



# Queensland Racing Integrity Commission

2022-23 Regulator Performance

Report

## Introduction

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This report has been prepared to meet the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission's ("the Commission") reporting obligations under the Queensland Government's Regulator Performance Framework, which is a key element of the Better Regulation Strategy.

The Commission is an independent statutory body established under the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* which oversees the integrity of racing in Queensland and safeguards the welfare of racing animals.

The purposes of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* are to:

- maintain public confidence in the racing of animals in Queensland for which betting is lawful; and
- ensure the integrity of all persons involved with racing or betting under this Act or the *Racing Act 2002*; and
- safeguard the welfare of all animals involved in racing under this Act or the *Racing Act 2002*.

## Model practice1:

### Ensure Regulatory Activity is Proportionate to Risk and Minimises Unnecessary Burden

#### *Supporting principles:*

- a proportionate approach is applied to compliance activities, engagement and regulatory enforcement actions
- regulations do not unnecessarily impose on regulated entities
- regulatory approaches are updated and informed by intelligence gathering so that effort is focused towards risk.

#### Evidence to support alignment with regulator model practices

The Commission's Regulatory Strategy and Framework (the Strategy) is based on five guiding principles: nurture voluntary compliance; evidence-based decision-making; risk-based approach; transparent governance; and a professional workforce.

The Strategy has an emphasis on education, engagement and then enforcement as a best-practice regulatory approach.

The Strategy is driven by the implementation of intelligence-led, risk-based decision-making to ensure that regulatory responses are proportionate and meet the Commission's resource model.

The Commission, through the Strategy and its principles, is committed to adopting a voluntary compliance approach, which ensures that resources and effort to consult through engagement and education are paramount when promoting the concepts of operating with integrity and safeguarding the welfare of racing animals.

The Commission's Appropriate and Proportionate Enforcement Policy guides staff in determining how and when enforcement action is utilised, and the most appropriate enforcement action to be taken in any given circumstances when voluntary compliance fails. Any enforcement action taken by the Commission will be based on the level of harm presented by the breach and the culpability level of the participant.

The Commission has standards in place for racing bookmakers and licensees of each code of racing. The standards explain how the Commission assesses applications from persons seeking to participate in the Queensland racing industry and how the Commission audits the ongoing suitability of licensed animals and participants.

In 2022-2023, the Commission implemented its Racing Penalty Guidelines for each code of racing. The Penalty Guidelines were prepared based on careful consideration of relevant penalty precedents for the same or similar rule breaches in similar circumstances. They aim to be a general deterrent to participants by outlining the potential penalties that could be incurred in the event of a rule breach. It provides not only a general deterrent to all licensed participants who could be potential rule-breakers, but also a specific deterrent from reoffending to those who have already been penalised.

The Commission's investigations and intelligence functions include the Intelligence Unit, the 'Report Something' portal and the stewards. The Intelligence Unit is primarily responsible for providing data and information about threats to the integrity of animal racing in Queensland and informed decision making around the deployment of operational resources. The 'Report Something' portal as a source of intelligence, provides the opportunity for industry participants and members of the public to report concerns about the mistreatment of animals or other wrongdoing within racing to the Commission.

## Model practice 2:

### Consult and Engage Meaningfully with Stakeholders

#### *Supporting principles:*

- formal and informal consultation and engagement mechanisms are in place to allow for the full range of stakeholder input and Government decision making circumstances
- engagement is undertaken in ways that help regulators develop a genuine understanding of the operating environment of regulated entities
- cooperative and collaborative relationships are established with stakeholders, including other regulators, to promote trust and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory framework.

#### **Evidence to support alignment with regulator model practices**

The Commission's three key elements of its regulatory approach are engagement, education, and enforcement. They are deliberately presented and communicated in this order to emphasise the value the Commission places on working with industry and other stakeholders to build a better industry.

The Racing Integrity Commissioner's One Industry vision demonstrates the commitment to working collaboratively to engage and educate as an organisation by communicating and sharing information to strengthen the racing industry. The Commission has established clear channels of communications across the breadth of the industry, and continues to work towards the Commission's five objectives; ensuring the highest level of animal care; sound integrity, safety, strong industry growth, and sustainability.

The Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) continued to meet in 2022-23. This forum provides an opportunity to discuss contemporary matters through an open discussion with subject matter experts from within the Commission, the racing industry and wider related public. The SRG facilitates consultation and collaboration to assist the Commission and the Queensland racing industry to reach shared goals where the highest integrity is maintained, and animal care is paramount. It also provides an engagement opportunity where the Commission is able to share information that supports its strategic objectives.

The Commission implemented its Engagement Strategy in 2022-23, a supporting strategy under the Regulatory Strategy and Framework. The Engagement Strategy outlines priorities, key stakeholder segment and the role of communication channels and captures the overarching narrative, key messaging and communication and engagement content, topics and activities that will be delivered to support a One Industry approach.

In 2022-23, the Commission engaged with stakeholders through the publication of various proactive media releases and media responses, released campaign emails to industry regarding industry related topics, published information in Race, Pace and Chase (which are monthly Thoroughbred, Harness and Greyhound industry magazines), as well as the hosting of a series of greyhound adoption events in southeast Queensland and Townsville.

## Model practice 3:

### Provide Appropriate Information and Support to Assist Compliance

#### *Supporting principles:*

- clear and timely guidance and support is accessible to stakeholders and tailored to meet the needs of the target audience
- advice is consistent and, where appropriate, decisions are communicated in a manner that clearly articulates what is required to achieve compliance
- where appropriate, regulatory approaches are tailored to ensure compliance activities do not proportionately burden particular stakeholders (e.g. small business) or require specialist advice.

#### Evidence to support alignment with regulator model practices

In alignment with the vision of One Industry, the Commission delivers educational material to support and promote the integrity of racing by ensuring consistent and fair administration of the Rules of Racing, and to promote best practice in safeguarding animal welfare. The use of education and awareness nurtures voluntary compliance and allows the Commission to make best use of its enforcement resources. This approach also aims to enhance public confidence in the Queensland racing industry.

Through a calendar of formal education campaigns, industry notices and the already established networks our staff have with industry participants and bodies representing industry participants, the Commission ensures participants have the information they need to comply with our regulatory framework.

Existing education and awareness materials published on the Commission's website includes, but not limited to, content on:

- Licensing Standards for each code of racing
- Rules of Racing for each code of racing (national and local)
- Biosecurity requirements
- Prohibited substances
- Greyhound socialisation and rehoming
- Identifying and treating heat stress.



## Model practice 4:

### Commit to Continuous Improvement

#### *Supporting principles:*

- regular review of the approach to regulatory activities, collaboration with stakeholders and other regulators to ensure it is appropriately risk-based, leverages technological innovation and remains the best approach to achieving policy outcomes
- to the extent possible, reform of regulatory activities is prioritised on the basis of impact on stakeholders and the community
- staff have the necessary training and support to effectively, efficiently and consistently perform their duties.

#### Evidence to support alignment with regulator model practices

The Commission continues to employ a full-time Internal Auditor that provides the Commission, the executives and the Audit and Risk Committee with independent, objective assurance on the Commission's risk management, control, and governance processes. The Internal Auditor conducts reviews of the Commission's regulatory activities in collaboration with stakeholders to ensure compliance with regulatory obligations and implement best practice processes. In 2022-23, the internal audit function completed reviews into ownership of animals, greyhound race day activities, bookmakers compliance and betting accounts.

The Commission continued to progress its functional realignment in 2022-23 implementing the final phase, Ways of Working. Activities within this phase focused on identifying better decision-making processes, delivering more efficient services, improving overall communication (internal and external) and strengthening the workforce capability. This phase has now been transitioned to business-as-usual activities through exploration, development and implementation of business improvement activities that have delivered efficiencies.

In 2022-23, 15 new cadets were welcomed into the Cadet Steward Program, with a total of 13 cadets commencing Certificate III training. The Commission continued to invest in the skills of its staff, offering cadet stewards Certificate III level training, provided through Racing Queensland's registered training organisation. The program provides competencies in communication, disciplinary decisions, procedural fairness, workplace health and safety and investigations, inquiries and appeals.

## Model practice 5:

### Be Transparent and Accountable in Actions

#### *Supporting principles:*

- where appropriate, regulatory frameworks and timeframes for making regulatory decisions are published to provide certainty to stakeholders
- decisions are provided in a timely manner, clearly articulating expectations and the underlying reasons for decisions
- indicators of regulatory performance are publicly available.

#### Evidence to support alignment with regulator model practices

The Commission's website outlines its priorities, including the publication of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, Regulatory Strategy and Framework 2021-2025.

The Commission provides transparency into its enforcement activities by publishing Stewards' Reports and Internal Review outcomes on the Commission's website.

The Commission also publishes key documents on the website including:

- proactive industry announcements and media releases, providing detail of significant policy decisions and enforcement outcomes for the industry
- Directions from Chief Stewards as to the interpretation of rules
- Elevated TCO2 levels detected in equine racing animals
- Greyhound breeding, race injury and retirement reports
- Thoroughbred and Standardbred Race Related Injuries

When decisions are made on licensing matters, clear reasons for the outcome are provided in writing to the relevant party. Licensing decisions are subject to a right of internal review and a right of external review.

The Commission provides details around performance through the publication of its Annual Report. Specific data relating to the Commission's Service Delivery Statement and effectiveness and efficiency measures are recorded as part of this process.