

**TBA** Thoroughbred  
Breeder's Australia

  
**AUSHORSE**

# Strategy Review



**2024**

## WHO WE ARE

### THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS AUSTRALIA BOARD IN 2024



**PRESIDENT**  
**BASIL NOLAN**  
Raheen Stud,  
QLD



**DIRECTOR**  
**PETER MURRAY**  
VIC



**DIRECTOR**  
**ANDY MAKIV**  
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**DIRECTOR**  
**RALPH SATCHELL**  
Willow Grove Stud,  
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**DIRECTOR**  
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**DAVID WHISHAW**  
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**DIRECTOR**  
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**DIRECTOR**  
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**CHAIRMAN**  
**ANTHONY THOMPSON**  
Widden Stud,  
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**DIRECTOR**  
**CHRIS WATSON**  
Mill Park Stud, SA  
Also on TBA



**DIRECTOR**  
**ADAM SANGSTER**  
Swettenham Stud,  
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**DIRECTOR**  
**ARTHUR MITCHELL**  
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NSW



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**TOM MAGNIER**  
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**RON GILBERT**  
Highgrove Stud, QLD  
Also on TBA



**DIRECTOR**  
**JOHN KELLY**  
Newhaven Park Stud,  
NSW



**TREASURER FOR  
TBA AND AUSHORSE**  
**ADAM TIMS**



## INTRODUCTION

# A voice for the breeding industry

The overarching aim for Thoroughbred Breeders Australia (TBA) and Aushorse is to ensure there is a sustainable breeding industry that has a secure and prosperous future.

We aim to achieve this by showing leadership on matters of strategic importance and representing breeders effectively when issues arise. These issues range from wagering reform or the Pattern to education and biosecurity.

It has been another busy year for TBA in the education and training area. In June we launched a remodelled Stud Start program, aimed at bringing people of all ages into the breeding sector. Featuring a new five-week online learning component that gave trainees more flexibility to study, the program was a success, with many of those who completed the course getting jobs in the industry. It is our intention to significantly increase the numbers of people coming through this course.

Our flagship program to bring young people into the industry, Fast Track, had its biggest intake, with 20 students from around Australia.

As we look to engage with future generations we have also developed a set of learning materials to be taught in classrooms across primary and secondary schools, which will be available for free on its own site, TBA Schools.

A new initiative that will begin in early 2025 is the TBA Graduate Program. We have

recruited 11 trainees, who have finished university in the past two years, to take part in a learning block where they will receive tutorials from experts from across racing, breeding and wagering. This will then be followed by a six-week internship with an industry employer.

This project has seen us work collaboratively with a number of organisations and I'm sure it will be a valuable pathway into our industry.

In terms of supporting those already working in breeding, our Next Crop initiative, which began in 2023, has grown strongly and now has close to 800 members, most of whom are young staff in the industry. Next Crop will again be organising a range of educational and social events throughout 2025.

Our management workshops – providing free coaching to leaders on stud across Australia – were again popular in the past 12 months and this opportunity is something we are committed to providing to members again.

Another key responsibility of TBA is working with governments, at both the federal and state levels. In the past 12 months I have personally met with more than 30 federal politicians to discuss issues as varied as wagering reforms, visas for foreign workers and biosecurity. The federal government's planned reform of the online wagering sector remains a significant threat to racing's finances, and this

will now play out in an election year. It is likely I'll again be spending significant time in Canberra.

Aushorse continues to provide the voice for the Australian breeding, making it clear there is no better place to buy and race a horse.

Our latest Investor's Guide, released in mid-December, may be the best yet and features a wonderful video that celebrates so much of what is great about Australian racing.

Our efforts to encourage international investment are obviously helped by successes such as Asfocra at Royal Ascot. For the third year, Aushorse hosted a drinks party after racing on the Tuesday of the Royal meeting, which provides a great opportunity to meet with many of the most influential people in world racing.

We also have a keen focus on domestic buyers, highlighting the benefits of locally-bred horses, as well as an important role in introducing more people to ownership. Across the sales in 2024, we were able to hold a number of events to encourage people into ownership.

Finally, I'd like to thank the dedicated team at TBA and Aushorse. None of these projects would be possible without their commitment and work.

*Tom Reilly*

Chief Executive Officer

## OUR ORGANISATIONS

### THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS AUSTRALIA

Thoroughbred Breeders Australia (TBA) is the national peak body established for the benefit of the Australian thoroughbred breeding industry – the second-largest in the world.

The association – which celebrated its centenary in 2019 – has a membership base of 4200 individual breeders and other industry participants, and is also the umbrella body for the six state breeders' associations.

Our members are at the heart of their rural communities, providing employment and investment and supporting a wide range of related professions.

Breeders are conscious of the need to work sustainably on their land, ensuring future generations' ability to do the same.

The breeding associations in each Australian state are shareholders of TBA and appoint directors to its board, and receive funding from the organisation.

### AUSHORSE

Aushorse's aim is to drive investment into the Australian thoroughbred industry from both domestic and international sources.

We proudly promote Australia as the most vibrant market in the world to buy or sell a thoroughbred, and our international marketing promotes Australia as a source of the highest-quality bloodstock.

Domestically, Aushorse has an important role to play in introducing new owners to the fun and excitement of racehorse ownership, as well as introducing people to the breeding industry. We are an independent, not-for-profit company, committed to providing impartial advice and assistance.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



### Industry Strategy

Providing strategic leadership on areas that are essential for a successful, sustainable and profitable industry.



### Government Lobbying

Developing and maintaining strong relationships with national, state and local governments to drive the outcomes that will benefit the industry.



### Racing Industry Advocacy

Working with other stakeholder groups, regulators and clubs to effect positive outcomes for breeders.



### Industry Communications

Ensuring participants, stakeholders and the public are aware of the successes and issues within the thoroughbred industry.



### Education & Training

Running programs such as Fast Track, Stud Start and the Graduate Program that provide pathways into the breeding sector. Also providing staff training and support for those already in the industry.



### International Marketing

Explaining the benefits of investing in the Australian thoroughbred industry to a global audience.



### Domestic Marketing

Encouraging local buyers to source their horses in Australia and empowering first-time ownership.



### Information Resource

Providing compelling and well-researched information that drives investment.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



# Fresh pathway wheels out the big guns

Internships with the biggest names in racing, breeding and wagering are being offered for the first time.

**T**horoughbred Breeders Australia (TBA) this year launched a new pathway for young people to enter the industry via a university graduate program.

The scheme will give graduates the opportunity to learn from some of the biggest names associated with racing, breeding and wagering.

Those accepted into the course will undertake a two-week learning block based at Flemington racecourse, before starting an internship at a major employer.

Among the companies supporting the program are Godolphin, Waterhouse and Bott Racing, Entain, Magic Millions, Melbourne Racing Club, Inglis, Yulong and the Victoria Racing Club.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for anyone hoping to work in the thoroughbred industry," TBA chief executive Tom Reilly said.

"We have a huge industry, employing around 80,000 people, but until now there hasn't been a pathway in place for us to try and recruit talented young people who can progress into leadership roles.

"The aim of the learning block is to open the graduates' eyes to all aspects of the industry and show them the different career options open to them."

TBA has offered 11 graduates a spot in the inaugural course, with the two week learning block starting in late January 2025. After this fortnight, graduates will join an employer for a paid internship of at least six weeks.



**'We are very much looking forward to having somebody join our team on their internship.'**

**Gai Waterhouse**

The learning block will feature lectures and workshops on everything from creating a wagering market and selecting a yearling, through to marketing a racing carnival and learning how handicapping works.

In the UK, the British Horseracing Authority has run a graduate program for 30 years, with many executives across the industry having completed the course.

Trainer Gai Waterhouse said the Australian industry had to keep reviewing how it attracts young and talented people into its ranks.

"I think this [the program] is a wonderful way to do it," she said. "We are very much looking forward to having somebody join our team on their internship."

The graduate program builds on TBA's established education and training programs, such as the national breeding traineeship, Fast Track, and TBA Learning, a free online platform which has enrolled more than 1000 students.

Entain deputy CEO and chief financial officer Lachlan Fitt said: "At Entain, we know the value of fostering new talent, and this program is a real game-changer for anyone serious about a future in thoroughbred racing."

He added: "In today's industry, hands-on experience and mentorship from leading organisations are key to building the next generation of racing professionals, and that's exactly what this program offers."

## MEET MADDIE: THIS YEAR'S NOLAN SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Fast Track graduate Madeleine St Ledger has been awarded this year's Nolan Scholarship.

As part of the scholarship prize, Madeleine will head to Ireland in January 2025 to join the Irish National Stud Breeding course over a six-month period.

She was a member of the 2021 Fast Track class and has remained with her host farm, Eureka Stud, since then. Her dedication led to her winning the scholarship that honours the late studmaster Basil Nolan Jr, who was "known for honesty, enthusiasm, motivation, a

strong work ethic, and a passion for learning".

"I grew up around horses in Bundaberg," said Madeleine, 26, who is the sixth scholarship winner. "Dad broke in and re-educated horses and I did pony club; horses have always been part of my life.

"I moved down [to Eureka Stud in south-east Queensland] so I could work with horses, and I loved it and stayed on after the course. Fast Track has taken me a long way. Now, I'm going to Ireland. You can't go wrong with that."





# Capacity field on the right track in 2024

Everyone wants a fast track to success, but just as important is choosing the right track.

**F**ast Track is the flagship traineeship program for Thoroughbred Breeders Australia.

It was created to recruit passionate horse people and those with an interest in joining our industry and help them develop the important skillsets needed for a career with thoroughbreds. Now in its seventh year, its success is evident with almost 90 per cent of graduates remaining in the industry after completing the course.

In 2024 the program had a full intake of 20 students who have chosen Fast Track as their pathway in the industry.

It's a 12-month journey to earn industry-recognised qualifications while gaining valuable on-farm experience. Through a blend of classroom learning and hands-on practical work, students build essential skills.

The 20 trainees began their 2024 Fast Track course to gain a Certificate III in Horse Breeding with a four-week intensive learning block at the TAFE NSW Scone Campus.

Once they completed the four-week intensive learning block, all students joined farms across the country to work full-time.



The 2024 Fast Track cohort boasted a full intake of 20 students.

The group then came back together in Scone for a second learning block, held over two weeks in November.

Madison Tims, TBA industry education and projects manager, said that trainees gained an unmatched introduction in all aspects of the thoroughbred industry, allowing them to kick-start a career that offers a world of possibilities.

"With breeding being such a significant rural industry, combined with its close relationship with racing, it means the opportunities to further a career are as many

and varied as you can imagine," she said.

"There are numerous roles in the breeding and thoroughbred industry including foaling attendant, yearling manager, stallion handler, vet nurse, stud logistics, bloodstock agent, and nominations manager.

"Nearly everybody involved in the industry has done some time working hands-on with horses on a farm, even if they now have an office-based job. Fast Track is designed to give trainees a learning experience that will set them up to succeed no matter which way they want to take their career."

## Stud Start offers flexible introduction

Stud Start began as a good idea on paper. The reality has turned out to be even better.

**T**he Thoroughbred Breeders Australia board and team wanted to emulate the success of the Fast Track program, but for those who couldn't commit to a 12-month program.

Think people with jobs and mortgages, not to mention families. Our aim was to create an entry point that gave such people the chance to know if the breeding sector was for them.

In 2023, a pilot program, Stud Start, began for mature-aged trainees as a taster course to the thoroughbred breeding industry. The initial group of six spent two weeks learning at TAFE in Scone before a work placement on a farm. In 2024, the program returned after TBA committed to an overhaul.

Feedback from the initial program suggested that the course needed to be more flexible to dovetail with individuals' existing family and work commitments. The result was a new six-week program, which begins with five weeks of online learning and culminates



Venessa Merrin will return to Vinery in 2025.

with a week of hands-on experience at Scone.

The online component saw nine students undertake one lesson each week. These lessons were recorded, allowing participants the opportunity to study at a convenient time.

Then it was up to Scone, where trainees experienced behind-the-scenes visits to farms around the Hunter Valley, including Widden Stud, Darley Kelvinside, Coolmore Stud, Yarraman Park Stud, Attunga Stud and Darbrook Downs Thoroughbreds. In addition to these visits, they heard from various guest speakers who were all experts in their fields from breeding and foaling to stallions, pre-training, sales and marketing.

Madison Tims, TBA industry education and projects manager, said Stud Start trainees did not have to complete a farm work placement period this year. Tims said it was more beneficial to provide specific support for the areas that most interested the trainee.

"With this approach, we had three students commence work on breeding farms, one has returned to work in racing stables, and one pursued a job interview within the bloodstock area," she said. "Three students returned to their careers outside of the industry but they're all eager to enter the sector next year to do a vet nursing course and work on breeding farms. This year's training model has been judged as more successful than the previous year based on the initial feedback and more people successfully transitioning into the industry."

After completing the program in July, trainee Venessa Merrin began a role as a foaling attendant with Vinery Stud at Scone, and she has already locked in the same position for next season.

"Stud Start gave me the courage, skills, and confidence to pursue my dream career in the thoroughbred industry," Merrin said.



# 'Meet, Grow and Lead': the three pillars for cultivating a vintage crop

A networking forum for young people from the thoroughbred breeding industry is booming.

**A** project to set up a networking and educational forum for young people in the breeding industry is paying dividends, doubling in size over 12 months to 730 members.

Madison Tims, TBA's industry education and projects manager, said the growth of Next Crop since its formation in mid-2023 had exceeded expectations.

"Next Crop was developed on the following three pillars: Meet, Grow and Lead," she said. "Meet new people through social events, grow with education and training to help improve professional development and lead, allowing the group to create opportunities to mentor others in areas that may have wanted support when first entering the industry. Often a lot of younger staff might only get the chance to network at yearling sales where everyone is super busy."

Over the year the group held 17 events nationwide for members, who are aged 36 and younger. Tims said the group aimed to have leadership chapters in each state, with a Mix and Mingle series created for the sales season in Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia over the past year.

"One of our most successful events this year included the Next Crop trivia night," she said. "Organised by TBA in conjunction with the Next Crop committee, which includes Widden's Matt Comerford and Newgate Farm's Lachie Pethica, more than 150 people, split into 25 teams, pitted their general and racing knowledge against each other in a good-spirited get-together ahead of the hectic Magic Millions sale week."



Next Crop members mingle at Adelaide.



In preparation for the breeding season, Next Crop members were invited to a selection of in-person events in NSW and Victoria. This started with an introduction to a foaling workshop in Scone in August, followed by a similar workshop in Seymour two weeks later.

In late August, 65 members attended a mini-stallion tour of Newgate Farm, Vinery Stud and Yarraman Park Stud, followed by a BBQ and a chance to mix and mingle with fellow members.

Next Crop leaders are already planning many events for 2025.



The Next Crop trivia night during Magic Millions week on the Gold Coast attracted more than 150 participants.





# Helping managers develop their skills

By providing management training to industry leaders, TBA aims to support breeding businesses across the country.

**T**BA is focused on helping arm current and future leaders with the skillsets necessary to take on the unique challenges of working in the horse breeding industry.

Becoming a leader is easy, learning to get people to follow is the hard part. TBA has rolled out training workshops for nearly 300 managers as part of our role in helping lift the performance of the industry, providing resources that may not be readily available to members.

Over the past three years, we have hosted these skills workshops for middle management nationwide.

The training consists of a two-day delivery by Juliet Robinson, from Big Goals. Robinson has 20 years of experience in developing and delivering this kind of training, and she possesses an understanding of the unique difficulties that managers face in the thoroughbred industry.

This year, the TBA management workshops were held in Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria.

We also held additional workshops in New South Wales and Victoria specifically for senior management and business owners to help them develop their leadership and communication skills to manage and motivate their own managers effectively. These workshops are crucial to developing

our industry's workforce, ensuring farm managers and senior management have the skills to deal with challenging situations.

In 2024, senior managers for the first time completed a training course tailored to their needs.

"We've had great success from the past management skills workshops," said Madison Tims, TBA's industry education and projects manager.

"These sessions are key to developing our industry's workforce, ensuring farm managers and senior management have the skills to deal with challenging situations on-farm.

"More than 90 per cent of past participants said they would recommend the workshop to other managers."

TBA Management Skills Workshops



Scan the QR code for more information

## SUPPORTING OUR WORKERS 24/7

Irregular hours and isolation are major issues confronting workers in the horse breeding industry.

To help address this challenge, TBA set up a mental health and wellbeing support service for those working in the breeding industry.

The Stud Staff Support Line (SSSL) offers free, independent and confidential face-to-face or phone counselling sessions at a time and location of your choosing.

The service is provided by AccessEAP on behalf of TBA. They operate independently and have a network of more than 2000 psychologists and clinical professionals around the country with a minimum of

five years postgraduate clinical supervised experience.

AccessEAP has been providing support to organisations for over 30 years and they are a member of the Employee Assistance Professional Association Of Australasia.

To raise awareness of mental health throughout the year, TBA also collaborated with Inglis during its charity soccer tournament in February to raise mental health awareness. We sponsored the referees' uniform, which displayed the SSSL, and also helped with their charity raffle.

In October we also ran a wellbeing webinar. The session was led by qualified mental



**Stud Staff Support Line**  
1300 822 935

**TBA** Thoroughbred Breeders Australia

health educator Pippa Baker, focusing on helping individuals develop practical skills and knowledge to enhance their wellbeing.

### Webinar topics included:

- Growth Mindsets.
- Burnout and Managing Burnout.
- Contentment versus Happiness.
- Anger Iceberg and Understanding Anger.

To access the service for free, simply state 'Thoroughbred Breeders Australia' as the referral body when you call. This information will not be shared with TBA.

Anybody working directly in breeding can access the AccessEAP service by calling 1300 822 935.



# Industry goes back to school

Primary and secondary school students will learn about thoroughbreds through TBA's latest education program.

**T**horoughbred Breeders Australia is delivering an education program for the first time designed for primary and secondary school-aged students.

In November, as part of National Agriculture Day celebrations, we announced the launch of our curriculum-aligned fact sheets and accompanying learning tasks that explore Australia's thoroughbred industry.

Madison Tims, TBA industry education and projects manager, said the new program was designed to connect the industry with schools and students through the education curriculum, giving teachers and parents the confidence that there are career pathways and opportunities for their children to work with horses.

Over a 12-month period, TBA developed the education program and supporting materials with the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA).

The foundation describes itself as "a collaboration between industry, government and educators to promote primary industries education" by providing educational information and resources to help build knowledge about the agricultural sector.

The foundations' other partners include peak industry bodies such as Meat & Livestock Australia, Australian Pork Limited,



Curriculum-aligned fact sheets and accompanying learning tasks that explore Australia's thoroughbred industry, including workbooks and posters, for primary and secondary students.

Australian Eggs Limited and Dairy Australia.

The 14 fact sheets, designed for TBA, provide thoroughbred-aligned learning experiences across areas such as science, mathematics, design and technologies, history, geography, economics and English on the PIEFA Primezone website.

Tims said these resources, alongside supplementary learning materials, will also be available on a new online platform, TBA Schools, by December 2024.

These resources integrate multimedia content, real-world case studies, and

cross-curricular activities to engage students in meaningful learning.

They provide a broad learning experience which ranges from flip books exploring the life cycle of a thoroughbred to investigating how Newton's laws of motion apply to horse movement.

Further, students can explore the industry's careers, sustainability initiatives, and the role of innovation and technology, offering students practical insights into breeding/genetics, anatomy, nutrition, welfare and performance management.

## ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUES TO FLOURISH

The Australian thoroughbred industry's home for online learning has grown rapidly to boast more than 1000 registered members.

Many farms have adopted TBA Learning as part of their onboarding process, using it to equip new staff with foundational skills and knowledge, ensuring they are well-prepared from day one.

These resources are free and available to everyone interested in developing their horse knowledge, as users are able to learn from some of the best in the industry.

A total of 20 modules and four courses have been uploaded to the platform, covering areas such as

conformation, checking horse health, how to safely load a horse for transport, and how to hold a horse for a vet or farrier.

A new course was released in December for staff attending yearling sales, while further content is being developed for those taking on a retired horse.

Each bite-sized module features video, audio and written content, allowing students to learn in a way that suits them. The modules are expected to take between 15 and 30 minutes to complete. They can be undertaken individually or tackled as a larger course, in which related modules are linked together.

At the end of each module, there is a test, with students

receiving a certificate of completion when they successfully get to the end of a module. These can then be presented to an employer, attached to CVs or displayed for self-recognition.

One of the major strengths of the platform is that it has the participation of industry experts who have a vast amount of practical, on-the-job knowledge from years of experience in their respective fields. TBA Learning provides the opportunity to acknowledge these individuals, and we are grateful to them for allowing us to share their skills.

In addition, the site's



content has been translated to create a Chinese learning platform. This second site is helping to upskill workers in the industry in that nation, while importantly also deepening our relationships with their major owners and breeders.

Visit the site at [www.tbalearning.com](http://www.tbalearning.com)



# Finding the answers through science

The Australian thoroughbred industry is at the forefront of trying to produce the best racehorses in the world.

Adoption of innovation and new technologies and the maintenance of best practices are vital in maintaining our competitive edge on the world stage.

For eight years an industry-wide levy has existed to support research aimed at sustaining the local breeding industry. This levy, administered by AgriFutures Australia, focuses research on four key areas for success: how do we get better at breeding our horses, caring for the horses and workers, engaging with the industry and wider community and preventing diseases and parasite outbreaks.

One recently-completed project offered free post-mortems to record and investigate mid-to-late term pregnancy loss in thoroughbred mares across Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. The goal of the project was to establish whether a national database was feasible and if it would help identify trends and issues to help minimise pregnancy loss in thoroughbred mares.

"The industry's continued investment in research that can be put into practice and deliver results in terms of productivity and financial returns will help ensure we can meet the challenges of tomorrow," said TBA chief executive Tom Reilly. "Getting federal funding for this work is also a great benefit."

The funding model for this research and development is managed in the following way: under the Thoroughbred Research and Development Levy the Stud Book collects \$10 per mare covered, paid by the stallion owner, and \$10 per mare returned, paid by the broodmare owner.

The levy collects about \$400,000 a year, but this is then matched by federal government contributions, meaning the program is able to invest \$800,000 in research and development annually.

While AgriFutures manages the money, decisions on how the money is spent rests with an advisory panel comprising mainly industry representatives. The current five-year program began in 2022.

"The goal of the program is to invest in



Dr Joan Carrick, who led the pregnancy loss project.

RD&E that improves sustainability, productivity and competitiveness of the Australian thoroughbred industry," Caitlin Smith, AgriFutures' thoroughbred horses program manager, said.

TBA is keen to hear from breeders on areas they believe are deserving of research funding. Visit [www.tbaus.com/rd-levy/](http://www.tbaus.com/rd-levy/) have-your-say/ and fill out the contact form under the research levy menu.

## CURRENT AGRIFUTURES PROJECTS INCLUDE...

### Early pregnancy in the mare

*The University of Newcastle*  
2024-2027

The aim is to develop prototype devices to facilitate rapid detection of early pregnancy in mares to increase the chances of a foal surviving.

### The Equine Fetal Membranes.

#### What is normal?

*The University of Melbourne*  
2024-2025

Up to 10 per cent of pregnant mares will abort their foals yearly. This study of fetal membranes is trying to better understand why this happens.

### Evaluation of a prototype vaccine for rattles in foals

*The University of Queensland*  
2023 - 2025

The development of a prototype vaccine that poses no risk to humans working with horses that have been vaccinated.

### Improving Fertility in Older Mares: Can the Effects of Aging be Reversed?

*The University of Sydney*  
2023-2026

Examines the effects of supplementing feed with niacin on mare fertility. This could improve conception rates and expand the reproductive lifespan of older mares.

### Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for horses

*The Australian Veterinary Association Ltd*  
2022-2025

Aims to develop evidence-based antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for horses. Vets will be provided comprehensive best-practice information on common clinical syndromes in horses.

## AGRIFUTURES ADVISORY PANEL

### CHAIR

#### DR CATHERINE CHICKEN

Catherine is an equine veterinarian in the NSW Hunter Valley. She is a consultant to the Scone Equine Hospital on equine pathology and infectious disease.

### DEPUTY CHAIR

#### MICHAEL GRIEVE

Former owner and operator of Grandview Stud.

### DR CRAIG SUANN

Former chief regulatory veterinarian for the NSW thoroughbred racing industry for 33 years.



**AgriFutures<sup>®</sup>**  
Thoroughbred  
Horses

### JACQUELINE STEWART

Keeper of the Australian Stud Book, the official authority for the identification of racehorses in Australia.

### MIKE BECKER

Independent stallions owner and operator.

### RYAN ARNEL

Stonehouse Thoroughbreds stud operator.

### DR GUY LESTER

Operator of Equimed, which brings specialist veterinary services directly to equine practitioners.

### DR FIONA LACEY

Veterinarian and owner of Mogumber Park stud.

### DR WENDY PERRIAM

Equine veterinary practice operator.



# Supporting life after racing

The welfare of horses is of paramount importance to TBA, which has expanded its off-track initiatives with other equestrian bodies.

**T**horoughbred horse breeding is driven by the magical allure of the racecourse. Yet for many thoroughbreds the magic of a new beginning begins off the track.

Adeline Collins owns three former racehorses, all of them thoroughbreds. None of them were winners on the track, but they are now helping Collins excel in her chosen field of equestrian coaching.

In November, Collins' way with former racehorses was acknowledged by Pony Club Australia, which named her Young Coach of the Year, an award sponsored by TBA.

"Thoroughbreds are close to my heart," said Collins, from South Gippsland, in a Facebook video post.

"We are in this really unique situation in Pony Club Australia where we do have a lot of thoroughbreds in our membership base.

"And part of that then is being able to respond to that need of teaching riders and their families how to manage off the track thoroughbreds as they venture into their second career."

The welfare of thoroughbreds is of



paramount importance to TBA, which has expanded its off-track initiatives in 2024 while fostering relationships with other equestrian bodies.

Among these initiatives is sponsorship of a program that will bring retired thorough-

**Racing Hearts will bring retired thoroughbreds into regional NSW schools.**

breds into schools in regional NSW, being run by Racing Hearts. These visits allow children to develop a bond with horses and see at first hand the beauty of the thoroughbred.

This year's Sydney Royal Easter Show exemplified the way that thoroughbreds can transition to a good and valued life away from the racetrack. TBA was delighted to continue its association with 'Thoroughbred Day' at the 2024 show.

We were honoured to once again support the prestigious Col. AV Pope Cup, along with a led class for geldings.

As the official broadcast box sponsor, we had a great time chatting about industry initiatives such as Fast Track, Next Crop and TBA Learning.

Congratulations to Riley Kent and Chorus (racing name Zounate) on taking out the 2024 Pope Cup at the Easter Show in April for the best show hacks in Australia over 15 hands.

The handsome chestnut, a product of Bowness Stud in Young, was offered at the 2018 Inglis Premier Yearling Sale where he was bought for \$80,000 by Elite Thoroughbreds. Zounate was racing consistently but struggling to break through, racking up 11 placings in maiden class before being offered through Inglis Digital in April 2021 where he made \$20,000 and was transferred to Mt Isa.

He saluted first-up for his new connections, winning by six lengths at Mt Isa and raced on until August 2022. By then he had won two more races and retired with a record of three wins and 13 placings from 32 starts with prizemoney topping \$77,000.

Queensland show rider Kent took on the chestnut horse, renamed him Chorus and made him a favourite in the show ring circuit, where everyone is singing his name.



TBA sponsored classes at the Royal Easter Show, as well as the Thoroughbred Sports' Horse Association Nationals.



Riley Kent and former racehorse Chorus triumphed at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.



# Connecting with governments

One of the most important roles for Thoroughbred Breeders Australia (TBA) is representing the breeding industry with the federal government.

Over the course of the past decade TBA has built strong relationships with politicians in Canberra from across the party divide, which has allowed the organisation to successfully advocate in a range of areas such as welfare standards, access to visas for skilled staff from overseas, access to animal and human vaccines and emergency relief payments.

The pathway to developing and maintaining these relationships is through face-to-face engagement. During 2024 TBA CEO Tom Reilly made four trips to Canberra, during which he met with more than 30 MPs and senators, along with their staff.

One major issue which ran through the year, but remains unresolved, is federal reform of online wagering. Given more than 90 per cent of racing revenue comes from this source, the shape of those changes will have a direct impact on racing and breeding.

TBA has been a strong advocate for wagering on racing to be given an exemption from many of the likely rules to be brought in for advertising.

For example, it is vital that racing broadcasts can be supported by wagering advertising, form guides in newspapers continue to be sponsored by bookmakers and race clubs and races continue to be sponsored by wagering companies.

It has been important to make the government understand that racing – which



TBA's Tom Reilly, broadcaster Caroline Searcy and Widden Stud's Antony Thompson in Canberra.

supports more than 80,000 full time jobs across Australia – is dependent upon wagering in a way in which other sporting codes are not.

While at the time of writing we are still awaiting the government's policy in this space, Reilly is confident that racing will be granted a broad exemption from some of the upcoming restrictions.

"An argument that has really struck home with politicians from all parties is that racing and breeding support jobs right the way across Australia, especially in regional areas," he explained. "While there are many politicians who have a negative view of wagering, it is helpful to explain how the receipts from betting underpin the whole financial model of breeding and racing."

As well as discussing wagering reforms, TBA has also been active in lobbying to ensure breeders can continue to access skilled staff from overseas.

In July we provided the Immigration Minister and his department with a detailed 10-page submission which argued for continued to access to skilled migrants under a range of visa categories. This submission fed into a significant review of the whole migration system into Australia. This remains ongoing, though TBA is confident pathways will remain for breeders to bring in these vital staff members. It is hoped that this process may even become cheaper and less bureaucratic following the review.

While a shifting federal parliamentary calendar meant TBA was not able to host its annual event in Canberra in 2024, we are hopeful of being able to hold a similar function in 2025.

In addition to working with federal politicians, TBA also sought to assist the state breeding associations with their government relations. This saw TBA meet with four of the six state racing ministers in 2024.

## TBA steps out with new look

Thoroughbred Breeders Australia has updated its brand logo to reflect its desire to raise awareness in the wider Australian community about the thoroughbred industry and present us as modern and contemporary.

This unique association may be 105 years old, but TBA is still relevant and competitive in a rapidly changing national and global market. Importantly, the new logo features a horse's head in the A of TBA. This emphasises the animal that is at the heart of everything we do.

The updated brand identity encompasses a fresh set of colours that

Thoroughbred  
Breeders Australia



A new modern look and set of brand colours for TBA. Below, our old branding.

are inspired by the landscape that we live and work in.

We look forward to this exciting new chapter as we continue to celebrate and advocate for thoroughbred breeding in Australia.

THOROUGHBRED  
BREEDERS

Australia



# Selling Australia at home and abroad

Aushorse continues to market Australia as the best place to buy, race and breed.

The bloodstock market is truly global, with buyers able to invest within multiple jurisdictions throughout the world.

In this competitive space it is vital Australia maintains a strong and distinctive voice to all offshore investors, as well as local industry participants, to highlight the benefits of buying, racing and breeding in Australia.

While the major sales companies, Magic Millions and Inglis, successfully market their own sales on the back of graduates, it's important for Australian breeders to maintain an overarching narrative on the benefits of participating in the Australian thoroughbred industry. And it is Aushorse that provides that voice.

We do this through a wide range of activities: an investor's guide that pulls together the most compelling data on our industry, traditional advertising in bloodstock publications, events at sales and race days, social media in three languages, a high-end magazine sent to leading buyers around the world and relationship building with clients at home and abroad.

## INVESTORS GUIDE

The Aushorse Investor's Guide is now in its eighth year and is essential reading for the global bloodstock industry.

The publication is widely promoted online – attracting well over 10,000 readers for the digital version – and it is also printed in hard copy and posted to 4500 people worldwide, along with the Aushorse magazine.

Among the key statistics are that in 2025, there will be 105 individual races worth \$1 million or more in Australia. This is more than across America and Europe combined.

Incredibly, more than 140,000 people own a share in a racehorse, which equates to 1 in every 191 Australians being involved in ownership.

It is not just in prizemoney and ownership that Australia leads the way, but also the quality of racing: in four of the past five years Australia has hosted more of the top

The 2025 *Investor's Guide* is available online and in print.

rated Group One races than any other jurisdiction.

And while there will be 105 races worth \$1 million or more in 2025, the sport is well funded at all levels. In the past racing season, the average race value across Australia was \$53,797.

This depth of prizemoney meant that 1 in every 43 horses that competed in the last racing season had career earnings in excess of \$500,000, with 1 in every 132 having won seven figures in prizemoney.

Despite the riches on offer, the Guide shows that it is more affordable to invest in Australia than in Europe or North America, with the price of the top colts and fillies significantly lower than in other yearling markets.

"I get a lot of people asking me about the Guide and as we were preparing it I had a number of prominent investors from Europe and America asking for the stats as they look at their investment plans for 2025," explains Aushorse CEO Tom Reilly. "The Guide is also very popular with trainers and syndicators here and is a great tool for them when engaging their clients."

The online Guide features a wonderful

video that encapsulates much of what is great about the Australian racing and breeding scene. It is available at [Aushorse.com.au](http://Aushorse.com.au) and has been designed to be easily viewed on mobile devices.

Inglis chief executive of bloodstock sales, Sebastian Hutch, complimented the publication, saying: "As we've seen with the recent spring carnivals in Melbourne and Sydney, the spectacle of the racing here in Australia is simply incredible.

"The Investor's Guide does a great job of showcasing that, but also making clear that Australia is unparalleled in terms of prizemoney, as well as bloodstock availability and affordability."

Magic Millions managing director, Barry Bowditch, said: "The Investor's Guide puts forward a compelling case as to why there is no better place to invest and race horses than Australia. It's a great document to have released as we get closer to kicking off the sales season on the Gold Coast next month."

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The social media presence of Aushorse has been amplified over the past 12 months, especially during Group One races, major



## CHAMPIONING AUSTRALIA



Australian owners were among the many who gathered for the Aushorse Royal Ascot event.



events, big sales days and multiple large-scale marketing campaigns.

Internally, Aushorse has been active in producing race explainers and video content on races along with other significant events on the calendar. Social content throughout the yearling sale season has been helpful to maximise engagement.

This year also has seen the social media team crafting the rollout of major campaigns like Australian Grown, which promoted the

unique way local horses are bred, raised and trained in Australia and why this leads them to become such good athletes.

This campaign was timed to coincide with the spring carnivals, when interest in Australian racing is peaking both internationally and domestically.

Social media posts highlighted the work of experts like Camilla Whishaw, who grew up on a stud farm in Tasmania, and now works internationally advising farms on

equine nutrition after qualifying in Health Science and Naturopathy. Whishaw explained how Australia's unique grasses and pastures ensure our horses have the best opportunity to develop into world class athletes.

Another expert featured in the campaign was leading reproductive veterinarian Dr Joan Carrick, who explained how Australia's climate and open spaces, along with management techniques that mirrored conditions in the wild, enabled mares to maintain their health during pregnancy while also allowing them to be more relaxed while foaling.

Featuring social media, an email campaign and advertising in bloodstock and racing publications, Australian Grown generated significant traction.

### ROYAL ASCOT EVENT

The Royal meeting at Ascot has become one of the truly international events on the global racing calendar, with runners coming from across the globe to take part in the prestigious carnival.

Of course, Royal Ascot has also been the scene of some of the Australian breeding industry's most prominent successes, with victories by the likes of Nature Strip, Merchant Navy and Black Caviar.

For the third year, Aushorse hosted a drinks party after racing on the first day of the meeting, and we were again able to celebrate an Australian victory, thanks to Asfoora's King Charles III Stakes win.

This event is a great way to catch up with many of the international investors who buy in Australia, as well as many we are keen to see on our shores. Having the connections of Asfoora join us also made for a special occasion.

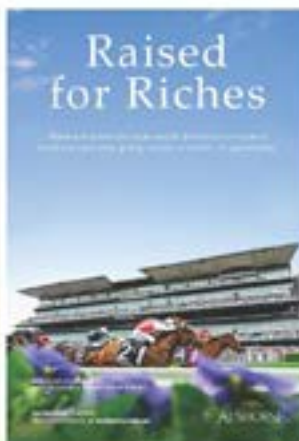
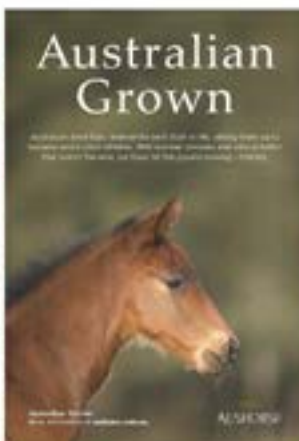
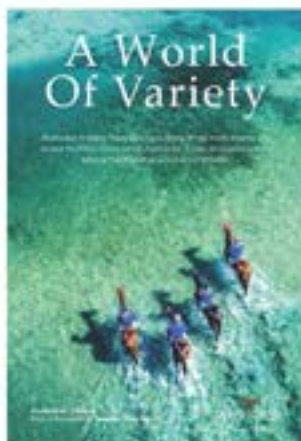
Outside of the drinks party Aushorse hosts a number of lunches around the Ascot meeting, when major owners from across the globe are in London.

### LAUNCH OF NEW WEBSITE

In September Aushorse launched a new, enhanced website. With digital communications playing such a crucial role in the modern world, having a site that reflects the vibrancy and modernity of the Australian thoroughbred industry is vital.

The site was designed by the same creative agency that has developed our digital Investor's Guide for the past two years, allowing the two to sync seamlessly.

The site is designed to provide relevant information for anyone from major international investors through to somebody looking to buy a share in their first racehorse. Through the site we also respond to many enquiries from people seeking more information on the Australian market.



The Australian Grown campaign highlighted the success of locally bred and trained horses.



# When fortune comes knocking

The Aushorse magazine celebrates the best and most inspiring stories from Australian racing and breeding.

The moment the implausible turns into reality on a racetrack is celebrated on the latest cover of the annual *Aushorse Magazine*.

The moment immediately after 100-1 chance Knight's Choice won the Melbourne Cup is captured perfectly.

Jockey Robbie Dolan – better known for his attempts to break into the pop music world on reality television – is bathing in the adulation and incredulity of the Cup crowd at Flemington. It's the ultimate dream of anyone who has been involved with a long shot.

In fact, this year's magazine is a celebration of how the implausible can turn into reality through hard work, smart planning and some old-fashioned good luck, with features on Asfoora's heist at Royal Ascot in June and Everest winner Bella Nipotina now sitting behind only the incomparable Winx on Australia's all-time prizemoney list.

Leading writer Malcolm Knox talks with trainer Gai Waterhouse who, at the age of 70, reflects on how she staked a place as a leading trainer in her own right, emerging from the shadow of her famous father Tommy Smith despite the brickbats, especially early on, from some doubters in the industry.

"This year's magazine has some great



stories that have been well told by some of the best writers in Australian journalism," says Aushorse CEO Tom Reilly. "I particularly enjoyed the features on Gai Waterhouse and

the entrance of the Cunningham family to the industry."

The magazine is designed to be a high-end product with quality writing and photography. The stories are selected to inform readers about our industry and share some of its vibrancy.

Released before the start of each sales season, with a print run of 6000 copies, the Aushorse Magazine and the accompanying Investor's Guide is mailed directly to 4500 buyers and investors across Australia and around the world.

The Aushorse Magazine is also displayed prominently and given away at sales venues across the country.

## Getting the lowdown

Knowledge is power in horse breeding, whether it's the first-time visitor at a yearling sale or the bloodstock expert armed with the latest datasets.

One of the key roles of Aushorse is promoting Australian thoroughbreds through the dissemination of this knowledge to potential investors worldwide.

One of the grassroots methods employed by Aushorse is taking race fans behind the scenes at the yearling sales, explaining what's going on and educating them about raising and caring for an elite thoroughbred. In the past we've organised a range of events for people to meet and hear from some of the most famous names in racing and breeding, from Peter Moody explaining what he looks for when assessing



Racing Connections hosted breakfast events in Perth and Adelaide in 2024.

yearlings, through to Gai Waterhouse talking about her training techniques and Ciaran Maher explaining his rise from jumps jockey to champion trainer.

These sales tours and masterclass events, hosted under the Aushorse sub-brand Racing Connections, were deployed at the Magic Millions Perth Yearling Sale in February and the Adelaide Magic Millions sale in March.

Typically, the attendees come along for breakfast, where they are given a rundown of the heady world of racing and breeding. Everyone is encouraged to ask questions of the experts, one of whom then takes them on a tour of the sales complex, providing insider insights on the horses going under the hammer.

In Adelaide attendees were eligible for a lucky door prize of \$5000 to spend on a horse at the sale. Meanwhile, potential first-time owners at the Perth sale breakfast were eligible to enter the Own The Dream competition run by Racing WA, which offered a first prize of a \$20,000 share in a racehorse.

Aushorse chief executive Tom Reilly said being at the sales was a fun but educational experience for everyone. He added that it also gave his team the opportunity to hear from breeders and buyers about the issues impacting the industry. "We look forward to catching up with everyone during the 2025 sales season," he said.



## AWARDS AND CONTACTS

# 'I'm blown away': Unsung heroes rewarded

Hazel Fertier often rides up to 20 horses a morning for more than 10 different stables. Her efforts were recognised at the annual industry awards night.

**T**enacity, an indefatigable spirit and a big helping of courage are key ingredients for working in the thoroughbred horse industry. Track rider Hazel Fertier embodies all of these traits.

Sidelined after a fall at trackwork, Fertier was still in a knee brace when she accepted the top award at the annual Godolphin Australian Stud and Stable Staff Awards.

The Thoroughbred Excellence Award, as well as the Horsemanship Award, were an unexpected morale booster and financial windfall for the popular Murray Bridge-based track rider, who was recognised for her work as the backbone of several local stables in South Australia.

Fertier often rides up to 20 horses a morning for more than 10 different stables, who hail her affinity with "tricky" or "difficult" horses.

"I'm absolutely blown away and completely didn't expect it at all," Fertier said after the Gold Coast awards ceremony in May this year. "It's a massive honour to throw in the Excellence Award. The recognition 100 per cent makes all the hard work worthwhile. There are so many people that do the same job and are just as deserving so to be acknowledged like this, it's just huge."



2024 award winners: (from left) Isabelle Toole, Trudie Clarke, Emma Cully, Hazel Fertier, Ngyrie Gonzalez, Nicole Mutimer and Finn McCarthy.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the Stud And Stable Staff Awards, overseen by TBA, recognised the winners of seven categories with winners representing five jurisdictions.

Thoroughbred Racing Northern Territory's Trudie Clarke was lauded for her 50 years of service, earning her the Dedication to Racing Award. Clarke has been involved in everything from track riding to clerk of the course and has been a pivotal asset in education for the past 20 years.

Each winner, except for the Newcomer Award recipient, received \$10,000 and a trophy, with runners-up awarded \$3000. The Thoroughbred Excellence Award winner earned an additional \$5000 and a trophy. The Newcomer winner and runner-up received \$5000 and \$3000, respectively, along with ongoing career development coaching.

### 2024 AWARDS

**Thoroughbred Excellence Award:** Hazel Fertier (Freelance Trackrider).

**Horsemanship Award:** Hazel Fertier (Freelance Trackrider).

**Leadership Award:** Finn McCarthy (McEvoy Mitchell Racing).

**Dedication to Breeding Award:** Ngyrie Gonzalez (Alwyn Park Stud).

**Dedication to Racing Award:** Trudie Clarke (Thoroughbred Racing Northern Territory).

**Administrative and Ancillary Services Award:** Emma Cully (Star Thoroughbreds).

**Thoroughbred Care and Welfare Award:** Nicole Mutimer (Northern Territory Institute of Equestrian Sport).

**Newcomer Award:** Isabelle Toole (Vinery Stud).

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## MEMBERSHIP

### BE PART OF THE NATIONAL BODY

The importance of Thoroughbred Breeders Australia membership cannot be overstated.

While the jaw-dropping racetrack deeds of horses such as Imperatriz speak volumes for the quality of Australian-bred racehorses, it's the work of TBA - often happening behind the scenes - that contributes most to the health and wealth of the

thoroughbred industry at large. The recognised peak body, Thoroughbred Breeders Australia (TBA), has over 4200 members, and this base provides TBA with the authority to lobby federal and state governments, regulatory authorities and other racing organisations to ensure positive outcomes for the industry.

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