



1 March 2019

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee

Inquiry into the feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register

RSPCA Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into the feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register. The RSPCA has long advocated for greater accountability and transparency regarding lifetime tracking of racehorses. A comprehensive national register which is available to the public will help provide community assurance that information is available to review the fate of horses after they leave the industry. The community expects the racing industry to make appropriate provisions for horses upon retirement instead of sending 'spent' horses to the knackery or abattoir.

A national traceability register would also assist in the management and communications relating to emergencies including disease outbreaks and natural disasters, which can help safeguard welfare as well as improve emergency response.

Mandatory microchipping is encouraged as part of a national registration system to help ensure rigour. Where possible, an effort should be made to link with existing databases on the basis that the information relating to all horses is retained in one national database. In terms of costs to operate the system, by sharing existing information, particularly for racehorses, this should avoid duplication and/or omissions, which in turn would result in cost efficiencies. As with other registration systems, it should be user pays but being mindful that costs should be kept at a minimum and for users to understand the benefits and cost savings especially in relation to disease outbreaks, which can be virtually impossible to manage without an effective tracing system. The database needs to be maintained at the national level, preferably by government.

With regard to overseas models, it is recommended that information is obtained regarding cost benefit of databases being used in different countries to help identify the most suitable for the Australian context.

Yours sincerely,

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