

Keynote on social licence

Roly Owers MRCVS
Chief Executive
World Horse Welfare



WorldHorseWelfare

www.worldhorsewelfare.org
Registered charity no. 206658 and SC038384

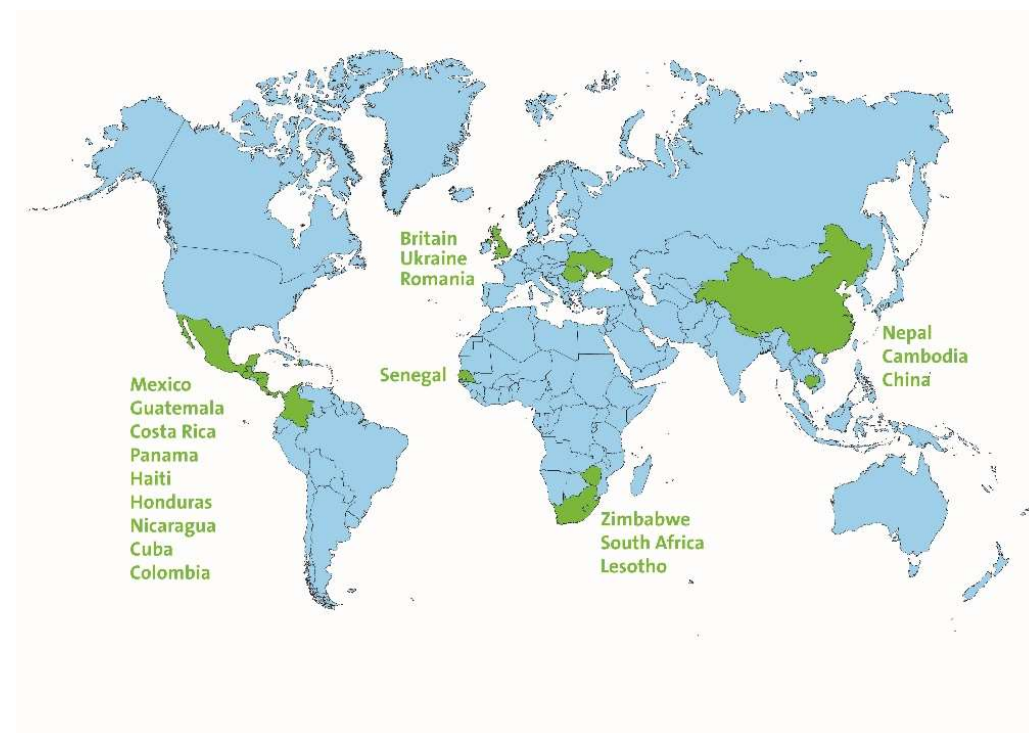
Outline

1. World Horse Welfare
2. Racing's problem
3. Social licence concept
4. Maintaining racing's social licence



1. World Horse Welfare – overview

- Leading equine charity since 1927
- Actively promotes the horse-human partnership
- Works across 4 continents
- 120+ employees – £10m turnover
- Partnership working with governments, universities, regulators, other NGOs
- Strong veterinary credentials
- Active in policy – WOA, EU, UN
- Supports responsible horse sport





Support responsible horse sport

- Welfare advisor to sport regulators
 - International Equestrian Federation (FEI) – Code of Conduct for Welfare of Horse
 - International Horse Sport Confederation (IHSC)
 - British Horseracing Authority (BHA)
 - Informally to other national federations
- Member of:
 - BHA's Whip Consultation Steering Group
 - Aintree and Cheltenham reviews
- Associate Member of British Equestrian



Focus on social licence

Review

Social Licence to Operate: What Can Equestrian Sports Learn from Other Industries?

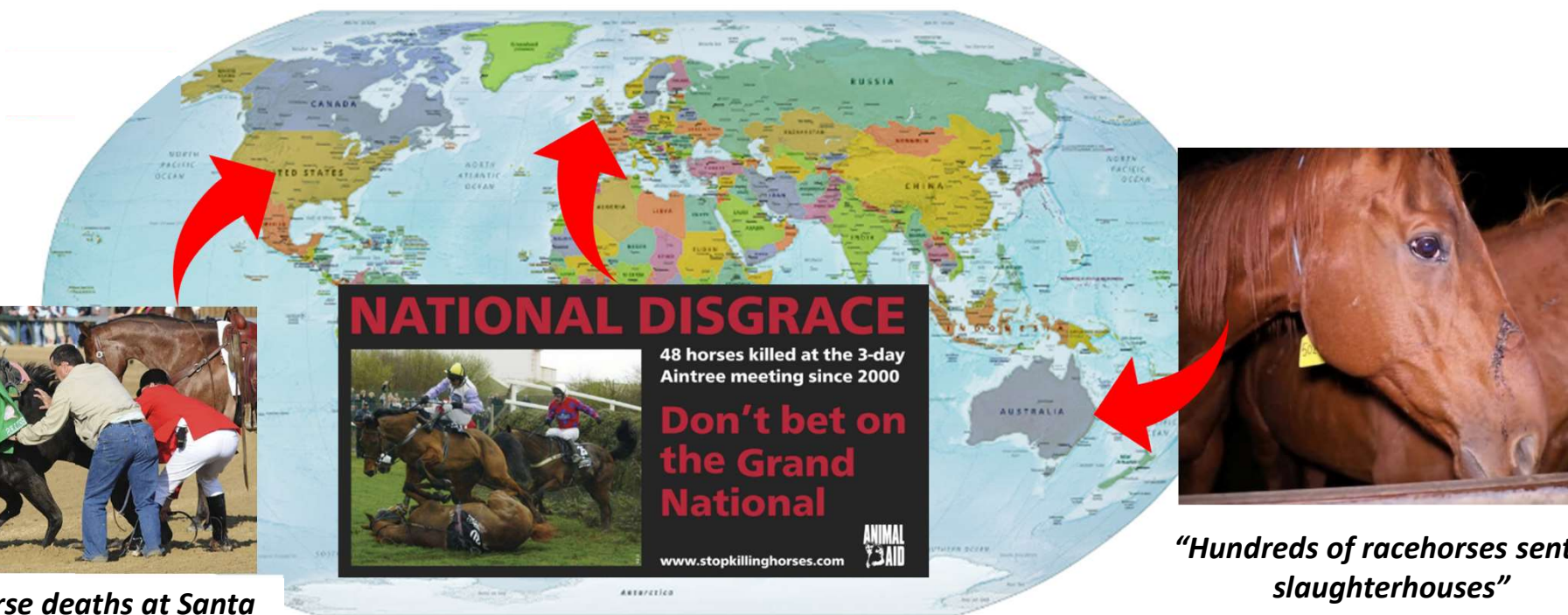
Janet Douglas ^{1,*}, Roly Owers ¹ and Madeleine L. H. Campbell ²

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2. Racing's problem

- Equestrianism – including racing – is on an ethical tightrope walk



"A spate of horse deaths at Santa Anita has activists and lawmakers pushing for national reform"

"Hundreds of racehorses sent to slaughterhouses"

Public attitudes and perception are changing

- Partnership or exploitation?

'Use but not abuse'

vs

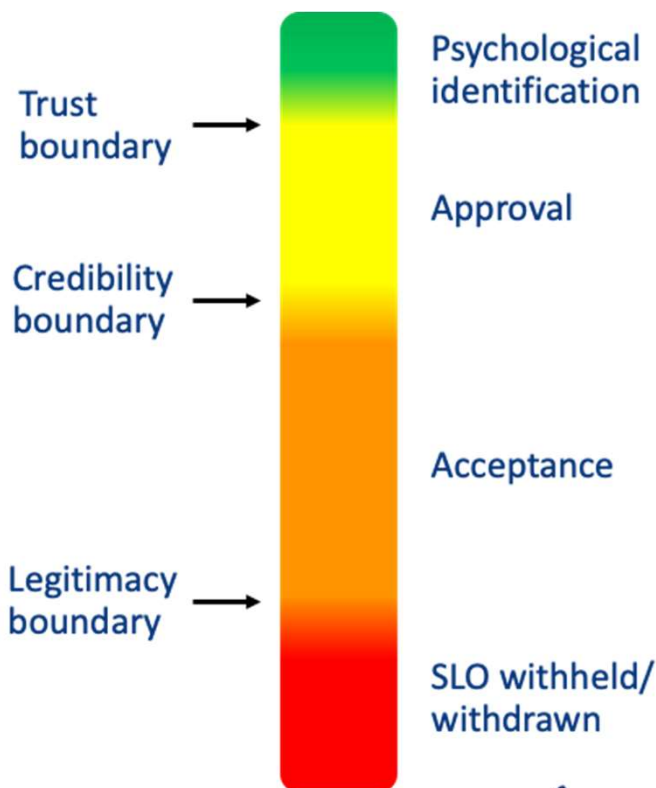
'Use is abuse'



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3. Social licence to operate (SLO)



Graphic: After Thomson & Boutilier (2011)

The consequences of losing a social licence



Greyhound racing:
Banned in parts of
Australia and the USA and
under threat in the UK

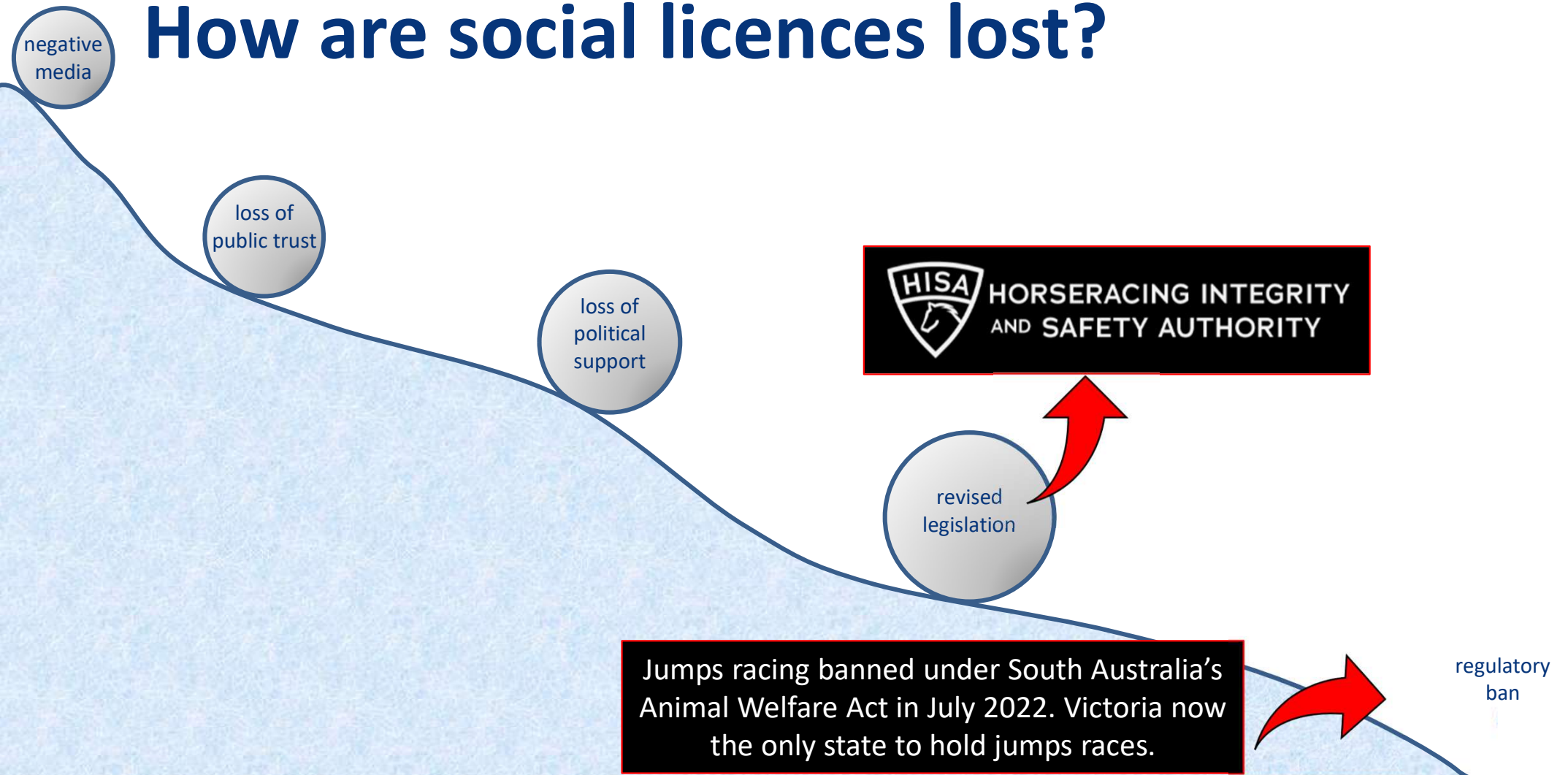


Jump racing:
Banned in most of
Australia



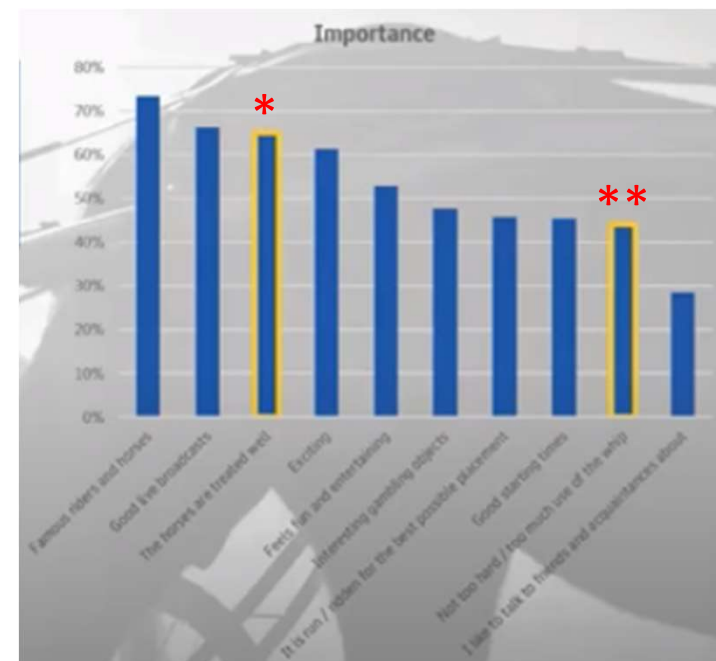
Equestrianism:
Lost from modern
pentathlon after 2024
Olympics

How are social licences lost?



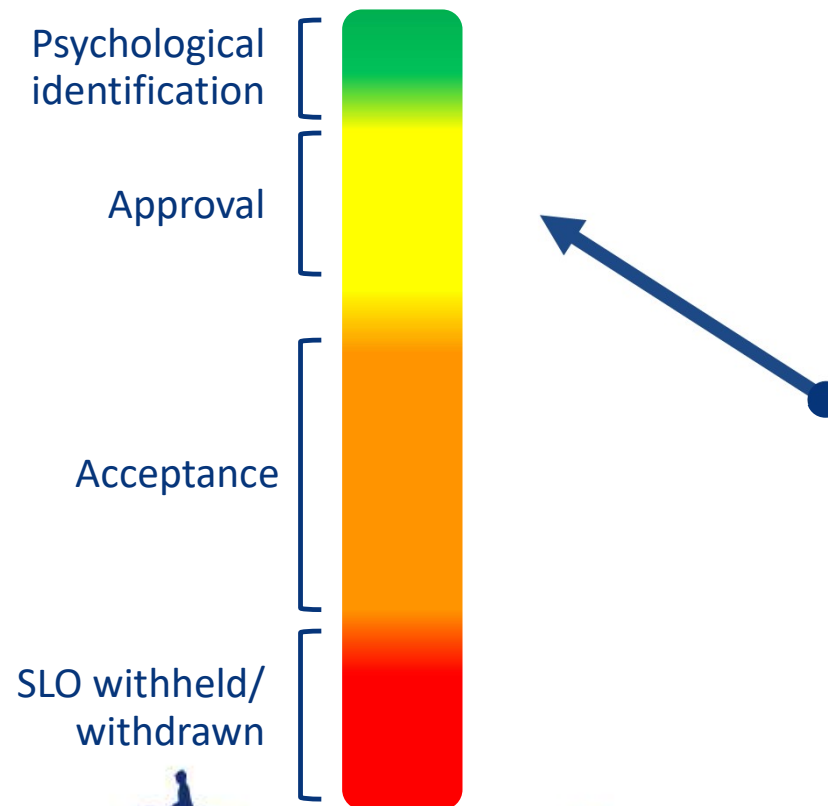
What impact is this having on betting?

- Limited data
- Survey: ATG users who watch both national and international races
 - Equine welfare 3rd most important factor*
 - Whip use also relevant**
- Santa Anita fatalities – concomitant reduction in betting turnover
 - Unfavourable coverage, COVID-19 or both?



4. Maintaining racing's social licence

- Where is racing on the SLO 'barometer' now?
 - Jurisdiction-dependent
 - To some extent, discipline-dependent (jumps vs flat)
- Where do we want it to be?
- How do we get there?



Racing has been proactive



Equine Injury Database JD



The Hong Kong Jockey Club
Equine Welfare
Research Foundation



Diapositive 13

JD0

Horse being scanned is in a PET scanner at Santa Anita

Janet Douglas; 2022-10-08T20:25:50.576

What more can be done?



Welfare

- Be open to learning about what good welfare really looks like
- Consider mental and physical welfare
- Promote positive welfare
- Improve equine safety
- Uphold rules and sanctions



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Diapositive 15

JD0

Photo is from Simon Earle Racing (<https://www.simonearleracing.co.uk/>) - welfare-focussed training).

Janet Douglas; 2022-10-10T09:11:00.921

Ethics

- Assess the ethics of all practices
- Ask 'Should we?' before asking 'Can we?'

Article

An Ethical Framework for the Use of Horses in Competitive Sport: Theory and Function

Madeleine L. H. Campbell

Citation: Campbell, M.L.H. An Ethical Framework for the Use of Horses in Competitive Sport: Theory and Function. *Animals* **2021**, *11*, 1725. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11061725>



Diapositive 16

JD0

Photo is from Flemington (Melbourne Cup)

Janet Douglas; 2022-10-10T10:02:45.431

Education

- Promote lifelong learning for all
 - Equine welfare
 - Equine safety
- Practice evidence-based racehorse management
- Challenge the status quo



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Communication

- Communicate shared values to all stakeholders, including the public
- Engage positively and proactively with the media
 - MUST 'walk the talk'



Proactive approach

- Find out what drives all stakeholders, including the public JD0
- Identify and mitigate threats
- Fund research on welfare issues, visible and 'invisible'
- Own the issues
- Commission independent experts
- Embrace reform
- Establish trust



Diapositive 19

JD0

Photo is of a whip-free finish in Norway.

Janet Douglas; 2022-10-10T09:34:28.020

Where are racing's biggest current threats?



JD0



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Diapositive 20

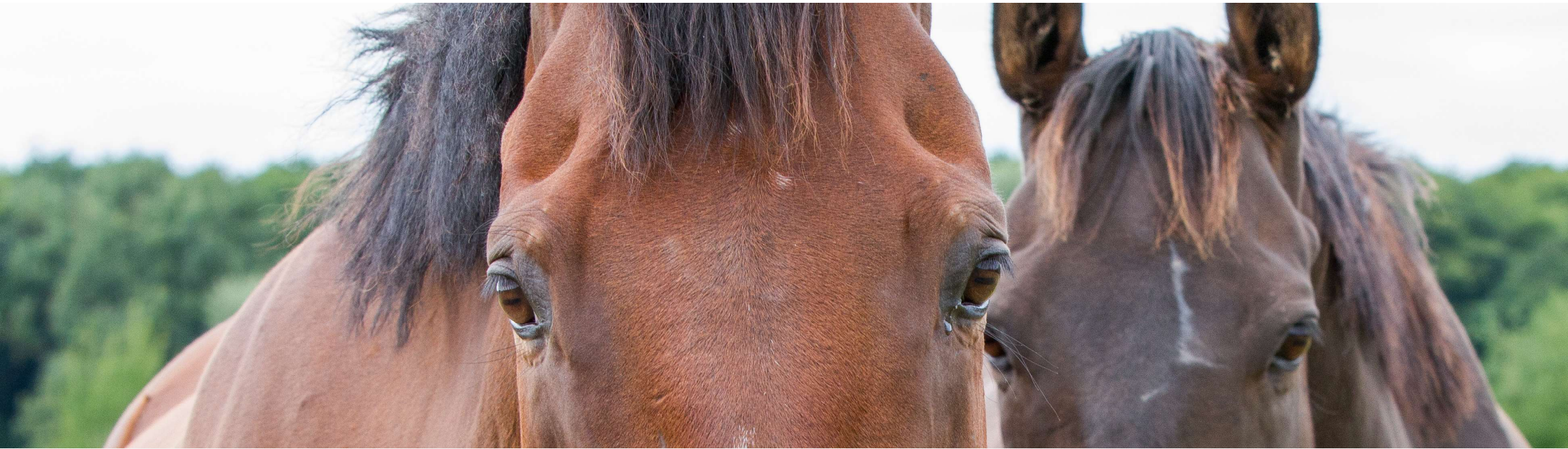
JD0

Photo of the breakdown is Barbaro.

Janet Douglas; 2022-10-10T09:48:23.556

Summary

- Social licence allows a sport the privilege of operating with minimal formalised restrictions
- Prioritising equine welfare is a major key to preserving racing – and the betting opportunities that it affords
- Our understanding of welfare is changing – we have a collective responsibility to change how we breed, manage, train, compete, retire and end the lives of our horses
- It involves challenging the status quo, enforcing the rules, communicating effectively, and building trust
- Racing needs a social licence for it to have a future – the welfare of the horse must be put first AND be seen to be put first



THANK YOU

@rolyowers
@horsecharity

