



Memorandum of Understanding

Between

The ACT Government

and

The ACT Equestrian Association Inc.

Final – May 2014

1 PREAMBLE

Equestrian sport and recreation activities are part of the history and social fabric of the ACT and the surrounding Australian Capital Region.

The ACT Government values the economic and social contribution of the recreational equestrian sector to the ACT community and recognises that a number of members of the community actively participate, or are otherwise interested, in the sector.

The ACT Government owns and manages much of the land currently used by the equestrian sector and provides various forms of financial support for the sector's activities. Land planning and development decisions are determined by the Government's aim to consider and to balance a range of views and interests to achieve the best outcomes for the Territory.

The ACT Equestrian Association (ACTEA) is the Territory's peak body representing recreational and sporting equestrian clubs in the ACT, including pony clubs, showjumping, trail riding, dressage, horse trials, and endurance riding. Recreational equestrian activities in the ACT function independently from the thoroughbred and harness racing industries.

ACTEA has an interest in pursuing the long-term sustainability of the equestrian sector in the ACT and seeks to ensure that its members' interests are articulated and considered within relevant Government processes.

It is noted that certain areas historically used by the equestrian sector are experiencing change associated with Canberra's urban development.

2 PARTIES TO THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum is between:

- The ACT Government; and,
- The ACT Equestrian Association Inc.

This Memorandum is not legally binding on either party and is undertaken in good faith for the purpose discussed below in Section Three. All words in the Memorandum should be interpreted in terms of their common, rather than legal, usage.

3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum is to maintain a strong relationship between the ACT Government and ACTEA to promote a more integrated approach to planning for and managing existing and future equestrian infrastructure.

To this end, this Memorandum establishes a basis for future interactions between the ACT Government and ACTEA through outlining mutually agreed goals and actions and facilitating whole-of-government consideration of equestrian issues in relevant government planning and decision-making processes.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The parties agree that the following principles will guide the partnership:

1. **Respect** — both parties agree that they will treat each other with integrity and respect in their dealings and adhere to the principles in this Memorandum.
2. **Accountability** —both parties acknowledge that their representatives have responsibilities which they are accountable for, and that such responsibilities will bear on decision-making made in relation to this Memorandum.
3. **Efficiency** —both parties agree that their interactions in the context of this Memorandum should be sensitive to the reasonable time expectations of the other party.
4. **Effectiveness** — both parties agree that any actions that follow from this Memorandum should effectively deliver measurable outcomes where substantive agreement has been reached by the parties.

The Government is committed to a triple bottom line approach (economic, social, and environmental) to resource allocation and decision making. In this context, the parties also agree that the following principles will apply when the Government considers resourcing and investment decisions in relation to the 'Strategic Issues' discussed in Section Six and its associated Schedule.

5. **Fit-for-purpose** – both parties agree to arrive at solutions that will be fit for purpose under current conditions and constraints, conforming to efficiency and effectiveness. Fit-for-purpose solutions may not be ideal or best, but what works safely under current conditions and constraints.
6. **Demand-driven** – both parties agree that Government decisions on investments in equestrian-related infrastructure should take into consideration the likely level of use of that infrastructure, including relative demand for infrastructure from other sport or recreation groups. Ultimately, any investment should represent value-for-money for the Territory, including in terms of opportunity costs.
7. **Social Benefits** – both parties acknowledge that equestrian sports contribute to broader government aspirations for a more active lifestyle among Canberrans especially women, young girls and older citizens and that outcomes should foster community engagement and be spread equitably across Canberra.
8. **Sound Environmental Basis** – both parties agree that equestrian access to public recreational areas should be balanced against protection of the natural environment and decisions in this regard should be made based on good, up-to-date science.

5 INTENDED OUTCOMES

Through this Memorandum the parties seek to achieve the following outcomes:

Strong partnership

Good communication and rationalising points of interaction will set the conditions for a stronger partnership between the ACT Government and ACTEA to deal with planning issues and impacts related to the equestrian sector.

A partnership implies working together to identify strategic issues and plan appropriate solutions.

A strong partnership does not require consensus and can tolerate disagreement. It requires goodwill to work toward consensus on matters of shared concern through sometimes robust discussion.

Mutual understanding

To reach a mutual understanding of each party's key interests and positions even where there is disagreement.

For the ACT Government, this will mean building its understanding of the aspirations and concerns of the local equestrian sector. For ACTEA, this will entail awareness that the Government must consider equestrian issues in the context of its broad policy agenda.

Mutual understanding does not require identical views on issues or the same values. It requires the ability to appreciate different perspectives.

Cooperation

To build a cooperative approach that furthers the interests of both parties in the future of equestrian sport and recreational activities in the ACT.

6 STRATEGIC ACTIONS AND ONGOING OPERATIONAL ISSUES

This MoU takes a strategic whole-of-government approach to equestrian issues. This approach seeks to ensure that engagement with the sector on strategic issues happens at the front end of planning and policy processes and in doing so maintain the crucial connectivity of equestrian infrastructure.

The Schedule to this Memorandum identifies strategic actions to address key broader planning and policy issues. The delivery of these actions will be coordinated by the 'single point of contact' (as discussed in Section Seven).

Certain ongoing and operational issues have also been identified as being of mutual interest to both parties and are outlined below. These are expected to be primarily addressed within normal Government activities by individual directorates within the framework provided by the Memorandum.

Consultation and Engagement

The Government will consult with ACTEA at an early stage on proposed decisions and actions that will impact upon the equestrian sector. The Government and ACTEA will continue to engage through the 'Equestrian Forum', a regular meeting between equestrian sector and directorate representatives. The Forum will convene as required.

More specifically, ACTEA will be engaged in government consultation processes targeting users of the Territory's recreational areas including in relation to specific planning and development proposals that would affect existing government horse holding paddocks. It is also agreed in-principle that the Government paddock contract manager should consult with paddock users prior to any decisions or changes which may affect their use of the Government horse holding paddocks.

The above provisions do not cover development applications (DAs) as DAs are subject to statutory notification requirements.

Facilities and Connectivity

Both parties agree that a range of competition and training facilities, and safe connections between such facilities, are desirable. The design of new suburbs should consider ways in which existing horse trails can be extended or improved, although it is also acknowledged that particular existing routes may change over time due to urban development patterns. That said, the impacts of future development or other forms of trail closure on the existing trail network will be considered during the planning and development process and that where possible action will be taken to ameliorate these impacts.

Trails Map

Dependent on funding, a map could be produced of equestrian trails similar to that for walkers and cyclists, and this map may be provided to commercial street directories.

Signage

Subject to the availability of resources, clear signage will be installed on equestrian routes and trails where multiple users interact, with a view to making other users aware of horse riders and to avoid inadvertent closure of equestrian trails.

Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) MoU

The existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Government, ACTEA and BNT Ltd will continue to operate. It is agreed in-principle that the BNT should follow a safe and attractive route with access to water and camp sites at intervals consistent with the well-being of horses. The Government agrees to disseminate and implement its plans for the iterative routing the BNT in a manner that is consistent with land development. Where a clear demand can be demonstrated and where appropriate land and sufficient resources can be identified, additional camping facilities will be considered.

Access to Blue Range

It is noted that the equestrian sector seeks the provision of access to Blue Range and in the Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC) for organised trekking and endurance training and competition. It is agreed that any access to the LCC be consistent with the LCC Strategic Management Plan and the LCC Recreation Strategy. Access for organised equestrian events will be considered within a defined area within Zones 2B and 3 west of Brindabella Rd, consistent with the Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park (2010).¹ Access to the Blue Range outside of the LCC is agreed to. It is noted that access to these areas may be subject to change at short notice (such as, for example, to protect the ACT's water supply).

Equestrian Park

The ACT Government agrees that Equestrian Park should be adequately maintained so it can be utilised by a range of users for state, national and international events. It is noted that the cross country area of the Park contains habitat of the nationally endangered Golden Sun Moth, which the Government is required to protect. Subject to available funding and government priorities, the ACT Government also supports the aspirations set out in the Creber Master Plan for further upgrades and improvement being undertaken at Equestrian Park.

Biosecurity and Animal Welfare

Both parties agree to support and promote horse health and disease management and prevention programs so as to benefit horses, other animals and their human contacts.

Each party further agrees to comply with the current and any future revised 'Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses in the ACT', and where applicable the 'Code of Practice Appendix 4: Commercial Horse Riding Establishments'.

7 GOVERNANCE

Single Point of Contact for Planning and Policy Issues

The Government will nominate a senior executive to act as a single point of contact for planning and policy matters concerning more than one directorate. These include the actions listed in the Schedule to this Memorandum and any new strategic issues that might emerge.

The single point of contact will not be personally responsible for the delivery of the strategic planning and policy actions listed in the Schedule to the Memorandum (or any new actions) but is expected to provide oversight so that a coordinated approach is taken across the relevant directorates.

¹ It is noted that horse riding is not allowed in Zones 1A, 1B or 2B (refer Table 2.8 of the Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park).

As a party to this Memorandum, ACTEA agrees to direct all correspondence on relevant planning and policy matters through the single point of contact so as to support a coordinated approach to strategic issues.

It is agreed that ACTEA should otherwise continue to deal directly with individual directorates on routine operational matters relating to the latter's normal programs and service delivery.

Escalation

If a matter cannot be resolved by a decision under the Memorandum (and excluding the decision to leave a matter unresolved), ACTEA may request in writing that the single point of contact formally escalate the issue to the most appropriate relevant minister for consideration.

Conflict Resolution

Attempts to resolve conflicts that might emerge should be made with reference to the 'Guiding Principles' and 'Intended Outcomes' discussed in Section 4 and Section 5.

Review of the Memorandum

The Memorandum and progress against undertakings made in the Schedule will be reviewed 24 months after its commencement.

The parties have executed this Memorandum of Understanding on the

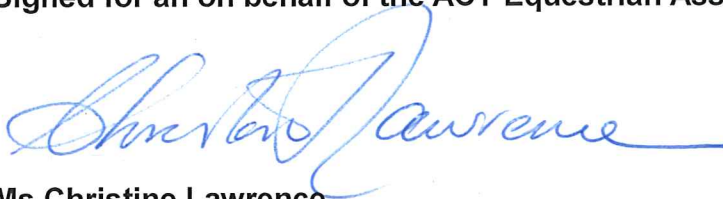
24 Day of May 2014

Signed for an on behalf of the ACT Government



Minister Shane Rattenbury MLA
ACT Government

Signed for an on behalf of the ACT Equestrian Association



Ms Christine Lawrence
President of ACTEA

Schedule of Strategic Planning and Policy Actions

- The Government will identify a senior executive to act as a 'single point of contact' for planning and policy issues involving multiple directorates;
- The Government will undertake work to clarify arrangements for the provision of horse paddocks on Government land for the foreseeable future. While in some cases existing horse paddocks will be subject to redevelopment, this work will seek to identify opportunities to identify replacement land that might be suitable as horse agistment wherever possible. Every effort will be made to site additional paddocks to advantage the equestrian sector, noting that the scarcity of suitable land or pre-existing land use restrictions may restrict the range of viable options;
- The Government agrees to complete a master plan for the Molonglo Valley, confirming arrangements for equestrian trails as the area's development progresses;
- Equestrian access to Canberra Nature Park (CNP) will be considered in the review of the CNP Plan of Management; and,
- The Government agrees that horse bushfire preparedness and evacuation arrangements be included in its emergency planning. Directions for horse owners would be included as part of evacuation notification arrangements.