

W.A. Horse Council *News*

January 2009



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Representing a united horse community in Western Australia.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

It is impossible to review the past year without commenting on the Equine Influenza outbreak. Although there were no cases in WA, many people and businesses suffered severe, financial and emotional hardship and it is hoped that 2009 will see the return of economic success and confidence in the Horse Industry.

When EI was confirmed in NSW in August 2007, the Council was approached by Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA), to be the facilitators in organising a number of Equine Influenza (EI) information and updating sessions for the horse industry. The Council also worked with the Director of Animal Biosecurity and the Chief Veterinary Officer in the development of EI information leaflets and posters, Biosecurity procedures, horse declaration forms, press releases and a Contingency Plan Template, copies of which are available on DAFWA's website (www.agric.wa.gov.au/).

As the West Australian Horse Council is a non profit, volunteer organization that provides a voice for the resolution of any issues that affect the horse industry, it was a busy time for everyone

involved. The Council was also invited to become part of the WA Equine Influenza Information Group, which made decisions concerning WA border quarantine conditions, vaccination, isolation facilities, movement of horses, recategorization of EI, funding to assist in the ongoing efforts to prevent EI entering WA and other subjects relating to protecting the WA horse community from this exotic disease that had brought other state's horse activities to a halt.

As a result of their involvement through the EI outbreak with Government Depts, the Council has been provided with funding by the Dept of Racing, Gaming and Liquor to present and oversee the following projects -

• **Awareness Program Workshops** - The Council combined with the Equestrian Federation of Australia WA Branch (EWA) and Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA), to coordinate a number of very successful Event Organisers workshops throughout the State and the Council would like to acknowledge the effort put into this project by EWA Chairperson Joanne Bastion.

• **Emergency Communication Preparedness Database** - The EI crisis really brought home to everyone just how fragmented the horse industry is, and the necessity to develop an effective method of disseminating information to the diverse equine community.

Some of the key commitments the Council is currently involved with are

- representing the horse industry with the Dept of Sport & Recreation's Trails WA Marketing project
- liaising with agistment centres with the view to forming an association and developing a Code of Practice
- organising a series of Best Environmental Practice HorseLand/Water workshops - funded through the Swan Catchment Plan Council
- working with Outdoors WA in developing a benchmark of minimum industry requirements for Adventure Activity Standards, covering commercial Trail Riding

I would like to thank the committee, who all have 'proper' jobs, for giving up their quality time to help members of the horse industry when problems arise, and for doing it so cheerfully. Over the last 15 years the Council has achieved many significant improvements in a variety of issues that were affecting the horse industry.

*Thank you all for supporting us
Diane Bennit
Chairperson 2008*



The Event Organisers Workshops were facilitated by consultant Barry Hamilton (Doppler Consulting) with Dr Warwick Vale giving the veterinary presentation at the State Equestrian Centre and Byford Trotting Complex.

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AUSTRALIA DECLARED EI FREE

The NSW Department of Primary Industries has now completed the surveillance needed to convince the rest of the world that this country has in fact eradicated Equine Influenza and the international community is looking at Australia in wonder and amazement at what we were able to accomplish. People from government, the horse industry, the horse owning public and private veterinary practitioners all working together have demonstrated what cooperation, dedication and commitment can achieve.

To ensure that any exotic diseases have less chance of gaining a foothold in future it is highly recommended that Horse Event Organisers continue to compile and maintain an annual Calendar of Events, collect information on horses attending events, maintain strict biosecurity at events and do not allow sick horses to attend events.

BRUCE M CHRISTIE
 Director, Animal & Plant Biosecurity/
 Chief Veterinary Officer of NSW

WA TOP TRAILS

The recent launch of 'Top Trails Western Australia' to approximately fifty stakeholders and industry representatives was attended on behalf of the Western Australian Horse Council by Janet Cameron and Diane Bennit. The Council was the only representative of the equestrian industry present at this launch and has been part of the assessment panel for the Top Trails Project. The Department of Sport and Recreation approached the Council to provide advice and expertise in the area of equestrian tracks and trails when the assessment process began. Top Trails Western Australia is an AusIndustry funded initiative under the Australian Tourism Development Program. The purpose of the program is to identify, enhance and co-ordinate the marketing and promotion of a network of WA Trails and their associated products – to put WA on the map as a trails destination. The project aims to bring more visitors to WA and disperse them to regional areas. Walk, cycle, paddle, equestrian, snorkel and drive trails are all included.

Nominations of trails were sought from the all sectors of the community . 165 nominations were received. All trails were then assessed against comprehensive selection criteria. The selection panel included representatives from a variety of organizations including the Western Australian Horse Council. Approximately 50 trails were then short listed . Successful trails needed to satisfy the following criteria:

- Offer a quality experience – with good views or natural landscapes or interesting local history
- Be well marked and well maintained
- Have a trail head and or maps
- Have a web presence and brochure.

Funding is available to assist with upgrading of marking, trail heads, maps, web presence and brochures if required for nominated trails. There are in the vicinity of 700 known trails in the state and it is anticipated that some of these will be upgraded in the future and added to Top Trails of Western Australia.

The benefits of the Top Trails project are many and varied. It is estimated that Trails Tourism already brings \$35 million annually, just to the South West of Western Australia. The Top Trails website will provide a central portal for trails information, making it easier to locate trails and information about the trails. Trails are free and many trails managers don't have the budget to market them. The Top Trails will be promoted cooperatively using funds generated from advertising on the Top Trails website. Funding is available through Top Trails WA to improve signage and Top Trails WA Marketing Team can assist with updating brochures and websites.

Unfortunately, only two of the trails nominated for equestrian use, Railway Heritage Trail and Kep Track were selected as Top Trails and they are in fact multi use trails as opposed to specifically bridle trails. One of the criteria for the bridle trails was the availability of horses for hire for visitors to the state, and as there are very few of these establishments, this proved to be limiting. In addition, most of the bridle trails nominated did not have trail heads, had limited marking and very few had maps and brochures. I would encourage anyone involved in any way with a bridle trail to apply for funding to improve your trail's marking and maps. I know that there are many people out there who would love to be able to ride some different trails but find it difficult to find out about trails in other areas. Encourage your shires to include information on their websites which can eventually be linked to the Top Trails website



Janet Cameron – WA Horse Council, Jane and Mike Pelusey – Trails Assessors, Steve Crawford – Tourism WA, Julie Hutchens – National Trust, Hugh Mclean – DSR Trails Development Consultant and Mike Wood – Chairperson of Bib Track

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Legislation Changes

The new Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2008 (POCTA) commenced on 16 December 2008. These regulations replace the POCTA Regulations 1997 which sunset on the same day. All regulations sunset after 10 years and must be replaced.

The new regulations introduce a number of new provisions and amendments of existing provisions. A summary of the key changes follows:

- changes to the way rodeos are licensed and regulated
- specification of traps that can be sold, set or used in Victoria
- new and amended regulations concerning the use of electric shock devices on animals
- introduction of new offences that protect the welfare of animals
- changes to the requirements for scientific establishments.

In addition a new version of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 also commenced on 16 December 2008, which includes updated provisions relating to traps and rodeos introduced last year in the Animals Legislation Amendment (Animal Care) Act 2007 but which had a delayed commencement due to the need to develop supporting regulations.

The new regulations and Act, as well as a range of other relevant information, can be downloaded from the following links

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare (follow links to legislation page) or

www.legislation.vic.gov.au click on 'law today' then select statutory rules or Acts beginning with 'P'.

These regulations were the subject of recent Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) consultation for which a large number of submissions were received. As a result a number of amendments to the new regulations were made. Details of these amendments can be found in the Notice of Decision, available at www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare.

For further information please contact the Department of Primary Industry Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or the website www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare.

Bates Australia and Wintec Sponsor Website

The WAHC is looking forward to the establishing of its own website, which is currently under construction.

Sponsorship, arranged by WAHC committee person Christina Slater with Ron Bates, is provided by Bates Australia and Wintec. These WA based companies are well known in the Horse Industry for their very generous sponsorship of many riders and events,

The new website will be keeping the horse industry informed of all equestrian issues and will have information and links to Horse Alert WA, DAFWA, WA Horse Emergency Communications Database, Hoofbeats, Aerial Culling of Brumbys petition and other sites pertaining to equine information.

We look forward to providing this service and will be publishing our new website address in the near future.

Awareness Program For Event Organisers

Co ordinated by the WAHC with representation from EWA, Racing & Wagering WA, Department of Agriculture & Food WA, this project provided a very useful insight into the responsibilities of Event Organisers.

Workshops were held in Albany, Busselton, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Byford and Brigadoon, in the first quarter of 2008. These were provided at no cost and were open to all organisers involved in any gathering of horses.

Organisers were brought up to date with the latest biosecurity procedures and the implications that an outbreak of Equine Influenza or any exotic disease would have on their club in the case of a lockdown.

All Organisers were given folders of relevant documents and taken through a training process for a Contingency Plan, and then worked on developing specific plans for their particular areas of interest.

Endorsed by DAFWA, the WAHC Contingency Plan Template is available on WAHC DAFWA and RWWA websites.

Although Equine Influenza has now been eradicated in Australia, Event Organisers are still being advised to use Horse Declaration

forms. The recent confirmed case of Contagious Equine Metritis in frozen semen from a Quarter Horse stallion in Kentucky, and the third death of a person in Qld. from the Hendra outbreak, show that the threat of exotic diseases is still a real possibility.

Hard copies or a DVD of the workshops are available at EWA at State Equestrian Centre Brigadoon or by contacting the WAHC on 92910202.

AUSTRALIAN HORSE INDUSTRY DIRECTORY (AHID)

An exciting new directory is soon going to be available in WA. The Showcase Publications Pty Ltd's directory is extremely comprehensive and is now in its eleventh year of publication in the Eastern States. This Directory is recognized as a leader of its type and will now include a WA section.

In colour and professionally produced, the directory covers all things equestrian.

Showcase Publications Pty Ltd are so confident of their commitment to WA, that to advertisers who provide "set up ads" payment is only due on publication. For smaller ads where Showcase has to create ads (which they don't charge for) payment is required on proof and acceptance of material created.

To see their website go to www.showcasepublications.com.au, to receive a free copy of the Directory, contact Diane Bennit 92910202 or to discuss advertising, email steve.moxey@showpub.com.au

GUEST SPEAKER REGISTER

Due to the increasing demand for Guest Speakers able to give information on a broad range of topics, the City of Swan has set up a Guest Speaker Register.

The WAHC was approached to register, as the committee covers a wide range of activities in the horse industry. In the first two weeks following the set up of the Register, 56 topics were covered.

SUSTAINABLE HORSEKEEPING - PASTURE MANAGEMENT FIELD DAYS.

Between October and December 2008, WAHC committee member Nikki Brooks organised the hosting of three very successful and well attended free field days, with an additional three planned between April and June in 2009. These field days have been funded through the Perth Region National Resource Management (NRM) formerly known as Swan Catchment Council.

The project is all about updating people with the Horse Land Water, which is the National Environmental 'Best Management Practices' project, delivered state wide across all horse demographics.

We have been fortunate in securing Chris Ferreira of Landcare Solutions to facilitate and deliver these workshops for the WAHC, which have been highly successful, as Chris' presentations are always so interesting, inspiring and full of practical knowledge.

The purpose of these field days is to show how to use environmentally friendly ways to improve pasture without costing the earth. Some of the topics covered are:

- Pasture- what to plant where and how
- Weed control - when and how
- Reinvigorating bare patches – simple cost effective solutions
- Waterwise watering – why you don't need expensive reticulation
- Soil testing – why soil testing is the key
- Improving soil health naturally – better ways for better health of animals and the environment
- Managing manure, worms and much more.



Part of the large group that attended one of the free field days at Brookleigh Estate in the Swan Valley.

Horse Land Water 'MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES' booklets and 'ACTION PLANNERS FOR HORSE PROPERTIES' are given out to attendees of the field days and these are full of useful information as well as allowing one to keep a log of your property management skills.

Bushfire Emergency Centres for Horses

With summer approaching and the inevitable bushfires, the necessity may arise for some people to move their horses from the danger area.

Foxwood Farm Equestrian Estate in Brook Rd Wattle Grove and the State Equestrian Centre in Cathedral Avenue Brigadoon are SES designated Equine Emergency Centres. If these venues are not convenient – contact your local Shire or FESA office on 93239300 for other Centres or, if there is not a suitable one near you, check the area for alternatives and make arrangements prior to an emergency arising. Examples for suitable venues may be yards/paddocks in sandy areas, showgrounds or sale yards.

Make sure that you have access to a horse float and that your horse loads easily, as it is not a good idea to be doing float training with a fire approaching.

Emergency Communication List

The recent Equine Influenza crisis identified the need for an effective method of disseminating emergency information, to the non regulated horse industry in WA.

The WA Equine Influenza Information Group requested the Council, to develop and maintain a contact list for communicating horse emergency information, to the non racing sector of the horse industry. Funding for the database and website was provided by the Dept. of Racing, Gaming and Liquor.

This comprehensive contact process is to include all key communicators in the equestrian governing bodies, clubs, equine businesses and service providers.

The information supplied is private and only used for the dissemination of updating the progress of an Emergency Disease, quarantine regulations and bio-security information. All those registered will be notified and asked to pass the information on to their members. The database already has over 10,000 registrations.

A public launch of this project is being planned to coincide with the launch of Horse Alert WA in 2009.

This is a free service that the Council is providing for the horse industry, and to assist us in this process, we request that you log on to www.horseemergency.com.au or a hard copy of the form is in the February issue of Hoofbeats, and can be faxed to 92910206.

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Horsemen's Pony Club Lease in Doubt

The issue of renewing the lease of the Whiteman Park grounds for Horseman's Pony Club was raised at the WAHC AGM. Committee person Nikki Brooks has communicated with John Day, Minister for Planning Culture & the Arts and has put the club in touch with other decision makers regarding this issue. In response to Frank Alban, Member for Swan Hills letter, Mr Day commented....

that in light of clauses noted by the Pony Club within the Planning Policy 2.2 in particular pertaining to current usage and its intent to affect those currently occurring on land mentioned in the policy, the matter will again be referred to the Whiteman Park Board for further consideration.

The Council will be following this situation closely.

Horse Alert WA

A joint industry and government operational project, Horse Alert WA will increase awareness of emergency equine disease and biosecurity practices in the horse industry.

A working party comprising representation from RWWA, DAFWA and the WAHC are developing a document, which encompasses industry responsibilities, biosecurity messages, disease fact sheets, contingency plans and response arrangements.

At the completion of the document there will be a public launch and the document will be accessible on the DAFWA, RWWA and WAHC websites. Hard copies will also be available

Kudos for the Council

In mid 2008 the WAHC received a letter from the previous Minister the Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC, congratulating the Council on their achievements in developing bio-security procedures, holding a number of Equine Influenza information evenings and producing a contingency plan for Event Organisers.

The Minister also commended the Council for the support they provide to the horse industry and wider community.

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Call for a Ban on Aerial Culling

On the 26th August 2008, the West Australian Newspaper published some photographs that left horse lovers across the state horrified. The photos depicted the end result of an aerial brumby cull on Frazier Downs Station, just south of Broome and showed dead brumbies with massive bullet wounds to their neck, chests and abdomens. Brumbies are feral animals, and while most people recognise the need to control their numbers for the sake of the environment, it was not the cull that caused such disbelief, but the method. Aerial culling of horses has been condemned throughout the rest of the developed world, for the high degree of pain and suffering that it causes to the animals. In the Frazier Downs cull, over 600 horses were shot and an extremely high percentage of those must have suffered drawn-out and unnecessarily painful deaths.

The Council feels that it is necessary to ban the aerial culling of horses in WA, not only because it is morally and ethically unjust, but also because the desire to see the end of this barbaric practice is shared by a majority of horse owners in this state.

As the first step in the campaign, a petition was developed with the assistance of lawyer Louise Horwood. In a very short time over 1,500 signatures had been collected, with petitions still arriving.

Political advocate and friend of the Council, Sue Hurt, has offered some sound advice and our next step will be to lobby politicians and obtain an audience with the Minister for Agriculture.

With the petition demonstrating the depth of feeling within the horse community, we believe that the government will realise that many of its voters are against Aerial Culling. If you would like to become involved in this campaign, contact WAHC committee person Portland Jones at equine@bigpond.net.au



Photo reproduced from: The West Australian Newspaper 26 August 2008

LIVER FLUKE

A request from DAFWA Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Peter Buckman for the WAHC to comment on proposed changes to the conditions of movement of animals to WA in relation to Liver Fluke.

WAHC committee person veterinarian specialist Dr Kathy Klein has corresponded with Dr Buckman regarding these changes and the effect they would have on horses. We'll update you with the results when available.

Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC) NEWS

The AHIC, our National body, held a well attended AGM at Equitana 2008. The very committed and extremely hard-working Dr Barry Smyth was re-elected unopposed as President. Barry is held in high regard in the Horse Industry. A panel of guest speakers chaired by AHIC Director Ken Dagley took questions and clarified a number of issues that were raised. WAHC Chairperson Diane Bennit was re-elected as a Director.

The AHIC invites entries in a competition, to create new logos for the AHIC and HorseSafe. The current logos have been in use for many years and can be seen, along with the competition conditions, on the AHIC website www.horsecouncil.org.au.

Approximate value of each of the two prizes in the competition is \$568 and is made up of a 1 year membership to AHIC value \$60.50, donated by AHIC; 1 year subscription to Hoofbeats magazine value \$40, donated by Hoofbeats; horse products to the value of \$250, donated by Virbac and Nature Vet; and books - value of \$218, donated by Equine Veterinarians Australia and Jane Myers, Equiculture.

Entries close 5pm EST Wednesday 14th January 2009

Government Events in 2008

The Council received an invitation to attend the official launch of Quarantine WA, which was held at Perth Airport.

The then Minister for Agriculture and Food Kim Chance said the number of quarantine inspectors and detector dogs would increase. The new measures had become necessary due to an increase in domestic passengers arriving in Perth, plus increased interstate road and rail trade travel. These measures could be a deterrent for infected saddlery and riding wear entering WA and spreading disease.

Tourists who fail to put fruit into an amnesty bin, can unintentionally introduce harmful organisms, capable of devastating WA horticultural industries, which are worth \$673 million a year.

The Council also attended a Recreation Industry Leader's Breakfast organised by the Dept. of Sport and Recreation (DSR). This meeting was held to enable the Minister and DSR to develop a better understanding of the issues facing the recreational industries.

Twenty seven people attended from all recreational sectors and it was very interesting to note that problems appear to be the same as in the horse industry.

Main concerns were – shortage of labour/staff, insufficient funding for training, activities being overseen by volunteers, wages needing to be more competitive.

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