
- Western Australia: 9.80%
- Northern Territory: 3.92%



## Roles Within Clubs and Associations

### *Primary role*

Respondents most commonly identified their primary role as:

- Committee member: 84.31%
- Other volunteer: 3.92%
- Coach: 1.96%
- Official: 1.96%
- Other roles: 7.84%

### *Additional roles*

Many respondents indicated they also perform additional roles:

- Administrator: 46.00%
- Committee member: 34.00%
- Official: 34.00%
- Facility operator: 16.00%
- Coach: 8.00%
- Other roles: 24.00%

This highlights the reliance on a small number of individuals filling multiple roles within clubs

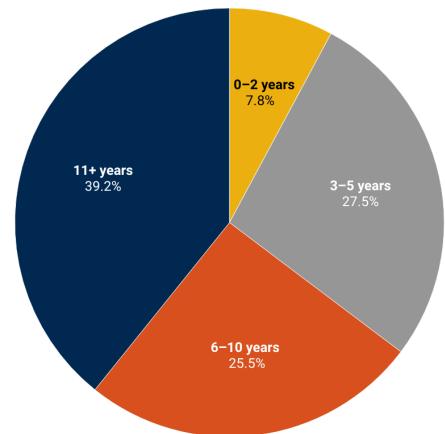
## Experience and Longevity

Time involved in an official capacity:

- 0–2 years: 7.84%
- 3–5 years: 27.45%
- 6–10 years: 25.49%
- 11+ years: 39.22%

The data shows that a significant proportion of clubs rely on long-serving volunteers and administrators.

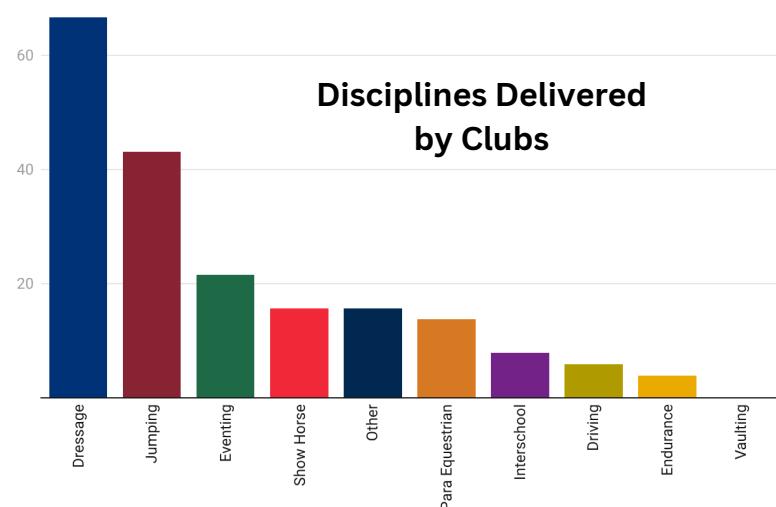
## Experience and Longevity



## Disciplines Delivered by Clubs (multi-select question)

Disciplines represented in club responses:

- Dressage: 66.67%
- Jumping: 43.14%
- Eventing: 21.57%
- Para Equestrian: 13.73%
- Show Horse: 15.69%
- Interschool: 7.84%
- Endurance: 3.92%
- Driving: 5.88%
- Vaulting: 0.00%
- Other disciplines: 15.69%



## Membership Trends at Club Level

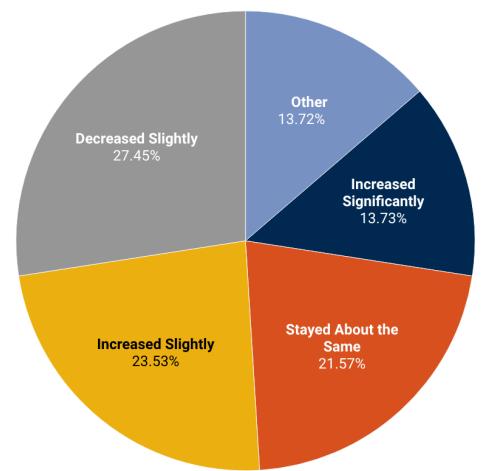
Clubs were asked how membership has tracked over the past three years:

- Increased significantly: 13.73%
- Increased slightly: 23.53%
- Stayed about the same: 21.57%
- Decreased slightly: 27.45%
- Decreased significantly: 11.76%
- Unsure: 1.96%

Overall:

- 37.26% of clubs reported some level of membership growth
- 39.21% reported some level of decline

## Membership Trends at Club Level



## Strategic Planning at Club Level

- Yes, current strategic plan: 53.06%
- No strategic plan: 34.69%
- Unsure: 12.24%

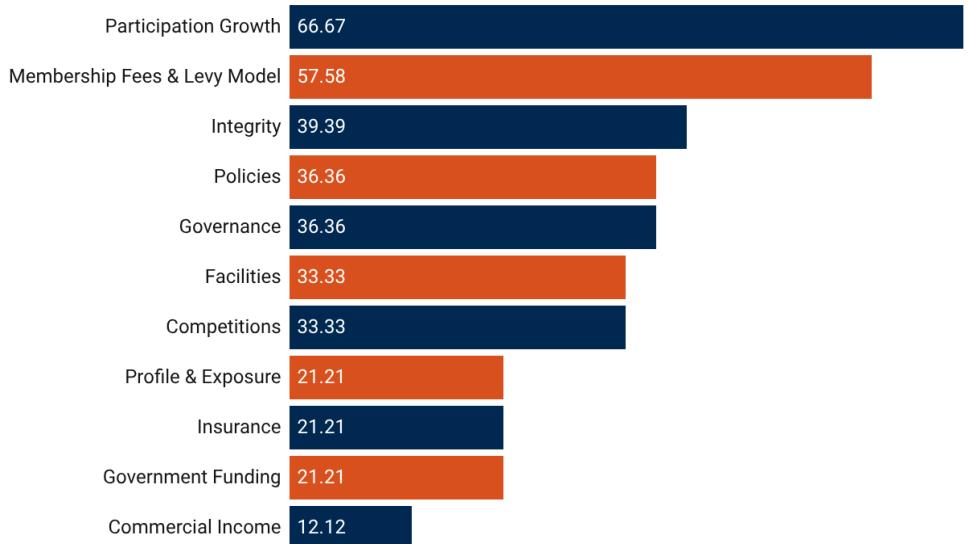
## Opportunities for the Sport

(multi-select question: select up to five)

The most frequently identified opportunities were:

- Participation growth strategies: 66.67%
- Membership fees and levy model: 57.58%
- Integrity: 39.39%
- Policies that govern the sport: 36.36%
- Governance: 36.36%
- Facilities: 33.33%
- Competitions: 33.33%
- Profile and exposure: 21.21
- Insurance: 21.21%
- Commercial income: 12.12%
- Government funding: 21.21
- High Performance Program

## Opportunities for the Sport



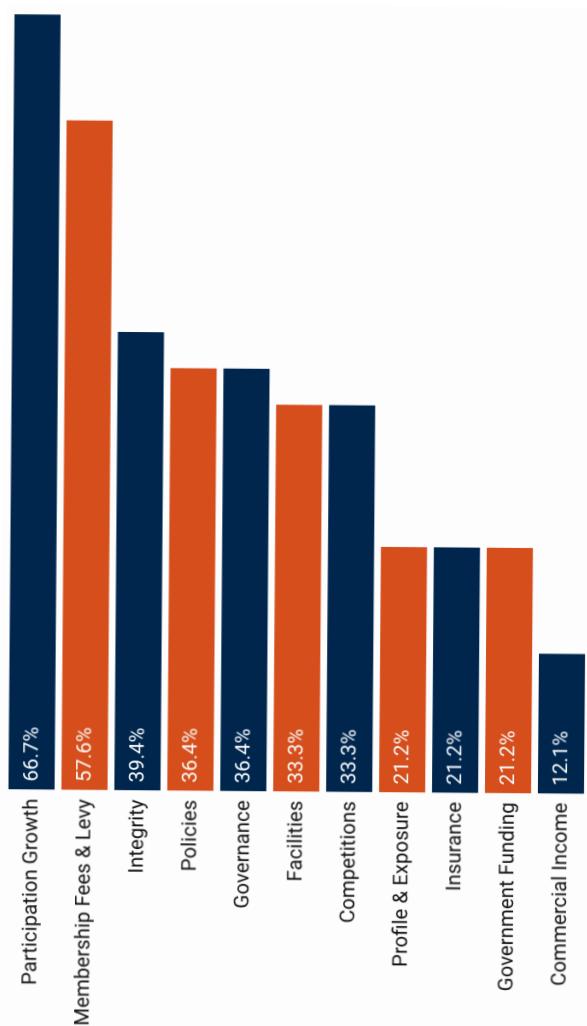
## Risks Facing Clubs and the Sport (multi-select question: select up to five)

The most frequently identified risks were:

- Lack of volunteers: 81.82%
- Declining participation numbers: 81.82%
- Declining membership numbers: 63.64%
- Insurance costs: 54.55%
- Integrity of the sport: 36.36%
- Poor governance: 36.36%
- Insufficient facilities: 33.33%
- Reduced government funding: 9.09%
- Technology limitations: 12.12%
- Child protection risks: 0.00%

Volunteer capacity clearly emerged as the most significant risk at club level

## Risks Facing Clubs and the Sport



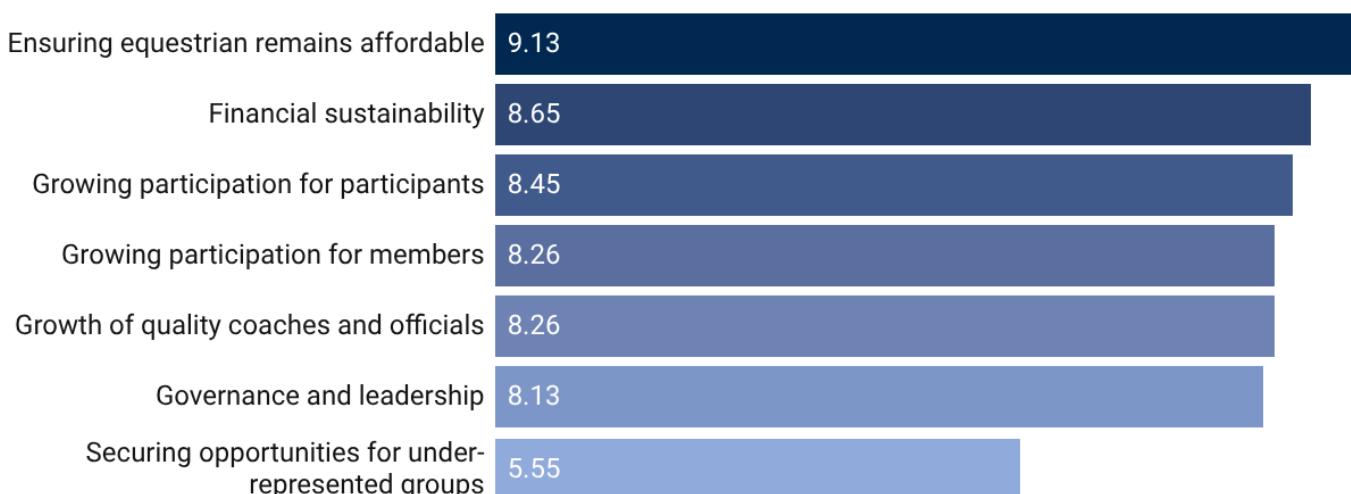
## What Clubs See as Most Important (scale of 1–10)

Highest-rated priorities:

- Ensuring equestrian remains affordable: 9.13
- Financial sustainability: 8.65
- Growing participation for participants: 8.45
- Growing participation for members: 8.26
- Growth of quality coaches and officials: 8.26
- Governance and leadership: 8.13

Lowest-rated priority:

- Securing opportunities for under-represented groups: 5.55



## Participation and Growth

Participation was rated as a high priority by:

- 80.00% of clubs

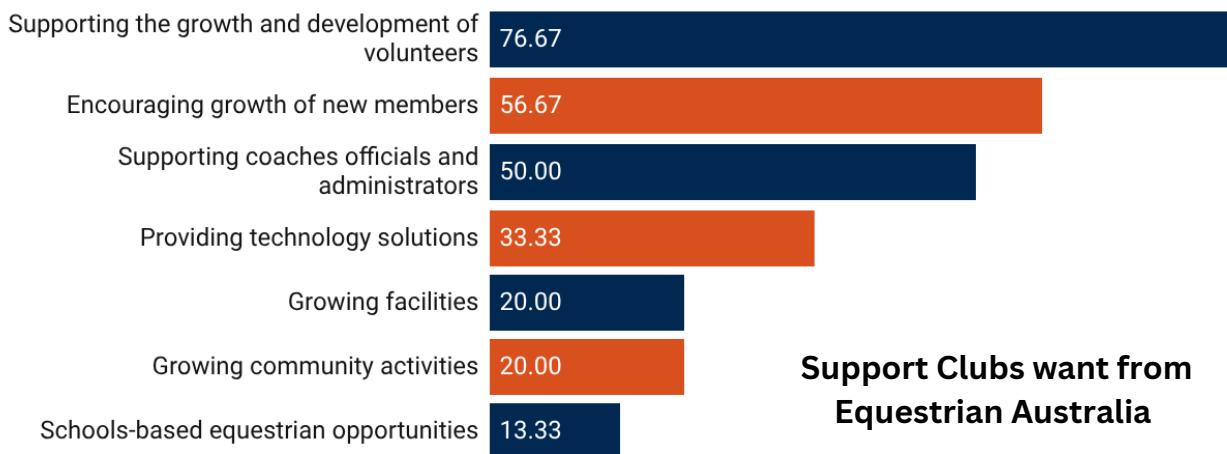
When asked whether to prioritise growth or service:

- Both equally: 70.00%
- Improving service: 20.00%
- Increasing participation: 10.00%

## Support Clubs want from Equestrian Australia (multi-select question)

Clubs identified the following priority support areas:

- Supporting the growth and development of volunteers: 76.67%
- Encouraging growth of new members: 56.67%
- Supporting coaches, officials and administrators: 50.00%
- Providing technology solutions: 33.33%
- Growing facilities: 20.00%
- Growing community activities: 20.00%
- Schools-based equestrian opportunities: 13.33%



## Volunteers

Volunteers were rated as a high priority by:

- 86.21% of clubs

When asked where focus should be placed:

- Both recruiting and developing volunteers equally: 65.52%
- Engaging more volunteers: 27.59%
- Developing existing volunteers: 3.45%

## Performance and Athlete Pathways

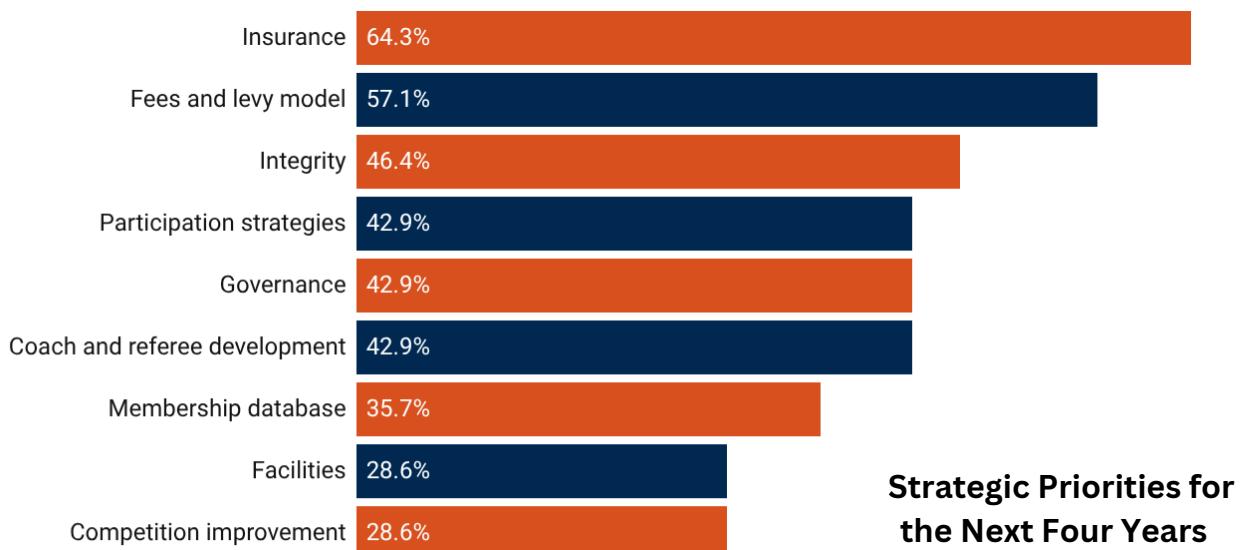
- National team performance
  - High or medium importance: 55.18%
  - Low, not a priority or unsure: 44.82%
- National athlete pathways
  - High or medium importance: 62.07%
  - Low, not a priority or unsure: 37.93%

Performance is important to clubs, but ranks below participation, affordability and sustainability.

## Strategic Priorities for the Next Four Years (multi-select question)

The most frequently identified priorities were:

- Insurance: 64.29%
- Fees and levy model: 57.14%
- Integrity: 46.43%
- Participation strategies: 42.86%
- Governance: 42.86%
- Coach and referee development: 42.86%
- Facilities: 28.57%
- Membership database: 35.71%
- Competition improvement: 28.57%



## **What the Results Show**

The Clubs and Associations survey shows that clubs:

- Rely heavily on a small group of long-serving volunteers filling multiple roles
- Are experiencing mixed membership trends, with decline a real concern
- Place strong emphasis on affordability, insurance and financial sustainability
- See volunteer capacity as the most significant risk to delivery
- Want participation growth balanced with service quality
- Support all disciplines, including those with smaller participation bases

These insights will help inform future planning and coordination between Equestrian Australia and its affiliated Clubs and Associations.

