

Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport

Independent Reviewers
Hon David Templeman
Professor Warren Harding
Mr John Nicolaou

contact@racingreview.wa.gov.au

Re: Independent Review into Financial Sustainability and Governance of Racing and Wagering Western Australia

Melbourne, 6 March 2026

Dear Reviewers,

The Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses (CPR) is a non-profit organisation that focuses upon the welfare of Thoroughbred racehorses. We wish to offer some comments on the review into the Western Australian racing industry, specifically, the omission of animal welfare from the Terms of Reference. CPR is at a loss to understand how animal welfare could be excluded from any assessment of the viability, sustainability and financial future of the racing industry, which would not exist without racehorses.

In this letter, we make two points with respect to the absence of welfare in the review. First, the racing industry is heavily dependent on a social license to operate to engage participants to attend the races, gamble, and invest in ownership of racehorses. However, this public support is declining. That is because the racing industry has left itself at the post with respect to global community standards of animal welfare. Social views towards animals have changed significantly since the modern-day racing industry and its instrumentalist business model was developed. The public overall, no longer supports these outdated values, and the ways in which the industry operates with respect to breeding, training, racing and retirement of Thoroughbreds.

Even though negative public opinion of racing presents a significant challenge to the industry's sustainability and viability, the industry has failed to address issues that are of major community concern particularly on-track deaths, over breeding and ex-racehorses regarded and treated as "wastage". The omission of animal welfare in this review only serves as further evidence of racing's reluctance to address the concerns that are undeniably contributing to racing's current financial hardship.

Secondly, there is a close link between racing's financial viability and the care and welfare of racehorses. The omission of welfare from the review, suggests that racing may be unwilling or unable to address the financial aspects required for adequate levels of care for racehorses. It is well known that poor animal welfare is cheap, and good welfare is not. Nonetheless, CPR holds the view, that an industry should not be operating if it proves unable to afford the proper care of its animals.

CPR asks that if you would reconsider including animal welfare as part of the review, we would be happy to submit a paper detailing the issues that the racing industry must address if it wishes to receive the benefits of the public's social license.

Kind regards



Elio Celotto
President
Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses

