QRIC's Animal Welfare Strategy

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) has a mandate to safeguard the welfare of racing animals. The Commission's Animal Welfare Strategy 2016-2020 specifically refers to the following key objectives to ensure that all racing animals are well cared for before, during and after racing.

Objective 1: Minimise 'wastage' of racing animals

Minimise 'wastage' of racing animals through promotion of more informed breeding and increased participant responsibility for welfare and end of career alternatives.

Objective 2: Maximise career opportunities for all racing animals

The Animal Welfare Strategy needs to find the balance between providing sufficient animals to support a competitive racing industry and reducing 'wastage', by maximising career longevity for all racing animals.

Objective 3: Enhance welfare and safety of racing animals

The welfare and safety of racing animals will be enhanced through evidence-based welfare standards, provision of proficient race day veterinary services and timely, proactive investigation of animal welfare complaints.

Key activities

- Minimise 'wastage' of racing animals through promotion of more informed breeding and increased participant responsibility for welfare and end of career alternatives.

- Introduce competency based licencing that requires relevant knowledge and experience of managing animal welfare issues.

- Publish and promote expert advice on greyhound breeding and socialisation practices to maximise breeding and retirement success.

- Strengthen the Greyhound Adoption Program of Queensland through service optimisation, better promotion and education.

- Publish and promote expert advice on animal health and behavioural issues that contribute to animal welfare.

- Develop and implement a range of proactive risk-based inspection strategies to maximise detection of any animal welfare issues.

- Enhance capability in judicial processes and prosecution of rule breaches relating to animal welfare.

- Improve whole of life tracking for racing animals.

- Make primary breeding and euthanasia data available via an open data portal.

- Strengthen relationships and collaboration between people and entities with an interest in racing animal welfare.

- Increase the intelligence capability of the QRIC and information sharing with other agencies engaged in animal welfare compliance and enforcement activities.

- Provide a grants process to support welfare, rehoming and retraining initiatives for racing and retired race horses and greyhounds.

The 5 Domains Model of Animal Welfare

QRIC adopts the 5 Domains Model of Animal Welfare. The model provides a framework by which animal welfare can be measured and provides clarity of expectations for animal welfare and development. The model emphasises the need for animals to have positive interactions with people and other animals. The early socialisation of animals is essential for racing animals to adapt well to training and then to successfully transition to retirement.

The provision of positive experiences and socialisation with other animals and people will build confidence and resilience in racing animals and also will greatly assist racing animals to adjust to new situations including retirement.

THE 5 DOMAINS OF ANIMAL WELFARE

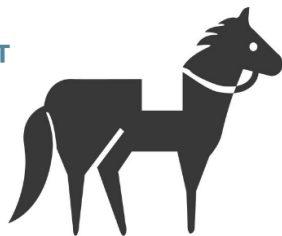QUEENSLAND RACING INTEGRITY COMMISSION

GOOD NUTRITION

Provide ready access to clean water. Provide enough food through a balanced, nutritious diet with variety.

GOOD ENVIRONMENT

Provide shade and shelter and safe housing that allows free movement and expression of natural behaviour.

GOOD HEALTH

Prevent, rapidly diagnose and treat disease and injury, and foster good health.

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Provide sufficient space, proper facilities and positive social interactions with other animals and people.

POSITIVE MENTAL STATE

Provide safe, species-appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences.

SPEAK TO YOUR VET ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ENSURE YOU ARE PROVIDING THE 5 DOMAINS OF ANIMAL WELFARE TO THE RACING ANIMALS IN YOUR CARE.

Promoting appropriate socialisation during an animal's development and racing career is a key component of the Commission's Animal Welfare Strategy.

Each of the five domains are provisions that contribute to the overall welfare of an animal. The Five Domains Model is divided into physical and mental components which together give rise to an animal's welfare status.

The domains provide the requirements for survival and health along with experiences that are enjoyable for animals such as social interaction, exercise, play and exploration.

Management of animals requires positive experiences to be identified and provided for them, and barriers to positive experiences removed wherever possible.

Nutrition Animals have access to clean water and enough food in a balanced diet. The food available is nutritious, appropriate for the species and individual animal and varied.

Environment Animals are comfortable and safe and provided with opportunities and choices to engage in natural and rewarding behaviour.

Health Animals are fit and healthy and injuries and illnesses are prevented or immediately and appropriately treated.

Behaviour Animals are able to express natural and rewarding behaviour and are able to engage in free movement and play, and have positive contact with animals and people to form social bonds.

Mental or affective state Nutrition, environment, health and opportunity for expression of natural behaviour all influence an animal's mental state. Each of these can provide positive and pleasurable experiences that enhance an animal's mental state.