



Speech By  
**Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe**


**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 October 2019

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Retired Racehorses, Forum**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.44 am): Last week, the ABC's program 7.30 broadcast a story about the treatment of horses after they had retired from their racing careers. Part of that story—a shocking part of that story—was the treatment of several retired racehorses at a Queensland abattoir. The images were horrific and sickening and I hope I never see anything like it again.

I welcome the Premier's announcement this morning of an independent inquiry into the treatment of retired racehorses. Some time ago I tasked my office with organising a forum to look at racehorses and their post-career lives. Invitations had been sent and accepted before the ABC story broke on Thursday night. First thing on Friday I asked that the forum be brought forward to this week. It has taken some organising but I am pleased to inform the House that the forum is being held this afternoon.

This is an issue that the whole of the racing industry needs to address and for which everyone must take responsibility. It is not about the trainers or the breeders; it is about the trainers, the breeders, the owners, the codes and all levels of government. Today major stakeholders from across the racing industry will be represented, from breeders and trainers to re-homers, vets and Racing Queensland. Also at the table will be the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, the independent organisation charged with safeguarding the integrity and welfare of racehorses and the industry.

The history of the commission actually speaks to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to animal welfare. It was established under the Racing Integrity Act 2016 and was borne of the 2015 commission of inquiry which was set up to look into the Queensland greyhound racing industry after the revelations of live baiting. We needed Racing Queensland to look after the business of racing, with the commission independent of that and focusing on integrity and welfare issues. It is this independence and the experience of QRIC that will continue to drive us towards excellence in the animal welfare arena.

Already we have the highly successful Greyhound Adoption Program, which brings ex-racing greyhounds and families together. Could we do something similar in the equine arena? It is certainly up for discussion, although we know it is a slightly different prospect finding a happy home for a greyhound than it is for a horse that stands 16 hands high. As the 7.30 story pointed out, this is not an issue that is confined to Queensland's borders. Next month all Australia's racing ministers will be meeting at the Australasian Racing Ministers Conference in Perth and I know this will be a key issue on the agenda. I look forward to updating the House on these issues.