

# TASRACING ANIMAL WELFARE REVIEW

D a v i d S y k e s B V S c . M R C V S

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## **Abbreviations Used**

ARVS	Association of Racecourse Veterinary Surgeons, UK
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK
EVA	Equine Veterinarians Australia
GAP	Greyhound Adoption Program
GBGB	Great Britain Greyhound Board
GRNSW	Greyhound Racing NSW
HRNSW	Harness Racing New South Wales
IFAR	International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses
IGSRV	International Group of Specialist Regulatory Veterinarians
NZTR	New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing
ORI	Office of Racing Integrity, Tasmania
OTT	Off the Track, Racehorse retraining program.
PRA	Principal Racing Authority
QRIC	Queensland Racing and Integrity Commission
ROR	Retraining of Racehorses UK
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tasmania)
RV	Racing Victoria
RWWA	Racing and Wagering, Western Australia
Tasracing	Principal Racing Authority for three (3) codes in Tasmania
TAWWG	The Thoroughbred Aftercare Welfare Working Group

## About this Review

### Request for this review

This review was undertaken at the request of Tasracing and according to the scope provided.

“To ensure Tasracing’s existing and future efforts and standards to achieve the corporate goal to promote and enhance animal welfare in accordance with community expectations”

Scope as per Tasracing’s engagement agreement:

- “Independent assessment of Tasracing’s welfare related programs and benchmark those against Best Practice standards.
- To identify gaps or weaknesses and prioritise areas that need to be actioned to achieve those targeted standards.
- To engage with participants within the sport and racing experts to develop workable, practical solutions.
- To compile data and evidence reviewing Tasracing’s welfare efforts and aspirations; highlight potential reputational risk areas and provide recommendations to reduce that risk.
- Utilising evidence-based information, make practical and achievable recommendations for changes necessary to assure Tasracing’s ongoing commitments to animal welfare are in line with current world’s best practice outcomes for the sport’s athletic participants.”

### Formulation of this review

Recommendations have been formulated following consultations and meetings from early April until the end of June 2022 with Australian based racing authorities, several international regulatory racing authorities, and welfare experts. In person consultations were conducted with Tasracing, racing stakeholders (owners, breeders, trainers), race day staff, staff from welfare and affiliated retraining and rehoming centres in Tasmania. The Office of Racing Integrity (ORI) were unable to provide a response due to resourcing limitations related to the Covid 19 pandemic. I was therefore unable to examine welfare data and statistics collected by ORI and could not make meaningful comparisons with similar data collected by other racing authorities. Additionally, I was unable to discuss welfare-related protocols that ORI have in place. Therefore, a number of the recommendations I have made may already be actioned or in the consultative stage.

This review does not attempt to define welfare but focuses instead on actions designed to deliver outcomes which minimise negative and maximise positive welfare effects. To facilitate this, the accepted “5 domains” model of animal welfare has been applied. This model looks at four physical domains, (nutrition, behaviour, health, and environment) each of which impact

on the fifth or psychological domain, the mental state of an animal's experience. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/10/10/1870>.

Additionally, the review focuses on recommendations with the goal to minimise acceptable risks that exist in greyhound, pacing and thoroughbred racing.

Welfare is an ever-evolving journey; our understandings and expectations continue to develop due to societal expectations; scientific and ethical understanding; advances made by research institutes; and by international racing jurisdictions. The industry must strive for current best practice welfare standards but also understand that with further research and development these standards may change. This requires the industry to evolve, correct and move with the new requirements.

There are several overarching themes identified and recognised internationally, which apply across all stages of all racing animals' lifetime. These are:

- Shared Responsibility for Welfare
- Traceability
- Education
- Monitoring of welfare
- International collaboration
- Evidence and the need for research

Many of the recommendations considered in this review originate from these six themes and I will address each one independently.

### **The Welfare Challenge:**

Our targeted outcome in all welfare programs for racing greyhounds and racehorses is for them to enjoy the best possible life experiences, and for the industry to have taken all measures to minimise the acceptable risk of poor welfare outcomes. An important result of this is to maintain and improve social acceptance and trustworthiness throughout the wider community.

This outcome can only be achieved by striving to have the best welfare practices for our racing animals and to be able to objectively measure and report subsequent welfare outcomes transparently.

The welfare of racing animals is the moral responsibility of everyone involved within the sport. Delivering optimal welfare will require a shared commitment. This applies across all stages of the lifetime of the racing animal from breeding, pre racing career, racing career and into and after retirement. That involvement includes breeders, owners, trainers, their staff, riders and

drivers, veterinarians, racing day staff, including stewards, racing veterinarians, re-homing establishments, and eventually private non-racing industry owners.

Part of that responsibility involves ensuring those who fail to deliver expected welfare standards for racing animals under their care are challenged and held appropriately and properly to account.

## **Tasracing today**

Much of the current strategy and standards for Tasracing welfare are in line with other racing jurisdictions. However, there is a recognition from Tasmanian racing stakeholders that the advancement of welfare policies in the three racing codes in Tasmania have suffered from the absence of a consistent welfare focus within the organisation over the preceding years.

Current policies and protocols are being followed. However, there is a need to refresh and develop new policies and strategies to aspire to recognised best standards.

This review aims to highlight areas for potential/possible improvement at Tasracing and to introduce protocols or policies that ought to be developed. The review is not an exhaustive list of all welfare policies that could be proposed.

### **Essential Requirements for Successful Welfare in Tasracing.**

Whilst I will follow the welfare themes outlined above, two concerns became evident during this review which need to be addressed by the Tasmanian racing industry. If not addressed, implementation of the numerous welfare strategy recommendations presented in this report will be problematic.

### **Organisation structure, leadership and staffing**

The first of those concerns involve the leadership and staffing at both organisations; Tasracing and ORI.

A perception of a lack of trust and transparency, including monitoring, consistency, and accountability at the ORI and Tasracing was expressed to me during the consultative process for this review.

The Monteith review published May 2022, "Review of the Racing Act 2004"; also supports and highlights a similar sentiment. As such I will not be making further recommendations in relation to the structure or reporting lines within or between ORI and Tasracing. I fully support the recommendations within the Monteith report and will progress my report on the understanding that most suggested changes in that review will be implemented and become

the Tasracing welfare/integrity model moving forward. To that end a reference to Tasracing will reflect an expected combined structure incorporating both Tasracing and ORI.

It is my recommendation that a key spokesperson for welfare across all codes is nominated at the executive/ board level of Tasracing. This person must be empowered to ensure that welfare recommendations suggested are closely considered, prioritised according to risk, budget, and timeline, and implemented in a timely manner. This executive should be responsible for supporting the veterinary, stewarding and welfare officers at both Tasracing and ORI in implementing welfare recommendations. Without this executive spokesperson taking ownership of welfare within Tasracing and consulting with and communicating that strategy to staff and external stakeholders, any welfare strategy progress will be difficult and frequently delayed.

1. I recommend that Tasracing and ORI review their recruiting process, staff levels, structure, and communication processes to achieve complete ownership of the welfare strategy across both organisations. There is historical evidence that both organisations have had difficulty in attracting, recruiting, and maintaining appropriately qualified professionals in the welfare sphere. I will leave it to the Tasracing board, government, and stakeholders to discuss the possible structure and location of the welfare related decision-making staff at ORI and Tasracing. Presently however, because of both the geographic, administrative, and structural isolation for welfare reporting, any successful implementation of the welfare considerations I may recommend will be difficult. A major reorganisation is required.

**Staffing:** During interviews, it became apparent that the veterinary profession currently within Tasmania and involved or interested in being employed in the racing industry is small and mature in age. Recruiting new regulatory veterinarians is difficult. To alleviate this shortage, a recruitment focus to identify, accommodate, and employ new veterinary surgeons into the racing industry must be made.

2. I recommend that Tasracing investigates novel ways to alleviate the issues if current experienced veterinarians retire from race-day and regulatory work. One option would be for race-day regulatory work to be done by veterinary surgeons who are employed by Tasracing, trained, and working as regulatory veterinarians, and are not employed directly by the racing clubs. This option involves offering full-time employment to those who request it, as well as part-time and flexible contract work to cover all race-day requirements, non-race-day activities, as well as potential project development work, support for OTT and GAP. This would allow for a larger, more flexible pool of Tasracing-employed veterinary surgeons, resulting in improved



consistency, and implementation of welfare strategies and projects being undertaken.

### **Data Collection and a Central Data Base:**

Deficiencies in information relating to welfare in many racing jurisdictions are often a direct result of the lack of a centralised data repository and a systematic approach to collecting welfare-related information. A similar issue appears to exist at Tasracing.

The TAWWG report identified several weaknesses in the current welfare regime for thoroughbreds in Australia, such as a lack of national standards for the care of horses. There is no clear national definition of what constitutes good welfare, no national welfare standards for thoroughbred horses and a state administrative structure that means different welfare funding levels, programmes, and rules across seven PRA's.

The apparent lack of an evidence base for decision making around welfare policy underwrites proposals for data gathering in this review.

- 3.** Tasracing to review and develop a Centralised Data Base for welfare and integrity information. The data base to interface with the National Authorities present data bases for continuity.

To fulfil its potential, a centralised data base is only as good as the accuracy, frequency and consistency of the information that it stores. The challenge is to develop technology and systems that allow for information to be collected and uploaded seamlessly without undue increased administrative workload for stakeholders.

To that effect, various innovations have provided effective technologies that allow ongoing information collection and automated uploading by approved stakeholders to a centralised data base. Examples of current technology include.

GRNSW has scanning technology and has commissioned a whole-of-life digital monitoring and tracking programme, ensuring many elements of the New South Wales greyhound racing industry that are currently paper-based are collected electronically and stored. Greyhound racing clubs, trial tracks, major breeders, public trainers, veterinarians with many industry clients, and other rehoming organisations will be touch points for collection. The approach will be a digitalised data captured storage and retrieval process. This automates and simplifies the capability to track the whereabouts of registered greyhounds, and also connects to the NSW pet registry, ideally giving lifetime traceability.

Medication-recording applications such as Equine MediRecords and other electronic applications e.g. Equine Registry UK, BHA veterinary officer's welfare mobile app and GBGB electronic recordings are all examples of digital data collection systems that fulfil these requirements.

An illustration of the possible multiple source inputs to the data base are.



4. Tasracing to explore technology to collect and upload welfare and other information into a central data base.

### Common Welfare Concerns

Some important welfare themes that are articulated by the public and industry stakeholders and are common in both the equine and greyhound racing include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of complete traceability of young animals from full registration through to entering licenced premises for training.
- The outcomes of retired racehorses and greyhounds and how they are transitioned into retraining and rehoming programmes for long term appropriate welfare results.
- The number of racing animals who do not reach the racetrack to race for whatever circumstances.
- Race-day fatalities, catastrophic injuries, how these are treated and the transparency of that data.
- Housing and husbandry practises for racing animals in both stables and kennels.

- The use and/or abuse of drugs and medications in racing.
- Euthanasia for each industry and the decision making and implementation of euthanasia as an appropriate outcome.
- Numbers and appropriate husbandry and handling processes for racehorses sent to slaughter at abattoirs and knackeries.

Often the information or data to answer these concerns is not consistently recorded and if recorded frequently sits in isolation. It is often stored in locations or formats difficult to extract and analyse, precluding informed welfare decisions and evidence-based policy. Moreover, inability to produce data can increase scepticism and fuel misinformation.

### **An immediate start**

It would be prudent for Tasracing to engage with the national authorities to address many of these concerns and at the same time explore opportunities to commence some of those initiatives independently until there is national harmonisation.

### **Essential Works**

There are two overarching projects which, by themselves, do not improve welfare but are vital in capturing information from which analyses can be made and evidence-based welfare decisions and strategies can be developed. Those two projects are:

- the creation of a centralised data base and
- technology options to collect data

Both are discussed elsewhere in this document.

### **Recommendations relevant to all three racing codes.**

For simplicity, I have attempted to list recommendations for each industry with the priority of the recommendation associated with each life stage of the greyhound or racehorse. However, there are overlaps between both life stages and the relevant species. The result is, that a recommendation may be listed under the racing greyhound section, but also can be considered for both the standardbred and thoroughbred industries. Before I examine some recommendations for the individual codes, I have several recommendations that are shared by all three racing codes.

### **Welfare Priority Branding**

A real and publicly declared commitment to welfare needs to be made. Welfare initiatives need to be promoted in a mission statement, published in all Tasracing material, website, social media etc. and extended to all racing organisations in Tasmania to recognise public perception concerns.

5. Tasracing to consider rebranding to emphasise equine and greyhound welfare in any mission statement on corporate and media material to reflect the focus on the welfare initiatives being undertaken. Presently other than OTT and GAP, there is little outward facing material that announces welfare as a major priority.

#### **Animal Welfare Board Committee.**

6. The establishment of an Animal Welfare Board by Tasracing. To include members of Tasracing stewarding teams, veterinary officers, welfare officers, RSPCA, GAP, OTT and other welfare or charity homing groups. This Committee to meet at least twice yearly, to discuss welfare concerns, public input and establish protocols, communication, and sources of continuing education.

### **Traceability**

#### **Microchip scanners**

7. Tasracing to consider providing microchip scanner or similar technology to relevant stakeholders in the industry. Stakeholders to include rehoming retraining centres, trainers, breeding and rearing farms for greyhounds, equine studs, horse transporters, horse pre-training and breaking-in yards. Other individuals on request. This technology will be used to aid in the collection of movement records; to provide accurate identification data for all racing animals in Tasmania; to be integrated into traceability protocols using innovative technology such as, Equine Register, Equine Medical Records app.

#### **Whereabouts information collection**

8. Tasracing to explore with Australian and international regulators as well as private companies' technologies for whereabouts or location information data collection at multiple touchpoints during a racing animals' lifetime. Examples to be explored would include.

Equine Register UK; <https://www.equineregister.co.uk/> which maintains and manages the DEFRA UK central Equine Register ; <https://www.equineregister.co.uk/central-equine-database.php> This company is also involved in managing an equine register database for the Canadian Government.

The Victorian Government Equine ID system reform consultation: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/horses/horse-traceability/national-horse-traceability-system-reform-consultation-information#h2-6>

Racing Australia are developing an app to be used in conjunction with a microchip reader or other device for identification of a horse's identity and location and upload to RAs central database.

GHRNSW traceability technology.

The TAWWG report note that Racing Victoria has developed its own off-the-track post-racing database in collaboration with Equestrian Victoria. This allows retired racehorses to be registered and traced through equestrian careers. Ideally this information would reside in a central database.

## **Monitoring and Welfare**

### **Electronic Medication Recording**

In most racing authorities, the collection and up to date recording of administered medications, treatments and supplements is often less than ideal. The administrative workload and inconvenience of updating information is cited by trainers as the reason for their poor compliance.

The administrative collection can be significantly improved, utilising digital medical records rather than manual paper trail. The benefits include systematic recording of medications, accurate contemporaneous records of therapeutic medications which are vital for both the responsible trainer and the regulator when investigating adverse analytical antidoping findings and improved health care for all racing dogs and horses.

Another advantage of an electronic medication recording system is the simultaneous collection of location information for both greyhounds and racehorses at the time of medication. This location information can be automatically uploaded to the Tasracing data base, giving live information on whereabouts, covering a longer lifespan than is currently available/ extending coverage and knowledge of whereabouts. The app can be used by breeders, owners, trainers and retraining establishments and their veterinary surgeons.

An example is the Irish based company Equine Medical Records; <https://www.equinemedirecord.com/>

9. Tasracing to explore available mobile web-based medication record applications with both Australian and international regulators and private company providers. Liaise with trainers, owners, and Tasmanian veterinary surgeons with respect to administration and application.

## How do we measure welfare?

Welfare can only be assessed and improved if there is a systematic way to measure it and collect the data for analysis. Collecting welfare measurement data allows us to assess the status of welfare, and the impact of changes subsequently applied.

Welfare measurements allow the identification of outliers - good and bad - that might currently exist. It enables us to see what might contribute to good welfare, to target and apply interventions and to see if those interventions are effective.

Training staff to utilise welfare tools can bring a heightened awareness of what constitutes good welfare and the ability to spot poor welfare outcomes.

- 10.** Tasracing commits to developing a central data base to upload and store information collected at all stages of racing's greyhound and horse lives to then understand any welfare concerns and make meaningful decisions on those concerns.

There is continuous research internationally in both horses and greyhounds to objectively measure their welfare status.

For racehorses, a UK Racing Foundation initiative has funded Bristol University's equine welfare team, led by Professor Siobhan Mullan, to develop an equine welfare assessment tool. Subsequently Hong Kong Jockey Club has financed a research project "The development and validation of novel behavioural assessment methods for equine welfare" with Dr Catherine Dwyer and her team at The University of Edinburgh.

For greyhounds, the GBGB has partnered with Professor Sarah Wolfensohn and her team at Surrey University and commissioned the development of a greyhound-specific animal welfare assessment grid (AWAG). The AWAG is expected to be easy to use and measures an animal's level of welfare in physical and physiological domains over time. It is proposed AWAG will enhance greyhound welfare by enabling users to identify changes more readily in an animal's welfare status, understand negative and positive welfare impacts and adapt practice according, to 'deliver good' lives for greyhounds

These assessment tools endeavour to extend beyond the initial four pillars of the five Domains to include behavioural assessment and human interaction tests, which give insight into circumstances that provide better life experiences and therefore better life outcomes for all racing animals.

Once certified, the assessment grid/tool and the training of its application would become integral in the CPD educational programmes for regulatory staff. This would include stewards and welfare teams to be used in premises inspections at stables and kennels, veterinary teams, and race-day staff.

Educational programmes incorporating CPD can also be established for breeders, trainers, rehoming retraining establishments to allow the recognition and development of self-assessing welfare practices.

- 11.** Tasracing investigates and partners with other jurisdictions and research groups looking to develop systematic, objective, and replicable methods of measuring welfare in kennels and stables such as those outlined above.

## **Collaboration**

- 12.** Tasracing to collaborate with Australian PRAs, international regulatory bodies, research establishments and private business to investigate and progress solutions for many of the welfare-related concerns that racing jurisdictions face. This collaboration to fast-track opportunities and minimise time to application of welfare programs and protocols. This collaboration includes looking at novel ways to collect location and traceability information without significantly increasing workloads.

Consideration would include:

Racing Victoria's Off the Track program has numerous successful funding and grant initiatives to support retraining and rehoming of thoroughbreds. Several of these initiatives would be relevant for Tasracing to consider.

GHRNSW's whole-of-life monitoring and tracking programme to regulate, track issues and report on the welfare of greyhounds registered in NSW. GBGB have developed a similar notification app.

NZTR is monitoring race-day fatalities. These are recorded after each race meeting and include all fatalities since 2019/20. Race-day entry is via an app to database. Inconsistencies in the completeness of the vet data entry are monitored and inconsistencies followed up. The data is made available to Massey University for epidemiological research. Operational reporting from the database for more timely review of data is a necessary enhancement.

Both OTT- and GAP-like programmes exist in all racing authorities. Collaboration on procedures and protocols with these groups will highlight possible best practice outcomes and further develop Tasracing's endeavours to support these outcomes.

GBGB and BHA have developed mobile phone or tablet-based apps for stewards and veterinary surgeons to record injuries and incidents on race days.

## **Evidence and the need for research**

Research and data have informed and shaped assumptions which in turn have influenced policies and procedures. Tracking the changes in data over time allows us to measure the

soundness of our assumptions. Examples include initiatives to reduce race day injury and fatalities in US racing, led by the Dean at Bristol University, Professor Tim Parkin. Research into developing objective welfare measuring standards in racehorses and greyhounds led by Professor Siobhan Mullan, Professor Sarah Wolfensohn, and Dr Catherine Dwyer. Dr Deborah Guest at the University of London Royal Veterinary College is undertaking research to understand the genetic basis for inherited diseases focusing on catastrophic bone fractures in thoroughbred horses. The Stridesafe research being undertaken by Tasracing, Melbourne University and Dr Scott Palmer at New York state are all excellent examples of how past and current research is continually having an impact on welfare decisions and standards.

- Tasracing veterinary and welfare staff need to be cognisant of ongoing research and have the opportunity to review and instigate relevant projects.
- Ensure Tasracing is tuned in to latest research into welfare and seeks opportunities to collaborate or instigate its own projects.

### **Education and Professional Development Programmes**

Welfare of all racing animals is the moral responsibility of everyone involved. Training programmes and educational opportunities for all participants are vital in delivering a wide range of welfare-related recommendations.

- 13.** Tasracing to provide and help access comprehensive training and knowledge sharing programmes for all stakeholders, providing those working within the sport access to a library of up-to-date, innovative research on best practice. This can be coordinated with other organisations such as RMTTC in the USA, GBGB in UK, IGSRV and ARVS in UK.

For trainers, stable staff and kennel assistants, practical CPD agendas delivered with external experts in veterinary medicine, research and industry.

For Veterinary Surgeons, training on pre-race assessments, trackside first aid, stabilisation and referral transportation. External CPD refresher courses targeted at Regulatory Veterinary roles.

For Stewards, build on existing training programs with additional emphasis on welfare related subjects and implementation including welfare assessment Tool/Grid training and how to evaluate those tools.

For Owners and Breeders, develop communications outlining moral and legal responsibilities associated with welfare. Develop in collaboration with external experts, continuous welfare focused knowledge sharing programmes.



For Owners of Retired Racing Animals, develop additional resources to add to the current new owners' packs, including information on behaviour, care, nutrition, sources of support and further information. Incentivise new owners of retrained horses or greyhounds to remain attached to the retraining rehoming programmes by having social media contacts, webinars and seminars so that they have a source of information to assist them in maintaining and growing the relationship with their newly acquired horse or greyhound.

14. Tasracing to consider attendance and completion of these CPD courses as a prerequisite for application to hold and renew Tasracing accreditation and licencing.



## Greyhounds

GBGB have published a comprehensive code of practice, bringing together best practice in greyhound care from across the sport. The code covers all aspects of caring for a greyhound's mental and physical health and includes recommendations on the construction, maintenance, and management of kennels, as well as guidelines on environmental enrichment, exercise, nutrition, and dental care. It is being produced in consultation with trainers, veterinary professions, and animal welfare charities.

15. Tasracing to review the GBGB code of practice and implement where appropriate.

## Puppies until racing phase

GBGB stewards conduct a minimum of two unannounced visits to residential greyhound kennels every year. Additionally, they are externally audited, and the outcome of these inspections are used to inform decisions around licencing. As mentioned under the educational and development section above, GBGB also publish a comprehensive code of practise bringing together best practise in greyhound care from across the sport.

- 16.** Tasracing to develop protocols for systemised, recorded inspections of breeding and rearing premises by stewards and welfare officers. These inspections would look at the infrastructure and husbandry practices but also include welfare assessment aids. Ongoing training and support for both the stewarding and welfare officers to be provided to ensure an understanding and ability to communicate appropriate considerations of welfare. Systemised regular visits will support the industry in demonstrating transparent measurable welfare standards.
- 17.** Tasracing to engage with both breeders and owners to provide educational information on rearing practices, nutrition, infectious diseases, parasites, and preventative health care. This ongoing educational information would also include behavioural training advice, highlighting best practises for socialising, handling, and rearing of racing greyhounds.

Collection of data on whereabouts at this age is imperative for the industry in understanding the reasons for pups who never race and provide transparent information on their outcomes or whereabouts. There are several digital systems available which can be used by the stewarding /welfare staff to collect whereabouts information through microchips or ear tags numbers.

- 18.** Tasracing to explore location information and identification collection systems, suitable for incorporating into kennel inspections. Tasracing consult with breeders and owners regarding a bond collection per puppy at the point of registration. The bond could be matched with funding from Tasracing and dedicated to cover costs associated with kennelling, feeding, and caring, support and encourage trainers to utilise behavioural and training techniques during the 28 day stand-down period, before these dogs enter the GAP system or are privately rehomed by the trainer.
- 19.** Tasracing to consider collecting a bond per dog permanently imported from mainland Australia or internationally for racing or breeding. This bond to be used for post-racing retirement education and retraining costs as noted above.
- 20.** Tasracing to develop and publicise an appropriate euthanasia policy and protocol for the greyhound industry, utilising breeders, rearing farm operators, owners, trainers and their veterinarians' opinions and expertise.



### Racing Phase.

Recommendations in this life span include

- 21.** Tasracing develops protocols and policies for systematic kennel inspections and recordings of findings by stewards, welfare officers and veterinary staff. Assessments to include using a welfare assessment protocol or tool to be able to monitor training premises consistently and systematically.
- 22.** Tasracing to develop an educational programme for trainers to involve both online and organised seminars outlining nutritional, infectious disease, injury identification and prevention, physiotherapy, medications, behavioural inputs. Ongoing educational information would also include behavioural training advice, highlighting best practises for socialising, handling, and training of racing greyhounds. Annual licence renewal would be associated with these educational endeavours.
- 23.** Tasracing to review the current emergency ambulance at each greyhound racetrack. Seek input from trainers, veterinarians, and stewards to design and deliver a safe stable recovery vehicle, suitable for returning injured animals to the race day veterinary team for assessment, treatment, and referral where necessary.
- 24.** Tasracing to develop with race day veterinary staff an injury-recovery protocol including appropriate stabilisation, immediate standardised analgesia, and appropriate aftercare analgesia.

25. Tasracing to consider retaining an emergency veterinary establishment in Hobart and in Launceston to accept out-of-hours greyhounds suffering major race-day injuries. A protocol for a rapid admission process to these facilities must also be developed.
26. In consultation with racetrack veterinarians, Tasracing to develop a euthanasia policy and protocol for on-track, race-day assessment of significant injuries for euthanasia.
27. Tasracing to develop a protocol to follow up dogs who sustain a serious race-day or trial injury and determine the prognosis 48 hours post-race. This information to be updated into the stewards' race-day information programme.
28. Tasracing to investigate web-based phone and tablet mobile software programmes for the collection of race-day injuries, inspections, and treatments. These are to be used by racing stewards and racing veterinarians. The information and data to be automatically uploaded to the Tasracing central data system.
29. Tasracing to investigate web-based digital medication recording programs for trainers and veterinarians and to provide support for these programs.
30. Tasracing to consider the compulsory attendance of a veterinary surgeon at all public trials.
31. Tasracing to review current transport recommendations including the number of dogs safely transported in trailers. Instigate inspections on race and trial days and ensure trainers comply with the recommendations of that review.
32. Tasracing to review and instigate an extreme weather policy for transportation and kennelling on race days and to include this recommendation into annual racing kennel inspections.
33. Tasracing to prohibit the export of any greyhound for racing or breeding to another international jurisdiction that does not uphold the same welfare standards and accountability as are expected in Australia.
  
34. Tasracing to develop a 24-hour welfare hotline for members of the public to report concerns regarding the welfare of registered racing greyhounds anonymously. Tasracing to be responsible for investigating alleged incidents.
35. Tasracing to commit funds and develop a **vulnerable dog scheme** to be used exclusively for veterinary treatment, recuperation, boarding and feeding of any racing or retired greyhound found in a neglected condition or with welfare concerns that require immediate intervention and support from the industry.
36. Tasracing to develop mentoring, support, and educational programmes for race-day veterinarians to develop the required veterinary skill sets applicable to racing greyhounds and conflict resolution training.
37. Tasracing to investigate and collaborate with research institutes on the development of a data base predictive model related to fractures and injuries and their severity. Investigating any association with number of runs, last run, age, trainers kennel data,

prior performance, track, draw, previous injuries, medication, stewarding kennel inspections information.

Most PRAs including Tasracing have a greyhound injury rebate programme which supports a greyhound that sustains a major injury on track and involves a financial contribution to the trainer and owner for the costs of veterinary treatment. Once recovered their dogs are available for rehoming.

In August 2019, in Western Australia the Greyhound Injury Full Recovery Scheme was introduced, where a trainer/owner may transfer custody of a greyhound to RWWA in the event of a severe injury and the cost of both veterinary treatment and post-operative care is paid through greyhound racing funding. Once recovered, the greyhound is rehomed through RWWA's Greyhounds as Pets (GAP) program.

- 38.** Tasracing to consider extending its current injury support program to provide the option of ownership transfer and full support for serious injuries like RWWA.



#### **Retirement and breeding phase.**

Greyhound owners and trainers have a duty to arrange homing of their greyhounds upon retirement or if they never race. Tasracing shares that responsibility for homing and facilitates appropriate homing process through its GAP system.

**GAP.** The Tasmanian greyhound adoption programme GAP has purchased a previously run boarding kennel premises which has 27 kennels and is to be expanded and developed over the next 18 months.

- 39.** A recommendation is that these facilities are developed to the highest possible standard. As the public image of the Tasmanian greyhound rehoming industry, anything less than ideal facilities will attract criticism from both industry stakeholders as well as potential rehoming clients. I understand that there is a redevelopment for these facilities planned imminently. An immediate review to ensure that they not only meet acceptable standards but also exceed those standards for short-term and long-term greyhound accommodation is essential.

The facility has employed a behavioural trainer and has three full-time kennel attendants, as well as a full-time manager. The future facility is to house upwards of 50 greyhounds at a single time to be assessed and undergo behavioural retraining. Presently there is a significant waiting period before vacancies occur at GAP to assess recently retired dogs.

- 40.** Tasracing to consider a second behavioralist, as well as increased kennel staff to be employed, so that there is a smooth efficient transition of dogs through the facility without developing an extended waiting period for greyhounds to enter and exceptional daily care is provided.
- 41.** Tasracing develops and supports an educational programme for GAP kennel staff emphasising greyhound health, nutrition, disease prevention, handling techniques and appropriate behavioural training. This will provide additional support to the behavioralists, resulting in likely shorter periods of time dogs are held at the GAP facility before they are rehomed. The educational programme once established can be extended to any registered kennel staff in private facilities.

All greyhounds have a mandatory 28 day stand down post-racing, before they enter a rehoming programme. This 28 day period has a cost to the owner/trainer that may result in a welfare challenge if not provided for appropriately. It also represents an opportunity to commence pre rehoming behavioural modification training.

- 42.** Tasracing to use funding from the proposed puppy registration bond or provide independent funding to supplement trainers to cover this 28-day interim standdown period. Eligibility for funding would be linked to completion of Tasracing-supported professional development programmes. Additional educational information and support systems for appropriate training prior to dogs entering a GAP retirement scheme would be available.

As part of Racing Queensland's commitment to implement strategies that demonstrate best practice in animal welfare, RQ has introduced the Greyhound Retirement Readiness Scheme. The scheme provides a capped amount of reimbursement, up to \$800 per

greyhound, towards the cost of desexing, dental treatment, vaccination and pre-anaesthetic blood tests for greyhounds that have been retired as pets. Tasracing presently has an initiative to cover compulsory desexing for retired greyhounds. This should also include:

- 43.** Tasracing to investigate options to extend this initiative to fund a Readiness Scheme similar to Racing Queensland's for retired greyhounds prior to being rehomed.
- 44.** Tasracing to engage with alternative homing schemes such as RSPCA, GREYT, Lost Dogs Home, to explore opportunities to include them in a network of approved homing partners or foster homing scheme. This would involve Tasracing ensuring these rehoming partners meet specific requirements in the following areas:
  - a. homing policy,
  - b. euthanasia and returns policy,
  - c. sharing of traceability information,
  - d. kennel environment,
  - e. daily exercise routine,
  - f. environmental enrichment practises,
  - g. nutritional support, and
  - h. access to behavioural assessment and retraining expertise.

Correct identification of behaviour traits and appropriate behavioural modification training is linked to the duration of stay in rehoming kennels. The GHRNSW-run GAP programme has a behavioural test which is an assessment of the dog's behaviour allowing them to be categorised as 'easy to rehome' or 'more difficult to rehome.'

The emotional welfare assessment test gives an indication of the pathways for which a greyhound could be rehomed in a successful long-term appropriate outcome. Tasracing's GAP program uses similar behavioural assessment. However, like the horse racing industry, most rehoming occurs privately, directly from trainers to other greyhound industry participants or new owners. These rehomed dogs may not have recognised behavioural training before they are rehomed but rely on the intimate knowledge and experience of the trainer to assess their dogs and place them into appropriate outcomes. GHRNSW uses regional greyhound trainers in a regional programme that allows a closer association between the original trainer and the potential new owner and is supported by GHRNSW. It allows feedback between the trainer and the public, and it provides the trainer opportunity to have closer input into his dogs with their new owners.

- 45.** Tasracing to explore options of developing regional retraining programmes involving trainers and supporting that with behavioural educational training and centralised administration within Tasracing.

- 46.** Tasracing to ensure that the new owners of retired greyhounds be provided with a welcome pack, available from all approved rehoming centres. The pack to include information on legal and moral responsibilities of ownership, health care and behavioural needs, and sources of support for information.
- 47.** Tasracing to explore staffing resources to increase social media awareness, community involvement, information and advertising of rehomed retired greyhounds including contacts for advice on behavioural and health concerns. Additional responsibilities to include developing and maintaining a social media community of retired greyhounds' owners, increasing exposure, and highlighting the benefit of adopting a Tasracing retired greyhound.
- 48.** Tasracing to develop an accurate and up-to-date location record system for all greyhounds at the point of rehoming and provide new owners with the opportunity to continue to maintain that information on the central data base through mobile touchpoint technology. Tasracing to administer and review whereabouts information on all rehomed greyhounds.
- 49.** Tasracing to work with behavioural experts and charity partners to establish an assessment protocol in relation to dogs and horses who are deemed unsuitable for safe rehoming.





## **Racehorses.**

This section is valid for both Trotting/Pacing and Thoroughbred breeds,

### **Foals/Yearlings up until entering a licenced training premises.**

- 50.** Tasracing to develop touchpoints to collect consistent up to date whereabouts information on foals and yearlings up to entering a licenced training premises, pretraining facility or bloodstock sale.
- 51.** Tasracing to consult with owners and breeders to establish a recommended protocol for notification and outcome location for all brood mares retiring from the breeding herd. This information to be gathered through touchpoints and uploaded to the Tasracing central data base.

### **Racing Phase.**

- 52.** Tasracing to review protocols and policies for systematic stable inspections and recordings of findings by stewards, welfare officers and veterinary staff. Assessments to include using a welfare assessment protocol or tool to be able to monitor racing premises consistently and systematically.

Education is a critical element of welfare at all stages in a racehorse's life and quality practices at the start of a horse's racing journey can assist in its whole-of-life welfare, including breaking-in and training of horses. This educational process should be completed with a second career in mind, including equestrian and pleasure riding components with trails, jumps, dressage, and sports arenas being made available. Racing Victoria have developed a digital platform and all licensed participants are required to take an online welfare course as part of their licensing renewal process.

- 53.** Tasracing to develop an educational programme for trainers to involve both online and organised seminars outlining nutritional, infectious disease, injury identification and prevention, and medications. Ongoing educational information would also include behavioural training advice, highlighting best practises for socialising, handling, and training racehorses preparing them for post-racing careers. Tasracing to investigate providing facilities at their training centres to encourage these retraining-focused activities.

Veterinary associations such as EVA provide CPD programmes for equine veterinarians. However, the content is routinely not targeted for regulatory veterinary work.

Organisations such as the UK Association for Racecourse Veterinary Surgeons, (ARVS), the USA Racing Medication Testing Consortium, (RMTC), and the International Group of Specialist Regulatory Veterinarians (IGSRV), all provide frequent in-person and remote training modules for regulatory specific veterinary surgeons.

- 54.** Tasracing to fund and partner with other organisations, CPD programmes and training for Tasracing racetrack veterinarians and ancillary staff.
- 55.** Tasracing to review, update and implement current policies and protocols for horses diagnosed with post-race cardiac dysrhythmias; horses returning to race after more than 12 months, and horses reported to have suffered a major injury or undergone surgery.
- 56.** Tasracing to develop a protocol for follow-up of racehorses who sustain a serious race-day injury or incident, including arrhythmias and bleeders and determine the prognosis 48 hours post-race. This information to be updated into the stewards' race day information programme and central data base.
- 57.** In consultation with racetrack veterinarians, Tasracing to develop a euthanasia policy and protocol for on track, race day assessment of significant injuries for euthanasia.
- 58.** Tasracing to develop with race-day veterinary staff an injury-recovery protocol including appropriate stabilisation, immediate standardised analgesia, and appropriate aftercare analgesia.
- 59.** Tasracing to review and instigate an extreme weather policy for transportation to and from, including race-day racecourse facilities, to ensure optimum welfare of the racehorse. Protocols should cover:
  - a. provision of Wet Bulb Thermometer, its use and readings,
  - b. adequate provisions/access to cold running water,
  - c. additional reserves of icy water,
  - d. cooling fans and ice,
  - e. plus extra race day staff to assist in cooling facilities
- 60.** Tasracing to instigate yearly welfare racecourse inspections. Inspections would include Racing Club staff, racetrack staff, veterinary staff, stewards and Tasracing racecourse personnel. Inspections to include not only infrastructure and track details but, also welfare-related scenario training for accidents, incidents and fatalities that can occur on race days. These would include location and manning of screens, protocols for catastrophic breakdowns and fatalities in different areas of the course. Provisions and activation of extreme weather protocols. The BHA has a similar programme which has received positive feedback from race clubs and stakeholders resulting in improved decision making and welfare outcomes on race days.

As a major welfare initiative, The Racecourse Association in the UK along with the UK Racing Foundation have funded and supported the development and production of a Fracture Support Kit for use on race days to stabilise and support horses that have suffered a major musculoskeletal injury of the distal limb to allow transportation and assessment.

<https://trainermagazine.com/european-trainer-articles/racecourse-fracture-support-system/2022/3/30>

- 61.** Tasracing to investigate the purchase of Fracture Support Kits, sufficient to be available at all racecourses during racing and trial days.
- 62.** Tasracing to develop a race day catastrophic injury and/or fatality protocol. Protocol to include compulsory antidoping sampling, post-mortem at a dedicated pathology facility. Included in this policy would be the formation of a Fatality Summary Committee to meet monthly and review fatality reports, information and data including track conditions, trainer, and jockey reports. The committee is to make recommendations resulting from investigative findings.

Several stakeholders raised the issue that the Tasracing harness racing calendar provided opportunities for horses to race on consecutive days or have two to three race starts in a ten-day period. With the stress of racing, travel time and being cross-tied for the duration of the meeting, there was a perception of challenging welfare conditions for these horses if they had short intervals between race days.

- 63.** Tasracing to review data on frequency of race day starts with the option to include a minimum standdown period between racing, especially for Harness Racing.
- 64.** Tasracing to consider a requirement for prerace examinations by Tasracing veterinary surgeons on horses who have multiple starts in rapid succession and/or total number of career race-day starts and formulate a welfare policy on the evidence from data collected.

For example, HRNSW have a protocol in place for horses with 200 or more race day starts which involves an examination prior to each race start.

- 65.** Tasracing to investigate web-based phone or tablet mobile software programmes for the collection of race-day injuries, inspections, and treatments. These are to be used by both racing stewards and racing veterinarians. The information and data from this system is automatically uploaded to the Tasracing central data system. The BHA and GBGB have both developed suitable software programmes.



## The Whip

The Whip as a welfare concern in thoroughbred racing.

The conundrum is to decide whether the use of the whip in racing is a welfare concern for horses or is the use of the whip in racing a public perception issue only. There is no clear scientific research that indicates under the currently approved whip design used in most jurisdictions, that definitively proves that the whip, when used appropriately within those rules, causes pain or suffering to the horse.

If we are to accept the point of view that the use of the whip under any circumstances produces pain or distress to the horse, then the result should be, that the use of the whip, except for safety reasons (for horse and rider) should be eliminated.

If we are to accept the point of view that under its current design and appropriate use, the whip does not compromise the welfare of the horse its continued use should be permitted (acknowledging the public perception that its use under certain circumstances may challenge that perception to welfare.

There are numerous different rules and regulations internationally on the use of the whip. The British Horse Racing Authority (BHA) are currently holding a consultative review of the use of the whip in racing thoroughbreds in Great Britain. This review was published on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022. [https://www.britishhorseracing.com/press\\_releases/improving-standards-and-enhanced-deterrents-at-the-heart-of-20-recommendations-published-as-part-of-british-horseracings-whip-report/](https://www.britishhorseracing.com/press_releases/improving-standards-and-enhanced-deterrents-at-the-heart-of-20-recommendations-published-as-part-of-british-horseracings-whip-report/) The HBA originally completed a whip review in 2011.

Current UK whip recommendations state that the whip can only be used seven (7) times in flat racing and eight (8) times in jumps racing. After the use of the whip, the horse must be given sufficient time to respond before it can be struck again. I.e., there is no striking with

consecutive strides. The whip is not to be used when the horse is out of contention. The whip is not to be used and delivered from above shoulder height. The contact area must be on the hindquarters or on the forward shoulder when the whip is held in a back hand position.

In France, the rules are similar to those in Great Britain, but allow an upper limit of five strikes per race.

In the Scandinavian countries the whip can be carried but must not be used unless it is to correct a horse's action and for safety only.

The Australian Racing Rules requirements for whip use include:

- prior to the 100-metre mark in a race, the whip must not be used in consecutive strides
- the whip must not be used on more than five occasions
- in the final hundred metres the race a rider may use the whip at the rider's discretion and may use it in consecutive strides.

Tasmanian racing as a principal racing authority under Racing Australia's rules are bound by that those rules.

- 66.** A recommendation that Tasracing supports a review of the use of the whip in horse racing, takes that recommendation to other PRAs for consultation and actively encourages Racing Australia to progress such a review.
- 67.** A recommendation that Tasracing in consultation with jockeys, trainers and other stakeholders explores programming a trial racing series that has modified conditions for permitted whip use, examines the outcomes of that series regarding jockey and horse safety and welfare, public perception and wagering factors.

### **Stridemaster/Stridesafe**

Tasracing is to trial an Australian-first thoroughbred welfare initiative, developed from the Stridemaster technology. Stridesafe is a software product that maps a thoroughbred's racing biometrics whilst racing or working at speed. The software modelling and the technology used in the trial has the potential to identify horses at higher risk of developing a potential catastrophic musculoskeletal injury. This identification can precede any outward observable change in the horse's gait or action. An outcome of this trial which may have significant impact on equine welfare, is earlier detection and avoidance of unexplained catastrophic injuries. It will also enable trainers to use collected information to make interventions in training and racing programmes.

If the data from this trial, along with a similar simultaneous trial in the USA, can accurately identify pre-catastrophic injury in thoroughbred horses then:

- 68.** Tasracing in consultation with trainers should explore expanding the use of Stridesafe devices and technology. This expansion to include initially training centres and then trainers' yards to identify at-risk horses more accurately during training, allowing training modifications or veterinary diagnostic imaging to avoid major injuries.
- 69.** Tasracing to collaborate utilising the expertise of Prof Chris Whitton and his equine research team at Melbourne University who are involved in research on musculoskeletal injuries incorporating Stridemaster/Stridesafe technology, to assist and validate research results. Develop a systematic protocol for horses identified as higher risk of injury by the software.



### **Retirement, Breeding and Rehoming Phase**

In this phase, there is a requirement to establish clear pathways for horses exiting racing or breeding. The challenge is to not only aid owners and trainers who find it difficult to place their retiring horses, but also support this transition into retirement, rehoming and retraining for all horses leaving racing.

There are programmes internationally and in mainland PRAs similar to Tasracing's OTT. The International Forum for Aftercare Racehorses (IFAR) was established in 2016 to address and develop dialogue on this challenge internationally. The UK charity, Retraining of Racehorses, (ROR), was established in 2000 and is dedicated to that same outcome.

According to Racing Australia's annual report of 2019 -2020, just 2% of horses retiring from racing exit into a programme run by a racing authority. The challenge is to have more retired racehorses moving through sponsored OTT like programs, providing long-term appropriate

homing outcomes and subsequently increased opportunities to collect location and wellbeing data.

Although Tasracing's OTT program is well-established, it is unlikely it can deliver an assessment and retraining service to most racehorses leaving racing in Tasmania given in its present form and funding level.

The industry is challenged and measured on several issues and the successful outcomes for those issues. These include:

- To assess and safely rehome retired racehorses in a timely manner
- To continue to grow the equestrian public's demand for these breeds for leisure activities
- To demonstrate and celebrate the lives of retrained racehorses and follow their careers for as long as possible
- To avoid vulnerable welfare outcomes and demonstrate transparent, appropriate end of life decision making and outcomes

To successfully accomplish these goals the racing industry needs to have information on the whereabouts and outcomes for retired racehorses. At present there is no data base for aftercare.

With Racing Australia, the SNS system is the major database for change of location and traceability in which breeders, owners, trainers enter all their information. The SNS data system does not allow for non-industry participants to be able to validate location of rehomed horses to the central database. The TAWWG report notes that Racing Victoria has developed its own off-the-track post-racing database in collaboration with Equestrian Victoria. This allows retired racehorses to be registered and traced through equestrian careers.

- 70.** Tasracing to develop a centralised data base and incentivise trainers, rehoming/retraining centres and new owners to utilise opportunities to maintain whereabouts information from touch point collection opportunities (See previous discussion on database). This would include an area for non-industry participants to upload information.

Across the racing industry there is a vast network of people involved in retraining and rehoming horses that have retired from racing or breeding or that might never have made it to the racetrack. Most of these participants operate through informal networks to provide new opportunities for horses. Additionally, there is an increasing number of dedicated professional and semi-professional retrainers, some of whom are now receiving support, assistance, and funding from racing industries through the PRAs owners and trainers. Supporting and assisting

these dedicated people is further improving the quality of retraining programmes and the success of rehoming.

The list of recommendations below is not exhaustive and many of the initiatives are presently in operation or planning by other jurisdictions. Therefore, it is prudent for Tasracing to utilise its welfare staff and explore with other jurisdictions to get a more thorough understanding of successful and more challenging proposals in this area:

- 71.** Tasracing to recruit and assist into the OTT program additional retraining professionals (OTT Coaches), to support and recognise a higher percentage of racehorses retiring from racing or breeding.
- 72.** Tasracing to engage with registered trainers to communicate and encourage them to commence a dialogue, utilise the services and provide access to OTT staff for early assessment and options for retiring horses.
- 73.** Tasracing to promote selected OTT coaches and retrainers to assess retiring racehorses for suitability for retraining at either the trainers' stables or dedicated OTT premises.
- 74.** Tasracing to collect information and manage and collate data from trainers on horses about to retire and provide administrative functions to support OTT goals.
- 75.** Tasracing to review its OTT coaching voucher system and incentivise new owners to complete that training programme in a fixed period.
- 76.** Tasracing to investigate an Equine Care Subsidy, to provide funding to OTT acknowledged retrainers to cover initial farrier, vaccination, dental procedures and link that funding to successful rehoming outcomes.





NZTR have developed a Prison Pilot and horse therapy programme. This follows overseas models that provide inmates or youth offenders with work skills and provides opportunity to better develop empathy skills or gain other wellbeing effects from working with horses.

- 77. Tasracing to explore opportunities to utilise OTT horses in therapy programmes such as prison, disability schemes and post traumatic recovery programmes.

Tasracing to explore staffing resources to maintain social media presence, community involvement, information, sponsorship, event coordination and advertising of rehomed retired racehorses from both Off the Track program and privately rehomed.

- 78. Tasracing to develop a 24-hour welfare hotline for members of the public to report concerns regarding the welfare of racehorses anonymously. Tasracing to be responsible for investigating alleged incidents.

- 79. Tasracing to commit funds and develop a **vulnerable racehorse scheme** which would be used exclusively for veterinary treatment, recuperation, stabling, agistment and

care of any racing or retired racehorse found in neglected condition or with welfare concerns that require immediate intervention and support.

80. Tasracing to consider the establishment of a funded retirement property for standardbred and thoroughbred horses. Racing NSW has purchased several properties for this use over the last five years and RWWA have a small property. Tasracing will need to establish if this option for retirement is the most appropriate and economical use of funds and resources compared to other welfare initiatives in this sector. The goal should be to provide the best long-term outcome for these horses in their new vocation and whether this is achievable with an industry sponsored retirement property.



#### **Euthanasia policy.**

Several racing jurisdictions have excellent guidelines and protocols for appropriate euthanasia outcomes for all ages of racehorses.

The Horse Welfare Board in the UK has clear guidelines and decision tree to assist owners and veterinarians.

[http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/EUTHANASIA\\_GUIDELINES.pdf](http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/EUTHANASIA_GUIDELINES.pdf)

[http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/DECISION\\_TREE.pdf](http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/DECISION_TREE.pdf)

- 81.** Tasracing to review current euthanasia guidelines for racehorses and develop a systematic practical protocol for decision making and implementation.

There is a public and environmental concern associated with appropriate euthanasia of racehorses that may result in a compromised welfare outcome. Ideally, euthanasia occurs in a quiet, familiar setting and is performed by a registered veterinary surgeon. If this is not possible, it should be performed by a person experienced in the procedure, competent in the method used and licensed where appropriate. Disposal of the carcass by landfill or removal to a knackery are the options and have different associated costs for the owner. In NSW, racing rules provide that a horse must not be directly or indirectly sent to an abattoir, knackery or similarly disposed of.

Racing Victoria has developed an Onsite Humane Euthanasia Program that includes options for disposal.

<https://www.racingvictoria.com.au/the-horse/equine-welfare/-/media/5087b91671fb41a59b2eb7eaa80f45f2.ashx>

The UK has a government supported Fallen Stock policy for the disposal of livestock including racehorses to avoid environmental contamination from the carcass.

- 82.** Tasracing to investigate developing a sponsored scheme for disposal of racehorses and greyhounds where burial is not an option for the owner.
- 83.** Tasracing to explore and implement a MOU with all registered knackeries, requesting identification data on thoroughbreds and standardbreds sent for slaughter. Training and educational material on appropriate husbandry and handling practices for horses pre-slaughter including the Tasracing Euthanasia Policy and Protocol would be shared through Tasracing.

### **Summary.**

I recognise that the recommendations are numerous. There are some that can be implemented quickly, simply and economically. There are others that will require far more time, cost and effort. The recommendations are also an opportunity to consider and engage with industry stakeholders and the public. This consultative process will reflect Tasracing's meaningful commitment to prioritise and implement a significant welfare strategy.

If the issues of professional retention, training and data are addressed then the strategy will have demonstrable, continuing beneficial effects on the welfare of racing greyhounds, standardbreds and thoroughbreds in Tasmania.

## **Appendix: List of recommendations**

1. I recommend that Tasracing and ORI review their recruiting process, staff levels, structure, and communication processes to achieve complete ownership of the welfare strategy across both organisations. There is historical evidence that both organisations have had difficulty in attracting, recruiting, and maintaining appropriately qualified professionals in the welfare sphere. I will leave it to the Tasracing board, government, and stakeholders to discuss the possible structure and location of the welfare related decision-making staff at ORI and Tasracing. Presently however, because of both the geographic, administrative, and structural isolation for welfare reporting, any successful implementation of the welfare considerations I may recommend will be difficult. A major reorganisation is required.
2. I recommend that Tasracing investigates novel ways to alleviate the issues if current experienced veterinarians retire from race-day and regulatory work. One option would be for race-day regulatory work to be done by veterinary surgeons who are employed by Tasracing, trained, and working as regulatory veterinarians, and are not employed directly by the racing clubs. This option involves offering full-time employment to those who request it, as well as part-time and flexible contract work to cover all race-day requirements, non-race-day activities, as well as potential project development work, support for OTT and GAP. This would allow for a larger, more flexible pool of Tasracing-employed veterinary surgeons, resulting in improved consistency, and implementation of welfare strategies and projects being undertaken.
3. Tasracing to review and develop a Centralised Data Base for welfare and integrity information. The data base to interface with the National Authorities present data bases for continuity.
4. Tasracing to explore technology to collect and upload welfare and other information into a central data base.
5. Tasracing to consider rebranding to emphasise equine and greyhound welfare in any mission statement on corporate and media material to reflect the focus on the welfare initiatives being undertaken. Presently other than OTT and GAP, there is little outward facing material that announces welfare as a major priority.
6. The establishment of an Animal Welfare Board by Tasracing. To include members of Tasracing stewarding teams, veterinary officers, welfare officers, RSPCA, GAP, OTT and other welfare or charity homing groups. This Committee to meet at least twice yearly, to discuss welfare concerns, public input and establish protocols, communication, and sources of continuing education.

7. Tasracing to consider providing microchip scanner or similar technology to relevant stakeholders in the industry. Stakeholders to include rehoming retraining centres, trainers, breeding and rearing farms for greyhounds, equine studs, horse transporters, horse pre-training and breaking-in yards. Other individuals on request. This technology will be used to aid in the collection of movement records; to provide accurate identification data for all racing animals in Tasmania; to be integrated into traceability protocols using innovative technology such as, Equine Register, Equine Medical Records app.
8. Tasracing to explore with Australian and international regulators as well as private companies' technologies for whereabouts or location information data collection at multiple touchpoints during a racing animals' lifetime. Examples to be explored would include.
9. Tasracing to explore available mobile web-based medication record applications with both Australian and international regulators and private company providers. Liaise with trainers, owners, and Tasmanian veterinary surgeons with respect to administration and application.
10. Tasracing commits to developing a central data base to upload and store information collected at all stages of racing's greyhound and horse lives to then understand any
11. Tasracing investigates and partners with other jurisdictions and research groups looking to develop systematic, objective, and replicable methods of measuring welfare in kennels and stables such as those outlined above.
12. Tasracing to collaborate with Australian PRAs, international regulatory bodies, research establishments and private business to investigate and progress solutions for many of the welfare-related concerns that racing jurisdictions face. This collaboration to fast-track opportunities and minimise time to application of welfare programs and protocols. This collaboration includes looking at novel ways to collect location and traceability information without significantly increasing workloads.
13. Tasracing to provide and help access comprehensive training and knowledge sharing programmes for all stakeholders, providing those working within the sport access to a library of up-to-date, innovative research on best practice. This can be coordinated with other organisations such as RMTC in the USA, GBGB in UK, IGSRV and ARVS in UK.
14. Tasracing to consider attendance and completion of these CPD courses as a prerequisite for application to hold and renew Tasracing accreditation and licencing.
15. Tasracing to review the GBGB code of practice and implement where appropriate.

16. Tasracing to develop protocols for systemised, recorded inspections of breeding and rearing premises by stewards and welfare officers. These inspections would look at the infrastructure and husbandry practices but also include welfare assessment aids. Ongoing training and support for both the stewarding and welfare officers to be provided to ensure an understanding and ability to communicate appropriate considerations of welfare. Systemised regular visits will support the industry in demonstrating transparent measurable welfare standards.
17. Tasracing to engage with both breeders and owners to provide educational information on rearing practices, nutrition, infectious diseases, parasites, and preventative health care. This ongoing educational information would also include behavioural training advice, highlighting best practises for socialising, handling, and rearing of racing greyhounds.
18. Tasracing to explore location information and identification collection systems, suitable for incorporating into kennel inspections. Tasracing consult with breeders and owners regarding a bond collection per puppy at the point of registration. The bond could be matched with funding from Tasracing and dedicated to cover costs associated with kennelling, feeding, and caring, support and encourage trainers to utilise behavioural and training techniques during the 28 day stand-down period, before these dogs enter the GAP system or are privately rehomed by the trainer.
19. Tasracing to consider collecting a bond per dog permanently imported from mainland Australia or internationally for racing or breeding. This bond to be used for post-racing retirement education and retraining costs as noted above.
20. Tasracing to develop and publicise an appropriate euthanasia policy and protocol for the greyhound industry, utilising breeders, rearing farm operators, owners, trainers and their veterinarians' opinions and expertise.
21. Tasracing develops protocols and policies for systematic kennel inspections and recordings of findings by stewards, welfare officers and veterinary staff. Assessments to include using a welfare assessment protocol or tool to be able to monitor training premises consistently and systematically.
22. Tasracing to develop an educational programme for trainers to involve both online and organised seminars outlining nutritional, infectious disease, injury identification and prevention, physiotherapy, medications, behavioural inputs. Ongoing educational information would also include behavioural training advice, highlighting best practises for socialising, handling, and training of racing greyhounds. Annual licence renewal would be associated with these educational endeavours.

23. Tasracing to review the current emergency ambulance at each greyhound racetrack. Seek input from trainers, veterinarians, and stewards to design and deliver a safe stable recovery vehicle, suitable for returning injured animals to the race day veterinary team for assessment, treatment, and referral where necessary.
24. Tasracing to develop with race day veterinary staff an injury-recovery protocol including appropriate stabilisation, immediate standardised analgesia, and appropriate aftercare analgesia.
25. Tasracing to consider retaining an emergency veterinary establishment in Hobart and in Launceston to accept out-of-hours greyhounds suffering major race-day injuries. A protocol for a rapid admission process to these facilities must also be developed.
26. In consultation with racetrack veterinarians, Tasracing to develop a euthanasia policy and protocol for on-track, race-day assessment of significant injuries for euthanasia.
27. Tasracing to develop a protocol to follow up dogs who sustain a serious race-day or trial injury and determine the prognosis 48 hours post-race. This information to be updated into the stewards' race-day information programme.
28. Tasracing to investigate web-based phone and tablet mobile software programmes for the collection of race-day injuries, inspections, and treatments. These are to be used by racing stewards and racing veterinarians. The information and data to be automatically uploaded to the Tasracing central data system.
29. Tasracing to investigate web-based digital medication recording programs for trainers and veterinarians and to provide support for these programs.
30. Tasracing to consider the compulsory attendance of a veterinary surgeon at all public trials.
31. Tasracing to review current transport recommendations including the number of dogs safely transported in trailers. Instigate inspections on race and trial days and ensure trainers comply with the recommendations of that review.
32. Tasracing to review and instigate an extreme weather policy for transportation and kennelling on race days and to include this recommendation into annual racing kennel inspections.
33. Tasracing to prohibit the export of any greyhound for racing or breeding to another international jurisdiction that does not uphold the same welfare standards and accountability as are expected in Australia.
34. Tasracing to develop a 24-hour welfare hotline for members of the public to report concerns regarding the welfare of registered racing greyhounds anonymously. Tasracing to be responsible for investigating alleged incidents.

35. Tasracing to commit funds and develop a **vulnerable dog scheme** to be used exclusively for veterinary treatment, recuperation, boarding and feeding of any racing or retired greyhound found in a neglected condition or with welfare concerns that require immediate intervention and support from the industry.
36. Tasracing to develop mentoring, support, and educational programmes for race-day veterinarians to develop the required veterinary skill sets applicable to racing greyhounds and conflict resolution training.
37. Tasracing to investigate and collaborate with research institutes on the development of a data base predictive model related to fractures and injuries and their severity. Investigating any association with number of runs, last run, age, trainers kennel data, prior performance, track, draw, previous injuries, medication, stewarding kennel inspections information.
38. Tasracing to consider extending its current injury support program to provide the option of ownership transfer and full support for serious injuries like RWWA.
39. A recommendation is that these facilities are developed to the highest possible standard. As the public image of the Tasmanian greyhound rehoming industry, anything less than ideal facilities will attract criticism from both industry stakeholders as well as potential rehoming clients. I understand that there is a redevelopment for these facilities planned imminently. An immediate review to ensure that they not only meet acceptable standards but also exceed those standards for short-term and long-term greyhound accommodation is essential.
40. Tasracing to consider a second behavioralist, as well as increased kennel staff to be employed, so that there is a smooth efficient transition of dogs through the facility without developing an extended waiting period for greyhounds to enter and exceptional daily care is provided.
41. Tasracing develops and supports an educational programme for GAP kennel staff emphasising greyhound health, nutrition, disease prevention, handling techniques and appropriate behavioural training. This will provide additional support to the behavioralists, resulting in likely shorter periods of time dogs are held at the GAP facility before they are rehomed. The educational programme once established can be extended to any registered kennel staff in private facilities.
42. Tasracing to use funding from the proposed puppy registration bond or provide independent funding to supplement trainers to cover this 28-day interim standdown period. Eligibility for funding would be linked to completion of Tasracing-supported professional development programmes. Additional educational information and support systems for appropriate training prior to dogs entering a GAP retirement scheme would be available.



43. Tasracing to investigate options to extend this initiative to fund a Readiness Scheme similar to Racing Queensland's for retired greyhounds prior to being rehomed.
44. Tasracing to engage with alternative homing schemes such as RSPCA, GREYT, Lost Dogs Home, to explore opportunities to include them in a network of approved homing partners or foster homing scheme. This would involve Tasracing ensuring these rehoming partners meet specific requirements in the following areas:
45. Tasracing to explore options of developing regional retraining programmes involving trainers and supporting that with behavioural educational training and centralised administration within Tasracing.
46. Tasracing to ensure that the new owners of retired greyhounds be provided with a welcome pack, available from all approved rehoming centres. The pack to include information on legal and moral responsibilities of ownership, health care and behavioural needs, and sources of support for information.
47. Tasracing to explore staffing resources to increase social media awareness, community involvement, information and advertising of rehomed retired greyhounds including contacts for advice on behavioural and health concerns. Additional responsibilities to include developing and maintaining a social media community of retired greyhounds' owners, increasing exposure, and highlighting the benefit of adopting a Tasracing retired greyhound.
48. Tasracing to develop an accurate and up-to-date location record system for all greyhounds at the point of rehoming and provide new owners with the opportunity to continue to maintain that information on the central data base through mobile touchpoint technology. Tasracing to administer and review whereabouts information on all rehomed greyhounds.
49. Tasracing to work with behavioural experts and charity partners to establish an assessment protocol in relation to dogs and horses who are deemed unsuitable for safe rehoming.
50. Tasracing to develop touchpoints to collect consistent up to date whereabouts information on foals and yearlings up to entering a licenced training premises, pretraining facility or bloodstock sale.
51. Tasracing to consult with owners and breeders to establish a recommended protocol for notification and outcome location for all brood mares retiring from the breeding herd. This information to be gathered through touchpoints and uploaded to the Tasracing central data base.
52. Tasracing to review protocols and policies for systematic stable inspections and recordings of findings by stewards, welfare officers and veterinary staff. Assessments to include using a welfare assessment protocol or tool to be able to monitor racing premises consistently and systematically.

53. Tasracing to develop an educational programme for trainers to involve both online and organised seminars outlining nutritional, infectious disease, injury identification and prevention, and medications. Ongoing educational information would also include behavioural training advice, highlighting best practises for socialising, handling, and training racehorses preparing them for post-racing careers. Tasracing to investigate providing facilities at their training centres to encourage these retraining-focused activities.
54. Tasracing to fund and partner with other organisations, CPD programmes and training for Tasracing racetrack veterinarians and ancillary staff.
55. Tasracing to review, update and implement current policies and protocols for horses diagnosed with post-race cardiac dysrhythmias; horses returning to race after more than 12 months, and horses reported to have suffered a major injury or undergone surgery.
56. Tasracing to develop a protocol for follow-up of racehorses who sustain a serious race-day injury or incident, including arrhythmias and bleeders and determine the prognosis 48 hours post-race. This information to be updated into the stewards' race day information programme and central data base.
57. In consultation with racetrack veterinarians, Tasracing to develop a euthanasia policy and protocol for on track, race day assessment of significant injuries for euthanasia.
58. Tasracing to develop with race-day veterinary staff an injury-recovery protocol including appropriate stabilisation, immediate standardised analgesia, and appropriate aftercare analgesia.
59. Tasracing to review and instigate an extreme weather policy for transportation to and from, including race-day racecourse facilities, to ensure optimum welfare of the racehorse.
60. Tasracing to instigate yearly welfare racecourse inspections. Inspections would include Racing Club staff, racetrack staff, veterinary staff, stewards and Tasracing racecourse personnel. Inspections to include not only infrastructure and track details but, also welfare-related scenario training for accidents, incidents and fatalities that can occur on race days. These would include location and manning of screens, protocols for catastrophic breakdowns and fatalities in different areas of the course. Provisions and activation of extreme weather protocols. The BHA has a similar programme which has received positive feedback from race clubs and stakeholders resulting in improved decision making and welfare outcomes on race days.
61. Tasracing to investigate the purchase of Fracture Support Kits, sufficient to be available at all racecourses during racing and trial days.

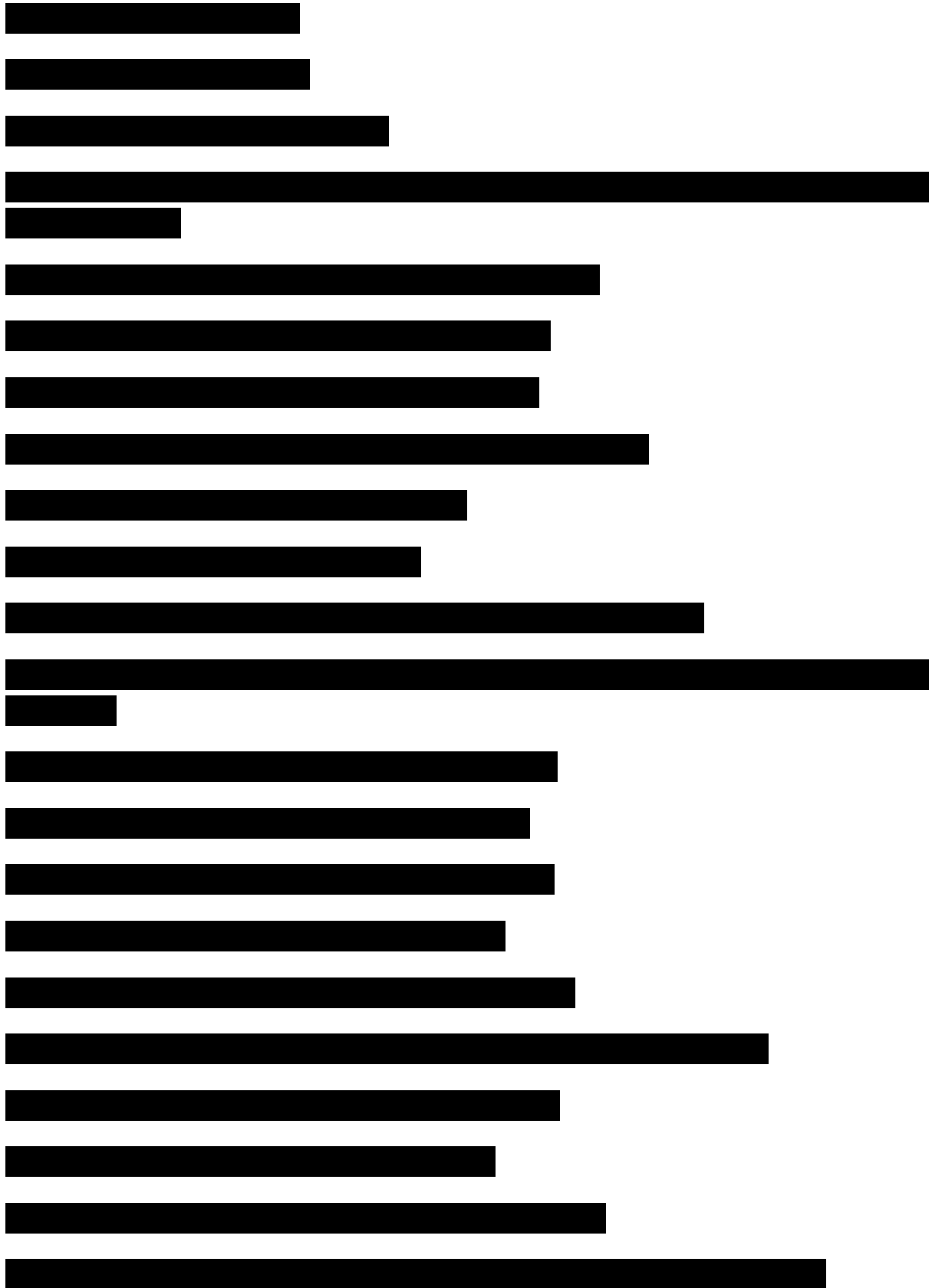
62. Tasracing to develop a race day catastrophic injury and/or fatality protocol. Protocol to include compulsory antidoping sampling, post-mortem at a dedicated pathology facility. Included in this policy would be the formation of a Fatality Summary Committee to meet monthly and review fatality reports, information and data including track conditions, trainer, and jockey reports. The committee is to make recommendations resulting from investigative findings.
63. Tasracing to review data on frequency of race day starts with the option to include a minimum standdown period between racing, especially for Harness Racing.
64. Tasracing to consider a requirement for prerace examinations by Tasracing veterinary surgeons on horses who have multiple starts in rapid succession and/or total number of career race-day starts and formulate a welfare policy on the evidence from data collected.
65. Tasracing to investigate web-based phone or tablet mobile software programmes for the collection of race-day injuries, inspections, and treatments. These are to be used by both racing stewards and racing veterinarians. The information and data from this system is automatically uploaded to the Tasracing central data system. The BHA and GBGB have both developed suitable software programmes.
66. A recommendation that Tasracing supports a review of the use of the whip in horse racing, takes that recommendation to other PRAs for consultation and actively encourages Racing Australia to progress such a review.
67. A recommendation that Tasracing in consultation with jockeys, trainers and other stakeholders explores programming a trial racing series that has modified conditions for permitted whip use, examines the outcomes of that series regarding jockey and horse safety and welfare, public perception and wagering factors.
68. Tasracing in consultation with trainers should explore expanding the use of Stridesafe devices and technology. This expansion to include initially training centres and then trainers' yards to identify at-risk horses more accurately during training, allowing training modifications or veterinary diagnostic imaging to avoid major injuries.
69. Tasracing to collaborate utilising the expertise of Prof Chris Whitton and his equine research team at Melbourne University who are involved in research on musculoskeletal injuries incorporating Stridemaster/Stridesafe technology, to assist and validate research results. Develop a systematic protocol for horses identified as higher risk of injury by the software.
70. Tasracing to develop a centralised data base and incentivise trainers, rehoming/retraining centres and new owners to utilise opportunities to maintain whereabouts information from touch point collection opportunities (See

previous discussion on database). This would include an area for non-industry participants to upload information.

71. Tasracing to recruit and assist into the OTT program additional retraining professionals (OTT Coaches), to support and recognise a higher percentage of racehorses retiring from racing or breeding.
72. Tasracing to engage with registered trainers to communicate and encourage them to commence a dialogue, utilise the services and provide access to OTT staff for early assessment and options for retiring horses.
73. Tasracing to promote selected OTT coaches and retrainers to assess retiring racehorses for suitability for retraining at either the trainers' stables or dedicated OTT premises.
74. Tasracing to collect information and manage and collate data from trainers on horses about to retire and provide administrative functions to support OTT goals.
75. Tasracing to review its OTT coaching voucher system and incentivise new owners to complete that training programme in a fixed period.
76. Tasracing to investigate an Equine Care Subsidy, to provide funding to OTT acknowledged retrainers to cover initial farrier, vaccination, dental procedures and link that funding to successful rehoming outcomes.
77. Tasracing to explore opportunities to utilise OTT horses in therapy programmes such as prison, disability schemes and post traumatic recovery programmes.
78. Tasracing to develop a 24-hour welfare hotline for members of the public to report concerns regarding the welfare of racehorses anonymously. Tasracing to be responsible for investigating alleged incidents.
79. Tasracing to commit funds and develop a **vulnerable racehorse scheme** which would be used exclusively for veterinary treatment, recuperation, stabling, agistment and care of any racing or retired racehorse found in neglected condition or with welfare concerns that require immediate intervention and support.
80. Tasracing to consider the establishment of a funded retirement property for standardbred and thoroughbred horses. Racing NSW has purchased several properties for this use over the last five years and RWWA have a small property. Tasracing will need to establish if this option for retirement is the most appropriate and economical use of funds and resources compared to other welfare initiatives in this sector. The goal should be to provide the best long-term outcome for these horses in their new vocation and whether this is achievable with an industry sponsored retirement property.
81. Tasracing to review current euthanasia guidelines for racehorses and develop a systematic practical protocol for decision making and implementation.

82. Tasracing to investigate developing a sponsored scheme for disposal of racehorses and greyhounds where burial is not an option for the owner.
83. Tasracing to explore and implement a MOU with all registered knackeries, requesting identification data on thoroughbreds and standardbreds sent for slaughter. Training and educational material on appropriate husbandry and handling practices for horses pre-slaughter including the Tasracing Euthanasia Policy and Protocol would be shared through Tasracing.

**Persons Interviewed**



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## **Links to further publications.**

<https://thoroughbredwelfareinitiative.org.au/new-page-1>

<https://www.britishhorseracing.com/regulation/horse-welfare-board/>

[https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/58ac2d90-c87b-42ab-b91c-413050cdd33d/resource/be9739b1-d952-4b73-81af-92cbcf414c7f/fs\\_download/independent-inquiry-into-equine-welfare-final.pdf](https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/58ac2d90-c87b-42ab-b91c-413050cdd33d/resource/be9739b1-d952-4b73-81af-92cbcf414c7f/fs_download/independent-inquiry-into-equine-welfare-final.pdf)

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/10/10/1870>.

<https://greyhoundcoalition.com/a-gaping-hole-in-the-industry/>

[https://horsesandpeople.com.au/hope-for-cross-sector-collaboration-on-equine-welfare-improvements/?mc\\_cid=d23a22d040&mc\\_eid=c30da8297d](https://horsesandpeople.com.au/hope-for-cross-sector-collaboration-on-equine-welfare-improvements/?mc_cid=d23a22d040&mc_eid=c30da8297d)

<https://www.equinemedirecord.com/>

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/horses/horse-traceability/national-horse-traceability-system-reform-consultation-information#h2-6>

<https://www.equineregister.co.uk/central-equine-database.php>

<https://www.racingvictoria.com.au/the-horse/equine-welfare/-/media/5087b91671fb41a59b2eb7eaa80f45f2.ashx>

## **Euthanasia**

[http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/EUTHANASIA\\_GUIDELINES.pdf](http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/EUTHANASIA_GUIDELINES.pdf)

[http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/DECISION\\_TREE.pdf](http://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Welfare/HWB/DECISION_TREE.pdf)

<https://nfsc.co.uk/about-the-scheme/#>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fallen-stock>

<https://www.racingvictoria.com.au/the-horse/equine-welfare/-/media/5087b91671fb41a59b2eb7eaa80f45f2.ashx>

## **The Whip**

<https://www.britishhorseracing.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/WhipReview.pdf>



### **Rehoming Retraining of retired racehorses**

<https://www.internationalracehorseaftercare.com/>

[https://www.internationalracehorseaftercare.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/IFARTheAftercareToolkit\\_2019.pdf](https://www.internationalracehorseaftercare.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/IFARTheAftercareToolkit_2019.pdf)

<https://www.ror.org.uk/>

### **Fracture Support Kits**

<https://trainermagazine.com/european-trainer-articles/racecourse-fracture-support-system/2022/3/30>

### **Greyhound**

<https://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/>

### **Educational Links**

<https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/racing/training-package-projects/retraining-horses-greyhounds-to-new-environments-project/>

<https://gbgb-prod-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/16182013/Comparing-Pre-Race-Examinations-and-Events-by-Sophie-Isaacs.pdf>

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0257581>

[https://horsesandpeople.com.au/hope-for-cross-sector-collaboration-on-equine-welfare-improvements/?mc\\_cid=d23a22d040&mc\\_eid=c30da8297d](https://horsesandpeople.com.au/hope-for-cross-sector-collaboration-on-equine-welfare-improvements/?mc_cid=d23a22d040&mc_eid=c30da8297d)