



# Australian Carriage Driving Society

ABN: 28 794 114 302 – Incorporation No: A01028

## HORSE WELFARE POLICY

**The Australian Carriage Driving Society places the utmost importance on the welfare of the Horse as the primary consideration in all carriage driving activities.**

Horse welfare must never be compromised by competitive or commercial interests and all ACDS Members are expected to accept and abide by this principle.

ACDS Rules, Guidelines and Risk Management Policies are intended to improve Horse welfare standards. The Rules, Guidelines and Policies are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure effective promotion and implementation of best – practice Horse welfare by ACDS Members.

***Regardless of the carriage driving activity or discipline, the following over-arching horse welfare principles apply:***

**1. At all stages during preparation, training and use of carriage Horses & Ponies, welfare must take precedence over other demands.**

This includes ensuring good Horse management; using training methods which are appropriate to the physical and mental capabilities of the Horse and which do not result in pain or fear; use of harness and vehicles which are correctly fitted and do not cause pain or injury; a high standard of farriery and foot care; and appropriate methods of transport.

**2. Horses & Ponies must be fit, competent and capable and in good health, appropriate to the type of activity and the specific demands.**

This includes ensuring an adequate level of fitness for the activity, applying appropriate Horse-health and biosecurity practices; and allowing adequate recovery time following veterinary treatment.

**3. Activities must not prejudice Horse welfare.**

Venues, stabling / yards, courses and their components must be designed and maintained with the safety of the Horse in mind. Competitions and activities must take into consideration the best interests of the Horses involved. The effects of extreme weather must be taken into account and mitigated as appropriate.

**4. The practice of trimming horses' sensory hairs is not permitted**

Vibrissae, or sensory hairs/whiskers, are the long stiff hairs growing on the chin, mouth and around the eyes and are used as organs of touch by the horse. The practice of trimming these sensory hairs/whiskers is not permitted.

Horses will not be permitted to compete in any ACDS activity if the horse's sensory hairs have been shaved or in any other way removed unless individual sensory hairs have been removed by a veterinarian. (veterinary certificate necessary).

**5. Every effort must be made to ensure Horses & Ponies receive proper and humane treatment during their lives.**

This includes provision of adequate veterinary and health care; the prompt and appropriate treatment of injury or illness; sympathetic and humane treatment during retirement; and where necessary, appropriate methods of euthanasia to minimise suffering.

**The ACDS supports the ongoing awareness and skills development of its members in relation to Horse welfare and encourages all those involved in equestrian sport to attain the highest levels of knowledge in relation to care & management of the Horse.**