


INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RETIRED THOROUGHBRED AND
STANDARD BRED HORSES IN QUEENSLAND

1. This submission is on behalf of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Trainer's Association ('ATAQ').
2. The submission is approved by the National Body. The ATA is a registered organisation of employers under Commonwealth Law.
3. This submission should be regarded as an interim statement of position by the ATAQ because, as matters presently stand, it is almost impossible to determine the scope of the problem because of the lack of statistics. In particular, it is not known:
 - (a) How many thoroughbred horses go to the two abattoir facilities in Queensland each year;
 - (b) Of the horses that do go to those facilities, it is not known what proportion of those horses have had another career after the conclusion of their racing days i.e. have they been at stud or in equestrian or other leisure horse pursuits for a number of years post racing?;
 - (c) How many ex-racehorses go to the abattoirs direct from their retirement from racing;
 - (d) How many retired racehorses are successfully rehomed each year;
 - (e) How many racehorses are retired from racing in Queensland each year;
 - (f) How many horses retire from racing in Queensland each year after having come to Queensland after being on-sold by stables in Victoria and New South Wales.
4. My discussion with trainers indicates that without exception they are active in endeavouring to find suitable homes and/or post-racing careers for horses that retire from their stables. Their efforts are in some cases on behalf of the owners of the horse, but in many instances on their own behalf as either a full or part owner of the horse.
5. Trainers advise me that there are a minority of horses which are fundamentally unsuitable for rehoming on account of physical deficiencies or temperamental factors. In such cases euthanasia either by veterinarian or through the horse going to an abattoir is the only option.
6. As an organisation the ATA strongly submits that irrespective of the species of animal involved, pre-slaughter and slaughtering activities at abattoirs should be conducted humanely and in accord with international best practice. It also goes without saying that the transportation of animals, of any species, should be undertaken humanely and in a way that minimises trauma.

Should there be a need for legislation to strengthen existing compliance obligations, these are matters for State and Federal governments.

7. The ATA submits that funding derived from the forthcoming 1% levy on prizemoney should be carefully administered under the supervision of a representative board with the objective of all funds going to horse welfare not administrative costs. To be clear on this, our view is that administrative costs should be met jointly by the State Government, Racing Queensland and QRIC. Members of the supervisory board should not be paid meeting fees or travel allowances out of the funds raised through the prizemoney levy.
8. Any enquiry should be forwarded to Cameron Partington, State Executive – Queensland -


Below is the statement we (ATAQ) released shortly after the ABC report.

Trainers in Qld were shocked and disgusted with the vision showing the disgraceful treatment of animals at the abattoirs in the recent [7.30](#) report on the ABC. We would hope the full force of the law will be applied to those found culpable, and measures are put in place to ensure this type of severe animal cruelty can never happen again. The major concern here is also that this activity was not brought to the attention of authorities immediately, rather than letting it continue for such a lengthy period, bringing further harm to many more animals. The issue of how and why some thoroughbred ex-racehorses found their way to such a facility needs immediate attention, and one the racing industry must investigate and then improve through the better traceability of our horses.

Trainers along with many others in the industry do an amazing job in re-educating and rehoming so many more of our retired racehorses, but like many things and as evidenced here, we can and need to do it better. The ethical and financial responsibility lies with everyone in the racing industry (breeders, owners, trainers, jockeys, race-clubs, media, sales companies, officials & administrators and gambling institutions etc) to play a part in ensuring the quality of the post-racing life of our horses".