

The Case for Change – Horse Education

Administrative information

Name of IRC: Animal Care and Management Industry Reference Committee
Name of SSO: Skills Impact
Name of Training Package: ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package

This skills priority originated from members of the Racing Industry Reference Committee (IRC). However, the skills required, to safely educate a horse so that it can be safely ridden are not unique to race horses, so this *Case for Change* is being made under the Animal Care and Management IRC, with involvement of the Racing IRC, as a cross IRC project. The equine expert members of the refreshed Animal Care and Management IRC either currently sit on the Racing IRC or have done so previously.

Members from both the Racing IRC and Animal Care and Management IRC were consulted in the development of this *Case for Change*.

During public consultation for the development of the *2017-2020 IRC Skills Forecast and proposed Schedule of Work*, feedback was received that the job role and activities associated with “horse education”, at times known as horse breaking, should be listed as a Priority Skill.

https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/skilliampactmedia/uploads/2017/05/ISF.ACM_IRCSkillsForecast.2017-2020.pdf

This draft *Case for Change* provides evidence of industry support for the need to develop units of competency dealing with the work processes, skills and knowledge required to educate, in the main, young horses. Currently there are no units that related to the work and the skill of “horse education” of young horses in any training package.

The Case for Change

“Horse education” is the term commonly used by people within the equine industry to describe the process that a person undertakes to ensure a horse is educated so that it is able to be safely ridden for either racing or recreational activities. This process usually occurs when horses are young. People who perform the process of “horse education” are called horse trainers. This *Case for Change* is for developing units, and one or more skill sets for the role of a horse trainer.

It should be noted that the skills related to horse education and horse training are slightly different. Horse education relates to a horse learning to wear riding equipment (saddle, bridle etc.) and learning to be ridden. Horse training is related to the horse learning further tasks (jumps, racing etc.). Some horse trainers will do both tasks, others may only work with horses that have already been educated to be ridden.

During the *Safety in Equine Training Project* (<https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/animal-care/training-package-projects/equine-safety-in-training/>) units were reviewed in an effort to improve safety of the learning environment that involved horses. As there is currently no specific units that describe the work associated with “horse education”, there was no way to ensure safety for the learners or the horses in any associated training program.

Development of units that cover the work roles associated with the tasks of “horse education” will ensure that trainee horse educators are taught the skills and knowledge in how to educate horses with the highest level of animal welfare standards, whilst also ensuring the safety of the learners undertaking their training. These units of competency could be added to the electives of a number of qualifications that involve horses or be a standalone skill set.

As many as one million horses live in Australia. Horse racing studbooks record the number of racing horses that are bred in Australia each year (both thoroughbred and harness). Statistics are not recorded for horses bred for recreational purposes. Approximately 14,000 thoroughbred horses and 3,500 standardbred (harness racing) are born each year. Both racing and recreational use horses require some degree of education by someone who has horse training/education skills.

It is estimated that 5,726 racing horse trainers currently exist in Australia, some of these people may have undertaken formal training. Horse training and horse education are different tasks, so without formal training in place, industry is concerned that horse training skills are in decline and the risk for the public and horse users increase with a lack of access to trained horse trainers.

Currently, learners can access short duration courses being offered in the market place. These courses are not nationally endorsed or accredited vocational courses, but are general interest courses and do not meet any standards of training requirements. There is a small number of accredited training courses, these courses cover the gamut of equitation science (including horse education) but they do not focus on horse education. This increases the risk of harm to both the learner and the animal.

Industry support for change

Members of the Racing and Animal Care and Management IRCs that are equine specialists were consulted about the skills needed to educate a horse.

During consultation it was recommended that individuals that wish to undertake training in “horse education” should already possess a high level of experience with horses (and other equines if they plan to work with them) prior to starting any training in “horse education”. During the development of the units of competency and skill set this can be addressed by including entry requirements or prerequisites. Entry requirements could be existing horse related qualifications e.g. stable/stud hands, track riders or jockeys. Alternatively, or in addition, a time frame of working in particular horse related jobs could be included.

To ensure that the outcome of the training provided not only meets the knowledge but the time needed to gain the practical experience, it has been suggested that training should only be delivered in a traineeship or apprenticeship delivery. This can be tested as part of the development of the project.

Impact of change

If the recommendations were accepted, the impacts would include:

- Development of units that would ensure high levels of safety for both the horse handlers, trainers and animals. This is particularly important when working with young uneducated horses which are a risk to horse handlers as they are large animals that are highly reactive to confrontation and change and when frightened can easily injure or kill a person while trying to escape. Horses are flight animals, meaning that when scared or confronted, they lash out (kicking) and try to run away from their confronter.
- Training delivered to the regulated standards of vocational education and training.
- Training package components (units of competency / skills sets) that align with correct Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations codes (animal trainer) could assist the industry with skilled migration.
- Registered Training Organisations would need to develop a training and assessment strategy that would include development of resources and engaging suitable trainers and assessors. This might include professional development of current Horse Educators to hold the requisite qualification.

The risks of not proceeding include a high chance of:

- Injury and death to a person when working with uneducated horses. People trying to ride or work with poorly educated horses have an escalated level of risk. In the case of Sarah Waugh this escalation of risk resulted in her death as the horse she was required to ride had not been re-educated and consequently was inappropriate for her to ride. (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-12-23/coroner-slams-tafe-over-jillaroo-students-death/3745866>)
- Unacceptable animal welfare practise when learners are not trained correctly.
- In the Australian Skills Quality Authority report "Training in equine programs in Australia", farm work-related injuries and fatalities were collated for the eight years, 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2011. During that time 11 workers died falling from a horse, 572 females were hospitalised due to a horse-related injury and a further 264 were injured having been bitten or struck by a horse. Nb. 85% of farm work-related hospitalisations were male and the most common reasons for being hospitalised was non-horse related.
- During the period July 2000 to June 2012 there were 98 horse-related deaths. 42% involved a person who worked with horses professionally (therefore 58% were not work related). 74% of the fatalities resulted from a fall. Skills Impact has been unable to find any statistics of injuries or fatalities that occurred during the horse education process.

Estimate of timeframes to implement changes

It is estimated that the project would be completed in twelve (12) months from receipt of approval.

Undertaking this project will support implementing the COAG Industry and Skills Council (CISC) reforms for Training Packages by:

The proposed work will support the implementation of the reforms agreed by CISC in November 2015 in the following ways by:

- improving the efficiency of the training system by creating units of competency that can be owned and used by multiple industry sectors
- fostering greater recognition of skill sets
- ensuring that new training courses can be developed as quickly as industry needs them and available to support niche skill needs.

This *Case for Change* was agreed to by the Animal Care and Management IRC

Name of Chair

Signature of Chair

Date

DRAFT

Attachment A: Training Package components to change

Skills Impact

Contact details: Evan Cooper

Date submitted: [Insert date submitted]

Training Package Code	Training Package Name	Unit Code	Unit Name	IRC Name	Review status	Change Required
X	X	X	X	X		
		ACMEQUXXX	Apply Advance Horse behaviour and Equine learning theory	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	Content to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop trust between horse and educator • Plan appropriate success rewards for horses. • Address training issues • Domesticating wild or semi-feral horses • Educate Heavy Horses
		ACMEQUXXX	Educate horse to be Mounted	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	Content to Include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate to Horse to wear bridle and bit. • Educate to Horse to wear a saddle, girth and stirrups • Educate Horse to be mounted.

ACMEQUXXX	Educate horse to be ridden	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	Content to Include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate Horse to walk while being ridden • Educate Horse to trot and canter while being ridden. • Educate Horse to gallop while being ridden • Introduce a young horse to work outside
ACMEQUXXX	Develop Horse Education plan.	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	Content to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Plan • Horse assessment including assessment of horse suitability after education for particular activities or riders
ACMEQUXXX	Educate a single Standardbred horses to wear a harness	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	Content to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carts • Drafts • Carriage • Buggy • Sulky • Pulling of equipment
ACMEQUXXX	Educate Horse to long rein	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	

ACMEQUXXX	Educate non-horse equines (donkey and mules)	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	
ACMEQUXXX	Educate Pack Equines	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	<p>Content to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-riding / driving activities • Long distance travel • High line • Overnight • Pack carrying
ACMEQUXXX	Reeducate Equines to new environment or activity.	Animal Care and Management IRC	Development	
ACMHBR307	Handle Young horses	Animal Care and Management IRC	Review	Review content to ensure appropriate skills in educating young horses to hear a bridle and be led.
ACMHBR311	Raise Young horses	Animal Care and Management IRC	Review	Review content to ensure appropriate skills in educating young horses to hear a bridle and be led.

Attachment B: Stakeholder Consultation Method and Scale

Stakeholder Consultation

The following table outlines consultation that has taken place to develop this draft *Case for Change*.

It is a summary of feedback up until 14 March 2018. Further feedback will be added to this table when the final *Case for Change* is submitted to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) on 20 April 2018.

Stakeholder Consultation		
Name of Stakeholder	Detail method(s) and Scale of Consultation	Comments
Julie Fiedler – Horse SA ACM IRC Member	Email, Teleconference Discussion	Discussion and input into current draft of Case for Change
John Sunderland – Godolphin ACM and Racing IRC Member	Email, Teleconference Discussion	Discussion and input into current draft of Case for Change
Ron Fleming – Racing and Wagering WA Racing IRC Member	Email, Teleconference Discussion	Discussion and input into current draft of Case for Change
Isabella Galati – Harness Racing Victoria Racing IRC Member	Email	Discussion for any Harness Racing units needed
Kathleen Mullan – Harness Racing Australia Racing IRC Member	Email	Discussion for any Harness Racing units needed