

## CONSULTATION NOTICE

<b>Code of Racing</b>	Thoroughbred
<b>Rule</b>	N/a
<b>Description</b>	Venue Suitability Assessment Procedure
<b>Authorised for Consultation</b>	May 27, 2024
<b>Consultation Closes</b>	June 10, 2024
<b>Submissions to</b>	<a href="mailto:policies@racingqueensland.com.au">policies@racingqueensland.com.au</a>

Racing Queensland (**RQ**), in conjunction with the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (**QRIC**), have been reviewing the relevant procedures that are followed when assessing the suitability of a venue/track for racing. From September 2022, these procedures have generally been facilitated by a joint RQ-QRIC document 'Race Meeting Procedures - Thoroughbred Postponement or Abandonment', a copy of which can be found [here](#).

As a result of considerable review and discussion, it is proposed the existing procedure document is replaced by a new 'Venue Suitability Assessment Procedure (Thoroughbred)'. A draft copy of the proposed new Procedure is provided in the following pages.

The Procedure outlines the processes RQ and the QRIC will follow when determining the outcome of a race meeting where any issue/s are identified with the track (or venue) either in the period leading into race day or on race day itself.

In short, under the Procedure the relevant decision-maker (i.e., RQ or the QRIC, depending on timing) will make enquiries with the Club and other relevant parties to ascertain the nature and extent of any identified issues and determine the course of action to be taken.

If the QRIC is the decision-maker (and in the relevant circumstances), an inspection will be undertaken involving the Club's racecourse manager and up to four jockeys selected by the Stewards (the '**jockey delegates**'). Following this inspection, the jockey delegates will give advice to the Stewards privately, at which point the Stewards may then decide the outcome of the race meeting.

Alternatively, after considering the opinion of the jockey delegates, the Stewards may require remedial actions to be undertaken, or decide that it is appropriate to obtain the opinion of the jockeys due to ride in the upcoming race.

If the opinion of the jockeys due to ride in the upcoming race is requested, a further inspection will be undertaken to give these jockeys the chance to inspect the track. The jockeys will then be given the opportunity to discuss their views in private, before delivering a collective jockeys' opinion to the Stewards. If the jockeys' opinion is divided, this fact, and the proportion of jockeys in favour and against, is to be conveyed to the Stewards. The Stewards, as the decision-maker, will then consider all relevant matters and determine the outcome of the race meeting.

It is noted that the Procedure does not include a secret ballot of jockeys, with that process replaced by the process detailed in the previous paragraph.

It is also noted that where RQ is the decision-maker (i.e., before official scratching time), RQ may request the QRIC's assistance if an issue is identified that may render the venue unsuitable for racing. In these circumstances, the QRIC will endeavour, where possible, to schedule Stewards to inspect the venue before race day and/or prior to scratchings on race morning, as the case may require (refer clause 2.1(h) of the Procedure).

RQ and the QRIC believe the proposed Procedure will ensure that decisions regarding the suitability of tracks/venues for racing are made following a robust process of assessment, and in the best interests and safety of industry participants.

Stakeholders wishing to provide any feedback on the proposed new Procedure are requested to do so as outlined at the top of this document.



# VENUE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE (THOROUGHBRED)

## 1. Purpose & Scope

- (a) The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the process that will be followed if any issues arise in the lead up to or during a race meeting that may render the venue unsuitable for racing (including with reference to safety).
- (b) This Procedure is a joint Racing Queensland (**RQ**) and Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (**QRIC**) Procedure. Any future versions, updates or amendments will be managed conjointly between RQ and the QRIC.
- (c) While the power to cancel, abandon or postpone a race meeting rests with RQ prior to official scratching time, and with the QRIC thereafter, both parties will work collaboratively and in a transparent and timely manner to ensure decisions are made based on all available information, and in the best interests of participants and animals.

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1. RQ as the Decision-Maker (before official scratching time)

- (a) **Giving notice to RQ:** If, prior to official scratching time for a race meeting, the Club, the QRIC or a participant identifies an issue that may render the venue unsuitable for racing, they must immediately notify RQ. Upon being notified of the issue, RQ will attempt to gather all relevant information from the party that raised it.
- (b) **RQ will undertake initial enquiries:** If, prior to official scratching time for a race meeting, RQ becomes aware of an issue that it believes may render the venue unsuitable for racing (whether notified in accordance with clause 2.1(a) or otherwise), RQ will undertake initial enquiries with the Club, the QRIC, and all other relevant parties, to:
  - (i) ascertain the nature and extent of the issue (including any history relevant to the issue or similar issues at the venue); and
  - (ii) determine whether any remedial actions should be undertaken to address the issue.

All parties involved in these initial enquiries must ensure that they are aware of and working toward the standard required for the venue to be deemed suitable for racing by RQ and, subsequently, by the Stewards on race day.

- (c) **RQ may require remedial actions:** Where RQ determines that remedial actions are appropriate (and where time permits), RQ will instruct the Club to carry out such actions to ensure the venue is suitable for racing.
- (d) **RQ may require track gallop:** Where deemed necessary, RQ may require that a track gallop involving at least one horse and an experienced rider be undertaken, to test the condition of the racing surface.
- (e) **RQ may decide conduct of race meeting:** Once RQ is satisfied that all appropriate actions and deliberations have taken place, RQ may decide (in its sole discretion) whether the race meeting will proceed as scheduled, or whether to cancel, abandon or postpone the meeting in accordance with its powers under AR 155(1). In making its decision, RQ will consider the opinions of the Club and the QRIC, and may also take into account the opinions of other relevant parties.

- (f) **RQ may alter timing of races:** RQ may choose to alter the scheduled timing of races at any time and for any reason, including to allow for works, actions or deliberations to be undertaken and, in doing so, will engage with other relevant parties as appropriate.
- (g) **Notification by RQ:** Once a decision has been made, RQ will notify the Club, the QRIC and all other relevant parties of the decision. If the decision is made to cancel, abandon, or postpone the meeting, or to alter the scheduled timing of races, RQ will:
- (i) issue an SMS communication to all participants engaged to take part in the meeting;
  - (ii) liaise with the QJA and the ATA QLD to ensure all participants engaged to take part in the meeting are made aware of the decision as soon as practicable (particularly any who may be enroute to the meeting);
  - (iii) contact the TAB/SKY to inform it of the decision; and
  - (iv) issue a media statement/tweet to inform the public of the decision, giving reasons.
- (h) **QRIC assistance:** To assist with achieving the intent of this Procedure, where RQ becomes aware of an issue that it believes may render a relevant venue unsuitable for racing, RQ may request the QRIC's assistance and, where possible, the QRIC will endeavour to schedule Stewards to undertake an inspection of the venue:
- (i) on a day prior to the race meeting; and/or
  - (ii) prior to official scratching time on the day of the race meeting,
- as the case may require.
- Regarding any such inspection, RQ will:
- (iii) liaise with the Stewards and the QJA as necessary; and
  - (iv) ensure that a representative of RQ's tracks team attends to take part (where possible).

## 2.2. QRIC as the Decision-Maker (from official scratching time)

- (a) **Giving notice to the Stewards:** If, after official scratching time on the day of a race meeting (including during the conduct of a meeting), the Club, RQ or a participant identifies an issue that may render the venue unsuitable for racing, they must immediately notify the Stewards. Upon being notified of the issue, the Stewards will attempt to gather all relevant information from the party that raised it.
- (b) **Stewards will undertake initial enquiries:** If, after official scratching time on the day of a race meeting (including during the conduct of a meeting), the Stewards become aware of an issue that they believe may render the venue unsuitable for racing (whether notified in accordance with clause 2.2(a) or otherwise), the Stewards will undertake initial enquiries with the Club and all other relevant parties to ascertain the nature and extent of the issue (including any history relevant to the issue or similar issues at the venue).
- (c) **Inspection may take place:** Thereafter, unless the Stewards decide otherwise (based on their initial enquiries), an inspection of the areas of concern will take place, involving:
- (i) the Stewards;
  - (ii) the Club's racecourse manager (or other appropriate Club official);
  - (iii) up to four jockeys selected by the Stewards (the **jockey delegates**); and
  - (iv) any other parties the Stewards deem appropriate.

- (d) **Stewards' selection of jockey delegates:** In selecting the jockey delegates to take part in this inspection, the Stewards will seek to include:
- (i) a combination of jockeys who rode in the previous race and jockeys engaged to ride in the upcoming race; or
  - (ii) where no race has taken place, a combination of jockeys engaged to ride in the first race and jockeys engaged to ride in the second race.

If there are no jockeys on course at the time of the inspection, the inspection may proceed in the absence of jockey delegates, but the Stewards will contact the QJA to inform it of this fact.

- (e) **Stewards to take advice from jockey delegates:** Upon completion of this inspection, the Stewards will take advice from the jockey delegates on their opinion as to the suitability of the venue for racing (this opinion to be given privately in the absence of any Club officials).
- (f) **Stewards may require remedial actions:** Upon completion of the inspection (or at any other relevant time), the Stewards may determine that remedial actions should be undertaken to address the issue. All parties involved in any such deliberations must ensure that they are aware of and working toward the standard required for the venue to be deemed suitable for racing by the Stewards.
- (g) **Club to carry out remedial actions:** Where the Stewards determine that remedial actions are appropriate (and where time permits), the Stewards will instruct the Club's racecourse manager (or other appropriate Club official) to carry out such actions to ensure the venue is suitable for racing. Upon completion of those actions, the parties involved in the initial inspection will re-inspect the areas of concern.
- (h) **Obtaining the opinion of jockeys in upcoming race:** If, after considering the advice of the jockey delegates, the Stewards decide it is necessary to obtain the opinion of the jockeys riding in the upcoming race, the Stewards will invite those jockeys to the Stewards' room to discuss the status of the meeting. At the conclusion of this discussion, the Stewards will:
- (i) invite those jockeys to inspect the areas of concern, together with the Stewards and the jockey delegates; and
  - (ii) following this inspection, ask the jockeys involved in this inspection to discuss any concerns they may have regarding the suitability of the venue for racing in the upcoming race (this discussion to take place in private in the jockeys' room).
- (i) **Jockeys to give opinion:** Following any such discussions, the jockeys will be invited to give their opinion as to the suitability of the venue for racing in the upcoming race (this opinion to be delivered by a jockey nominated by the jockeys involved in the discussion). If the opinion is divided, that fact and the proportion of jockeys in favour and against is to be conveyed to the Stewards.
- (j) **Stewards may decide conduct of race meeting:** Once the Stewards are satisfied that all appropriate actions and deliberations have taken place, the Stewards may decide (in their sole discretion) whether the race meeting will proceed as scheduled, or whether to postpone the meeting in accordance with their powers under AR 21(f)(i). In making their decision:
- (i) the Stewards will liaise with the Chief Thoroughbred Steward (or, if the Chief Thoroughbred Steward is unavailable, the Deputy Chief Thoroughbred Steward or the relevant Regional Manager); and
  - (ii) the Stewards will consider any advice of the jockey delegates, any opinion of the jockeys given in accordance with clause 2.2(h), and may also take into account the opinions of other relevant parties.

- (k) **Stewards may alter timing of races:** The Stewards may choose to alter the scheduled timing of races at any time and for any reason, including to allow for works, actions or deliberations to be undertaken and, in doing so, will engage with other relevant parties as appropriate.
- (l) **Notification by Stewards:** Once a decision has been made, the Stewards will notify the Club, the jockeys on course and all other relevant parties of the decision. If the decision is made to postpone the meeting, or to alter the scheduled timing of races, the Stewards will:
- (i) inform RQ of the decision;
  - (ii) issue an SMS communication to all participants engaged to take part in the meeting;
  - (iii) (if applicable) arrange the appropriate on course announcements via the relevant broadcasters;
  - (iv) contact the TAB/SKY to inform it of the decision; and
  - (v) issue a media statement/tweet to inform the public of the decision, giving reasons.
- (m) **RQ to liaise with QJA and ATA QLD:** Immediately upon receipt of such notice from the Stewards, RQ will liaise with the QJA and the ATA QLD to ensure all participants engaged to take part in the meeting are made aware of the decision as soon as practicable (particularly any who may be enroute to the meeting).
- (n) **Jockeys unwilling to ride:** Any jockey unwilling to ride following a decision of the Stewards to proceed with the meeting must inform the Stewards of that fact and, upon doing so, will be granted permission to forgo further rides on that day and may leave the racecourse without penalty.
- (o) **Replacement jockeys:** Replacement jockeys for such horses may then be engaged by connections from amongst the jockeys who are willing to ride at the meeting, provided that jockey doesn't have an existing engagement to ride in that particular race. If there are no such jockeys available, the horse (or horses) will be withdrawn from the race without penalty.
- (p) **Repeat process:** This process may be repeated after each race throughout the course of a meeting as deemed appropriate by the Stewards.

### 3. References & Related Documents

Document
Rules of Racing of Racing Queensland - Thoroughbred
Standard Required Of Licensed Venues Policy
Licensed Venue Standards - Thoroughbred

### 4. Version History

Current Version:	2	Date Made:	DD/MM/2024	Effective Date:	DD/MM/2024
Document Owner:	EGM Operations (RQ) Deputy Commissioner (QRIC)			CEO Approved:	DD/MM/2024
Enquiries to:	Senior Racing Manager - Thoroughbred (RQ) Chief Steward - Thoroughbred (QRIC)			Due for Review:	DD/MM/2026

Version	Effective	Document Owner	Changes Made
1	15/09/2022	EGM Operations (RQ) Deputy Commissioner (QRIC)	New Procedure
2	DD/MM/2024	EGM Operations (RQ) Deputy Commissioner (QRIC)	Reviewed and updated.

