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26th April 2022
Kristin Leigh
Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses

RE: National Horse Traceability Register

Dear Ms Leigh,

Thank you for your email, and your invitation for Animal Care Australia (ACA) to work with the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses (CPR).

ACA and our Horse Advisory would need to review CPR’s report prior to agreeing to support it, or its recommendations. We are sure you can appreciate it would be irresponsible to agree to a report we have not had the opportunity to review.

We acknowledge you have read our submission, and would like to remind the CPR that ACA only supported the Horse Traceability Register *conditionally*. ACA holds concerns that the Register cannot perform to an acceptable minimum standard without the following additional recommendations:

Recommendation 1: All Horse related legislation in Australia is updated and consolidated into one National document that is consistent across all states and for all Horses.

Recommendation 2: The National Horse Register is introduced as an integral part of the new National legislation

Recommendation 3: A government funded Department is created to regulate the horse industry in Australia, maintain the Register, provide education and respond to the issues that the register reveals

Without these additional measures, there isn’t the real possibility of improving horse welfare or rider safety. For this reason, ACA fully supports the current direction of the Horse Traceability Register Working Group to focus on biosecurity by including horses in current livestock tracing systems. This already exists in most states, and will go some way to improving current industry standards for accountability and welfare nationally. This is a positive step forward.

Separate to this, ACA has been pursuing action to remove horses from livestock classification and systems altogether. We believe this an absolute necessity and we have early indications of support in this direction. This will offer greater animal welfare and safety outcomes to all horses and their owners beyond the scope of a national register. It is also likely to make the outcomes of the Horse Traceability Register Working Group irrelevant.

Regardless of which solution comes to fruition first, positive engagement with the horse industry from all stakeholders will be essential to help implement the changes the industry needs. There is no denying that the industry needs to raise its standards, but this will only happen with unified support for horse owners, riders and sporting associations.

We look forward to seeing this support for the horse industry reflected in your report. We look forward to the opportunity to review your report and recommendations so that ACA can determine whether becoming a signatory to your proposed campaign is in the best interests of animal welfare, all horses and their owner/riders.

Again, thank you for reaching out to us.

Kind regards,

Michael Donnelly
President, Animal Care Australia.
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