

Thoroughbred Industry Welfare Initiative Announced

Press release for immediate use

8th February 2020

The thoroughbred industry has come together to announce a strategy to develop a national horse welfare regime.

Thoroughbred Breeders Australia (TBA), the Australian Trainers' Association (ATA) and the Australian Jockeys' Association (AJA) along with other stakeholders have established an Independent Working Group (IWG).

This will review the current welfare landscape in the Australian thoroughbred industry, look to world's best practice, consult with participants in the industry, and draw upon the learnings from other animal industries.

The IWG, which will be chaired by former Victorian premier Dr Denis Napthine, will focus on horses exiting the thoroughbred industry, whether as retired racehorses or unraced animals, through to end-of-life management.

The other panelists are Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Science and Strategy Officer for RSPCA Australia, Dr Ken Jacobs, a director of the Australian Veterinary Association, and Jack Lake, a senior advisor on agriculture in the Hawke, Keating and Rudd governments.

The membership of the IWG is deliberately drawn from outside the racing and breeding industries to ensure their independence and encourage them to explore policy options outside current industry thinking.

Tom Reilly, the chief executive of TBA, said: "The challenges of the welfare, rehoming, retraining and end-of-life for thoroughbreds are national issues that are of concern to all participants in the industry.

"We have to acknowledge that if we can improve outcomes in these areas, it is our responsibility to do so.

"Too often our industry is fragmented along state lines. This initiative will facilitate a national discussion with the aim of finding national solutions. Everybody who I have asked for support have been happy to give it and get behind this."

The IWG will be asked to produce a report outlining a practical policy framework for a national horse welfare regime, which will be the basis for a wider discussion with industry stakeholders and federal and state governments.

The work of the panel will be funded by industry participants, with commitment of resources from breeders, owners, trainers, jockeys, clubs and wagering operators.

Andrew Nicholl, chief executive of the ATA, said: "It is important that participants from across the Thoroughbred industry work together on what is a challenging issue."

A steering committee, which will include leading trainer Chris Waller, will sign off on the terms of reference for the IWG, which is expected to provide its recommendations later this year.

Martin Talty, chief executive of the AJA said: "Horse welfare is paramount to everything we do and it is important that we have a panel independent of the industry to help us. I am confident they will provide recommendations that we can all get behind."

Chris Waller urged all in the industry to come together behind the project: "This initiative is an opportunity to start building a national approach to welfare in racing and all industry players should grab it."

Racing Australia, the national body that is comprised of all the state racing regulators, said last night it "welcomed" the initiative and that they shared a "common aspiration of elevating the quality of equine welfare in Australia."

The organisations, businesses and people supporting the initiative include:

National

Australian Jockeys' Association, Australian Trainers' Association, Bet Easy, Inglis, Magic Millions, Tabcorp, Federation of Bloodstock Agents Australia, Thoroughbred Breeders Australia.

NSW

Attunga Stud, Bjorn Baker Racing, Chris Waller Racing, Coolmore, Fairhill Farm, Gai Waterhouse Racing, Godolphin, John O'Shea Racing, Kitchwin Hills, Koorinal Stud, Middlebrook Valley Lodge, Newgate Farm, Newhaven Park Stud, NSW Trainers' Association, Rheinwood Pastoral, Segenhoe Thoroughbreds, Sledmere Stud, Tartan Fields, Thoroughbred Breeders NSW, Tyreel Stud, Vinery Stud, Widden Stud, Yarraman Park Stud.

Queensland

Aquis, Brisbane Racing Club, Eureka Stud, Glenlogan Park Stud, Gollan Racing, Heathcote Racing, Highgrove Stud, Lyndhurst Stud Farm, Raheen Stud, Thoroughbred Breeders Queensland Association.

South Australia

Cornerstone Stud, McEvoy Mitchell Racing, Mill Park Stud, South Australian Thoroughbred Breeders.

Tasmania

Armidale Stud, Grenville Stud, TasBreeders.

Victoria

Ciaron Maher Racing, Lauriston Park Thoroughbreds, Lindsay Park Racing, Malua Racing, Melbourne Racing Club, Mick Price Racing, Rosemont Stud, Spicer Thoroughbreds, Swettenham Stud, Thoroughbred Breeders Victoria, Three Bridges Thoroughbreds, Victoria Racing Club.

Western Australia

Darling View Thoroughbreds, Lynward Park Stud, Yarradale Stud, Mungrup Stud, Scenic Lodge Thoroughbred Stud, Western Australian Racing Trainers' Association, Thoroughbred Breeders WA.

Prominent Owners

China Horse Club, Francis Cook, Debbie Kepitis, Peter Tighe, Neil Werrett.

ENDS

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