



Quest Equine Welfare Network

The Quest Equine Welfare Network is a group of volunteer horse men and women, spread across Australia, who are committed to improving the welfare of equines by way of education, advice, support, lobbying, and, where appropriate and possible, rehabilitating equines who are in need. Quest also aims to raise awareness of the plight of far too many equines in this country whose well-being is compromised so they may live happier, healthier lives, free of fear and suffering.

There is a chronic over-supply of horses in this country, and this state of affairs is a major contributor to most equine welfare issues we face. Around 40,000 horses are slaughtered each year in Australia for human consumption and the pet food industry, mostly for overseas markets, the biggest of which is Japan, followed by France, Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Around 20% of these horses are feral stock, i.e. brumbies. The remainder is made up of domestic stock, ex-race horses and the like. The horses are slaughtered, and their meat processed in two onshore export-accredited abattoirs located in South Australia and Queensland. Chances are that if you have ever sold a horse in a sale yard, they have ended up in one of these two processing plants.

Not all equines in the slaughterhouse yard are aged or ill, a high proportion of them are sound, young horses who are merely surplus to requirements. Equine slaughter isn't utilising a resource, it's cleaning up a mess. One of Quest's current priorities is to work towards addressing the issues that lead to the neglect, abandonment, maltreatment, and unwarranted slaughter of equines.

There are Quest Affiliates in almost every State and Territory who make themselves available to assist horse owners in many ways, from providing advice and assistance on health matters, assessing and rehabilitating horses in need, assisting with the housing of equines in an emergency such as a flood or bushfire, and assisting with re-homing all manner of equines. The Network is also steadily bringing together fact sheets for the horse owner covering a variety of topics, which include 'Care of the Aged Equine', 'First Aid', 'Buying a Horse', and the very sensitive issue 'Euthanasia'. These fact sheets are downloadable from the Quest website.

We are not equine 'experts', nor do we claim to be. Some of us are fortunate enough to have had lifelong associations with equines. Some of us are late-life starters. Some of us are stay-at-home mums, and others are professionals employed outside the home in various fields. What we have in common is a passion for, and commitment to equine welfare.

Many of us have our own resident 'rescues', some of whom have become partners in various equine sports, including pleasure riding, dressage, and vaulting. Others enjoy relaxed lives in 'forever homes' where nothing more is asked of them than to be content.

Quest Equine does not seek donations, and all welfare related work undertaken by the Network Affiliates is self-funded.

There are many reasons why owners may seek assistance for equines in their care, a common one being, for example, a change in a financial situation, meaning that adequate feed or husbandry is no longer affordable. The Quest Network is often contacted by individuals who hold concerns for the well-being of a horse/pony belonging to someone else. Quest can offer support and/or advice on how to best facilitate appropriate care for the animal.



Quest does accept equines for care and rehabilitation, but due to financial limitations, can only accept those in genuine need. We are unable to take in equines who are simply unwanted, but do operate a successful 're-homing' operation. Quest affiliates endeavour to provide appropriate assistance based upon the needs of each individual case. In most cases there is no need for equine neglect or suffering to continue, and a solution can be found.

Another of Quest's current projects, which can be accessed on the website, is the '1000 Voices Campaign.' This campaign was launched to encourage owners and/or clubs and associations to make a commitment to follow a code of practice that highlights the basic rights and needs of equines. By signing the pledge, owners demonstrate their good faith and support for their equine friends.

"Ten voices is a whisper which may never be heard. One thousand voices is a rolling tide that cannot be ignored."

Information about Quest and its services including education and assistance to equine owners can be accessed via the Quest website <http://equinewelfare.net>

Also accessible via the website is a friendly discussion forum where equine enthusiasts can get together to ask questions, share information, download factsheets, keep updated with Quest activities or just chat 'horses and donkeys'.

Contact: enquiries@equinewelfare.net