



# AERA Horse Welfare Statement

ABN 14 684 748 206

The Australian Endurance Riders Association Inc. (AERA) requires all persons involved with the sport of endurance to acknowledge and accept that, at all times, the welfare of the horse must be absolutely paramount. The welfare of the horse must never be subordinated to competitive or commercial interests.

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## General Welfare

1. The highest standards of horse husbandry and management must be adopted in relation to general health, nutrition, hydration, housing, sanitation and safety.
2. Endurance riding requires horses to perform at a high level for extended periods of time, requiring superior levels of fitness. Horses must be trained, and ridden in competition, commensurate to their age, physical capabilities, pregnancy status and maturity. Training and riding techniques must not be abusive or cause fear.
3. Foot care, shoeing, tack and any other equine equipment used must be of a high standard, designed and fitted to avoid the risk of pain or injury. The use of whips or spurs is expressly forbidden.
4. Vehicles and trailers used to transport horses should be regularly maintained, safe, well ventilated and protect horses from injury. Horses must be fully protected against injuries and transport related health risks.
5. Journeys should be planned and, for longer journeys where circumstances allow, horses should be permitted regular rest stops with access to feed and water.

## Competition

1. Participation in competition must be restricted to fit horses and riders of proven competence. Horses must be allowed suitable rest periods between training and competitions. Additional rest periods should be allowed following travelling.
2. No horse deemed unfit to compete may enter or continue to compete in competition. Veterinary advice must be sought whenever there is any doubt.
3. Riders will avail themselves of appropriate training and education to ensure their riding techniques and fitness are of a level that is empathetic and supportive to the horse and does not cause injury or impede the horse.

## Doping and Medication

1. Any action or intent of doping and illicit use of medication constitutes a serious welfare issue and will not be tolerated.

2. After any veterinary treatment sufficient time must be allowed for full recovery before training and entry into competition.

## **Events**

1. Endurance courses must be designed with the safety of the horse in mind and with adequate water points available.
2. Endurance rides must not be staged in extreme weather conditions that may compromise the welfare or safety of the horse. Where such conditions arise during a ride, consideration must be given to suspending or cancelling the ride or providing alternative track options.

## **Humane Treatment of Horses**

1. Veterinary treatment must be provided at rides, as required, to safeguard the health and well-being of the horse.
2. If a horse is injured or exhausted during competition the rider must stop competing and a veterinary evaluation must be performed.
3. Delays (or attempts to avoid or delay) presenting a horse for veterinary assistance where it should have been reasonably suspected that the welfare of the horse was compromised or potentially compromised will not be tolerated.
4. Refusal of invasive treatment for a horse after the veterinarian at a ride indicates that the immediate welfare of a horse is compromised and requires invasive treatment will not be tolerated.
5. Wherever necessary, horses must be transported to the nearest relevant treatment centre for assessment and therapy unavailable, or unsuitable to be provided, at a ride base.
6. Injured horses must be given full supportive treatment before being transported.
7. If injuries are sufficiently severe a horse may need to be euthanised on humane grounds by a veterinarian, as soon as possible, with the sole aim of minimising suffering.
8. Horses must be treated sympathetically and humanely when they retire from competition.

## **Education**

1. The AERA urges all persons who are associated with the sport of equine endurance riding in Australia to attain the highest possible levels of education relevant to the care, management and riding of the horse.