



Australian Government
Australian Skills Quality Authority

REPORT

Training in equine programs in Australia



Letter of transmittal

The Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP
Minister for Vocational Education and Skills
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

We are pleased to provide the report on the Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA's) national strategic review of training in equine programs in Australia.

This strategic review was initiated by ASQA Commissioners in response to the tragic death of a young student, Ms Sarah Waugh in 2009, in a horse riding accident during training at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) New South Wales institute and the systemic safety issues identified in the subsequent New South Wales Coroner's report.

This national strategic review relied on audits of registered training organisations, surveys of registered training organisations and stakeholder feedback for its findings. The review confirmed the concerns in the Coroner's report about the content and conduct of the equine training, policies and procedures for assessing horses to be used in training, and the adequacy of trainer and assessor competencies and currency of industry experience.

The results have indicated that most registered training organisations have difficulty complying with assessment requirements; the equine training environment while small is very diverse; short duration courses in horse riding and handling are potentially undermining safety; and changes are required to national qualifications to address safety and quality issues.

This strategic review was guided by a management committee drawn from key stakeholders from industry, employers, unions and government and chaired by ASQA's Chief Commissioner.

ASQA's Commissioners are grateful for the invaluable contribution of the management committee—both collectively and individually—and also for the active support and contribution from other stakeholders.

Key recommendations of this review address the need for:

- changes to training packages to address safety and quality issues in equine training
- a consistent approach for managing work health and safety risks in the horse industry across Australia
- training packages to include minimum benchmarks around the amount of training required for units of competency and VET qualifications
- the quality of assessment to improve
- greater clarity in training packages in relation to assessment evidence
- adequate provision of training and assessment in an actual or simulated environment, and
- trainers and assessors to gain and maintain vocational competence.

ASQA considers the implementation of the strategic review's recommendations will strengthen considerably the quality and safety of equine training and assessment provided to learners. This is particularly important not only for the integrity of the VET sector but also because safe practice and effective risk management is critical to training in the equine industry.

We commend this report and its recommendations to you.

Yours sincerely



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Chief Commissioner and Chief
Executive Officer



Dr Dianne Orr

Deputy Chief Commissioner and
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Professor The Hon Michael Lavarch AO

Commissioner Risk, Intelligence
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Key findings

- Horse riding and horse handling activities occur in a range of income earning, professional and amateur sport, and recreational settings cutting across all age and ability groups. They encompass diverse professional, amateur and recreational organisations and industry regulators.
- The single unifying theme across all settings is that there is risk in these activities requiring a focus on safety and active risk identification and management.
- Data indicates there are a significant number of injuries, hospitalisations and fatalities that occur during horse riding and handling.
- While there are voluntary codes or guides for the horse industry, including one developed by Safe Work Australia, there is no consistent approach for managing work health and safety risks in the horse industry across Australia.
- As a result of the diversity of settings and activities, there are numerous equine units of competency spread across five industry training packages and many equine VET accredited courses.
- As VET is training for work and many horse-related activities are sport and recreation based, a large amount of training also occurs outside the VET system.
- This training landscape makes the market confusing for potential students, who may find it difficult to identify training that matches their needs and skill levels.

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Executive Summary

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) commenced operation as the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector on 1 July 2011.

ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met so that students, employers and governments have confidence in the quality of vocational education and training outcomes delivered by Australian registered training organisations (RTOs).

Under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (the Act), ASQA can conduct reviews of any area of concern in training provided by RTOs, to identify systemic poor practice and propose solutions.

The tragic death of a young student, Ms Sarah Waugh in 2009, in a horse riding accident during training at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) New South Wales institute and the systemic safety issues identified in the subsequent New South Wales Coroner's report were the primary reasons for ASQA's initiation of this strategic review into equine training.

The New South Wales Coroner expressed concerns about the content and conduct of the equine training, policies and procedures for assessing horses to be used in training, and the adequacy of trainer and assessor competencies and currency of industry experience.

There have been a number of actions taken in relation to VET equine programs in response to the New South Wales Coroner's findings, including changes to policy and procedures across all TAFE New South Wales institutes delivering equine programs and a commitment by the current training package developer AgriFood Skills Australia to review all equine qualifications. However, the review found that the VET market for equine training is complex and confusing and there are a number of areas that require systemic responses to address ongoing safety concerns.

The strategic review focused on a broad sample of qualifications and units to ensure adequate coverage across the key sectors of agriculture, racing, sport and recreation, and animal care and management. Audits also sought to cover both horse riding and horse handling in all settings given the complementarity of these skills and the injury rates in both riding and handling. The analysis focused particularly on the issues which are common to all horse riding and handling regardless of setting, that is, risk identification, management and control, and implementation of safe practices.

Overall audit results

Audits of 20 RTOs were conducted by ASQA in 2014 against the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012*. Since these audits were conducted, new Standards [(*Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*) (the Standards for RTOs 2015)] came into effect for organisations applying to become an RTO on 1 January 2015 and for existing RTOs on 1 April 2015.

Twenty RTOs across six jurisdictions were specifically audited for this review. This represents 51.3 per cent of the 39 RTOs that confirmed to ASQA that they had delivered some equine programs in 2014.

Of the 20 RTOs specifically audited for this review, 15 (75 per cent) were not able to demonstrate full compliance at the initial audit. The non-compliances ranged from minor to very serious non-compliance in relation to one or more of the standards audited. It was of concern that the highest rates of non-compliance were in relation to the standard relating to training delivery and assessment, which is the core business of an RTO.

The RTOs that were found not to be compliant with the required standards at the initial audit were given 20 working days to respond to the non-compliances found.

Following the 20 working day rectification period, 17 (85 per cent) of the RTOs were found to be compliant with the standards.

Since then two RTOs have subsequently been able to demonstrate compliance.

Training package development

There are two training package developers responsible for five training packages that contain equine units of competency.

Agrifood Skills Australia is the training package developer for the *AHC10 Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management*; the *MTM11 Australian Meat Industry*; the *RGR08 Racing* and the *ACM10 Animal Care and Management* Training Packages.

Service Skills Australia is the training package developer for the *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Reaction* Training Package.

Recommendations

Eleven recommendations are made in this report. They focus on particular areas of concern identified through the research undertaken for this review, stakeholder consultations, and the audits that were conducted.

Many of the recommendations require changes to be made to national qualifications to address critical safety and quality issues at a time when the VET system is in transition as it undergoes major reforms, including changes to the organisations responsible for training package development and how this process occurs.¹

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee has been established to provide industry input on improving the quality and relevance of vocational education and training, to guide the training product development process, to prioritise and schedule training product development, and to endorse products managed by training package developers.² To ensure the recommended changes are actioned urgently during the period of reform to the training package development process, a recommendation has been made to the training package developers to include the recommended changes and to prioritise the scheduling of this work.

In the interim, pending the changes being made to the qualifications and given the urgency of elevating safety in equine training, it is recommended that ASQA take a number of immediate actions in key areas.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the training package developers:

- make the changes to training products proposed in Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 in this report, in consultation with industry, and
- in their scheduling of training product development work, to ensure safety and quality issues are urgently addressed, give priority to scheduling the training product development work proposed in Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 8, 8 and 10 and, once the *Standards for Training Packages* have been amended, in recommendation 7.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the Australian Industry Skills Council ensures that the training packages approved have appropriately incorporated the recommendations from this report.

Embedding safe practice in the training environment

Horse riding and horse handling activities occur in a range of income earning, professional and amateur sport, and recreational settings, cutting across all age and ability groups and encompassing diverse professional, amateur and recreational organisations and industry regulators.

¹ The Government has announced a new contestable model for training package development and maintenance. The Government has invited proposals from organisations to provide support to Industry Reference Committees which will oversee training packages with a view to a new model being in place by January 2016. This may mean that another body (or bodies) is awarded the responsibility for the training packages referenced in this report. In recognition of these potential changes the report uses the term 'training package developer'.

² Australian Government Department of Education and Training (April 2015), *New Arrangements for Training Product Development for Australian Industry*, accessed 29 June 2015 at <http://docs.education.gov.au/node/37079>. The Government has announced a new contestable model for training package development and maintenance. The Government has invited proposals from organisations to provide support to Industry Reference Committees which will oversee training packages with a view to a new model being in place by January 2016. This may mean that another body (or bodies) is awarded the responsibility for the training packages referenced in this report. In recognition of these potential changes the recommendations in this report will refer actions in relation to the training package to 'the training package developer'.

However, the single unifying theme across all settings is that the risk associated with these activities requires a focus on safety and active risk identification and management. Data cited by Safe Work Australia shows that between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2011, a total of 11,635 hospital admissions were recorded for horse-related incidents and between July 2000 and June 2012 there were 98 horse-related deaths.

The extent to which RTOs place safety at 'front and centre' of their delivery and assessment and proactively manage the inherent risks of interacting with horses has therefore been explored during the review.

This is particularly important in equine programs as not only are RTOs responsible for delivery and assessment of competencies related to safe horse practice, they are also responsible for ensuring a safe learning environment and a safe workplace in a high risk context.

The review has found that there are a number of resources that cover risk assessment and safety in horse riding and handling, but overall it appears that these resources, which could support RTOs to be more systematic and holistic in their risk assessment and management, are not being accessed and used as much as they could. More widespread adoption of these resources would inform practice and promote proactive attention to safety with respect to horses, riders, staff, site, equipment and operations.

As there is no single protocol, code or set of tools and checklists, it is more complex for RTOs to know about and utilise resources which could support their practice.

The most comprehensive resource for the training and assessment environment is the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training*. This document is published and made freely available by the Australian Horse Industry Council and was adapted from the TAFE New South Wales procedures, developed as a result of the New South Wales Coroner's report into the death of Ms Sarah Waugh.

All parties in the training industry agree having 'fit-for-purpose' horses, that is, horses suitable for the training needs of students, matching individual horses to each student commensurate with their riding/handling experience, and having clear lines of responsibility for determining this suitability/matching are essential first steps to safety. Integral to this process are pre-activity risk assessments which need to consider factors such as equipment, premises/sites, and students' prior riding experience.

The *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* includes templates for comprehensive pre-activity risk assessment, horse suitability audits and participant self-assessment checklists.

It is self-evident that if a training package or accredited course unit requires access to a horse, the RTO has a responsibility under Standard 1 of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (the Standards for RTOs 2015) to ensure the horse is fit-for-purpose and the student can safely handle and where necessary, ride the horse while training. The horse suitability template in the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* includes the requirement to clearly identify each horse and its history. This is a critical prerequisite to enabling effective risk assessment. However, as noted in this review, data on horses and horse owners in Australia is limited and there is no national register, sometimes making valid identification difficult. This makes the requirement for a comprehensive horse suitability assessment even more essential.

It is therefore proposed that ASQA issue a *General Direction*³ that all RTOs delivering equine programs must demonstrate completion of a horse suitability audit and checklist, such as those in the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* as part of their compliance with the assessment requirements of Standard 1 of the Standards for RTOs 2015. It is also recommended that the audit occur before the first time the horse is used for an activity and that it is subsequently kept current by updating it after each use, noting that the initial risk assessment of the horse will impact on the extent and depth of the audit

³ S28 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*

that is required after each use. It is also proposed that the risk assessment documents be retained for a period of six months from the date of the student assessment to which the horse and rider risk assessment is relevant. This requirement is in accordance with ASQA's *General Direction – Retention requirements for completed student assessment items*.⁴

It is also proposed that pending changes to training packages to specify the level of rider proficiency required for participation in training for horse riding units (see recommendation 5), ASQA's *General Direction* will include a requirement that all RTOs delivering such units evaluate and document each student's level of rider proficiency and suitability for participation in the training programs, prior to the commencement of training.

The new *General Direction* will ensure that in the interim period prior to the changes to the training packages recommended by this review, critical aspects of risk management and safe practice in horse riding and handling can be implemented immediately.

There is currently no way to legally mandate adoption and use of the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* by RTOs. However, when the training package developer reviews equine qualifications and units, consideration can be given to mandating use of the key risk assessment templates included in the *Procedures* using the provisions of the *Standards for Training Packages*. This will need to be done in close collaboration with industry and technical experts to ensure the templates are customised to reflect the diverse industry settings and to integrate a continuous improvement process through regular reviews of the templates and their use.

The training package developer for the rural and related industry, AgriFood Skills Australia, has advised that the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* is expected to be included as a reference document in the Companion Volume it develops to support implementation of new equine qualifications. While inclusion in the Companion Volume is likely to increase awareness and use of the procedures, it would not form part of the endorsed component of the training packages which is auditable. Nevertheless inclusion in the Companion Volume is likely to increase awareness and use of the *Procedures*.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that ASQA issue a *General Direction* under section 28 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* requiring that:

- delivery of each qualification, unit of competency and accredited course requiring the use and access to a horse, must be preceded by completion of a horse suitability audit and checklist for each horse by a qualified trainer
 - before the first time the horse is used for an activity, and
 - updated after each use so the suitability remains current
- each RTO delivering training that involves horse riding evaluates and documents each student's level of rider proficiency and suitability for participation before such training commences, and
- such risk assessment documents must be retained by the RTO for six months from the date of the student assessment to which the horse and rider risk assessment is relevant.

⁴ <http://www.asqa.gov.au/media-and-publications/retention-requirements-for-completed-student-assessment-items.html>

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that, in their review of all equine qualifications and units of competency, training package developers collaborate with industry to consider any additional templates from the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* that should be specified in the *range of conditions* or *assessment conditions* fields of the units as mandatory for use by RTOs in their training and assessment strategies.

Embedding safe horse riding and handling practice in training packages

Many stakeholders expressed the view that there needs to be a stronger focus on safety in the training packages. Currently qualifications include safety matters in different units and modules, but it is not considered to be sufficient in cohesion or depth. Stakeholders noted that the variability in approaches to safety in units and course modules makes it more challenging for RTOs to interpret and assess consistently.

Stakeholders suggested that training needs to initially focus on basic safety, including interpreting horse behaviour, described as how to 'read' the horse. Some stakeholders regard basic equitation skills as a prerequisite to any actual riding skill development. This would provide students with current knowledge on this developing science as it applies to safety, for example, the way riders provide cues to a horse to ensure control.

This would develop an understanding of the psychology and behaviour of horses, drawing on already existing evidence-based approaches to assessing behaviour and temperament, such as that used with assessment of police horses.

Stronger integration of safety, especially in lower level qualifications, is seen as even more important with the increased popularity and prevalence of equine units being delivered through VET in schools.⁵

There are concerns that some students may be achieving a certificate II level equine qualification with limited access to horses. Stakeholders commented that this increase in the delivery of certificate II through VET in Schools means it cannot always be assumed that those entering jobs with horses have a background in or experience with horses. This makes assessment of the students' level of experience and competence at the outset of training even more critical.

The risk posed by limited exposure to horses is exacerbated in the context of training for the racing industry where safe riding of horses and fast riding (whether in training the horse or in a race), while not mutually exclusive, do pose some challenges. An apprentice jockey or track work rider must safely ride a horse that has been fed a special high energy diet, designed to give it what has been called 'explosive energy'. Jockeys 'ride short', with less knee contact than a recreational rider might employ.

Not all jurisdictions require trainees or apprentices in the racing industry to have completed a lower level qualification, where basic handling and riding skills could be comprehensively assured. In the *Review of*

⁵ VET in Schools is a program which allows students to combine vocational studies with their general education curriculum. Students participating in VET in Schools continue to work towards their senior secondary school certificate, while the VET component of their studies gives them credit towards a nationally recognised VET qualification. VET in Schools programs may involve structured work placements. Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2013) Glossary of VET, accessed 29 June 2015, <http://www.voced.edu.au/glossary-vet>, p 116.

*apprentice jockey recruitment training and welfare*⁶, it was noted that new apprentice jockeys have less equine experience and exposure to horses and all-round horse skills than in the past.

It is noted that the current training package developer for this industry, AgriFood Skills Australia is undertaking a review of all equine qualifications and that an entry level certificate II qualification which covers basic horse riding and care⁷ is being developed offering a number of streams as a pathway into employment in a range of equine sectors, including racing, breeding, agriculture and recreation.

It is proposed that irrespective of the streams, each unit has a strong and consistent focus on safety in riding, handling, care, and in understanding horse behaviour. This will ensure that regardless of each student's eventual job outcome, they will have achieved competency in the core component of safe practice.

It is also proposed that those learners who are identified as novice or inexperienced in horse riding or handling should complete the core units of the new certificate II qualification as part of any qualification related to horse riding, care or handling that they undertake. The core units currently proposed in the draft qualification are:

- work safely in the horse industry
- handle horses
- provide basic care for horses
- perform daily horse enterprise tasks
- participate in workplace communications
- provide first aid.

Those learners who are novice or inexperienced in horse riding/handling and who wish to achieve a horse riding outcome from their courses should also be required to complete an additional two units from the new certificate II which are mandated to achieve riding competency. The two units currently identified in the draft certificate II are:

- Perform horse riding skills at walk and trot, and
- Perform horse riding skills at walk, trot and canter.⁸

This proposal acknowledges that there will be learners with appropriate experience that can be recognised through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and provides the flexibility for the units to be undertaken as part of a range of qualifications, rather than simply mandating that the new certificate II be completed. It will provide a safeguard that whether students select a job pathway in racing, breeding, agriculture or recreation, all graduates will have safety at the core of their equine practice.

In addition it is recommended that when the training package developer reviews the qualifications, it specifies the level of rider proficiency required for participation in training for horse riding units, that is, the minimum rider competence required. This will ensure that beginner riders are not placed inappropriately in units requiring a higher skill level. This can be done by using the 'entry requirements' field of each qualification under Standard 9 of the *Standards for Training Packages* which permits the **specification** of the **knowledge, skills or experience** required by the learner to commence the qualification.

⁶ *Review of apprentice jockey recruitment training and welfare 2011-2012* Racing Queensland p5

⁷ The *Certificate II in Horse Care* is the proposed title.

⁸ Unit titles are as titled in the draft *ACM20115 Certificate II in Horse Care* at 15 May 2015, provided by AgriFood Skills Australia.

Pending these changes and given the urgency of addressing safety, it is recommended that ASQA issue a *General Direction* requiring RTOs to evaluate rider proficiency prior to commencement of any training involving horse riding (see Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that training package developers in their review of equine qualifications and development of a new entry level Certificate II in Horse Care:

- ensure that regardless of the vocational stream, each unit has a strong and consistent focus on safety in riding and handling and in understanding of horse behaviour
- specify the level of rider proficiency required for participation in training for horse riding units, and
- ensure that for all learners identified as novice or inexperienced in horse riding or handling, the core units of the new Certificate II must be completed as part of any qualification/accredited course relating to horses and that in addition, such novice or inexperienced learners who wish to achieve a horse riding outcome, must complete the following two units:
 - Perform horse riding skills at walk or trot, and
 - Perform horse riding skills at walk, trot and canter.

Embedding safety in the workplace

This review has focused on VET equine programs which include a safety component as opposed to state and territory work health and safety requirements. However, it is noted the two are complementary. RTOs as workplaces and as employers where students may undertake workplace training and assessment have obligations under work health and safety laws. Taking work health and safety issues into consideration may help strengthen the outcomes of this review which include improving safety in equine training.

In June 2014, Safe Work Australia published a *Guide to Managing Risks When New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses* (the SWA Guide) to provide practical guidance for work activities where workers and others interact with horses. The SWA Guide also advises that it is also useful for other people who interact with horses at a workplace, such as teachers, volunteers or visitors at a workplace.

The SWA Guide is a useful resource for RTOs as workplaces as well as other workplaces such as racing stables where VET students are undertaking workplace training and assessment. The SWA Guide provides detailed advice on who has duties in relation to interaction with horses, how to identify hazards, assess and control risks and review control measures.

New South Wales and South Australia have implemented the SWA Guide. The implementation of the Guide in the other states and territories would provide a more consistent approach across Australia for duty holders who manage risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses. It is proposed that jurisdictions that have not implemented the SWA Guide be encouraged to implement it in their jurisdictions and promote it as a resource for the horse industry. However, the SWA Guide can still be used as practical guidance by anyone working and interacting with horses, regardless of whether it has been implemented in that jurisdiction.

Given the data shows evidence of extensive injuries, hospitalisations and fatalities during horse riding and handling, it is proposed that there needs to be a greater awareness of work health and safety obligations by RTOs and employers, where students may undertake workplace training and assessment.

It is therefore recommended that the training package developers collaborate with industry to consider the contents of the SWA Guide, to determine whether any aspects of the hazard and risk assessment and control measures should be embedded into the equine units of competency and qualifications to complement the templates drawn from the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* as outlined in Recommendation 4.

Embedding the information from the SWA Guide into VET equine programs, where appropriate, will help ensure duty holders understand how to manage the risks that are likely to be faced by new or inexperienced workers and others when interacting with horses.

Finally, it is proposed that whether or not the SWA Guide is embedded into the equine qualifications and units in the training packages, the training package developers in collaboration with state and territory work health and safety regulators and ASQA, should consider measures to improve safety in equine training programs.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that:

- jurisdictions that have not implemented the *SWA Guide to Managing Risks When New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses* give consideration to its implementation in their jurisdictions and promote it as a resource for this industry
- the training package developers in their review of equine qualifications consider the contents of the *Guide to Managing Risks When New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses* in collaboration with industry, to determine whether any aspects of the hazard and risk assessment and control measures should be embedded into the equine units of competency and qualifications, and
- the training package developers, in collaboration with state and territory work health and safety regulators and ASQA, consider measures to improve safety in equine training programs.

Short duration courses

Stakeholders suggested that there needs to be more rigour and detail in volume of learning or amount of training measures in training packages as quality RTOs are being undercut by those offering shorter training. The major concern related to volume of learning is that substantially shortened courses may lead to poor quality outcomes, providing insufficient time for students to achieve competence, and in the case of horse riding and handling can potentially undermine safety.

This review has found that a number of course durations advised by RTOs fell significantly below *Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF) requirements for certificate II and III qualifications. The full-time volume of learning measure for a certificate II according to the AQF is typically 0.5 to one year (600 to 1200 hours) full-time equivalent, and for a certificate III, one to two years (1200 hours to 2400 hours) full-time equivalent. All Australian Government, state and territory ministers for training agreed that these benchmarks should be implemented by 1 January 2015 with training package developers and accrediting

authorities⁹ to have policies and processes in place in time to ensure implementation by the required date.

The New South Wales Coroner queried whether the volume of learning in the training provided to Sarah Waugh, was sufficient for a beginner rider to demonstrate controlling and working educated horses via mustering exercises.¹⁰ This was reiterated by other stakeholders during consultations, one of whom suggested that mandatory hours for the basic riding units should be set at 120 hours.

However, volume of learning under the AQF is set at qualification rather than unit of competency level. This raises the question of whether a minimum number of hours need to be set within the training package for beginner riding units to assist RTOs to develop appropriate training and assessment strategies.

Previous ASQA strategic reviews have found that short duration courses are a systemic problem in the VET sector. It is therefore proposed that there is a systemic solution across all training packages to address this critical quality issue.

Standard 1 of the Standards for RTOs 2015 specifies that an RTO's training and assessment strategies, including the amount of training they provide must be consistent with the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses. However, training packages remain largely silent on this issue leaving RTOs to interpret what is needed rather than having explicit industry requirements.

The short duration of a high proportion of courses remains an ongoing concern to ASQA and industry stakeholders, as it poses a significant risk to the quality of VET. ASQA is of the view that the training packages need to include explicit guidance to RTOs on this issue to ensure that they are fully aware of the requirements and ASQA's ability to regulate against the Standards is strengthened.

ASQA has made a submission to the Australian Government's *Review of Training Packages and Accredited Courses*¹¹ and included advice on the need to address this issue. The outcome of this process is expected to be announced in the near future.

It is proposed that the *Standards for Training Packages* be amended to require all training package developers to specify minimum amount of training benchmarks in the endorsed components of training packages together with descriptions of appropriate variations to the benchmarks, to reflect the acceptability of shorter courses when there are relevant learner characteristics, such as learners who already have relevant and recent experience. In relation to equine qualifications and units, this would mean minimum benchmarks would be specified for the safe development and assessment of basic riding and horse handling skills.

⁹ The Australian Qualifications Framework (the AQF) defines accrediting authorities as 'either authorised under legislation or has been given the responsibility to accredit programs of learning leading to AQF qualifications and/or to register providers to issue AQF qualifications'. The AQF defines 'authorised issuing organisations' as including registered training organisations (RTOs) authorised by the Australian Skills Quality Authority and the government accrediting authorities in Victoria and Western Australia to issue AQF qualifications in *vocational education and training*. The list of accrediting authorities in place at the time of the AQF 2nd edition which is the current version includes the National Skills Standards Council responsible for the endorsement of AQF qualifications in national training packages. The National Skills Standards Council has been replaced by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee which now has responsibility for endorsement of national training package qualifications. See Australian Qualifications Framework, Second Edition, (January 2013), accessed 27 July 2015, at <http://www.aqf.edu.au/resources/aqf/>, pp21, 22, 91, 103.

¹⁰ State Coroner's Court of New South Wales (23 December 2011), Inquest into the death of Sarah Waugh 2990/10,

¹¹ See <https://consult.industry.gov.au/vet-reform/training-packages-review>

It is proposed that once the *Standards for Training Packages* has been amended in relation to this systemic issue, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee in its role to provide industry oversight of the quality and relevance of training, prioritises the work of training package developers to revise training packages as a priority to comply with the new requirements.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that:

- the *Standards for Training Packages* be amended as a matter of urgency to include a mandatory field in the qualification and unit templates that specifies the 'minimum amount of training benchmark' and describes appropriate variations to the minimum amount of training benchmark to reflect the acceptability of shorter courses when there are relevant learner characteristics, such as learners who already have relevant and recent equine experience, and
- after the amendments have been made to the *Standards for Training Packages*, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee prioritises the work of training package developers to revise training packages to comply with the new requirements.

Assessment

It is a requirement that an RTO must only issue a VET qualification to persons it has assessed as competent in accordance with the requirements of the training package or VET accredited course. Where assessment is unreliable, the validity of the qualifications issued is questionable and critically, in relation to equine qualifications, the safety of graduates and others could be compromised. The highest levels of non-compliance during initial audits were against Standard 15.5 of the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* (Standard 1.8 of the *Standards for RTOs 2015*).

Stakeholders noted that assessment consistency can be difficult in the equine industry and because it requires documenting observed practical skills, competency is not always done well.

The audits found that RTOs were frequently not compliant against this Standard because they provided inadequate information about practical tasks and the performance indicators to ensure reliability and validity of assessment judgements. In addition, insufficient assessment evidence was provided to substantiate a judgement that the student was competent.

Concerns were also expressed by stakeholders and confirmed by audits that there was significant use of third party reports on assessment tasks and assessors with the required qualifications were not always present to directly observe and make judgements about the student's competence.

The review found that the detail of assessment requirements in units of competency and VET accredited course modules varies. Some specify assessment must take place in the workplace or in a simulated workplace. Others specify that assessment must ensure 'conduct of multiple horse handling activities' and that there must be access to 'a variety of quiet and reasonably tractable horses'.

It was suggested that the training packages need to provide guidance on how students should progress through different 'levels' of horses, with increasing exposure of students to more challenging horses. The training packages need to be more specific on the number of horses on which a student needs to demonstrate competency.

Some stakeholders expressed concern about use of the online mode of delivery. While many students enrolled in training via the distance or online mode were pleased with the knowledge they developed through the course, others were concerned that practical skills were not as well developed. The theory of loading a horse onto a float, hitching it to a vehicle and towing it was presented as an example, where no practical demonstration of student skill was required.

Where delivery was by distance or online, some stakeholders felt that the authenticity of assessment was questionable and queried whether self-assessment is reliable. Some students felt that there was insufficient observation of skills. A related concern was the lack of visits by trainers to the training 'venue', which in some delivery modes was the student's farm, with all contact with the RTO being via online technology.

It is noted that as the training package developer reviews the equine qualifications, they will develop the revised qualifications to comply with the *Standards for Training Packages* which permit industry to specify much clearer performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions than has previously been permitted in training package design. This could include providing mandated templates for valid skills observation documents and assessment tools in the performance evidence and assessment conditions of units of competency, and specifying where it is required that there be direct observation of competency by a qualified assessor.

It is noted that this could also potentially address concerns expressed during the review about the supervision arrangements of apprentice jockeys. Many horse trainers and jockeys who have exceptional horse skills are good mentors and workplace supervisors, but do not have experience in training people. Increased clarity in the training package about performance and knowledge evidence and assessment conditions could also clarify the respective responsibilities of VET trainers and assessors, racing stable trainers and jockeys for the safety, training and supervision of apprentices in the racing industry.

It is expected that inclusion of clear specifications in the training packages of industry's assessment requirements will give clarity to RTOs about industry expectations and enable ASQA to target audits in this area of poor quality practice identified by the review.

Since 2014 when the audits were conducted, the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (the Standards for RTOs 2015) came into effect, from 1 January 2015 for organisations applying to become an RTO and from 1 April 2015 for existing RTOs. The Standards for RTOs 2015 include a strengthened assessment standard which ASQA expects will lead to improvement in this area.

Finally, given the high level of non-compliance with the assessment standard at the initial audit (17 or 85 per cent of 20 RTOs audited for this review), it is important to note that the qualification *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* does not include *TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools*, as a core unit. Achieving competency in this unit would build higher level skills in assessment. This issue has been referred to the training package developer who has responsibility for development and maintenance of this qualification (currently Innovation and Business Skills Australia).

Current core units in *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* are:

TAEASS401B Plan assessment activities and processes
TAEASS402B Assess competence
TAEASS403B Participate in assessment validation
TAEDEL401A Plan, organise and deliver group-based learning
TAEDEL402A Plan, organise and facilitate learning in the workplace
TAEDES401A Design and develop learning programs
TAEDES402A Use training packages and accredited courses to meet client needs

Trainer and assessor skills

Many comments were made through the interviews conducted at audit that trainers and assessors need coaching accreditation or instructional skills, as holding a *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* and being experienced in horse skills is insufficient for the purposes of instructing others.

As a result of the New South Wales Coroner's report, TAFE New South Wales requires that all trainers and assessors involved in the conduct of units involving horse handling and riding in all its institutes must hold national qualifications in instruction in horse riding and handling skills, as evidence of experience in leading and supervising groups of riders and in trail riding and open field work.

The audits found that the majority of RTOs' trainers and assessors do already hold additional competencies or were in the process of obtaining them.

Most trainers and assessors also hold first aid qualifications/competencies.

Almost half of the RTOs audited had some or all of their trainers and assessors holding level 1 or 2 National Coaching Accreditation such as that offered through Equestrian Australia.¹²

Some RTOs have trainers and assessors who are either undertaking or possess:

- Horse Safety Australia accreditation as instructors
- senior instructor or instructor skill sets from the *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation* Training Package, or
- a statement of attainment for *SISOEQO414A Instruct horse riding and handling skills*.

The current training package developer for this industry, AgriFood Skills Australia, has indicated it is considering the issue of appropriate trainer and assessor qualifications for equine programs in its current review of all equine qualifications. In view of the high levels of risk in equine training, trainers and assessors in equine programs should be required to possess qualifications in coaching or instruction of others in horse riding and handling skills.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that training package developers in their review of equine qualifications:

- provide clearer and more specific requirements for performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions for each unit of competency
- specify, where required, the direct observation of competency by a qualified assessor
- consider whether specifications of mandatory templates for valid skills observation documents and assessment tools should be included in the performance evidence and assessment conditions of units of competency, and
- specify in assessor requirements that assessors must have qualifications in instruction or coaching of horse riding/handling, noting that there is currently a range of such qualifications in use and that these should be reviewed to consider their suitability.

¹² See Equestrian Australia, EA Education Courses, accessed 30 March 2015 at <http://www.equestrian.org.au/Coaching-courses>

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that the training package developer in its current review of the *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* to determine whether *TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools*, should be included as a core unit.

The VET market

The review has found that as a result of the diversity of settings and activities in which people work with horses there are numerous equine units of competency spread across five industry training packages¹³ and many equine VET accredited courses.

In addition, as VET is training for work and many horse-related activities are sport and recreation based, a large amount of training also occurs outside the VET system. There is also significant crossover between the sectors as the audits found that many trainers and assessors maintain involvement in bodies such as Pony Club and Equestrian Australia and have coaching or instruction qualifications obtained through these bodies.

However, the diverse training landscape makes the market confusing for potential students who may find it difficult to identify training that matches their needs and skill levels. Given the unifying theme of safety and effective risk management that is common to both the VET system's equine training and non-VET equine training, there is potential for the sectors to learn from each other. This could include exploring the adoption of similar safety codes or guides and considering whether the requirements for non-VET coaches could be adapted as the basis for a skill set for VET sector equine trainers and assessors. This could potentially simplify the currently complex training offerings, and provide access for participants/learners and trainers/assessors/coaches in the VET and non-VET sectors to a body of training with safety and risk management at its core.

It is proposed that the training package developers' review of equine qualifications should include a scan of all accredited courses to determine whether the training package can meet the needs currently included in those courses, with the view to ultimately making them redundant and reducing the volume of offerings that are contributing to the confusing landscape.

It is also proposed that key bodies involved in non-VET equine sectors be included in the training package review process to facilitate the cross-sector communication and the potential to learn from each other's experiences in horse riding and handling activities, particularly around approaches to safety and risk management.

Finally, as ASQA administers the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012* it can, in relation to future applications, ensure that the safety elements which have been embedded into training packages are replicated by any course developers who submit initial applications for a new accredited course or renewal applications for existing courses. This will assist to embed safe practice and effective risk management across all equine programs.

¹³ The five national training packages containing equine units of competency are: AHC10 *Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management*, RGR08 *Racing*, ACM10 *Animal Care and Management*, MTM11 *Australian Meat Industry*, SIS10 *Sport, Fitness and Recreation*. Further information about the diversity of VET equine programs is in chapter 4.

Recommendation 10

It is recommended that training package developers in their review of equine qualifications:

- scan all current VET equine accredited courses to determine whether the training packages can meet the needs currently included in those courses and if so, to include those competencies in the training packages, and
- include key bodies from the non-VET equine sectors in the review process to ensure their experiences in safety and risk management inform the development of the revised qualifications.

Recommendation 11

It is recommended that ASQA, in exercising of its responsibilities under Part 3 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, including in its application of the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012* made under that Act, ensures that the specific changes to training packages to make safety explicit and to specify volume of learning as outlined in Recommendations 5, 7 and 8, are appropriately and satisfactorily addressed by course proponents in applications for accreditation of proposed equine programs or course renewal applications.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) commenced operations as the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector on 1 July 2011.

ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met so that students, employers and governments have confidence in the quality of vocational education and training outcomes delivered by Australian registered training organisations (RTOs).

The Authority is the regulatory body for RTOs in:

- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- South Australia
- Queensland
- Tasmania

ASQA is also the regulatory body for RTOs in Victoria and Western Australia:

- that offer courses to overseas students, and/or
- offer courses to students (including through offering courses online) in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland, or Tasmania.

The total number of RTOs in Australia is 4590. ASQA regulates 3948 (86 per cent) of these RTOs, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Regulators of Australia's RTOs



Source: www.training.gov.au 1 June 2015

1.2 Changes to the regulatory framework commencing in 2015

The Council of Australian Governments Industry and Skills Council is responsible for endorsing VET standards for RTOs. The purpose of these standards is to:

- describe the requirements that an organisation must meet in order to be an RTO in Australia, and
- ensure that training delivered by RTOs meets industry requirements (as set out in the training package or accredited course).

All RTOs regulated by ASQA are responsible for ensuring they fully comply with the standards at all times as a condition of their registration.

The standards describe outcomes RTOs must achieve, but do not prescribe methods to achieve these outcomes. This non-prescriptive approach:

- allows RTOs to be flexible and innovative in their VET delivery, and
- acknowledges that each RTO is different and needs to operate in a way that suits their clients and learners.

The standards are enabled by the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (the Act), the Act under which ASQA operates.

On 26 September 2014, the Council of Australian Governments Industry and Skills Council agreed to new regulatory standards for training providers and regulators. The Standards for RTOs 2015 were implemented from 1 January 2015 for organisations applying to become an RTO and from 1 April 2015 for existing RTOs.

This review of training in equine programs was commenced in 2014 when the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* applied. Hence, where a specific reference is made to a 2012 standard the report also includes in parenthesis the standard that applies from 2015. ASQA has published a [mapping summary](#), which maps the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* to the Standards for RTOs 2015.

1.2 ASQA strategic reviews

As the national regulator, ASQA is committed to maintaining world-class vocational education and training standards across Australia. Section 35 (2) of the Act states that 'the National VET Regulator may review or examine any aspect of an NVR registered training organisation's operations to determine any systemic issues relating to the quality of vocational education and training'.

Under this section of the Act, ASQA initiated three strategic reviews in 2012-13 targeting training 'hot spots' where intelligence had identified risks to the quality of outcomes achieved by training delivery and assessment. The three strategic reviews undertaken in 2012-13 were:

- training and assessment for the aged and community care sector
- the entry-level occupational health and safety training required to work on construction sites in Australia, commonly known as the White Card, and
- inappropriate marketing and advertising practices by RTOs.

ASQA strategic reviews conduct in-depth analysis of a particular issue, sector, qualification, unit/s, courses or method of delivery. The focus is on examining the systemic issue leading to poor practice and identifying appropriate actions to address the poor practice across the system, not just to resolve issues with individual RTOs.

ASQA applies a proportionate and risk-based approach to regulation. For ASQA, proportionate means that regulatory focus is concentrated on RTOs of concern (those that are not delivering quality training outcomes). Similarly, regulatory interventions are minimised for RTOs that consistently deliver high quality training outcomes.

Risk-based regulation means targeting resources to areas that pose the greatest risk to the delivery of quality vocational education and training—and therefore the greatest risk to the reputation and economic strength of Australia's training and international education and industries. This approach also means that for high-quality RTOs, the burden of regulation can be minimised.

ASQA implements this proportionate and risk-focused regulation through several key methods:

- the application of an agency-wide risk model that utilises data and intelligence to identify, evaluate and treat risks, and influences every aspect of the regulation of RTOs, from application to audit to enforcement
- identifying and addressing major systemic risks through a program of strategic reviews, targeted at problematic sub-sectors of the training industry, and
- using complaints about regulated RTOs as a key source to gather data and inform how those RTOs are regulated.

In January 2014, ASQA announced that training in early childhood education and care, security, and equine programs would come under the microscope in 2014-2015. The media release can be accessed from www.asqa.gov.au/news-and-media/training-regulator-to-review-key-sectors-of-the-economy.html.

For the purposes of this report, the term 'equine' is used to refer to horses and any activities involving their riding, handling or care.

1.3 Management committee and methodology

The review has been overseen by a management committee chaired by ASQA's Chief Commissioner, which included representatives from:

- the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
- the Western Australian Department of Education Services
- Rural Skills Australia
- AgriFood Skills Australia's Racing Standing Committee
- Racing and Wagering Western Australia
- Horse South Australia
- Safety in Focus
- Safe Work Australia
- Service Skills Australia, and
- the Australian Government Department of Industry (subsequently replaced by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training).

The representatives on the management committee are listed in **Appendix A**.

The management committee's role has included:

- providing advice on the methodology adopted for the review
- offering expert advice throughout the review and overseeing progress
- advising on consultations and providing a conduit to stakeholders, and
- providing input into the report and its recommendations.

The management committee advised that:

- the sample of qualifications and units to be covered by the review should be quite broad, to ensure an adequate sample across the key sectors of agriculture, racing, sport and recreation and animal care and management
- the units should cover both horse riding and horse handling in all settings given the complementarity of these skills and the injury rates in both riding and handling, and
- the audits should be informed by an industry expert given the highly technical nature of the horse industry.

Taking into account the advice of the management committee, the diversity of equine qualifications, the large number of units and the relevance of safety across all sectors, the review has focused on a sample of units from the following **training package qualifications**:

- From the *AHC10 Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package*:
 - *AHC20110 Certificate II in Agriculture*
 - *AHC30110 Certificate III in Agriculture*
 - *AHC30310 Certificate III in Horse Breeding*.
- From the *RGR08 Racing Training Package*:
 - *RGR20108 Certificate II in Racing (Stable hand)*
 - *RGR30208 Certificate III in Racing (Advanced Stablehand)*
 - *RGR30108 Certificate III in Racing (Trackrider)*
 - *RGR40208 Certificate IV in Racing (Jockey)*.
- From the *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package*:
 - *SIS30713 Certificate III in Sport Coaching*.

The review has also included a number of VET accredited courses. Accredited courses address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed training packages.¹⁴

ASQA regulates VET accredited courses and modules in accordance with the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses* 2012. 'Accredited' means the course has met national design standards and is nationally recognised and that the training provider can issue a nationally recognised VET qualification or statement of attainment following its full or partial completion.¹⁵ There are VET accredited courses in horse industry practice, management, operations, breeding and equine studies.

¹⁴ See the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses* 2012, VAC 4, accessed 3 March 2015 at <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00177>

¹⁵ ASQA, *Standards for VET Accredited Courses*, accessed 3 March 2015 at <http://www.asqa.gov.au/about/australias-vet-sector/standards-for-vet-accredited-courses1.html>.

The review has included the following **VET accredited courses**:

- 22246VIC Certificate II in Equine Studies
- 91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Performance Horse)
- 10229NAT Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse)
- 69797 Certificate III in Horsemanship (Riding, Handling and Behaviour)
- 22139VIC Diploma of Horse Breeding (Stud Management)
- 10230NAT Diploma of Horse Industry Management (Performance Horse).

Audits focused on the following units of competency and modules from VET accredited courses, following an analysis of the relevance of these units and modules to issues of safety and risk management in horse riding, handling and care across the diverse sectors in which people engage with horses:

Units of competency from training packages:

- RGRPSH201A Handle horses
- RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks
- AHCLSK212A Ride horses to carry out stock work
- AHCHBR304A Educate, ride and care for horses and equipment
- SISOEQO201A Handle horses
- SISOEQO202A Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
- AHCHBR202A Handle young horses
- AHCHBR305A Handle and care for stallions
- SISOEQO409A Train and condition horses.

Modules from VET accredited courses:

- TIGURG308A Undertaking riding at the appropriate skill level
- TIGEGT301A Equine groundwork and transportation
- NSWTEQU414A Manage the re-education of horses
- VU21407 Demonstrate basic horse riding or driving skills
- NSWTEQU206A Ride performance horses for exercise in an arena
- NSWTEQU410A Interpret equine behaviour
- NSWTEQU303A Care for performance horses
- NSWTEQU411A Implement and monitor equine health and welfare strategies
- NSWTEQU205A Lunge performance horses for exercise
- NSWTEQU305A Prepare for attend and participate in events/activities.

Further information about the range and diversity of equine training products (which is used collectively to refer to qualifications and units as well as VET accredited courses and modules) is provided in Chapter 4.

In summary **the methodology for the strategic review** has included:

- reviewing various reports, environmental scans and data
- consulting with key stakeholders
- surveying all RTOs delivering the relevant qualifications
- interviewing a number of students, employers and RTO representatives in the equine industry
- analysing complaints received in relation to RTOs delivering the relevant qualifications, and
- auditing 20 RTOs between 15 October 2014 to 12 December 2014 that had confirmed that they had delivered one or more equine units of competency or modules during 2014.

Based on the management committee's advice ASQA engaged a highly qualified industry expert to accompany auditors for a sample of audits to provide technical advice about issues such as risk identification and management in relation to horses, rider skills, gear and equipment and training sites.

Further detail about the methodology is included in **Appendix B**.

1.4 Structure of this report

- **Chapter 2:** Sets out background to the strategic review, including the tragic death of Ms Sarah Waugh in a horse riding accident during training at a TAFE New South Wales institute and the systemic safety issues identified in the subsequent New South Wales Coroner's report. Developments in VET that have occurred in response to the New South Wales Coroner's findings are also outlined.
- **Chapter 3:** Provides detail about the horse riding industry and activities, including a snapshot of initiatives to increase safety in horse riding and handling and information about the size and injury rates in different sectors of the industry.
- **Chapter 4:** Outlines the nature of training for the equine industry, including the diversity of equine training programs, the number, type and background of RTOs delivering equine training, student numbers, the number of qualifications and units relevant to the review that are being delivered and the results of the RTO survey undertaken for this review.
- **Chapter 5:** Provides a summary of stakeholder consultations, including the issues raised in roundtable discussions, comments provided by RTOs during the survey conducted for the review and insights gathered from interviews with employers, trainers and students of the sample RTOs audited.
- **Chapter 6:** Analyses the compliance of RTOs offering equine training with the requirements of the relevant standards for RTOs. Compliance with training and assessment standards, the adequacy of the training resources provided by RTOs, the qualifications and required industry competencies of trainers, the quality of assessment, and the provision of appropriate information by RTOs to students are examined.
- **Chapter 7:** Presents a summary of the main findings of the review together with recommendations and a discussion of the way forward.

Chapter 2 Background to the review into training in equine programs

2.1 The death of Sarah Waugh

ASQA's review of equine training follows the tragic death of a young student, Ms Sarah Waugh, in a horse riding accident in 2009. At the time of her death, Ms Waugh was enrolled in the *Certificate II in Agriculture* course in the *RTE03 Rural Production Training Package* (as it was then) as part of jackaroo/jillaroo¹⁶ training taught by TAFE New South Wales Western Institute, including two units of competency that provided for actual horse riding or learning to ride, namely *RTE2130A Ride and care for horses and equipment* and *RTE1104A Support horse work*. In the coronial report on the student's death, the New South Wales Coroner raised issues with the adequacy of the equine units, policies and procedures for assessing horses to be used in training, and the adequacy of trainer and assessor competencies and currency of industry experience.

The New South Wales Coroner's recommendations included that:

- ASQA, AgriFood Skills Australia (the Industry Skills Council responsible for development and maintenance of the national qualifications in this industry), and TAFE New South Wales (with responsibility for all TAFE New South Wales institutes across the state), review the content and conduct of the units
- TAFE New South Wales amend its policy and practice with respect to supply of horses for use in the units
- TAFE New South Wales adopt the Australian Horse Industry Council *HorseSafe Code of Practice*
- there be an independent assessment of practice and procedure at TAFE New South Wales Western Institute, and
- the adequacy, feasibility and implementation of the guidance materials for the unit of competency be reviewed.¹⁷

The New South Wales Coroner noted that TAFE New South Wales Western Institute had implemented changes to its practice and procedure since Ms Waugh's death, including new guidelines for horse selection, horse identification and history, horse skills audit, staff student ratios and daily risk assessments. However, the report noted these could be strengthened and would only be effective if fully implemented and understood by all.

The death of Ms Waugh and the systemic issues identified by the Coroner in the report (hereafter referred to as 'the New South Wales Coroner's report') were the primary reasons for ASQA's initiation of this strategic review into equine training.

2.2 Developments in VET following the New South Wales Coroner's report

There have been a number of actions taken in relation to VET equine programs following delivery of the New South Wales Coroner's report, many of which are due to the efforts of Ms Waugh's parents, Juliana and Mark Waugh, to improve safety for all students. The timing of ASQA's strategic review is opportune as it can be informed by and can build on the actions that have been taken following the Coroner's findings.

¹⁶ A jillaroo (male equivalent jackaroo) is a woman who is learning to work on a sheep or cattle farm. Source: Cambridge Dictionaries Online, accessed 29 June 2015 at <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/jillaroo>.

¹⁷ Deputy State Coroner (23 December 2011), *Inquest into the death of Sarah Waugh*, 29.90/10, 2010/437640, State Coroner's Court of New South Wales.

ASQA survey of RTOs delivering equine training

As a result of the findings, in December 2011, ASQA initiated a survey of all RTOs registered to deliver the unit *RTE2130A Ride and care for horses* or equivalent units, seeking information on student numbers and the details of qualifications and current industry skills of trainers and assessors conducting training for the unit or equivalent. Thirty-seven RTOs indicated they were delivering horse riding units and they provided information about 95 trainers and assessors. The survey aimed to identify the scale and scope of delivery and to determine whether the concerns found by the Coroner's report in relation to trainer and assessor competencies were evident across other training providers.

The survey found that approximately 16 (17 per cent) of trainers and assessors did not demonstrate that they had the necessary training and assessment competencies. Approximately 58 (61 per cent) did not demonstrate or provided insufficient evidence that they held the relevant vocational competencies.¹⁸ Only one trainer and assessor of the 95 reviewed was considered to demonstrate current industry skills.¹⁹

Following the initial survey, ASQA's Commissioners decided to:

- seek more detailed information and evidence from the RTOs
- focus attention more closely on subsequent audits of any RTOs registered to deliver or seeking to deliver horse riding units, and
- schedule a strategic review of RTOs providing horse riding units with a view to strengthening the quality of training standards and outcomes in the industry.

In January 2012 ASQA also acted to suspend part of TAFE New South Wales registration so that no student was allowed to enrol in or be allowed to continue being trained and assessed in any of the following units:

- *RTE2130A Ride and care for horses and equipment*
- *RTE1104A Support horse work*
- *AHCLSK212A Ride horses to carry out stock work*
- *AHCHBR101A Support horse work.*

¹⁸ Vocational competency in a particular industry consists of broad industry knowledge and experience, usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has a vocational competency will be familiar with the content of the vocation and will have relevant current experience in the industry. Vocational competencies must be considered on an industry by industry basis on (Source: VOCED plus, Glossary, accessed 27 February 2015, at www.voced.edu.au/content/glossary-term-vocational-competency).

¹⁹ Industry currency is the maintenance of a trainer's vocational technical skills and knowledge, enabling the trainer to deliver and assess vocational training relevant to current industry practices. Source: VOCED plus, Glossary, accessed 27 February 2015, at www.voced.edu.au/content/glossary-term-industry-currency. *The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* include the following definition of current industry skills: the knowledge, skills and experience required by VET trainers and assessors and those who provide training and assessment under supervision to ensure that their training and assessment is based on current industry practices and meets the needs of industry.

Current industry skills may be informed by consultations with industry and may include, but is not limited to:

- a) having knowledge of and/or experience using the latest techniques and processes
- b) possessing a high level of product knowledge
- c) understanding and knowledge of legislation relevant to the industry and to employment and workplaces
- d) being customer/client-oriented
- e) possessing formal industry and training qualifications, and
- f) training content that reflects current industry practice.

TAFE New South Wales

TAFE New South Wales Western Institute subsequently agreed in June 2012 to cease delivering its jackaroo/jillaroo program and ASQA removed the above units from its scope of registration on the National Register of VET²⁰.

In March 2012 TAFE New South Wales, which has responsibility for all TAFE New South Wales institutes, established an independent Coroner's Report Working Group which met to review the New South Wales Coroner's recommendations and to specifically consider the following issues arising from the Coroner's findings:

- a review of the conduct of the relevant equine units including adequacy of the units' essential performance criteria
- the appropriateness of beginner riders being able to control and work educated horses within a timeframe of 40 hours
- the adequacy of current descriptors for industry experience of trainers and assessors who have no independent accreditation of their riding skill, and
- best practice in the assessment of horses for the conduct of the units.²¹

The Working Group oversaw the development of a comprehensive document *TAFE NSW Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* which aims to promote safety and consistency of delivery of educational programs that require the use of horses. The document provides guidelines and procedures to ensure best practice in risk management in the conduct of horse-related courses and to implement the intent of the *Code of Practice for the Horse Industry* developed in 2003 and revised in 2009 by the Australian Horse Industry Council (found at www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/horse-safe/code-of-practice/).

The development of the procedures and their incorporation of the Code means that TAFE New South Wales has acted to implement the recommendation made by the Coroner to 'adopt the *Australian Horse Industry Council Horsesafe Code of Practice*' across its institutes. The procedures include:

- safety and risk management procedures
- staff experience and qualification requirements
- horse suitability and assessment procedures
- student safety, risk and responsibility requirements, and
- standards and requirements for equipment and premises.

The procedures have since been made freely available to the Australian Horse Industry Council as a resource for any organisations providing horse industry related education and training programs.²²

TAFE New South Wales' response to the recommendations from the Coroner's report, based on the advice from the independent Working Group was sent to the New South Wales Coroner's Office advising of actions taken by TAFE New South Wales.

In response to the Coroner's query about the adequacy of relying upon the recognition of staff prior learning and industry experience and in the absence of any independent accreditation of riding skill, TAFE New South Wales introduced a requirement that all trainers and assessors across all of its institutes involved in conduct of the unit *AHCLSK212A Ride horses to carry out stock work* (which had replaced the unit Ms Waugh was undertaking at the time of her death, *RTE2130A Ride and care for*

²⁰ The National Register of VET is the authoritative source of nationally recognised training and RTOs. See www.training.gov.au. ASQA sanctions are recorded on this site.

²¹ The Working Group included the following members: Horse SA, New South Wales Harness Racing Club, National Centre for Equine Education, National Agricultural College of Queensland, AgriFood Skills Australia, TAFE New South Wales, and ASQA.

²² See <http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/horse-safe/resources/>

horses and equipment) must hold national qualifications in instruction in horse handling and riding skills as evidence of experience in leading and supervising groups of riders in trail riding and open field work.

The New South Wales Coroner also recommended that TAFE New South Wales amend the tender process for the supply of horses for the relevant equine units. TAFE New South Wales commissioned an independent review of TAFE New South Wales Western Institute's tender processes for the provision of horses for use in horse riding and handling activities and implemented revised policy and procedures as a result, addressing all areas recommended by the Coroner. This includes that:

- horses provided must be educated for use with beginner riders, experienced in lessons with beginner riders, educated for and experienced in use around stock, and
- TAFE New South Wales excludes ex-racehorses and horses that are under 10 years of age.

AgriFood Skills Australia

In June 2012 the current training package developer for this industry AgriFood Skills Australia, announced that it would review all equine related competencies across all national qualifications for which it has responsibility. TAFE New South Wales requested that AgriFood Skills Australia identify minimum rider competence to enrol in equine units including *AHCLSK212A Ride horses to carry out stock work*.

The independent working group established by TAFE New South Wales to consider the Coroner's recommendations, advised AgriFood Skills Australia that *AHCLSK212A Ride horses to carry out stock work*:

*should only be used for proficient riders selecting suitable horses to perform stock work for the first time, and/or preparing the horse for such work using basic methods and procedures.*²³

Pending the outcome of AgriFood Skills Australia's review, TAFE New South Wales introduced a requirement preventing any of its institutes enrolling beginner riders in this unit.

AgriFood Skills Australia has advised that the review of all equine qualifications is well advanced and is being advised by a technical working group of stakeholders including those from the racing, animal care, agriculture and sport and recreation industries, safety auditors, employers and other training package developers who have equine units in their portfolio. The issues raised by TAFE New South Wales about minimum rider competence and trainer and assessor qualifications are being considered during the review. Based on industry advice, an entry level certificate II qualification which covers basic horse riding and care is being developed as a pathway into a number of vocations.

The new certificate II to be located in *ACM Animal Care and Management* Training Package will provide a consistent standard of core skills for any person working with horses, covering the skills and knowledge to work safely in the horse industry, handle and care for horses, fit gear, and assist with horse exercise and transport. It will not require a person to ride a horse. However, elective units that include the skills and knowledge required to ride horses using basic horse riding skills are included.

The qualification will offer a number of streams including racing, breeding, agriculture, recreation, and performance horse to provide pathways into employment in a range of sectors in the equine industry. This approach to developing a qualification which embeds a set of core skills (in this case, safe practice in horse riding/handling) that is common to a number of job roles and industry sectors, and offering a broad foundation with pathways into a number of sectors is consistent with reforms to national

²³ TAFE New South Wales Response (based on the advice from the Independent Working Group) to the recommendations from the Coroner's Inquest into the death of Sarah Waugh, unpublished.

qualifications currently under consideration by the Australian Government. The potential reforms include approaches to more effectively identify cross-industry skills and to develop broader preparatory qualifications for entry level workers that can lead to more vocationally specific training.²⁴

The technical working group on the development of the new equine qualifications will consider current units and qualifications in horse riding and handling across the VET training market and ensure that the new qualification covers market requirements. It is anticipated that the new qualification will reduce the need for a number of current units on horse handling and that it will replace the current qualification *RGR20108 Certificate II in Racing (Stablehand)* in the *RGR08 Racing Training Package* which is the qualification currently required for the licensed occupation of stablehand.

The qualification will be accompanied by a Companion Volume which includes guidance material with a strong focus on safety and risk management in horse riding and handling. It is expected that it will include links to key references for use by RTOs, such as the TAFE New South Wales *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* as well as other documents that provide safety and risk management advice, as outlined in Chapter 3.

AgriFood Skills Australia has advised it hopes to complete the review and development of the qualification as well as a full review of the *RGR08 Racing Training Package* before its contract with the Australian Government to develop and maintain training packages ends.

However, it should be noted that the timelines for the review have been impacted by a series of reforms to the VET sector which have been the subject of consultations by the Australian Government throughout 2014 and 2015.

The Government has announced that a new contestable model for training package development and maintenance will be established. The Government has invited proposals from organisations to provide support to Industry Reference Committees which will oversee training packages with a view to a new model being in place by January 2016. This may mean that another body is awarded the responsibility for the training packages currently managed by AgriFood Skills Australia, as well as the training package which includes equine units that are managed by Service Skills Australia.

The discussion paper issued by the Australian Government Department of Industry acknowledges that there will need to be transition arrangements to a new model for development and maintenance of training packages.²⁵ This may further impact on the scheduling and completion of the review of the equine units of competency and related training packages.

²⁴ Australian Government Department of Industry (October 2014) *Review of Training packages and Accredited Courses Discussion Paper*, accessed 13 January 2015 at <http://www.vetreform.industry.gov.au/publication/review-training-packages-and-accredited-courses-%E2%80%93-discussion-paper>, pp15-17.

²⁵ Australian Government Department of Industry (October 2014) *Industry Engagement in Training package Development Discussion Paper – Towards a Contestable Model*, accessed 13 January 2015 at <http://vetreform.industry.gov.au/publication/industry-engagement-training-package-development-%E2%80%93-towards-contestable-model-discussion>, p19.

Chapter 3 The horse riding and handling industry

3.1 Initiatives in safe horse riding and handling

The horse riding and handling industry has long been identified as large and diverse encompassing professional and amateur sporting organisations, breed associations, recreational activity operators and individuals and businesses who use or breed horses for pleasure or professional purposes. It has also been recognised as an inherently risky activity.²⁶

Data cited by Safe Work Australia in 2014 indicates that:

- One worker is hospitalised each day in Australia due to a horse-related injury. Between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2011 a total of 11,635 hospital admissions were recorded for horse-related incidents.
- For every worker injured another nine non-workers are injured, often at places like riding schools, equestrian centres and trail riding businesses.
- It is common for young people to have an interest in horses. This is reflected in Australian injury statistics with people under 24 years old being most likely to be injured.
- Females accounted for two thirds of the hospital admissions with a concentration between the ages of 10 and 24 years.
- Of the 10 per cent of injuries that occurred in a work setting, 39 per cent of these occurred within the industry categorised as 'agriculture, forestry and fishing'.
- Between July 2000 and June 2012, there were 98 horse-related deaths of which 42 per cent involved a person who worked with horses as part of their profession including farmers, trainers, stable hands, stock workers and strappers. The data shows that horses are a common cause of death on farms.
- While 48 per cent of the fatalities involved horse riding, other activities resulting in fatalities included moving around the horse, mustering and horse racing.²⁷

More recent data on horse-related fatalities compiled by the National Coronial Information System for ASQA advises that 132 such fatalities occurred in Australia between 1 July 2000 and 31 December 2013. Therefore there were 34 deaths involving horses from 1 July 2012 to 31 December 2013. Deaths were almost evenly divided between males (69) and females (63). The fatalities most frequently occurred in the age ranges of 20-29 years (18.2 per cent) and 50-59 years (17.4 per cent). The most common locations of incidents were farms (47 deaths, 35.6 per cent), transport areas, including public bush tracks and dirt roads (23 deaths or 17.4 per cent) and the racetrack or racecourses (20 deaths or 15.2 per cent). Notably the number of fatalities was much lower in equestrian facilities (six deaths) or sports and athletics areas (five deaths).²⁸

Safe Work Australia noted that horse riding poses a significant safety risk due the following factors:

- horses are capable of acting independently of the rider and the extent to which the rider has control of the horse can suddenly change
- horses are capable of acting independently whether being ridden or not, and
- a horse is a large animal and the rider's head can be up to three metres above the ground.²⁹

²⁶ Australian Horse Industry Council (2009) *Code of Practice for the Horse Industry – revised October 2009*, accessed 25 February 2015 at <http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/horse-safe/>, p1.

²⁷ Safe Work Australia (June 2014) *Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses*, accessed 27 February 2015 at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/guide-managing-risks-interact-horses>, pp2, 21.

²⁸ National Coronial Information System (Unpublished 2015) DR15-06: Horse-related fatalities in Australia (2000-2013), prepared for ASQA.

²⁹ Safe Work Australia, (June 2014), p21.

The sample of references cited below, while by no means exhaustive, provides a snapshot of efforts made to address risks and reduce injuries across both recreational and work settings over the past decade.

In 2003 the Australian Horse Industry Council noted that despite the size of the horse industry, there was not an agreed minimum standard for managing risks related to horse activities. The Council developed an industry Code of Practice, *Code of Practice for the Horse Industry* (the Code) to assist in the development of a high standard of risk management throughout the horse industry and to reduce the risk of injury to participants, spectators, staff, officials and the public from horse-related events and activities.

The Code was revised and updated in 2009 but continues to be voluntary. It notes that organisations can benefit from the Code by using it as a guide to managing horse-related activities.

The Code provides guidance in relation to horse and rider equipment, premises, staff, horses, operations, agistment, and document and record management. It also incorporates a Code of Ethics.³⁰ The Australian Horse Industry Council has also developed a range of support materials, forms and procedures to be used in conjunction with the Code of Practice, including the *HorseSafe Self-Assessment Booklet*. These are freely available on its website.³¹

Other publications have focused specifically on increasing safety in the racing and racing stable industries.

Victoria

A 2006 study into prevention of injuries in the Victorian thoroughbred horse riding industry concluded that:

- the size of the occupational health and safety problem in the thoroughbred horse riding industry is difficult to determine, as there is widespread under-reporting of incidents and injuries
- there is very limited written information about risk and risk control in the industry, and
- there is a low level of occupational health and safety education and training in the sector at a time when basic training is becoming more important as a result of inexperienced people entering employment.³²

Western Australia

In 2009 WorkSafe in Western Australia published its adaptation of a Victorian WorkSafe publication on safety in horse stables and track riding, aimed at assisting employers and employees to comply with their duties and obligations under the West Australian *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*. It covered risk identification and risk management in areas such as stable security, handling and transporting horses, fencing, track riding conditions, riding gear and supervision.³³

As a follow up to the publication, WorkSafe in Western Australia conducted an inspection campaign in the thoroughbred horse racing stable industry with a view to raising awareness of the safety risks and reducing injuries in the sector. The announcement in November 2010 noted that there are around 700 workplaces engaged in horse racing activities in the state.³⁴

³⁰ Australian Horse Industry Council (2009), *ibid*, pp1,2,21.

³¹ Australian Horse Industry Council (2003) *HorseSafe Self Assessment Booklet*, accessed 25 February 2015 at <http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/horse-safe/resources/>

³² S Cowley, B Bowman, M Lawrance (15 March 2006), Prevention of injuries that result from working with horses in the Victorian thoroughbred horse racing industry, Phase 1 Report, WorkSafe Victoria Safety Development Fund, p30, at https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/9210/SDF_RacingPhase1_Report.pdf

³³ WorkSafe (May 2009) *Horse stables and track riding safety: West Australia Edition*, accessed 26 February 2015 at http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/horse_racing_stables_0.pdf, pp4-6, 17-18, 21-22.

³⁴ Department of Commerce (11 November 2010) *Media release Inspection campaign targets horse racing stables*, accessed 26 February 2015 at <http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/announcements/inspection-campaign-targets-horse-racing-stables>

Australian Capital Territory

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation conducted research which describes risk factors associated with injuries to jockeys involved in thoroughbred racing and evaluates currently available safety equipment and standards.

It noted that there is a paucity of information on the incidence and type of injuries suffered by professional jockeys in Australia and therefore injury rates and risk factors associated with injuries are poorly documented. The project aimed to develop an accurate and extensive data-base of injuries and incidents to persons (and horses) participating in the thoroughbred racing industry.

The project developed an Australian Racing Incident Database and jurisdictions commenced progressively entering data from 2008. Over time it is expected that as the data grows a range of reports will be available to allow researchers, doctors and veterinarians to conduct analysis on the pattern of injury with the aim to improve safety standards in the industry.³⁵

Queensland

Racing Queensland together with the Queensland Jockeys Association, the Australian Trainers Association and other industry stakeholders undertook a review of apprentice jockey training and welfare in 2011. The review was prompted by the fact that applicants of a suitable size, potential and attitude are increasingly difficult to find and many trainers are less willing or capable of providing the level of on-the-job training and mentoring required.

The review noted that increasingly, apprentice jockeys require more training, support and coaching in riding skills. They have less equine experience and exposure to horses and to all-round horse skills than in the past. Prior to the review there had been feedback from stakeholders that riding skills in general needed to be improved and employers, in general, were no longer entirely responsible for the skill levels of apprentices. The review found that the resulting gap must be taken up by the training provider and a support team.

In the past the employing horse trainer was responsible for riding skills development through trackwork and race riding. Horse trainers were expected to tutor apprentices in these tasks as well as review races, discuss tactics and assist with obtaining rides. The hectic schedules of today's horse trainer does not allow for adequate mentoring of the apprentice and many apprentices are not sufficiently mentored in the workplace.

The review did not specifically focus on safety, but it was implicit in the objectives of the review to ensure a program for an ongoing supply of well trained, skilled jockeys and to ensure that industry can provide the necessary training, recognition and workforce development to meet the future needs of racing for a skilled, productive and safe workforce. The review made a number of recommendations about training and riding.

The review found that the pathway through to riding in metropolitan races is well structured and young riders are monitored carefully during every stage, but there is a need for an intensive program of riding instruction in the early stages of apprenticeships to ensure apprentices have sufficient general and specific riding skills to progress to race riding.

In relation to education and training, the review found that staff are highly qualified in terms of the required vocational education technical expertise as well as extensive racing industry experience. They are also well versed in the complex and often challenging task of identifying, recruiting, placing and retaining trainees and apprentices. However, it recommended that consideration be given to conducting

³⁵ Foote C, McIntosh A, V'Landys P, and Bulloch K, (March 2011) *Health and Safety in Australian Horse Racing*, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, pp vii, 20-21.

apprentice intake training as an intensive program for riders to develop quality riding skills prior to trials and race riding.³⁶

New South Wales

As a result of Sarah Waugh's death, the New South Wales Government proposed that a model Code of Practice is developed by Safe Work Australia for the horse riding industry.

Safe Work Australia is the national policy body responsible for leading the development of policy to improve work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements across Australia. It has members representing the Australian Government and all the states and territories as well as representatives from industry and unions. Safe Work Australia was responsible for developing the model Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations for adoption as laws of the Australian Government and each of the states and territories. Seven jurisdictions have enacted the model work health and safety laws to date.

Following the New South Wales Government proposal for a code of practice, Safe Work Australia worked closely with stakeholders to develop materials which work health and safety ministers agreed in April 2014 should be presented as a guide.

Model codes of practice provide practical guidance on how to meet the standards set out in the Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations. An approved code of practice is automatically admissible as evidence in court proceedings under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and its Regulations. While Australian Government and state and territory work health and safety ministers might agree to a model code of practice, it must also be approved as a code of practice in a jurisdiction for it to have effect in that jurisdiction. Therefore a model code of practice developed by Safe Work Australia will only have evidentiary status under a jurisdiction's work health and safety laws, once it is approved by the minister responsible for work health and safety legislation in that jurisdiction.

Guidance material including guides for specific activities or industries also provide practical information to assist duty holders meet their obligations under the work health and safety laws. Guides are also admissible as evidence in court proceedings of what can and should be done by duty holders to comply with work health and safety laws.

The only difference between codes of practice and guidance material is that codes of practice are automatically admissible in a court of law, whereas guidance material can be admitted under the usual court processes.

The *Guide to Managing Risks When New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses* provides practical guidance for a person conducting a business or undertaking, who carries out work activities where workers and others interact with horses. It is also useful for people who may interact with horses at a workplace, for example, teachers, volunteers or visitors at a workplace.

The SWA Guide notes that despite the differences in settings in which workers and individuals interact with or ride horses, whether for work or pleasure, many of the risks and control measures are similar.³⁷

To date the Safe Work Australia guidelines have been adopted by New South Wales and South Australia.

³⁶ Racing Queensland Ltd, Queensland Jockeys' Association, Australian Trainers Association, Industry contributors (undated) *Review of Apprentice Jockey Recruitment, Training and Welfare 2011-2012*, accessed 26 February 2015 at http://www.thoroughbredracingqueensland.com/media/19886/apprentice_review.pdf

³⁷ Safe Work Australia (June 2014), p2.

3.2 The size of the horse riding and horse handling industry

Given the diversity of work and recreational sectors in which horse riding and handling occur, it is difficult to get accurate data on the size of the industry, although some data is available about individual sectors.

The racing industry

In 2013-14, 386 race clubs conducted race meetings at 368 tracks around the country. 36,675 horses competed in almost 20,000 races with total starters nearing the 200,000 mark. There were 3678 trainers and almost 1000 registered jockeys and many more thousand stable hands, stud hands and tradespeople who also earned part or all of their living through racing.³⁸

Harness Racing Australia advises that over 48,000 people participate in its industry, with around 30,000 in regional Australia. The industry provides over 19,000 jobs.³⁹

Racing is controlled and regulated in each jurisdiction by principal racing authorities in accordance with national *Rules of Racing* and supplemented by *Local Rules* in each state and territory, which regulate licensing of specific job roles.

The *Australian Rules of Racing* include provisions for the fitness of jockeys and horses. For example, under AR.64 a horse may be prevented from participating in any track work or racing if it presents a safety risk to itself, any other horse or to any person. AR.81F provides that riders must not ride unless physically fit and may be required to undergo a medical or physical examination to prove fitness. The *Rules of Racing* also specify use of safety equipment and gear. For example, AR.87 refers to standards for helmets approved by the Australian Racing Board and AR.87B refers to approved safety vests. Penalties apply to riders, apprentices and apprentice masters if the rules are contravened.⁴⁰

Local Rules in each jurisdiction supplement the *Australian Rules of Racing* in relation to safety. For example, *New South Wales Local Rules* 82A refers to the appointment of track supervisors at race clubs and their powers including:

- (b) supervise the conduct of licensed persons to ensure adherence to track regulations and safety requirements;
- (c) monitor both horse and rider's gear, including but not limited to protective vests, skull caps, safety irons, safety lights and reflective gear, and ensure that a track rider, whilst mounted on a horse, does not carry, wear or use any object, appliance, or gear during track work that is not approved by the Stewards
- (d) supervise all horses using racecourse facilities, with the authority to order away from any facility any horse that presents a safety concern or any horse which is not entitled to use such facility
- (e) with the approval of the Stewards, assess the competency of stablehand riders engaged to ride trackwork and to ensure only approved stablehand riders ride on club training grounds, and
- (f) monitor and report to the race club any incidents, accidents or safety concerns relating to horses and personnel, and take the necessary action to ensure accident warning devices are appropriately activated.⁴¹

³⁸ Australian Racing Board (December 2014) 2013/14 Australian Racing Fact Book: a guide to the racing industry in Australia, accessed 26 February 2015 at http://www.australianracingboard.com.au/fact-book/ARB_Fact_Book_2014_Working_05122014.pdf, p10.

³⁹ Australian Harness Racing, (10 May 2013) *Harness Racing: an industry, a sport, a supporter of regional Australia*, accessed 26 February 2015 at http://www.harness.org.au/news-article.cfm?news_id=20703

⁴⁰ Racing Australia (1 April 2015) *Australian Rules of Racing*, accessed 22 April 2015 at http://www.racingaustralia.horse/uploadimg/Rules_Aust_300315.pdf

⁴¹ Racing NSW (as amended 1 April 2015) *Rules of Racing of Racing NSW*, accessed 22 April 2015 at <http://www.racingnsw.com.au/site/content/document/00000401-source.pdf>

As noted earlier, there is a paucity of data on injuries in the racing industry. A 2008 study of race day jockey falls in Australia for the period 2002-2006 found that being a jockey carries a substantial risk of injury and death and that although fall, injury and fatality incidence rates are not exceptional by international standards, there can be improvement to safety standards in the industry. The study found that there were 861 injuries from 3360 jockey falls in 748,367 rides. There were five fatalities during the study period.⁴²

A follow up study by the authors in 2010 focused on risk factors for falls to jockeys employed in thoroughbred racing. The study identified a range of factors that could be the basis for formulating strategies to improve occupational health and safety standards, addressing what it described as a critical lack of information in this regard.⁴³

The Australian Jockeys' Association advises that 89 per cent of jockeys have suffered at least one fall during their career that has required medical attention and nine per cent have fallen more than 20 times.⁴⁴

Safety was one of the seven programs delivered by the Australian Jockeys' Association in 2009-10. The website notes that as at 2009-10 there had been more than 300 deaths to jockeys over the period of racing within Australia and cases of paraplegia or quadriplegia as a result of race falls. It also noted that other industry workers including stable hands, strappers, trials riders and barrier attendants are at risk. The Association advocates the need for a policy that encompasses regulation, reporting of accident and injury trends, costs and annual reviews for ongoing improvement, to facilitate a safer work environment and a focus on prevention.⁴⁵

Unfortunately during the period from August 2013 to October 2014 there were four deaths of jockeys during the course of thoroughbred horse racing and one death of a harness trainer/rider, all of whom were female.

At the time of this review only one inquest into these fatalities had been finalised. The Coroner in Darwin found that the actions of the horse in baulking at a pedestrian crossing could not have been predictable. The baulking resulted in the experienced jockey's fatal fall. The Coroner noted that:

One of the main reasons the sport is dangerous is that horses are intelligent animals with a mind of their own and it is impossible to always predict what they are going to do. Racehorses present particular challenges, since they are highly conditioned, well fed, including on supplements to keep up their energy and nutrition, and highly strung.

*Darwin Turf Club and Thoroughbred Racing Northern Territory have learnt from Ms Montgomerie's death that even when regulations are complied with, and reasonable precautions taken, tragic accidents can still occur and may reveal further opportunities to improve on safety.*⁴⁶

Two of the jockeys died as a result of falls following the break-down of the horses they were riding, prompting calls for stronger vetting of horses before races.⁴⁷

⁴² P Hitchens, C Leigh Blizzard, G Jones, LM Day and J Fell, (20 August 2008), *The incidence of race-day jockey falls in Australia 2002-2006*, the Medical Journal of Australia, accessed 27 February 2015 at <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2009/190/2/incidence-race-day-jockey-falls-australia-2002-2006>.

⁴³ P Hitchens, C Leigh Blizzard, G Jones, L Day and J Fell, (2010), Predictors of race-day jockey falls in flat racing in Australia, *Occup Environ Med* 2010;67:10 693-698 Published Online First: 23 June 2010 doi:10.1136/oem.2009.050567, p698.

⁴⁴ Australian Jockeys' Association, (August 2008), *Racing for our Lives: A plan to protect Australian jockeys*, accessed 27 February 2015 at <http://www.australianjockeys.org/sites/default/files/CampaignBooklet.pdf>, p1.

⁴⁵ Australian Jockeys' Association, (2009-10), Program 5-Safety, accessed 20 April 2015 at <http://australianjockeys.org/?q=node/85>

⁴⁶ Mr Greg Cavanagh SM, (1 December 2014), *Inquest into the death of Simone Montgomerie*, Coroner's Court Darwin, accessed 5 March 2015 at <http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/courtsup/coroner/documents/D01272013%20Montgomerie.pdf>, p17.

One researcher has commented that stewards' inquiries into individual incidents are unlikely to result in findings that are useful. It is the collation and analysis of all the incidents that will detect patterns in the data that may lead to the identification of modifiable risk factors.⁴⁸

Farming and agriculture

The agriculture sector employed 306,700 workers in 2010-2011. Safe Work Australia uses a range of data sources to provide a profile of the types and frequency of work-related injuries and fatalities that occur on Australian farms. Over the eight years from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2011, 356 workers died while working on a farm property, of which 11 occurred in falling off a horse.

Approximately 4400 workers on farms were hospitalised for a work-related injury in the three year period from July 2006 to June 2009, 3740 (85 per cent) of which were males. While the most common reasons for being hospitalised for males involved machinery, motorcycles or being bitten or struck by cattle, the pattern was different for females. Five hundred and seventy two (13 per cent) of farm hospitalisations involved females who had been injured in a horse-related incident with a further 264 (6 per cent) having been bitten or struck by a horse.⁴⁹

Other horse-related activities

The Australian Horse Industry Council notes that there are very few statistics on horses and horse-related activities in Australia and this limits what the Council can do to obtain help for the industry.

Research commissioned by the Australian Horse Industry Council published in October 2010 examined the size and scope of the horse industry in terms of the number of horses, people and events in Australia and within each state to determine the implications for infectious disease management. Data was collected via a survey of racing organisations, recreation/sporting associations and breed based organisations.

The report noted that data is limited, drawn from differing sources, based around estimations, often overlapping, and presented in a different manner. The variety in the industry is what makes collecting detailed and comparable data difficult. Estimates suggest about 400,000 people own horses in Australia with one million horses in the industry, translating into about two per cent of the population owning horses. However, currently there is not enough detail about events and the number of horses and people involved.⁵⁰

In November 2014 the Australian Horse Industry Council conducted a survey to elicit more information about the industry. The data gathered will be used to represent the horse industry when engaging with the Australian Government and local, state and territory governments.⁵¹

⁴⁷ The Daily Telegraph, (16 October 2014), *Deaths of jockeys Carly-Mae Pye and Caitlin Forrest prompt safety call*, accessed 4 March 2015 at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/sport/superracing/deaths-of-jockeys-carlymae-pye-and-caitlin-forrest-prompt-safety-call/story-fni2gg7e-1227093059119>

⁴⁸ P Hitchens, (17 November 2014) *We need to prevent further jockey deaths in horse racing*, The Conversation, accessed 4 March 2015 at <http://theconversation.com/we-need-to-prevent-further-jockey-deaths-in-horse-racing-34003>

⁴⁹ Safe Work Australia, (March 2013), *Work-related injuries and fatalities on Australian farms*, accessed 27 February 2015 at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/work-related-injuries-fatalities-australian-farms>, pv,vi.

⁵⁰ O'Sullivan, H (October 2010), *What is the size and scope of the Australian horse industry and what does this mean for infectious disease management? A report for the Australian Horse Industry Council*, accessed 27 February 2015 at <http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/topics/surveys/size-scope-of-the-horse-industry-and-how-it-affects-disease-management/>, pp3,14, 15.

⁵¹ Australian Horse Industry Council, (1 November 2014), *Size and scope of the horse industry survey*, accessed 26 February 2015 at <http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/>

A snapshot of the analysis of over 3000 responses from across all jurisdictions showed:

- 94 per cent of respondents own horses, and 22 per cent were employed with horses of which 44 per cent were employed full time, 44 per cent part-time and 12 per cent occasionally
- 38 per cent had had an accident requiring hospitalisation
- The top five activities in which respondents were involved were dressage, hacking and jumping (61 per cent), pleasure riding (55 per cent), pony club/adult riding club (54 per cent), trail riding (47 per cent) and natural horsemanship (26 per cent).⁵²

Service Skills Australia, the national Industry Skills Council currently responsible for the development and maintenance of the SIS10 *Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package* notes that given the outdoor recreation sector is composed of a wide range of sub sectors and job roles, there are substantial difficulties in collating statistics that capture the size of the sector in terms of both output and employment. The available Australian Bureau of Statistics participation data for a select range of outdoor recreation activities indicates that some have seen substantial increases over the last six years. Data on horse riding merges both sporting (for competition) and recreation forms but shows that from 2005-06 to 2011-12 there was a 16.9 per cent increase in participation in horse riding/equestrian activities/polo from 127,300 participants to 148,800.⁵³

Data about injury rates and fatalities in horse riding and handling point to the size and scale of the horse-related recreational and sporting activities in which Australians are engaged. As noted earlier, Safe Work Australia cites Australian Institute of Health and Welfare hospital admissions that shows for every worker injured another nine non-workers are injured, often at places like riding schools, equestrian centres and trail riding businesses.

Forty per cent of injuries in the 11,635 hospital admissions over the three year period from July 2008 to June 2011 happened while engaged in sports. Trail or general horseback riding accounted for 80 per cent of cases within this activity.⁵⁴

Data on Australian sports injury hospitalisations for the year 2011-2012 shows there were 1568 cases of hospitalised injury resulting from equestrian activities and these cases accounted for four per cent of all cases of hospitalised sports injuries. It should be noted that this data encompasses a broad range of equestrian activities including equestrian events, endurance riding, polo and polocrosse, thoroughbred and harness horse racing, rodeo, and trail or general horseback riding.⁵⁵

Of the 98 horse-related deaths between July 2000 and June 2012, 42 per cent involved a person who worked with horses as part of their profession (so conversely 58 per cent were not work related). Of the deaths, six per cent involved children under the age of 10, and young people between 10 and 19 accounted for another 14 deaths (14 per cent). The vast majority of fatalities resulted from a fall from a horse (74 per cent).⁵⁶

⁵² Australian Horse Industry Council, 2015-15 Horse Industry Survey Results Snapshot, accessed 2 April 2015 at <http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/news/ahic-horse-industry-survey-on-the-economic-value-of-the-horse-industry/>

⁵³ Service Skills Australia, (2014) *Sport, Fitness and Recreation Environmental Scan 2014*, accessed 3 March 2015, at <https://www.serviceskills.com.au/environmental-scans#industry-snapshots>, pp43, 44.

⁵⁴ Safe Work Australia (June 2014) *Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses*, accessed 27 February 2015 at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/guide-managing-risks-interact-horses>, pp2,21.

⁵⁵ Kreisfeld R, Harrison JE and Pointer S (2014) *Australian sports injury hospitalisations 2011-12*, Injury research and statistics series no. 92 Cat. No. INJCAT, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, p79.

⁵⁶ Safe Work Australia (June 2014) *Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses*, accessed 27 February 2015 at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/guide-managing-risks-interact-horses>, citing data from the National Coronial Information System, p21.

Lessons from other sectors

The recent report by the Commission of Inquiry into the regulation of the Queensland greyhound racing industry is focused on the welfare of racing dogs and the regulatory arrangements following live baiting scandals. However, it proposes systemic solutions to the challenges of tracking animals during their life cycle so they are fully traceable. This challenge has been identified in relation to horses where data is limited and often based on estimations. Poor traceability potentially impacts on the effectiveness of training providers' systems for appropriate selection and matching of horses to learner riders.

The report also discusses the need for a comprehensive risk identification and management framework that underpins effective compliance and regulation, and how monitoring and data analysis can provide useful research tools to understand trends and drive continuous improvement, all issues identified as key in the research into safe equine activity outlined in this chapter.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Alan MacSporran QC (1 June 2015) Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry Final Report, accessed 30 June 2015 at <http://www.greyhoundreview.qld.gov.au/pdf/final-report-1-june-2015.pdf>

Chapter 4 The nature of training in the horse-riding industry

4.1 The diversity of VET equine programs

The range of equine VET programs is diverse, reflecting the very different ways that Australians interact with horses across income earning, professional and amateur sport, and recreational activities. These programs include both training package and accredited course qualifications, in specific occupational areas including: racing, stockwork, meat processing, breeding, trail riding instruction and equine dentistry.

Training packages

There are a large number of units of competency covering the skills for horse riding, caring and handling and they can be found in five national training packages, the first four of which are currently maintained by AgriFood Skills Australia and the fifth by Services Skills Australia:

- *AHC10 Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management* (three qualifications with 24 units between them)
- *RGR08 Racing* (five qualifications with 65 units between them)
- *ACM10 Animal Care and Management* (3 qualifications with 32 units between them)
- *MTM11 Australian Meat Industry* (in one qualification as an elective)
- *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation* (12 qualifications with 33 units between them), which is currently maintained by Service Skills Australia.

Units of competency in horse riding, caring and handling are also included in a number of skill sets. Skill sets are not qualifications but are defined as single units of competency or combinations of units of competency from a training package which link to a licensing or regulatory requirement or a defined industry need.⁵⁸

Given the wide range of income earning activities in the **agriculture, horse breeding, recreational and animal care industries**, the units of competency related to horse riding, handling and care are electives available to be chosen depending on the job outcome sought.

Similarly in the **meat industry**, there is a wide range of job roles, only a few of which might require competency in the unit *AHCLSK212A Ride horses to carry out stock work*.

Conversely those seeking to work in the **thoroughbred or harness racing industries** will all require competency in horse riding, handling or care and thus relevant units of competency in these activities are core requirements in the qualifications rather than electives.

The racing industry is regulated throughout Australia by state and territory racing authorities (principal racing authorities) which set competency and integrity requirements for a number of licensed occupations in the industry. This includes mandating the national qualifications or skill sets that must be achieved as part of the licence requirements. However, a review of the job roles or occupations which require licensing indicates that the licensing requirements vary across states and territories, with the occupation of jockey having the most consistency.

The *RGR08 Racing* Training Package includes a number of skill sets that were developed to accommodate industry licensing and registration regulations.⁵⁹ The national register of VET in Australia shows 24 skill sets in the *RGR08 Racing* Training Package, of which 18 relate to thoroughbred and

⁵⁸ Australian Government Department of Industry (3 April 2014) *Training package Products Policy endorsed by the National Skills Standards Council*, accessed 3 March 2015 at <http://industry.gov.au/skills/TrainingPackages/Pages/default.aspx>, p7

⁵⁹ AgriFood Skills Australia, <http://www.agrifoodskills.net.au/?page=RacingBackground>, accessed 2 March 2015.

harness racing.⁶⁰ The Racing Training Package is currently under review but, as previously mentioned for the review and other training package reviews referred to in this report, may be affected when the Government's VET reforms are finalised. This may result in the responsibility for training packages moving to new bodies.

AgriFood Skills Australia, as the current training package developer has advised that all thoroughbred and harness racing licensed persons in every state will be required to complete work health and safety and 'handle horse' units of competency to meet licensing requirements by the end of 2015. This directive will also affect VET in Schools programs offering equine units and qualifications as well as RTOs who are preparing learners for employment in the racing industry.

In relation to **sport, fitness and recreation** it is again not surprising that in all qualifications, units related to horse riding, handling and care are electives, given the range of recreational activities covered by the sport, outdoor recreation, coaching and fitness industries.

Service Skills Australia is undertaking a full review of the SIS10 *Sport, Fitness and Recreation* Training Package to ensure the content reflects current industry practice. Service Skills Australia is also involved in the technical reference group convened by AgriFood Skills Australia to review all equine units of competency and qualifications.

Many of the equine units of competency offer 'thin markets' for the training providers registered to deliver them, that is, the demand for training in the units may be small or dispersed over a large geographical area. This provides challenges for training providers to maintain high quality facilities and access to suitable horses and for trainers to maintain industry currency.

VET accredited courses

The units of competency in horse riding, handling and care from training packages are also included in VET accredited courses, together with accredited course modules that have been specifically developed in the areas of horse riding, handling and care.

An implication of the range of units and modules in training packages and VET accredited courses, is that for those who want to undertake training in the areas of horse riding, handling and care, it can be difficult to find a course that meets a person's specific requirements. The market for potential students, many of whom are likely to be young people and their parents can be confusing, and on face value appears fragmented. This is particularly concerning given the risks involved in horse riding and handling which require proactive management, including the need to assess the matching of learners and horses appropriately and to ensure safety is at the core of all learning activities.

A full list of training package qualifications and associated equine units of competency which demonstrates the complexity of the training market is at **Appendix F**.

Equine training outside the VET system

VET is training for work and most people undertake nationally recognised units of competency or qualifications as a pathway to jobs. However, as many horse-related activities are for the purposes of sport and recreation, much training for horse-riding and horse handling occurs outside the VET system. As an example, many young people receive their first exposure to horses in pony clubs across the nation.

Such training is not regulated by ASQA. ASQA regulates the delivery of qualifications (AQF levels 1 to 8 certificates to graduate diplomas) which are formally recognised through the AQF. However, the training may be regulated by other associations in various ways. Equestrian Australia and Pony Club Australia are joint program partners in the 'Ready Set Trot' program to introduce children to the fundamentals of horse skills. Delivery centres which can be clubs, riding centres, coaches or schools are accredited,

⁶⁰ Australian Government, training.gov.au, accessed 2 March 2015 at <http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/RGR08> .

inspected and monitored by Equestrian Australia to ensure the program is delivered safely at all times, a coach accredited through the National Coach Accreditation Scheme must be present, and there are mandatory insurance requirements.⁶¹

Equestrian Australia also offers a range of education courses at various levels in riding/driving, horse management and coaching. Information on the Equestrian Australia and Pony Club Australia websites advises that reciprocal coaching qualifications are available to Equestrian Australia and Pony Club Australia coaches. The website (<http://www.ponyclubaustralia.com.au/default.asp?Page=26929>) characterises this work as follows:

The ultimate goal of this project is to provide a standardised, transparent and valid method of recognising the skills and accreditations in horse riding, horse management and coaching across Equestrian Australian and Pony Club Australia.

*The project helps members of both organisations receive the recognition for the time and resources which they have spent training and achieving their respective accreditations.*⁶²

The Pony Club Australia website indicates that competency-based training and assessment is used in the training of coaches and both Equestrian Australia and Pony Club Australia advise that they use the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme for coaching training. The scheme is described as an initiative of the Australian Sports Commission and is used as a framework for coaching training by approximately 100 sports.⁶³

Given the unifying theme of safety and effective risk management that is common to both the VET system's equine training and non-VET equine training, there is potential to learn from each other. This could include exploring the adoption of similar safety codes or guides and considering whether the requirements for non-VET coaches could be adapted as the basis for a skill set for VET sector equine trainers and assessors. This could potentially simplify the currently complex training offerings, and provide access for participants/learners and trainers/assessors/coaches in the VET and non-VET sectors to a body of training with safety and risk management at its core.

4.2 Survey findings

As part of the strategic review, ASQA issued a survey in April 2014 to all RTOs identified as delivering equine training. Completion of the survey was mandatory, dependent on the RTO actually delivering within the 2014 calendar year.

Thirty nine RTOs were identified as having one or more of the relevant equine training products on scope. Four (10.3 per cent) did not complete the survey as they advised that they did not deliver in the 2014 calendar year. A total of 35 (89.7 per cent) responses were received.

The survey comprised 167 questions, seeking information on the nature of training in the equine industry. RTOs were also invited to provide any comments they wished to make. Of the 35 RTOs who responded to the survey, 18 provided comments. These are analysed in Chapter 5 Stakeholder Consultation.

⁶¹ Ready Set Trot Overview (2015), Equestrian Australia, accessed 30 March 2015 at <http://www.readysettrt.com/About/ReadySetTrotoverview.aspx>

⁶² Pony Club Australia Inc. (18 September 2013) Reciprocal coaching qualifications now available to EA and PCA coaches, accessed 30 March 2015 at <http://www.ponyclubaustralia.com.au/default.asp?Page=26929>

⁶³ Equestrian Australia, EA Education Courses, accessed 30 March 2015 at <http://www.equestrian.org.au/Coaching-courses>

Delivery profile

For the purposes of summarising what equine training is being delivered, RTOs were surveyed on enrolment data for the four types of program—equine accredited courses, racing qualifications, equine units from sports and recreation qualifications and equine units from agriculture qualifications. The data provided under each of these categories indicated that most enrolments are in the Agriculture Training Package.

Accredited courses

Equine accredited courses are delivered by a small number of RTOs. Ten RTOs advised that they delivered equine accredited courses. The equine accredited courses included *91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Performance Horse)*, *10230NAT Diploma of Horse Industry Management (Performance Horse)*, *22139VIC Diploma of Horse Breeding (Stud Management)*, *69797 Certificate III in Horsemanship (Riding, Handling and Behaviour)*, *10229NAT Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse)* and *22246VIC Certificate II in Equine Studies*.

The total number of students enrolled in equine accredited courses in 2014 was 425.

Racing training package

The qualifications included *RGR20108 Certificate II in Racing (Stablehand)*, *RGR30108 Certificate III in Racing (Trackrider)*, *RGR30208 Certificate III in Racing (Advanced Stablehand)*, and *RGR40208 Certificate IV in Racing (Jockey)*. These qualifications are delivered by 16 RTOs.

There were 629 students enrolled in qualifications from the Racing Training Package in 2014.

Sport and recreation training package

Of the 35 RTOs that responded, only two RTOs delivered *SIS30713 Certificate III in Sport Coaching* as a full qualification. In contrast to the pattern of enrolments in the Racing Training Package and in equine accredited courses, most enrolments in the Sport and Recreation Training Package are in units of competency, not in full qualifications. The survey questions requested each RTO to identify the enrolments for each unit of competency they delivered from *SIS30713 Certificate III in Sport Coaching*.

The total number of students enrolled in units of competency from the Sport and Recreation Training Package in 2014 was 200.

Agriculture training package

In relation to the qualifications within the Agriculture Training Package the survey requested RTOs to identify the enrolments for each unit of competency they delivered from *AHC20110 Certificate II in Agriculture*, *AHC30110 Certificate III in Agriculture* and *AHC30310 Certificate III in Horse Breeding*. The Certificate III in Agriculture contains only two core units, *AHCOHS301A Contribute to OHS processes* and *AHCWRK313A Implement and monitor environmentally sustainable work practices*. The majority of the qualification is comprised of 14 units selected from 27 elective strands, covering all aspects of agriculture from broad acre farming to machinery operation and maintenance.

Hence for the purposes of this review, the surveyed RTOs were asked to provide data on the number of enrolments from relevant elective units.

The total number of students enrolled in units of competency from the Agriculture Training Package in 2014 was 4537.

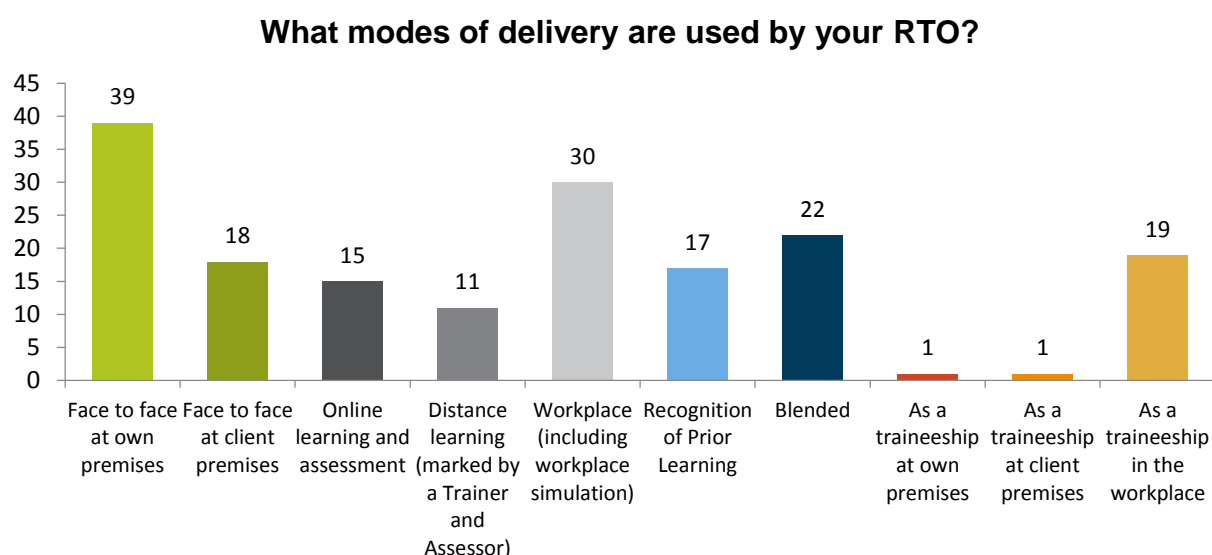
Mode of delivery

Information was sought about the mode of delivery used by RTOs. Options for responses included:

- face-to-face at own premises
- face-to-face at client premises
- online learning and assessment
- distance learning (marked by a trainer and assessor)
- workplace (including workplace simulation)
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- blended
- as a traineeship at own premises
- as a traineeship at client premises
- as a traineeship in the workplace
- other (to be specified).

Thirty five RTOs responded to this question and 201 modes of delivery were reported.

Figure 2: Delivery mode used by RTOs



Source: ASQA survey

Course duration

The survey results, as shown in Table 1, are as follows:

- three RTOs (7.9%) delivered a certificate II in equine training in less than one week. This was the shortest duration for a certificate II course
- five RTOs (13.2%) delivered a certificate II qualifications in one to two weeks
- five RTOs (13.2%) delivered a certificate II qualification in three to 10 weeks
- 11 RTOs (28.9%) delivered a certificate II qualification in 12 to 26 weeks
- 14 RTOs (36.8%) delivered a certificate II qualification within the 0.5 to one year required by the AQF volume of learning measure.

Table 1: Course duration - total of all certificate II qualifications in equine training

Course duration – total of all Certificate II qualifications in Equine training		
Number of weeks	Number of providers	Proportion (%) of providers
Less than 1 week	3	7.9
1 – 2	5	13.2
3 – 10	5	13.2
12 - 26	11	28.9
AQF benchmark for a Certificate II – 0.5 to 1 year (26-52 weeks)		
More than 26 weeks	14	36.8
Total	38	100%

Source: ASQA survey

The majority of certificate III equine qualifications are being delivered in less than the specified measure in the AQF. The minimum specified is 52 weeks.

Table 2: Course duration – total of all certificate III qualifications in equine training

Course duration – total of all Certificate III qualifications in Equine training		
Number of weeks	Number of Providers	Proportion (%) of RTOs
Less than 1 week	1	1.8
1 – 2	13	23.6
8 - 16	9	16.4
18 - 24	6	10.9
26 - 49	14	25.5
AQF benchmark for a Certificate III 1 to 2 years (52 – 104 weeks)		
More than 52 weeks	12	21.8
Total	55	100%

Source: ASQA survey

The survey results, as shown in Table 3, are as follows:

- three RTOs (75%) were delivering training within the 0.5 to 2 years benchmarked in the AQF
- one RTO (25%) was delivering just below this benchmark at 24 weeks duration.

Table 3: Course duration – total of all certificate IV qualifications in equine training

Course duration – total of all Certificate IV qualifications in Equine training		
Number of weeks	Number of RTOs	Proportion (%) of RTOs
24 weeks	1	25.0
AQF requirement for a Certificate IV – 0.5 to 2 years (26-104 weeks)		
More than 26 weeks	3	75.0
Total	4	100%

Source: ASQA survey

Qualifications issued

The survey asked the RTOs to identify the actual number of units of competency or qualifications issued in the 2014 calendar year. This data is consistent with the number of enrolments in the various courses and training package qualifications, are identified above in the text headed Delivery Profile on page 45. It also illustrates the large number of students completing units of competency rather than full qualifications.

Table 4: Number of qualifications issued in 2014

Total number of qualifications issued in the 2014 Calendar year		
Qualifications	Number of students	Proportion (%) of students
Equine accredited courses	81	21.1
Agriculture Training Package	0	0.0
Racing Training Package	303	78.9
Sport and Recreation Training Package	0	0.0
Total	384	100%

Source: ASQA survey

Table 5: Number of units of competency issued in 2014

Total number of units of competency issued in the 2014 Calendar year		
From the course or package:	Number of students	Proportion (%) of students
Equine accredited courses	0	0.0
Agriculture Training Package	3,925	96.2
Racing Training Package	12	0.3
Sport and Recreation Training Package	141	3.5
Total	4,078	100%

Source: ASQA survey

Levels of previous experience

RTOs were asked to indicate their estimation of the prior horse related experience for students enrolling.

Do any of the students currently enrolled in this course have previous experience in the equine industry?
Yes/No/Don't know.

If yes, what is the level of equine experience your students have? The answer categories were beginner, competent, competition - for all, most or some.

The results for the accredited courses are as follows:

- one provider enrolled beginners who all had previous experience
- 28 providers enrolled students with only some experience.

For racing enrolments:

- 21 out of 50 students (42%) were classified as beginners
- 14 of these 21 students (66.6%) had only some experience.

While the answers to these survey questions are subjective, it does indicate that a basic safety-focused qualification prior to undertaking a racing qualification is likely to improve rider safety.

Table 6: Level of previous experience for students enrolled in equine courses or qualifications

Level of previous experience for students enrolled in equine courses or qualifications				
Level of previous experience	Accredited course	Racing	Sport coaching	Agriculture
Beginner rider				
All	1	3	0	0
Most	2	4	1	3
Some	8	14	2	19
Competent				
All	0	3	0	8
Most	5	2	3	14
Some	9	15	1	17
Competition				
All	0	1	0	1
Most	3	0	1	9
Some	9	8	3	17
Total responses	37	50	11	88

Source: ASQA survey

Chapter 5 Stakeholder consultation

As part of the review, ASQA has consulted widely with stakeholders from all areas of the equine training industry. Face-to-face consultations were held in most capital cities, along with meetings via teleconference. Many stakeholders contacted ASQA directly. Some of those consulted came from the non-VET sectors in the horse industry, from pony clubs and from horse breeding. All were concerned about safety issues and had suggestions for improvements.

As outlined in section 4.2, a survey was conducted of all RTOs delivering relevant training. In addition to responding to the survey questions, RTOs were invited to make additional comments. Relevant comments made during the survey have been incorporated into the stakeholder analysis (refer to Chapter 6) as well as an overview of key questions about safety issues which were included in the survey.

Through the audit process, RTOs, trainers and assessors, students and employers were invited to comment on how training in the three main industry areas involving nationally recognised qualifications could be made safer.

5.1 Selection of horses

All stakeholders in the training industry agree that matching a horse to a student is a first step towards safety. Many of the codes and protocols referred to in Chapter 3 include guides for the selection of a horse that is appropriate for the skill set of the student. These include not only the horse's background, but any rehabilitation if the horse is an ex-racehorse, its acclimatisation to the training area and what feed it has been given recently.

The SWA *Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses* (the SWA Guide) includes a section titled 'Fit for purpose horse'. The SWA Guide states:

Persons conducting a business or undertaking should not permit new or beginner riders to ride horses that:

- *are nervous or reactive*
- *have a tendency to rear, buck, pig root, bite people or horses, kick people when being handled or ridden, shy, bolt or any other behaviour which might unseat an unbalanced rider*
- *are highly trained and sensitive*
- *are non-compliant and unresponsive*
- *regularly trip or stumble, or*
- *are from a race track without extensive re-training.*⁶⁴

While having a horse suitable for the training needs of the student is essential for safety, as well as having clear lines of responsibility for determining this suitability, stakeholders have identified that these are not always present. This suggests that there is a need for a more consistent approach to managing the risks associated with selecting 'fit for purpose' horses.

New South Wales and South Australia have implemented the SWA Guide. The implementation of the SWA Guide in the other states and territories would assist in building consistency across Australia for duty holders who manage risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses.

The SWA Guide applies to new and inexperienced riders interacting with horses. This includes apprentices in the racing industry. However, not all jurisdictions require trainees or apprentices to have completed a lower level qualification, where basic handling and riding skills could be comprehensively assured, and where the Guide's advice to be cautious about using ex-racehorses could be followed. In its

⁶⁴ Safe Work Australia (June 2014) p19.53

*Review of apprentice jockey recruitment training and welfare*⁶⁵, Racing Queensland stated that *apprentice jockeys require more training, support and coaching in riding skills.*

In the racing sector, safe riding of horses and fast riding (whether in training of the horse or in a race), while not mutually exclusive, do raise some challenges. An apprentice jockey or apprentice trackwork rider must safely ride a horse that has been fed a special high energy diet, designed to give it what has been called 'explosive energy'. Jockeys 'ride short', with less knee contact than a recreational rider might employ. One eminent authority is concerned that the science of risk management has not been embraced by the racing industry. Other stakeholders have commented that racing trainers need compulsory work, health and safety training.

One experienced industry practitioner referred to a potential flaw in the assessment of a horse. 'Horse people don't intentionally put people or horses at risk, however, many (horse) people involved in working with inexperienced people can forget what they have learned themselves, and this can put learners in unintentionally risky situations'. To put this another way, experienced horse people can underestimate the risks associated with a particular horse to a beginner.

Students who were interviewed during the audits commented on specific problems with horses used in training, including one RTO where some poor horse behaviour included biting and kicking. One animal (a pony the student owned) was actually not broken in. A trainer suggested that all RTOs should have a 'couple of bomb-proof horses', for beginner riders.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the New South Wales Coroner⁶⁶ in 2011 recommended that TAFE New South Wales improve its system for quality assuring the selection of appropriate horses to be used in training. TAFE New South Wales has done this with a series of templates (equine procedures) which must be completed for every training program relating to horses across all TAFE New South Wales institutes. Horse Safety Australia has adapted these templates with TAFE New South Wales' permission, to enable them to be used by non-TAFE (and) smaller organisations.⁶⁷

The RTO survey conducted for this review also invited RTOs to comment on various issues concerning safety:

- which if any safety guides or codes they were using
- how horses were sourced for use in the training; and
- RTO governance practices in regard to safety.

Thirty-three RTOs provided a response to these safety issues as follows:

- 26 RTOs (79%) stated that they have adopted the Safe Work Guide
- 25 RTOs (76%) indicated they have also adopted the TAFE New South Wales *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training*.
- 21 RTOs (64%) indicated they have adopted other codes and guides including:
 - Equestrian Australia's Essential Risk Management Summary⁶⁸
 - animal welfare codes of practice; and
 - State specific safe work codes.

RTOs are evenly divided in how horses are provided for training and assessment. One third of RTOs (11) have their own horses, with a further 10 requiring students to bring their own horses. Where students are

⁶⁵ *Review of apprentice jockey recruitment training and welfare 2011-2012* Racing Queensland p5

⁶⁶ State Coroner's Report NSW 2990/10, on 23 December 2011

⁶⁷ Equine Audit Procedures, revised version Horse Safety Australia 2692014

⁶⁸ Equestrian Australia, Essential Risk Management Summary, accessed 21 May 2015 at <http://www.equestrian.org.au/sites/default/files/Risk%20Management%20checklist.pdf>

in an apprenticeship (racing), or working for an agricultural enterprise, the horses are provided by the employer. Six RTOs provided this answer.

Of the remaining six RTOs, three had a hire agreement in place, and the other half had 'another' source of horses (for example, from a local riding school).

Even where RTOs require students to bring their own horses to the training program, trainers reported that the horse was sometimes not suitable for a new rider.

RTOs are evenly divided in how horses are provided for training and assessment. One third of RTOs (11) have their own horses, with a further 10 requiring students to bring their own horses. Where students are in an apprenticeship (racing), or working for an agricultural enterprise, the horses are provided by the employer. Six RTOs provided this answer.

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Even where RTOs require students to bring their own horses to the training program, trainers reported that the horse was sometimes not suitable for a new rider.

Of specific interest for this review, was how RTOs ensure that training delivered away from the RTOs' own premises met the governance arrangements for safety, such as properly equipped venues, supervision and so on. Responses to this question varied considerably. One RTO that utilises online training, requires students to have access to a safe equestrian facility and requires the students to assess this themselves. Where premises are leased by the RTO, some ensure a risk assessment is completed prior to training. In their responses, some of these RTOs included specifically that both the facility and the behaviour of the horses were risk assessed. One RTO also included a regular checking of first aid equipment in their procedures for risk minimisation.

With some of the RTOs delivering the *RGR08 Racing Training Package* their governance arrangements relied on the inspections performed by stewards.

In summary, most RTOs report that they conduct risk assessment of facilities prior to training, with only a small number of RTOs relying on either student assessment of risk, or racing stewards' assessment.

These survey responses in relation to safety issues contrast with the findings at audit which indicate that use of relevant safety codes and guides is inconsistent, as are systematic risk management practices. Further detail is provided about this issue in Chapter 6.

5.2 The training packages and accredited courses

Many stakeholders expressed the view that there needs to be a specific focus on safety in the training packages. Currently qualifications may include safety matters in different units, but it is not sufficiently comprehensive. Training needs to initially focus on basic safety, including interpreting horse behaviour. How to 'read' the horse, allowing it to be safely caught, was mentioned by a trainer as a skill that needs to be 'internalised' by students. The hardest aspect of training for new entrants was 'learning that horses are unpredictable and act on instinct' (trainer).

Another trainer emphasised that safety around the horse was the hardest and most important thing to instil into students. Students (must be made) 'aware that it is a 500kg animal and you must have your wits about you. Don't be complacent. A horse can turn around and knock your teeth out with its head'.

One RTO requires beginner riders to complete a private horse skills course to supplement the skills learnt through the agriculture package. Some stakeholders regard basic equitation skills as a prerequisite to any actual riding skill development. This would provide students with current knowledge on this developing science as it applies to safety, for example, the way riders provide cues to a horse to ensure control.

AgriFood Skills Australia is preparing a certificate II level basic horse handling course as outlined in Chapter 2, which includes the core skills for anyone working with horses, whether caring for, handling or riding.

Many specific improvements were suggested for the training packages. These include:

- developing an understanding of the psychology and behaviour of horses, drawing on already existing evidence-based approaches to assessing behaviour and temperament, such as that used with assessment of police horses
- having a mandatory unit on safety as it appears incidental at the moment
- reviewing the certificate II level unit *RGRPSH209A Attend horses at race meetings and trials*. This was considered as not at the AQF level 2.
- prerequisite units for new entrants, for the certificate II and III level qualifications
- mandatory hours for the *Handle horses* and *Perform basic riding task* units, at 60 and 120 hours respectively
- detailing the volume of learning in the training packages 'so that all RTOs are on a more level playing field'. Another RTO commented that the certificates II and III from the training package should all have a minimum duration of 12 months
- putting more rigour in volume of learning measures. 'In a contestable environment it is a major concern. Quality RTOs are being undercut by others offering quicker and shorter training'.
- considering whether some units of competency are repetitive
- specifying the use of technology such as helmet cameras, to assist the development of safe riding skills
- clarifying that a risk assessment process is mandatory. One trainer said that it is currently only inferred.
- The Agriculture Training Package has separate qualifications so there is less flexibility in selection of units. This can lead to important elective units not being included. Alternatively, design skill sets that focus on the requisite units, which may also allow a graduated skill development, with a basic and more advanced riding and handling skill set. A specific area for a more advanced skill set would be handling horses in a crush.
- When the training package developers undertake their consultation in the re-design of the training packages, giving consideration as to how to provide access to the consultation process for farmers and people living in remote locations.

The New South Wales Coroner⁶⁹ queried whether the volume of learning (provided in the unit in which Ms Waugh was enrolled) was sufficient for a beginner rider to demonstrate controlling and working educated horses via mustering. The units of competency relevant to a beginner in such a context do not have a minimum volume of learning, as that is only relevant under the AQF at the qualification level. In any case, despite the fact that volume of learning benchmarks in the AQF were to be fully implemented by 1 January 2015 as outlined in Chapter 6, most training packages remain silent about volume of learning at qualification level.

Given the concerns expressed regarding the adequacy of riding experience for beginner riders as provided through nationally accredited training, the absence of a skill set focused on safety for beginner riders and the need to distinguish between basic and more complex competencies, it would seem prudent to determine the minimum number of hours for the achievement of relevant units of competency, whether in a skill set or not, to assure safety.

Some specific suggestions were also made by those involved with VET accredited courses. Having a mandatory work placement for a Certificate II in Equine Studies course was thought to be unreasonable by one trainer. Another trainer thought that VET accredited courses were contributing to a 'fragmentation' of the training industry and there should be a training package qualification or skill set that encompassed the modules in the VET accredited courses.

⁶⁹ State Coroner's Report NSW 2990/10, on 23 December 2011

Assessment consistency can be difficult in this industry. Documenting observed practical skills competency is not always well done. 'Horse people don't write things down. It is hard to get paper evidence'. In racing, a training manager asserted that assessment was a 'tick and flick exercise, where it is expected that students will be signed off as competent'.

The training packages need to provide guidance on how students should progress through different 'levels' of horse. They need to be more specific on the number of horses on which a student needs to demonstrate competency, not just the current statement of 'more than one horse'. 'There does need to be a few more *musts* in the training package. It should say that the student must ride a range of horses' (trainer).

A common problem expressed by trainers and employers, was the difficulty some students have with the literacy requirements of the qualifications. It could be considered whether a basic skill set that focused on practical aspects of safe horse riding and handling without completion of written theory assessment could address this problem.

Student to trainer ratio

The number of students who can be safely managed by one trainer was a subject raised by RTO trainers and managers. A ratio of one trainer to no more than five students, for the practical sessions, was suggested. Others, including parents, also raised the ratio concern. The RTO 'just didn't have enough teachers to do things safely'. During audits RTOs were asked about their student to trainer ratios and the results are outlined in Chapter 6.

Trainer skills

Many comments were made through the interviews conducted at audit that trainers needed coaching accreditation, as holding a *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* was not deemed sufficient. 'Being an experienced horseman is not sufficient to train people'. An employer (pastoral company) where students do work placement, commented that while 'there is a lot of passion' in the trainers, there is not sufficient competency. One stakeholder commented on trainers, that in some, 'animal sense is lacking in that they cannot read behaviour or respond to early cues'.

Some stakeholders expressed concern about the skills of trainers in the racing industry. 'Apprentice jockeys are handed over to (horse) trainers that have little or no experience with training people.' The apprentices may then be 'handed on to a steward, who is not necessarily qualified to know what the requirements are, but are the people signing off on the training.'

In the racing industry the supervision of apprentice jockeys at country meetings was mentioned as a concern for some stakeholders. The *Australian Rules of Racing* specify the responsibility of the apprentice jockey's master at Rule 85A: *All engagements for any apprentice jockey to ride in races shall be approved by his master....* The steward of the race course can also make a judgement of an apprentice jockey's skill, and suspend or limit the permission to ride *if they find that any aspect of his race riding technique, method or practice may be a hazard to himself or other riders....*, at Rule 92A.⁷⁰

Some people have queried the suitability of a jockey to *unpack the training package and sort out a training delivery plan*. A jockey who does not have any training credentials may be appropriate as a mentor, it was suggested, but not as a de facto trainer. The Standards for RTOs 2015 require trainers and assessors (being at an RTO's premises, at a workplace [racing stable] or at a race track for training or assessment purposes), to have trainer and assessor qualifications, industry skills and vocational competencies (Standard 1.13).⁷¹ There can be arrangements for supervision, but the accountability rests with the qualified trainer or assessor (Standard 1.20).

⁷⁰ Australian Rules of Racing, amended 1 July 2014

⁷¹ Standards for RTOs 2015 1.13

In 2013 ASQA surveyed RTOs, reviewing the qualifications of trainers who were delivering units of competency in horse riding or handling. While 84 per cent of trainers (and assessors) were identified as having qualifications as trainers⁷², 65 per cent of trainers were found not to hold vocational competencies.⁷³ However, as discussed in Chapter 6 the audits found a significant shift from the earlier survey results with many trainers and assessors holding coaching or instructional qualifications. Seventeen (85 per cent) of RTOs that were audited were compliant at initial audit with Standard 15.4 of the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* (trainers and assessors, Standards 1.13, 1.14, 1.15 and 1.16 of the Standards for RTOs 2015).

Assessment resources

During the audits comments were made that many units in the training packages are repetitive and that holistic assessment would be sensible. However, it was also commented that 'a lot of trainers can't do (holistic assessment) as mapping unit performance criteria is a higher level skill'. The current standard for trainers is the *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* which does not include as a core unit *TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools*. If all trainers achieved competency in this unit they would gain an understanding of assessment in general, as well as how to design holistic assessments.

During their consultations stakeholders expressed concern about assessment:

- 'it is just tick and flick'
- assessment needs to be evidence based
- there needs to be assessment on 'harder' (more risky) horses, before students are deemed competent
- completing a task once or twice does not mean a student can be deemed competent, and
- the fitness of students also needs to be assessed to ensure safe handling and riding.

These concerns about assessment practices were confirmed by the audit results as outlined in Chapter 6.

Student needs

The comment has been made during stakeholder consultations that even in racing apprenticeships, students increasingly have low skills when they commence. Government funding is apparently not available for a certificate II level qualification, which might assist with skills development. As indicated in Chapter 2 a certificate II course is under development by the training package developer, responding to an obvious need for this basic safety-focused qualification. The qualification is to contain common core units, with electives relevant to the different industry areas in equine training, including racing.

VET in Schools

Some schools are delivering part of the *RGR08 Racing Training Package*, with stakeholders querying whether this provided sufficient basic skills to ensure student safety when they attended actual racing venues. Many students are achieving a certificate II level equine qualification with little access to horses at all. The schools-based programs are deemed *a popular market*. Stakeholders commented that this increase in VET in Schools means it can't be assumed that those entering jobs with horses have a background or experience with horses. This makes assessment at the outset of training about level of experience and competence even more critical. Some of these concerns should be addressed by the development of the entry level, safety-focused certificate II equine qualification.

Online or distance training

⁷² The trainers with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, TAA40104(superseded), or TAE40110(current)

⁷³ Review of responses for trainers/assessors delivering horse riding units, Final Report 23 January 2013, ASQA.

While many students enrolled in training via distance or online were pleased with the knowledge they developed through the course, others were concerned that practical skills were not as well developed. The theory of loading a horse onto a float, hitching it to a vehicle and towing it was presented as an example where no practical demonstration of student skill was required.

Where delivery was by distance or online, some stakeholders felt that the authenticity of assessment was questionable and queried whether self-assessment is reliable. Some students felt that there was insufficient observation of skills. A related concern was the lack of visits by trainers to the training 'venue', which in some delivery modes was the student's farm, with all contact with the RTO being via online technology.

Non-accredited training

Concerns were expressed that safety requirements also need to be addressed for non-accredited training, with a mandatory code of practice that would address the minimum requirements for safe horse handling and riding. However, the regulation of non-VET settings is beyond the scope of this review and therefore recommendations are not made in this regard. In fact research shows much work has already been undertaken outside the VET sector to address safety in the horse industry and as previously noted, collaboration between the VET and non-VET sectors could be beneficial to facilitate cross-sector communication and the potential to learn from each other's experience, particularly around approaches to safety and risk management.

Chapter 6 Analysis of the levels of compliance of training quality in equine training and assessment

The findings of the strategic review include a summary of the results of the audits of 20 RTOs conducted by ASQA specifically for this review between 15 October 2014 and 12 December 2014. An overview and analysis of the outcomes of these audits are provided in this chapter.

As noted in Chapter 1, based on the advice of the review's management committee an industry expert was engaged to accompany auditors to a sample of the audits in order to provide technical advice on risk management and safety issues relevant to interaction with horses.

6.1 Overview of the standards audited

The strategic review focused on a series of quality standards from the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012*. The Standards for RTOs 2015 were introduced in late 2014. They applied for organisations applying to become an RTO from 1 January 2015 and for existing RTOs from 1 April 2015.

The focus of the strategic review was on a specific subset of Standard 15 that particularly relates to quality training delivery and assessment, but also included other standards relevant to concerns raised by coroners, regulators, employers and the industry generally.

The standards selected directly impact on the student in terms of quality of information provided, support services and accuracy of qualification issued. The selected standards also impact on the quality of training and assessment provision such as the suitability of the training and assessment strategy, access to suitable resources, adequacy of trainers and assessors, valid assessment and engagement with industry.

Not all of the standards selected for the review were relevant to all RTOs and therefore were not audited for certain RTOs. As an example, Standard 17.3 (Standard 2.4 of the Standards for RTOs 2015) requires the RTO to monitor all training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that it complies with all aspects of the VET Quality Framework. Not all RTOs have such arrangements.

6.2 Overall levels of compliance and non-compliance with the standards

Twenty RTOs were audited specifically for this review. This represents 51.3 per cent of RTOs that confirmed to ASQA that they had delivered one or more equine units in 2014. This enabled a sufficient sample size to identify key issues and explore safety in horse handling, care and practice across the range of sectors in which students obtain jobs after completing their training. Audits were conducted in RTOs spread across six jurisdictions.

As noted in Chapter 4, the training market for equine programs while small is very diverse because horse riding and horse handling activities occur in a range of income earning, professional and amateur sport, and recreational settings cutting across all age and ability groups. The audits included units of competency and VET accredited courses that contained modules covering job roles in agriculture, thoroughbred and harness racing, animal care and management, and sport, fitness and recreation. This means that the requirements of the training package or VET accredited course can be quite different depending on the industry requirements for the job roles and the regulation of some roles such as those in racing. The racing industry is particularly distinctive as it is governed by principal racing authorities in each jurisdiction in accordance with national *Rules of Racing* together with *Local Rules of Racing*.

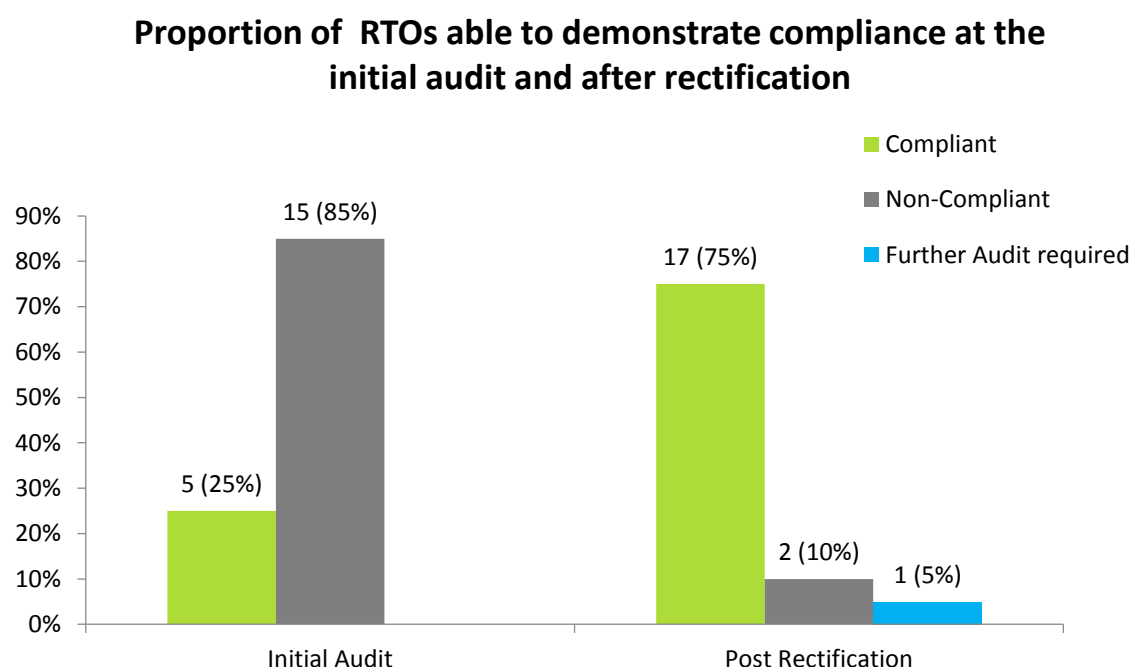
Of the 20 RTOs specifically audited for this review, 15 (75 per cent) were not able to demonstrate full compliance at the initial audit. The non-compliances ranged from minor to very serious non-compliance in relation to one or more of the standards audited that could affect the RTO's registration. If RTOs are

found not to be fully compliant with the national standards they are given a 20 working day rectification period to address the non-compliances that were identified at their audit. Final levels of compliance are then determined once auditors have examined any evidence an RTO submits to rectify the non-compliance identified at the initial audit. The actual level of compliance can only be determined after this rectification period.

Following the 20 working day rectification period, 17 (85 per cent) of the RTOs were found to be compliant with the standards.

The overall level of compliance with the standards at the initial audit and after rectification period for the 20 RTOs that were audited are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Summary of compliance outcomes, at initial audit and following rectification period, for 20 audits conducted during this review



Source: ASQA audits.

After the review of the rectification evidence ASQA can take action against RTOs that remain not compliant, including possible removal of the qualifications from an RTO's scope of registration or the removal of registration.

Following the 20 audits, two audits (10 per cent) did not achieve compliance after their audits and were finalised as not compliant. The two RTOs were issued with notice of intention to suspend part of the RTOs scope of registration. A further decision was then made not to suspend part of the RTOs registration following an analysis of submitted reconsideration evidence.

The review also considered whether there were differences in the levels of compliance by RTOs offering equine qualifications in the different industry areas, for example, agriculture and racing. However, as the sample numbers are relatively small, no definitive patterns could be seen apart from noting that the most frequently delivered qualifications were in the agriculture industry and the audits against those qualifications also showed significant levels of non-compliance.

There was a very high rate of non-compliance at initial audit against Standard 15 (quality training and assessment, [Standards 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16 and 2.2 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]). The greatest rate of non-compliance at initial audit was recorded against Standard 15.5 (assessment, [Standard 1.8 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]). Fifteen (75 per cent) of RTOs were not compliant with this standard. After the rectification period, 17 (85 per cent) of RTOs were able to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

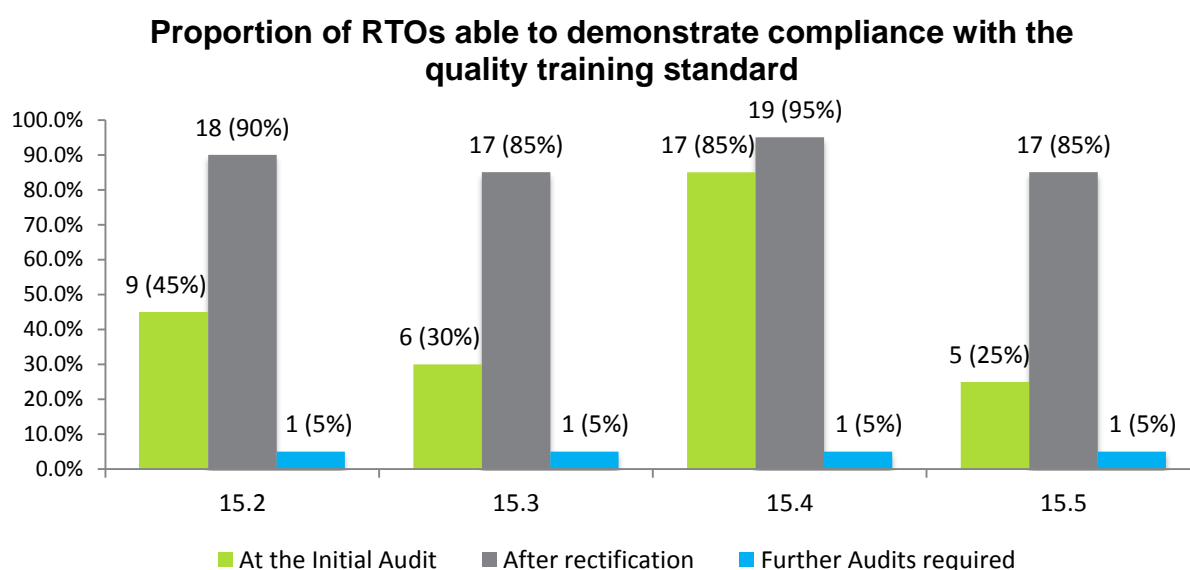
Fourteen RTOs (70 per cent) were found not compliant with Standard 15.3 (staff, facilities and resources [Standards 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]) at initial audit, but following the rectification period 17 (85 per cent) were able to comply with this standard.

In relation to Standard 15.2 (training and assessment strategies [Standards 1.1, 1.4, 1.15 and 1.6 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]), 11 RTOs (55 per cent) were not compliant at initial audit but following rectification, 18 (90 per cent) were able to comply with this standard.

High rates of non-compliance at initial audit by seven RTOs (35 per cent) were also shown against Standard 16.3 (information to potential clients [Standards 5.1 and 5.2 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]).

The proportion of RTOs that were able to demonstrate compliance with Standards 15.2, 15.3, 15.4 and 15.5 at the initial site audit and after the rectification period is shown in Figure 4. It indicates that the level of compliance increases substantially once RTOs have the opportunity to provide evidence that they can meet the requirements of the Standards.

Figure 4: Proportion of RTOs able to demonstrate compliance with the quality training and assessment standard at initial audit and following rectification.



Source: ASQA audits (15.2 Strategies for training and assessment; 15.3 Resources; 15.4 Trainer competence; 15.5 Assessment; 16.3 Information provided to learners before enrolment).

In the remainder of this chapter, a more detailed analysis is provided of the initial audit findings against a number of the key standards against which there were the highest levels of non-compliance at initial audit. An analysis is also provided against Standard 15.4 (trainers and assessors, [Standards 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, and 1.16 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]) against which there was a high level of compliance at initial audit 17 RTOs (85 per cent). There are two reasons for providing an analysis against this standard:

- the positive results contrast with the results of a 2011 survey of RTOs delivering equine training which found very poor results in relation to vocational competencies and currency of industry skills of trainers and assessors. The audits offered the opportunity to identify whether changes had occurred since 2011, and

- many stakeholders observed that there should be a requirement for equine trainers and assessors to have qualifications in instructing or coaching horse-riding in addition to the mandatory training and assessment qualifications required by the Standards for RTOs 2015. The audits provided an opportunity to explore this issue with RTOs.

Given that this review was prompted by a Coroner's report that raised significant concerns about the adequacy of the equine units, policies and procedures for assessing horses to be used in training, and the adequacy of trainer and assessor competencies and currency of industry experience, the focus of the analysis is on these issues. Examples of good practice have also been provided. The analysis focuses particularly on the issues which are common to all horse riding and handling regardless of setting, that is, risk identification, management and control and implementation of safe practices.

6.3 Standard 15.2 Training and assessment strategies

Requirements of Standard 15.2

Standard 15.2 (Standards 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 of the 2015 Standards for RTOs 2015) requires RTOs to have strategies for training and assessment which meet the requirements of the training package or VET accredited course. These strategies are to guide trainers and assessors who are delivering a course (cluster of units or a qualification) to students. The training and assessment strategies must be developed through effective consultation with industry.

Each qualification within the training packages and VET accredited courses included in this review requires a mix of core and elective units/modules. Each of these units of competency/modules includes specific knowledge and skills, which must be demonstrated by a student within the industry context and across the range of conditions described in the unit/module before the student can be found competent by the RTO.

The training and assessment strategies developed by RTOs need to reflect these requirements.

Of the 20 RTOs audited for the review, a range of training and assessment strategies were utilised for various modes of delivery. Some RTOs presented more than one training and assessment strategy to reflect different delivery modes or different target groups. Of the 20 RTOs audited, the predominant mode of delivery was face-to-face or face-to-face combined with a work placement or work-based training and assessment. Blended or mixed delivery modes were the next major delivery method followed by workplace training and traineeships.

A summary of the delivery modes utilised by the 20 RTOs audited for this review are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Delivery modes used by the 20 RTOs audited for this review

Delivery mode	Number of RTOs using
Face-to-face only	8
Face-to-face combined with work placement or work based training and assessment	3
Mixed or blended learning modes	4
Traineeships	3
Workplace	3
Distance learning	1
Online	1

Note: Total number exceeds 20 as some RTOs reported using more than one mode of delivery.

Duration of programs

RTOs also need to be cognisant of the requirements of the AQF in relation to volume of learning. The AQF defines volume of learning as identifying the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes of a particular qualification type. In response to concerns about too much short duration training, Australian Government, state and territory ministers for training endorsed the following volume of learning benchmarks (for course developers) in the AQF, which were to be fully implemented by 1 January 2015:

0.5 to one year (600–1200 hours) for a certificate I

0.5 to one year (600 –1200 hours) for a certificate II

one to two years (1200–2400 hours) for a certificate III

0.5 to two years (600–2400 hours) for a certificate IV

one to two years (1200–2400 hours) for a diploma

1.5 to two years (1800–2400 hours) for an advanced diploma

0.5 to one year (600 – 1200 hours) for a graduate certificate

one to two years (1200 -2400 hours) for a graduate diploma

Accrediting bodies, qualification developers and issuing bodies (that is RTOs) are required to meet the qualification specifications in the AQF. The *VET Quality Framework* also specifies that RTOs meet the requirements of the AQF. RTOs are therefore responsible for ensuring that the programs designed by them meet these requirements. From 1 January 2015 all new enrolments must be in qualifications that meet the requirements of the AQF.⁷⁴ More detailed information about volume of learning is included in Appendix C.

Previous ASQA strategic reviews in training for childcare, aged care and the construction industry have found that there were significant concerns held by stakeholders about short duration of courses.⁷⁵

The major concern related to volume of learning is that substantially shortened courses may lead to poor quality outcomes as such timeframes 'cannot deliver the rigour or depth of training and competency required by industry'.⁷⁶ As outlined in Chapter 5, stakeholders have expressed concerns about short duration courses in horse riding and handling that are potentially undermining safety. Hence this review has also examined the issue of short course duration as an indicator of possible risks to safety.

Stakeholders suggested that there needs to be more rigour and detail in volume of learning measures in training packages as quality RTOs are being undercut by others offering quicker and shorter training. To date the requirements of the AQF with respect to volume of learning have been largely ignored by training package developers. Training packages generally do not specify benchmarks for the sufficient amount of training for a learner who is new to the training area to be able to gain the required skills and competencies for each qualification. The Standards for RTOs 2015 make reference (in Standards 1.1 and 1.2) to RTOs ensuring that a sufficient amount of training is provided to enable each learner to meet the

74 Australian Qualifications Framework Council, (January 2013), Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, accessed 13 January 2014 at <http://www.aqf.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Australian-Qualifications-Framework-2nd-Edition-January-2013.pdf>, p103.

⁷⁵ ASQA's strategic review reports *Training for aged and community care in Australia* and *Training for the 'White Card' for Australia's Construction Industry* can be accessed at <http://www.asqa.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/strategic-review-reports.html>

⁷⁶ Assessment issues in VET: minimising the level of risk, Halliday-Wynes and Misko, NCVER, 2013 <http://www.ncver.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/310cbf48-36de-4936-9022-ead11ffc5c03/Assessment-issues-in-VET-2620.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=310cbf48-36de-4936-9022-ead11ffc5c03>

requirements for each unit of competency, unit or qualification in which they are enrolled. However, what this means for each program in a training package is not specified.

Stakeholders had no shortage of suggestions about the benchmarks that should be set. One RTO commented that certificates II and III should all have a minimum duration of 12 months.

Stakeholders have queried whether volume of learning and course durations are sufficient for beginner riders to demonstrate competency. One stakeholder suggested that mandatory hours for the basic riding units should be set at 120 hours. However, volume of learning under the AQF is set at qualification rather than unit of competency level, raising the question of whether a minimum number of hours needs to be set within the training package for beginner riding units, therefore assisting RTOs to develop appropriate training and assessment strategies.

When discussing volume of learning consideration needs to be given to the target group and whether the target group has existing skills and knowledge which may warrant a shortened duration. For example, several RTOs during audit for this review advised that they are selective about the learners permitted to enrol in horse riding units, only accepting those who have prior riding experience.

Data about duration of programs was obtained from audits and supplemented by information provided by RTOs in the RTO survey undertaken for this review as detailed in Chapter 5.

In some cases duration information was indeterminate due to either the way programs were mapped by RTOs or because learners were living on a working property and the proportion of hours dedicated to working/training was unclear.

Other RTOs provided a range of hours for qualifications they deliver depending on the electives selected by the learner. In some cases the bottom of the range fell below that expected for certificates II and III. One example indicated a bottom range of 303 hours for the Certificate II in Agriculture and 404 hours for the Certificate III in Agriculture. However, the top of the range for these qualifications fell within the volume of learning measures of the AQF (1220 hours for the certificate II and 1370 hours for the certificate III).

A number of course durations advised by RTOs fell significantly below AQF requirements, for example, 292 hours nominated for *91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Performance horse)*. A number of RTOs also indicated duration for certificates III that were well below requirements. This included certificate III qualifications ranging from 390 to 628 hours.

The review also considered the nominal hours allocated to not just qualifications, but also to individual horse riding units of competency. The most significant example of short duration was found in relation to one RTO that delivered two equine units in a certificate II over two days (15 hours) and one equine unit in a certificate III conducted with two other units of competency in less than two days (13 hours).

A range of hours was apparent in relation to basic horse riding units including:

- 20 hours for *SISOEQO201A Handle horses* in an RTO that indicated their target cohort is those who are experienced with horses
- 40 hours for *SISOEQO201A Handle horses* and 50 hours for *RGRPSH201A Handle horses* in an RTO that targets candidates with previous riding experience
- 50 hours for *RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks* in an RTO delivering racing qualifications
- 50 hours for *RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks* also in an RTO delivering racing qualifications that only accepts people with a riding background
- two RTOs indicated 100 nominal hours for *SISOEQO202A Demonstrate basic horse riding skills*
- one RTO indicated that it spends up to 160 hours on riding skills but 90 per cent of its students have no riding experience.

These figures confirm stakeholders' views about inconsistency in approaches to volume of learning and indicate that the volume of learning requirements may not be being met by some RTOs, except in some cases where they are able to demonstrate clear reasons for reduced course duration based on learner

characteristics such as previous horse riding experience. It appears that short duration of training is likely to be a factor impacting on safety in the training environment, as well as the competence of qualified graduates to carry out job roles.

Areas of non-compliance

As outlined earlier, 11 RTOs (55 per cent) were not compliant with Standard 15.2 at initial audit and following the rectification period 18 (90 per cent) were compliant.

For the RTOs specifically audited for this review, the main reasons for the level of non-compliance at the initial audit were related to inaccurate or insufficient information. The strategies did not provide an accurate or sufficiently detailed framework for delivery and assessment and had not been adapted to meet the needs of the various targets groups, such as school-based trainees. Specific issues are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of issues for non-compliance with Standard 15.2

Issue	Specifics
Short duration	<p>There is insufficient time to learn, practice and consolidate the skills and knowledge in units of competency before summative assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The training strategy does not reflect training time, does not explain how the simulated environment is used for delivery and assessment and does not provide sufficient information to confirm that students have sufficient opportunity to develop, practise and consolidate skills and knowledge before assessment.
Inaccurate, incomplete or inconsistent information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about assessment in the Learning Guide for the units of competency does not align with the information in the strategy for training and assessment. Session plans and timetables do not accurately describe the time spent on the delivery of the unit. The strategy for the qualification did not <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurately describe the elective units to be delivered in the course identify the delivery sites for the course, or include the training materials to be used in the delivery of the course. The strategy for the accredited course did not include the delivery sequence or the timetable for the delivery and assessment. No reference was made to the assessment instruments for any of the units included in the strategy. The description of the reference materials required for the delivery of each of the courses/qualifications did not include the resources for each unit. One trainer was not included in the list of staff delivering the qualification. The training resources used to deliver the individual units were not clear and no links were provided to the unit outlines. The prerequisite units for the riding units were not identified. One unit was incorrectly identified. The strategies for all qualifications reviewed contained additional modules that were not required to gain the qualifications and there were skills requirements that were not required to gain the qualification.

Issue	Specifics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategies did not state the minimum (core and elective) requirements for conferral of the qualification nor provide sufficient information to students about requirements. • The strategies did not identify how training and assessment is conducted. • There was not a consistent understanding by the RTO's staff about what is required by the training package rules to gain the qualifications. • Insufficient/incomplete information was provided to students in the strategies. • There was an incorrect version of unit code and title and incorrect ordering of prerequisites. • Not all assessment requirements were included in the strategy. • One core unit was missing and the strategy did not identify all learner cohorts (school based trainees). • The approach to assessment was not described and there was no information in place to guide delivery. • There was an inaccurate description of learning resources. • The strategy did not identify delivery and assessment arrangements for each of the proposed target groups and modes of delivery and there was insufficient information to identify how practical skills would be assessed.
Work placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy for the qualification did not include the requirement to complete a 40 hour work placement.
Effective consultation with industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTO could not demonstrate that the training and assessment strategy was developed through effective consultation with industry. • The industry consultation evidence was insufficient.

Source: ASQA audits

The large proportion of RTOs that are unable to document an accurate training and assessment strategy indicates that they do not fully appreciate the importance of these strategies to guide consistent training and assessment. It also suggests that RTOs do not fully read or interpret the training package or VET accredited course requirements and then develop a strategy to ensure that the requirements will be met.

In addition, many RTOs did not demonstrate that they can apply the requirements of the AQF in terms of volume of learning and ensure that the volume of learning of the RTO's course design is consistent with the needs of specific target groups.

Following the rectification period, 18 (90 per cent) were found compliant with Standard 15.2.

Examples of good practice

A number of RTOs provided examples of good practice at audit including:

- thorough horse audits and rider/horse registers
- assessment of riding experience and provision of guidance about appropriate courses that match current skills, and
- clear identification of appropriate client group, horse identification forms completed and horse, rider and equipment subject to safety risk checks.

Standard 15.3 Resources required

Requirements of Standard 15.3

Standard 15.3 (Standards 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6 of the Standards for RTOs 2015) requires RTOs to have the resources (staff, facilities, equipment, training and assessment materials) as required by the training package and the training and assessment strategies to deliver the courses. It intersects with some other standards. For example, if the trainers do not have appropriate qualifications (Standard 15.4 [Standards 1.13, 1.14, 1.15 and 1.16 of the 2015 Standards]) or assessment is not compliant with requirements (Standard 15.5 [Standard 1.8 of the 2015 Standards]), then the RTO is generally also not compliant with Standard 15.3 (Standards 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6 of the 2015 Standards).

Training packages and VET accredited courses describe the requirements for assessment of learners, including any specific environments or equipment that must be used. Assessment methods must ensure that only properly skilled learners are determined as competent. When conducting assessment RTOs must adhere to all requirements, such as the context of assessment and essential resources as described in the unit or module.

When using 'simulated' workplace environments, they must ensure they fully replicate the resources, environment and any time and productivity pressures that exist in the actual workplace. It is important to ensure the development and use of simulated environments is informed by consultation with industry stakeholders to ensure relevance to real workplaces.

Training package and VET accredited course requirements

The diversity of training package units of competency and accredited course units audited for this review makes it challenging to outline all requirements. However, a perusal of the requirements reveals that the one feature in common is a focus on achieving competency in safe practices, although it is expressed in different ways and to different extents. Many units also specify the types, ages and breeds of horses suitable for use in delivery and assessment.

The focus on safety is not surprising given that, as previously mentioned, despite the differences in settings in which workers and individuals interact with or ride horses, whether for work or pleasure, many of the risks and control measures are similar. All settings have one thing in common, they are dealing with a large and often unpredictable animal.

However, as noted by stakeholders, the variability in approaches to safety in units and course modules makes it more challenging for RTOs to interpret and assess consistently. Stakeholders described approaches to safety as 'of insufficient cohesion and depth' and as needing to be expressed in a mandatory safety unit as 'it appears incidental at the moment'.

Several examples of the safety aspects of units and of relevant resource and assessment requirements are provided in Table 9.

Table 9: Unit/module extracts from training package qualifications and accredited courses - safety and assessment context/resources

Training package unit or accredited course module	Examples of safety aspects	Extracts - assessment and resources
RGRPSH205A <i>Perform basic riding tasks</i>	<p>From unit descriptor: <i>This unit of competency specifies the outcomes required to achieve basic riding skills using a well-educated horse with a docile temperament and includes protecting the welfare of people and horses and providing post-exercise care of horses.</i> <i>The term well-educated horse' refers to an animal that has undergone sufficient training to ensure that it behaves in a safe, tractable and manageable way when being handled and ridden, even by inexperienced personnel.</i> <i>To undertake this unit the candidate will be able to apply safe horse handling skills and workplace OHS standards.</i> Required skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>applying safe handling and work practices when dealing with horses</i> • <i>applying safe basic riding skills.</i> 	<p>Context and specific resources for assessment include: <i>Competency must be assessed in a racing workplace or simulated environment that provides access to the required resources. Assessment is to occur under standard and authorised work practices, safety requirements and environmental constraints.</i> The following resources must be available include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>a variety of well-educated thoroughbred horses</i> • <i>materials and equipment relevant to assessing candidate's ability to perform basic riding skills</i> • <i>safe handling and controlled riding areas, such as racing stables, and training and racetracks.</i>
SISOEQO201A <i>Handle horses</i>	<p>From unit descriptor: <i>This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to handle horses safely. This unit focuses on the identification and safe catching, management and handling of horses for the purposes of transporting, training and racing or recreational use.</i></p>	<p>Context and specific resources for assessment includes: <i>Assessment must ensure conduct of multiple horse handling activities to demonstrate competency and consistency of performance.</i> <i>Assessment must also ensure access to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>resources, such as information on horse features and behaviours</i> • <i>a suitable location, such as stables</i> • <i>a variety of quiet and reasonably tractable horses of different temperaments and behaviours, and at different stages of training</i> • <i>equipment such as leg ropes, muzzles, leads, horse float and a suitable vehicle for towing</i> • <i>a supervisor or manager.</i>
VU21407 <i>Demonstrate</i>	<p>From unit descriptor:</p>	<p>From application of the unit: <i>The application of this unit is best suited to</i></p>

Training package unit or accredited course module	Examples of safety aspects	Extracts - assessment and resources
<p><i>basic horse riding or driving skills</i></p>	<p><i>This unit covers the knowledge and skill to participate in horse riding or horse driving activities in controlled conditions under supervision and using safe and suitable horses.</i></p> <p>Required skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>interacting with instructor, other riders and the horse, to maintain a positive and safe riding environment</i> <i>listening skills to following instructions and directions from the instructor</i> <i>handling and caring for horses safely</i> <i>horse riding techniques to control horse in a safe and effective manner under controlled conditions</i> <i>tacking up a horse using correct equipment.</i> 	<p><i>a workplace where the skills and knowledge can be applied and performed in an equine workplace under supervision.</i></p> <p>Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to assess competency in this unit advises:</p> <p><i>Competence in basic riding skills requires evidence that the following have been successfully completed demonstrating:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>selecting and fitting appropriate tack and personal equipment so that both horse and rider are safe and comfortable</i> <i>controlling the horse through the use of consistent positive body language and movement to communicate with the horse by giving it appropriate instructions</i> <i>following instructions from the instructor to demonstrate required movements, techniques and control over the horse</i> <i>applying safe horse handling techniques to avoid hazards where possible</i> <i>maintaining safe distances in group riding.</i> <p>Context of and specific resources for assessment advises:</p> <p><i>Assessment must ensure participation in horse riding sessions that are of a sufficient duration to allow the participant to demonstrate competency and consistency of performance.</i></p> <p><i>Assessment must also ensure access to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>resources, such as information on horse riding equipment, possible horse behaviour and basic riding techniques</i> <i>a controlled riding location</i> <i>quiet and tractable horses</i> <i>equipment such as halters, ropes, saddles, bridles, helmets, suitable clothing and boots</i> <i>a qualified instructor.</i>

Given the findings of the New South Wales Coroner and the prevalence of safety in all units included in the review, the extent to which RTOs place safety at 'front and centre' of their delivery and assessment and proactively manage the inherent risks of interacting with horses was audited.

This is particularly important in equine programs as RTOs are not only responsible for delivery and assessment of competencies related to safe horse practice, they are also responsible for ensuring a safe learning environment in a high risk context. The audits sought information about whether:

- RTOs have systematic processes for implementing and documenting assessment of horse suitability, initial rider assessment and pairing with horses, horse usage, site and equipment checks, and use of personal protective equipment, and
- they made use of key resources that could assist them in risk identification and management, and in meeting the requirements of the training packages and VET accredited courses.

Key resources include the Safe Work Australia *Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses*, the Australian Horse Industry Council's *Code of Practice for the Horse Industry* and *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* which were adapted from the procedures developed by TAFE New South Wales to accompany the Australian Horse Industry Council's *Code of Practice*. All TAFE New South Wales institutes delivering equine training are required to comply with the *TAFE New South Wales Procedures for the Delivery of Equine Training*.

During consultations and audits, the question of how many students can be safely managed by one trainer was a subject raised by trainers and managers in RTOs. A ratio of one trainer to no more than five students was suggested for the practical sessions.

Of the RTOs that provided this information, five indicated they maintain a ratio of one trainer to eight students, three advised a ratio of one to six, four had a ratio of one to four and the remaining three indicated, one to three, one to two and one to one. However, several qualified their response indicating they always have two trainers for practical exercises, or that due to the size of their arenas, the ratio is always one to two for riding exercises.

Areas of non-compliance with Standard 15.3

While examples of good practice were found in relation to Standard 15.3, 14 RTOs (70 per cent) were found not compliant at initial audit. Issues of non-compliance included:

- The register of horses, indicating the suitability of horses, was incomplete and therefore the risk assessment of horses was not sufficiently well documented to confirm the suitability of all horses for delivery of the units.
- There was no record on student files confirming students had been paired with suitable horses.
- The RTO was unable to establish resources used to deliver the unit and that training resources and assessment materials met the accredited course and unit requirements.
- The RTO was unable to demonstrate that sufficient training resources and equipment were accessible.
- Inadequate quality control mechanisms were in place to administer online learning resources and assessments.
- The accuracy of the risk register was in doubt, information recorded on the horse usage register and horse suitability audit was inconsistent, and information about pairing of individual students with individual horses was not recorded, meaning that it could not be confirmed that resources were sufficient.
- The RTO relied heavily on resources provided in the workplace for employment based traineeships but was unable to demonstrate that workplace facilities, equipment and resources met training package requirements to enable trainees to develop and demonstrate competence.

These findings contrast with RTO responses to the survey question regarding practices in regard to safety. Most RTOs responded that they conduct risk assessments of facilities prior to training. However, given the examples of non-compliance found at audits, there is apparently significant variability in the effectiveness of such risk assessment practices. Alternatively, while most RTOs indicated they might risk assess facilities, it is possible the risk assessments are not holistic and do not cover horse, riders, facilities and gear.

Information was inconsistent as to whether the audited RTOs use the key resources outlined earlier to inform their safe training and assessment and risk management. However, three RTOs indicated that they use the Australian Horse Industry Council's *Code of Practice for the Horse Industry*, while only one RTO indicated that they use Safe Work Australia's *Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses*. Four RTOs indicated that they comply with the *TAFE New South Wales Procedures for the Delivery of Equine Training* which incorporates and is designed to accompany the Australian Horse Industry Council's *Code of Practice*.

Relevant resources such as these are also distributed through TAFE New South Wales' equine Community of Practice which was established following the New South Wales Coroner's report referred to earlier. There was also reference to the use of other resources such as Worksafe Victoria's Horse Stables and Track Riding Safety.⁷⁷

These results also contrast with RTO responses to the survey question about use of relevant safety codes or guides, as the majority responded they use either the Safe Work Australia's *Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses* or the *TAFE New South Wales Procedures for the Delivery of Equine Training*. It is not clear why there is a disparity between the survey results and the findings at audit. However, it has been concluded that RTOs are not using these resources as much as they could in their risk assessment and management. More widespread adoption of these resources could inform practice and promote proactive attention to safety with respect to horses, riders, staff, site, equipment and operations.

The fact there is no single protocol, code or set of tools and checklists makes it more complex for RTOs to know about and utilise resources which could support their practice. However, it is evident that if a training package or accredited course requires access to a horse, the RTO has a responsibility under Standard 15 (training and assessment, Standard 1 of the Standards for RTOs 2015) to ensure the horse is fit-for-purpose and the student can safely handle and ride the horse while training.

Following the rectification period, 18 RTOs (85 per cent) were found compliant with standard 15.3.

Examples of good practice

A number of RTOs provided examples of good practice at audit including:

- a clear and consistent approach to advising students about the use of personal protective equipment and sound operating procedures to ensure usage
- using relevant templates from the Australian Horse Industry Council's *Code of Practice* such as the student self-assessment, maintaining a register of the horses age and breeding and conducting an annual assessment of horses', rating them against four levels
- using both the Australian Horse Industry Council *Code of Practice* and the Safe Work Australia *Guide* for conduct of risk assessments
- maintaining single purpose gates and arenas as recommended in the New South Wales Coroner's report.⁷⁸ It was noted that several RTOs had very well maintained and safe sites.
- assessing and grading horses and daily horse and gear inspections
- conducting a risk assessment by the student and trainer at the beginning of each practical task
- extensive procedures in place for matching horses and students
- participating in the equine Community of Practice established by TAFE New South Wales following the New South Wales Coroner's report, which includes access to templates for induction, participant self-assessment, horse suitability assessment and other templates, and

⁷⁷ WorkSafe Victoria, (June 2007) Horse Stables and Track Riding Safety, accessed 17 April 2015 at http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/21674/horse_racing.pdf

⁷⁸ Deputy State Coroner (23 December 2011), *Inquest into the death of Sarah Waugh*, 29.90/10, 2010/437640, State Coroner's Court of New South Wales, p33.

Examples of good practice

- all horses have a
 - selection record
 - risk assessment (team assessment)
 - training record
 - usage record, when and by whom
 - behaviour and health record.

Standard 15.4 Trainers and assessors

Requirements of Standard 15.4

Standard 15.4 (Standards 1.13, 1.14, 1.15 and 1.16 of the Standards for RTOs 2015) requires that trainers and assessors:

- have training and assessment competencies, currently defined as holding the *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* or demonstrated equivalent competencies
- have relevant vocational competencies
- have current industry skills, and
- continue to develop their knowledge and skills related to VET knowledge, training and assessing competence and their industry currency.

Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has vocational competency will be familiar with the content of the vocation and will have relevant current experience in the industry. Vocational competency must be considered on an industry-by-industry basis and with reference to any guidance provided in the relevant training package or accredited course.⁷⁹

Finally, if the trainers/assessors do not have the *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* or demonstrated equivalent competencies, then they must hold a skill set such as the *TAESS00007 Enterprise Trainer – Presenter's Skill Set* and be under supervision.

Requirements of the training packages and VET accredited courses

The *AHC10 Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package* and the *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package* do not require assessor competencies that are additional to those required by Standard 15.4.

However, the assessment guidelines in the *RGR08 Racing Training Package* advise that:

*The relevant industry control body in each state where the assessment is conducted must approve assessors engaged in assessing qualifications or units of competency that may be used by a state principal racing authority for the purpose of licensing, registering or approving industry occupations.*⁸⁰

This includes assessors for qualifications with a licensed outcome, such as stablehands and jockeys.

⁷⁹ National Skills Standards Council determination 17 June 2013, http://www.nssc.natese.gov.au/policies/determination_for_trainer_and_assessor_competencies

⁸⁰ Australian Government (release 2.0 generated 25 July 2014) *RGR08 Racing Training package*, accessed 13 April 2015 at training.gov.au, p62.

The following VET accredited courses which were included in the strategic review have no requirements for assessor competencies beyond those in Standard 15.4:

- *2246VIC Certificate II in Equine Studies*, although it is recommended that horse riding instructors have National Coaching Accreditation Scheme Level 1 or equivalent;⁸¹ and
- *22139VIC Diploma of Horse Breeding (Stud Management)*.

However, the remaining four VET accredited courses which were included in the audits for the review have requirements specific to TAFE New South Wales trainers and assessors in addition to those in Standard 15.4.

10229NAT Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse) and *10230NAT Diploma of Horse Industry Management (Performance Horse)* both advise that in addition to the requirements of Standard 15.4, TAFE New South Wales trainers and assessors at all TAFE New South Wales institutes must:

- comply with the requirements of the *TAFE NSW Procedures for the Delivery of Equine Training*, and
- successfully complete the unit: *SISOEQO414A Instruct horse riding and handling skills* to deliver and assess horse riding and handling.⁸²

91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Performance Horse) requires that:

*All teachers delivering horse riding and handling must have successfully completed the unit SISOEQO414A: Instruct Horse Riding and Handling Skills.*⁸³

These requirements reflect TAFE New South Wales response to the recommendations from the New South Wales Coroner's inquest into the death of Ms Sarah Waugh.

69797 Certificate III in Horsemanship (Riding, Handling and Behaviour) includes the following requirements additional to those in Standard 15.4 for trainers:

- hold a current Advanced First Aid Certificate or equal
- in excess of three years' experience working in the recreational horse industry
- experience in instructing others in horse skills, and
- demonstrated expertise in presenting training to a range of clients.⁸⁴

Many comments were made during consultations that trainers should also hold coaching accreditation as being experienced in horse skills is insufficient for the purposes of instructing others. At audit, information was sought about whether trainers and assessors had qualifications or other competencies beyond those required by Standard 15.4, such as those now required for all TAFE New South Wales institutes that deliver equine training.

The audits found that the majority of RTOs' trainers and assessors held additional competencies or were in the process of obtaining them.

Eighteen out of the 20 RTOs audited for this review had some or all of their trainers and assessors holding first aid qualifications.

⁸¹ *2246VIC Certificate II in Equine Studies*, p17, Course owner: Training Products Unit, Department of Education and Training.

⁸² *10229NAT Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse)*, p12 and *10230NAT Diploma of Horse Industry Management (Performance Horse)*, p12, Course owner: NSW TAFE Commission.

⁸³ New South Wales Technical and Further Education Commission (6 June 2013), *91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Performance Horse)*, p14, Course owner: NSW TAFE Commission.

⁸⁴ *69797 Certificate III in Horsemanship (Riding, Handling and Behaviour)*, p12, Course owner: Intercept Group Pty Ltd.

Nine RTOs had all or some holding level 1 or 2 National Coaching Accreditation, such as that offered through Equestrian Australia.⁸⁵

Only four out of 20 RTOs audited had trainers and assessors with no additional competencies in instruction (information was unclear in relation to one other RTO).

The remainder of the 20 have trainers and assessors either possess or have underway:

- Horse Safety Australia accreditation as instructors
- senior instructor or instructor skill sets from the *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation* training package, or
- a statement of attainment for *SISOEQO414A Instruct horse riding and handling skills*.

As outlined in Chapter 2 the training package developer is considering the issue of appropriate trainer and assessor qualifications for equine programs in its current review of all equine qualifications.

Areas of non-compliance with Standard 15.4

ASQA's 2011 survey of 37 RTOs delivering equine training found that approximately 17 per cent of the 95 trainers and assessors in the survey did not demonstrate that they had the necessary training and assessment competencies. Approximately 61 per cent did not demonstrate or provide sufficient evidence that they held the relevant vocational competencies. Only one trainer/assessor of the 95 reviewed was considered to demonstrate current industry skills.

This strategic audit has found a markedly different result. Seventeen (85 per cent) of RTOs audited were compliant with Standard 15.4 at initial audit. It is likely that this change has been driven by the New South Wales Coroner's findings as well as ASQA's initiation of the survey.

Of the three RTOs who were not compliant with Standard 15.4 at initial audit, the reasons were:

- unable to provide sufficient evidence that trainers and assessors held vocational competence in the relevant qualifications
- no evidence provided to demonstrate that one trainer had the vocational skills and knowledge to deliver the relevant qualification or that other trainers had continued to develop their VET knowledge and skills, and
- no evidence provided to verify that the trainer held the required qualification or equivalent and had the vocational competence in the relevant qualifications being delivered, and no evidence provided to verify that arrangements for persons delivering and assessing under direct supervision were in place.

Following the rectification period, 19 (95 per cent) RTOs were able to demonstrate compliance with Standard 15.4.

While the high level of compliance with Standard 15.4 is noted, given the high level of non-compliance with the assessment standard (75 per cent), it is worth noting that the qualification *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* does not include *TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools* as a core unit. Achieving competency in this unit could increase skill levels in assessment as noted in Chapter 5.

⁸⁵ See Equestrian Australia, EA Education Courses, accessed 30 March 2015 at <http://www.equestrian.org.au/Coaching-courses>.

Examples of good practice

Examples of good practice included:

- individual attention given to language, literacy and numeracy needs due to low teacher/student ratio and an industry specialised tutor providing a familiar environment with language, literacy and numeracy support available one full day per week, and
- as mentioned earlier the majority of RTOs' trainers and assessors hold or are working towards competencies additional to those required by Standard 15.4, in particular focusing on instruction/coaching skills.

Standard 15.5 Assessment

It is a requirement that an RTO must only issue a VET qualification to persons whom it has assessed as competent in accordance with the requirements of the training package or VET accredited course.⁸⁶

Where assessment is unreliable, as established through this review, the validity of the qualifications issued is questionable.

Requirements of Standard 15.5

Assessment must:

- meet the requirements of the training package
- be in accordance with the principles of assessment, that is, valid, reliable, flexible and fair
- be conducted according to the rules of evidence, that is, for sufficient, valid, authentic and current evidence to be collected⁸⁷
- meet workplace requirements, and
- be systematically validated.

It is required that RTOs demonstrate that assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and with the rules of evidence and that RTOs have developed assessment tools and used them in line with the instructions within the tools. An assessment tool includes the following components:

- *context and conditions of assessment*
- *tasks to be administered to the student*
- *an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate and evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (that is the assessment decision-making rules). This term also takes in the administration, recording and reporting requirements, and may address a cluster of competencies as applicable for holistic assessment.*⁸⁸

Validation involves checking that the assessment tool produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the training package have been met. It includes reviewing and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ See Standard 23.1.

⁸⁷ Refer to Appendix D for definitions of the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.

⁸⁸ ASQA *General Direction – Retention requirements for completed student assessment items* (Feb 2014)

⁸⁹ National Quality Council 2009, p22.

Requirements of the training packages and VET accredited courses

The detail of assessment requirements in units of competency and VET accredited course units varies.

Some such as *RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks* specify assessment in the workplace or simulated workplace:

*Competency must be assessed in a racing workplace or simulated environment that provides access to the required resources.*⁹⁰

Others such as *SISOEQO201A Handle horses* specify that assessment must occur more than once, and that 'assessment must ensure conduct of multiple horse handling activities to demonstrate competency and consistency of performance and that there must be access to a variety of quiet and reasonably tractable horses of different temperaments and behaviours, and at different stages of training'.⁹¹

Similarly *TIGURG308A Undertaking riding at the appropriate skill level*, specifies that 'evidence should be collected over a period of time using a range of well-educated horses of different ages and sexes in a variety of recreational environments'.⁹²

Areas of non-compliance with Standard 15.5

The highest level of non-compliance at initial audit was recorded against Standard 15.5 (assessment [Standard 1.8 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]). Fifteen (75 per cent) RTOs were not compliant with this Standard. After the rectification period 17 (85 per cent) of RTOs were able to demonstrate compliance.

The main reasons for non-compliance were:

- inadequate or incomplete instructions to assessors and candidates, for example, inadequate information provided about practical tasks and the performance indicators to ensure reliability and validity, no decision making rules were provided, that is, the number of responses required by the candidate to achieve a satisfactory outcome
- inadequate practical assessment tasks to ensure validity
- the assessment instruments provided at audit could not sufficiently capture the demonstration of competence by a candidate, for example, not all required skills or performance criteria were covered
- assessment tasks not aligned to unit of competency requirements, for example, the context and consistency of assessment was not addressed to the appropriate AQF level
- no recording of the candidate demonstrating the required skills over a period of time
- insufficient assessment evidence was provided to verify that the required skills, required knowledge, range and critical aspects had been met to substantiate a competency judgement
- assessment not validated was a frequent occurrence
- eight RTOs (40 per cent) were unable to demonstrate that assessment had been systematically validated, and
- no Recognition of Prior Learning tools in place.

In the majority of cases, not compliant assessment did not meet some or many of the principles of assessment or the rules of evidence. These results confirm the concerns expressed by stakeholders during consultations about poor assessment practice.

⁹⁰ *RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks*, accessed 13 April 2015 at <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/RGRPSH205A>

⁹¹ *SISOEQO201A Handle horses*, accessed 13 April 2015 at <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/SISOEQO201A>

⁹² *TIGURG308A Undertaking riding at the appropriate skill level*, p5, Course owner: Intercept Group Pty Ltd.

Examples of good practice

Examples of good practice identified during audits included:

- Under the RTO's standard operating procedures, the following must be conducted by the trainer/assessor prior to any practical activity by the student
 - area risk assessment form
 - horse assessment form
 - rider assessment form
 - practical equipment checklist
 - gear-check checklist.
- Requirements for third party observers and observations are clearly specified including
 - number of observations of the student required within a certain period of time and standard documentation
 - amount and relation of contact the party has had with the student
 - minimum criteria to be met by third party observers including industry experience and qualifications.

Standard 16.3 Information prior to enrolment

Requirements of Standard 16.3

Standard 16.3 (Standards 5.1 and 5.2 of the Standards for RTOs 2015) requires that before clients enrol or enter into an agreement, the RTO informs them about the training, assessment and support services to be provided and about client rights and obligations. It is closely linked to Standard 24.1 (accuracy and integrity of marketing [Standard 4.1 of the Standards for RTOs 2015]) but is more about completeness and accuracy of information given about the qualifications in which potential students wish to enrol.

Information that should be provided includes whether students require some prior experience with horses, what personal protective equipment is required, mode of delivery and class times.

Areas of non-compliance with Standard 16.3

Seven RTOs (35 per cent) were not compliant with Standard 16.3 at initial audit. Following the opportunity to provide rectification evidence, 19 RTOs (95 per cent) were compliant.

The significant reasons for non-compliance were:

- inaccurate or incomplete information including information about the qualifications, duration, mode of delivery or class times
- inadequate advice required about personal protective equipment requirements
- no advice given that horse riding is not taught and that students require horse riding experience
- information not given about the student's need to have access to a suitable horse
- no information about the number and duration of practical placements
- website included a statement that if not satisfied with result the students can just take the online assessment again, and
- information provided after rather than prior to enrolment.

After the RTOs audited had the opportunity to rectify the identified non-compliances, 18 RTOs (90 per cent) were found compliant with this standard.

Other standards audited

Other elements of Standard 16, as well as elements of Standards 17, 20, 24 and 25 were audited for the review. However, the levels of non-compliance with these standards at initial audit was not significant and following the rectification period almost all RTOs were able to demonstrate compliance. For this reason a detailed analysis in relation to these standards has not been included in this report.

Standard 18.1 had very high levels of non-compliance at initial audit. This is because Standard 18.1 requires that the RTO's Chief Executive Officer ensures that the RTO complies with the VET Quality Framework. This means that where there is a non-compliance in relation to any other standard the RTO will also be not compliant in relation to Standard 18.1.

Chapter 7 Findings

This review was driven primarily by the tragic death of a young student, Ms Sarah Waugh, in a horse riding accident during jillaroo training at a TAFE New South Wales institute and the systemic safety issues identified in the subsequent New South Wales Coroner's report. The Coroner expressed concerns about the content and conduct of the training, policies and procedures for assessing horses to be used in training and the adequacy of trainer and assessor competencies and currency of industry experience.

The review has found that a number of actions have occurred in response to the Coroner's findings. These include changes to policies and procedures across all TAFE New South Wales institutes delivering equine programs and the current review of all equine qualifications to ensure the content meets industry's needs and embeds safety from the commencement of entry level training.

Horse riding, handling and care occur in a wide range of income earning, sport, and recreational settings, encompassing professional and amateur sporting organisations, breed associations, recreational activity operators, community groups and individuals and businesses that use or breed horses for pleasure or professional purposes. Data shows that there continues to be significant injuries, hospitalisations and fatalities occurring during horse riding and handling.

The single unifying factor across all settings and age groups is that there is risk in the activities by virtue of the fact that horses are large, intelligent and unpredictable animals and interactions with them require a focus on safety and active risk identification and management. While there are a number of voluntary codes and guides which address safety that have been developed by different organisations and agencies in response to particular settings, there is no consistent approach for managing work health and safety risks in the horse industry across Australia.

Given the diversity of settings and activities involving interactions with horses, it is not surprising that the review found there are numerous equine units of competency spread across five industry training packages and many equine VET accredited courses. In addition, as many horse-related activities are sport and recreation-based, a large amount of training also occurs outside the VET system and organisations such as Pony Club, the Australian Horse Industry Council and Equestrian Australia have developed their own safety protocols and coaching accreditation to address the needs of their members.

The diverse training landscape makes the market confusing for potential students, many of whom are likely to be young people and their parents, who may find it difficult to identify training that matches their needs and skill levels. This is of particular concern given the risks involved in horse riding and handling which require proactive management, including the need to match learners and horses appropriately and to ensure that safety is at the core of all learning activities.

There are also challenges for RTOs. Many of the equine units of competency offer 'thin markets' that is the demand for training in the units may be small or dispersed over a large geographical area. This presents challenges for RTOs to maintain high quality facilities and access to suitable horses and for trainers to maintain industry currency.

During consultations stakeholders expressed concerns about safety and risk management in training and assessment, the extent to which safety is integrated into the content of national qualifications, the duration of courses, some of which are considered too short to enable students to attain competency, and the quality of assessment practice. These concerns were confirmed by audits conducted for this strategic review.

The review also found that initiatives for work health and safety in relation to managing risks when new or inexperienced persons are interacting with horses are of relevance to improving safety in VET equine programs and could be more widely promoted for a more consistent approach for duty holders who need to manage these risks.

The audits have found that while there are a number of resources that cover risk assessment and safety in horse riding and handling, the extent to which RTOs use these to support more holistic and systematic

risk assessment and management is unclear. More widespread and systematic adoption of these resources could inform practice and promote proactive attention to safety with respect to horses, riders, staff, site, equipment and operations. This is particularly important in training for equine programs where RTOs are not only responsible for delivery and assessment of competencies in relation to safe interaction with horses, but are also responsible for ensuring a safe learning environment and a safe workplace in a high risk context.

All parties in the training sector agree that having 'fit-for-purpose' horses suitable for the training environment, matching individual horses to each student commensurate with their riding/handling experience and having clear lines of responsibility for determining suitability/matching are essential first steps to safe practice.

Recommendations have been made in relation to all of these issues in response to research, stakeholder concerns and the audit findings.

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee has been established to provide industry input on improving the quality and relevance of vocational education and training, to guide the training product development process, to prioritise and schedule training product development and to endorse products managed by training package developers. **Many of the recommendations require changes to national qualifications to address safety and quality issues.** To ensure the recommended changes are actioned urgently during the period of reform to the training package development process, a recommendation has been made to the training package developers to include the recommended changes and to prioritise the scheduling of this work.

In the interim, pending the changes being made to the qualifications and given the urgency of elevating safety in equine training, it is recommended that ASQA take a number of immediate actions in key areas.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the training package developers:

- make the changes to training products proposed in Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 in this report, in consultation with industry, and
- in their scheduling of training product development work, to ensure safety and quality issues are urgently addressed, give priority to scheduling the training product development work proposed in Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 8, 8 and 10 and, once the *Standards for Training Packages* have been amended, in recommendation 7.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the Australian Industry Skills Council ensures that the training packages approved have appropriately incorporated the recommendations from this report.

Embedding safe practice in the training environment

Horse riding and horse handling activities occur in a range of income earning, professional and amateur sport, and recreational settings, cutting across all age and ability groups and encompassing diverse professional, amateur and recreational organisations and industry regulators.

However, the single unifying theme across all settings is that the risk associated with these activities requires a focus on safety and active risk identification and management. Data cited by Safe Work Australia shows that between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2011, a total of 11,635 hospital admissions were recorded for horse-related incidents and between July 2000 and June 2012 there were 98 horse-related deaths.

The extent to which RTOs place safety at 'front and centre' of their delivery and assessment and proactively manage the inherent risks of interacting with horses has therefore been explored during the review.

This is particularly important in equine programs as not only are RTOs responsible for delivery and assessment of competencies related to safe horse practice, they are also responsible for ensuring a safe learning environment and a safe workplace in a high risk context.

The review has found that there are a number of resources that cover risk assessment and safety in horse riding and handling, but overall it appears that these resources, which could support RTOs to be more systematic and holistic in their risk assessment and management, are not being accessed and used as much as they could. More widespread adoption of these resources would inform practice and promote proactive attention to safety with respect to horses, riders, staff, site, equipment and operations.

As there is no single protocol, code or set of tools and checklists, it is more complex for RTOs to know about and utilise resources which could support their practice.

The most comprehensive resource for the training and assessment environment is the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training*. This document is published and made freely available by the Australian Horse Industry Council and was adapted from the TAFE New South Wales procedures, developed as a result of the New South Wales Coroner's report into the death of Ms Sarah Waugh.

All parties in the training industry agree having 'fit-for-purpose' horses, that is, horses suitable for the training needs of students, matching individual horses to each student commensurate with their riding/handling experience, and having clear lines of responsibility for determining this suitability/matching are essential first steps to safety. Integral to this process are pre-activity risk assessments which need to consider factors such as equipment, premises/sites and students' prior riding experience.

The *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* includes templates for comprehensive pre-activity risk assessment, horse suitability audits and participant self-assessment checklists.

It is self-evident that if a training package or accredited course unit requires access to a horse, the RTO has a responsibility under Standard 1 of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (the Standards for RTOs 2015) to ensure the horse is fit-for-purpose and the student can safely handle and where necessary, ride the horse while training. The horse suitability template in the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* includes the requirement to clearly identify each horse and its history. This is a critical prerequisite to enabling effective risk assessment. However, as noted in this review, data on horses and horse owners in Australia is limited and there is no national register, sometimes making valid identification difficult. This makes the requirement for a comprehensive horse suitability assessment even more essential.

It is therefore proposed that ASQA issue a *General Direction* that all RTOs delivering equine programs must demonstrate completion of a horse suitability audit and checklist, such as those in the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* as part of their compliance with the assessment requirements of Standard 1 of the Standards for RTOs 2015. It is also recommended that the audit occur before the first time the horse is used for an activity and that it is subsequently kept current by updating it after each use, noting that the initial risk assessment of the horse will impact on the extent and depth of the audit that is required after each use. It is also proposed that the risk assessment documents be retained for a period of six months from the date of the student assessment to which the horse and rider risk assessment is relevant. This requirement is in accordance with ASQA's *General Direction – Retention requirements for completed student assessment items*.

It is also proposed that pending changes to training packages to specify the level of rider proficiency required for participation in training for horse riding units (see Recommendation 5), ASQA's *General Direction* will include a requirement that all RTOs delivering such units evaluate and document each

student's level of rider proficiency and suitability for participation in the training programs, prior to the commencement of training.

The new *General Direction* will ensure that in the interim period prior to the changes to the training packages recommended by this review, critical aspects of risk management and safe practice in horse riding and handling can be implemented immediately.

There is currently no way to legally mandate adoption and use of the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* by RTOs. However, when the training package developer reviews equine qualifications and units, consideration can be given to mandating use of the key risk assessment templates included in the *Procedures* using the provisions of the *Standards for Training Packages*. This will need to be done in close collaboration with industry and technical experts to ensure the templates are customised to reflect the diverse industry settings and to integrate a continuous improvement process through regular reviews of the templates and their use.

The training package developer for the rural and related industry, Agrifood Skills Australia, has advised that the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* is expected to be included as a reference document in the Companion Volume it develops to support implementation of new equine qualifications. While inclusion in the Companion Volume is likely to increase awareness and use of the procedures, it would not form part of the endorsed component of the training packages which is auditable. Nevertheless inclusion in the Companion Volume is likely to increase awareness and use of the *Procedures*.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that ASQA issue a *General Direction* under section 28 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* requiring that:

- delivery of each qualification, unit of competency and accredited course requiring the use and access to a horse, must be preceded by completion of a horse suitability audit and checklist for each horse by a qualified trainer
 - before the first time the horse is used for an activity, and
 - updated after each use so the suitability remains current
- each RTO delivering training that involves horse riding evaluates and documents each student's level of rider proficiency and suitability for participation before such training commences, and
- such risk assessment documents must be retained by the RTO for six months from the date of the student assessment to which the horse and rider risk assessment is relevant.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that, in their review of all equine qualifications and units of competency, training package developers collaborate with industry to consider any additional templates from the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* that should be specified in the *range of conditions* or *assessment conditions* fields of the units as mandatory for use by RTOs in their training and assessment strategies.

Embedding safe horse riding and handling practice in training packages

Many stakeholders expressed the view that there needs to be a stronger focus on safety in the training packages. Currently qualifications include safety matters in different units and modules, but it is not considered to be sufficient in cohesion or depth. Stakeholders noted that the variability in approaches to

safety in units and course modules makes it more challenging for RTOs to interpret and assess consistently.

Stakeholders suggested that training needs to initially focus on basic safety, including interpreting horse behaviour, described as how to 'read' the horse. Some stakeholders regard basic equitation skills as a prerequisite to any actual riding skill development. This would provide students with current knowledge on this developing science as it applies to safety, for example, the way riders provide cues to a horse to ensure control.

This would develop an understanding of the psychology and behaviour of horses, drawing on already existing evidence-based approaches to assessing behaviour and temperament, such as that used with assessment of police horses.

Stronger integration of safety, especially in lower level qualifications, is seen as even more important with the increased popularity and prevalence of equine units being delivered through VET in schools.

There are concerns that some students may be achieving a certificate II level equine qualification with limited access to horses. Stakeholders commented that this increase in the delivery of certificate II through VET in Schools, means it cannot always be assumed that those entering jobs with horses have a background in or experience with horses. This makes assessment of the students' level of experience and competence at the outset of training even more critical.

The risk posed by limited exposure to horses is exacerbated in the context of training for the racing industry where safe riding of horses and fast riding (whether in training the horse or in a race), while not mutually exclusive, do pose some challenges. An apprentice jockey or track work rider must safely ride a horse that has been fed a special high energy diet, designed to give it what has been called 'explosive energy'. Jockeys 'ride short', with less knee contact than a recreational rider might employ.

Not all jurisdictions require trainees or apprentices in the racing industry to have completed a lower level qualification, where basic handling and riding skills could be comprehensively assured. In the *Review of apprentice jockey recruitment training and welfare*, it was noted that new apprentice jockeys have less equine experience and exposure to horses and all-round horse skills than in the past.

It is noted that the current training package developer for this industry, AgriFood Skills Australia is undertaking a review of all equine qualifications and that an entry level certificate II qualification which covers basic horse riding and care is being developed, offering a number of streams as a pathway into employment in a range of equine sectors, including racing, breeding, agriculture and recreation.

It is proposed that irrespective of the streams, each unit has a strong and consistent focus on safety in riding, handling, care, and in understanding horse behaviour. This will ensure that regardless of each student's eventual job outcome, they will have achieved competency in the core component of safe practice.

It is also proposed that those learners who are identified as novice or inexperienced in horse riding or handling should complete the core units of the new certificate II qualification as part of any qualification related to horse riding, care or handling that they undertake. The core units currently proposed in the draft qualification are:

- work safely in the horse industry
- handle horses
- provide basic care for horses
- perform daily horse enterprise tasks
- participate in workplace communications
- provide first aid.

Those learners who are novice or inexperienced in horse riding/handling and who wish to achieve a horse riding outcome from their course, should also be required to complete an additional two units from the new certificate II which are mandated to achieve riding competency. The two units currently identified in the draft certificate II are:

- Perform horse riding skills at walk and trot, and
- Perform horse riding skills at walk, trot and canter.

This proposal acknowledges that there will be learners with appropriate experience that can be recognised through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and provides the flexibility for the units to be undertaken as part of a range of qualifications, rather than simply mandating that the new certificate II be completed. It will provide a safeguard that whether students select a job pathway in racing, breeding, agriculture or recreation, all graduates will have safety at the core of their equine practice.

In addition it is recommended that when the training package developer reviews the qualifications, it specifies the level of rider proficiency required for participation in training for horse riding units, that is, the minimum rider competence required. This will ensure that beginner riders are not placed inappropriately in units requiring a higher skill level. This can be done by using the 'entry requirements' field of each qualification under Standard 9 of the *Standards for Training Packages* which permits the **specification** of the **knowledge, skills or experience** required by the learner to commence the qualification.

Pending these changes and given the urgency of addressing safety, it is recommended that ASQA issue a *General Direction* requiring RTOs to evaluate rider proficiency prior to commencement of any training involving horse riding (see Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that training package developers in their review of equine qualifications and development of a new entry level Certificate II in Horse Care:

- ensure that regardless of the vocational stream, each unit has a strong and consistent focus on safety in riding and handling and in understanding of horse behaviour
- specify the level of rider proficiency required for participation in training for horse riding units, and
- ensure that for all learners identified as novice or inexperienced in horse riding or handling, the core units of the new Certificate II must be completed as part of any qualification/accredited course relating to horses and that in addition, such novice or inexperienced learners who wish to achieve a horse riding outcome, must complete the following two units:
 - Perform horse riding skills at walk or trot, and
 - Perform horse riding skills at walk, trot and canter.

Embedding safety in the workplace

This review has focused on VET equine programs which include a safety component as opposed to state and territory work health and safety requirements. However, it is noted the two are complementary. RTOs as workplaces and as employers where students may undertake workplace training and assessment have obligations under work health and safety laws. Taking work health and safety issues into consideration may help strengthen the outcomes of this review which include improving safety in equine training.

In June 2014, Safe Work Australia published a *Guide to Managing Risks When New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses* (the SWA Guide) to provide practical guidance for work activities where workers and others interact with horses. The SWA Guide also advises that it is also useful for other people who interact with horses at a workplace, such as teachers, volunteers or visitors at a workplace.

The SWA Guide is a useful resource for RTOs as workplaces as well as other workplaces such as racing stables where VET students are undertaking workplace training and assessment. The SWA Guide provides detailed advice on who has duties in relation to interaction with horses, how to identify hazards, assess and control risks and review control measures.

New South Wales and South Australia have implemented the SWA Guide. The implementation of the Guide in the other states and territories would provide a more consistent approach across Australia for duty holders who manage risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses. It is proposed that jurisdictions that have not implemented the SWA Guide be encouraged to implement it in their jurisdictions and promote it as a resource for the horse industry. However, the SWA Guide can still be used as practical guidance by anyone working and interacting with horses, regardless of whether it has been implemented in that jurisdiction.

Given the data shows evidence of extensive injuries, hospitalisations and fatalities during horse riding and handling, it is proposed that there needs to be a greater awareness of work health and safety obligations by RTOs and employers, where students may undertake workplace training and assessment. It is therefore recommended that the training package developers collaborate with industry to consider the contents of the SWA Guide to determine whether any aspects of the hazard and risk assessment and control measures should be embedded into the equine units of competency and qualifications. This would complement the templates drawn from the *Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training* as outlined in Recommendation 4.

Embedding the information from the SWA Guide into VET equine programs, where appropriate, will help ensure duty holders understand how to manage the risks that are likely to be faced by new or inexperienced workers and others when interacting with horses.

Finally, it is proposed that whether or not the SWA Guide is embedded into the equine qualifications and units in the training packages, the training package developers in collaboration with state and territory work health and safety regulators and ASQA, should consider measures to improve safety in equine training programs.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that:

- jurisdictions that have not implemented the *SWA Guide to Managing Risks When New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses* give consideration to its implementation in their jurisdictions and promote it as a resource for this industry
- the training package developers in their review of equine qualifications consider the contents of the *Guide to Managing Risks When New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses* in collaboration with industry, to determine whether any aspects of the hazard and risk assessment and control measures should be embedded into the equine units of competency and qualifications, and
- the training package developers, in collaboration with state and territory work health and safety regulators and ASQA, consider measures to improve safety in equine training programs.

Short duration courses

Stakeholders suggested that there needs to be more rigour and detail in volume of learning or amount of training measures in training packages as quality RTOs are being undercut by those offering shorter training. The major concern related to volume of learning is that substantially shortened courses may lead to poor quality outcomes, providing insufficient time for students to achieve competence, and in the case of horse riding and handling can potentially undermine safety.

This review has found that a number of course durations advised by RTOs fell significantly below *Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF) requirements for certificate II and III qualifications. The full-time volume of learning measure for a certificate II according to the AQF is typically 0.5 to one year (600 to 1200 hours) full-time equivalent, and for a certificate III, one to two years (1200 hours to 2400 hours) full-time equivalent. All Australian Government, state and territory ministers for training agreed that these benchmarks should be implemented by 1 January 2015 with training package developers and accrediting authorities to have policies and processes in place in time to ensure implementation by the required date.

The New South Wales Coroner queried whether the volume of learning in the training provided to Sarah Waugh was sufficient for a beginner rider to demonstrate controlling and working educated horses via mustering exercises. This was reiterated by other stakeholders during consultations, one of whom suggested that mandatory hours for the basic riding units should be set at 120 hours.

However, volume of learning under the AQF is set at qualification rather than unit of competency level. This raises the question of whether a minimum number of hours needs to be set within the training package for beginner riding units to assist RTOs to develop appropriate training and assessment strategies.

Previous ASQA strategic reviews have found that short duration courses are a systemic problem in the VET sector. It is therefore proposed that there is a systemic solution across all training packages to address this critical quality issue.

Standard 1 of the Standards for RTOs 2015 specifies that an RTO's training and assessment strategies, including the amount of training they provide must be consistent with the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses. However, training packages remain largely silent on this issue leaving RTOs to interpret what is needed rather than having explicit industry requirements.

The short duration of a high proportion of course remains an ongoing concern to ASQA and industry stakeholders, as it poses a significant risk to the quality of VET. ASQA is of the view that the training packages need to include explicit guidance to RTOs on this issue to ensure that they are fully aware of the requirements and ASQA's ability to regulate against the Standards is strengthened.

ASQA has made a submission to the Australian Government's *Review of Training Packages and Accredited Courses* and included advice on the need to address this issue. The outcome of this process is expected to be announced in the near future.

It is proposed that the *Standards for Training Packages* be amended to require all training package developers to specify minimum amount of training benchmarks in the endorsed components of training packages together with descriptions of appropriate variations to the benchmarks, to reflect the acceptability of shorter courses when there are relevant learner characteristics, such as learners who already have relevant and recent experience. In relation to equine qualifications and units, this would mean minimum benchmarks would be specified for the safe development and assessment of basic riding and horse handling skills.

It is proposed that once the *Standards for Training Packages* have been amended in relation to this systemic issue, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee in its role to provide industry oversight of the quality and relevance of training, prioritises the work of training package developers to revise training packages as a priority to comply with the new requirements.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that:

- the *Standards for Training Packages* be amended as a matter of urgency to include a mandatory field in the qualification and unit templates that specifies the 'minimum amount of training benchmark' and describes appropriate variations to the minimum amount of training benchmark to reflect the acceptability of shorter courses when there are relevant learner characteristics, such as learners who already have relevant and recent equine experience, and
- after the amendments have been made to the *Standards for Training Packages*, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee prioritises the work of training package developers to revise training packages to comply with the new requirements.

Assessment

It is a requirement that an RTO must only issue a VET qualification to persons it has assessed as competent in accordance with the requirements of the training package or VET accredited course. Where assessment is unreliable, the validity of the qualifications issued is questionable and critically, in relation to equine qualifications, the safety of graduates and others could be compromised. The highest levels of non-compliance during initial audits were against Standard 15.5 of the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* (Standard 1.8 of the *Standards for RTOs 2015*).

Stakeholders noted that assessment consistency can be difficult in the equine industry and because it requires documenting observed practical skills, competency is not always done well.

The audits found that RTOs were frequently not compliant against this standard because they provided inadequate information about practical tasks and the performance indicators to ensure reliability and validity of assessment judgements. In addition, insufficient assessment evidence was provided to substantiate a judgement that the student was competent.

Concerns were also expressed by stakeholders and confirmed by audits that there was significant use of third party reports on assessment tasks, assessors with the required qualifications were not always present to directly observe and make judgements about the student's competence.

The review found that the detail of assessment requirements in units of competency and VET accredited course modules varies. Some specify assessment must take place in the workplace or in a simulated workplace. Others specify that assessment must ensure 'conduct of multiple horse handling activities' and that there must be access to 'a variety of quiet and reasonably tractable horses'.

It was suggested that the training packages need to provide guidance on how students should progress through different 'levels' of horses, with increasing exposure of students to more challenging horses. The training packages need to be more specific on the number of horses on which a student needs to demonstrate competency.

Some stakeholders expressed concern about use of the online mode of delivery. While many students enrolled in training via the distance or online mode were pleased with the knowledge they developed through the course, others were concerned that practical skills were not as well developed. The theory of loading a horse onto a float, hitching it to a vehicle, and towing it was presented as an example where no practical demonstration of student skill was required.

Where delivery was by distance or online, some stakeholders felt that the authenticity of assessment was questionable and queried whether self-assessment is reliable. Some students felt that there was insufficient observation of skills. A related concern was the lack of visits by trainers to the training 'venue', which in some delivery modes was the student's farm, with all contact with the RTO being via online technology.

It is noted that as the training package developer reviews the equine qualifications, they will develop the revised qualifications to comply with the *Standards for Training Packages* which permit industry to specify much clearer performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions than has previously been permitted in training package design. This could include providing mandated templates for valid skills observation documents and assessment tools in the performance evidence and assessment conditions of units of competency and specifying where it is required that there be direct observation of competency by a qualified assessor.

It is noted that this could also potentially address concerns expressed during the review about the supervision arrangements of apprentice jockeys. Many horse trainers and jockeys who have exceptional horse skills are good mentors and workplace supervisors, but do not have experience in training people. Increased clarity in the training package about performance and knowledge evidence and assessment conditions could also clarify the respective responsibilities of VET trainers and assessors, racing stable trainers and jockeys for the safety, training and supervision of apprentices in the racing industry.

It is expected that inclusion of clear specifications in the training packages of industry's assessment requirements will give clarity to RTOs about industry expectations and enable ASQA to target audits in this area of poor quality practice identified by the review.

Since 2014 when the audits were conducted, the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (the Standards for RTOs 2015) came into effect from 1 January 2015 for organisations applying to become an RTO and from 1 April 2015 for existing RTOs. The Standards for RTOs 2015 include a strengthened assessment standard which ASQA expects will lead to improvement in this area.

Finally, given the high level of non-compliance with the assessment standard at the initial audit (17 or 85 per cent of 20 RTOs audited for this review), it is important to note that the qualification *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* does not include *TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools*, as a core unit. Achieving competency in this unit would build higher level skills in

assessment. This issue has been referred to the training package developer who has responsibility for development and maintenance of this qualification (currently Innovation and Business Skills Australia).

Current core units in *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* are:

TAEASS401B Plan assessment activities and processes

TAEASS402B Assess competence

TAEASS403B Participate in assessment validation

TAEDEL401A Plan, organise and deliver group-based learning

TAEDEL402A Plan, organise and facilitate learning in the workplace

TAEDES401A Design and develop learning programs

TAEDES402A Use training packages and accredited courses to meet client needs

Trainer and assessor skills

Many comments were made through the interviews conducted at audit that trainers and assessors need coaching accreditation or instructional skills, as holding a *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* and being experienced in horse skills is insufficient for the purposes of instructing others. As a result of the New South Wales Coroner's report, TAFE New South Wales requires that all trainers and assessors involved in the conduct of units involving horse handling and riding in all its institutes must hold national qualifications in instruction in horse riding and handling skills, as evidence of experience in leading and supervising groups of riders and in trail riding and open field work.

The audits found that the majority of RTOs' trainers and assessors do already hold additional competencies or were in the process of obtaining them.

Most trainers and assessors also hold first aid qualifications/competencies.

Almost half of the RTOs audited had some or all of their trainers and assessors holding level 1 or 2 National Coaching Accreditation such as that offered through Equestrian Australia.

Some RTOs have trainers and assessors who are either undertaking or possess:

- Horse Safety Australia accreditation as instructors
- senior instructor or instructor skill sets from the *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation* Training Package, or
- a statement of attainment for *SISOEQO414A Instruct horse riding and handling skills*.

The current training package developer for this industry, AgriFood Skills Australia, has indicated it is considering the issue of appropriate trainer and assessor qualifications for equine programs in its current review of all equine qualifications. In view of the high levels of risk in equine training, trainers and assessors in equine programs should be required to possess qualifications in coaching or instruction of others in horse riding and handling skills.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that training package developers in their review of equine qualifications:

- provide clearer and more specific requirements for performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions for each unit of competency
- specify, where required, the direct observation of competency by a qualified assessor
- consider whether specifications of mandatory templates for valid skills observation documents and assessment tools should be included in the performance evidence and assessment conditions of units of competency, and
- specify in assessor requirements that assessors must have qualifications in instruction or coaching of horse riding/handling, noting that there is currently a range of such qualifications in use and that these should be reviewed to consider their suitability.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that the training package developer in its current review of the *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* to determine whether *TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools*, should be included as a core unit.

The VET market

The review has found that as a result of the diversity of settings and activities in which people work with horses there are numerous equine units of competency spread across five industry training packages and many equine VET accredited courses.

In addition, as VET is training for work and many horse-related activities are sport and recreation based, a large amount of training also occurs outside the VET system. There is also significant crossover between the sectors as the audits found that many trainers and assessors maintain involvement in bodies such as Pony Club and Equestrian Australia and have coaching or instruction qualifications obtained through these bodies.

However, the diverse training landscape makes the market confusing for potential students who may find it difficult to identify training that matches their needs and skill levels. Given the unifying theme of safety and effective risk management that is common to both the VET system's equine training and non-VET equine training, there is potential for the sectors to learn from each other. This could include exploring the adoption of similar safety codes or guides and considering whether the requirements for non-VET coaches could be adapted as the basis for a skill set for VET sector equine trainers and assessors. This could potentially simplify the currently complex training offerings, and provide access for participants/learners and trainers/assessors/coaches in the VET and non-VET sectors to a body of training with safety and risk management at its core.

It is proposed that the training package developers' review of equine qualifications should include a scan of all accredited courses to determine whether the training package can meet the needs currently

included in those courses, with the view to ultimately making them redundant and reducing the volume of offerings that are contributing to the confusing landscape.

It is also proposed that key bodies involved in non-VET equine sectors be included in the training package review process to facilitate the cross-sector communication and the potential to learn from each other's experiences in horse riding and handling activities, particularly around approaches to safety and risk management.

Finally, as ASQA administers the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012* it can, in relation to future applications, ensure that the safety elements which have been embedded into training packages are replicated by any course developers who submit initial applications for a new accredited course or renewal applications for existing courses. This will assist to embed safe practice and effective risk management across all equine programs.

Recommendation 10

It is recommended that training package developers in their review of equine qualifications:

- scan all current VET equine accredited courses to determine whether the training packages can meet the needs currently included in those courses and if so, to include those competencies in the training packages, and
- include key bodies from the non-VET equine sectors in the review process to ensure their experiences in safety and risk management inform the development of the revised qualifications.

Recommendation 11

It is recommended that ASQA, in exercising of its responsibilities under Part 3 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, including in its application of the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012* made under that Act, ensures that the specific changes to training packages to make safety explicit and to specify volume of learning as outlined in Recommendations 5, 7 and 8, are appropriately and satisfactorily addressed by course proponents in applications for accreditation of proposed equine programs or course renewal applications.

List of acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
EA	Equestrian Australia
NVR	national vocational regulator
RTO	Registered training organisation
SWA	Safe Work Australia
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	vocational education and training
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

Glossary

Term	Definition
Access and equity	<p>The policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that vocational education and training are responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.</p> <p>Source: <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i> and <i>Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015</i></p>
Assessment	<p>The process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a training package or by the learning outcomes of a VET accredited courses</p> <p>Source: <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i> and <i>Standard for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015</i></p> <p>www.comlaw.gov.au</p>
Assessment requirements	<p>Are the endorsed components of a training package. Assessment requirements set out the industry's approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment.</p> <p>Source: <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i> and <i>Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015</i></p>
Assessment tools	<p>An assessment tool includes the following components: the context and conditions for the assessment, the tasks to be administered to the candidate, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (that is the assessment decision-making rules). It also includes the administration, recording and reporting requirements.</p> <p>Source: http://www.asqa.gov.au/verve/_resources/Guide_to_developing_assessment_tools.pdf#search=assessment tools</p>
Audit	See compliance audit and registration audit
Authenticity	<p>One of the rules of evidence. To accept evidence as authentic, an assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work.</p> <p>Source: https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377</p>
Compliance audit	<p>The systematic and documented processes used to assess an RTO's ongoing compliance with the VET Quality Framework and other relevant standards.</p> <p>Compliance audits are scheduled at ASQA's discretion with the authority of an ASQA Commissioner.</p>

Term	Definition
Course	<p>A course of vocational education and training.</p> <p>Source: https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2015C00186</p>
Industry Skills Council	<p>Is a national body recognised and funded by the Australian Government to develop and maintain training packages specific to the industry area(s) for which it has coverage.</p> <p>Source: <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i></p>
Learner	<p>An individual who is receiving, responding to and processing information in order to acquire and develop competence. This incorporates the processes of preparing and presenting for assessment.</p> <p>Source: <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i></p>
Non-compliance	<p>Non-compliance occurs when the requirements of the VET Quality Framework or other relevant standards or registration conditions have not been met.</p>
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	<p>An assessment process that assesses an individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a VET qualification.</p> <p>Source: <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i></p>
Registration audit	<p>An audit undertaken to assess an application for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initial registration as an NVR RTO • renewal of registration as an NVR RTO • change to the scope of registration of an NVR RTO. <p>Any audit undertaken under the NVR Act that is not a registration audit is a compliance audit.</p>
Registered training organisation (RTO)	<p>A training organisation registered by a national, state or territory registering body.</p>
Simulated work environment	<p>The requirement for a unit of competency to be assessed in a simulated workplace environment may be identified either within the unit of competency itself or within the relevant training package assessment guidelines.</p> <p>A simulated workplace may be required for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learner may not have access to a workplace • the available workplace may not use the relevant skill, equipment or process • conducting assessments may be disruptive or interfere with work requirements, for example, there may be ethical, privacy or confidentiality issues to consider • it may not be appropriate to apply the skills in the workplace due to potential risks such as health and safety, or equipment being damaged. <p>For the purposes of assessment, a simulated workplace may be described</p>

Term	Definition
	<p>as one in which all of the required skills are performed with respect to the provision of paid services to an employer or the public can be demonstrated as though the business was actually operating.</p> <p>In order to be valid and reliable, the simulation must closely resemble what occurs in a real work environment.</p> <p>The simulated workplace should involve a range of activities that reflect real work experience. The simulated workplace should allow the performance of all of the required skills and demonstration of the required knowledge.</p> <p>It is critical that when a simulated workplace is being set up, the assessor is thoroughly familiar with the competency standard/s, as well as experienced in the current circumstances and environment of the workplace.</p> <p>In deciding whether a simulation or an assessment environment has been adequately set up, the following should be considered.</p> <p>Are there opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test the full range of equipment • use up-to-date equipment and software • reflect times and deadlines • show the complexity of dealing with multiple tasks • involve prioritising among competing tasks • deal with customers, including difficult ones • work with others in a team • communicate with diverse groups • find, discuss and test solutions to problems • explore health and safety issues • answer practically oriented, applied-knowledge questions, and • show the level of written and verbal expression sufficient for, but not exceeding, the work requirements. <p><i>Source: 2010 AQTF User's Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration. http://natese.gov.au/?a=69353</i></p>
Training and assessment strategy	<p>A framework that guides the learning requirements and the teaching, training and assessment arrangements of a VET qualification. It is the document that outlines the macro-level requirements of the learning and assessment process, usually at the qualification level.</p> <p><i>Source: Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i></p>
Training Package	<p>A nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment requirements, AQF qualifications, and credit arrangements for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.</p> <p><i>Source: Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i></p>
Unit of competency	<p>The specification of industry knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.</p> <p><i>Source: Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i></p>

Term	Definition
Vocational education and training (VET)	Post-compulsory education and training, excluding degree and higher-level programs delivered by higher education institutions, which provides people with occupational or work-related knowledge and skills. VET also includes programs that provide the basis for subsequent vocational programs.
Volume of learning	<p>The AQF defines volume of learning as identifying the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes of a particular qualification type. The full-time volume of learning measure for a certificate II is typically 1200 hours full-time equivalent, and for a certificate III 1200 hours to 2400 hours full-time equivalent.</p> <p>The Australian Qualifications Framework Council in its explanation of volume of learning, states that</p> <p><i>the volume of learning allocated to a qualification should include all teaching, learning and assessment activities that are required to be undertaken by the typical student to achieve the learning outcomes. These activities may include some or all of the following: guided learning (such as classes, lectures, tutorials, online study or self-paced study guides), individual study, research, learning activities in the workplace and assessment activities.</i></p> <p>For more detailed information refer to Appendix C</p> <p>Source: <i>Australian Qualifications Framework.</i></p>
VET Quality Framework	<p>At the time of this review it comprised:</p> <p>the <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i></p> <p>the Fit and Proper Person Requirements</p> <p>the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements</p> <p>the Data Provision Requirements, and</p> <p>the Australian Qualifications Framework.</p> <p>Source: <i>Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012</i> and <i>Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015</i></p>
www.training.gov.au	Training.gov.au is the official National Register of VET in Australia and is the authoritative source of information on training packages, qualifications, accredited courses, units of competency, skill sets and registered training organisations.

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Appendix A: List of Steering Committee representatives

Christopher Robinson (Chair)

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Don Hudgson

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Morena Stanley

Training Accreditation Council Western Australia

Jeremy Hodes and Lynn Connell

Australian Government Department of Industry

Geoff Bloom

Rural Skills Australia

Ron Fleming

Racing and Wagering, Western Australia

Julie Fiedler

Horse South Australia

Joy Harris

Service Skills Australia

Meredith Chapman

Safety in Focus

Neil Storey and Yvonne Noordhuis

Safe Work Australia

Appendix B: Review methodology

The findings of the review were informed by four components:

- context and background, including reviewing relevant reports and data
- audits of RTOs offering training in equine courses
- consultation with stakeholders including students, employers and RTOs, and
- surveying of RTOs.

The following provides the details regarding the strategies that were used.

A2.1 Context and background data

Various reports, environmental scans and census data were reviewed to inform the review. This included especially:

- New South Wales Coroner's report into the death of Ms Sarah Waugh
- documents and research reports related to safety in horse riding and handling and the horse industry
- data related to delivery of training by RTOs, including RTO numbers, national distribution of RTOs and student numbers, and
- the provision of equine training including RTO type and number, national distribution and enrolments and graduations.

A2.2 Consultations and survey

Consultations

Consultation with key stakeholders occurred in a number of ways through:

- opportunities identified by committee members such as attendance at forums and workshops
- focus groups, and
- formal roundtable meetings and teleconferences with stakeholders initiated for the review.

Consultations with stakeholders in the equine sector were undertaken in 2014 with face-to-face meetings and teleconferences for participants in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales.

Organisations consulted included:

- not for profit organisations
- peak bodies
- RTOs
- associations
- other stakeholder groups.

Survey

In 2014, ASQA undertook a survey of RTOs that had confirmed that they had delivered some equine training in 2014.

The aim of the survey was to:

- provide more detailed information about the nature of equine training delivery by RTOs registered with ASQA to deliver such training, and
- inform the development of any audits undertaken for this national strategic review of equine training.

A2.3 Interviews with students, RTO representatives and employers in equine training—the voices

During the audit process the strategic review team was also able to consult with employers, students, trainers and the RTO management to document both areas of concern and suggestions on how training and assessment could be improved. This has been of considerable value to the review.

During the audit or post audit visit 153 people were interviewed. Of these 22 were RTO representatives, 28 were trainers, 15 employers, one team leader and 86 were students (past or present) as shown in Table A1 below.

Table A1: Stakeholder interviews during the sampled audits

RTO type	RTO number	Employers	Trainers	Students	Other (team leader)
School	1	0	1	5	0
University	0	6	1	4	1
Enterprise	0	2	1	5	0
TAFE	13	5	17	52	0
Private	8	3	8	20	0
TOTAL	22	16	28	86	1

Source: ASQA randomly sampled audit notes 2014 – voices tally sheet

A2.5 Audits of RTOs offering equine training

The core component of this review has been to carry out audits of RTOs providing equine training to test the level of compliance with required national Standards for training. The primary purpose of these audits was to determine the compliance or otherwise of RTOs with the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012*, which were the national Standards in operation at the time of the review. These have subsequently been replaced by the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

Essential standards for the continuing registration of an RTO relate to:

- the quality of training and assessment provided by the RTO (Standard 15 [Standards 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16 and 2.2 of the 2015 Standards])

- adhering to principles of access and equity to maximise trainee outcomes (Standard 16 [Standards 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1 and 6.2 of the 2015 Standards])
- RTO management systems that are responsive to client, staff and stakeholder needs (Standard 17 [Standard 2.4 of the 2015 Standards])
- appropriate governance arrangements (Standard 18 [Standard 2.1 of the 2015 Standards])
- appropriate interactions with ASQA as the national VET regulator (Standard 19 [Standard 8.1 of the 2015 Standards])
- compliance with legislation (Standard 20 [Standards 8.5 and 8.6 of the 2015 Standards])
- adequate insurance (Standard 21 [Standard 7.4 of the 2015 Standards])
- proper financial management (Standard 22 [Standards 5.3 and 7.2 of the 2015 Standards])
- appropriate arrangements for issuing and recognising VET qualifications and statements of attainment (Standard 23 [Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 7.5 of the 2015 Standards])
- the accuracy and integrity of marketing material put out by the RTO (Standard 24 [Standards 4.1 of the 2015 Standards]), and
- the transition of courses to new training package requirements (Standard 25 [Standards 1.26 and 1.27 of the 2015 Standards]).

There are similar standards which an application for initial registration as an RTO need to meet. The Standards are set out in a legislative instrument, *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2011*, in accordance with subsection 185 (1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

RTOs must be compliant at all times with these standards to fulfil the requirements for registration as a training provider. RTOs are required to apply for renewal of their registration and can be re-registered for up to seven years. Applications for renewal are risk assessed, and for most, the process will also involve an audit of their compliance against all the standards required for continuing registration. Moreover, all RTOs that have only recently become ASQA registered RTOs will have a compliance audit after 12 months of operation. In addition, ASQA can require a compliance monitoring audit of an RTO at any time during the registration cycle, irrespective of whether or not the RTO has submitted an application for registration renewal to ASQA.⁹³

The focus of the audits was on a sample of units from the following training package qualifications:

- From the *AHC10 Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management* training package
 - *AHC20110 Certificate II in Agriculture*
 - *AHC30110 Certificate III in Agriculture*
 - *AHC30310 Certificate III in Horse Breeding*
- From the *RGR08 Racing* training package
 - *RGR20108 Certificate II in Racing (Stable hand)*
 - *RGR30208 Certificate III in Racing (Advanced Stablehand)*
 - *RGR30108 Certificate III in Racing (Trackrider)*
 - *RGR40208 Certificate IV in Racing (Jockey)*
- From the *SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation* training package
 - *SIS30713 Certificate III in Sport Coaching*

⁹³ Note that ASQA is also implementing a new risk model to improve regulation of the national standards. The new risk model will be more proactive than previous models and will draw upon data and market intelligence to predict potential risks and direct regulatory effort.

The review has also included the following VET accredited courses:

- 22246VIC Certificate II in Equine Studies
- 91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Performance Horse)
- 10229NAT Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse)
- 69797 Certificate III in Horsemanship (Riding, Handling and Behaviour)
- 22139VIC Diploma of Horse Breeding (Stud Management)
- 10230NAT Diploma of Horse Industry Management (Performance Horse).

The units of competency from these training packages and the modules from VET accredited courses that were sampled for audit are shown in Table A2. These units and modules were selection for audit following an analysis of their relevance to issues of safety and risk management in horse riding, handling and care across the diverse sectors in which people engage with horses.

Table A2: Units of competency and modules from VET accredited courses sampled

Qualification – training package or VET accredited course	Units/module
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHC20110 Certificate II in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHCLSK212A Ride horses to carry out stockwork • AHCLSK210A Muster and move livestock • AHCHBR203A Provide daily care for horses • AHCHBR202A Handle young horses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHC30110 Certificate III in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHCHBR304A Educate, ride and care for horses and equipment • AHCHBR307A Assess suitability of horses for stock work • AHCHBR302A Carry out basic hoof care procedures • AHCHBR305A Handle and care for stallions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHC30310 Certificate III in Horse Breeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHCHBR304A Educate ride and care for horses and equipment • AHCHBR307A Assess suitability of horses for stockwork • AHCHBR302A Carry out basic hoof care procedures • AHCHBR305A Handle and care for stallions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGR20108 Certificate II in Racing (Stable hand) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks (elective) • RGRPSH201A Handle horses (core) • RGRPSH203A Perform basic driving tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGR30208 Certificate III in Racing (Advanced Stablehand) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks (elective) • RGRPSH201A Handle horses (core) • RGRPSH203A Perform basic driving tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGR30108 Certificate III in Racing (Trackfinder) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks (core) • RGRPSH201A Handle horses (core) • RGRPSH203A Perform basic driving tasks (elective)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGR40208 Certificate IV in Racing (Jockey) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks (core) • RGRPSH201A Handle horses (core)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIS30713 Certificate III in Sport Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SISSEQS303A Teach the fundamental skills of riding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22246VIC Certificate II in Equine Studies (expiry 31/12/2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGRPSH205A Perform basic riding tasks (elective) • SISOEQO201A Handle horses (core) • VU21407 Demonstrate basic horse riding or

Qualification – training package or VET accredited course	Units/module
	<i>driving skills (elective)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Performance Horse) (expiry 31/12/2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SISOEQO201A Handle horses AHCHBR202A Handle young horses NSWTEQU206A Ride performance horses for exercise in an arena NSWTEQU205A Lunge performance horses for exercise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10229NAT Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SISOEQO201A Handle horses (Core) SISOEQO202A Demonstrate basic horse riding skills (elective) NSWTEQU206A Ride performance horses for exercise in an arena (elective) NSWTEQU305A Prepare for attend and participate in events/activities NSWTEQU206B Ride Performance horses for exercise in arena NSWTEQU303A Care for performance horses and care for stallions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 69797 Certificate III in Horsemanship (Riding, Handling and Behaviour) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIGURG308A Undertaking riding at the appropriate skill level (core) TIGEGT301A Equine groundwork and transportation (core)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22139VIC Diploma of Horse Breeding (Stud Management) (expiry 30/06/2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AHCHBR202A Handle young horses (core) AHCHBR305A Handle and care for stallions (core)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10230NAT Diploma of Horse Industry Management (Performance Horse) (expiry 31/10/2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SISOEQO409A Train and condition horses (elective) NSWTEQU414A Manage the re-education of horses (elective) NSWTEQU410A Interpret equine behaviour NSWTEQU411A Implement and monitor equine health and welfare strategies NSWTEQU303A Care for performance horses

Source: training.gov.au

This review focused on a specific subset of the Standards 15 (Standards 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16 and 2.2 of the 2015 Standards) that particularly relates to training delivery and assessment, namely:

- the strategies for training and assessment, including the student target group; whether the course is delivered in the workplace or classroom or in some other way; the duration of the course; and whether strategies were developed through *effective consultation with industry* (Standard 15.2 [Standards 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 of the 2015 Standards])
- what staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials the RTO uses to deliver the course (Standard 15.3 [Standards 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6 of the 2015 Standards])
- the qualifications of trainers and assessors, including their industry experience and vocational competence (Standard 15.4 [Standards 1.13, 1.14, 1.15 and 1.16 of the 2015 Standards])
- assessment material to be used by the RTO to determine student competence (Standard 15.5 [Standard 1.8 of the 2015 Standards])
- whether the RTO provided clear information to learners prior to enrolment (Standard 16.3 [Standards 5.1 and 5.2 of the 2015 Standards])
- how employers were involved in assisting with training and assessment of learners (Standard 16.4 [Standards 1.5 and 1.6 of the 2015 Standards])
- whether learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs (Standard 16.5 [Standard 1.7 of the 2015 Standards])
- whether the RTO monitors training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf (Standard 17.3 [Standard 2.4 of the 2015 Standards])
- whether the RTO issues to persons who it has assessed as competent in accordance with various requirements (Standard 23.1 [Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 of the 2015 Standards])
- whether the RTO ensures its marketing and advertising of VET qualifications is ethical, accurate and consistent with its scope of registration (Standard 24.1 [Standard 4.1 of the 2015 Standards]), and
- whether the RTO has managed the transition of superseded training packages and qualifications (Standard 25.1 [Standards 1.26 and 1.27 of the 2015 Standards]).

Appendix C: Volume of learning—an explanation

An extract from Australian Qualifications Framework Council www.aqf.edu.au

© Australian Qualifications Framework Council, Issued May 2014

The volume of learning and the breadth and depth of the knowledge, skills and application of the knowledge and skills determined for a qualification, define the complexity of the qualification.

The volume of learning determined for a qualification must fall within the range provided in the descriptor for the qualification type.

The concept of 'typically' used to describe the volume of learning is intended to provide some flexibility in relation to pathways into and from AQF qualifications that are incorporated into the design of the qualification. It is not intended as justification for not applying the requirement.

Volume of learning applied

It is the responsibility of organisations developing and/or accrediting qualifications to exercise professional judgment to ensure that the design of programs of learning leading to qualifications enables students to achieve the learning outcomes for both the qualification type and the discipline. Decisions about design of qualifications must take into account students' likelihood of successfully achieving qualification outcomes and must also ensure that integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained. Those developing and/or accrediting qualifications should be able to provide a pedagogical rationale to justify a decision about the volume of learning.

The volume of learning allocated to a qualification should include all teaching, learning and assessment activities that are required to be undertaken by the typical student to achieve the learning outcomes. These activities may include some or all of the following: guided learning (such as classes, lectures, tutorials, online study or self-paced study guides), individual study, research, learning activities in the workplace and assessment activities.

The teaching, learning and assessment activities are usually measured in equivalent full-time years. The accepted length of a full-time year, generally used for educational participation, is 1200 hours.

The volume of learning allocated in the design of a qualification may vary depending upon:

- the level of the previous qualification required for entry
- whether the purpose of the qualification is for deepening or broadening of knowledge and skills, or
- whether the qualification leads to professional outcomes or is generalist in purpose.

It would be usual for a greater volume of learning to be allocated to qualifications designed to:

- build on a previous qualification in a different discipline regardless of the level of the previous qualification
- build on a qualification from any lower level, or
- require workplace, clinical or professional practice.

If a lesser volume of learning is allocated to a qualification, the components of the program of learning must be predominately or entirely at the level of the qualification type. If credit—such as through articulation arrangements—contributes to the volume of learning, the learning outcomes for the qualification must be achievable despite the reduced volume of learning.

Volume of learning applied in delivery

The duration of the delivery of the qualification may vary from the volume of learning specified for the qualification.

Providers may offer the qualification in more or less time than the specified volume of learning, provided that delivery arrangements give students sufficient opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes for the qualification type, level and discipline.

Students may be fast-tracked through the qualification, for example, by providers offering three semesters per year, longer study hours in the traditional two semester model, or intensive periods of study. Conversely, some cohorts of students may be offered a longer duration of delivery to support their successful achievement of the qualification outcomes. Students may be offered more self-paced methodologies, including online delivery and workplace delivery, which will vary the duration required to achieve the learning outcomes. The duration may be reduced for individual students if credit towards the qualification is given in the form of recognition of prior learning, advanced standing or credit transfer.

Provider decisions about the duration of the delivery of a qualification must take into account the students' likelihood of successfully achieving the learning outcomes and ensure that the integrity of the qualification outcomes is maintained. If the duration of delivery is substantially different from the volume of learning specified by the qualification type specification, providers should be able to provide pedagogical rationale to support the variation.

Volume of learning for each qualification type

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	typically two years
Certificate I	typically 0.5-1 year
Certificate II	typically 0.5-1 year
Certificate III	typically 1-2 years. Up to 4 years may be required to achieve the learning outcomes through a program of indentured training/employment.
Certificate IV	typically 0.5-2 years. There may be variations between short duration specialist qualifications that build on knowledge and skills already acquired and longer duration qualifications that are designed as entry level work.
Diploma	typically 1-2 years
Advanced Diploma	typically 1.5-2 years
Associate Degree	typically 2 years
Bachelor Degree	typically 3-4 years
Bachelor Honours Degree	typically 1 year following a Bachelor Degree.
Graduate Certificate	typically 0.5-1 year
Graduate Diploma	typically 1-2 years
Refer to Australian Qualifications Framework qualification type specifications for information about Masters Degree and Doctoral Degree.	

Source: ©

Australian Qualifications Framework Council, Issued November 2012

Appendix D: Definitions—principles of assessment and rules of evidence

From the *Standards for NVR RTOs 2012*:

Principles of assessment are required to ensure quality outcomes. Assessments should be fair, flexible, valid and reliable as follows:

- a) **Fairness:** Fairness requires consideration of the individual candidate's needs and characteristics, and any reasonable adjustments that need to be applied to take them into account. It requires clear communication between the assessor and the candidate to ensure that the candidate is fully informed about, understands, and is able to participate in, the assessment process, and agrees that the process is appropriate. It also includes an opportunity for the person being assessed to challenge the result of the assessment and to be reassessed if necessary.
- b) **Flexible:** To be flexible, assessment should reflect the candidate's needs, provide for recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired, draw on a range of methods appropriate to the context, competency and the candidate and, support continuous competency development.
- c) **Validity:** There are five major types of validity: face, content, criterion (that is predictive and concurrent), construct and consequential. In general, validity is concerned with the appropriateness of the inferences, use and consequences that result from the assessment. In simple terms, it is concerned with the extent to which an assessment decision about a candidate (for example, competent/not yet competent, a grade and/or a mark), based on the evidence of performance by the candidate is justified. It requires determining conditions that weaken the truthfulness of the decision, exploring alternative explanations for good or poor performance and feeding them back into the assessment process to reduce errors when making inferences about competence.
Unlike reliability, validity is not simply a property of the assessment tool. As such, an assessment tool designed for a particular purpose and target group may not necessarily lead to valid interpretations of performance and assessment decisions if the tool was used for a different purpose and/or target group.
- d) **Reliability:** There are five types of reliability: internal consistency, parallel forms, split-half, inter-rater and intra-rater. In general, reliability is an estimate of how accurate or precise the task is as a measurement instrument. Reliability is concerned with how much error is included in the evidence.

Rules of evidence are closely related to the principles of assessment and provide guidance on the collection of evidence to ensure that it is valid, sufficient, authentic and current as follows:

- a) **Validity:** see Principles of assessment.
- b) **Sufficiency:** Sufficiency relates to the quality and quantity of evidence assessed. It requires collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. Supplementary sources of evidence may be necessary. The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency.
- c) **Authenticity:** To accept evidence as authentic an assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work.
- d) **Currency:** Currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by candidates to demonstrate that they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, so the evidence must be from either the present or the very recent past.



FACT SHEET

Appendix E: Reconsideration of a decision by ASQA (Fact sheet)

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), the national VET regulator, makes decisions about the registration of training providers as registered training organisations (RTOs) and the accreditation of VET courses.

If you are dissatisfied with a decision made by ASQA, you have a number of options:

1. Consider the reasons for the decision, address the outstanding areas of non-compliance and submit a fresh application.
2. Ask ASQA to reassess its position
3. Ask ASQA to reconsider the decision.
4. Apply to have the decision reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). Refer to the ASQA fact sheet '[Administrative Appeals Tribunal review of an ASQA decision](#)'.

This fact sheet tells you about **Option 3, the reconsideration process**.

Which decisions can be reconsidered?

Not all decisions can be reconsidered.

Only 'reviewable decisions' as specified in section 199 of the [National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011](#) (the NVR Act) can be reconsidered. These are listed on Page 2 of this fact sheet.

How do I apply for reconsideration?

You must apply to ASQA for reconsideration using the [Application for reconsideration of reviewable decision](#) form.

You must apply either within 30 days after you are informed of ASQA's decision, or—if you have requested an extension to submit your application and ASQA has granted the extension—within the extended period.

You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of the application.

Is there a fee?

The fee payable for an application for reconsideration is identified in ASQA's [Schedule of fees and charges](#).

Will ASQA place a stay on its decision?

A stay is a decision to suspend the implementation of the decision that you have asked ASQA to reconsider. A stay may be granted subject to conditions.

ASQA will consider whether to place a stay on its decision if:

- your organisation's registration is likely to expire before the completion of the reconsideration process, or
- you request ASQA to do so.



Reviewable decisions under s 199 of the NVR Act

A decision to grant an application for registration (including renewal of registration) as an NVR registered training organisation.

A decision determining the period for which a national VET regulator (NVR) registered training organisation is registered.

A decision to impose a condition on an NVR registered training organisation's registration.

A decision to reject an application for registration (including renewal of registration) as an NVR registered training organisation.

A decision to vary a condition on an NVR registered training organisation's registration.

A decision not to determine a shorter period for making an application for renewal of registration as an NVR registered training organisation.

A decision to change, or refuse to change, an NVR registered training organisation's scope of registration.

A decision to suspend all or part of an NVR registered training organisation's scope of registration.

A decision to shorten the period of an NVR registered training organisation's registration.

A decision to defer making a decision to change an NVR registered training organisation's scope of registration until the organisation addresses issues identified by the national VET regulator.

A decision not to allow an NVR registered training organisation's registration to be withdrawn.

A decision to cancel an NVR registered training organisation's registration.

A decision to grant an application for accreditation of a course (including renewal of accreditation) as a VET accredited course.

A decision to impose conditions on the accreditation of a VET accredited course.

A decision to vary a condition on the accreditation of a VET accredited course.

A decision to reject an application for accreditation of a course (including renewal of accreditation) as a VET accredited course.

A decision to amend a VET accredited course.

A decision to cancel the accreditation of a VET accredited course.

A decision to give a written direction to an NVR registered training organisation under paragraph 36(2)(a) or (b).

A decision to issue, or not issue, a VET qualification.

A decision to issue, or not issue, a VET statement of attainment.

A decision to cancel, or not cancel, a VET qualification.

A decision to cancel, or not cancel, a VET statement of attainment.

A decision to enter details on the register under subsection 216(4).

What is the process for reconsidering a decision?

In most cases, an ASQA Commissioner or ASQA staff member, who was not involved in making the original decision, will reconsider the decision.

If an ASQA staff member made the original decision, only a Commissioner or more senior member of staff may reconsider the decision.

The person reconsidering the decision has the authority to affirm, vary or revoke the decision.

As part of the reconsideration process, ASQA will consider the reconsideration application, any additional information provided with the application and the evidence on which the original decision was made.

How long does it take for a decision to be reconsidered?

It may take up to 90 days from the day a complete 'Application for reconsideration of reviewable decision' is received for ASQA to make a decision about the application.

The RTO will be advised in writing of ASQA's decision, and receive a statement of reasons for the decision, within 30 days of the decision being made.

Further rights of review

The [Administrative Appeals Tribunal](#) (AAT) provides independent review of a wide range of administrative decisions made by the Australian Government (and some non-government bodies).

The AAT aims to provide fair, impartial, high-quality and prompt review with as little formality and technicality as possible. Both individuals and government agencies use the services of the AAT.

The AAT has the power to set aside decisions made by ASQA, including decisions made as part of the reconsideration process. An application can also be made to the AAT for a stay of ASQA's decision.

An appeal to the AAT must usually be made within 28 days of receiving ASQA's decision.

If you submit an 'Application for reconsideration of reviewable decision' to ASQA and apply to an external review body such as the AAT before ASQA has made its reconsideration decision, ASQA will stop the reconsideration process and affirm its original decision.

Additional information

Freedom of information

An RTO has the right to obtain access to documents about the decision under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. Information about how to make an application to ASQA to access documents is available from the ['About' section of ASQA's website](#).

Interpreting services

If an interpreter is required, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 for the cost of a local call. Tell the operator the language you speak. Ask the TIS to telephone the ASQA Info line on 1300 701 801.

Cantonese

若你需要口譯員，請致電131 450聯絡翻譯和口譯服務署（TIS National），要求他們致電 1300 701 801 聯絡 ASQA。我們的工作時間是 9.00am – 7.00pm Monday – Friday AEST。

Mandarin

如果你需要口译员，请致电131 450联系翻译和口译服务署（TIS National），要求他们致电 1300 701 801 联系 ASQA。我们的工作时间是9.00am – 7.00pm Monday – Friday AEST。

Greek

Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, παρακαλείστε να τηλεφωνήσετε στην Υπηρεσία Μετάφρασης και Διερμηνείας (Εθνική Υπηρεσία TIS) στο 131 450 και ζητήστε να τηλεφωνήσουν ASQA στο 1300 701 801. Οι ώρες λειτουργίας μας είναι 9.00am – 7.00pm Monday – Friday AEST.

Korean

통역사가 필요하시면 번역통역서비스 (TIS National)에 131 450으로 연락하여 이들에게 1300 701 801 번으로 ASQA에 전화하도록 요청하십시오. 저희의 근무시간은 9.00am – 7.00pm Monday – Friday AEST입니다.

Persian

شماره 131 450 – تلفن کنید و از آنها بخواهید (TIS National) اگر به مترجم شفاهی نیاز دارید لطفاً به "خدمات ترجمه کتبی و شفاهی" است. 9.00am – 7.00pm AEST (Monday – Friday) – تلفن کنند. ساعات کار ما 1300 701 801 – شماره ASQA به

Russian

Если вам нужен переводчик, то позвоните в Службу письменного и устного перевода (TIS National) по номеру 131 450 и скажите переводчику, что вам нужно позвонить в ASQ по номеру 1300 701 801. Наш распорядок работы: 9.00am – 7.00 pm Monday – Friday AEST.

Serbian

Ако вам је потребан тумач, молимо вас да позовете Службу преводилаца и тумача (Translating and Interpreting Service - TIS National) на 131 450 и замолите их да позову ASQA на 1300 701801 Наше радно време је 9.00am – 7.00 pm Monday – Friday AEST.

Spanish

Si necesita intérprete, llame al Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación - Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) al 131 450 y pídale que llamen a ASQA al 1300 701 801. Nuestro horario de atención es 9.00am – 7.00 pm Monday – Friday AEST.

Turkish

Tercümana ihtiyacınız varsa, 131 450 numaralı telefondan Yazılı ve Sözlü Tercüme Servisini (TIS National) arayınız ve sizi 1300 701 801 numaralı telefondan ASQA ile görüştürmelerini isteyiniz. Çalışma saatlerimiz 9.00am – 7.00 pm Monday – Friday AEST.

Appendix F: Equine related qualifications, units of competency and accredited courses

Qualification and code	Unit code	Unit title
AHC10210 Certificate I in AgriFood Operations	AHCHBR101A	Support horse work
AHC20110 Certificate II in Agriculture	AHCHBR202A	Handle young horses
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	AHCHBR204A	Assist with mating procedures and parturition of horses
	AHCLSK212A	Ride horses to carry out stock work
AHC30110 Certificate III in Agriculture	AHCHBR302A	Carry out basic hoof care procedures
	AHCHBR303A	Carry out mare mating or artificial insemination procedures
	AHCHBR304A	Educate, ride and care for horses and equipment
	AHCHBR305A	Handle and care for stallions
	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	AHCHBR307A	Assess suitability of horses for stock work
AHC30310 Certificate III in Horse Breeding	AHCHBR302A	Carry out basic hoof care procedures
	AHCHBR303A	Carry out mare mating or artificial insemination procedures
	AHCHBR304A	Educate, ride and care for horses and equipment
	AHCHBR305A	Handle and care for stallions
	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	AHCHBR307A	Assess suitability of horses for stock work
	AHCHBR308A	Maintain horses in a healthy state and safe environment
	AHCHBR309A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
	AHCHBR401A	Carry out stud stable management duties
	AHCHBR402A	Supervise raising young horses
	AHCLSK330A	Implement procedures for foaling down mares
	AHCLSK417A	Manage horses for stock work
AHC40110 Certificate IV in Agriculture	AHCLSK417A	Manage horses for stock work
RGR10108 Certificate I in Racing (Stablehand)	RGRPSH101A	Catch and handle quiet horses under supervision
	RGRPSH102A	Perform basic stable duties
	RGRPSH205A	Perform basic riding tasks
RGR20108 Certificate II in Racing (Stablehand)	RGRPSH201A	Handle horses
	RGRPSH202A	Assist with transportation of horses
	RGRPSH205A	Perform basic riding tasks
	RGRPSH206A	Develop riding skills for flatwork
	RGRPSH207A	Perform stable duties
	RGRPSH208A	Attend horses at trackwork
	RGRPSH209A	Attend horses at race meetings and trials
RGR30108 Certificate III in Racing (Trackrider)	RGRPSH201A	Handle horses
	RGRPSH202A	Assist with transportation of horses
	RGRPSH205A	Perform basic riding tasks
	RGRPSH206A	Develop riding skills for flatwork
	RGRPSH207A	Perform stable duties
	RGRPSH208A	Attend horses at trackwork
	RGRPSH209A	Attend horses at race meetings and trials
	RGRPSH301A	Implement stable operations
	RGRPSH304A	Identify factors that affect racehorse performance
	RGRPSH306A	Develop basic trackwork riding skills
	RGRPSH307A	Exercise horses in pacework
	RGRPSH309A	Implement feeding programs for racehorses under direction
	RGRPSH310A	Prepare for self-management in racing

Qualification and code	Unit code	Unit title
	RGRPSH404A	Ride horses at trackwork
	RGRPSH405A	Ride horses in jump outs
	RGRPSH406A	Develop riding skills for jumping racing
	RGRPSH407A	Educate thoroughbred horses for racing
	RGRPSH414A	Ride horses in trials
	RGRPSH420A	Participate in implementing racehorse exercise programs
RGR30208 Certificate III in Racing (Advanced Stablehand)	RGRPSH201A	Handle horses
	RGRPSH202A	Assist with transportation of horses
	RGRPSH205A	Perform basic riding tasks
	RGRPSH206A	Develop riding skills for flatwork
	RGRPSH207A	Perform stable duties
	RGRPSH208A	Attend horses at trackwork
	RGRPSH209A	Attend horses at race meetings and trials
	RGRPSH301A	Implement stable operations
	RGRPSH302A	Supervise handling of horses
	RGRPSH303A	Supervise transportation of horses
	RGRPSH304A	Identify factors that affect racehorse performance
	RGRPSH305A	Develop driving skills for trackwork
	RGRPSH306A	Develop basic trackwork riding skills
	RGRPSH308A	Provide first aid and emergency care for horses
	RGRPSH309A	Implement feeding programs for racehorses under direction
	RGRPSH420A	Participate in implementing racehorse exercise programs
RGR30408 Certificate III in Racing Services (Cadet Steward)	RGRSWA301A	Collect non-blood samples from greyhounds or horses
	RGRSTD408A	Analyse race performance
RGR40108 Certificate IV in Racing (Racehorse Trainer)	RGRPSH302A	Supervise handling of horses
	RGRPSH401A	Relate anatomical and physiological features to the care and treatment of horses
	RGRPSH408A	Manage horse health and welfare
	RGRPSH409A	Determine nutritional requirements for racing horses
	RGRPSH417A	Participate in protests, inquiries and appeals
	RGRPSH420A	Participate in implementing racehorse exercise programs
	RGRPSH421A	Operate horse racing training business
	RGRPSH422A	Promote and maintain business arrangements with racehorse owners
	RGRPSH423A	Train horses for jumping racing
	RGRPSH501A	Plan and adapt training and conditioning programs for racehorses
	RGRPSH502A	Plan and implement education of horses for racing
	RGRPSH503A	Trial and race horses
	RGRPSH504A	Develop systems and records for horse racing business training operations
	RGRPSH505A	Select horses for racing
	AHCHBR307A	Assess suitability of horses for stock work
RGR40208 Certificate IV in Racing (Jockey)	RGRPSH201A	Handle horses
	RGRPSH202A	Assist with transportation of horses
	RGRPSH205A	Perform basic riding tasks
	RGRPSH206A	Develop riding skills for flatwork
	RGRPSH207A	Perform stable duties
	RGRPSH208A	Attend horses at trackwork
	RGRPSH209A	Attend horses at race meetings and trials
	RGRPSH304A	Identify factors that affect racehorse performance
	RGRPSH306A	Develop basic trackwork riding skills
	RGRPSH310A	Prepare for self-management in racing

Qualification and code	Unit code	Unit title
	RGRPSH404A	Ride horses at trackwork
	RGRPSH405A	Ride horses in jump outs
	RGRPSH406A	Develop riding skills for jumping racing
	RGRPSH407A	Educate thoroughbred horses for racing
	RGRPSH413A	Prepare for race riding
	RGRPSH415A	Ride horses in races
	RGRPSH416A	Perform trial and race jumping riding skills
	RGRPSH417A	Participate in protests, inquiries and appeals
	RGRPSH418A	Set goals to improve racing performance
	RGRPSH419A	Manage principles of sports science for jockeys
RGR40308 Certificate IV in Racing (Harness Race Driver)	RGRPSH201A	Handle horses
	RGRPSH202A	Assist with transportation of horses
	RGRPSH203A	Perform basic driving tasks
	RGRPSH204A	Prepare to drive jog work
	RGRPSH207A	Perform stable duties
	RGRPSH208A	Attend horses at trackwork
	RGRPSH209A	Attend horses at race meetings and trials
	RGRPSH304A	Identify factors that affect racehorse performance
	RGRPSH305A	Develop driving skills for trackwork
	RGRPSH310A	Prepare for self-management in racing
	RGRPSH402A	Drive horses in pacework and fast work
	RGRPSH403A	Educate harness horses for racing
	RGRPSH410A	Prepare for race driving
	RGRPSH411A	Prepare to drive horses in trials
	RGRPSH412A	Prepare to drive horses in races
	RGRPSH418A	Set goals to improve racing performance
	RGRPSH420A	Participate in implementing racehorse exercise programs
RGR40608 Certificate IV in Racing Services (Steward)	RGRSTD406A	Assess greyhound or horse handling skills
	RGRROP408A	Perform duties of betting supervisor or steward at greyhound or horse race meetings
	RGRSWA301A	Collect non-blood samples from greyhounds or horses
	RGRSTD407A	Assess driving or riding skills of license or registration applicants
	RGRSTD408A	Analyse race performance
RGR40708 Certificate IV in Racing Services (Track Maintenance)	RGRSTD406A	Assess greyhound or horse handling skills
RGR50108 Diploma of Racing (Racehorse Trainer)	RGRPSH401A	Relate anatomical and physiological features to the care and treatment of horses
	RGRPSH409A	Determine nutritional requirements for racing horses
	RGRPSH420A	Participate in implementing racehorse exercise programs
	RGRPSH422A	Promote and maintain business arrangements with racehorse owners
	RGRPSH423A	Train horses for jumping racing
	RGRPSH501A	Plan and adapt training and conditioning programs for racehorses
	RGRPSH502A	Plan and implement education of horses for racing
	RGRPSH504A	Develop systems and records for horse racing business training operations
RGR50308 Diploma of Racing Services (Steward)	RGRPSH505A	Select horses for racing
	RGRSTD406A	Assess greyhound or horse handling skills
	RGRSTD407A	Assess driving or riding skills of license or registration applicants
	RGRSTD408A	Analyse race performance

Qualification and code	Unit code	Unit title
	RGRSTD501A	Manage steward services
RGR50408 Diploma of Racing Services (Track Management)	RGRSTD406A	Assess greyhound or horse handling skills
REGRSS00015 Racing Judge Skill Set	RGRROP411A	Perform duties of greyhound or horse race judge
	RGRCMN001A	Comply with the rules of racing and related products
RGR08 Racing Training Package Standalone units	RGRPSH311A	Participate in racing as an owner
	RGRROP302A	Brand standard bred horses
	RGRROP305A	Perform duties of clerk of scales for horses at thoroughbred race meetings
	RGRROP410A	Perform duties of racehorse handicapper
	RGRROP314A	Perform duties of photo finish operator at greyhound or horse race meetings
ACM30510 Certificate III in Farriery	ACMFAR301A	Handle horses safely in the provision of farriery services
	ACMFAR302A	Work effectively as a farrier in the equine industries
	ACMFAR303A	Perform routine day-to-day farriery activities
	ACMFAR304A	Respond to emergencies and apply essential first aid in the equine industries
	ACMFAR306A	Maintain, repair and manufacture hand tools used in farriery
	ACMFAR307A	Make standard shoes for a range of horses
	ACMFAR308A	Determine foot care and shoeing plans for horses
	ACMFAR309A	Fit shoes for normal healthy horses
	ACMFAR310A	Fit shoes to alleviate moderate faults and defects in horses
	ACMFAR311A	Fit shoes to alleviate severe faults and defects in horses
	ACMFAR312A	Accommodate special needs of particular horses through farriery techniques
ACM40412 Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing	ACMVET414A	Nurse foals
	ACMVET415A	Provide intensive foal care and nursing
	AHCHBR202A	Handle young horses
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	AHCHBR305A	Handle and care for stallions
	AHCLSK330A	Implement procedures for foaling down mares
	ACMEQU405A	Maintain and monitor horse health and welfare
ACM40512 Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry	ACMEQD401A	Work within an equine dental service provision framework
	ACMEQD402A	Determine equine oral function efficiency
	ACMEQD403A	Identify potential health impacts of equine oral conditions
	ACMEQD404A	Conduct equine oral inspection and assessment and plan equine dental treatment
	ACMEQD405A	Perform routine dental correction and oral care using manual instruments
	ACMEQU401A	Relate equine anatomical and physiological features to equine health care requirements
	ACMEQU402A	Determine nutritional needs in provision of horse health care
	ACMEQU403A	Relate musculoskeletal structure to horse movement
	ACMEQU404A	Evaluate fit of saddlery and equipment
	ACMINF301A	Comply with infection control policies and procedures in animal work
	RGRPSH201A	Handle horses
	RGRPSH304A	Identify factors that affect racehorse performance
	RGRPSH308A	Provide first aid and emergency care for horses
MTM11 Australian Meat Industry	AHCLSK212A	Ride horses to carry out stock work
SIS20213	AHCHBR201A	Monitor horse health and welfare

Qualification and code	Unit code	Unit title
Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
SIS30413 Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
	SISOEQO303A	Conduct horse riding sessions in an arena
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	SISOEQO305A	Ride horses in tracked areas
	SISOEQO306A	Guide day horse trail rides in tracked areas
	SISOEQO317	Supervise horse handling
SIS30613 Certificate III in Sport Career Oriented Participation	RGRPSH401A	Relate anatomical and physiological features to the care and treatment of horses
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
SIS30713 Certificate III in Sport Coaching	AHCHBR201A	Monitor horse health and welfare
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	RGRPSH401A	Relate anatomical and physiological features to the care and treatment of horses
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	SISSEQS301A	Demonstrate basic dressage, show jumping and cross-country riding
	SISSEQS302A	Demonstrate basic dressage and show horse skills
	SISSEQS303A	Teach the fundamental skills of riding
SIS40313 Certificate IV in Outdoor Recreation	AHCHBR302A	Carry out basic hoof care procedures
	AHCHBR304A	Educate, ride and care for horses and equipment
	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	SISOEQO305A	Ride horses in tracked areas
	SISOEQO407A	Select horses for a program
	SISOEQO408A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
	SISOEQO409A	Train and condition horses
	SISOEQO410A	Guide overnight horse trail rides in tracked areas
	SISOEQO411A	Ride horses in remote areas
	SISOEQO412A	Manage horse illness and injuries in remote areas
	SISOEQO413A	Guide trail rides in remote areas
	SISOEQO414A	Instruct horse riding and handling skills
	SISOEQO418	Apply anatomy and physiology to equine performance
SIS40512 Certificate IV in Sport Coaching	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	SISOEQO409A	Train and condition horses
	SISSEQS301A	Demonstrate basic dressage, show jumping and cross-country riding
	SISSEQS302A	Demonstrate basic dressage and show horse skills
	SISSEQS404A	Teach the intermediate skills of riding on the flat
	SISSEQS405A	Teach the intermediate skills of riding over fences
SIS40612 Certificate IV in Sport Development	AHCHBR201A	Monitor horse health and welfare
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	SISOEQO303A	Conduct horse riding sessions in an arena
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	SISSEQS301A	Demonstrate basic dressage, show jumping and cross-country riding
	SISSEQS303A	Teach the fundamental skills of riding
SIS50310 Diploma of Outdoor Recreation	SISOEQO409A	Train and condition horses
	SISOEQO515A	Manage stable maintenance
	SISOEQO516A	Manage the education of horses
SIS50512	SISOEQO409A	Train and condition horses

Qualification and code	Unit code	Unit title
Diploma of Sport Coaching	SISOEQO516A	Manage the education of horses
	SISSEQS301A	Demonstrate basic dressage, show jumping and cross-country riding
	SISSEQS405A	Teach the intermediate skills of riding over fences
SIS50612 Diploma of Sport Development	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	SISOEQO408A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
	SISOEQO515A	Manage stable maintenance
SISSS00059 Horse Program Manager Skill Set	AHCHBR201A	Monitor horse health and welfare
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
	SISOEQO303A	Conduct horse riding sessions in an arena
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	SISOEQO407A	Select horses for a program
	SISOEQO408A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
	SISOEQO409A	Train and condition horses
SISSS00060 Horse Riding Assistant Instructor Skill Set	AHCHBR201A	Monitor horse health and welfare
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
	AHCHBR201A	Monitor horse health and welfare
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	SISOEQO303A	Conduct horse riding sessions in an arena
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	SISOEQO317	Supervise horse handling
	SISSEQS303A	Teach the fundamental skill of riding
	SISOEQO414A	Instruct horse riding and handling skills
	SISOEQO418	Apply anatomy and physiology to equine performance

Equine related accredited courses and units of competency/modules

Course and code	Unit and module code	Unit and module title
22139VIC Diploma of Horse Breeding (Stud Management) Course owner: Training Products Unit, Department of Education and Training	AHCBAC501A	Manage agricultural crop production
	AHCHBR202A	Handle young horses
	AHCHBR305A	Handle and care for stallions
	AHCCHM501A	Develop and manage a chemical use strategy
	AHCLSK503A	Develop and implement a breeding strategy
	AHCAGB505A	Develop a whole farm plan
	AHCHBR401A	Carry out stud stable management duties
	AHCHBR303A	Carry out mare mating or artificial insemination procedures
	AHCCHM201A	Apply chemicals under supervision
	AHCCHM303A	Prepare and apply chemicals
	AHCAIS401A	Supervise artificial breeding and/or embryo transfer programs
	AHCHBR402A	Supervise raising young horses
	VBP161	Develop and implement a marketing plan for stud stock
	VBP146	Develop and monitor business operations
	VU20499	Implement and monitor horse nutrition program
	VU20498	Implement procedures for foaling down mares
	VU20497	Manage horse health and welfare
	VU20501	Manage horse nutrition
	VU20500	Manage OHS procedures and environmental work practices
	VU20502	Manage reproductive outcomes of stallions and mares
	VU20496	Work with horses
22246VIC Certificate II in Equine Studies Course owner: Training Products Unit, Department of Education and Training	VU21402	Implement horse health and welfare practices
	VU21403	Implement and monitor a horse feeding program
	VU21404	Relate equine form and function
	VU21405	Equine anatomy
	VU21406	Equine physiology
	VU21410	Assist in the conduct of an event in the equine industry
	VU21411	Horse breeding principles and practices
	VU21412	Care for pregnant mares and foals
	BSBITU202A	Create and use spreadsheets
	RGRPSH203A	Perform basic driving tasks
	RGRPSH205A	Perform basic riding tasks
	SIRXADM001A	Apply retail office procedures
	SIRXSLS002A	Advise on products and services
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	AHCINF201A	Carry out basic electric fencing operations
	AHCINF202A	Install, maintain and repair fencing
	AHCINF203A	Maintain properties and structures
	AHCMOM203A	Operate basic machinery and equipment
	AHCWRK204A	Work effectively in the industry
	HLTFA211A	Provide basic emergency life support

Course and code	Unit and module code	Unit and module title
	HLTFA311A	Apply first aid
	SIRXCCS201	Apply point-of-sale handling procedures
	SIRXCCS202	Interact with customers
	SIRXSLS201	Sell products and services
	VU21413	Develop basic coaching skills
	VU21407	Demonstrate basic horse riding or driving skills
	VU21408	Demonstrate novice horse riding or driving skills
	VU21409	Assist in the preparation of a horse for an event
	VU21401	Work safely in an equine organisation
69797 Certificate III in Horsemanship (Riding, Handling and Behaviour) Course owner: Intercept Group Pty Ltd	TIGEAP301A	Introduction to equine anatomy and physiology
	TIGEPH301A	Introduction to the evolution and psychology of equine behaviour
	TIGOHS301A	Apply health and safety procedures in equine recreational activities
	TIGAWL301A	Introduction to animal welfare and the recreational horse industry
	SROEQO004A	Apply first aid for horses
	TIGHHC302A	Undertake preventative equine health care
	SROEQO002A	Demonstrate basic horse-riding skills
	TIGURG308A	Undertaking riding at the appropriate skill level
	TIGEGT301A	Equine groundwork and transportation
	SROEQO008A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
	TIGGEM301A	Carry out the grooming of horses and maintain grooming equipment
	TIGPEA301A	Provide equine accommodation
91183NSW Certificate II in Horse Industry Operations (Non-current Expired 31/12/2014) Course owner: NSW TAFE Commission	AHCHBR203A	Provide daily care for horses
	NSWTEQU202A	Prepare to work in the performance horse industry
	NSWTEQU205A	Lunge performance horses for exercise
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	AHCHBR202A	Handle young horses
	AHCHBR204A	Assist with mating procedures and parturition of horses
	RGRH205A	Perform basic riding or driving tasks
10229NAT Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse) Course owner: NSW TAFE Commission	NSWTEQU206A	Ride performance horses for exercise in an arena
	NSWTEQU304B	Maintain the health and welfare of performance horses
	NSWTEQU303B	Care for performance horses
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	HLTAID003	Provide first aid
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	NSWTEQU206B	Ride performance horses for exercise in an arena
	NSWTEQU307B	Ride and lead performance horses
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
	SISOEQO305A	Ride horses in tracked areas
	NSWTEQU305B	Participate in horse events/activities

Course and code	Unit and module code	Unit and module title
	NSWTEQU205B	Lunge performance horses for exercise
	AHCHBR303A	Carry out mare mating or artificial insemination procedures
	AHCHBR307A	Assess suitability of horses for stock work
	AHCHBR305A	Handle and care for stallions
	AHCHBR202A	Handle young horses
	RGRPSH401A	Relate anatomical and physiological features to the care and treatment of horses
	AHCHBR309A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	AHCHBR302A	Carry out basic hoof care procedures
	NSWTEQU410A	Interpret equine behaviour
	AHCINF301A	Implement property improvement, construction and repair
10229NSW Certificate III in Horse Industry Practice (Performance Horse) (Non-current Expired 01/11/2013) Course owner: NSW TAFE Commission	NSWTEQU304B	Maintain the health and welfare of performance horses
	NSWTEQU303B	Care for performance horses
	SISOEQO201A	Handle horses
	HLTAID003	Provide first aid
	SISOEQO304A	Apply first aid for horses
	NSWTEQU206B	Ride performance horses for exercise in an arena
	NSWTEQU307B	Ride and lead performance horses
	SISOEQO202A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills
	SISOEQO305A	Ride horses in tracked areas
	NSWTEQU305B	Participate in horse events/activities
	NSWTEQU205B	Lunge performance horses for exercise
	AHCHBR303A	Carry out mare mating or artificial insemination procedures
	AHCHBR307A	Assess suitability of horses for stock work
	AHCHBR305A	Handle and care for stallions
	AHCHBR202A	Handle young horses
	RGRPSH401A	Relate anatomical and physiological features to the care and treatment of horses
	AHCHBR309A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
	AHCHBR306A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
	AHCHBR302A	Carry out basic hoof care procedures
	NSWTEQU410A	Interpret equine behaviour
	AHCINF301A	Implement property improvement, construction and repair
10230NAT Diploma of Horse Industry Management (Performance Horse) Course owner: NSW TAFE Commission	NSWTEQU411A	Implement and monitor equine health and welfare strategies
	NSWTEQU410A	Interpret equine behaviour
	NSWTEQU403B	Evaluate equine training methodologies
	SISOEQO409A	Train and condition horses
	NSWTEQU414A	Manage the re-education of horses
	NSWTEQU503B	Evaluation horse conformation
	NSWTEQU504B	Manage equine nutrition
	NSWTEQU505B	Manage fitness for horses

Course and code	Unit and module code	Unit and module title
	NSWTEQU506B	Manage performance horse breeding operations
	NSWTEQU415A	Analyse equine pedigrees
	AHCHBR401A	Carry out stud stable management duties
	AHCHBR402A	Supervise raising young horses
	AHCLSK330A	Implement procedures for foaling down mares
	NSWTEQU402B	Manage horses to meet performance horse sport requirements
	NSWTEQU404B	Manage international opportunities for performance horses
	NSWTEQU412A	Manage the development and presentation of young horses
	SISOEQO515A	Manage stable maintenance
	NSWTEQU413A	Implement an equine facility maintenance improvement and management program
	NSWTEQU501B	Manage legal aspects of horse enterprises
Modules	NSWTEQ7205A	Lunge performance horses for exercise
	NSWTEQU206A	Ride performance horses for exercise in an arena
	NSWTEQU305B	Participate in horse events/activities
	NSWTEQU410A	Interpret equine behaviour
	NSWTEQU303A	Care for performance horse