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## **1. PURPOSE**

The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association is committed to ensuring high standards of biosecurity for all horses participating in ATHRA sanctioned events.

After the successful eradication campaign of Equine Influenza in 2007 it remains vital that equestrian activities continue to follow good biosecurity measures to minimize the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

Biosecurity is the commonsense and practical management of a horse's health, the health of the property on which the horse is kept, and above all the health of the horse owner, its handlers and other people who come into contact with the horse. With sensible management practices the risk of disease infecting horses and people can be reduced.

## **2. SCOPE**

This Policy covers all affiliated clubs, all ATHRA members and all persons attending a sanctioned ATHRA event as a Ride Visitor or in any other capacity.

In this context, "sanctioned ATHRA event" includes trail rides, trail ride challenges, charity rides, special events, regional camps, training days and clinics; and as defined in ATHRA's Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>.

## **3. POLICY**

### **3.1. Responsibility**

The responsibility for ensuring high standards of biosecurity rests in equal parts with the horse owner; the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association; and the ATHRA affiliated club organising or hosting the event who must ensure the events and venues are managed to best protect against any of the following scenarios:

- Introduction of exotic, endemic and infectious disease to horses,
- Spread of disease from an infected area to an unaffected areas,
- Incidence and spread of disease agents of public health significance.

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<sup>1</sup> IMS-GU-009 ATHRA Code of Conduct

### 3.2. Club Biosecurity Risk Mitigation Plan

Clubs are encouraged to prepare and implement a generic Biosecurity Risk Mitigation Plan, to be used for typical club rides and for other events where more horses are expected to participate (but not Special Events or Charity Rides – see Item 3.3 below).

The Plan must be specific to the local environment as described in Item 3.6 below.

ATHRA's Horse Biosecurity Guideline<sup>2</sup> document provides information about topics that should be included in a Club Biosecurity Risk Mitigation Plan.

### 3.3. Special Events, Charity Rides and other Large Events

An event-specific Biosecurity Risk Mitigation Plan must be prepared for Charity Rides and Special Events (as defined in the Code of Conduct) and submitted to ATHRA's Insurance Coordinator with the Event Application<sup>3</sup>.

### 3.4. Vaccination

Some diseases can be prevented, or their effect minimized, by vaccination. All horses should be vaccinated against tetanus. Strangles and equine herpes virus (EHV 4) vaccines are recommended for certain situations; horse owners should consult their veterinarian for advice.

ATHRA strongly recommends that all horses should be vaccinated against any infectious disease where the risk of infection has been proven to exist or is likely to exist in the region in which the horse is normally stabled, or in places where the horse is likely to be taken. However, it is up to each individual owner to decide whether to vaccinate their horses against infectious disease.

A requirement for all participating horses to be vaccinated as a pre-requisite to attending an Event will be the organizing club's decision to make.

However, in the case of major ATHRA-sponsored and/or promoted Events (for example: the annual Queensland September Camp, the Ride With Pride event, and state Regional Camps\*), ATHRA reserves the right to over-rule some or all biosecurity measures proposed by the organizing or host club.

\*This list is not exhaustive

### 3.5. Individual State and Territory Laws and Regulations

Individual state and territory laws and regulations shall take precedence over any biosecurity decisions and actions proposed by ATHRA and/or an organizing club.

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<sup>2</sup> IMS-GU-033 Horse Biosecurity

<sup>3</sup> IMS-F-013 Application to Conduct Special Event/ Charity Ride

### 3.6. Identifying Local Biosecurity Risks

When preparing Risk Mitigation Plans, Event organizers must consider the specific infectious diseases associated with both the Event location and the regions from which horses will travel to the Event.

For example: The transmission of Hendra virus is associated with flying foxes (fruit bats). Therefore, for an Event planned to be held in a region where fruit bats can be found, or where Hendra virus has previously been recorded, or where horses will travel from, a decision must be made on whether or not participating horses are to be vaccinated against the virus as a pre-requisite for attendance.

### 3.7. Communication of Risk Mitigation Plans

Event organizers must ensure that the biosecurity requirements specific to their Event are communicated to all participants well prior to horses arriving at the venue.

## 4. POLICY REVIEW AND CHANGE

This Policy in its entirety is to be reviewed annually by the ATHRA Board and the review date and outcome minuted for future reference.

**Emergency Disease Watch Hotline 1800 675 888**