

18 November 2019

Mr Terry Martin SC
Inquiry Chair
Queensland Racing Integrity Commission

By email contact@inquiry.qric.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Martin SC

Inquiry into animal cruelty in the management of retired racehorses in Queensland

I refer to your letter dated 7 November 2019.

Thank you for the opportunity to allow Racing Australia to assist the inquiry.

Racing Australia welcomes the inquiry in light of the animal cruelty exposed at the Meramist abattoir. As Racing Australia has made clear on many occasions, such behavior is inhumane and must not be tolerated. However, it was a clear misrepresentation of the Thoroughbred racing industry's approach to equine welfare to assert that the cruelty depicted is a necessary outcome of the industry.

Please see below Racing Australia's response to the questions set out in your letter.

1. The Australia Rules of Racing ("Rules") regulate the powers of Principal Racing Authorities ("PRAs") in respect of Thoroughbred racehorses during the period in which PRAs have jurisdiction over those horses, being from registration for racing (naming) until retirement from racing. While the Rules provide notification requirements for participants in respect of horses that are being retired, the regulation of welfare of retired racehorses itself is outside the scope of the Rules.
2. As at 1 November 2019, there were 1,042 Thoroughbred breeders in Queensland registered with Racing Australia.
3. Thoroughbred breeders are not licensed by Racing Australia.
4. Thoroughbred breeders are required to pay Racing Australia fees which accompany fulfillment of certain obligations under the Rules of the Australian Stud Book (e.g. lodgment of mare returns and stallion returns, DNA testing). The relevant fees are set out at <https://www.studbook.org.au/Fees.aspx>.

Since 1 September 2017, Racing Australia has also collected a \$10 "Thoroughbred horses levy" which applies to each mare return and stallion declaration of service lodged with the Australian Stud Book.

Collected on behalf of AgriFutures (formally RIRDC), the Thoroughbred horses levy supports priority research and is matched dollar for dollar by the Federal Government. Further information on the levy are set out at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/rates/thoroughbred-horses>

5. Racing Australia does not offer any breeding incentives.
6. Racing Australia does not have a position on the matter. This is because, in part, each PRA has different obligations and objectives with respect to issues affecting the industry in their particular jurisdiction.
7. Neither Racing Australia nor the PRAs have any legal authority to regulate the welfare management of retired racehorses. Consequently, once racehorses are retired from the industry, it is extremely difficult for racing authorities to maintain visibility over those horses' movements and the care they receive.

For example, owner A retires their horse from racing and transfers it to owner B who intends to use it for equestrian. Provided owner A has made the appropriate notification of the horse's retirement in accordance with the Australian Rules of Racing, both Racing Australia and the relevant PRA will have owner B's contact details and the address of the horse's new home. However, racing authorities have no powers to require owner B to disclose any information in respect of (e.g. to confirm its retirement location), or provide access to (e.g. for welfare inspections), the horse.

By way of further example, at the end of the horse's equestrian career, owner B transfers the horse to owner C who uses it as a pleasure horse for a number of years before selling it at a livestock sale, where it is purchased by a trader and on-sold to a knackery. In these circumstances, it would simply not be possible for racing authorities to regulate the welfare of retired racehorses through to that point in their life.

This is why Racing Australia continues to advocate for the introduction of a National Horse Traceability Register, which would assist racing and other authorities to track racehorses following their retirement from racing, thereby enabling such authorities to ensure compliance with appropriate welfare standards.

Further, at the point retired racehorses exit the industry, they become subject to the statutory and regulatory requirements that exist in the relevant jurisdiction and which apply to the horse's particular destination (e.g. animal welfare/prevention of cruelty animals legislation, equestrian rules, livestock processing standards). Racing authorities have no control in respect of the establishment, review or enforcement of such regulatory arrangements.

8. As set out in 7 above, a National Horse Traceability Register would significantly assist racing and other authorities in managing the welfare of retired racehorses.

If we can be of further assistance to the inquiry, please advise accordingly.

Yours sincerely



Myles Foreman
Acting Chief Executive Officer