



ABOVE: Present at the documentation signing were (L-R): Peter V'landys, Lynell Peck, Ron Woodham and trainer Pat Webster (with Thankgodyou'rehere checking out the fine print)
 BELOW (L-R): Lynell Peck, Peter V'landys, Pat Webster and Ron Woodham (and Thankgodyou'rehere)

Racehorses & inmates benefit from new program

AN EXCITING PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE A NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR BOTH RACEHORSES AND PRISON INMATES

New South Wales has become the first state in Australia to launch an innovative program to find new homes and careers for retired racehorses, whilst rehabilitating prison inmates with new skills and job prospects.

The Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Program will see retired racehorses retrained for new pursuits including companion animals, police work, recreational riding and equestrian events.

The horses would be cared for by carefully selected and supervised inmates at correctional centres at Muswellbrook and Windsor.

Racing NSW Chief Executive, Peter V'landys, said the program will have significant long-term benefits for both horses and prisoners.

"This partnership between the NSW Government and Racing NSW has enormous potential and the outcomes could have far reaching effects," Mr V'Landys said.

"Not only does it enable racehorses to have a life after racing but it also provides a new life opportunity for the prisoner."

Mr V'landys added: "I would like to thank the tremendous efforts of Lynell Peck and Shane Brady from the Australian Turf Club. They have put countless



hours into this project, as has program manager Scott Brodie."

Corrective Services Commissioner, Ron Woodham, said the partnership follows a successful pilot program at St Heliers Correctional Centre at Muswellbrook earlier this year involving four inmates caring for 16 horses.

"This is a unique program which provides inmates with personal development opportunities they would otherwise miss out on by making them responsible for the care, management, training and hygiene of these horses," he said.

"Having the skills to hold down a job is a major factor in reducing re-offending and that's what this program will offer by helping with their integration to the workforce and society upon release."

Racing Minister, George Souris, and Attorney General, Greg Smith, launched the joint venture between Racing NSW and Corrective Services NSW to strengthen animal welfare for thoroughbreds and rehabilitation options for prisoners.

"This partnership is a win-win situation providing new opportunities for both retired racehorses and prison inmates while supporting the broader equestrian and horse riding industries," Mr Souris said.

"NSW produces some of the finest thoroughbreds in Australia but their racing careers are relatively short compared to their life span.

"The not-for-profit program will see these magnificent animals sold to the general public as leisure horses, while others will be retrained for new careers as police horses or in competitive jumping and dressage. In fact, we have already had interest from Victoria Police for thoroughbreds to be used as police horses.

"This is a welcome step in strengthening animal welfare in the racing industry and providing a realistic option for owners to give their retired horses a new life after racing."

Mr Smith said the program would allow inmates to acquire skills necessary for employment within the thoroughbred racing industry.

"Inmates will have a broad involvement in the program from caring for and retraining horses, to building and maintaining facilities and even producing lucerne hay for feed," he said.

"Suitable inmates will receive training in horse care and management and have the opportunity to complete relevant TAFE qualifications.

"This program is based on the principles of discipline and responsibility – two important areas to help inmates modify their behaviour." **RNSW**

Thoroughbred rehabilitation program

- Joint venture between Racing NSW and Corrective Services NSW
- Thoroughbreds at the end of their racing careers will be donated to the program by owners through Racing NSW
- The animals will be accommodated at St Heliers Correctional Centre at Muswellbrook and John Morony Correctional Complex at Windsor
- Prison inmates will build and maintain facilities and provide care for the animals
- Up to 50 horses and 17 inmates will be involved in the program at Muswellbrook and up to 10 inmates and 12 horses at Windsor
- The program operates across three levels of rehabilitation:
 - Level 1: Pre-training (up to 5 months)**
RNSW will deliver surrendered horses to the site for pre-training by inmates, under the supervision of a Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Manager. Horses that respond well to rehabilitation and are assessed as safe and healthy by RNSW will be sold as leisure horses to the general public. Horses identified with potential to complete further training for a new equine career will be progressed to Level 2
 - Level 2: Intermediate Training (up to 2 months)**
This training continues and reinforces skills learnt at Level 1, with the addition of classical riding and natural horsemanship techniques. Horses identified as suitable for equine career redeployment are spelled (under the care of inmates) prior to progressing to Level 3
 - Level 3: Re-education Training (at Randwick)**
Horses are re-educated to a specialist equine career such as police work, dressage, and jumping and sold to established markets at a premium amount
- Since March 2011 a pilot program has been held at St Heliers Correctional Centre in which four inmates have successfully trained six horses to Level 1. The pilot program is currently accommodating 16 horses
- Suitable inmates will be able to enter a 12-month traineeship and complete Certificate II or higher in Racing (Stablehand) or other related courses offered by the Australian Racing and Equine Academy under the Racing NSW/TAFE-Western Sydney Institute Training Partnership
- The program will be a not-for-profit venture, with any proceeds from the sale of retrained horses reinvested to maintain and possibly expand the program
- RNSW will provide materials for the construction of purpose-built facilities, necessary equine equipment, transportation and feed, accredited/certified trainers and assessors and veterinary services and medication
- CSNSW will provide inmate labour for construction and maintenance of purpose-built facilities, adequate prison staff and inmates to work in the program, and lucerne hay produced at St Heliers Correctional Centre's farm for feed