




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 27 November 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Retired Racehorses

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.11 am): As this House would be aware, on 17 October 2019, ABC's 7.30 aired a program focused on racehorse welfare. The images shown on the program were abhorrent and raised serious concerns around the treatment and welfare of horses once they leave the racing industry. The Palaszczuk government and its racing bodies QRIC and RQ take animal welfare matters very seriously and are committed to ensuring that all racing animals are afforded the appropriate standard of animal welfare.

On 22 October 2019, the Premier announced an independent inquiry to examine the issues raised by the report headed by Terry Martin and Dr Peter Reid. Later that day I chaired the first meeting of a forum with key stakeholders to discuss options for providing a model for the retraining and rehoming of retired racehorses in Queensland. This group reconvened on Friday, 15 November, to discuss a proposed model and how it will operate. I am pleased to report to the House that these meetings have been very positive, with all participants showing a genuine desire to work in the best interests of the welfare of racing animals in retirement.

I can also advise the House that following a request from Judge Martin, on 1 November QRIC announced a two-week amnesty for all Queensland racing industry horse owners and trainers to update their racehorse retirement data. As of Friday, 15 November, there were 411 thoroughbred and 308 standardbred retirements registered in Queensland during the amnesty. This compares to averages of 85 and 25 per month respectively before that time. As a result of this success, the amnesty was extended for a further two weeks until this Friday.

Further, on 9 November I welcomed Racing Queensland's implementation of a one per cent prize money levy from 1 January 2020 for thoroughbred and harness racing to support Queensland's equine welfare. It is proposed that the funds from this levy will be the base funding for the rehoming and retraining program, with other options being assessed. However, it is also vital that the Commonwealth government implement a national horse traceability register as soon as possible. This will help in the data collection and tracking of ex racing animals right across the country. This was the key issue at the meeting of state racing ministers in Perth on Friday, and I can report to the House that all ministers agreed to write to the federal Minister for Agriculture, Bridget McKenzie, outlining our support for a national traceability register for all horses, noting that this can only be done successfully with the leadership and cooperation of the federal government.

The cruelty and mistreatment of all animals will not be tolerated, and the Palaszczuk government is working together with industry to ensure a robust and effective retraining and rehoming model is put in place that will give more retired racehorses the best opportunity for a safe home and a career post racing.