

Australian Endurance Riders Association



AERA Biosecurity Statement

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PART 1

Opening Statement

The aim of the Biosecurity Plan is to provide a safe and secure environment for humans and horses within which to hold successful Endurance Events that comply with the AERA Rulebook.

Biosecurity is the management of infectious diseases to reduce the risk of transmission. Animal biosecurity is a comprehensive approach with the critical element being the control of disease agents and the prevention of the spread of any disease agents. This includes hygiene practices and the quarantine of and control of infectious diseases onto and within an endurance ride venue and surrounding roads and tracks. This information applies to management of infectious disease risk in general, which could include strangles, diarrhoea and respiratory illness, and includes information specifically relating to Hendra virus risk and its zoonotic potential.

The management of infectious diseases requires the fulfilment of certain obligations prior to the ride and at the ride by people in charge of a horse, on the one hand, and by ride organisers on the other.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF THE HORSE

Preventing the Introduction of Disease onto the Ride Venue

All people who bring horses or livestock onto the grounds are expected to be aware of their biosecurity obligation that they must take all reasonable steps to ensure their activities do not spread a pest, disease or contaminant.

With respect to Hendra, vaccination of horses is the most effective way to help manage HeV disease. Vaccination of horses provides a public health and work health and safety benefit by reducing the risk of HeV transmission to humans and other susceptible animals. However, whenever HeV infection is suspected, even in vaccinated horses, appropriate biosecurity precautions including personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used as no vaccine can provide 100% guaranteed protection.

The following actions are required of the person responsible for bringing a horse to an event.

Information

Provide the ride secretary (via the Ride Entry Form and Horse Health Declaration) with:

- Name and contact details of the person who is responsible for each horse when finalising entries
- Details of any changes to the responsible person before the horse arrives at the ride base
- Full details of your horse/s identity and property of origin, including PIC. If any horse is returning to a location other than its property of origin, provide the details of this property prior to departure from the event venue
- Proof of current vaccination if your horse/s is/are vaccinated against Hendra virus, Equine Herpes, Strangles, or similar. Accepted proof is:
 - i) a vaccination certificate or notation in the horse/s' logbook completed by the vet who administered the vaccine, or
 - ii) a microchip number, which when scanned by the Chief Steward, Biosecurity officer, or Head Vet that shows compliance when queried against the Hendra Vaccine registry:

<https://www.health4horses.com.au/health-care/conditions/hendra/hendra-virus.aspx?ReturnUrl=/index.aspx>

- A properly completed Horse Health Declaration for every horse entering the ride base and their travelling companions, on arrival at the ride venue. The declaration states that the horse/s is/are healthy to the best of the responsible person's knowledge and includes a temperature log for the stipulated number of days prior to arrival at the ride venue and subsequently, until the pre-ride veterinary check. **DO NOT** bring an unwell horse onto the ride base.
- If a horse is brought to the ride base **WITHOUT** a horse health declaration it **will not** be permitted to enter the ride base.

Health Checks

- Regularly and carefully check the health of each horse before leaving home, while travelling, and after arrival at the ride venue. Health checks should include: normal eating and drinking habits, temperatures between 37.5 and 38.5C. Any nasal discharge, coughing, fever (temperature greater than 38.5), swelling, lameness or off food or water should be noted, and a veterinarian contacted to conduct an examination.
- If a horse becomes unwell while travelling, contact a vet and the ride organiser, before arrival at the ride base.

Hygiene

Ensure that the horse(s) you bring to the ride venue are from properties actively practicing effective biosecurity principles. As part of your responsibility not to create a biosecurity risk, the measures you take may include:

- Wash your horse(s) before leaving home so that soil and organic matter are removed from their coats and hooves
- Check for any evidence of ticks and abide by all government regulations for spraying
- Wash your vehicles and floats before leaving home to remove visible dirt
- Clean all horse gear of visible dirt before leaving home
- Bring sufficient tack, feed and water containers with you, to avoid sharing these at the event
- Adhere to all regulations regarding the transport of plants (including horse feed) and animals. Interstate participants must inform themselves and abide by, the regulations which apply to your point of origin. International competitors must comply with Australian quarantine regulations.
- Keep horse feed and water under cover and away from fruit trees to prevent contamination from birds/flying foxes while travelling and at the event.

Preventing the Spread of Disease at the Ride Venue

The following actions are required of the person responsible for each horse.

Information

At the Arrival gate or the pre-ride vet check, the person responsible for the horse will be asked to provide a duly completed temperature log for each horse entered in the ride and its travelling companions. In some events your horse(s) may be required to be identified for the duration of the event by a number written in crayon on the rump. Numbers can be rewritten if they become illegible. The RO/Chief Steward is responsible for this.

Hygiene

- As much as possible, minimise contact with other people's horses, and restrict access to your horse/s by others
- Avoid sharing feed containers or equipment. If this must happen, gear must be cleaned and

disinfected between horses.

- Clean your horse yards of manure and feed scraps on a regular basis
- Collect manure so it can be easily removed from your camp by the event organisers

Horse Health

- Provide a thermometer and take your horse(s) temperature daily from arrival at the ride venue until the pre-ride vet check, and during ride vet checks if required
- Immediately notify the Chief Steward/Head Vet /or Treatment vet if your horse becomes unwell during the event

Financial Responsibility

Please note that the person responsible for any horse requiring treatment, including sampling and laboratory testing, will be responsible for all costs associated with treatment, including all PPE gear used. Horses' logbooks will not be returned while accounts remain outstanding.

Biosecurity Information for Ride Organisers

Workplace Health and Safety Requirements

Each state and territory within Australia has work, health and safety legislation. Horse Industry associations that conduct a business or undertaking have duties under work health and safety legislation to ensure the health and safety of themselves, their workers and other persons so far as is reasonably practicable. Risks to health and safety must be eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable. If elimination is not reasonably practicable, the risks must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

An endurance ride may be a workplace for some persons but not others. Rides must:

- provide and maintain a work environment minimising risks to health and safety
- provide and maintain safe plant and structures
- provide and maintain safe systems of work
- ensure the safe use, handling, and storage of plant, structures and substances
- provide adequate facilities (including hand hygiene and first aid facilities) for the welfare of workers including ensuring access to those facilities
- provide any information, training, instruction or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety

A Safework Australia Volunteer Resource Kit is available at:

<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/model-whs-laws/guidance/volunteers/pages/resource-kit>

Biosecurity Management

Biosecurity risks can be reduced by taking steps to:

- a. prevent introduction of disease onto grounds
- b. prevent the spread of disease on the grounds
- c. minimise the effect and spread of a disease incident within the ground

These have been described earlier in this document.

Hendra by Local Government Area

The following is a list of Local Government Areas where Hendra infection has occurred. These are listed as the risk is evidentially higher than other areas.

For ease of ride management, the Local Government area and PIC number that a horse is arriving from should be provided on the Horse Health Declaration.

Queensland	New South Wales
Brisbane City Council	Ballina Shire Council
Bundaberg Regional Council	Byron Shire Council
Cairns Regional Council	Kempsey Shire Council
Charters Towers Regional Council	Lismore City Council
City of Gold Coast	Nambucca Shire Council
Douglas Shire Council	Richmond Valley Council
Fraser Coast Regional Council	Tweed Shire Council
Gladstone Regional Council	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	
Livingstone Shire Council	
Logan City Council	
Mackay Regional Council	
Mareeba Shire Council	
Moreton Bay Regional Council	
Noosa Shire Council	
Redlands City Council	
Rockhampton Regional Council	
Scenic Rim Regional Council	
Somerset Regional Council	
South Burnett Regional Council	
Sunshine Coast Regional Council	
Tablelands Regional Council	
Townsville City Council	
Western Downs Region Council	
Whitsunday Regional Council	

Emergency Contact List

ORGANISATION	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	COMMENT
Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline			
Biosecurity (State govt details)			
Biosecurity Officer			
Event Veterinarian			
Local Veterinarian 1			
Other Local Veterinarians			
Body Disposal Company			
Clinical waste disposal			
Venue Owner/Manager			
Neighbours with horses			
Local Police			
Workplace Health Safety (State govt details)			
Local hospital			

Biosecurity Policy

Competitors will be advised before and during the event that:

- They have a biosecurity obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure their activities do not spread a pest, disease or contaminant.
- Horse Health Declarations (HHD) are a mandatory requirement for all rides.
- The property identification code (PIC) of the horse's origin and returning property must be included on the HHD.
- Acceptance into the event will be refused if the required HHD is not presented at point of entry or designated registration point.
- No horses with signs of illness are to be brought onto the grounds.
- Equipment, including food containers is not to be shared between horses.
- Direct nose to nose contact between horses that are not regularly in contact should be minimised.

- Horse floats and trucks should be cleaned and disinfected before leaving to go to the event.
- Biosecurity equipment identified later in this document should be available at all times.
- Competitors are responsible for cleaning up manure from yards and placing it in designated areas.
- Competitors are required to advise the event organisers immediately if a horse is sick, to stop all non-essential contact with the sick horse and not allow anyone to have close contact with the sick horse.
- Everyone handling horses should wash or sanitise hands between contacting different horses.

Please note that details relative to Horse Health Declarations and Temperature Log duration have been spelt out in more detail below. It is particularly important to observe the strong recommendations regarding duration of Temperature Log maintenance.

The Horse Health Declaration

A Horse Health Declaration - current forms available on the AERA website <http://aera.asn.au/forms-page/> - must be completed prior to entry to the venue and will detail the contact details of the owner or person in charge of the horse, the address and PIC number of the horse's property of origin immediately prior to travel, a temperature log, a horse health declaration by the owner or person in charge of the horse(s), and a declaration.

The Temperature Log Duration

Temperature logs must be completed by the person in charge of the horse. The temperature log duration will be decided by the ride's Head Veterinarian in conjunction with the ride Biosecurity Officer at least one month before the ride commences. The recommendations re temperature logs are:

- For a horse not in a Hendra Risk Zone or a vaccinated horse in the Hendra Risk Zone: 3 days
- For an unvaccinated horse from a Hendra Risk Zone going to a ride in a Hendra Risk Zone, or a non- vaccinated horse from a Hendra Risk Zone going to ride in other areas: 10 days
- For National Championship (Tom Quilty) the temperature log duration is at the discretion of the Head Veterinarian, the Biosecurity officer and AERA .

Horse Health Declarations should be collected at the point of entry to the ride base in Hendra Risk Zone areas. In other areas the Head Veterinarian in conjunction with the Biosecurity officer may permit them to be collected at a designated registration point, as the first point of contact. The required duration of the Temperature Log should be completed before the first point of contact, at which a supplementary Temperature Log may be required to be undertaken.

Veterinary Treatment Hospital and Isolation Zone

An endurance treatment hospital is a very important area of an endurance ride base, but can pose major risks to staff, volunteers and competitors, as such it is important that strict protocols and procedures are followed.

The Biosecurity officer, in consultation with the Organising Committee, is in charge should a biosecurity risk arise. While the Biosecurity officer does not possess the legal powers necessary to quarantine or

restrict movements of people, they will arrange to record the details of any person and/or animal leaving the grounds if they have been directed not to.

Equipment and Access

A suitable area in a quiet place on the ride base grounds needs to be set aside as designated Veterinary Team Hospital area. The area must be large enough to accommodate a number of horses, depending on the number of entries and the expected climate, terrain and experience of competitors. Horses may require some form of veterinary intervention. This can vary greatly depending on weather conditions, terrain and timing of the event (e.g. Early in the season). The area must be protected from the weather elements (sun and rain) and be private with screens erected around the Veterinary Treatment Hospital. The area must have adequate lighting to allow veterinary procedures to be conducted.

Access to the Veterinary Treatment Hospital needs to be restricted at the discretion of the Treatment Vet. If the rider or responsible person want to update or discuss with other people (e.g. strappers) they must leave the Veterinary Treatment Hospital. Officials who can access the Veterinary Treatment Hospital are the ride veterinarians, chief steward and any other ride officials at the direction of the chief steward or treatment veterinarian. There should be only one entry and exit point from the Veterinary Treatment Hospital, to allow monitoring of those present within the Veterinary Treatment Hospital.

No dogs or animals (other than horses entered in the ride) are permitted within the Veterinary Treatment Hospital.

Only ride veterinarians and trained veterinary staff are to administer treatment. The veterinarian may instruct that the person responsible or rider to leave the vicinity of the horse or stand more than 5 metres away during certain invasive procedures, or for the entirety of the treatment (at the discretion of the head veterinarian).

Certain invasive procedures may not be able to be carried out on unvaccinated horses. Also, referral to external hospital facilities for further diagnostic procedures and surgery may not be an option for unvaccinated horses originating from known Hendra High Risk areas, or at/from rides conducted in known Hendra high risk areas.

To ensure that all horses attending an event will be able to receive treatment if required, AERA Rulebook S1 rules 14.1 and 16.5 must be implemented well before the event date.

Riders and responsible persons must be aware that there are many limitations in the treatment of endurance horses at an endurance ride, due to the limited availability of diagnostic equipment, and the ambulatory nature of a ride base Veterinary Treatment Hospital (compared to permanent horse hospitals with 24-hour staffing and on call veterinarians and trained veterinary staff).

Appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn. Please refer to the interagency report <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/cdb/hev-inf-prev-adv.pdf> Pages 24 to 32 are particularly pertinent re infectious disease control recommendations. After administration of invasive procedures and treatment of horses, the veterinarian and those in contact must follow appropriate decontamination procedures prior to leaving the Veterinary Treatment Hospital or having contact with

another horse.

The Biosecurity officer, in consultation with the Organising Committee, is in charge should a biosecurity risk arise. While the Biosecurity officer does not possess the legal powers necessary to quarantine or restrict movements of people, they will arrange to record the details of any person and/or animal leaving the grounds if they have been directed not to.

Biosecurity Equipment

This is the *suggested minimum* list of biosecurity equipment required at an endurance ride.

Equipment Required at Event:

- Microchip scanner for vet inspection (Biosecurity officer)
- Effective communication system (Organising committee)
- Hand sanitiser for stations around yard areas and at marshalling areas (Organising Committee)
- Human First aid kit (Organising committee)

Biosecurity Field Kit

PPE Equipment:

- disposable nitrile gloves
- overalls
- boots/covers
- P2 respirators
- safety goggles
- paper hand towels
- heavy duty garbage bags
- clinical waste bags

Decontamination Equipment:

- buckets
- spray bottles
- scrubbing brush
- foot bath –detergents and disinfectant

Isolation Equipment comprising:

- star pickets with protective caps or panel fencing
- rolls of hessian
- large tarpaulin
- hazard tape

Communication Plan

Notification to all affected parties is a critical component for an effective infectious disease control plan.

Development of a clear, concise and accurate message about a situation, the measures being taken and the procedures for event participants to follow is critical to prevent the spread of disease.

Site Map

A site map should include:

- entry and exit point/s
- isolation area
- stabling
- public access
- public parking
- participants' parking
- designated exercise/warm up areas
- event activities
- manure disposal area
- other waste areas (e.g. feed, soiled bedding, clinical waste including sharps)
- location of cleaning agents, disinfectant
- location of hand washing basins and hand sanitisers
- location of first aid kits
- location of PPE Kit
- water sources
- a traffic flow/movement of people information (spectators, competitors and officials), vehicles, animals and emergency vehicles for safe exiting of the vetting area

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/livestock/horses/hendra-virus>

A detailed site plan to be included here, and be displayed prominently at locations around the Ride Base

Biosecurity Incident Contingency Plan

In the event that a horse at the event is sick with symptoms similar to the symptoms of a notifiable disease, the following plan is to be followed:

Sick Horse

- ROC and Biosecurity officer are to be advised of a sick horse immediately.
- Biosecurity officer will contact the head vet.
- Horse is to be taken to isolation area, via the most direct route avoiding any unnecessary contact with other people or horses until review by the vet.

Vet Attendance

- If the horse is deemed to be non-infectious it may be returned to its regular stable and will be managed by the person responsible (for the horse) and the attending vet (at the responsible person's expense – see page 6).
- An event vet may decide to perform a diagnostic exclusion test and the horse will remain in isolation with a minimum five metre distance to other horses or passing people until the test results are available.
 - i. If a diagnostic exclusion test is performed with a positive result returned the event halts and State Government Biosecurity legislation ensues.
 - ii. If a diagnostic exclusion test is performed and there is strong suspicion that a positive result will be returned the event could be halted pending confirmation of the result.
 - iii. All people within the isolation zone i.e. vet, officials, owner, are to don PPE gear when tending to the horse.
 - iv. Disinfection of shoes via footbaths and strict hand hygiene are to be followed.
- If the diagnostic exclusion test result is negative the horse may return to the ride Vet hospital if treatment still needed, or to its regular stable if no further treatment is required.

Biosecurity Issue Identified

- Biosecurity officer in conjunction with attending vet will contact the Biosecurity authority for the state involved.
- Biosecurity officer will ask ROC to close exit points and broadcast to all present at the venue to remain on site until further information and while exit points are closed.
- Event organiser will take advice about whether to continue with the event, after discussion with the Biosecurity authority of the state involved, and advise participants of this decision.
- Horse Health Declarations for all horses on site are made available to the Biosecurity authority of the state involved.
- Access to isolation area will be patrolled by the Biosecurity officer and limited to essential personnel.
- All horse movement to cease unless authorised by the Biosecurity authority of the state involved.

Lockdown

- The Biosecurity authority of the state involved will advise if a total lockdown of the venue is required and the event organising committee will advise participants of this decision.
- The Biosecurity officer will regularly check entry/exit points to ensure anyone leaving the venue is given an exit notice and their vehicle registration is noted.
- The Biosecurity officer will make arrangements for waste removal if required.
- The event organiser will arrange for fodder to be available for purchase by participants.
- Further bedding, if required, will be arranged by the Biosecurity officer in conjunction with the venue and be available for purchase by participants.
- The Biosecurity authority of the state involved will advise the Biosecurity Manager and participants of any further protocols required.
- The Biosecurity officer in conjunction with the Head Veterinarian and ROC will arrange removal and disposal of deceased animals if required.

Addendum

Links to State Government Departments responsible for Biosecurity

Qld – Farms, Fishing and Forestry: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry>

NSW – Department of Primary Industries: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/>

Vic – Agriculture Victoria: <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture>

Tas – Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment: <https://dpiwpe.tas.gov.au/>

SA – Primary Industry & Regions: <https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/>

WA – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/>