



Sport Horse Welfare and Social Licence to Operate

Informing a Social Licence to Operate Communication Framework:

Attitudes to Sport Horse Welfare

by

Julie Fiedler

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Abstract

Social media platforms potentially showcase horse sports to naïve audiences. Negative discourses may be triggered when the public perceive possible threats to horse welfare, resulting in questions about horse sport organisations' capacity to manage animal welfare transparently. The public may raise questions about an organisation's social licence to operate (SLO), the informal, unwritten level of acceptance or approval by stakeholders of organisations and their operations. SLO, a concept well known in business and mining sectors but not yet in the horse world, sits 'within' the community, and sport cannot 'un-own' disapproving public sentiment. Ultimately this informal, unwritten licence may be withdrawn, and the organisation may fail.

Advocates for the horse's welfare or 'voices for the horse' arise from inside and outside the organisation, from fans, people who watch sport but are not fans, and horse enthusiasts and other stakeholders, including researchers; however, the primary advocate for the non-human athlete, the horse, is the human athlete. However, contemporary society is impacted by disruptive technologies, where the hierarchal, institutional-style organisations are being challenged by Internet-enabled users' preferences for flatter, devolved ways of doing business. In the context of horse sport, this is realised particularly in sport-to-public communication undertaken by every participant with a smartphone. As the primary interface with the public about horse welfare, sport participant messaging may or may not align with the organisation's corporate communication on the same topic.

The societal discourse about animal welfare is also evolving, transitioning from the 'Five Freedoms' towards the 'Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model' (5D). The 5D

provisions provide a list of welfare-centric words, or a welfare-centric vocabulary, which help describe positive or negative experiences for an animal, which will develop further over time, as animal welfare continues to be a progressive field of research.

To inform an organisational communication framework addressing SLO, this mixed-method study investigated participants' attitudes towards welfare, and whether these attitudes align with the contemporary Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model.

The method included a Likert-like survey, distributed by a national Australian horse sports organisation, which questioned respondents about their attitudes to horse welfare and asked the open question 'Horse welfare is...?' From a potential field of 1600 organisation members, 107 survey returns were received, (response rate of 7%), identifying variously as professionals (gaining income from horses (22.22%, $n=18$), or as amateurs (gaining no income from horses) (77.78%, $n=63$), with a mean age of 52 (range, 21 to 72). ANOVA analysis revealed that females ($p < 0.05$) were more likely than males to listen to and act on welfare messages from an organisation. Amateurs ($p < 0.05$) were more likely than professionals to agree that scientific researchers provide the lead when building new knowledge about welfare, while professionals ($p < 0.05$) were more likely than amateurs to agree that they contributed to building new knowledge about welfare. There was little evidence of knowledge of the 5D in the open question responses, analysed through direct word matching.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, in order to further explore ideas about sport, welfare and SLO.

Subsequent to the primary study, an opportunity arose to collect data pre- and post- a horse industry professional development event hosted by the non-profit organisation Horse SA. Themed on sport horse welfare and SLO, participants completed an online survey which included the open question ‘Horse welfare is...?’

Analysis revealed no data of statistical significance; however, we discussed the observation relating to results which indicated that there was less confidence amongst participants post-event when talking to others about welfare. Our result aligns with findings from another similar small study and further research is warranted.

The results from this study will inform a communication framework for organisations addressing SLO. Further studies which examine options for providing sport participants with a more pertinent welfare-centric vocabulary are warranted. In addition, we recommend further research which investigates integration of horse welfare strategies with communication frameworks, where the process involves engaging sport participants in a meaningful way.

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To my mentors who have shared their wisdom, and to the horses themselves, who enable personal completeness.

Candidate's Statement

By submitting this thesis for formal examination at CQUniversity Australia, I declare that it meets all requirements as outlined in the RHD Examination Policy and Procedure and the RHD Thesis Policy and Procedure.

Acknowledgement of professional services

Professional editor Susan Bond provided copyediting and proof-reading services, according to the guidelines laid out in the University-endorsed national guidelines, 'The editing of research thesis by professional editors.'

Julie Fiedler

9 July, 2009

Candidate: Julie Fiedler

Date

Declaration of authorship and originality

I, the undersigned author declare that all of the research and discussion presented in this thesis is original work performed by the author. No content of this thesis has been submitted or considered in whole or part, at any tertiary institute or university for a degree or any other category of award. I also declare that any material presented in this thesis performed by another person or institute has been referenced and listed in the reference section.

Julie Fiedler

9 July, 2019

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Date

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1 Sport, horses and the public's opinion toward welfare

1.1.1 Introduction

Globalisation has accelerated changes in human behaviour, evidenced by the participation of citizens in the sharing economy, in which businesses once viewed as 'disruptive' have transformed into thriving enterprises, for example, Airbnb™ and Uber™ (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 70; Hamari et al., 2016, p. 2048). Emerging from an accelerating globalisation is a contemporary SLO, an intangible phenomenon shaped by the new sharing economy and resulting in reinvented public values of legitimacy, credibility and trust (Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017, p. 1079; Rooney et al., 2014, p. 215). SLO challenges traditional institutions to reflect on their self-governance, and to reimagine what previously legitimate business practices might mean in the new operating environment of devolved trust, in which, every day, business decisions are taken 'with' the community (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, pp. 70–71; Rooney et al., 2014, p. 215).

A heightened exposure to SLO and the associated unstable public discourse occurs within organisations in which the business model includes the partnering of a human athlete with a non-human athlete (in this case the horse) on a human-constructed field of play (McGreevy, 2017; Parsons & Moffat, 2014, p. 342). These organisations include equestrian sports federations and horse racing clubs. Here, the public discourse explores what it means to trust the sport organisation with safeguarding the welfare of the 'other', the sentient horse (Birke & Thompson, 2018, p. 120; Duncan et al., 2018, p. 318; Ledger & Mellor, 2018; Merritt, 2017, p. 198). Recognising welfare responsibilities, sports

organisations are reconciling what it means to be transparent in a digital age while balancing business sustainability with the need to make welfare decisions in the company of the community, who are also voices for the horse (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 70; Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1).

This study has two overarching aims: firstly, to build on existing knowledge relating to SLO and secondly, to discuss how the study results can inform an organisational communication framework designed to enhance an organisation's participation in a SLO discourse. The study is in the context of sports where humans partner with horses, with a focus on welfare as a trigger point for outrage when the public perceives that the horse is at risk. Further, it seeks to gain insights into how one of the parties in the discourse, the horse sport participants, consider welfare. In this study, Research Question 1 (RQ1) asks: 'What are the attitudes of horse sport organisation participants towards horse welfare?' Further, to ascertain if the attitudes align with mainstream animal welfare models, Research Question 2 (RQ2) asks: 'How do attitudes align with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model, if at all?'

1.1.2 Background

Globalisation through greater access to digital technologies has captured the individual sports follower, who can spectate, comment upon and share online and offline sporting field experiences as what author Singleton (2017) terms a 'smart fan' (pp. 80–81). While there has always been public opinion about humans and animals on the sporting arena since the festivals held in Rome's Colosseum, the Internet has globalised even the smallest local sporting event through smartphone technologies, blurring the traditional

boundaries of geography and time zones (Cartwright, 2018; Stavros et al., 2014, p. 466). Technology allows fans to become virtually involved, passionately sharing digital information and resources in all aspects of sport and its administration (Cartwright, 2018; Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 70; Singleton, 2017, pp. 1–2).

However, this 24/7, seven-days-a-week access increases the exposure of horse sport to a potentially naïve global audience (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1). While this provides a sport with a platform to promote the competition and attract commercial investment, it also exposes ways in which the human interacts with the horse. In some cases, this may elicit a negative public response if it is perceived that the welfare of the horse is at risk.



Figure 1: 'Smart fans' virtual involvement in sport. [Photo credit: PYT Photography.]



Figure 2: 'Smart fans' socially positioning horses as sport celebrities. Winx wins 4th Cox Plate (2018), Melbourne, Australia. [Photo credit: Alex Coppel. The Advertiser.]

Sports culture and fandom is a mirror for society. From the social positioning of horses as corporate 'sporting celebrities' to the selfie posted from a local horse club, the accelerating technology is a challenge for the 'status-quo' of sports organisations. This new juxtaposition, a blending of traditional horse cultures with the new technology-enabled central positioning of the horse as a sport-athlete, brings a level of public accountability for sport previously only experienced by the business sector (Merritt, 2017a, p. 198).

The fandom includes spectator-fans who collect, share and comment using digital sport resources but are not sport fanatics, and fans of the sport horse who become outraged if it is perceived that their welfare is at risk (Breitbarth et al., 2015, pp. 261–262). Fans may be naïve about the intricacies of the sport but, enhanced by technology, this 'smart' global

audience is responsive to horse welfare issues and may question trust in the organisation which, when aggregated, impacts on long-term business sustainability (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1; Hampton & Teh-White, p. 1; KPMG & Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), 2018, p. 25; Singleton, 2017, p. 5).

This emergent dynamic, where digital exposure to organisational decisions toward welfare attracts a global readership, has come about through the rapid societal adoption of the sharing economy (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 12; Hamari et al., 2016, p. 2047). Once disruptive business models now thrive (for example, Airbnb TM and UberTM) as trust is devolved away from traditional institutionalised structures to peer-reviewed, crowdsourced opinions that drive consumer decision-making (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 70; KPMG & AICD, 2018, p. 12). Technology accelerates not only access to information but societal expectations as a result of gained knowledge. This can result in faster decision-making about factors that affect the welfare of the horse.

This study hypothesises that sport participants, as guardians for the non-human athlete (the horse), are particularly exposed to, and impacted by, public opinion and the sharing economy transacting in values such as trust. As public advocates for the horse they target one half of a close partnership unique in the human-animal kingdom; at the same time, the human athlete is also a ‘voice’ for the horse. The voices inside and outside of sport, and at different levels within society, contribute to the complexity of this multi-layered and contested discourse.

1.1.3 Social licence to operate

A social licence is a licence that must be earned every day.

Richard Boele, National Leader, Human Rights and Social Impact Services,
KPMG Australia.

Social licence to operate is the public or ‘social’ acceptance, which awards a ‘licence’ to the organisation to undertake its activity – or to ‘operate’ (Morrison, 2014, pp. 18–25).

In recent times the concept of SLO has been applied to the mining and banking industries (Black, 2013, p. 17; Stoddard, 2019;). However, Boutilier (2014, pp. 263–268) argues that the first written evidence of ‘social licence’ was in 1818 in J. W. Cunningham’s book *A World Without Souls*, where ‘licentiousness’ was used by the Vicar of Harrow on the Hill to describe, in Boutilier’s words, ‘excessive liberties taken with social norms and a lack of respect for the Sabbath’ (Cunningham, 1818). Today, this demonstrated ‘push-back’ against the institution of the Church through a personal statement of a preferred social position, although evolved, is familiar in the distrust now witnessed by other contemporary institutionalised systems, for example, politics.

SLO is today acknowledged as the public’s approval (or consent) of the activities of an institution, including businesses, government, business, research and non-profit sporting organisations (Boutilier, 2014, p. 263; Gallois et al., 2017; Morrison, 2014, pp. 14–16; Paine, 2016; Patten, 2018; Teh-White, 2016; Whyte, 2018). While a community can be seen to award consent, this community can also seek to withdraw; however, there is no

one point at which the decision to withdraw can be seen to occur (Black, 2013, pp. 18–19; McHugh, 2016, p. 22; Morrison, 2014, p. 28).

There are different arguments as to what constitutes the pre-requisites for achieving or maintaining a SLO including legitimacy, consent and trust (Morrison, 2014, pp. 89–90), or legitimacy, credibility and trust (Black, 2013, p. 19; Boutilier, 2014, p. 264; Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017, p. 1084). Authors Kendal and Ford (2017) argue that SLO is unclear, is more than a singular, binary arrangement, and align it with terms such as social acceptance (Kendal & Ford, 2018, pp. 493–495). In a counter-response to Kendal and Ford (2017), authors Garnett, Zander and Robinson (2017) argue that social licence is binary, and is preceded by many conversations which lead to social acceptance, followed by social licence, potentially leading to a legal licence arrangement (Garnett et al., 2018, p. 734). Both authors concur that the term is adaptable and evolving (Garnett et al., 2018, pp. 734–735; Kendal & Ford, 2018, pp. 494–495). This study will discuss legitimacy, credibility and trust as a pathway for the awarding or removal of public consent embodied in the SLO.

An organisation established and trading under relevant government laws has a level of pre-existing legitimacy. However, in the digital age ‘social legitimacy’ must also be considered. Social legitimacy is created when members of the public interrogate crowdsourced information about an organisation and assume the role of citizen-agents in order to confirm or deny the perceived level of legitimacy held, while using social media to simultaneously influence wider public opinions on factors such as fairness and transparency (Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017, p. 1078; Lillqvist, Moisander, & Fuat Firat, 2017, p. 197; Morrison, 2014, p. 88).

Credibility relates to the public's confidence level that an organisation will carry out what it says it will do, and includes a social element similar to legitimacy. Online users can form opinions about the organisation's competency, before influencing other people's opinions by expressing contempt or sarcasm, claiming an idea or resource as their own, or by dynamically altering their relationship with the contentious issue, by becoming closer to, or more distant from, their own comments posted online at an earlier date (Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017, p. 1079; Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014, p. 15). An organisation's credibility is reinforced when the public can see that the organisation is doing what it said it would do.

Trust is emerging to be the most important element of a contemporary SLO, not as a by-product of organisational practices, but as a result of relationships being built and re-built each day (Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017, p. 1084; KPMG & AICD, 2018, pp. 11–14). The 'trust' based shared economy is one where online users rate, review and comment peer to peer, and businesses can choose to demonstrate listening skills by responding (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015; Coombs, 2015, p. 84; Macnamara, 2016a, p. 43). These multi-authored real-time public conversations facilitate the shift of 'trust' away from institutions to an outsourced citizen-curated model which has the added benefit of building transparency.

This 'devolved' form of trust translates into the public expectation that organisations will safeguard the welfare of animals involved in sport, not as an 'instrument' or 'sporting tool', but as the non-human athlete brought onto the human field of play. Increasing societal recognition of animal agency and sentience, converging with accelerating,

disruptive technologies is requiring sports with animals to reflect on their positioning in society.

Discussion so far has highlighted that the ‘social’ part of the SLO is the new dimension for organisations to grapple with as to what it means for business operations. A potential barrier for the adoption of the SLO concept is the confusing terminology for laypersons, as the term ‘licence’ has linkages with the field of economics, implying a binary agreement (Black, 2013, pp. 17–18). Instead, an SLO operates along a continuum, and at multiple levels, with many valid smaller SLOs at given points (Dare et al., 2014, p. 188; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017b, p. 138; Parsons & Moffat, 2014, p. 340).

SLO continues to evolve, rapidly shifting away from early concepts associating it with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social contract theory (SCT). CSR is described as a voluntary action by the organisation, promoting contribution to the ‘corporate pillars’ of culture, environment, economic and social benefit (European Commission, 2019; Ubrežiová et al., 2015), while SCT appears to have many similarities to SLO, critics of the process argue it is historically one-sided, questioning whether it masks minority interests on a pathway to maintaining status-quo (Morrison, 2014, p. 24). In contrast to CSR and SCT which sit with the body corporate, SLO sits within the community (Morrison, 2014, p. 27), and therefore an organisation cannot ‘un-own’ the convergent social discourse and walk away.

Further, SLO has a focus on multiple single issues, creating the necessity for organisations to be flexible and adaptable in all aspects of engagement, communication and decision-making in light of the unstable public discourse (Boutilier & Thomson,

2011, p. 9; Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, pp. 70–76; Morrison, 2014, pp. 26–36; Thomson & Boutilier, 2018).

In summarising this section, the discussion has considered how organisations are recognising that SLO is no longer an ad-hoc afterthought, but a practice embedded within the everyday conduct of business (Hampton & Teh-White, p. 1; KPMG & AICD, 2018, pp. 11–12). Organisations need to translate what SLO means for the corporate body, and for the staff, volunteers and participants, reflective of their own culture, and within the context of current laws, the political situation and societal norms where there is a greater awareness of animal agency.

1.2 Horses, historical technologies and the transfer to sport

Wild horse populations were herded, eaten and domesticated at different times throughout history, often aligned with the development of human societies (Levine, 2005, p. 5; Outram et al., 2018, p. 1). In many cultures, the horse became technology of choice for war, agriculture, communication and transport (Lawrence, 1988, p. 223). Today, the historical commodification of horses has transferred onto the corporate sporting field where the human partners with the non-human athlete (the horse), enabling the human to achieve more (Adelman & Thompson, 2017; Merritt, 2018, p. 3). However, in many developing countries the horse and related equidae remain essential to the incomes of subsistence farmers and families (World Horse Welfare, 2018).

1.2.1 War, and sports with a military origin

A chariot drawn by horses was military technology circa 2000 BC, with chariot racing included in the Olympic Games of 680 BC. Organised modern harness racing commenced from the mid-1700s in England, Europe and North America parallel with the selective breeding of horses for speed at the diagonal-leg gait of trot and the lateral-leg gait of pace, including the modern Standardbred (“Harness racing”, 2017, “Chariot”, 2018; Roebuck, 2018a).

Modern armies furnished by wealthy countries have long since exchanged serving military horses for machines, leaving popular culture media, the arts and historical societies to reconstruct war settings with accounts of horses in battle and as a soldier’s comrade (Australian War Memorial, 2018; Spielberg, 2012; Australian Light Horse Association, 2018; Wincer & Jones, 1987; British Army, 2018). Horses continue to feature in military ceremonial settings and as a symbol of diplomacy, for example in 2018 when the French President Emmanuel Macron gifted a horse from the French Republican Guard to China’s President Xi Jinping (Rose, 2018).

Performance tests designed for military officers and their mounts have transferred onto the modern sports field, including the equestrian sports of Dressage, the Three-Day Event and Show Jumping, first included in the 1912 modern Olympic Games (International Olympic Committee, 2018a, 2018b, 2018d). In 1921 the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI) was established to regulate international events and develop a global rulebook for all relevant equestrian sports, and to support Olympic Games participation for equestrian sport. Equestrian is the only sport involving a partnership between two

athletes, a human and a non-human athlete, to perform as one (Fédération Équestre Internationale [FEI], 2018a; International Olympic Committee, 2018c). In 2018, the FEI website listed membership of 133 national equestrian federations, registering over 272 000 horses, 102 000 competitors and 9 200 officials (FEI, 2018b).

1.2.2 Ranch work, farming and sport

In Westernised post-industrial countries, horses have been largely replaced by machines for large-scale agricultural work, although stock horses are still preferred for some specialised jobs, including separating stock contained in yards. In contrast, farmers and families located within many cultures rely on over 100 000 000 horses and other equidae for income (Australian Government, 2017; Brooke Action for Working Horses and Donkeys, 2018).

Ranch work skills have also transferred to the sporting field, through a range of competitive activities including events involving cattle, for example, western cutting and campdrafting (Australian Campdraft Association, 2018; United States Cutting Horse Association, 2018). In 2000 the FEI accepted the sport of reining into the ‘family’. However, in 2018, the recognition agreement ended (USA Reining, 2013; “USA’s biggest reining groups kicked out of FEI”, 2018), with reining no longer being able to compete at the World Equestrian Games or other FEI sanctioned events.

1.2.3 Transport, communication and sport

Historically horses were the preferred technology for transport and communication services, especially over longer distances. The famous United States Pony Express featured relay riders carrying a US mailbag between Sacramento and Salt Lake City, covering 3212 kilometres in 10 days, while the Australian Cobb & Co. horse-drawn mail and passenger carriage services adopted a similar principle of changing horses frequently to cover vast distances regularly (National Pony Express Association, 2018; Riley, 2011). Today, the FEI recognises the modern version of long-distance riding as the sports of endurance riding, while the sport of carriage driving has origins in war, agriculture and transport (Roebuck, 2018a; FEI, 2018f).

1.3 Horses and sports with their origins in entertainment

Throughout history, human leisure, sport and entertainment time has involved partnering with horses. These activities have not evolved out of the need to fight wars, produce food or trade, and although refined and modernised, they remain almost in original form. The following section discusses two entertainment pastimes still popular today, horse racing and equestrian vaulting.

Racing horses to determine which was the fastest has no identifiable origin, as unofficial match racing of two horses is likely to have occurred at any time on any continent where the horse was domesticated. Horse racing became an organised sport in the early 1600s within England, France and North America, parallel with the development of a horse

selectively bred for speed, the Thoroughbred (“Horse racing”, 2018; McManus, 2013, pp. 14–16).

Equestrian vaulting is best described as acrobatics or gymnastics on horseback and has its history in the entertainment and military contexts. Vaulting, where the horse is controlled by a central handler on a circle with a long rein (rope), was adopted by European armies during the 17th Century to improve the skill levels of riders while carrying swords and lances. In the late 1700s, those acrobatic skills learnt in the military went on to feature as entertainment in circuses. In 1983, equestrian vaulting was recognised as a sport by the FEI while some circuses have responded to the public concern about the welfare of the animals involved, evolving to reimagine horses partnering with humans in theatrical ‘circus art’ such as *Cavalía*™ (“Cavalía Odysseo”, 2018; “How Vaulting has developed from bull-leaping in ancient times to a global equestrian sport”, 2018; Lavers, 2015, p. 141). Acrobatics and gymnastics performed on a horse without a handler, often at a gallop on a straight line, is called trick riding (Canadian Trick Riding Association, 2018).

1.4 Society re-imagines animals

Societal changes are shaping human attitudes towards human-animal interactions. These changes include developments in contemporary understanding of salience, agency and anthropomorphism, and their role in focusing the public’s perception of risks to the welfare of the horse during these human-horse interactions.

1.4.1 Animal sentience

Central to recent progress in animal welfare science is the recognition that animals can experience positive and negative affective states, known as sentience (Duncan, 2006, p. 11). As the dissemination of research about animal sentience occurs, it intersects with a deepening community consciousness advocating for the inclusion of sentience into governance frameworks. In monitoring public sentiment, the World Animal Protection organisation has developed the Animal Welfare Index, which ranks countries on their progress toward animal welfare laws and policy including the recognition of sentience (“Animal Welfare Index Methodology”, 2014). In February 2019, the Australian Capital Territory has proposed that the jurisdiction becomes the first in the country to recognise animal sentience (Orr, 2019).

1.4.2 Animal agency

Along with sentience, there is a growing body of scientific recognition of ‘agency’, where positive animal welfare sees animals have the opportunity to make more decisions about how to live their own lives (Mellor, 2017, p. 4). Further, agency occurs when animals are participants in a human-animal interaction, making choices and taking action as ‘actors’ or ‘agents’, shaping our human experiences, attitudes and informing our culture (Birke & Thompson, 2018, p. 139; Carter & Charles, 2013, pp. 322–323; Ruse, 2017).

Societal-wide awareness of animal agency, however, is currently latent. There is opportunity for individuals to discover more about animal agency through a variety of means: from education in undertaking animal welfare assessments, participation in

animal-assisted therapy programs which acknowledge agency; or, in contrast, through investigating methodologies in which human attitudes and actions seek to de-traumatise an animal (Adelman & Thompson, 2017, pp. 271–272; Mellor, 2017, pp. 1–20).

Laypersons may ask: ‘What choices does this animal have each day?’ and ‘Am I recognising when and how this animal is responding to its environment and me through its actions?’

1.4.3 Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism, according to the Oxford Living Dictionary, is ‘[t]he attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to a god, animal, or object’ (“Anthropomorphism”, 2018).

This study proposes the hypothesis that, as animals have transitioned to new roles in society, such as sport or as companions, and with the penetration of social media, there is an increased application of human characteristics to animals in everyday language and changed expectations of how animals will share our lives. For example, the common use of the descriptor ‘fur-babies’ may recognise that a dog has a place within a family in the same way as a child.

Applying anthropomorphism to animals has a poor scientific reputation, as it can reduce human sensitivity to the needs of animals, creating a problematic situation leading to compromised welfare (McGreevy & McLean, 2010, p. 36). Further, in many fields of animal sciences, anthropomorphism is dismissed as unscientific, given that scientific

methodologies must be objective and ultimately benefit the animal (Birke & Thompson, 2018, p. 50).

More recently, argument for a more informed perspective has emerged that suggests anthropomorphism might improve or reduce an animal's welfare status when associated with human-animal interactions and agency (Thompson & Clarkson, 2019, p. 128). For example, an undesirable application of anthropomorphic language is that which labels a horse's behaviour as 'bad', when in fact the horse is displaying fearful behaviours (Birke & Thompson 2018, p.120 ; McGreevy & McLean, 2010, p. 121; McLean & McGreevy, 2010, p. 203). In contrast, 'good' anthropomorphic language use can facilitate human-animal bonding, for example, to assist in interpreting species-specific behaviours during training, and as a result reduce stress level to the animal (Birke & Thompson, 2018, p. 120; Mellor, 2016b, p. 13).

1.4.4 Society re-imagines the horse

Society's self-realisation about the human-horse relationship forecasts the reconceptualising of the sports horse as a non-human athlete in a co-species partnership on the human-constructed playing fields of equestrian sports and racing (Gillett, 2014, pp. 8–9; Merritt, 2017, p. 198a). The concepts are still developing as social scientists studying human-animal relationships and interspecies sport provide a deeper understanding of the role of horses as agents in creating sporting cultures. Such studies also argue for the giving of 'voice', in recognition of agency (Adelman & Thompson, 2017, pp. 269–270; Gillett, 2014, pp. 9–10; Marvin, 2014, p. 2; Ruse, 2017, pp. 2–18).

While society holds onto cultural norms contextualising the horse within military, agricultural, transport, entertainment and other settings, cultural recognition is also given to the horse as a non-human athlete in the sports training and playing fields. The case of Winx and jockey Hugh Bowman winning their fourth Cox Plate at Moonee Valley Racecourse on October 27, 2018 (Figure 2), provides an example of the ways in which technology enables ‘smart fans’ to socially position the horse as a sports celebrity—or as we might now consider, the ‘non-human sports star’ (Figure 2).

The emerging perspective of the non-human athlete provides a reference point for the public–organisation discourse centred on SLO, and one which, through greater access to technology, engages and empowers a previously passive audience to participate.

1.4.5 Voices for the horse

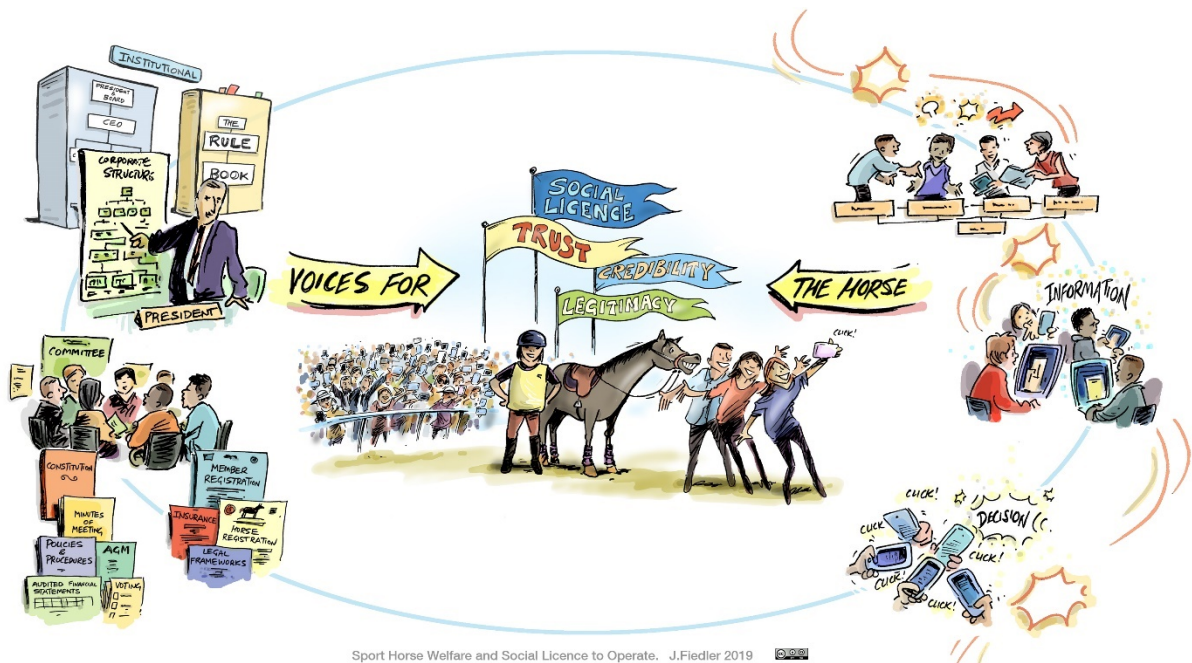


Figure 3: Voices for the horse

Disruptive technologies amplify multiple representations from those who claim to be the advocate or ‘voice’ for the horse. Fans, spectators, advocates, and those who work professionally to inform horse welfare, for example researchers and veterinarians, exchange information online alongside ad hoc advocacy groups and individuals from a potentially naïve public (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1). While all may assert that they are speaking in support for the welfare status of the horse, the discourse is often contentious, conflicting and with disproportional inconsistent transparency (Westberg et al, 2017, p. 102). This is a new, unstable dynamic, in which traditional and emerging welfare advocates move almost seamlessly between and through institutionalised organisational communication mediums and social media platforms.

The unstable nature of the horse welfare discourse is a challenging operating environment for sports organisations, and this environment is set to become increasingly disruptive as

more citizens move from passive news reading to active participation in news making (Muthukumaraswamy, 2010, p. 58). One-way messaging, where information or news is issued in a passive style from an organisation, for example a website posting, is in contrast to sport participants seeking an interactive communication approach, which will only grow in demand as participatory journalism models evolve.

In the sharing economy, businesses prosper on peer-reviewed, crowdsourced opinions to build trust and inform consumer decision-making (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 70; KPMG & AICD, 2018, p. 12). This approach to sharing information has many examples found within mainstream media channels, where content is crowdsourced before curation by a professional journalist or editor, with *The Conversation* providing a good example of this approach (McGreevy, 2017). Larger sports with their own communication centres provide similar services, such as Racing Victoria (Racing.com) and FEI TV (tv.fei.org). However, content contributors may perceive limitations with the experience. For example, sometimes sources are not acknowledged, and they may find little incentive to repeatedly engage if it is uncertain how their knowledge contribution will benefit themselves, the organisation, or the horse.

An emerging form of organisational communication practice incorporates reciprocal journalism, where journalists adopt actions and attitudes which facilitate working ‘with’ the public to provide media content. An example of reciprocal journalism is ABC Open (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 2018). Positive reciprocity involves the perception or actual actions of exchanging knowledge resources—for example, horse welfare knowledge—for the mutual benefit of both parties. This can build social capital through long-term relationships based on trust which can be measured and act as predictors for

audience behaviour (Coddington et al., 2018, pp. 1039–1040; Seth, 2015, pp. 1–2).

Descriptors vary for social capital, however in the context of this project, Pelling & High's (2005, p. 310) descriptor when quoting Putnam (1995, pp. 664–665) is selected:

“social capital...features of social life—networks, norms and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives”.

1.4.6 In the company of the community

Increasingly, sports organisations are recognising that the public seeks accountability for the welfare of the horse at multiple touchpoints, including organisational governance, the rules for the conduct of competitive events, and through organisational empowerment of the chief guardian, the human athlete. The public seeks assurance that the organisation is taking horse welfare seriously, in perception and practice (credibility) building long-term relationships (trust) as the pathway to ongoing consent (licence) for the activity to continue (Coddington et al., 2018, pp. 1039–1040; Morrison, 2014, p. 25).

In recognising their welfare responsibilities, sports organisations will need to reconcile what it means to be transparent in a digital age while balancing business sustainability with the need to make welfare decisions ‘in the company of the community’, who are also voices for the horse (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 70; Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1).

1.5 Evolving animal welfare

As society becomes more informed about animal welfare, and the associated concepts of sentience, agency and anthropomorphism through skills learnt by participation in the sharing economy, we now discuss engagement with animal welfare assessment in the same light.

Sports organisations responsible for the welfare of the non-human athlete are likely to have a future that requires them to adopt attitudes and actions to form relationships of mutual benefit online and offline. This will, in turn, build social capital through the common ground of horse welfare.

1.5.1 What the community knows about animal welfare

Internationally, the first country to implement laws in relation to the welfare of animals was the United Kingdom. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA UK) was established in 1824 to undertake the dual welfare-regulatory role after MP Richard Martin's Bill to 'Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle' was passed (Hughes & Lawson, 2011, pp. 376–381; RSPCA UK, 2018).

In 1964 public outrage arose in response to the publication of Ruth Harrison's book about factory farming in the UK, *Animal Machines* (Sayer, 2013, p. 473). In response, the UK

Government engaged Professor Roger Brambell to prepare a report, which subsequently made recommendations to improve farm animal welfare, later to become the Five Freedoms (Conklin, 2014; Webster, 2016, p. 2) (Table 1).

Table 1

The Original Five Freedoms and Five Provisions for Promoting Animal Welfare

	Freedoms	Provisions
1	Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition	By providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour
2	Freedom from discomfort and exposure	By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and comfortable resting area
3	Freedom from pain, injury and disease	By prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
4	Freedom from fear and distress	By ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering
5	Freedom to express normal behaviour	By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

Note. Adapted from Table 1 in “Updating Animal Welfare Thinking: Moving beyond the ‘Five Freedoms’ towards ‘A Life Worth Living’”, by Mellor (2016b).

The Five Freedoms principles and provisions have provided widely accepted guidance for government, non-government organisations and laypersons, for example the South Australian Government’s *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (*Animal Welfare Act 1985* (SA); Mellor, 2016, p. 1; Webster, 2016, pp. 2–3). However, contemporary law and policy

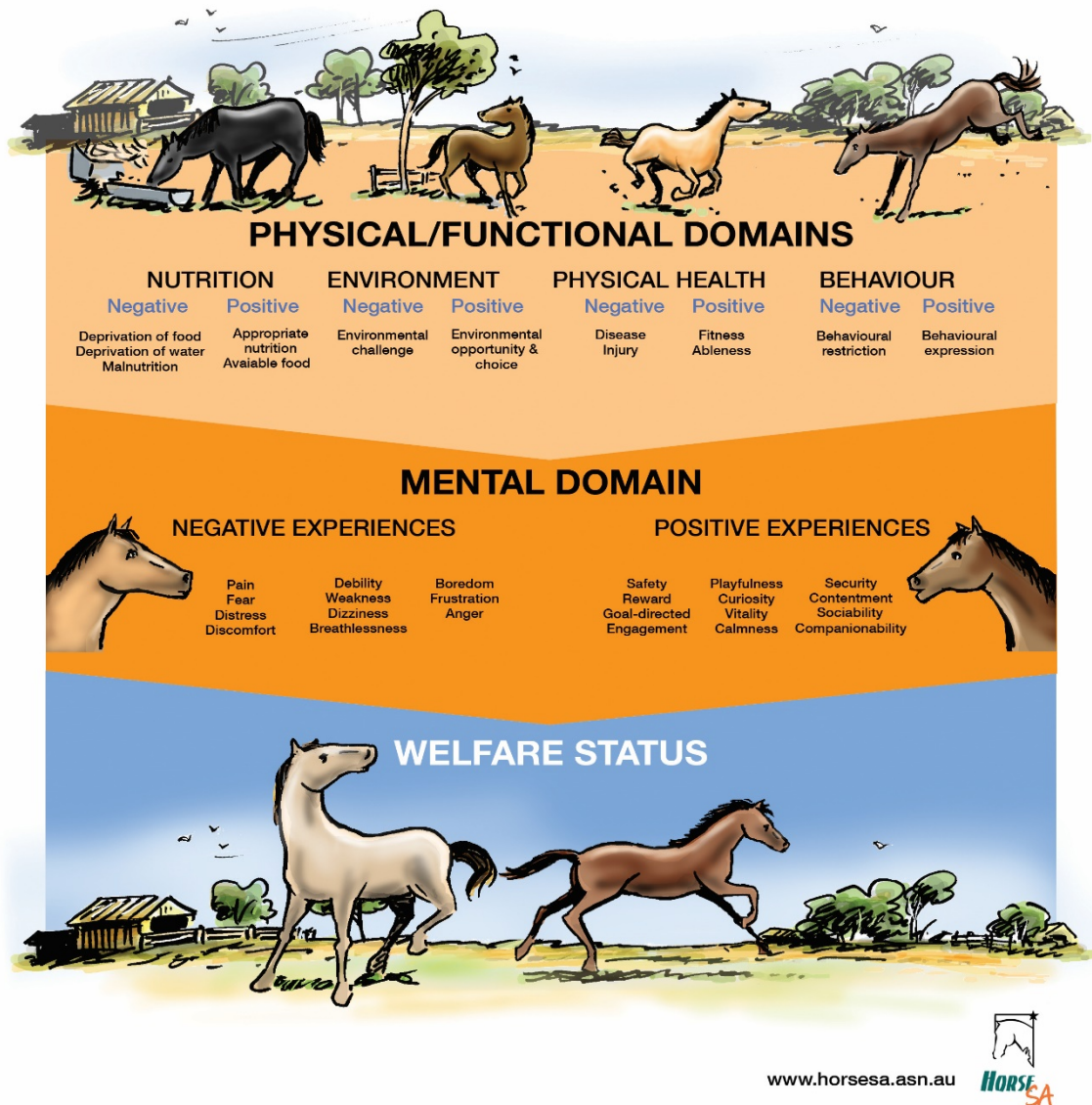
makers are increasingly drawing on more recent research, including the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model (ACT Government, 2016, p. 9; Ledger & Mellor, 2018, p. 1; Mellor & Beausoleil, 2015, p. 241).

In recent years, the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model (5D), has evolved from the Five Freedoms. Author David Mellor argues that the ‘Five Freedoms’ constrains continuous improvement for animal welfare in contemporary society, as the wording lulls laypersons into assuming each goal can be easily understood and achieved, and further, fails to encourage animal guardians to set aspirational welfare goals (Mellor, 2016a, pp. 1–2; Mellor, 2016b, pp. 1–2).

Mellor argues that there is a misunderstanding around the use of the word ‘freedom’, as it leads to thinking ‘elimination from’ or ‘absence of’, with a focus on negative experiences. Further, the use of ‘freedom’ can lead to people concluding that is the ‘right’ for animals to gain this status (Mellor, 2016a, pp.1-2; Mellor, 2016b, pp. 1–2).

The Five Domains Model recognises the growing knowledge base of animal welfare research through the structure and arrangement descriptors within each of the domains. Each domain guides people who are assessing animal welfare to consider dynamic internal and external factors which lead to positive and negative subjective experiences, and then to arrive at a welfare status (Mellor, 2017, p. 4; Mellor et al., 2015, p.241). In an example of research extension, Horse SA, a non-profit community organisation working with horse owners and organisations through advocacy and education, has contextualised the Five Domains in a poster format to support the engagement of horse owners (Figure 4).

The Five Domains Model



Adapted from Mellor, D.J. (2017). Operational details of the Five Domains Model and its key applications to the assessment and management of animal welfare. *Animals* 7(8), 60; doi:10.3390/ani7080060.



2018

Figure 4: The Five Domains Model simplified.

1.6 The rationale for this research project

The argument for undertaking this research is to contribute to long-term sustainability of horse sport through building on knowledge about an emerging threat being its SLO. In sport in which humans partner with horses, SLO is challenged when the public perceive that the welfare of the horse is at risk. Unaddressed, horse sports may become obsolete through the loss of confidence by the public and participants, and by the costs associated with ‘retro-fitting’ horse welfare as a strategic priority.

This Masters in Communication (by research) thesis ‘Sport Horse Welfare and Social Licence to Operate’ has been achieved through partnering with the Australian Endurance Riders Association, and general in-kind support provided by the researcher’s employer, The Horse Federation of South Australia (Horse SA).

2 Literature review

This literature review will provide an overview of the existing research and issues about a SLO in the context of sports horse welfare. The review will build knowledge and support the overarching aims for this project: firstly, to build on existing knowledge relating to SLO and secondly, to discuss how the study results can inform an organisational communication framework designed to enhance an organisation's participation in a SLO discourse.

Further, the review will outline current horse owner attitudes to welfare before providing an overview of the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model as we seek to answer the following research questions. Research Question One (RQ1) asks, 'What are the attitudes of horse sport organisation participants towards horse welfare?' and Research Question Two (RQ2) asks, 'How do attitudes align with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model, if at all'?

An innovative aspect of this study field of sports horse welfare and SLO is that the Chief Investigator (CI) is an insider researcher. An insider researcher is one who is also part of the community or cohort that is being researched (Mercer, 2007, p. 3). Further, data collected for the primary survey is from the viewpoint of sport participants within the organisation, the Australian Endurance Riders Association (AERA). Chapter 7 discusses this research approach, including opportunities and risk mitigation strategies.

This study will contribute towards the future sustainability of sports through building on existing knowledge of SLO and informing organisational communication frameworks.

2.1 The contemporary social licence to operate

Profitability and sustainability go hand in hand ... social licence disappears if you are not part of the community and doing the right things by stakeholders.

Alan Joyce CEO Qantas 2018 (Whyte, 2018).

Chapter 1 discussed the ways in which SLO is underpinned by legitimacy, credibility and trust on a pathway to public consent with a focus on the ‘social’ aspects of each of the factors, and how, unlike corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social contract theory (SCT), SLO sits with the community. Reflective of the community setting, a SLO operates along a continuum and at multiple levels, with many valid smaller single-issue SLOs.

The contemporary SLO aligned with horse sports recognises the dimension of the re-imagined non-human athlete as a sentient animal and a partner for the human athlete on a human constructed field of play. Similarly, the farming and live export of animals also face community expectations, often amplified by media stories (Baker-Dowdell, 2018; Smith, 2018). This contrasts with the SLOs associated with the mining, business and banking sectors centred on inanimate assets such as gold, manufacturing or cash. SLOs in

those business sectors do not have advocates for the key stakeholder, a sentient animal, nor the context of the unique human and non-human sporting partnership.

We will now discuss disruptive technologies, followed by how they have led to devolved trust, to social media as a solution, and the role of organisational listening, before concluding with what it might mean to be transparent in a digital age. Taking a closer look at how an Internet-enhanced society has shifted expectations may inform understanding of the contemporary SLO and, potentially, what steps need to be taken to avoid its loss.

2.1.1 Disruptive technologies and the new normal

The digital age has irreversibly changed the traditional institutionalised approach to democracy, flattening power structures, reducing administrative red tape, facilitating time efficiency in decision-making and, as a result, maintaining business sustainability and building social capital (Klein et al., 2000, p. 16). The new community ‘currency’ lies in knowledge and its opportunities for co-creation, sharing and decision-making (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, pp. 70–71; Gregorius, 2015 p. 1). Organisations that fail to recognise or manage the disruption increase the risk of people walking away from conversations and challenging democratic processes and, as a result, organisations becoming meaningless and obsolete (Wasko & Di Gangi, 2016, p. 66).

Through taking a closer look at social media in the context of sports organisations and horse welfare, this discussion will build an understanding of the importance of addressing factors affecting a SLO.

2.1.2 Social media: The problem and the solution

Social media supports the building of social capital in an organisation, through facilitating trust building and providing opportunities for reciprocity online and offline (Hofer & Aubert, 2013, p. 2135). However, not all platforms are set up to allow the telling of long, complex stories, or for adding context. Facebook, for example, has the unique feature of enabling users to divide up a story with many interconnected parts into single snapshots, or ‘frames’. This feature places a focus on one aspect of a story, usually the crisis, which may act to solicit negative comments from community members who until this point had not spoken (Etter & Vestergaard, 2015, pp. 171–173; Heugens et al., 2004, pp. 1366–1368). A ‘framing’ of an image and commentary where there is a perceived risk to the welfare of a horse can attract many negative comments and ‘go viral’ when in fact it was just a ‘moment in time’ without context of what occurred before and after the image was taken.

However, social media can also provide a solution for management of a negative discourse about horse welfare through understanding how each can facilitate relationship building. For example, Facebook provides opportunities for the building of relationships online which are often reinforced offline when people meet locally or at clubs. This is known as ‘bonding’; however, the social capital generated by Facebook groups or cohorts is not considered inclusive, and lacks diversity, as they centre on groups with a narrow range of common interests. In contrast, Twitter ‘bridges’ like-minded people, frequently through #hashtags, with the social capital generated considered inclusive (Hofer & Aubert, 2013, pp. 2135–2140).

When planning action to address a crisis, one partial response may include the organisation establishing a dedicated online Facebook group in which people can discuss the issue (Etter & Vestergaard, 2015, p. 164). Members of a group with a common interest in horse welfare can work through issues and, in turn, form bonds and become long-term social advocates for the organisation.

In a social media savvy world, organisations need to design a flexible approach to rules and policy in order to create a trusted communication environment that, amongst other aspects, ensures that dialogue about horse welfare is an inclusive, diverse, two-way conversation (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 76; Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010, p. 399; Macnamara, 2016b, p. 146).

2.1.3 Devolved trust

Disruptive technologies, including those which service social media platforms, have reshaped public trust by devolving the number and type of sources from which a citizen gathers and verifies information. Traditional sources of public trust, including the institutions dedicated to government, research or sport administration are captured in this devolved ‘trust shift’, with citizens referring to crowdsourced opinion to balance readily available evidence-based sources, for example, scientific or financial reports (Camporesi et al., 2017, p. 24; Thompson & Clarkson, 2016b; Thompson & Haigh, 2018, p. 1).

Devolved trust has the potential to impact politically on a sports organisation’s holistic philosophical and ethical approach to conducting their everyday business (Camporesi et al., 2017, pp. 24–29). For example, when the public petition Members of Parliament

about the establishment of an independent body for the welfare of racehorses, in effect they are removing primary regulatory care of horses (the primary non-human asset) from the hands of the British Horseracing Authority (Animal Aid, 2018). In sport's increasingly commercialised operating environment, administrators need to manage both for-profit and non-profit values. There is the risk that participants could be left feeling disenchanted when the sport's horse welfare 'status quo' is challenged by outsiders, because public trust was assumed by the sport's board of management (Barnes et al., 2018, p. 321; Breitbarth et al., 2015, p. 265; Fahlén, 2017, pp. 717–719).

However, organisations which engage sport participants and opinion leaders in this disruptive environment can build capacity and skills so that these participants and leaders will instead act as long-term advocates for the organisation (Funahashi et al., 2015, p. 497; Stavros et al., 2014, p. 466). These 'social leaders' are empowered by the organisation to curate the contemporary SLO conversation. This occurs through building social relations and trust across multiple touchpoints in an open, transparent approach, avoiding focus on individual people, issues or problems (Camporesi et al., 2017, p. 29; Funahashi et al., 2015, p. 495).

Social capital can be built through a common interest in the welfare of the sports horse and should be an asset to organisations, arising from a shared protective factor for the sentient athlete. The common concern for the horse acts to bridge sport participants who may have been previously marginalised but now have a voice through social media.

When voices raise concern toward welfare risks to horses, and is expressed in a respectful way, organisations need to listen (Stavros et al., 2014, p. 466; Tonts, 2005, p. 147). If the organisation fails to listen, social capital networks are easily fractured if people feel

excluded or further marginalised, especially at the local community sports level (Tonts, 2005, p. 137).

2.1.4 Organisational listening

No one country is immune to global community expectations and we must continue to explore means of securing the sustainability of our industry. (14 Sept 2017)

Geoff Want, Immediate past Chair, Australian Harness Racing.

Organisational listening, in a similar way to other fundamental communication skills, is being re-invented as social media takes public interest conversations and decision-making away from traditional consultation models (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017). As more citizens embrace the business models of sharing economies, organisations that work hard at listening are facilitating democratic processes and contributing to their organisation's reputation for justice and fairness (Macnamara, 2016a, p. 5).

Contemporary organisational listening integrates both online and offline methodologies. For example, the South Australian Government's 'Better Together' engagement program engages citizens in democracy and decision making events, these including the YourSay website, the establishment of citizen juries to discuss and deliberate on matters of state importance, the delivery of 'how to' training for public sector staff, and provision of opportunities for the public to decide how government funds are spent (Government of South Australia, 2018).

Better Together engagement tools, if scaled to the size of the sports organisation, may provide insight into ways of leveraging organisational and institutionalised administration structures to broker a way forward for horse welfare and greater long-term public acceptance. In part, this is achieved by facilitating the engagement of sport participants in transparent decision-making processes. This approach promotes the shared responsibility for an SLO, as it rests with all who are involved with the non-human athlete on the field of play, not just the overarching administration (Espejo & Bendek, 2011, p. 477; Government of South Australia, 2018).

2.1.5 Transparency in the digital age

Organisational transparency in the digital age is more than data sharing that results in knowledge building; it is also about creating opportunities for frequent, recurrent interactions between people. Relationships are the structural framework which not only keeps an organisation strong but also keeps it resilient (Espejo & Bendek, 2011, p. 477; Hansen & Flyverbom, 2014, p. 885).

The digital age, however, has negative residue, whereby the ‘footprint’ of past decisions may remain online forever. This potentially poses a risk for business sustainability, and for sports struggling to remain relevant to members. It therefore becomes critical to utilise a range of mediating technologies to support co-creation of new information, ensuring that participants are engaged and that they contribute to the direction of the organisation. This enables ownership of an organisation’s ‘identity’, its decisions and its policies so it becomes self-regulating and self-organising (Espejo & Bendek, 2011, p. 447).

In planning transparent processes, organisational leaders need to counterbalance participants who have wisdom gained through long-term involvement with those who are seeking targeted, relevant information delivered in an efficient, timely and accessible manner (Espejo & Bendek, 2011, p. 477). Relationship management within organisational structures has cost implications to digitally upskill those who have a particular interest in providing input to a decision-making process, and to ensure they can subsequently claim that the process was transparent (Espejo & Bendek, 2011, p. 477).

However, transparency is difficult to achieve if there are practices in place that lead to questions around integrity or if people feel that their issues are not understood within the organisation (KPMG & AICD, 2018, pp. 14–16). The organisation may be relying on rigid structural processes and expecting compliance, rather than looking for ways to overcome communication barriers and frameworks for the flow of work (Espejo & Bendek, 2011, pp. 477–490). Barriers include inadequate consultation methods, treating stakeholders as the risk to be managed, and a failure to appreciate social contexts (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017b, pp. 138–139).

2.2 Equestrian cultures

While there are still many millions of working equids, particularly donkeys, mules and ponies in third world countries, modern equestrian cultures find horses reimaged in new leisure and sporting roles (Adelman & Thompson, 2017, p. 3). Recognising this transitional period, this section will discuss constantly adapting and evolving cultures

through the lens of tangible and intangible heritage, politics, gender, inclusiveness, ethics and industrial workforces.

2.2.1 Tangible heritage

Tangible heritage in the equestrian context includes monuments, horse-centric buildings and landscapes, along with associated in-context objects, for example, stables, bridles and whips. Specific examples include the monument to Phar Lap at the Melbourne Museum or the living landscapes of the Thoroughbred stud ‘Coolmore’ in Kentucky, USA (Coolmore Stud, 2019; McManus, 2013, p. 89; Räsänen & Syrjämaa, 2017, n.p.; Melbourne Museum, 2019).

In conserving heritage, the stories of the past are retold, interpreting the meaning for the present-day citizen (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] Office in Cairo: Tangible Cultural Heritage, 2017). The Melbourne Cup, for example, is a famous horse race but is also a cultural event where each year the central tangible object, the iconic cup, travels thousands of kilometres each year on a ‘cultural tour’ ahead of the event, fulfilling educational and social goals. The tour allows the cup owners, the Victoria Racing Club, to curate a continuous co-contribution to its heritage and, as a result, reaffirm social capital (“2018 Lexus Melbourne Cup Tour”, 2018; “Lexus Melbourne Cup visits Louth providing a boost to the drought-stricken community”, 2018).

As awareness grows around animal sentience, agency and the articulation of anthropomorphic behaviours, social media facilitates public ability to question traditional

aspects of equestrian heritage and its alignment to modern day community attitudes (Adelman & Thompson, 2017, p. 1). For example, current public discourse questions how objects long associated with equestrian cultures, such as the bit and the whip, impact positively or negatively on the horse (Adelman & Thompson, 2017, p. 267; McLean & McGreevy, 2010, pp. 207–208; Mellor & Beausoleil, 2017, p. 1). It is related to the ‘how and why’ of the object use which is where the cultural value of the tangible object intersects with the intangible aspects of equestrian cultures.

2.2.2 Intangible heritage

Intangible heritage refers to traditional and contemporary ‘ways of doing things’ expressed through practices including oral history, storytelling, art, festivals and rituals. In the equestrian context, examples include how to make a horseshoe or particular traditions associated with training a horse. Intangible heritage is not on a fixed timeline, rather a convergence of old and new culture occurring at the same time (UNESCO, 2019).

One example of intangible heritage is the equestrian traditional knowledge and practices preserved at the Cadre Noir of Saumur, France. In 2011, UNESCO inscribed equitation in the French tradition on the representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The inscription recognised the cultural value of the French traditional ‘way’ of riding horses, and that this practice should be preserved for humanity. Today, the cultural practices are kept alive through the specialist keeping and training of horses, with performances of the equitation tradition shared with the public at the French National

School of Equitation (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2018; Le Cadre Noir, 2014).

The Cadre Noir aside, intangible heritage is witnessed in everyday human-horse interactions, amplified by online broadcasting and image sharing. For sport participants, ‘ways’ of riding and caring for horses are crowdsourced from a variety of knowledge bases including sports organisations, professional coaches, scientific research and friends (Thompson & Haigh, 2018, p. 1; Voigt et al., 2016a, p. 183; Voigt et al., 2016b, p. 335). Further, the sub-cultures of equestrianism are often contentiously intertwined and socially influenced, so that what one cohort identifies with, another may reject. The preferred styling and social setting for the wearing of riding helmets provides an example of this contestation (Haigh & Thompson, 2015, p. 576; Thompson & Clarkson, 2016b, p. 89; Thompson et al., 2015, p. 1).

In the context of sports horse welfare, these ‘ways of doing things’ are observed both from within equestrian cultural contexts and from without by the public, creating a space in which for some the intangible practice in question is culturally acceptable, while from other perspectives the practice is out of date, and no longer relevant in modern society. An example is an action of using a whip on the horse in sports including racing and eventing (Elder, 2018a; McGreevy et al., 2013; McGreevy & Fawcett, 2018).

2.2.3 Politics

The increased scrutiny of the public on day to day operations of an organisation challenges leaders to reflect on their self-governance, and to reimagine what previously

legitimate business practices might look like, now that the community is present in the equation (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, pp. 70–71; Rooney et al., 2014, p. 215).

All sports in which human-horse partnerships are competing on a human-constructed playing field, will sooner or later face an issue relating to horse welfare that places a strain on the sport's future sustainability (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1). Self-aware organisations have the opportunity to lead cultural adaptation through leveraging existing social capital resources and available administration structures in order to engage with stakeholders. However, resistance may occur as participants consider they are unevenly wearing the long-term costs (Hampton & Teh-White, p. 1; Post, 2018; Williams & Martin, 2011, p. 202).

Public perception that sport has failed to take adequate action in response to a horse welfare issue can escalate the matter to the government, creating a situation in which the future of the sport may lie outside of the control of the sport's administration itself. As an example, in 2016 the Australian State of New South Wales responded to a recommendation by the Special Commission of Inquiry into the greyhound racing industry, directing the closure of the entire industry on the grounds of animal cruelty (McHugh, 2016, p. 22; Pengilly, 2016). Similarly, in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and South Australia, governments have responded to public pressure, instigating parliamentary inquiries into rodeo, jumps racing and racehorse protection (New Zealand Government, 2018; Parliament of South Australia Select Committee Jumps Racing, 2016; United Kingdom Parliament, 2018). While these cited cases are high profile, any organisation in which humans and animals interact is open to scrutiny with regard to welfare.

2.2.4 Gender

The partnership of two different species on the same field of play is unique. Another way in which horse sport is unique is gender integration, in that men and women compete equally at all levels of equestrian sport, including the Olympic Games, and in racing (Thompson, 2016). However, academics and social theorists argue that equality and equity have yet to be fully addressed in equestrian sports or racing (Butler, 2013; Coulter, 2013; Thompson, 2016).

The role of gender in equestrian cultures is an under-researched area, with two examples of knowledge gaps discussed. First, there is a need to understand the influences of gender and socio-economic status, self-identity and participation levels in equestrian sport and racing, and the ways in which gender aligns with the use of social media and attitudes to horse welfare. Secondly, there is a gap relating to how sport organisation structures address parity and representation in decision-making processes, including decisions relating to horse welfare. These two examples contribute to the argument for the formalisation of equestrian social sciences in research and teaching (Adelman & Thompson, 2017, p. 267; Dashper, 2012, p. 213; Plymoth, 2012, p. 335).

2.2.5 Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is the recognition of different sectors of society, for example, people with a disability, psychiatric patients and war veterans (Corring et al., 2013, p. 121; Gillett, 2014, pp. 192–208; Romaniuk, 2018, p. 1). An example of inclusive horse riding opportunities is found within the organisation ‘Riding for the Disabled’ and the many

derivative therapeutic, psychotherapy and spiritual counterparts worldwide (Riding for the Disabled Association Incorporating Carriage Driving, 2019).

Importantly for this study, inclusiveness requires consideration of people who cannot access the Internet, or who have a low level of digital literacy, a problem frequently compounded by poor social networks (Loges & Jung, 2001, p. 536; Tsai et al., 2017, p. 29). When organisations are considering making decisions ‘with’ the community, they must also recognise where extra resources may be required in different contexts, so that the building of social capital is not an afterthought.

2.2.6 Ethics

Ethics relates to the overall philosophy guiding how an individual or group of people decide to manage their conduct (“Dialogue”, 2018). The provision of high standards of horse welfare is ethically-driven, an example being the development of the ‘10 Principles of Learning Theory’ by the International Society for Equitation Science (Refer to Appendix A) (Mellor et al., 2015; McLean, McGreevy, & Christensen, 2018, pp. 14–15). In contrast, it may be perceived that an ethical conflict arises when an athlete places competition ambition ahead of horse welfare (McLean & McGreevy, 2010, p. 205; Voigt et al., 2016a, p. 192).

2.2.7 Workforces and safety

When humans and horses interact in the workplace, there is an increased risk that the human will sustain an injury (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1; O'Brien, 2016, p. 1; Thompson et al., 2015, p. 1). In Australia, horse industry workplace safety initiatives have been implemented by the Australian Government after a high number of reported injuries in horse sport, and specifically as a result of the coronial inquest into the death of Sarah Waugh who died as a result of a riding accident while a student at TAFE NSW, a government vocational training institution (McCarthy, 2016; Safework NSW, 2018). The safety reforms also captured sporting organisations and events run by non-profit organisations, as these legal entities are workplaces, where volunteers are also recognised under the Workplace Safety Act (Safework Australia, 2018).

Initiatives have included the development by SafeWork Australia of national guidelines for horse industry worker safety, while the New South Wales Government went further, and gazetted a Code of Practice under its workplace safety Act (New South Wales Government, 2017; Safework Australia, 2014). In a parallel approach, the body responsible for overseeing training of workers, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), undertook a strategic review of vocational equine industry training recommending greater clarity and minimum benchmarks as a mechanism to improve worker competency (Australian Skills Quality Authority, 2016, p. iv; Skills Impact, 2017).

Notwithstanding these government-led interventions and industry initiatives, such as The Horse Federation of South Australia's 'People.Culture.Horses' national workplace safety

conferences, industry-wide application of a workplace safety framework is still in its infancy (Horse SA, 2018; Thompson et al., 2015, p. 1). The slow uptake may be in part due to employer and workers historically accepting a level of risk when around horses, without reframing to align with modern approaches to safer work practices (Bowman et al., 2007, p. 421; Thompson & Nesci, 2013, p. 105).

It is worth commenting here that unlike all human incidents, it is when the non-human athlete is catastrophically injured or killed that high levels of public outrage are triggered—for example, at the death of horses in the Melbourne Cup—with the subsequent discourse challenging the values of the sport and its participants (“Are opponents of Melbourne Cup fun-hating whingers or worried animal activists with a point?”, 2017; Busch, 2018). If horses are compromised in their workplace (the sporting field), this should be a trigger for organisational reflection if the sport is to remain sustainable for the long term.

Workplace safety research in relation to horse sport is limited, with most studies centred on thoroughbred racing and eventing noting the foci points of rider skill, the horse and environmental factors including the constructed jump (Hitchens et al., 2011, p. 840; Hitchens et al., 2010, p. 693; O'Brien, 2016, p. 1). There is a need for further research into sport-related workplace welfare for human and the non-human athletes, not only related to safety, but from social science perspectives of diversity, transitioning of cultural practices, ethics and animal agency (Bornemark et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2015, p. 1; Thompson & Nesci, 2013, p. 108).

2.3 The globalisation of horse-centric sport-entertainment

The broadcasting of contemporary horse sport-as-entertainment to the general public focuses a global audience on the human athletes, the horses and, in many cases, landscapes of cultural significance, for example Paris Eiffel Showjumping (<https://pariseiffeljumping.com/en/>) or polo on the beach in Australia (Karnikowski, 2018). Globalisation provides a segue to increased commercialisation of digital and collateral assets, and marketing of the competition, the athletes and desirability of associated horse-sport lifestyles (FEI, 2018d; McManus, 2013, p. 89).

Globalisation and commodification are not confined to the ‘big players’ with identifiable corporate branding, but scales accordingly, with many individual social influencers drawing in a new audience through sharing their personal experiences on the human-horse relationship against the backdrop of horse sport. For example, blogger ‘Skint Dressage Daddy’ reflects humorously with readers on what it is like to live with a horse-centric wife and daughter (Facebook 15,000 + followers on 12th May 2019), while ‘Wocket Woy and the Pwoducer’ broadcast weekly video blogs often filmed from the back of galloping horses (Facebook 164,000 + followers on 12th May 2019) (Batchelor & Goldstein, 2019; Skint Dressage Daddy, 2018). Sports have a social asset base on and off the playing field, which may be currently categorised as ‘commercial’, or ‘not carrying our brand’, however there is an opportunity to re-imagine a wider variety of social influencers to act as long-term advocates for the sport.

2.3.1 Global horse sport structures

Thoroughbred horse racing and equestrian sports have different structures, rule books and administrative powers. However, at a global level, the peak bodies have united on common interest areas of horse welfare, biosecurity, the international movement of horses and drug control.

For equestrian sports, the FEI global rulebook covers international level competitions including dressage, show jumping, eventing, carriage driving, para-equestrian dressage, vaulting and endurance; however, each of their 133-member countries also develop local rules. For example, the British Equestrian Federation has its own rulebook governing competitions at national or local level, as does the Australian national body Equestrian Australia (British Equestrian Federation, 2019; Equestrian Australia, 2019; FEI, 2018b). Further, any local horse-riding club can run competitions and activities using rules specific to that organisation, for example the Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria (Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria, 2018).

For thoroughbred horse racing, rulebooks exist for each jurisdiction, for example The Australian Rules of Racing or the British Horse Racing Authority rulebook (British Horseracing Authority, 2019; Racing Australia, 2018).

To promote greater global alignment amongst racing authorities internationally, the International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities (IFHA) was established in 1993. The 59-member organisation's aims include working towards greater alignment in its

member countries for the rules related to racing, breeding and wagering (International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities, 2018).

In 2003, the FEI and the IFHA united to form the International Horse Sport Confederation (IHSC) with the aim of promoting co-operation between the world's leading organisations overseeing competitive horse sports. The organisations have the joint vision of horse welfare, facilitation of the international movement of horses, drug control and disease surveillance. A joint fund has been established to co-invest in agreed initiatives (Atock, 2018, p. 178; FEI, 2013b; International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities, 2014).

2.3.2 'Supply' of the horse-athlete

Thoroughbred and Standardbred horses are purpose-bred for racing, with an industry built around the functions of breeding, buying and owning and racing a horse through stud farms, yearling sales, racehorse syndication, training and racecourse-entertainment venues (McManus, 2013, p. 1). In this scenario, there are generally close liaisons between the stud book, the register of racehorses, and the rules of racing which, coupled with the licencing of people within the industry, provide a framework with which horse welfare measures can be applied.

In contrast, selection of horses for equestrian competitions is not breed specific in the same way thoroughbreds are selected for horse racing. While there are some competitions affiliated with breed societies and studbooks, any breed of horse can enter sports such as dressage, showjumping or eventing, as long as both the human and equine competitors

meet general entry requirements (FEI, 2009). While there are organisations, such as the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses, which seek to bring the FEI and sport horse breeders closer together, there are many different types of horse sports and breeds of horses which fall outside of the scope of this organisation. In comparison to racing, there is less opportunity to apply regulatory administrative powers from birth through training and competition (World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses, 2018).

Horse breeders, both racing and non-racing, have a vested interest in horse sport, as competitions provide the best opportunities for the horses they have bred to showcase talent and potential. Success on the racetrack or in the equestrian sports arena adds to the commercial value of the horse for future competition or as a breeding prospect.

Further, while horse breeders have a direct stake in horse sport, they are often ‘on the outside’, as they are unlikely to be members of a sport organisation if they do not compete or officiate. Neither do sport organisations have managing stud books as their core business (FEI, 2018b; International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities, 2018). This disconnect may become a risk factor for sports organisations seeking to manage their SLO. As discussed earlier, the racing industry has administrative levers available which when enacted can provide a comprehensive approach to the delivery of horse welfare policy. In contrast, there are currently fewer administrative options open for equestrian sport to leverage welfare activities which may mean that in the future, breeders could pose an unacceptably high risk to the sport.

2.3.3 Sport and the context of government

Horse sport events operate in the context of Government Acts and policies relating to animals, including welfare. For example, specific Australian Federal Government Acts include the Biosecurity Act which outlines how disease threats will be managed for humans, animals and plants, and acts to support paying for a disease response which affects horses (Australian Government, 2011a, 2011b, 2015). Australia also has achieved a unique government-industry contract known as the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement, which facilitates a response to disease outbreak under the operational document AUSVETPLAN, and includes horses (Animal Health Australia, 2019a, 2019b). However, in relation to animal welfare in Australia, it is each State and Territory which gazettes animal welfare acts. The Acts are enforced by the non-profit organisation the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) not by government (RSPCA Australia, 2018).

Many sports organisations rely on government bodies for funding, in return for adopting governance policies related to gender, inclusiveness and ethical standards, for example the Australian Sports Commission Mandatory Sports Governance Principles (Australian Sports Commission, 2018). It is unclear how different organisations construct relationship-building opportunities between sport participants and government representatives as part of their ordinary business. In many cases, intervention only occurs after a crisis.

2.3.4 Research and horse sport

Researchers can build knowledge to improve sport-specific horse welfare, informing organisations, owners and athletes through the dissemination of evidence-based information in journal articles and through popular media. However, the impact of science is variable amongst horse owners who, before forming an opinion, self-evaluate the scientific findings, including the process involved to obtain the research results in the first place, and balance this with comparative information crowdsourced through social media networks (Gallois et al., 2017, pp. 56–57; Thompson & Haigh, 2018, p. 1).

Further, scientists may be one of the ‘voices for the horse’. They may be internal or external to an organisation and participating in the public discourse on horse welfare. As such, researchers, and by association many veterinarians, are directly contributing to an organisation’s SLO.

2.4 Animal welfare

A range of methodologies exist which serve to guide humans in assessing, monitoring and managing the welfare status of animals; these include the Five Freedoms, the Five Domains, the Quality of Life (QoL) models, and Fraser and MacRae’s (2011) framework recognising four categories of human activities which impact on animals (Fraser & MacRae, 2011; Mellor, 2016b, pp. 1–5; Webster, 2016, pp. 1–6). These publicly available models help to grow the community knowledge base about animal welfare and inform the

public discourse arising out of perceived risks where animals may be having their welfare unacceptably compromised by a human interaction.

Recognising that this knowledge sits within the community, and as part of maintaining a SLO, sport has a common framework known to the public on which to base the highest standards in animal welfare assessment, monitoring and a commitment to research investment (Sherwen et al., 2018, p. 1).

2.4.1 Animal welfare: definition versus characterisation

The welfare of any sentient animal is determined by its individual perception of its own physical and emotional state. John Webster (Webster, 2016, p. 1).

Animal welfare refers to the ‘affective state’ of the individual animal. This includes care and veterinary intervention and importantly also includes the summation of positive and negative experiences associated with behaviours, environment, nutrition and physical health, reflected in the mental state. The subjective evaluation of all these factors combined is the welfare status of the animal (Mellor, 2017, p. 2; Mellor et al., 2015, pp. 18–20). Further, Mellor argues against using a fixed definition of welfare, instead to move towards characterising the status of an individual animal based on observations at the time, in turn promoting a more flexible, responsive attitude amongst animal caregivers (Mellor, 2016b, p. 14).

2.4.2 Animal welfare is different than animal rights

Attitudes towards advocating for animals fall along a societal spectrum from animal rights to animal welfare. Animal welfare is positioned within science, whereby organisations and individuals working to further the welfare status of animals generally do so with a matter-of-fact attitude, underpinned by a scientific evidence-based approach to assessment, monitoring and continuous improvement (Carenzi & Verga, 2009; Marc & Carron, 1998, p. 9; Mellor et al., 2015, p. 76). The animal welfare risk assessment process found within the zoo strategy *Caring for Wildlife* (Sherwen et al. 2018) is an example.

Animal rights is positioned within the area of practice and ethics, where the perspective argues for the ‘freedom and liberty’ of animals, urging the cessation of the human use of animals for any purpose (Marc & Carron, 1998, p. 42; Mellor et al., 2015, p. 76; Wissenburg & Schlosberg, 2014, p. 2). The ‘Aussie Farms’ public information map displaying farms, slaughterhouses and some racecourses, serves as a repository for animal rights activists and provides an example of the way in which activists mobilise and inform others (Pedersen, 2019; Aussie Farms Repository, 2019).

2.4.4 The Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model

The Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model (Five Domains), which provides the theoretical lens for this study, facilitates the systematic scoring of factors contributing to the compromise or enhancement of an animal’s welfare status (Mellor, 2016b, pp. 13–14). In this model, three domains have a focus on internal survival-related factors being nutrition, environment and health, while a fourth focusses on the external situation-related

factor of behaviour. Each of the four domains contains subjective positive and negative experiences aligned with affective experiences found within the fifth domain. The summary of the scores collated for the fifth domain provides the welfare status of the animal (Mellor, 2017, p. 4) (Figure 5).

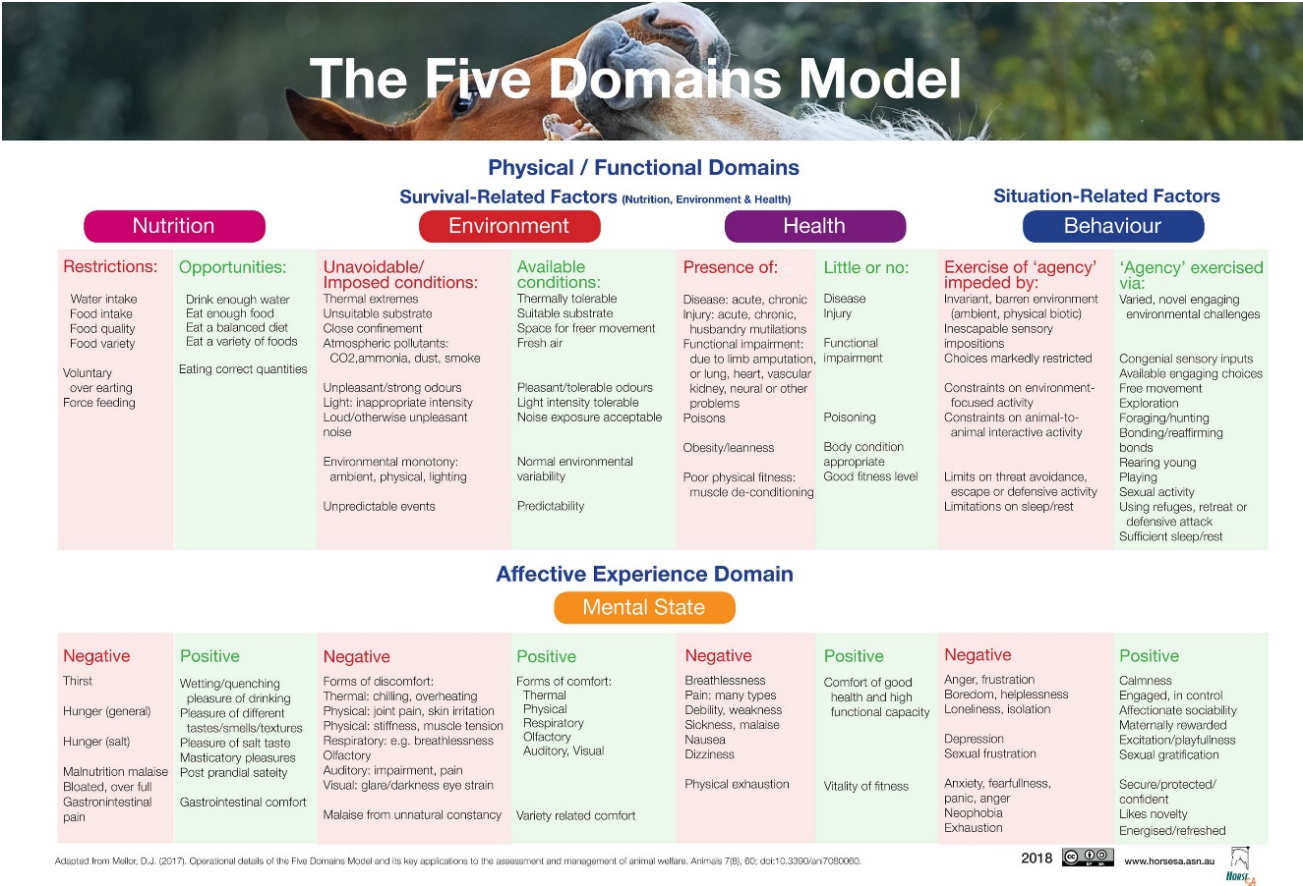


Figure 5: The Five Domains Model chart.

This Five Domains model has wide application; for example, a search of the journal *Animals* on 28 December 2018 using the search term 'Five Domains' found articles relating to assessing interventions with horses (McGreevy et al., 2018, p. 1), risk assessment in zoos (Sherwen et al., 2018, p. 1), changes in welfare relating to injured

farm dogs, and providing a forensic context for animal welfare court cases (Ledger & Mellor, 2018, p. 1; Littlewood & Mellor, 2016, p. 1).

2.5 Horse welfare – Owner attitudes

There is limited research relating to horse owner attitudes and welfare. In particular, it is unclear how the relationships between the home stable, organisation-led athlete education and the sport itself intersect and impact on participant attitudes to welfare. This section will discuss general research about horse owners and welfare before discussing horse welfare issues that have attracted the broader attention of specialist and popular media.

2.5.1 Current knowledge about horse owner attitudes towards welfare

There are diverse and conflicting opinions about what constitutes best practice in routine horse care, in what ways it may be conditional, and how often and by whom it should be administered (Thompson, 2017, p. 128; Visser & Van Wijk-Jansen, 2012, p. 295). For example, a study undertaken within the American show horse scene found that officials considered horse welfare issues arose when amateurs combined a lack of overall experience with a ‘winning over horse welfare’ attitude. In contrast, show participants were able to identify horse welfare problems but indicated that the organisation, the rulebook and professional trainers were in the best position to effect change (Voigt et al., 2016a, p. 183; Voigt et al., 2016b, p. 335).

Horse owners are proactive about undertaking preventative care, including hooves and teeth, often seeking veterinary advice (Ireland et al., 2013, p. 418) However, some horse owners do not turn to veterinarians for advice until horse health indicators worsen (Buckley et al., 2004, p. 132; Chapman & Thompson, 2016, p. 41; Visser & Van Wijk-Jansen, 2012, p. 295). In these cases, latency does not appear to be due to a lack of interest in horse health. Rather, there may be other underlying issues including a lack of industry engagement, economic cost or poor vet-client relations (DuBois et al., 2017, p. 1; Thompson & Clarkson, 2016a, p. 41).

2.5.2 Horse welfare in the media

Mainstream media channels and citizen journalists report on stories relating to sports horse welfare for public interest and, in some cases, in the role of a media-centric ‘welfare watchdog’, the Facebook pages “Clean Endurance” providing a good example of this (Clean Endurance, 2018). There are many welfare issues raised in the media, but three high profile issues provide illustration of the relationship between media and horse welfare: restrictive nosebands; the use of whips; and the deaths of horses in endurance riding.

2.5.2.1 Restrictive nosebands

The use of restrictive nosebands has become an issue due to the trend to fasten nosebands so tightly that the horse cannot perform normal functions of licking and chewing. The issue has drawn media attention, particularly in the sport of dressage, and is the focus of a

position statement made by the International Society for Equitation Science (ISES), with supporting letters from horse industry bodies (ISES, 2019). ISES cites research on restrictive nosebands which provides evidence to inform improvements to horse welfare. This has resulted in rule changes by various international equestrian federations, including the announcement by the Swiss Equestrian Federation requiring a two centimetre clearance between the bridge of the nose and the strap from 2020 (Doherty et al., 2017, p. 1; Eurodressage, 2018b; Fenner et al., 2016, p. 1).

Restrictive nosebands appear to be a modern issue. Tom Roberts in his book *Horse Control and the Bit* (1971) described fitting a noseband by placing two fingers between the strap and the bridge of the nose, and only raised the problem of taking care when attaching standing martingales or military fittings (Roberts, 2001, p. 103). Similarly, in the 1952 book *The Young Rider*, the author ‘Golden Gorse’ recommends that the noseband ‘should be just loose enough to admit two fingers over the nose easily... A good rule for bridling is to “leave room for two fingers everywhere”’ (Gorse, 1952, p. 29). The restrictive noseband issue has been recently amplified through a public discourse surrounding ISES’s open letter to World Horse Welfare (ISES, 2018). The letter was in response to a controversial public lecture at the 2018 World Horse Welfare (WHW) Annual Congress whereby presenter Richard Davison called for more evidence about the problems of tight nosebands before many riders would accept it was an issue (Christensen, 2018; Davison, 2018). The media activity also generated a blog questioning if scientists and horse riders would ever understand each other (Maurel, 2019).

2.5.2.2 The use of the whip in racing

In Australia, the use of whips on horses during a race continues to draw community-wide scrutiny. Public opinion has in part been informed by the dissemination through mainstream media of research findings relating to the use of whips in racing, including the ABC Television's "Catalyst" program and the online opinion paper *The Conversation* (McGreevy, 2017; ABC Television, 2015).

Peer recognition for research on whips was conferred to the scientific team behind many of the studies through awarding of the prestigious 2011 Australian Museum Eureka Prize for scientific research that contributes to animal protection (Creagh 2011). The central welfare-related themes in research to date relate to the use of the whip outside the context of known animal learning theory, and the whipping of tired horses (McGreevy et al., 2018, p. 1).

In 2016, Harness Racing Australia announced a ban on whips in racing. However, as a result of industry resistance, the rules were subsequently amended to allow for a wrist action only. In thoroughbred racing, there is a shift in mainstream media reports and in comments from racing administrators, who are starting to report that whips are likely to disappear. However there is resistance to change, including from the jockeys themselves (Cook, 2018a; Weber, 2016; Ross, 2018; Want, 2017a).

Issues with the whip extend outside the sport of racing. In 2018 eventer Oliver Townend was warned against over-use of the whip at the Badminton Horse Trials, which resulted in

a social media backlash and a loss of corporate sponsorship (Elder, 2018a; Radford, 2018).

2.5.2.3 Endurance riding and horse deaths

Endurance riding involves riding horses over a long distance within a set time. While the sport has many regulatory and veterinary controls in place, the primary issue of concern is the over-riding of horses that leads to catastrophic injury or death. In the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games held in Tyron, USA, 53 of the 95 horses entered were sent to the medical clinic before the event was eventually abandoned for a number of reasons, including riders being given the wrong directions on course (O'Bryant, 2018). In response to the results of the Tyron event, and previous issues in the United Arab Emirates in particular, the FEI moved in December 2018 to establish a temporary endurance committee to review the rules (FEI, 2018c).

Longer term issues in the sport of endurance riding include use of the term 'endurance racing', which has been coined as a contemporary descriptor, due to the high average speeds on course (field of play) particularly in the Middle East (Cuckson, 2018a, 2018b; Jones, 2017). In 2018, veterinarians from France and Germany walked away from the sport citing horse welfare and the impact on the sport's reputation (von Christian, 2018).

The media, particularly through the activist-style Facebook page Clean Endurance made public many of the endurance racing rule breaches and officiating failures, which were subsequently reported on by third party media groups such as the equestrian sport news page 'Grand Prix Replay' (Clean Endurance, 2019; Kyriacou, 2018). In April 2019, the

FEI temporary endurance committee reported on their progress at the FEI Sports Forum, outlining a suite of reforms, to which Clean Endurance subsequently issued a supportive statement (FEI, 2019; Kyriacou, 2019a).

2.6 Summary

This literature review has provided an overview of the existing research and issues about a SLO in the context of sports horse welfare. We have specifically examined how contemporary SLO has emerged out of globalisation, where disruptive technologies have fostered flattened power structures and facilitated time-efficient decision making. The review considered how social media can be a problem, framing ‘crisis’ situations which elicit negative comments from the public and discussed how the same platform is often the source of a solution. It examined the ways in which the sharing economies have led to devolved trust across society, leading onto the need for organisations to re-invent the ways in which they listen to stakeholders. It has discussed transparency in a digital age, and the need to embrace disruptive technologies to facilitate new ways for people to connect more often and, as a result, build relationships for a more resilient organisation.

This chapter has also reviewed literature which provided the equestrian cultural context, which in this study refers to racing and equestrian sports. It examined culture as tangible and intangible heritage, before framing equestrianism by discussing politics, gender and inclusiveness. It discussed ethics and workforce issues, noting the latter is an under-researched area, particularly as it relates to attitudes to the welfare of the horse in the workplace, which includes sporting fields.

The chapter also examined globalisation of horse-centric sport-entertainment, including the structures of racing and non-racing sport, and the academic arguments relating to the emerging issues associated with the societal repositioning of the horse as a non-human athlete. It considered the 'supply' of the non-human athlete, sport and its conduct in the context of government regulations before looking at research and the variability of its impact, as citizens balance science with opinion.

Finally, the chapter discussed the definition of animal welfare, and the way in which animal welfare is different to animal rights, before moving onto describing the Five Domains Animal Welfare Model. It discussed owner attitudes toward welfare, citing three examples of welfare issues in the media, being the use of restrictive nosebands, the application of the whip, and horse deaths in the sport of endurance riding.

3 Methodology

3.1.1 Research design

This study seeks to address two overarching aims and two research questions. The first aim is to build on existing knowledge relating to SLO and the second aim is to discuss how the study results can inform an organisational communication framework designed to enhance an organisation's participation in a SLO discourse. Further, it seeks to gain insights into how one of the parties in the discourse, the horse sport participants, consider welfare. This cohort are the sport's primary interface with the public, and chief guardian for the welfare of the non-human athlete, the horse.

In this study, RQ1 asks, 'what are the attitudes of horse sport organisation participants towards horse welfare?' Further, to ascertain if the attitudes align with mainstream animal welfare models, RQ2 asks, 'How do attitudes align with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model, if at all?'

To answer the research questions, the project design, informed by a literature review, featured a mixed-method approach to collecting quantitative and qualitative data through an online survey (Refer to Appendix B) and semi-structured interviews (Refer to Appendix C). The online survey distributed by the Australian Endurance Riders Association to approximately 1600 sport participants located in all regions within Australia, featured Likert-scale, closed and open questions. The data collected, subsequent to analysis, provided statistical results and descriptive text. Semi-structured interviews, conducted online utilising the GoToWebinar™ platform, provided an opportunity to validate survey results and further expand on topics. As a result of building

knowledge about sport participants attitudes towards horse welfare, this study will also inform future research.

3.1.2 Background

At the time this research project was in the planning phase, sport horse welfare and SLO was an under-researched area. One of the first articles to associate the two concepts of overarching horse welfare and public opinion was ‘Reconciling horse welfare, worker safety, and public expectations: Horse event incident management systems in Australia’ (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1). A limited number of studies discuss public opinion and horse welfare issues, with most research associated with racing, for example the public view on jumps racing and the use of whips (McGreevy & Fawcett, 2018; Montoya et al., p. 273).

Similarly, research with a focus on horse owner attitudes to welfare is limited (Hemsworth et al., 2015, p. 1). Overall, most studies relating to horse owner attitudes towards welfare look at specific welfare issues, or actions related to care of the horse. Studies which focus on attitudes towards horse welfare or care have utilised methodologies which include vignettes (DuBois et al., 2017), in-depth interviews (Horseman et al., 2017), Likert surveys (Rice, 2018) and surveys with open and closed questions (Thompson et al., 2017, p. 348) Studies examining SLO within the contexts of fishing, mining, natural resources, wildlife management and thoroughbred jumps racing engage a range of methods including literature and media reviews, case studies, interviews and theoretical modelling (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017; Duncan et al., 2018;

Hampton & Teh-White, p.1; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017a, p. 347; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017b, p. 137).

The literature review discussed what it may mean for organisations to be transparent in a digital age, citing that it is not only data sharing, but using technology to encourage frequent meeting and the building of relationships (Hansen & Flyverbom, 2014, p. 885). In relation to sport participants, this includes understanding which stakeholder groups may share their viewpoints, ascertaining their willingness to adjust ideas and work together on contestable issues, such as horse welfare, in order to shape organisational decisions (Espejo & Bendek, 2011, p. 477; Gallois et al., 2017, pp. 56–57; Hansen & Flyverbom, 2014; Macnamara, 2016b, p. 146). Further, organisations taking this approach are reducing external risks to the sport by first reconciling those found internally (Owen & Kemp, 2013, p. 29). Later in this chapter we will discuss data collection in relation to the sport participants' attitudes towards welfare and stakeholder relationships.

This section has reviewed a range of studies that have investigated horse care and welfare noting research design, and studies which inform an approach to understanding how attitudes to welfare could be framed in order to support an organisation's participation in a SLO discourse.

3.2 The Chief Investigator

A risk to manage in the design of this project is that the CI is an insider researcher, which forces consideration of ‘distance’ from known cohorts, from a methodological and ethical position (Drake, 2010, p. 98). As with all research, the qualities of findings from an insider are open for challenge, including by the known cohorts who are the subject of the investigation, as the researcher may apply a different interpretation to the data results (Smetherham, 1978, p. 98). In contrast, insider researchers have an appreciation of the internal culture and politics of an organisation. This allows natural social interactions to occur which can result in a greater level of trust and improved quality of information collected (Rooney, 2005, p. 15; Unluer, 2012, p. 1).

The CI has previous experience with stakeholder relations and the collection of data from the wider horse industry through project management positions. For example, projects relating to horse owners and climate change, and horse owner attitudes to horse health and welfare (Thompson & Clarkson, 2017, p. 52; Thompson et al., 2018, p. 1). In Chapter 7, the CI reflects on being an insider researcher.

3.3 Theoretical lens

One of the overarching aims of this study is to inform a communication framework to enable sport organisations and participants to engage in a SLO discourse.

This study hypothesises that a communication framework is more likely to be effective if there is a commonly understood systematic animal welfare framework, language and

understanding of the ‘how and why’ of animal welfare assessment which aligns with contemporary publicly available information (Mellor, 2017, p. 1). And, by application, it should follow that the language and understanding of welfare that is held by horse sport participants will be more likely to resonate with the knowledge base held by the public.

Further, we seek to answer research question two which asks, ‘How do attitudes align with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model, if at all?’ The Five Domains (5D) Animal Welfare Assessment Model has five different categories (domains) that are considered by animal guardians when undertaking an animal welfare assessment, where each animal experience is rated in each of the first four domains against the situation the animal is in at the time of assessment. The scores are then combined and referenced against descriptors in the fifth domain, which considers ‘affective experience’, to provide a score for the animal’s mental state. In other words, unless the first four domains have been evaluated by the animal guardian, an evaluation of the mental state of the animal is not able to be effectively undertaken.

It is for this functional reason that we will only utilise the headings and descriptors pertaining to the first four domains for a direct word match against the data set. This method will provide an indication:

- a) If sport participants use the 5D model as a framework to describe what is horse welfare.
- b) Which of the four domains resonate most with sport participants.
- c) The extent of the contemporary animal welfare vocabulary.

When interpreting the results through the theoretical lens of the 5D model, we will be able to determine if there is any alignment, where there are any gaps, considerations for communication frameworks, and any further research.

This is an innovative application of the 5D model within the field of social sciences, providing a new way to analyse data collected about attitudes towards horse welfare.

3.4 The research partner and sport

The Australian Endurance Riders Association (AERA) is the project partner for this research study (AERA, 2018a). Endurance riding is a sport where horses are ridden on roads, trails and tracks over a long distance of up to 160 kilometres. Events feature different distances and rider weight and age categories, with the winner being the first to cross the finish line with a fit horse as assessed by veterinarians. Riders who complete the course within a total time allowed and have a fit horse are also recognised (Equestrian Australia, 2018).

The sport has been recognised officially by the FEI since 1982 (FEI, 2018a). In recent years, as the sport has commercialised, and attracted wider participation by countries including the United Arab Emirates, an evolution has occurred leading to a conflict of values and ideas. Changes leading to internal and external political challenges include the welfare implications of pushing horses to maintain constant faster speeds (endurance ‘racing’), ‘groomed’ or manufactured tracks to allow faster travel, and a growing concern over the number of serious horse injuries and deaths (Clean Endurance, 2019; Kyriacou, 2019b). For example, the recent 2018 World Equestrian Games in Tyron, USA, saw 53 of

the 90 horses entered admitted to the veterinary hospital prior to event cancellation (O'Bryant, 2018). However, Australian endurance riding is conducted in the traditional format, with comprehensive veterinary oversight enabled through the Australian Endurance Riders Association Rulebook (AERA, 2019).

3.4.1 Identification of stakeholders, establishing question themes

Sport horse welfare is a complex problem with a myriad of contentious issues influenced by subjective interpretations of racing and equestrian traditions, politics, culture, hidden sub-cultures, geographic location, gender and a narrow body of relational science where methodologies incorporate integrated non-traditional fields, for example horses, law and social sciences (Adelman & Thompson, 2017; Merritt, 2016, pp. 267–270). A social licence to operate is, in itself, a reason to engage or re-engage with stakeholders, a concept that should not be forgotten (Boutilier, 2014, p. 271).

Stakeholder identification is a factor when developing a communication framework to mitigate risks associated with an unstable discourse. Within stakeholder groups there will be cohorts ready to listen and understand, and who are prepared to enter into dialogue designed to transparently shape decisions about welfare (Black, 2013, pp. 63–66; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017a, pp. 347–348).

A key step involves finding common ground where relationships can be built or strengthened, including through the development of new knowledge, and to invest in the skills associated with organisational listening, empathy and negotiation in order to begin

dialogue on the contestable issues (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017b, p. 137; Yankelovich, 1999, pp. 46–105).

This project seeks to understand sport participant attitudes to horse welfare from a perspective that will help inform an organisational communication framework:

- a) To understand attitudes in relation to stakeholder groups.
- b) To understand attitudes which influence participation in a social licence to operate through the themes of credibility, building trust, organisational transparency and finding common ground.

3.4.1.1 Identification of stakeholder groups

Informed by this literature review, a mind map was prepared featuring common sports horse organisation stakeholders (Figure 6). The exercise identified a greater number of stakeholders than was able to be managed within the project timelines. The following groupings were selected: (1) sport participants; (2) the organisation; (3) horse breeders; (4) government; (5) research. Future studies could investigate stakeholders excluded from this study, for example, veterinarians and businesses providing corporate sponsorship.

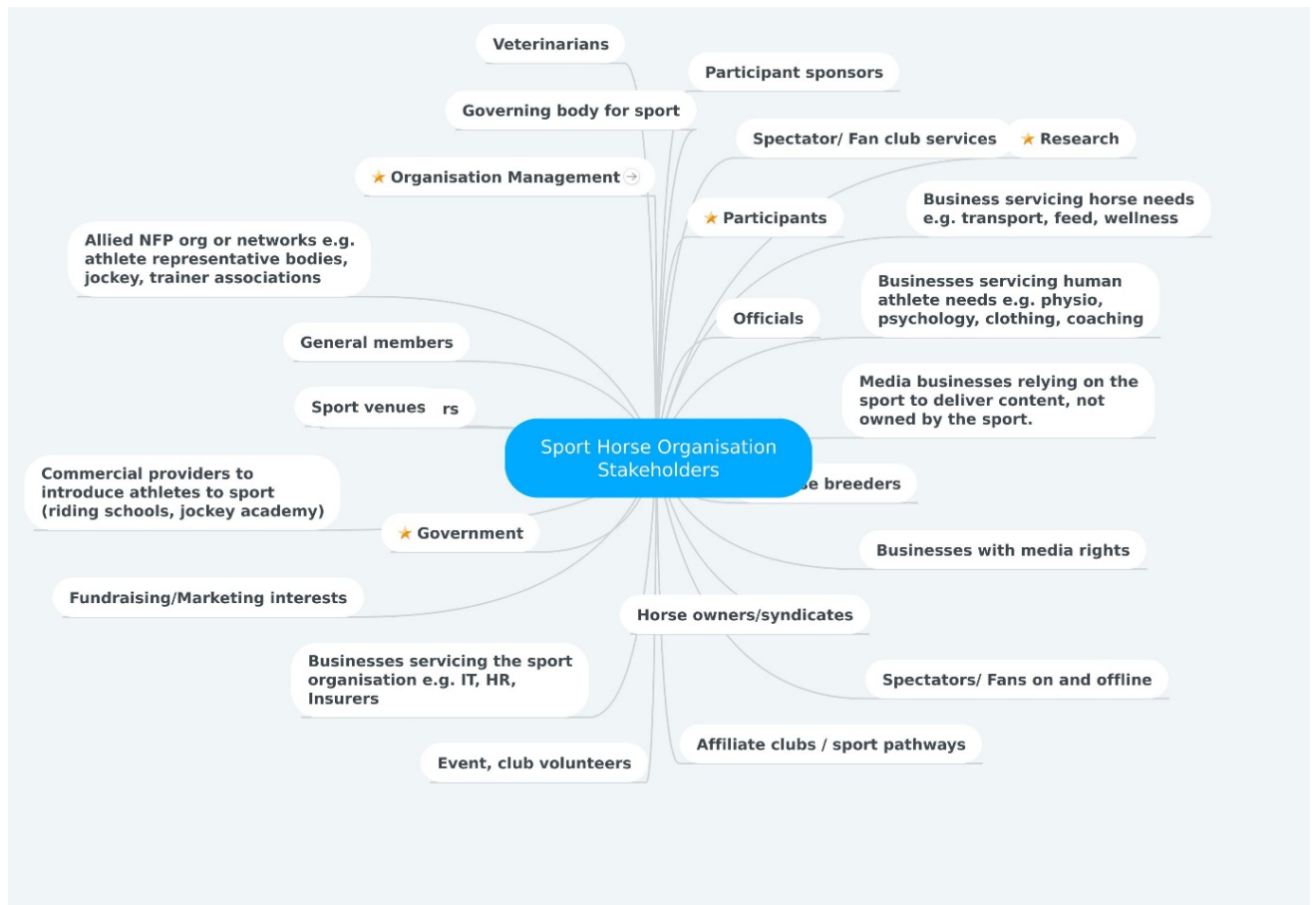


Figure 6: Sport horse industry stakeholders mind map

3.4.1.2 Selecting general themes to guide structure of questions

The literature review guided theme setting, whereby questions would be similar for each stakeholder group. As discussed in the literature review, the public discourse relating to the perceived risk to the welfare of sport horses can be contentious, with many ‘voices for the horse’. Further, the public begin to question their trust in the sport governing body to safeguard the non-human athlete on the field of play. For organisations to effectively manage internal risks and begin to address public concerns, organisations need to develop a greater understanding of participants’ attitudes to welfare.

For this study, data was collected which may identify where common ground may be found, as this existing social capital can inform the approach to the contested discourses. Similarly, through understanding attitudes about welfare, organisations may identify opportunities for building and maintaining the underpinning elements of SLO, being legitimacy, trust and credibility.

Table 2

Question Themes

No.	Theme-lines	SLO linkage
1	Alignment of attitudes	Finding common ground (Legitimacy)
2	Listening, then acknowledging or acting on horse welfare messages	Trust
3	Opportunities for the co-creation of new welfare knowledge	Trust
4	Sharing information with members	Transparency
5	Public sharing of horse welfare knowledge/initiatives to assist in the delivery of welfare outcomes for the sport	Transparency
6	Understanding who is seen to lead horse welfare initiatives, take leading roles	Credibility

3.5 The Likert survey

The Likert survey model is the primary instrument for collection of qualitative and quantitative data to enable answering of RQ1.

Prepared as an online survey, a web link is cost effective to distribute by the Australian Endurance Riders Association, and is the method agreed to by delegates at a national board meeting (AERA, 2018b, p. 16). Further, a Likert scale survey model allows for each response to be allocated a numerical value (Punch, 2014, p. 234), reducing perceptions of bias which may occur with the CI recognised as an insider researcher, therefore aiding to build trust in the research process (Evans & Mathur, 2018, p. 854). Prior to writing the survey, a brief plan was written to guide execution of the task. The plan had six phases (Figure 7) each of which we will now discuss in more detail.

3.5.1.1 *Step 1: Plan the survey*

The first phase involved writing a plan to provide operational guidance and timeline management. Tasks included opening an account with Central Queensland University (CQU) corporate licence for SurveyMonkey™ and lodging the plan and survey questions for ethics approval.

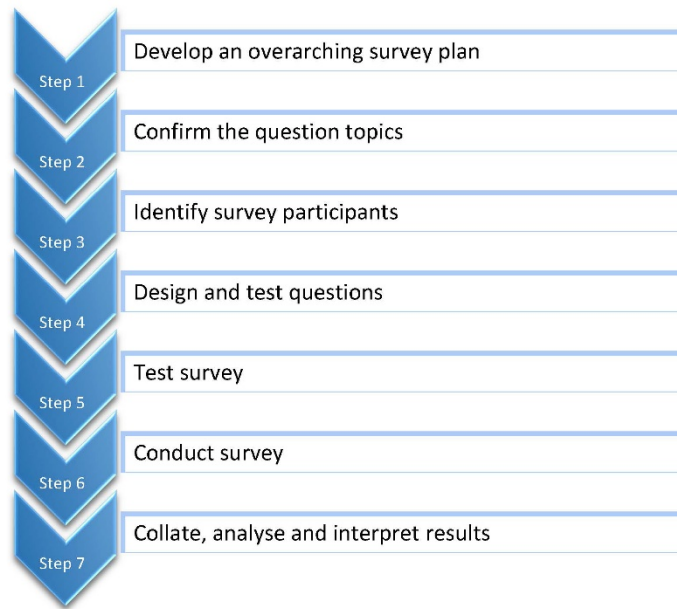


Figure 7: Survey plan

3.5.1.2 Step 2: Design the survey

An online survey was designed consisting of 38 questions in total.

Quantitative data pertaining to the respondents' attitudes to horse welfare was collected through 30 Likert-style questions grouped to address the participants' attitudes to other participants, the sports organisation, horse breeders, government and research. The Likert survey utilised a scale of one to seven: (1) Don't know (2) Strongly disagree (3) Disagree (4) Neither agree nor disagree (5) Agree (6) Strongly agree (7) Not applicable.

Qualitative data was collected through two open questions which ask respondents to complete the sentences: 'What is welfare?' and 'What is social licence to operate?'

3.5.1.3 Step 3: Identify survey participants

The target audience is sport participants associated with the Australian Endurance Riders Association (AERA). To recruit volunteer participants an email notification calling for volunteer participants was issued by the AERA Secretary to state and regional committees. One limitation on the self-selection process was that volunteers were required to be over 18 years of age. No other limitation was placed on gender or location. There was no requirement to provide evidence of membership of AERA as this may have identified the survey respondent. AERA has approximately 1600 members, and it was anticipated that a response rate of 16% (n=250) could be achieved.

3.5.1.4 Step 4: Develop the introduction and questions

This phase involved the development of an introduction aligned with CQU policy, refining and ordering the questions and a concluding statement.

The introduction included a research project overview, information about how long the survey was expected to take, benefits and risks associated with participation, confidentiality and anonymity, project outcomes, consent to participate, right to withdraw, complaints and contact details for survey feedback. A conclusion statement incorporated a reminder about confidentiality, publication of results, concerns or complaints and contact details.

3.5.1.5 Step 5: Test the survey

Testing the survey provided an opportunity to check sample results and to adjust questions.

Trial participants timed how long it took to complete and provided feedback to the researcher on the online usability and flow (“Survey Guidelines: Best practice for conducting surveys”, 2014). Further, test respondents provided feedback on the ‘voice’ of the survey, ensuring that researcher bias was not evident which in turn could affect the answers and risk the validity of results (Novak & Sellnow, 2009, p. 370).

3.5.1.6 Step 6: Conduct the survey

Phase six involved conducting the survey. As the survey was online, it was expected that responses may be received more quickly than a traditional face-to-face or postal survey (Kiesler & Sproull, 1986, p. 411). During the period of time that the survey link was live, the researcher actively observed the survey response rate and addressed any reported faults. The time period the survey was open was 28 days (closed Monday May 14, 2018).

3.5.1.7 Step 7: Analyse and interpret results

This phase involved a staged approach to the analysis and interpretation of survey data, which is discussed later in this chapter.

3.6 Semi-structured interviews

The purpose for selection of semi-structured interviews in this study was two-fold, to validate early survey findings and to provide sport participants to expand on topics and issues to meet the study goals.

Semi-structured interviews are a broadly accepted research tool to allow the researcher to expand on lines of inquiry (Grindsted, 2005, p. 1015; Grix, 2010, p. 128). Interviews allow the researcher to hear in the research participant's voice how they give meaning to the information collected and associate it within their worlds (Grindsted, 2005, p. 1015; Rabionet, 2011, p. 563). Further, interviews are a suitable research tool where there may be a diversity of views and a limitation of established knowledge about a subject. The method allows for discretion on the order questions and permits time for the sharing of ideas, beliefs and values (Kallio et al., 2016, p. 2595; Wilson, 2013, p. 24).

Three key limitations were identified for the semi-structured interviews. The first, that participants in the sport have a vested interest and there may not be the diversity of views being sought by the researchers (Merritt, 2017b, p. 25). Second, SLO applied to horses-in-sport activities is only a recent phenomenon and the participants may not have a high level of awareness or had experience in talking about the topic (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1; Owers, 2017).

Third, the CI has no research or industry experiences with semi-structured or other types of interview techniques, resulting in poor insight into what risk mitigation actions may be

required. As the CI has had little experience with semi-structured interviews, a training session was arranged at CQU with other Masters and PhD candidates with Associate Professor Kirrilly Thompson prior to commencing this section.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews: Five step plan

The process for planning and the conduct of the interviews followed a five-step process described below.

3.6.1.1 *Plan the interviews*

In this first step a plan for undertaking the semi-structured interviews involving identifying tasks to be completed including preparation of an interview guide, an interviewee information sheet, an interviewee consent form, and a procedure for conducting and recording the interviews. The plan was submitted to the CQU Human Ethics Committee along with the proposed questions (Figure 8).

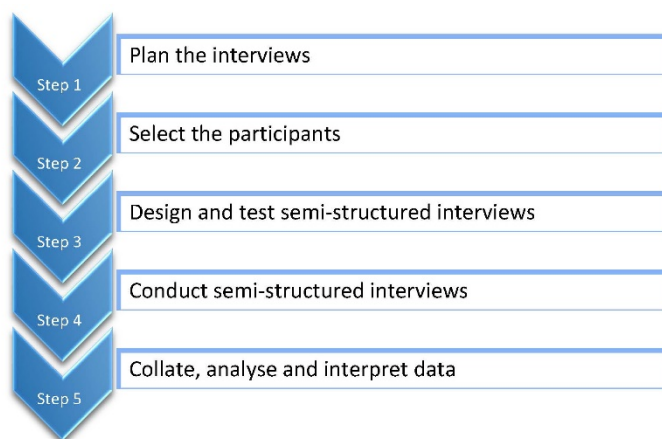


Figure 8: *Semi-structured interview plan*

3.6.1.2 Identify survey participants

AERA distributed the call for interview volunteers through their Australia-wide networks. One limitation on the self-selection process was that interviewees must be over 18 years of age. No other limitation was placed on gender or location, and there was no requirement for the participant to have completed the online survey as a pre-requisite. On responding, the volunteers were issued with an information sheet about the project which included information about the right to withdraw at any time, de-identification of data and who to contact at CQU if they had a concern. A consent form was also provided.

To ensure that no direct financial cost would be incurred by volunteers, online interviews were held using GoToMeeting™. The program offers the opportunity for MP4 video and MP3 audio recordings; however, only audio was utilised avoiding issues which may be caused by less than optimal Internet connection. The licence for GoToMeeting™ is held by Horse SA, a project supporter, with the CI experienced in operating the platform.

Twenty-five interviewees were proposed in the Confirmation of Candidature, with the researcher seeking a diversity of membership profile, for example, gender, geographic location, and membership category. However, after an initial invitation and reminders, a total of three volunteers responded to the call, with two interviews completed.

Potential reasons for the low uptake include the timing of the call during the busy competition season, sport participants considering the survey met their needs, or lack of interest.

3.6.1.3 Develop and test interview format

The interview questions consisted of a short list of open-ended questions which sought to expand on and explore ideas raised in the survey, including any public opinions about their sport.

An interview guide was prepared, to support the CI in managing potential issues that may occur, for example, long silences, long answers, or to bring the interviewee back onto topic.

This documentation was revisited again at the time of the interview (Petrova et al., 2016, p. 452). Each participant was issued with a project identity number in order to ensure de-identification. On completion of the interviews, the MP3 recordings were sent to Rev.com online service for transcribing.

Due to the complexity of learning to use Nvivo TM and the low number of interview respondents, this tool was not utilised for this project, which is a variation on what was proposed in the Confirmation of Candidature.

3.6.1.4 Conduct interviews

Interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed time, with two volunteers completing this task while one was unable to make a suitable time. On logging in, the interviewees were introduced to the project and a verbal consent was recorded. The interviews took an average of 18 minutes to complete, with the researcher hand-writing notes during the

interview both for a reflective purpose and as a back-up should the electronic recording have failed.

3.6.1.5 Collate, analyse and interpret data

This step involved preparing transcripts of the interviews recorded in MP3 format, through transcribing audio into text. The transcript analysis is described further on in this chapter, while the interpretation is discussed in Chapter 4.

3.6.2 Limitations

The key limitations were identified for semi-structured interviews. Firstly, that participants in the sport have a vested interest and there may not be the diversity of views being sought by the CI (Merritt, 2017b, p. 25). Secondly, SLO is only a recent phenomenon in the context of sport horses and the participants may not have a high level of awareness about the topic (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1; Owers, 2017). Limitations associated with cost to the volunteers were overcome by conducting the interviews online, with the donation of interview personal time managed through mutually agreeable scheduling.

In practice, a further limitation which may have led to a low number of volunteers participating was that the endurance ride calendar was well underway. The sport is time consuming when the investment of hours each week by sport participants includes horse fitness training, travel and competition time.

3.7 Risk management

The literature review highlighted risks to manage throughout the survey and interview design, implementation and analysis phases. Of general concern is a low poor response rate, uninhibited responses and participants feeling that the research is posing a threat, for example to the future sustainability of the sport (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011, p. 21; Kiesler & Sproull, 1986, p. 411). However, the review also highlighted opportunities to manage risk, including use of leadership and peer pressure, personal interest in the topic being surveyed and social capital held by the insider researcher influencing a decision to participate (Fang et al., 2009, p. 150; Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009, p. 35; Groves et al., 2004, p. 25).

Risks associated with surveys also include an increasing drop-out rate the longer a survey progresses, manipulation of social media content by organisational reputation managers, and the digital divide leaving gaps where people find it too hard to participate (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009, p. 349; Höijer, 2011; Kennedy & Sommerfeldt, 2015; Lai & To, 2015). To reduce the risks associated with dropping out, images of horses were included in this survey to strengthen identity with the topic (Groves et al., 2004, p. 2; Schonlau, 2002, p. 363).

Further, survey participants may associate the question relating to SLO as a threat to the conduct of the sport, that is seeing the researcher as a risk factor to their organisation's SLO. This risk was mitigated through coordinating with the horse sport body AERA to

directly lead and invite participation in the survey. No survey promotion was directly undertaken by the researcher.

Recognising the abovementioned risks and drivers, the CI drew on researcher insider status and existing social capital through past project management roles which engaged the wider Australian horse industry. A presentation about the research project was provided to the board of AERA prior to the survey and interview stages. In this way, the time and effort needed to build social capital from scratch was reduced, a factor when potential survey respondents are deciding to participate (Fang et al., 2009, p. 150).

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis facilitates preparation of a descriptive text to support discussion about the results and aids to identify future research recommendations. Further, the results can be presented in a variety of formats, including numerical values and percentages, graphs and charts. Similarly, the use of colourful and descriptive information graphics acts as an aid for interpretation and builds social capital as the researcher seeks to co-construct knowledge in a way that gives meaning to sports organisations and participants as the target audience (Onwuegbuzie & Dickinson, 2008, pp. 220–221).

In this study, iStock TM images were utilised for the survey, while for conference presentations delivered during the study period and for this document, illustrations were commissioned, or permission was sought to use photographs and existing illustrations developed by Horse SA.

3.8.1.1 Survey analysis

Survey data was subject to statistical analysis, percentage calculations and descriptive text analysis.

The Likert model facilitates this type of data interpretation through the ability to apply numerical values to answers, making it easier to compare and contrast results. However, it does not replace the researcher, who is the ultimate analyst (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011, p. 82). During analysis, the researcher will need to determine if any post-survey adjustments are required, including determining actions to take with incomplete surveys, invalid answers or ineligible participants.

In this project, in preparation for statistical analysis of the Likert survey questions using the program ANOVA, data was cleaned, including removal of the ‘not applicable’ range and conversion of answers to numerical values. Similarly, the demographic questions were cleaned before statistical analysis.

The Likert questions were also subject to calculation of percentages associated with identified answers on the scale. The percentage scores for the responses to ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’, and separately the combined answers of ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’. Further, given the high percentages associated with answers applied to ‘neither disagree or agree’ and ‘don’t know’, these scores were combined to arrive at a new classification of ‘unsure’.

The open question relating to horse welfare underwent a direct word match analysis in relation to the four domains of Nutrition, Environment, Health and Behaviour. This method was selected, as in the practice of applying the 5D animal welfare assessment model, a horse is scored against a domain on the top layer, such as Nutrition, so that the scores can inform assessment of the horse in the associated matching column found under the affective mental state domain. The mental state of the animal cannot be assessed without first evaluating the associated survival or situation-related factors.

Notations were recorded on results of interest, including sport participants' preferred words to describe welfare.

This method provided a tool to manage an issue discussed in Chapter 7, that of insider researcher bias.

3.8.1.2 Conclusion

The sport horse organisation perspective was kept in focus as the target audience for this research, with data collected from sport participants. Results from this research may be utilised to report to members as a form of organisational accountability and guides a way forward for future horse welfare negotiations (Bice & Moffat, 2014, p. 257; Black, 2013, pp. 92–93).

Further, understanding sport participant attitudes about horse welfare in relation to a range of stakeholder groups builds social capital resources held by an organisation.

However, discussions around research findings will need to recognise that the dynamic

SLO is not an exact science, because of the ever-evolving nature and involvement of several fields of study; it may be, in the same way as social capital, just a *praxis* (Sabatini, 2009, p. 429).

3.9 Ethics

CQU guidelines and policies related to research and the ethics approval process informed the plan, which included the procedure for volunteer recruitment, consent to participate, conduct and recording of the interviews, guidelines for recording and data analysis. This process supported answering of the research questions, and the final report (Rabionet, 2011, p. 563). The CQU ethics approval reference number is 0000020770.

4 Results

4.1.1 Introduction

The data presented in this chapter informs the two overarching aims of this project which are, firstly, to build on existing knowledge relating to SLO and, secondly, to inform an organisational communication framework. The results support answering of RQ1 ‘What are the attitudes of horse sport organisation participants about horse welfare?’ and RQ2 ‘How do attitudes align with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model, if at all?’

This section will firstly look at the survey respondents’ demographics before participants’ attitudes about working with their organisation, and how the organisation works with participants. Following on are study results relating to attitudes towards a SLO, women, professionals and amateurs before outlining attitudes to the stakeholders of government, horse breeders and researchers.

The chapter closes with the presentation of data about sport participant attitudes towards horse welfare and alignment with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model.

4.1.2 Survey respondent profile

Surveys were distributed to 1600 sports participants, with 107 survey returns received, a response rate of 7%.

4.1.2.1 Gender

The survey targeted sport horse participants associated with endurance riding in Australia. Of the 107 participants who commenced the survey, 83 respondents completed the question relating to gender. A total of 64 (77.11%) females and 19 (22.89%) males responded.

4.1.2.2 Age

The youngest respondent was 21 years, with the oldest recording an age of 72 years. The overall mean age was 51.8 years (mean SD 9.8). Respondents lived in every state and territory of Australia except the Northern Territory.

4.1.2.3 Number of years with horses

The number of years involved with horses is a mean of 18.86 years (SD 11.18).

4.1.2.4 Ratio of professionals to amateurs

Of the total responses to this question (N=81), there were 63 (77.78%) respondents who identified with being an amateur, gaining no income from their association with horses, while 18 (22.22%) identified with being a professional, gaining some income ranging from casual to full-time.

4.2 Describing social licence to operate

This section discusses responses to the survey open question ‘Social licence to operate is...’. As there is no single definition of a SLO, a two-step approach was taken. The first step was a general coding exercise to group answers into themes, before moving to the second step of applying the specific search terms of ‘legitimacy’, ‘credibility’, ‘trust’ and ‘consent’.

The responses were coded into the following themes, ranked from highest to the lowest. In some cases, individual answers contained text which fell into more than one coding category (Table 3).

Table 3

‘Social licence to operate is ...’ Themes

Rank	Theme	Example text	No.
1	Public acceptance and outsider perception	community agrees, moral compass, acceptance, tolerance, recognition, transparency, information, sport can go ahead, socially acceptable, meets community expectations, general public senses horses are cared for, the community agrees, public permission, tacit approval, what we do...is OK, outsiders not concerned, perception, what the public thinks, accountability, look welfare critics in the eye, public view, people power, horse cannot be seen to suffer, mindful of moral & ethical obligations	34

2	Don't know	??, not sure, means nothing, n/a, no idea, unsure, never heard of it	28
3	Horse, people welfare	Personal accountability, horse care, welfare of all parties, goal to improve welfare of horses, welfare & safety, good welfare outcomes, high horse welfare protocols, have horses around horses	15
4	Gain a licence	from ignorant masses, don't need licence (aka taxes), BS, from... know nothing about our sport, control by others that's not required, PETA dreamed up, to run an event, government, to ride in the area, non-professional licence	13
6	Sport	all of above, speed & distance reduction, AERA... does not operate in the interests of the sport	3
7	Communication	social interaction to share knowledge, members to share opinions, member voice	2
8	Organisation's relevance	relevant, growth, enjoy sport function, investment	2
9	Peer acceptance	Informal approval by members	1

The highest number of words describing respondents' attitudes to SLO (n=34) were in the category of 'Public acceptance and outsider perception', which indicates a general awareness of the SLO phenomena.

However, if the remaining categories 2 to 9 are combined, including the categories of 'don't know' and 'health and welfare', the outcome is 64. When calculated in this manner, the results indicate that there is a greater number of people who are unsure about

a SLO than those with a general awareness of the need to acknowledge community sentiment.

A direct word match analysis revealed no mention of the words associated with SLO as discussed earlier in this thesis, being ‘legitimacy’, ‘credibility’, ‘trust’ and ‘consent’.

4.3 Sport participants and sport organisations working together

The percentage scores were calculated for all 30 Likert questions, with the eight highest scoring questions shown in Table 4. The highest percentage scores occurred only in two question clusters:

- 1) The sport participants’ (survey respondents’) attitudes about horse welfare relating to working with their organisation.
- 2) The sport participants’ (survey respondents’) attitudes about horse welfare relating to the organisation working with members.

Questions relating to sport participants’ (survey respondents’) attitudes about horse welfare in relation to horse breeders, government and research scored lower percentages.

The percentage scores from ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ were combined for all 30 Likert questions and are displayed in this table from highest to lowest percentage score (Table 4).

Table 4

The Highest Total Percentage Scores Occurred in Only Two Stakeholder Groups.

Stakeholder Group	Q. #	Question theme	Score %
Participants	6	I support members contributing to research data which will assist my organisation to deliver horse welfare outcomes for our sport	89.72
Participants	2	I listen to and act on horse welfare messages from my organisation	85.99
Participants	4	I participate in opportunities to share horse welfare information and education with other members	84.11
Participants	3	I contribute to opportunities to build to new knowledge about horse welfare	78.5
Organisations	12	The organisation makes information publicly available to support understanding of how we deliver welfare for our sport (Q12)	73.69
Organisations	7	The organisation leads horse welfare continuous improvement initiatives on behalf of members	72.63
Participants	1	Through my organisation, I contribute to horse welfare continuous improvement initiatives	69.16
Organisations	11	Overall, the organisation management has similar viewpoints to my own on horse welfare	67.37

4.4 Reflections on equestrian sport cultures

The following section provides results relating to gender, the professional or amateur status of participants and the number of years involved with endurance horses.

4.4.1 Women agree more on...

Overall, women are more likely to agree than men ($P > 0.05\%$) when asked the following questions, as listed in the chart below (Table 5).

Table 5

Themes Where Women Were More Likely to Agree Than Men

Stakeholder Group	Q #	Questions
Participants	2	I listen and act on messages from my organisation about horse welfare
Organisation	7	The organisation leads horse welfare on behalf of members
Organisation	8	The organisation listens to and acknowledges horse welfare improvement ideas from members
Organisation	11	Overall, the organisation management has similar views to my own on horse welfare
Research	27	The organisation actively works with researchers on building horse welfare knowledge

Note. $P > 0.05\%$

There were no statistically significant results where males held a stronger viewpoint.

4.4.2 Professional and amateur attitudes towards horse welfare

In relation to professionals and amateurs, there were two questions which recorded statistically significant responses ($P > 0.05\%$).

Overall, professionals were more likely to agree that they contribute to building new knowledge about horse welfare (Q3) while amateurs were more likely to agree that scientific research leads to the building of new knowledge in horse welfare practices (Q25).

Table 6

Themes More Likely to be Agreed On by Professionals and Amateurs

Stakeholder group	Q#	Question theme	P > 0.05%
Participants	3	I contribute to opportunities to build new knowledge about horse welfare	Professionals
Research	25	Scientific research leads the building of new knowledge in horse welfare practices	Amateurs

4.5 Sport stakeholder relations

The next section presents results for sport participants' attitudes towards welfare in three stakeholder groups of horse breeders, government and researchers.

4.5.1 Government

When asked if the government regulates horse welfare and therefore the organisation cannot do anything about it, 38.05% disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, in this question, 25% neither agreed nor disagreed, and a further 22.83% didn't know. Similarly, when asked if respondents felt that government listens to and acknowledges the organisation's horse welfare initiatives, 20.65% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 28.26% neither agreed or disagreed, and 30.23% didn't know.

When asked if government representatives are invited to contribute to the organisation information and education or members relating to horse welfare, 20.65% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 17.39% agreed or strongly agreed. When combining the scores of don't know and neither disagree or agree, a high 60.87% were unsure, the highest of all questions in this stakeholder group when calculated using this method (refer to Table 7).

When asked if the organisation actively works with government on horse welfare initiatives, 25% agreed or strongly agreed. However, similarly high percentages were found in the neither agree or disagree (28.26%) or don't know (30.23%). Further, if government regulations align with the respondent's views on horse welfare within the sport, 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 29.35% neither agreed or disagreed, and 23.91% didn't know.

Most respondents (37.77%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the government publishes information to support the delivery of horse welfare outcomes for their sport, while 19.57% neither agreed or disagreed and 25% didn't know.

Overall, respondents were unsure about the sport and the government context. To highlight this finding, we have created a chart with the heading 'Unsure' which combined scores of 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'don't know' for each relevant question.

Table 7

Government Relations: 'Unsure': Where 'Neither Agree nor Disagree' and 'Don't Know' Were Combined

Q#	Question theme	Score % Unsure ^
15	Government representatives are invited to contribute to the organisation information and education for members relating to horse welfare	60.87 %
14	The government listens to and acknowledges the organisation's horse welfare initiatives	58.49%
16	The organisation actively works with government on horse welfare initiatives	58.49%
17	Overall, government regulations align with my views on horse welfare within the sport	53.26%
13	Government regulates horse welfare ; therefore the organisation cannot do anything about it	47.85%
18	The government publishes information that is used to support the delivery of horse welfare outcomes for their sport	44.5 %

4.5.2 Horse breeders

Respondents (sport participants) were the most polarised when it came to attitudes towards horse welfare as it relates to relationships with horse breeders (Table 8).

The results are displayed in percentage scores from highest to lowest as it relates to the combined scores of ‘agree and strongly agree’.

Table 8

Survey Respondents’ Attitudes about Horse Welfare in Relationship to the Stakeholder Group of Horse Breeders

Stakeholder Group: Breeders	Q #	Question theme	Don’t know %	Disagree/ Strongly disagree %	Neither agree/ disagree %	Agree/ Strongly Agree %
	23	Overall, breeders have similar views to my own on horse welfare within our sport	17.58	30.77	18.68	31.86
	22	Breeders are invited to contribute to the organisation’s information and education for members	25.27	29.67	23.08	21.98
	20	Breeders listen to and acknowledge our sport’s horse welfare initiatives	14.29	28.57	36.26	20.88
	21	The organisation facilitates opportunities for members and	17.58	32.97	28.57	20.88

		breeders to work together to grow knowledge in horse welfare				
	24	The organisation works with breeders to make information publicly available to support understanding of how we deliver welfare outcomes in our sport	27.47	26.37	27.47	18.68
	19	Breeders lead horse welfare continuous improvement	8.79	38.46	36.26	16.49

In the question relating to if breeders lead horse welfare to improve horse welfare outcomes, 38.46% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 36.26% neither agreed or disagreed. Further, most respondents (36.26%) neither agreed nor disagreed when asked if breeders listened to and acknowledged the sports horse welfare initiatives.

Survey respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed (32.97%) that the organisation facilitated opportunities for members and breeders to work together to grow knowledge in horse welfare. When asked if horse breeders are invited to contribute information that is used to support the delivery of horse welfare outcomes for the sport, 29.67% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 25.27% did not know.

There was division amongst respondents about breeders holding the same attitudes as their own towards horse welfare, with 31.86% agreeing or strongly agreeing, while 30.77% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Further, when asked if the organisation actively works with breeders on promoting horse welfare initiatives, 32.97% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4.5.3 Researchers

Survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed (70.93%) that scientific research can lead horse welfare outcomes, while 9.30% neither agreed or disagreed, and 11.63% didn't know. Additionally, when asked if researchers listen to and acknowledge the organisation's welfare initiatives, 34.89% agreed or strongly agreed with 30.23% unsure and 25.58% neither agreed or disagreed.

When asked if the organisation works with researchers to build new horse welfare knowledge, 39.53% agreed or strongly agreed, and 15.11% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 25.58% didn't know.

Further, the question which asked if survey respondents considered if researchers were invited to undertake research which contributes to the organisation's information and education for members about horse welfare, 41.87% agreed or strongly agreed, while 6.98% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When asked if, overall, research findings aligned with their views on horse welfare in their sport, 51.16% agreed or strongly agreed, with 25.58% neither agreeing or disagreeing, while 16.28% didn't know.

Similarly, most participants were aware that research organisations published information that supported the delivery of horse welfare outcomes for their sport, with 56.98% agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, 17.44% didn't know while 16.28% neither agreed nor disagreed.

However, overall many respondents were unsure about how research and sport interfaced, which is highlighted by combining scores of ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘don’t know’ (Table 9).

Table 9

Unsure: Combined Scores from ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’ and ‘Don’t Know’

Question theme	Score % Unsure	Q #
Researchers listen to and acknowledge the organisation’s welfare initiatives	55.81%	26
Researchers are invited to undertake research which contributes to the organisation’s information and education for members	51.79%	28
Overall, research findings align with my views on horse welfare in our sport	41.86%	29
The organisation actively works with researchers to build new horse welfare knowledge	40.69%	27
Research organisations publish information that supports the delivery of horse welfare outcomes for our sport	33.72%	30
Scientific research leads the building of new knowledge in horse welfare practices	20.93%	25

4.6 Sport participants' perspectives on horse welfare

4.6.1 Horse welfare is?

Sport participants were asked to complete the open question: 'Horse welfare is....'. All responses were reviewed using a direct word match analysis for two known animal welfare reference points, namely the 'Five Freedoms and Five Provisions' and the 'Five Domains Animal Welfare Model'. There were no references in full to either the Five Freedoms or the Five Domains Animal Welfare Model. Two (n=2) respondents used the phrase 'freedom from...'

Table 10 displays results of a direct word match analysis for the domains of Nutrition, Health, Environment and Behaviour.

Table 10

Five Domains Model: Direct Word Matches with the Five Domain Animal Welfare Model

Domain Headings

Rank	Domain	Direct word matches
1	Health	19
2	Environment	3
3	Nutrition	0
4	Behaviour	0

The two references closest to a current animal welfare framework relate to these statements, likely to align with the 'Five Freedoms':

‘Freedom from pain, hunger, thirst, excessive demands metabolically, and from increased risk of serious injury.’

‘Freedom from thirst, hunger and pain. Freedom from training practices and devices that cause suffering.’

Similarly, there were examples where ‘environment’ was referred to in a very broad sense by the respondent:

‘Making sure that the horse has a correct environment, including feeding, exercise, health care & housing.’

‘Maintaining quality care for horses both in and out of their competition environment.’

When investigating common terms for describing what horse welfare is, the most common words contained within phrases were ‘care’, mentioned 19 (n=19) times and ‘well-being’, mentioned 12 (n=12) times. Four (n=4) respondents reiterated the term ‘welfare’, with two examples providing responses to the prompt ‘Horse welfare is...’

‘Looking after the horse’s welfare in my sport.’

‘Having horse welfare as our first priority.’

Respondents approached describing welfare from both a positive and negative aspect. For descriptive purposes this section refers to ‘positive’ when a human adds an action to

intervene with the care of the horse in an effort to improve welfare status. In contrast, 'negative' refers to the removal of, or not undertaking, an action.

Examples of describing interventions (positive):

'Looking after the health and wellbeing of your horse on a daily basis whether it be through diet, exercise, worming, rugging etc. day to day care of.'

'Appropriate care delivery for horses, including feeding, housing, working and treatments.'

Examples of describing interventions (negative):

'Ensuring animals are not deliberately injured or kept in consistently hazardous situations and do not suffer from deprivation of feed, water, shelter and equine companionship.'

'.... don't over ride your horse in competition...'

'...not beaten when competing, not ridden beyond capacity.'

The physical state of the horse was not the only consideration, with five (n=5) respondents referring to the 'emotional' state of the horse, while four (n=4) referenced the 'mental' state and two (n=2) referred to the 'psychological' state, although occasionally the different terms were used in the same phrase. Examples included:

‘Management, training and care that is compatible with horses physical, psychological and emotional needs.’

‘Horses are used only in a way which is not detrimental to their physical bodies or mental / emotional state.’

‘Maintaining mental and physical wellbeing of the horse.’

Reflecting on the earlier discussions in the thesis relating to sentience, agency and anthropomorphic language, the following use of the term ‘happy’ was noted by three respondents (n=3):

‘Healthy, happy equine partner.’

‘Trying to ensure that horses live happy lives.’

‘A happy healthy horse at the end of every event.’

However, when entering the direct word search terms ‘sentient’, ‘agency’, ‘choose’ and ‘choice’ no results were returned. Referring to earlier discussions in the thesis about the non-human athlete, the search term ‘non-human’ did not return a result, however ‘athlete’ returned one (n=1) result:

“Ensuring the mental and physical well-being of our equine athletes at all levels of competition.”

4.6.2 Aligning sport horse and community attitudes towards welfare

The second task involved analysis of keywords to describe welfare as a direct word match with the positive and negative animal experiences listed in the 5D framework. The keywords selected are identified in bold in the chart below. The analysis provides an insight into the depth and breadth of the welfare vocabulary sport horse participants possess to describe different positive or negative states the horse may be experiencing.

Table 11

Overall Results. The Five Domains Provisions: Direct Word Matches with Domains 1 to 4

DOMAIN and Provisions	Primary Survey
NUTRITION	0
Restrictions	
Water intake	0
Food intake	0
Food quality	0
Food variety	0
Voluntary overeating	0
Force Feeding	0
Opportunities	
Drink enough water	1
Eat enough food	0
Eat a balanced diet	1
Eat a variety of foods	0
Eating correct quantities	0
ENVIRONMENT	3
Unavoidable/imposed conditions	
Thermal extremes	0
Unsuitable Substrate	0
Close confinement	0
Atmospheric pollutants (CO2, dust, smoke)	0
Unpleasant/strong odours	0
Light: In appropriate intensity	0

Loud/otherwise unpleasant noise	0
Environmental monotony (ambient, physical, lighting)	0
Unpredictable events	0
Available conditions	
Thermally tolerable	0
Suitable substrate	0
Space for freer movement	0
Fresh air	0
Pleasant, tolerable odours	0
Light intensity tolerable	0
Noise exposure acceptable	0
Normal environmental ^ variability	1
Predictability	0
HEALTH	19
Presence of	
Disease: acute, chronic, injury, acute, chronic husbandry mutilations	0
Functional impairment due to limb amputation, or lung, heart, vascular, kidney, neural or other problems	0
Poisons	0
Obesity, Leanness	0
Poor physical fitness: muscle de-conditioning	0
Little or no:	
Disease	0
Injury	1
Functional impairment	0
Poisoning	0
Body condition appropriate	0
Good fitness level	0
BEHAVIOUR	0
Exercise of agency impeded by:	
Invariant, barren environment (ambient, physical, biotic)	0
Inescapable sensory impositions	0
Choices markedly restricted	0
Constraints on environment-focused activity	0
Constraints on animal-to-animal interactive activity	0
Limits on threat avoidance, escape or defensive activity	0
Limitations on sleep, rest	0
Agency exercised via:	
Varied, novel , engaging environmental challenges	0

Congenial sensory inputs	0
Available engaging choices	0
Free movement	0
Exploration	0
foraging/hunting	0
Bonding /reaffirming bonds	0
Rearing young	1
Playing	0
Sexual activity	0
Using refuges, retreats or defensive attack	0
Sufficient sleep/rest	0

4.7 Summary

In this study, respondents were most likely to identify as amateur women, with an average age of 51.8 years, with a mean of 15 years' involvement with the sport of endurance riding.

More people were unsure about SLO than had a general awareness of the need to acknowledge community sentiment.

Overall, the top five relationships that respondents positively identified with were as per Table 12.

Table 12

Top Five Relationships with which Respondents Identified

Ranking	Q. #	Question theme	Score %
1	6	I support members contributing to research data which will assist my organisation to deliver horse welfare outcomes for our sport	89.72
2	2	I listen to and act on horse welfare messages from my organisation	85.99
3	4	I participate in opportunities to share horse welfare information and education with other members	84.11
4	3	I contribute to opportunities to build new knowledge about horse welfare	78.5
5	12	The organisation makes information publicly available to support understanding of how we deliver welfare for our sport (Q12)	73.69

Of the top five, women are more likely to listen and act on organisational messages than males, while professionals are more likely to participate in opportunities to share horse welfare information and education with other members.

The stakeholder group which recorded the most polarising range of responses was horse breeding.

The top three areas where participants were most unsure related to the context of how sport and government interrelated (Table 13).

Table 13

Top Three Sport-Government Relationships Respondents were Most Unsure About

Rank	Q#	Question theme	Unsure ^
1	15	Government representatives are invited to contribute to the organisation information and education or members relating to horse welfare	60.87 %
= 2	14	The government listens to and acknowledges the organisation's horse welfare initiatives	58.49%
= 2	16	The organisation actively works with government on horse welfare initiatives	58.49%

In this study, the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model served as a theoretical lens to evaluate sport horse participants' attitudes towards welfare. However, no respondent referred holistically to this model as a way to frame welfare thinking.

When describing welfare, respondents' answers overwhelmingly aligned within the domain heading of 'health' and most commonly describe welfare using words such as 'care' and 'well-being'.

5 Discussion

Change is incidental, innovation is structural.

Asha Nagesser (Nagesser, 2014).

5.1 Introduction

This study examined sport participant attitudes towards horse welfare in the context of relationships with the organisation, and the stakeholder groups of horse breeders, government and researchers. Further, in order to answer the research questions, participants were asked to describe horse welfare, which was aligned to words used to describe animal welfare states as outlined in the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model.

Horse welfare on the sport field is facing increasing scrutiny, and for sport involving horses to remain viable into the future, an internal understanding of welfare is required. Sport organisations will be able to utilise the findings from this study to inform investment into organisational communication frameworks, further research, provide education programs for participants, and adjust messaging for target audiences.

This chapter discusses the results of the data analysis. The first section looks at building awareness of SLO, the second section explores recognising evolving equestrian cultures, and the third section explores adopting a culture of innovation for horse welfare. The chapter concludes with an argument as to why the findings are important, exploration of the implications for sport horse welfare and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Building awareness of social licence to operate

This study found that there was a general awareness amongst sport horse participants about SLO as a form of public acceptance. For example, when asked to complete the phrase ‘Social licence to operate is.....?’ respondents’ answers included ‘meets community expectations’, ‘tacit approval’ and ‘socially acceptable’. Authors Hampton and Teh-White, in reviewing scientific articles, similarly noted that tacit approval by the community is one term utilised as part of a wider vocabulary associated with SLO (Hampton & Teh-White, p. 1).

However, there was still confusion about what SLO is amongst many survey respondents, who described SLO as a ‘non-professional licence’, or the issue of horse welfare itself. The term ‘licence’ may have led some respondents to think it was a written agreement between two parties. For example, some respondents answered ‘a non-professional licence’, or ‘don’t need a licence (aka taxes)’, rather than the generally accepted definition of a public discourse running on a continuum, at multiple levels, with many valid single issue SLOs at given points (Dare et al., 2014, p. 188; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017b, p. 138; Parsons & Moffat, 2014, p. 340).

For an organisation to address SLO effectively, the phenomenon will need to become familiar territory for sport administrators and participants, as it has in other animal-based sectors. An example is provided in the Australian dairy sector, where industry leaders discuss how their organisation has moved from promoting consumption to building

consumer trust as a factor towards maintaining a SLO (Baker-Dowdell, 2018; Delahunty, 2015).

Examples of organisations taking action to build trust about horse welfare in their sport include the Swiss Equestrian Federation which has introduced new rules governing the tightness of nosebands, the British Horse Racing Authority's report into the number of horse deaths at the Cheltenham Festival, the Ontario Equestrian Federation's donation to research using money saved from ceasing to issue plastic member cards, Harness Racing Australia's review into the use of the whip, and Harness Racing Victoria's online welfare course for trainers (Elder, 2018b; Eurodressage, 2018b; Harness Racing Victoria, 2019; British Horseracing Authority, 2018; Want, 2017b).

The study findings suggest that, overall, there is a need to introduce into sport horse organisation discourses the phenomenon of SLO and its relevance to the future sustainability of sport.

For the SLO discourse to resonate with participants, the organisation will need to utilise a range of online and offline engagement tools providing opportunity for active contribution by sport participants because horse welfare matters from their own perspective. Contribution needs to be recognised as two-way, taking place at many levels, within multiple simultaneous discourses, all occurring along a continuum.

Further, sports organisations should seek out opportunities to facilitate reciprocity featuring exchanges related to building vocabulary and knowledge about welfare, which in turn increases the number of touchpoints familiar with an increasingly welfare-aware

society. Similarly, any future communication framework will need to be founded on principles which build legitimacy, credibility and trust amongst sport participants through the adoption of design elements that feature reciprocity. The framework will need to aim to build capacity amongst sport participants, who are the primary interface with the public, to discuss with the public their sport and attitudes about welfare in a way that, every day, contributes to maintaining the sport's SLO.

5.3 Recognising evolving equestrian cultures

This section discusses participants' viewpoints on stakeholder relations in the context of horse welfare.

5.3.1 Participant-sport relations

The study found that the most positive stakeholder relations exist between the sport participant and their governing sport organisation. For example, participants were willing to contribute to the continuous improvement of horse welfare through building new knowledge, sharing information with the public and participating in research projects. This finding is consistent with Harvey et al (2007), who found that sport organisations are more likely to have a strong social capital foundation where long-term volunteerism exists, and further, that these volunteers are more likely to commit to becoming involved in activities which support the future viability of the sport, even if it appears intangible (Harvey et al., 2007, pp. 219–220). Although our study did not ask about the number of

years in volunteering, there may be a linkage between long-term volunteering and our results where sport participants reported a mean of 18.86 years (SD 11.18) with horses.

The high level of goodwill towards horse welfare is a social capital base, and potentially an untapped resource. There is an opportunity for sport leaders to work with participants to map out the future of horse welfare and plan the ways in which continuous improvement will be hosted into practice through new customs and celebrations to promote cultural adjustment (Skinner et al., 2018, p. 145).

Continuous improvement includes educational opportunities, an engagement opportunity identified by interviewee no. 2 in the semi-structured interviews.

‘...there's no substitute for education... so an expansion of education rather than criticism is probably the better way to engage people. Finding opportunities to do that is our greatest challenge.’ (Interviewee No. 2)

5.3.2 Horse welfare and ‘men’s sheds’

The results found that there was more support amongst women for the co-creation, adoption and sharing of horse welfare initiatives. This is consistent with findings of a study in Landcare, where women featured in the discourses associated with the ‘nurturing’ aspect of caring for the land (Liepins, 1998, pp. 384–385). Similarly, females scored higher in surveys of veterinary students about animal welfare (Hazel et al., 2011, p. 79; Mariti et al., 2018, p. 1). These studies place a gender lens on welfare through links between women and nurturing. However, this provides an opportunity for sports

organisations to develop ways to engage men with the subject of horse welfare. For example, drawing on research findings from the field of men's health, initiatives may include avoidance of stereotyping men and providing culturally 'safe places' online and offline to discuss horse welfare (Misan & Sergeant, 2008, p. 1; Smith, 2007, p. 20). The Australian cultural practice of providing community space in the form of a physical shed in which only men meet ('men's sheds') provides insights into ways in which to culturally position men's self-identification with horse welfare (Misan & Sergeant, 2008, pp. 1–7).

5.3.3 Professionals award social legitimacy

This study found that professionals were more likely to contribute to building new knowledge about horse welfare, while amateurs supported researchers taking the lead in this area.

Validating this finding, the role of experienced sport participants and welfare knowledge sharing was acknowledged by interviewee no. 1, also noting the avoidance of social media platforms by this cohort.

'...because the older people aren't really on Facebook very much, Not in communication on that forum, but at the rides, they're endless information.' (Interviewee No.1)

Professional sport participants' viewpoints were examined in the context of the attitudes shaped by the sharing economy. This cohort is an untapped resource, and unless there are technology-mediated opportunities to be involved in the design, development and

distribution of a project to build new horse welfare knowledge, the outcomes may lack the required legitimacy, regardless of scientific merit (Gallois et al., 2017, pp. 56–57; Thompson & Clarkson, 2016b, p. 89). If engaged, professionals can award social legitimacy to the new knowledge (which may have rulebook or policy implications), acting to bridge the outcomes with amateur owners, in turn contributing towards maintenance of the organisation's SLO (Bice, 2014b, p. 75; Carter et al., 2015, p. 404).

Secondly, organisations may take a similar social approach with amateurs, overtly co-leading new knowledge building with scientists and capitalising on the recognition that amateurs give to research. Based on study findings relating to role-modelling in sport, engagement is more likely to take place if mechanisms are in place to educate amateurs about sports-related research and its processes, and how to implement findings afterwards (Mutter, 2014, p. 334). In particular, the need for plain English interpretation is critical, and further, the findings must be practically applied at both an individual and the wider horse industry scale (Thompson & Clarkson, 2016b, p. 89).

With the rapid commercialisation of equestrian sports and increased access to racing through syndication, further research is required into the differences between professionals' and amateur horse owners' viewpoints on welfare, utilisation of social leadership models to foster horse welfare continuous improvement, and what this means for an organisation's SLO (Bice, 2014a; FEI, 2018c; Magic Millions Sales Pty. Ltd., 2018).

Our findings suggest that sport administrators have an opportunity to exercise organisational transparency through building relationships based on the common interest of horse welfare.

5.3.4 Unconvinced, undecided about sport and government

Sport, as with any other business, operates within the context of the national governance and legal frameworks, and of the societal values which influence how laws are applied. Occasionally, sport organisations may also have direct contractual arrangements with a government department for aspects relating to the delivery of sport to citizens; for example, the Australian Sports Commission investment in the National Sporting Organisation (NSO) Equestrian Australia (Australian Sports Commission, 2019).

In survey questions in the government stakeholder section, 44% or more of respondents were unsure how government interfaced with the sport. This realisation, combined with the poor overall understanding of SLO as discussed earlier, poses a higher risk factor for sport administrators, specifically in countries where governments have in the past withdrawn full or partial support for a sport, for example greyhound racing in Australia and the USA state of Florida (Godfrey, 2016; Kelly, 2018).

In countries with a similar governance structure to Australia, citizens elect representatives to form local, state and national governments. In the literature review, we discussed examples of biosecurity and animal welfare laws which provide a framework under which sports involving horses are required to operate. Information and resources are developed to help sport to comply, in particular, with biosecurity practices through

websites and education programs, including Farm Biosecurity and the online training course of Animal Health Australia (Animal Health Australia, 2018b; Farm Biosecurity Program, 2018).

Further, as outlined in the literature review, horse sport organisations in Australia are uniquely placed through peak body representation on the non-profit public company Animal Health Australia, to advocate for the co-design and development of sport-specific resources. This is likely to be viewed by sport participants as an industry-led exercise in the same way as the *Horse Venue Biosecurity Workbook* (Animal Health Australia, 2018a; Farm Biosecurity, 2018).

However, embracing of common values between government and the sport horse industry may not be a given assumption, due to political history with government or the RSPCA as the entity charged with enforcing animal welfare law on behalf of government. For example, the South Australian Government Minister for Recreation and Sport, Leon Bignell, adopted a negative stance against jump racing, even though the sport was within his own portfolio (Hanifie, 2018; L. Novak, 2017).

This study hypothesises that poor government-industry relations may lead to disengagement of sport participants, particularly if media interest subsides and a transactional, check-box approach is taken to reporting of outcomes to address concerns (Coleman, 2018, p. 18; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017a, p. 348). Likewise, a similar disengagement scenario may occur if little or no information is hosted from government to sport participants by the organisation.

Study results suggest that sport participants prefer the organisation to lead on the issue of horse welfare. In moving forward with disengaged stakeholders, leadership needs to take into account how to use technology to establish opportunities for culturally safe places which promote equality, ways for participants to listen empathetically, and how to strategically introduce challenging topics (Misan & Sergeant, 2008, p. 1; Smith, 2007, p. 20; Yankelovich, 1999, p. 46).

Risks to avoid include ‘group think’, too many welfare reform ideas at once, and miscalculating the impact of the shared economy on culture (Yankelovich, 2015, pp. 31–81). Finding ways for the organisation to exercise transparency in a digital age not only through data sharing, but also through informal and formal opportunities for dialogue, is critical if sport is to remain meaningful for participants and financially viable into the future.

5.3.5 Sport and horse breeders: Looking both ways at once

The study found that the survey respondents were polarised when it came to attitudes relating to how the sport participants (survey respondents) related with the stakeholder group of horse breeders about welfare. As previously discussed in the literature review, racing has rules and administrative systems in place that apply to a horse from birth through to competition, providing racing organisations with a communication pathway. This does not, overall, apply to non-racing sports.

In the sport horse sector, the establishment of the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses (WBFSH) seeks to bridge the gap between breeders and the FEI, as the sport

governing body (WBFSH, 2018). For grass-roots sport horse participants in many countries of the world the federation may appear Europe-centric, particularly if participants are involved in sports not recognised by the Olympics or are associated with breeds of horses whose studbooks are not affiliated with the WBFSH Federation.

For organisations seeking to maintain their SLO, the divergent viewpoints of sport participants about horse breeders is a risk factor, which in the future may be unacceptable. A strategic intervention may be required if long-term trust is to be maintained within the sport.

The polarised viewpoints by sport participants about relationships with horse breeding stakeholders may require the organisation to take an innovative, strategic approach if participants are to contribute meaningfully to the already unstable, contested public discourse about horse welfare.

Strategic innovation is a non-instinctive approach which is not simply responsive to formal organisational strategies, policy or administrative procedures, but is a leadership model which seeks to establish a structural foundation of innovation (Nagesser, 2014; Skinner et al., 2018, p. 145). Innovative culture is agile, responsive to the multiple unstable discourses which are a feature of an organisation's SLO that needs to be flexible and adaptable in all aspects of engagement, communication and decision-making (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, pp. 70–76; Morrison, 2014, pp. 26–36; Nagesser, 2014; Skinner et al., 2018, p. 111; Thomson & Boutilier, 2018).

Innovation includes embracing experimentation and failure as first steps towards an improved outcome (Cannon & Edmondson, 2005, p. 299). If polarised viewpoints exist within a sport organisation, a flexible approach to trial and error of solutions will need to be embraced, and realisation of its long-term value to the mitigation of risk to reputation.

5.3.6 Sport and research: yes, but not sure

Our study found that sport participants felt that researchers were able to lead horse welfare outcomes (70.93%), coupled with the view by over 72% of respondents that the organisation leads continuous improvement in welfare, with women favouring this more than men. These results suggest that sport participants are willing to work with the organisation and researchers on issues about horse welfare.

Further, reflecting on earlier findings, there was very strong support (over 89%) for sport participants to contribute to collecting research data, and by amateurs who agreed that scientific research leads the building of new knowledge.

However, over 50% of respondents were unsure if researchers listen to and acknowledge the organisation's welfare initiatives or if researchers have been invited to undertake research which contributes to the organisation's information base and education for owners. While it appears that there is support for research, there is a level of uncertainty as to whether research was directly relevant to the sport or its participants.

This finding is consistent with study results outlining the need to engage horse owners in research, and for research to be explained in a way that is meaningful for industry and

horse owners alike, including addressing the use of anthropomorphic language, a point discussed later in this study (Thompson, 2017; Thompson & Clarkson, 2016b).

For leaders in sport, our findings suggest an opportunity for sport to co-lead with scientists in building new evidence-based horse welfare information to underpin improvements for horses. However, as discussed earlier, the research process and dissemination of results need to be cognisant of the influencing social factors if the findings are to obtain horse owner acceptance, and ultimately, translate into changed practices.

5.4 Adopting an innovative culture for horse welfare

In this study, the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model serves as a theoretical lens through which to evaluate sport horse participants' attitudes towards welfare. The descriptive words in each domain act as a guide to common welfare terms to describe different animal experiences. Animal guardians, regardless of the species, can utilise the model as a common reference point. The study mapped terminology used by sport horse participants to describe welfare alongside those of the peer-reviewed, multi-species, 5D model.

5.4.1 Sport participants and the collective understanding of welfare

Our study results show that overall, sport participants have a limited horse welfare-vocabulary, and universally explain welfare in non-specific terms, without referring to a framework, for example the Five Freedoms or Five Domains.

The survey indicated that the most common way participants explain horse welfare is to use the generalised terms ‘well-being’ and ‘care’. Well-being is widely accepted as being interchangeable with welfare in the wider community (Fraser, 1993, p. 38; Marc & Carron, 1998, p. 57). As the term was not expanded on to refer to nutrition, environment, health, behaviour or mental state, it is hypothesised that for these survey respondents the word performs as a ‘catch-all’ phrase. The word ‘care’ was used in a similar way. It was unclear whether respondents were familiar with the full scope of what well-being and care imply in relation to standardised animal welfare assessment models.

In the Australian context, the ‘how to’ of animal welfare assessments appears to be an assumed skill and knowledge set amongst amateur and professional horse owners.

Amateur owners are most likely to source information through the Australian Pony Club Manuals, online discussion groups and the Australian or state horse industry councils via publications such as the *Australian Horse Welfare & Wellbeing Toolkit* (Australian Horse Industry Council, 2013; Thompson & Haigh, 2018, p. 1; Thompson et al., 2018, p. 1).

Professionals up-skilling through their workplace, and vocational education students, may access training associated with Australian qualifications provided by Registered Training Organisations. A search of the Australian Government website housing all nationally

endorsed Units of Competency (which are packaged into skill sets or qualifications) on Jan 13th 2019 did not reveal a Unit in which students had to demonstrate competency in how to ‘undertake a horse welfare assessment using a standardised model’ (Australian Government, 2018). However, numerous elements contained within Units that required job tasks to be undertaken appeared to assume that the procedure was known.

The last section will briefly discuss anthropomorphic language, with the descriptive term ‘happy’ favoured by some respondents. Contemporary horse owners have little or no experience of the horse in their previous roles to support war, agriculture, transport or communication, therefore building a relationship and ‘learning together’ is an accepted part of modern equestrian culture (Schuurman, 2017, p. Chapter 3). As societal attitudes evolve toward animal agency and sentience, so will the use of anthropomorphic terms need to be addressed within horse owner education programs.

5.4.2 Aligning attitudes to The Five Domains Model

This study has found that sport horse participants’ views towards welfare aligned poorly with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model. The contemporary 5D model has been adopted by other animal sectors, including zoos. However, in the sport horse sector there appears to be low usage of a reference framework within which to describe welfare, or to describe welfare from the perspective of animal experiences.

The most common reference point for sport horse owners is aligned with the physical domain of health. This finding correlates with results from a study of students completing

an online course about animal welfare who, when asked ‘what is good welfare’, overwhelmingly responded ‘health’ (MacKay et al., 2016, p. 294).

The result may also be reflective of how horse welfare is currently outlined in many sport organisation policies; for example, the *FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of Horses (2013)* and the *International Group of Specialist Racing Veterinarians Horse Welfare Guidelines (2008)* which does not frame welfare in the context of survival, situational or affective experiences of the horse, instead providing a list relating to horse care, fitness to compete, humane treatment and event conditions. (FEI, 2013a; International Group Specialist Racing Veterinarians, 2008).

Past relevant research has included an expert panel assessing negative interventions with horses using an earlier version of the 5D Model. However, as discussed earlier, unless sport participants are involved in research processes, the outcomes may not be viewed as relevant (Fraser et. Al., 2006; McGreevy et al., 2018, p. 114).

5.5 Summary

This study’s findings suggest that sport organisations would benefit from developing a horse welfare strategy coupled with a communication framework. The welfare strategy needs to step beyond the existing ‘list’ style of current sport Codes and Guidelines and go further to outline a systematic step-by-step approach for horse owners and administrators. Led by the sport organisation, the strategy would address how to assess, monitor, modify and set aspirational goals, along the way building a sport-specific welfare vocabulary.

Further, the strategy would seek to increase the number of touchpoints with community attitudes relating to animal sentience, animal agency and the positive and negative applications of anthropomorphic language.

Integration or alignment of a communication framework with the welfare strategy addresses the expectations of participants for a transparent organisation which builds relationships with stakeholders, including horse breeders, government and research. Further, the framework seeks to articulate the processes for design, development and implementation of the welfare strategy into actions.

In addition, the framework will underpin communication processes whereby the organisation can recognise welfare responsibilities and reconcile what it means to be transparent in a digital age while balancing business sustainability with the need to make welfare decisions in the company of the community, who are also voices for the horse.

5.5.1 Future research

Sport horse welfare rests with all in the organisation who have direct and indirect responsibility for the horse, including participants, or internal ‘voices for the horse’, who are sport’s primary interface with the public. It is recommended that future research in this field seek direct involvement of sport participants at all phases of the project from design to post-research implementation, if research results are to resonate with this audience.

Interactive opportunities to build and maintain relationships, facilitate dialogue, professional development events, on and offline education and programs to facilitate cultural adaptation, and other innovative ways are needed to work ‘with’ stakeholders in a digital age.

With this approach, future horse welfare would benefit from embedding a communication and engagement framework from the ground level, including, where opportunity exists, the integration of racing and non-racing common interest areas.

The process to develop a plan provides opportunity to build in welfare assessments, monitoring and continuous improvement measures, and to build capacity amongst sport participants to advocate for the plan in a social world. This includes how to use the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment model to frame dialogue and grow the horse welfare vocabulary.

However, for the 5D to have meaning for sport participants, there will need to be work undertaken to customise the 5D model, as currently it does not have enough common language with industry. It may even need to be customised to suit different geographic and sport sub-culture cohorts.

Future research is also required to grow knowledge on ways to better integrate institutional and social co-leadership, what it means for sport organisations to be transparent in a digital age, and the impact of emergent public discourses about animal sentience, animal agency and the increasing public use of anthropomorphic language.

Further, more knowledge is needed as to how to build capacity in sport administrators and

participants to retain legitimacy, credibility and trust when interfacing ‘with’ the public about attitudes towards welfare.

In seeking to more fully inform an organisational communication framework, further research is required to understand the differences between professionals and amateur horse owners’ viewpoints, specifically in relation to differences in attitudes and relationships intersecting between home stable, organisation-led athlete education and the sporting field.

In addition, further research is required to build knowledge about the influences of gender and socio-economic status, self-identity, and how gender articulates with the use of social media and attitudes to horse welfare. Similarly, in how sport organisation structures address parity and representation in decision-making processes, particularly decisions relating to horse welfare.

Finally, there is call for greater overarching recognition and investment by sport organisations towards equestrian social sciences, and the integration of social sciences with traditional ‘hard’ science fields, for example veterinary science and law. This is to ensure that future scientific investigations consider not only participatory approaches to research design and investigations, but also frame findings to ensure relevance for increasingly ‘social’ sport participants and public.

6 Conclusion

6.1.1 Sport horse welfare and social licence to operate

The Internet has changed the way citizens and society interacts with each other and form opinions (Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, p. 70; Hamari et al., 2016, p. 2048). Individuals no longer only look to institutions for information they trust, instead referring to multiple online sources, public opinion and recommendations by strangers with a #commoninterest (Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017, p. 1079; Rooney et al., 2014; Takac, et al., 2011, p. 185). Government, research and sports organisations are institutions challenged with operating in this ‘new’ environment where there is a focus on the impacts of the ‘social’ part of social media through devolved legitimacy, credibility and trust (Camporesi et al., 2017, pp. 24–29; Cullen-Knox et al., 2017, pp. 70–71; Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017, p. 1079; Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014, p. 15).

6.1.2 Answering the research questions

In answering Research Question 1, ‘What are the attitudes of horse sport organisations about horse welfare?’, this study found that social capital exists between the participants and the organisation, and a level of goodwill which is demonstrated by a willingness to work for longer-term sustainability of the sport through collaborating on the common interest issue of horse welfare.

In answering Research Question 2, ‘How do attitudes align with the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model, if at all?’, this study found that, overall, there was a poor alignment, suggesting that sport organisations would benefit from developing a horse welfare strategy which steps beyond the existing ‘list’ style feature of current sport Codes and Guidelines and goes further to outline a systematic step-by-step approach on how to set aspirational horse welfare goals, and then assess, monitor, and as required, modify.

The project’s aims of contributing to increased knowledge about SLO in the context of sport horses have been addressed through building knowledge about how sport participants currently discuss SLO. The findings suggest that overall, there is a need to increase information provided to sport participants about the phenomenon of SLO and its relevance to the future sustainability of sport.

The study results will address one of the overarching aims of the project, which is to inform a sport’s communication framework designed to enhance participation in a SLO. This has been achieved through giving recognition to the integration or alignment of a communication framework with a horse welfare strategy. Other ways in which the study results inform a communication framework is to recognise the role of professionals and amateurs, women, and the need for a new approach to actively engage men. Further, there is a need to increase the number of touchpoints with community attitudes relating to animal sentience, animal agency and the positive and negative applications of anthropomorphic language.

6.1.3 How this study contributed to existing knowledge

This study builds on current knowledge about sport horse welfare and SLO as individual and coupled research topics. SLO as a phenomenon within the horse sport sector has been discussed since 2016, for example in relation to sport horse incident management and horse sport and climate change. However, the coupled study fields of sport horse welfare and SLO remains an under-researched area (Fiedler et al., 2016, p. 1; Thompson & Clarkson, 2017, p. 55).

In this study, the term ‘sport horse’ holistically considers both racing and equestrian sport in the context of public opinion towards welfare. It is more common for research investigations to address sport-specific or welfare specific issues, for example studies about SLO or public opinion and horse racing (Duncan et al., 2018, p. 318; Montoya et al., 2012, p. 273; Ruse et al., 2015, p. 1072).

Further, in this study the CI was an insider, and the research was carried out from an insider’s perspective of horse welfare and SLO. This dual aspect is managed both as a risk and an opportunity, which is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

The study adds to existing knowledge through positioning of the horse as a non-human athlete within the context of how fans, sport watchers and individuals seek to experience sport, share information and form opinions, which may trigger outrage over perceived risks to welfare. This is in contrast to the term ‘athlete’ as positioned within the FEI #TwoHearts marketing campaign launched ahead of the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro (Jones, 2016). While the marketing campaign refers to the horse as an athlete, the concept

of the horse as a non-human athlete in its own right is yet to be reflected within key FEI documentation, including the *FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse* (FEI, 2013a).

Further, this study recognises that sports administrators experience a disruptive ‘operating environment’, in which stakeholders use social media platforms to engage with the public about welfare. Sport has an opportunity to use the same platforms to build relationships between sport participant cohorts and vested interest stakeholders in order to involve people in discussions and decision-making about welfare. This was acknowledged in the study by the framing of the research survey to include questions based on attitudes to welfare and the grouping of questions into the stakeholder categories.

This study is unique in that it asked demographic questions of respondents to separate out professionals from amateurs, recognising that commercial interests are competing on the same playing field as ‘leisure’ sport partnerships. Further, by asking the number of years involved with the sport, the finding of a mean of 18.86 years discounted a lack of experience as a reason for gaps in participants’ knowledge about how to complete the statement ‘Horse welfare is...’.

The study notes the ways in which sport participants, organisation administration and stakeholder groups are recognised as ‘voices for the horse’ positioned both inside and outside of the sport. It was important to gather information from the inside of the organisation from the sport participants, as the chief guardians for the welfare of the horse and the primary public interface with the public.

Finally, the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model was utilised as a tool to evaluate how sport participants frame their conversations and their use of particular descriptive words to describe horse welfare.

6.1.4 What was unique about the findings in this study?

The study found that sport participants have a strong desire to work within their organisation networks to improve horse welfare. However, recognition needs to be given to different cohorts and their preferred approaches to achieve welfare outcomes. Further, the findings suggest the need to step away from the assumption that sport participants understand either their contribution to sport's SLO, or the ways in which the organisation's decisions about welfare attract global readership.

Further, another unique finding challenges the presumption within sport that sport participants have the skills and knowledge to undertake a basic self-assessment of horse welfare or that they have a horse welfare vocabulary to talk to others in an informed manner. This is a risk factor for sport, as participants are the primary interface with the public about welfare. Further, there is an opportunity to develop Units of Competency for the Australian Vocational Education Training System which guide student training in the 'how to' of welfare assessment and monitoring.

The most unexpected findings related to the polarisation associated with the stakeholder group of horse breeders. As 'suppliers' of the non-human athlete, with a vested interest in the long-term sustainability of sport delivery, disengaged horse breeders are a risk factor for sport seeking to maintain a SLO.

6.1.5 If it is a contemporary problem, what happens if we ignore it?

SLO and its potential to significantly impact the future sustainability of horse sport is a contemporary problem. On the international horse industry stage, the topic is frequently raised in presentations and interviews given by Dr Roly Owers, CEO of World Horse Welfare, and Nick Rust, CEO of The British Horseracing Authority (Eurodressage, 2018a; National Equine Forum, 2018). The public also raised their collective voice, with the example occurring during October 2018 when the UK House of Commons instituted an inquiry into the ability of British Horseracing to manage the welfare of horses. This was in response to a petition submitted by Animal Aid with over 100,000 signatures to create a new independent welfare body to protect racehorses from abuse and death (Animal Aid, 2018; Cook, 2018b).

Horse welfare in the context of public opinion is an accelerating, emerging issue which is impacted by the changing social attitudes towards animal sentience, animal agency and use of anthropomorphic language. A sport which is slow to recognise public sentiment, or ignores it all together, risks disengaging participants and supporters and incurring a significant financial burden to restore long-term trust. Ultimately, if public trust is lost or significantly challenged, it may lead to an intervention by overarching sport governing bodies or government.

Further, the disruptive operating environment for sport is set to continue, as the Internet of Things (IoT) integrates with the Cloud of Things (CoT) allowing technologies to collect, store, analyse and display 'big data'. For example, future event organisers could use technology to allow real-time analysis and display of data collected at the sport venue

by people and their smart phones. It will take foresight and leadership for sport organisations to harness the ‘live’ data collected by spectators to underpin a ‘real-time’ management of horse welfare on the field of play, and to recognise how positive welfare decisions can be made ‘with’ the public.

Finally, when planning communication frameworks, organisations may need to consider incorporating the principles of reciprocal journalism in order to remain relevant, as citizens and participants change from passive news readers to news makers, or in the context of this study, from passive horse welfare-watchers to actively contributing to the welfare status of individual or collective horses on public sporting fields.

6.1.6 Conclusion

This study has discussed how the business model for horse sport features partnership of a human athlete with a non-human athlete (in this case the horse) on a human-constructed field of play. It has explored factors around changed human behaviours, accelerating technologies and the unstable public discourse which can occur when the public perceives that the welfare of the horse is at risk.

It has considered the viewpoint of the sport participant towards horse welfare in the context of stakeholder relations, along with building knowledge about how participants frame welfare and the language used to talk about this subject with others.

The study results indicate that sport organisations would benefit from developing a horse welfare strategy integrated with, or parallel to, a communication framework. The approach will validate the work of the organisation by the sport participants and build capacity amongst the cohort, as the primary interface with the public, to talk to others about welfare in an informed manner.

In turn, the approach will build resilient sport organisations, who in recognising welfare responsibilities, reconcile what it means to be transparent in a digital age while balancing business sustainability with the need to make welfare decisions in the company of the community, who are also voices for the horse.

7 Reflections

7.1 In plain view: A discussion on insider and outsider research

Outsiders often have an insight that an insider doesn't quite have. Diane Abbott
(Robinson, 2009)

A researcher practising within a research setting where the participants and organisation are familiar is known as an ‘insider’. This chapter reflects on the role of an insider researcher before discussing how, in relation to this project, the risks were managed, and opportunities leveraged. In conclusion, there are recommendations for future research.

The CI belongs to the wider horse community and is considered an insider. In preparing the research plan, it was important to develop a level of self-awareness in relation to political alliances and to identify pre-existing assumptions about cultural attitudes, and potential perspectives of the research participants (Unluer, 2012, p. 1).

Past horse industry working life includes employment with racing stables, sales yards, riding schools, a cattle station, a registered training organisation (TAFE SA) and Riding for the Disabled Association. The CI’s current job role of 18 years has provided an opportunity to organise and present at national conferences related to the themes of thoroughbred and harness racing, large animal rescue (emergency management), workplace safety and horse welfare. This has provided a unique opportunity for cross-

sector stakeholder relationship building and insights into current and emergent industry issues.

7.1.1.1 Risk management

In preparing the research plan, consideration was given toward the identification of the risks associated with being an insider, and to plan for mitigation techniques to manage for any potential bias. In consultation with research supervisors, open discussion and agreement on the risks and mitigation approaches took place before acceptance of the research plan.

The risk factors are many, including personal motivations, political alliances or unidentified assumptions. However, four concepts will be discussed, starting with the research setting, before considering perception, mitigation of risks and leveraging of opportunities.

7.1.1.2 Research setting

The CI's interest in horses and over 30 years of professional working life within the horse industry has significantly impacted on this research project. This is evident from the project scope, positioning of the research questions, and easy access to research participants (Breen, 2007, p. 170). While this may have provided insights, which allowed for management of project risks, it also provided a challenge to ensure that research rigour was followed.

7.1.1.3 Perception

Outsider researchers have clearly identified boundaries between the participants and researcher. However, where people and communities are involved, including the ‘closed’ horse sport community, this can lead to a feeling of disempowerment and poor representation. Research participants may have the sense that they are personally contributing to data which results in a report *about* their experiences rather than *with* their cultural values and opinions (Bridges, 2001, p. 384). Without management, the final report of an outsider researcher may lead to resentment or rejection, with little prospect of follow up studies or extension work.

In contrast, as an insider, the CI is familiar with many of the cultural aspects associated with the research setting and, further, with many of the individual research participants, and the documents to be referenced for data collection. However, there is a risk that the boundaries between the researcher and subject become blurred, with the researcher potentially viewed as being a co-informant, particularly if the researcher may appear to be taking on the role as an agent for change (Rich & Misener, 2017, p. 16). Alternatively, the researcher may not be either on the inside or the outside, instead taking the approach that the research process is one of experiential learning on a continuum (Breen, 2007, p. 163).

During research, there are likely to be times whereby the insider or outsider role is not always clearly identifiable, and times when the researcher moves forwards and back between both roles (Botterill, 2015, p. 15; Mercer, 2007).

As with all research, the qualities of findings from an insider are open for challenge. The perception that bias may have influenced results is a realistic threat. However, there is an opportunity to challenge this argument from an alternative viewpoint as the insider may have an increased advantage when providing evidence to validate the research findings, due to the quality of information collected attributed to the personal openness of participants (P. Rooney, 2005, p. 15).

7.1.1.4 Mitigation of risks

Three risk management strategies were put into place to reduce bias and to ensure ongoing industry support for this type of research: a literature review, structure of the primary survey, and an extra data collection opportunity provided by the action learning professional development event hosted by Horse SA.

Firstly, a critical component for this study was the extensive literature review undertaken to establish a case for the need to address this type of gap in knowledge. The review sought to identify why SLO as it relates to sport involving animals is evolving, and to investigate if there were existing contemporary animal welfare frameworks in place for the horse industry to adapt. The depth of the review served to mitigate against perception of political bias and build a case for stakeholder engagement in the interests of the long-term sustainability for sport.

Secondly, the structure of the primary survey had built in risk management strategies, through selection of a Likert-survey model which allowed for allocation of numerical values to the answers prior to statistical analysis. When analysing the open question

relating to the emotive topic of horse welfare, using a direct word match, the responses were mapped against an existing contemporary animal welfare assessment model.

Further, the survey was distributed by AERA, rather than by the CI, in order to avoid bias. This was due to the extensive horse industry networks, including those within the sport of endurance, held by the CI's employer, Horse SA.

7.1.1.5 Leveraging of opportunities

As an insider researcher, there are opportunities to leverage existing social capital to support undertaking this research project. For example, the CI has established existing industry networks with AERA. However, there was still a need to provide a face-to-face presentation to AERA board about the project proposal and a letter of support obtained. Further, there was an undertaking to provide a face-to-face briefing again at the project completion and go through the lay persons report.

7.1.1.6 Future research recommendations

As an insider, researching sport horse welfare and SLO, there is significant opportunity to contribute to developing a greater knowledge base within the industry. In particular, for sport's horse welfare programs, specifically in relation to stakeholder engagement, articulation of horse welfare decision-making *with* the public, and facilitation of capacity building amongst sport participants to support efforts to facilitate cultural adaptation.

In conclusion, when developing an insider's research plan, honesty and openness are required to enable measures to be put in place to mitigate against perceived or real bias, ensuring the quality of the final findings.

7.2 Limitations

This study is limited to Australian citizens, and participants associated with the sport of endurance riding, aligned with the Australian Endurance Riders Association. This study sample size was limited, with survey distributed to 1600 sport participants, with 107 surveys completed (7% response rate), and 2 semi-structured interviews.

8 Addendum

An opportunity arose in the concluding stages of this study to examine if participation in a professional development about horse welfare influences the attitudes of horse sport participants. This addendum explains the process and results of this session.

Horse SA conducted the professional development event ‘Sport Horse Welfare and Social Licence to Operate’ held on 13th and 14th February 2019, in Hahndorf, South Australia.

The event centred on the impact of SLO for sports involving horses and featured an education component relating to the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment Model.

The target audience featured administrators and executive level volunteers from thoroughbred and harness racing, and a range of equestrian sports. Further, there were representatives from educational institutions and importantly social leaders.

It was not intended for the results of the event to influence the outcomes of the primary project. Instead, it was seen as an opportunity to ‘road test’ one of the research recommendations in a real-world setting. Further, the additional opportunity to collect data potentially addressed the shortfall experienced through a lack of semi-structured interview volunteers.

8.1.1 Methodology

Utilising similar methodology engaged for data collection as a model, a mixed-method approach to collecting quantitative and qualitative data was selected. The survey featured

a Likert-style question, open and closed questions. The data collected, subsequent to analysis, provided statistical results and descriptive text.

Two opportunities were identified as suitable points for data collection, for which two separate surveys were designed, being a pre-event survey (refer to Appendix D) and a post-event survey (refer to Appendix E). Each survey was divided into two sections, with the first section consisting of a total of five open, closed and multiple-choice questions for the collection of demographic data. The second section had seven open questions relating to horse welfare and event experiences. One question in each survey was the same in the primary project and this project, being the open-ended question to complete, 'Horse welfare is...?'

A new ethics approval application was lodged and accepted as a modification of the existing approval (CQU Reference number 0000020770), and the CQU SurveyMonkey commercial platform populated. The pre-conference survey link was distributed to delegates 48 hours prior to the event, with the post-event link emailed the following day after the event, closing off after five days.

Following closure of the survey, data was downloaded and analysed using similar processes to the primary project. Procedures involved converting Likert survey data to numerical values for statistical analysis, applying a direct word match process to the question 'Horse welfare is...?' and review of descriptive text.

8.1.2 Results

Pre-event survey demographic results

There were 29 respondents who completed the pre-event survey, of whom 19 were female and 10 were male. Respondents were from every state in Australia except ACT, with one respondent from New Zealand. Ages ranged from 33 to 84 years with a mean age of 57.7 (SD 12.9).

When asked about the number of years involved with horses, the range was 5 to 65 years with a mean of 38.6 years (SD 16.8). Of these, 21 identified with being a professional, gaining some sort of income from horse-related activities, while eight identified as amateur.

Post-event survey demographic results

There were 22 respondents who completed the post survey, of whom 16 were female and 6 were male. Respondents were from every state in Australia except ACT, Tasmania and Queensland, with one respondent from outside of Australia. Ages ranged from 33 to 84 years with a mean age of 56 years (SD 13.5).

When asked about the number of years involved with horses, the range was 5 to 67 years with a mean of 39 years (SD 17.0). Of these, 13 identified with being a professional, gaining some sort of income from horse-related activities, while 9 identified as amateur.

8.1.2.1 *Chi-squared test*

One question which appeared in both the pre- and post-event survey asked, ‘How confident would you be to talk to members of your organisation about horse welfare?’

Data was combined from the pre- and post-event Likert-scale question and a Chi-squared Test applied. The test, which finds out how likely it is that results occurred by chance, is applied after data has been divided into categories.

A total of 44 responses were analysed, however no results of statistical significance were recorded ($.690 = p > 0.05$). Although of non-statistical value, it was identified that there was a greater drawing toward ‘confident’ in the post-event survey, as 4.2% of respondents moved out of ‘not so confident’ into a higher category. Of note, there was also a shift in the ‘extremely confident’ category, whereby 29.2% of respondents identified with this category pre-event, while 20% identified post-event, an aspect that will be discussed later in this chapter (Figure 9, 10)

Q8 How confident would you be to talk to members of your organisation (or others) about horse welfare?

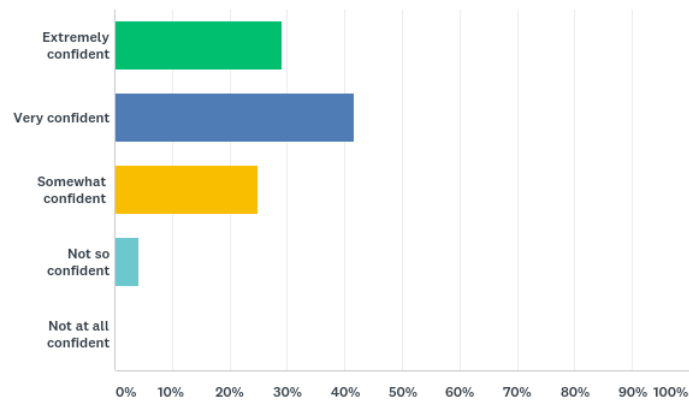


Figure 9: Pre-event survey: Confidence levels when talking about welfare to others

Q8 How confident would you now be to talk to members of your organisation (or others) about horse welfare?

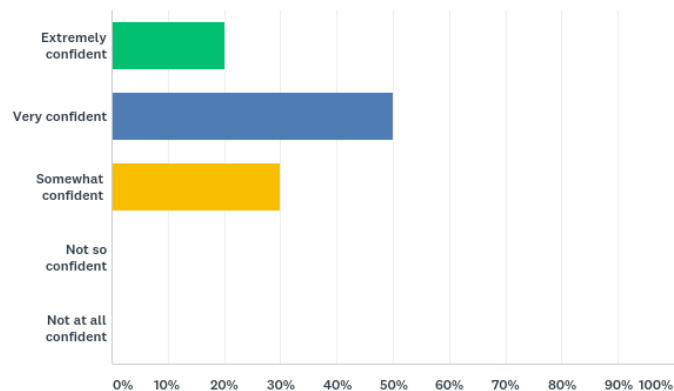


Figure 10: Post-event survey: Confidence levels when talking about welfare to others

Respondents were asked to complete the open question ‘Horse welfare means...?’ in the pre- and post-event survey. Utilising the same analysis methods for the primary survey, data was first subjected to a direct word match against four headings of the Five Domains

Model (nutrition, environment, health, behaviour) before undergoing a direct word match for keywords as found in the 5D provisions.

In relation to the four key 5D headings utilised, the table below compares the pre- and post-event survey results with data results arising out of the primary survey.

Table 14

Five Domains Model: Direct Word Matches with Domain Headings

Rank	Domain	Matches Primary (n=78)	Pre-event (n=24)	Post-event (n=20)
1	Health	19 (24%)	5 (20.8%)	4 (20%)
3	Environment	3 (3.8%)	0	4 (20%)
4	Nutrition	0	0	1 (5%)
5	Behaviour	0	1 (4.1%)	3 (15%)

Similarly, as for the primary survey, a direct word match was undertaken with the 5D provisions, highlighted in bold in the table below. The data between the primary survey, and that of the pre- and post-survey appear in the same chart for comparison.

Table 15

Direct Word Match with 5D Provisions

DOMAIN and Provisions	Primary Survey	Pre-event	Post- event
NUTRITION	0	0	1
<i>Restrictions</i>			
Water intake	0	0	0
Food intake	0	0	0
Food quality	0	0	0

Food variety	0	0	0
Voluntary overeating	0	0	0
Force Feeding	0	0	0
<i>Opportunities</i>			
Drink enough water	1	0	0
Eat enough food	0	0	0
Eat a balanced diet	1	0	1
Eat a variety of foods	0	0	0
Eating correct quantities	0	0	0
ENVIRONMENT	3	0	4
<i>Unavoidable/imposed conditions</i>			
Thermal extremes	0	0	0
Unsuitable Substrate	0	0	0
Close confinement	0	0	0
Atmospheric pollutants (CO2, dust, smoke)	0	0	0
Unpleasant/strong odours	0	0	0
Light : In appropriate intensity	0	0	0
Loud/otherwise unpleasant noise	0	0	0
Environmental monotony (ambient, physical, lighting)	0	0	0
Unpredictable events	0	0	0
<i>Available conditions</i>			
Thermally tolerable	0	0	0
Suitable substrate	0	0	0
Space for freer movement	0	0	0
Fresh air	0	0	0
Pleasant, tolerable odours	0	0	0
Light intensity tolerable	0	0	0
Noise exposure acceptable	0	0	0
Normal environmental ^ variability	1	0	1
Predictability	0	0	0
HEALTH	19	5	4
<i>Presence of</i>			
Disease : acute, chronic, injury, acute, chronic husbandry mutilations	0	0	0
Functional impairment due to limb amputation, or lung, heart, vascular, kidney, neural or other problems	0	0	0
Poisons	0	0	0
Obesity, Leanness	0	0	0
Poor physical fitness : muscle de-conditioning	0	0	0

Little or no:

Disease	0	0	0
Injury	1	0	0
Functional impairment	0	0	0
Poisoning	0	0	0
Body condition appropriate	0	0	0
Good fitness level	0	0	0
BEHAVIOUR	0	1	3
<i>Exercise of agency impeded by:</i>			
Invariant, barren environment (ambient, physical, biotic)	0	0	0
Inescapable sensory impositions	0	0	0
Choices markedly restricted	0	0	0
Constraints on environment-focused activity	0	0	0
Constraints on animal-to-animal interactive activity	0	0	0
Limits on threat avoidance, escape or defensive activity	0	0	0
Limitations on sleep, rest	0	0	0
<i>Agency exercised via:</i>			
Varied, novel , engaging environmental challenges	0	0	0
Congenial sensory inputs	0	0	0
Available engaging choices	0	0	0
Free movement	0	0	0
Exploration	0	0	0
foraging/hunting	0	0	0
Bonding /reaffirming bonds	0	0	0
Rearing young	1	0	0
Playing	0	0	0
Sexual activity	0	0	0
Using refuges, retreats or defensive attack	0	0	0
Sufficient sleep/rest	0	0	0

As with the primary survey, there were respondents who provided holistic responses, of which an example is reproduced below.

‘Provision of conditions and experience that enhance the welfare of horses across five domains including nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and mental state’.

'The interplay of a number of factors (which are somewhat variable in their influence depending on circumstances) which affect the overall health and wellbeing of the horse.'

'Horse welfare means more than just 'nothing wrong with the horse'. Welfare includes well-being, which results from an active engagement with the horse's living conditions, diet, company, habits, etc., to ensure that not only is nothing wrong, but also that all is well'.

8.1.3 Pre-event questions

Survey respondents were asked what take home information related to horse welfare they would like to receive in relation to this professional development event. There were four themes which resonated equally amongst respondents: how to engage participants and motivate change; the provision of up to date advice and developments; a better understanding of how to assess and reconcile welfare; and lastly, an understanding of the impact of social perceptions of horse welfare and related research (SLO).

Table 16

PD Pre-event: What Take Home Information Respondents Would Like to Receive

Theme	No.	Sample of respondents' answers
How to engage participants & motivate change	4	
Up to date advice, developments	4	Being up to date with current trends and foresight into Horse Welfare
Better understanding of how to assess and reconcile welfare	4	How to balance horse sport with the horse's welfare
Understanding impact of social perceptions of horse welfare & related research (-) (SLO)	4	Gauge the current level of acceptance for change from sport horse organisation and how they perceive a way forward to ensure the horse industry's social licence is maintained
Gain knowledge I can pass onto others, gain confidence to talk about welfare	2	Even greater confidence in expressing the means to maintain and improve horse welfare.
How to develop positive messages related to welfare	2	Messages which are positive and enabling when things do not always go to plan
Technical information about complicated aspects of welfare	2	
Promoting education to participants	1	
Other	1	What the attitude of those in the sport horse industry have towards ensuring a horse's history is registered for life
Unsure	1	

Comments from respondents included:

‘Information that can be incorporated into our management of horses, within the context of still riding them, and keeping them as domestic animals.’

‘A status assessment of attitudes among major industry players in relation to the importance/ urgency of ATTITUDE CHANGE. The development of some universal guidelines as a starting point for PRACTICAL CHANGE.’

‘Building bridges, starting and maintaining difficult conversations, creating collaborative networks, ‘working with “the enemy”’ - i.e. finding common ground and keeping communication lines open when there are very different perspectives or understanding of welfare and public expectations.’

‘An understanding of potential impact on the sport in regard to social licence and the risks involved if no action is taken.’

When asked how often the respondent’s organisation provides professional development opportunities related to the assessment and monitoring of horse welfare, the most common response was ‘rarely or never’. A total of 24 respondents completed this question (N=24).

Table 17

PD Pre-event: How Often Organisations Provide PD Opportunities Related to Welfare Assessment and Monitoring

Continuing/ Often	Annually	Quarterly	Rarely or never	N/A	Other (see below)
5	4	2	6	3	4

Examples of responses recorded under ‘Other’:

‘Allows me to attend any conferences that I am interested in.’

‘Informal transfer of knowledge.’

‘Regularly promoting evidence-based welfare initiatives and knowledge.’

‘Officials get the opportunity to discuss and develop current guidelines at training days,’

When asked what horse welfare initiatives the respondents would like to see their organisation take, the most common response related to participant education and training. A total of 25 respondents for this question (N=25).

Table 18

PD Pre-event Event: What Initiatives Respondents Would Like to See

Theme	No. of responses aligning with theme	Example responses
Participant Training & education	5	Including update of Equestrian Australia (EA) Coaching Syllabus
Initiatives to Understand and acceptance of horse welfare measures	4	Collaboration with different sectors EA to establish welfare committee, as EWA have.
Ways to share research updates and trend data	4	Engage with literature and share with industry
Messaging/ responsibility from peak body	4	Continue to advise members to pay attention to welfare
Unique ID and horse traceability	3	Lifetime registration
Other (1 response for each theme)	(5)	Review into Equestrian Australia (EA) Thoroughbreds (TB) leading the way Ways to implement cultural change Horse housing & ethology Public info about horse welfare
	25	

8.1.4 Post-event responses

Participants were asked what they gained from the professional development event in relation to horse welfare. There were 20 (N=20) respondents who addressed this question, which in some cases provided responses requiring coding against more than one category. The theme with the highest number of responses coded against it related to providing structured learning or guidance and assessment for the Five Domains Animal Welfare Assessment model.

Table 19

PD Post-event: In relation to horse welfare, what did you gain from this professional development event?

Theme	No.	Example responses
Provided (welfare) structure, assessment guidance/5 Domains	6	A more conceptual idea of analysing how welfare needs are being met in a given circumstance
Networking, industry involvement	5	Great networking and confirmation that my thinking is aligned with others
Sharing knowledge, research findings, information	5	How science is improving training methods
Cross-disciplinary collaboration/ forward looking, inspiration, confidence.	4	Confidence in good support network, new ideas and inspiration to make changes
Language, different opinions	3	Language to use when talking about it and a clear understanding of welfare vs liberation
SLO	1	Information about social licence

Conference theme welfare + SLO	1	An understanding of the different horse sport industries and how welfare assessment and guidelines can assist them in maintaining social licence
-----------------------------------	---	--

A total of 19 (N=19) people responded to the question asking what ideas did they have, as a result of undertaking the professional development event, which could be incorporated into their organisation.

Table 20

PD Post-event: As a result of undertaking this professional development event, what ideas do you have in relation to horse welfare which could be incorporated into your organisation?

Theme	No.	Example responses
Social licence/ public attitudes	5	Consider the impact of actions/non-action on the general public, in relation to how I deal with horse welfare.
Undertake a review in our own workplace or event	1	A review of rules with a specific section titled horse welfare.
Help member clubs or staff/share info/ education	6	Assisting sporting organisations in developing welfare guidelines/protocols, etc.
Media management	1	Better process for managing social media storms.
Five Domains, opening up thinking/building confidence on welfare	7	How to branch out from a standard baseline, looking to create a life where the horse can thrive, not just survive.
General	2	I think we do a reasonable job.

‘...and we have to make the vets really understand it now...’

Application of the 5 domains model as an underlying reference, introducing more comprehensive traceability for the lifetime of horses to allow welfare & other things to be monitored for better outcomes.’

When asked what specific recommendations the respondents would like to make to their organisation in relation to horse welfare initiatives, most wanted to engage with experts and provide education for members and staff. A total of 18 (N=18) responses were received.

Table 21

PD Post-Event: What specific recommendations would you like to make to your organisation for horse welfare initiatives?

Theme	No.	Example responses
Engage with experts, education for members, staff	4	...engage with equine welfare specialists to develop education programmes to help us achieve our goals.
Raise awareness, sharing knowledge	2	Be aware we can do better. Seek information education from validated sources.
Social licence	2	Consider social licence as a priority.
Undertake assessments	2	Assess paddocking and care from the perspective of the 5 domains.
Five Domains	2	Introduce the 5 domains principle, to existing players and new.

Review guidelines, rulebooks, manuals	2	Institute welfare guidelines associated with enforceable standards.
Media/Future headlines	2	Get the Committee to think of some future headlines.
Education	1	Providing horse welfare educational materials and guidance to those in horse sporting industries.
Traceability	1	Introduction of a horse traceability system, best at national level, for the lifetime of horses, hopefully drawing on existing registers/systems so as to avoid duplication of cost and data.

An example comment:

‘Would recommend the Five Domains are incorporated into the next tranche of vocational training packages for the horse industry, and that horse trainers need to have ongoing professional development and the opportunity to continue their learning through more advanced qualifications to support their experience, and to align their ethical framework with current expectations.’

In following on, respondents were asked what resources, information, further training or expert support may be required to help deliver the initiatives they had identified in the previous question. A total of 17 (N=17) responses were provided.

Table 22

PD Post-Event: What resources, information, further training or expert support may be required to help deliver those initiatives?

Theme	No.	Example responses
Information	5	Diagrams and information in small, easy to digest pieces, that can be shared and discussed over a longer period of time, to really let the ideas seed, take root and grow.
Practical, hands on	2	I think a lot of hands on, and showing people goes a long way.
Expert and peer support	3	A regular catch up with this network would be good to support each organisation as we navigate our individual equine welfare strategies.
Conference proceedings, engage local experts	4	The material on Horse SA website from the meeting.
Five Domains	1	At the event, it became clear that the 5 Domains is flexible enough to allow individuals to 'massage' its use for their own specific environments. Additional practice at using the 5 Domains would always be helpful.
Procedures	1	Staff Induction and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) reflective of 5D.
Traceability	1	Industry submissions to Senate Inquiry, outlining why horse traceability can make a positive contribution in terms of Horse welfare, Emergency Animal Disease (e.g. EI) safety (of both people & horses) and better provenance (to reduce fraud & negative welfare outcomes).
Communication	1	Finding ways to communication welfare guidelines/ regulations in a coherent and understandable way.
General	1	OK as we are, thanks.

‘Many organisations will be eager to incorporate these principles into training for their members but may benefit from structured guidelines to enable their presentations to remain realistic, achievable and evidence-based. Training will be essential for willing people to become expert facilitators so all views and contributions are valued and that people reach a common understanding and have ownership, Professor David Mellor is one of the best facilitators I have ever seen, and engages everyone however challenging their views may seem. He does not give advice but clarifies and summarises contributions so that the 'essence' is then fed back to the contributor and the audience.’

Following on from asking respondents to identify initiatives to recommend to organisations, and what resources would be required to assist implementation, we asked which initiative the respondents were most confident that the organisation were most likely to take up. The theme aligned with communication and engagement resonated with the highest number of respondents. There were 18 (N=18) responses to this question.

Table 23

PD Post-Event: With regard to the suggested initiatives, which one would you be most confident that your organisation would implement?

Theme	No.	Example responses
Communication & engagement	5	We would be likely to share the information ongoing through our website and social media avenues.
Education	4	Instruction sessions and information sessions.
Guideline, SOPs, policies, rule reviews	4	A review of our rules.

Five D implementation	2	Awareness that we need to understand the Domains having said that could there be another more easily understood word than Domains.
Traceability	1	A National Horse Traceability Scheme (Register) requires buy in from Federal and State Governments for it to happen. BUT it also requires industry support for it to succeed.
Application	1	Nutrition improvements.
General	1	Domains were interesting.

An example of a comment is reproduced below.

‘...a lot of very good individuals would engage in anything to do with better understanding welfare, others need to retire...’

8.1.5 Discussion

The mean age of event attendees (sports administrators) was 57.7 years (SD 12.9), which compares to the mean age of the sport participants (primary survey) of 51.8 years (SD 9.8). While there is only a gap of 5.9 years in age between sport participants and sports administrators, the ‘credibility’ of administrators may be found with the number of years of involvement with horses. Sport participants recorded an average 18.86 years with horses, while the mean number of years for administrators was 38.6 years, a difference of 19.74 years.

The cohort of administrators were asked pre- and post-event if they were confident to talk to sport participants about horse welfare. Although analysis did not record a result of statistical significance, there is an underlying trend which warrants further investigations.

After participating in a two-day professional development event, there was a convergence of responses away from 'extremely confident', 'somewhat confident' and 'not so confident' to 'very confident'. While an improvement in knowledge about welfare is likely to be expected after an educational event, there was also a shift of 9.2% who became less confident. This finding correlates with a similar small but noticeable trend reported in relation to students participating in an animal welfare online course (MacKay et al., 2016, p. 293). It is hypothesised that this result may have occurred due to the overshadowing of the 'Five Freedoms' in societal discourse, and that it will take some time to not only change attitudes but gain confidence through hands-on practice of the 'positive welfare' approach of the 5D model.

As reported with the primary survey, the reference to health when talking about welfare remains a common answer.

The following responses to pre- and post-event questions also form recommendations for future research or skills investment.

When it comes to organisations providing professional development for their staff or volunteers, more received training in horse welfare assessment and monitoring than those who rarely or never received any. However, there was still a demand for take home information after the event, including how to engage with participants and motivate

change, updates on developments, a better understanding on assessing and reconciling welfare and, finally, a better understanding of social perceptions about horse welfare.

In relation to what horse welfare initiatives survey participants would like to see their organisation undertake, the most popular theme was participant training and education, followed by initiatives to understand and accept horse welfare measures, ways to share research and what messaging should come from the peak body.

Event participants appreciated the framework or structure provided by the 5D model to guide welfare assessments, networking and sharing of information. As a result of attending this event, participants considered that their organisation was in a better position to open discussion and thinking about welfare, that they were in a better position to help clubs and members, and that a discussion about SLO in the context of horse welfare was the most likely organisational post-event action. Participants were most likely to recommend engagement of experts, delivery of education for staff or volunteers, and to develop dedicated education programs and resources able to be delivered in small pieces. Establishment of a network of experts for peer support was also seen as beneficial.

Respondents were most confident that their organisation would improve communication and engagement about welfare, develop education options, review rule books, workplace Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), and policies.

8.1.6 Conclusion

This was a very small additional study, and as such has limitations. However, from this work we were able to note that horse sport administrators have a significant number of years of involvement with horses and remain keen to learn new ways to help sustain their sport into the future in light of changing public opinion.

While there was a drop-in confidence post-workshop when it came to talking to others about welfare, there was recognition overall that there was a benefit gained from ongoing networking, education and professional support as a viable way forward.

Appendix A: International Society for Equitation Science first training principles



First Training Principles

Human and horse welfare depend upon training methods and management that demonstrate:



1. Regard for human and horse safety
By acknowledging the horse's size, power and flightiness | By learning to recognise flight/fight/freeze behaviours early.
By minimising the risk of causing pain, distress or injury | By ensuring horses and humans are appropriately matched.

2. Regard for the nature of horses
By meeting horse welfare needs such as foraging, freedom and equine company | By respecting the social nature of horses.
By acknowledging that horses may perceive human movements as threatening | By avoiding dominance roles during interactions.

3. Regard for horses' mental and sensory abilities
By acknowledging that horses think, see and hear differently from humans | By keeping the length of training sessions to a minimum.
By not overestimating the horse's mental abilities | By not underestimating the horse's mental abilities.

4. Regard for emotional states
By understanding that horses are sentient beings capable of suffering | By encouraging positive emotional states | By acknowledging that consistency makes horses optimistic for further training outcomes | By avoiding pain, discomfort and/or triggering fear.

5. Correct use of desensitisation methods
By learning to apply correctly systematic desensitisation, over-shadowing, counter-conditioning and differential reinforcement.
By avoiding flooding (forcing the horse to endure aversive stimuli).

6. Correct use of operant conditioning
By understanding that horses will repeat or avoid behaviours according to their consequences | By removing pressures at the onset of a desired response | By minimising delays in reinforcement | By using combined reinforcement | By avoiding punishment.

7. Correct use of classical conditioning
By acknowledging that horses readily form associations between stimuli.
By always using a light signal before a pressure-release sequence.

8. Correct use of shaping
By breaking down training into the smallest achievable steps and progressively reinforcing each step toward the desired behaviour.
By changing the context (trainer, place, signal), one aspect at a time | By planning the training to make it obvious and easy.


9. Correct use of signals or cues
By ensuring the horse can discriminate one signal from another | By ensuring each signal only has one meaning
By timing the signals with limb biomechanics | By avoiding the use of more than one signal at the same time.

10. Regard for self-carriage
By training the horse to maintain gait, tempo, stride length, direction, head, neck and body posture.
By avoiding forcing a posture or maintaining it through relentless signalling (nagging).



This poster is a summary of the First Training Principles. To read the extended version go to:
www.equitationsscience.com

Appendix B: Survey questions


Sport Horse Welfare & Social Licence to Operate

Section one: Working with your organisation

This question block relates to how you work with your organisation on the topic of horse welfare.

* 1. Through my organisation, I contribute to horse welfare continuous improvement initiatives

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 2. I listen to and act on messages from my organisation about horse welfare

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 3. I contribute to opportunities for to build new knowledge about horse welfare.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 4. I participate in opportunities to share horse welfare information and education with other members.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 5. Overall, other members of my organisation have similar views to my own on horse welfare

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 6. I support members contributing to research data which will assist my organisation to deliver horse welfare outcomes for our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Section two: The organisation working with members

This question block relates to your views in relation to how your organisation works with you in relation to horse welfare.

- * 7. The organisation leads horse welfare continuous improvement initiatives on behalf of members.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 8. The organisation listens to and acknowledges horse welfare improvement ideas from members.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 9. The organisation works with members to develop new horse welfare knowledge.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 10. The organisation facilitates opportunities to share horse welfare information and education for members.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 11. Overall, the organisation management has similar views to my own on horse welfare.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 12. The organisation makes information publicly available to support understanding of how we deliver welfare outcomes for our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Section three: Government regulations and horse welfare

This question block relates to your views on how your organisation and your state government work together on horse welfare.

- * 13. The government regulates horse welfare, therefore the organisation cannot do anything about it.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 14. Government listens to and acknowledges the organisation's horse welfare initiatives.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 15. Government representatives are invited to contribute to the organisation information and education for members relating to horse welfare.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 16. The organisation actively works with government on horse welfare initiatives.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 17. Overall, government regulations align with my views on horse welfare within our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 18. Government publishes information that is used to support delivery of horse welfare outcomes for our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Section four: Horse breeders

This question block relates to your views on horse breeders, as an essential part of the sport through the supply of horses.

* 19. Breeders lead horse welfare continuous improvement

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 20. Breeders listen to and acknowledge our sport's horse welfare initiatives.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 21. The organisation facilitates opportunities for members and breeders to work together to grow knowledge in horse welfare.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 22. Breeders are invited to contribute to the organisation's information and education for members.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 23. Overall, breeders have similar views to my own on horse welfare within our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 24. The organisation works with breeders to make information publically available to support understanding of how we deliver welfare outcomes for our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Section five: Horse sport and science

This question block relates to your views on how the organisation works with the science community in relation to horse welfare.

* 25. Scientific research leads the building of new knowledge in horse welfare practices

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 26. Researchers listen to and acknowledge the organisation's horse welfare initiatives.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 27. The organisation actively works with researchers on building horse welfare knowledge.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 28. Researchers are invited to undertake research which contributes to the organisation's information and education for members.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 29. Overall, research findings align with my views on horse welfare within our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 30. Research organisations publish information that supports delivery of horse welfare outcomes for our sport.

Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Section six: General

This question block asks for your views about social licence to operate and horse welfare.

31. Horse welfare means.....

32. Social licence to operate means





Section seven: Demographic information and closing comments

33. What is your age? (please round out the number if you prefer to not state)

34. What gender do you associate with?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

35. What State or Territory of Australia do you live in?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> South Australia | <input type="radio"/> Australian Capital Territory |
| <input type="radio"/> Western Australia | <input type="radio"/> New South Wales |
| <input type="radio"/> Northern Territory | <input type="radio"/> Victoria |
| <input type="radio"/> Queensland | <input type="radio"/> Tasmania |

36. How many years have you been involved with the sport of endurance riding?

37. I would consider myself

- ☐ a professional (gaining casual, part-time or full-time work linked to endurance riding or horses)
- ☐ an amateur (gaining no income)

38. Any other comments?

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview questions

1. Can you tell me about your involvement with endurance riding?
2. If there were new opportunities made available to contribute to developing horse welfare knowledge in your sport, how would you like to do this?
3. The survey results indicate that many respondents felt that there were few opportunities provided for members and breeders to work together on horse welfare. What are your opinions on this?
4. Is there a topic that you would like the organisation to facilitate dialogue on?
5. What do you think is the general public's wider opinion about your sport?
6. What are your feelings about engaging with the public in a more open way about your sport?
7. Anything else you would like to mention?

Appendix D: Professional development event pre-event survey questions

Pre-event survey: Sport horse welfare & social licence to operate

Section 1: Demographic information

1. What is your age?

2. What gender do you associate with?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other

3. Where do you live?

☐ South Australia

☐ Victoria

☐ New South Wales

☐ Australian Capital Territory

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Queensland

☐ Northern Territory

☐ Western Australia

☐ Tasmania

4. How many years have you been involved with horses?

5. I would consider myself...

☐ A professional (gaining full-time, part-time or casual income linked to horses)

☐ An amateur (gaining no income)

6. If you gain income from the horse industry, what does your job role include?

Section 2: Horse Welfare

7. Horse welfare means.....?

8. How confident would you be to talk to members of your organisation (or others) about horse welfare?

☐ Extremely confident

☐ Not so confident

☐ Very confident

☐ Not at all confident

☐ Somewhat confident

9. In relation to horse welfare, what take-home information would you like from this professional development event?

10. How often does your organisation provide professional development opportunities related to assessment and monitoring of horse welfare?

11. Currently, what horse welfare initiatives would you like to see your horse organisation take?

12. What do you think the future holds in relation to horse welfare initiatives for your organisation?

13. Any other comments?

Appendix E: Professional development event post-event survey questions

Post-event survey: Sport horse welfare & social licence

Section 1: Demographic information

1. What is your age?

2. What gender do you associate with?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other

3. Where do you live?

<input type="radio"/> South Australia	<input type="radio"/> Queensland
<input type="radio"/> Victoria	<input type="radio"/> Northern Territory
<input type="radio"/> New South Wales	<input type="radio"/> Western Australia
<input type="radio"/> Australian Capitol Territory	<input type="radio"/> Tasmania
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)	

4. How many years have you been involved with horses?

5. I would consider myself...

☐ A professional (gaining full-time, part-time or casual income linked to horses)

☐ An amateur (gaining no income)

6. If you gain income from the horse industry, what does your job role include?

3

Section 2: Horse Welfare

7. What do you now consider that 'Horse welfare means.....'?

8. How confident would you now be to talk to members of your organisation (or others) about horse welfare?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely confident | <input type="radio"/> Not so confident |
| <input type="radio"/> Very confident | <input type="radio"/> Not at all confident |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat confident | |

9. In relation to horse welfare, what did you gain from this professional development event?

10. As a result of undertaking this professional development event, what ideas do you have in relation to horse welfare which could be incorporated into your organisation?

11. What specific recommendations would you like to make to your organisation for horse welfare initiatives?

12. What resources, information, further training or expert support may be required to help deliver those initiatives?

13. With regard to the suggested initiatives, which one would you be most confident that your organisation would implement?

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