

WP&CS of Australia Inc.

WELFARE POLICY

RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS

Horse welfare relates to the general care and wellbeing of horses at all times including when participating in activities and events and is not limited to extreme cases of neglect.

Members are expected to make all efforts to ensure that their ponies and cobs are adequately fed, watered and sheltered and that their general wellbeing is catered for. Members are also expected to seek veterinary and other professional equine advice when needed.

Members should be familiar with and comply with the relevant WPCSA Codes of Conduct and Policies by referring to the WPCSA website – www.wpcs.com.au under Membership.

In particular the **WPCSA Members & Breeders Code of Ethics** and the **WPCSA Members General Code of Conduct**.

Excellent information on horse welfare is available via:

- ✓ The Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC) website and in particular the Wellbeing Tool Kit
<http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/horse-welfare/>
<http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/horse-welfare/australian-horse-welfare-and-well-being-toolkit>
- ✓ Relevant States - Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Horses
- ✓ Information about welfare management at events is included in the WPCSA Risk Management Policy (www.wpcs.com.au under Showing). All event organisers should be familiar with this document and the **Weather Extremes & Event Cancellation Policy** (www.wpcs.com.au under Membership).

The WPCSA recognises, however, that at times members may face difficulties in caring for their ponies and cobs.

Any legitimate concerns that members have regarding the welfare of other members' ponies or cobs should be expressed in detail in a signed letter forwarded to the WPCSA National Office. Members should avoid making frivolous or vexatious claims.

All correspondence received is kept in strict confidence, as are any outcomes resulting from the concerns expressed.

THE ROLE OF THE WPCSA WITH WELFARE MATTERS

The main role of the WPCSA with welfare matters is to educate members on welfare issues and to refer members to relevant sources of advice on welfare matters.

The WPCSA also has a role in considering complaints forwarded to it about welfare issues concerning ponies and cobs owned by members.

THE ROLE OF THE MEMBER LIAISON OFFICER

If notifications of concerns about welfare are directed to the Society the Member Liaison Office's role is to consider the information, consult with the Committee of Management, and if appropriate, contact the member involved to offer general advice and report back to the WPCSA Committee of Management.

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIETY WITH WELFARE MATTERS

It is not the role of the WPCSA to offer financial support.

Members should be aware that the WPCSA has no powers of enforcement, therefore if a reported situation is such that it requires more than advice, the matter will be referred to the appropriate organisation(s) (e.g. The RSPCA, Project Hope).

Members are encouraged to report any welfare concerns directly to these organisations.

If an organisation such as the RSPCA or Project Hope becomes involved with a welfare matter the WPCSA Committee of Management (COM) will request that these organisation/s keep the COM informed of developments and outcomes.

Members should be aware that if action is taken by an enforcing agency, it is not possible for the Society to be involved other than to await the conclusion of the investigation.

Should a member be convicted of cruelty to animals, the WPCSA Rules regarding 'Discipline of a Member' will be considered by the COM regarding possible action being taken against that member as allowed by the WPCSA Rules. Penalties may include cautioning, suspension or expulsion from, membership of the WPCSA. The severity of the penalty will depend on the members' history in relation to welfare matters and on the severity of the court of law findings and penalties imposed by it.