

## **Worksafe**

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In most modern workplaces these days, when a worker injures him or herself to any degree, it is a serious and reportable incident. If even just a band-aid is applied to a small cut, paperwork must be filled out. Like it or not, that is the way of the world.

Workplace safety and prevention of injuries is very high on the radar at the moment, and for good reason. Too many people are being injured at their workplaces with subsequent pain, costs and losses being suffered by all parties. So drawing blood or breaking bones are big no-no's for human workers.

It is a real shame that the same levels of injury prevention, safety awareness and worksafe practices do not apply to our horses; even in 'recreational' environments let alone 'real' horse events.

If one death in the human workplace is totally unacceptable then how can we, as a civilized society, condone any event in which horses are injured, killed or 'put down' (killed; just a polite way of saying it)?

Horse racing and horse jumping in their various forms and blends are tainted with injuries, blood and broken bones and the needless deaths of too many horses. Justifying it by saying that these horse activities are worth billions of dollars to the economy and employ thousands of people is no justification at all. If an activity causes needless and unfortunate injury and suffering, then the answer is pretty simple: don't do it!

If you own a racehorse, or know someone who does, or know people who bet on the races or are employed in the industry then please ask the questions; is it moral that these animals are treated this way for our entertainment? And is it fair on the horse to be treated as just a way for someone with a gambling problem to get their kicks? Are there better ways of seeking investment opportunities, entertainment and a social day out? (I wonder if 'ethical investment' providers invest in the horse racing industry?) Don't think so.

A horse that has broken down at the behest of human activity is a sure sign that something is wrong and that something needs to be changed to right that wrong.

If you know somebody who aspires to be a show jumper or eventer or if you are involved in these activities, then please ask them or yourself these questions: is this a natural activity for a horse? What damage is being inflicted on the horse's body, limbs and hooves by these high energy lift offs and rough landings? Why do show jumping and eventing horses limp into middle age and hobble into old age (if they get there at all)? And why are 'navicular syndrome', ringbone, bowed tendons and pedal bone osteosis so common in jumping horses?

Hello?

If the horse had true choice and chose to partake in these endeavours then it would be different. But horses do not have a choice. They are made to run, forced to jump and dance and have no option but to complete a leg of an endurance ride (unless the vet declares they are unfit). And if they break, get injured or have a big crash and are deemed to not be able to continue then they are often just put down on the spot, sent to the doggers or neglected in a 'back

paddock' somewhere. The human in a lot of these cases is greatly disappointed because they didn't 'win'.

It would be refreshing for a change if life for the horse was considered by us, their carers, from the horses' point of view. It is vastly different from the current view where many horses are just vehicles for human entertainment, human achievement and the perpetuation of the social malady of gambling.

We are indeed in debt. In moral debt. And it is high time we made a serious effort to change this situation. We can, and one way would be to give all the animals in our care the life and dignity they deserve.