

Patron
The Honourable Linda Dessau A.C.
Governor of Victoria



3 April 2019

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Inquiry Committee,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register.

RDA Victoria believes that the introduction of such a register would enhance safety of both horse and human, promote industry education and integrity and have better welfare outcomes for the animals.

Safety

Horse riding is a dangerous activity (Safe Work NSW, 2017).

As a provider of a service for people with a disability, we have the utmost duty of care to vulnerable participants. Sourcing fit for purpose equids for RDA programs is vital to providing a safe service.

We have many experiences of horses and ponies not presenting as described, some with false descriptions. This includes non - disclosure or misrepresentation of period of time owned and the purposes the animal is being used for. A National Horse Register Database would assist in back ground checks in procuring horses suitable for RDA purposes.

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For this reason, RDA Victoria sees a National Horse Registry a vital component in making the horse industry safer.

Education and Integrity

RDA Victoria sees this registry as an opportunity to educate and promote integrity in the greater horse industry. Generic documents such as WHS / OHS guidance material, club management resources, horse welfare information could be uploaded to provide horse owners and businesses a “one stop shop” to assist legislative compliance and promote best practice. Webinars and online information sessions could be offered to all horse owners through this system.

Welfare

The register may be developed for updating electronic health records, assisting in managing biosecurity and confirming identity of horses.

Traceability is vital when tracking disease outbreaks. Currently there is no system in place to trace horse location, other than established stud books and registries. Once a horse drops out of these systems there is no formal record of location or ownership. Zoonoses are an emerging threat (CDC, 2018) and it is in the best interests of public health to ensure strong systems are in place for disease epidemiology and control.

The Horse Disease Response Levy Act 2011 and Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement requires horse owners to pay back Government the cost of management or eradication of disease. The current system of collecting this levy through manufactured

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feed and worming pastes is “hit and miss”. A registry would assist in equitable collection of this levy.

A National Registry would also assist in identifying animals after a natural disaster, such as floods and fire and allow prompt communication with owners.

RDA Victoria sees a National Register as essential in making the horse industry safer and accountable. Once again, thank you for providing the opportunity for comment.

Yours sincerely,

Edwina Boase-Stratford
State Coaching Coordinator
RDA Victoria

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). Zoonoses - Emerging Infectious Disease journal - CDC. Retrieved from <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/page/zoonoses-2018>

Safe Work NSW. (2017). CODE OF PRACTICE MANAGING RISKS WHEN NEW OR INEXPERIENCED RIDERS OR HANDLERS INTERACT WITH HORSES IN THE WORKPLACE. Gosford, NSW: Safe Work NSW. Retrieved from https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/79160/SW08262-Code-of-Practice-Managing-risks-when-new-or-inexperienced-riders-or-handlers-interact-with-horses-in-the-workplace.pdf