

Queensland Racing Review 2025

Terms of Reference



Queensland
Government

Background

Queensland's racing industry is a vital contributor to the state's economy and a significant employer of Queenslanders, responsible for generating more than \$2.4 billion in value added contribution to the Queensland economy with 51% directly benefiting regional economies.¹

With an average of 32 race meetings across the three codes each week and 120 race clubs across the state, racing plays an important role in the social fabric of the state, particularly in our rural and regional areas.²

The Queensland Government is committed to strengthening the racing industry, ensuring the long-term viability of all racing codes in venues throughout the state, while maintaining high animal welfare standards.

Over the past decade, the racing industry in Queensland has been the subject of numerous reviews and inquiries including into the treatment of retired Thoroughbreds³; the regulation of the Queensland Greyhound racing industry (the MacSporran report)⁴; the review of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016*⁵; the establishment of the Racing Appeals Panel; and, most recently, the 'best practice review' into the operations of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (the Commission).⁶

The MacSporran report saw the enactment of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016*, which enabled the separation of the integrity and licensing functions from Racing Queensland (RQ) and the establishment of the Commission.

The industry funding model changed with the introduction of the *Betting Tax Act 2018* (Betting Tax Act) and further amendments to the *Betting Tax Act in 2022* that shifted RQ's funding for the industry from its commercial relationship with Tabcorp to a point of consumption tax. Further, the Racing Infrastructure Fund (RIF), which has been funding major infrastructure projects since 2014, is almost exhausted without an ongoing funding stream.

To this end, the Queensland Government has committed to delivering a comprehensive, independent review that will shape the future of Queensland's racing industry.

1 *2022–23 Size and scope of the Queensland Racing Industry*, prepared by IER, April 2024

2 *2023–24 Racing Queensland Annual Report*

3 *Inquiry into animal cruelty in the management of retired Thoroughbred and Standardbred horses in Queensland - Management of retired Thoroughbred and Standardbred horses* – Final report – Publications | Queensland Government

4 *Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry* Final Report

5 *Proactive Release: Reforms arising from the review of the Racing Integrity Act 2016*

6 In December 2023, the former Government announced that QRIC would undergo an independent best practice review. While the report was completed in 2024, the report was never released by the former Government.

Objectives

This review acknowledges the diversity and interdependence of participants, stakeholders and interests that define the racing industry. Unlike previous reviews, which focused narrowly on specific issues such as integrity, animal welfare or governance, this review will comprehensively examine all aspects of racing in Queensland. Its purpose is to identify and recommend the steps necessary to:

- ensure the financial sustainability and long-term viability of all racing codes
- strengthen the integrity of Queensland's racing industry
- work to deliver modern and fit for purpose racing infrastructure in every part of the state
- safeguard the ongoing viability and success of country racing
- foster a collaborative relationship among stakeholders to ensure a commitment to the care and welfare of racing animals is a priority.

The Department of Sport, Racing and the Olympic and Paralympic Games (the department) has been tasked with supporting the review, with assistance from the Department of Primary Industries.

Scope

The review will, with a focus on ensuring a sustainable industry across all three codes, address the following 6 focus areas of the racing industry in the Queensland:

1. Current legislative framework and governance arrangements
2. Financial sustainability
3. Integrity
4. Infrastructure
5. Country racing
6. Animal welfare.

In considering each of these focus areas, the review will:

- conduct a thorough assessment of the current operations within Queensland, including relevant issues outlined below
- identify any systemic challenges or inefficiencies that are hindering the good functioning of that part of the industry
- provide recommendations for next steps, including strategies to optimise investment and deliver a sustainable, world-class industry with long-term success across each focus area.

This Terms of Reference recognises that sustainability in the racing industry refers not only to economic factors. It encompasses the industry's integral role in Queensland's social fabric, particularly in rural and regional areas, as well as the need to prioritise the commitment to the care and welfare of racing animals.

Matters identified for review

As part of the examination of each focus area, the review will consider the following key issues and opportunities including:

- support for the long-term success and sustainability of racing
- prioritisation of care and welfare of racing animals in conjunction with stakeholders
- the need for fit for purpose infrastructure that supports all three racing codes
- the effectiveness of existing governance arrangements and delegations
- opportunities to connect more Queenslanders to racing and recognise country racing is the fabric of many communities
- the cost of providing integrity services and the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission's funding model
- collaboration between stakeholders and Racing Queensland to optimize the racing calendar
- the implications of a slower wagering market and alternative revenue opportunities
- increasing legal costs, insurance and compliance costs
- ongoing statewide industry workforce challenges
- the need for a greater media presence
- effective engagement to leverage racing's large volunteer workforce
- the impact of natural disasters and weather events on all aspects of the industry.

Existing legislative framework

The department is responsible for the oversight of legislation enabling the operation and governance of the racing industry via the *Racing Act 2002*, the *Racing Regulation 2023* (the Racing Legislation). The Department of Primary Industries is responsible for oversight of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* and the *Racing Integrity Regulation 2016* (the Racing Integrity Legislation).

The Racing Legislation establishes RQ, and the Racing Integrity Legislation establishes the Commission and the Racing Appeals Panel (RAP).

RQ is responsible for the commercial operation and viability of the industry as the control body for thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing.⁷

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) is the body responsible for regulating the integrity of the racing industry and the welfare of racing animals.⁸

⁷ The functions of Racing Queensland are set out in section 10 of the *Racing Act 2002*.

⁸ The functions of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission are set out in section 10 of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016*.

Methodology

The review will be conducted by an independent reviewer, with government lead provided by the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games, and supported by the Department of Primary Industries.

The reviewer will undertake consultation with key stakeholders in Queensland and in making recommendations will draw on the expertise and experience of Queensland's racing counterparts both nationally and internationally.

Deliverables and timing

The reviewer will deliver an interim report to the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games within four months of commencing the review. A final report is to be provided within six months of commencing the review. The report will be made available to the public once finalised.