

# Animal welfare information sheet for horse incident response teams

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Animal Emergency Incident Management Network ANZ

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[www.aeimn.org](http://www.aeimn.org)





# Acknowledgement

This presentation was prepared on the traditional lands of the Bunurong and Boon Wurrung people, Werribee, Victoria. Australia.

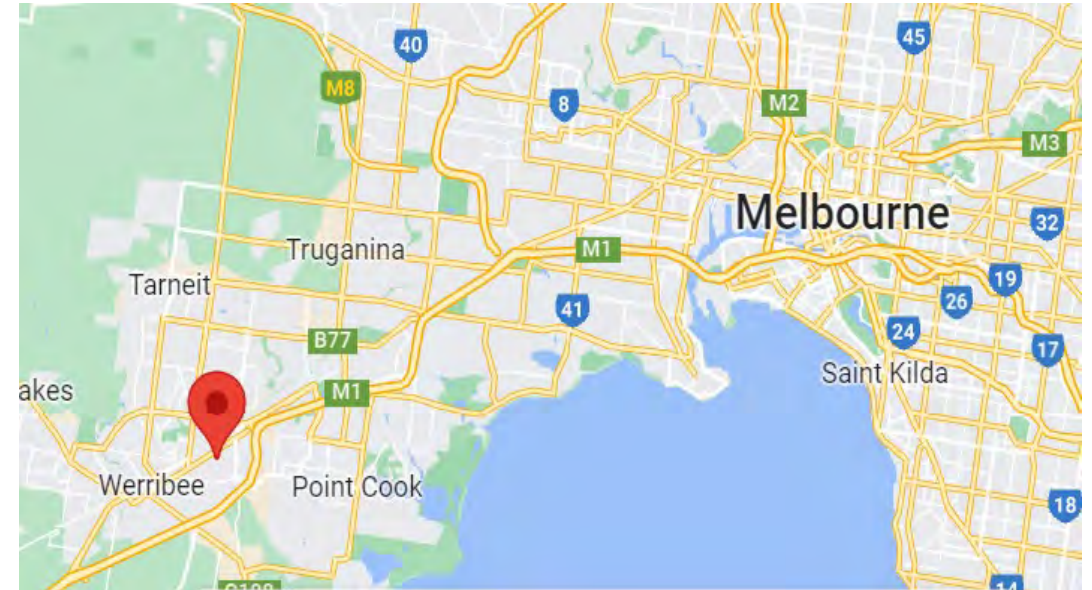


# Location

The University of Melbourne, Werribee Campus is also the registered address for Animal Emergency Incident Management Network ANZ (AEIMN ANZ) 'The Network'



Google (2023) *Australia*. Available at <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Australia/> (Accessed: 22 July 2023).



Google (2023) *University of Melbourne, Werribee Campus*. Available at <https://www.google.com/maps/place/250+Princes+Hwy,+Werribee+VIC+3030> (Accessed: 22 July 2023).



# Animal Welfare Law

## Animal Welfare Laws

- There are no national animal welfare laws in Australia.
- Each Australian State and Territory has an Act and Regulations
- Australian laws  
RSPCA Australia
- New Zealand law  
SPCA New Zealand

## Emergency Management Arrangements

### National information sheet



Google (2023) Australia. Available at <https://www.google.com/maps/@-28.1898431,122.5240533,3.46z?entry=ttu> (Accessed: 22 July 2023).



NZ, NSW, SA laws facilitate animal rescue (life and 'property').

# Agenda

1. About the Animal Emergency Incident Management Network ANZ (AEIMN ANZ)

2. Animal welfare

3. Horse welfare at incidents, tips for responders.



# AEIMN

Animal Emergency Incident Management Network  
(Australia & New Zealand)

Download a copy of this presentation from:  
[www.aeimanz.org/resources](http://www.aeimanz.org/resources)





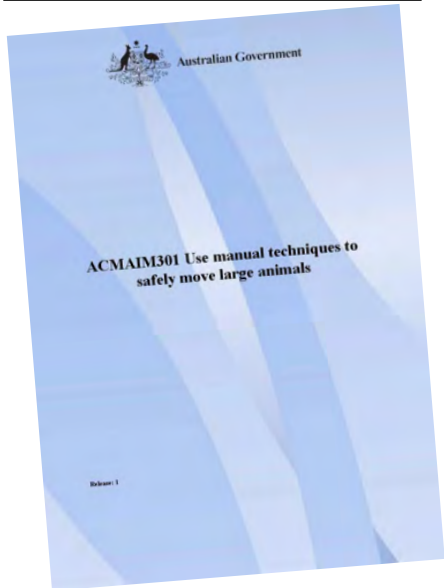
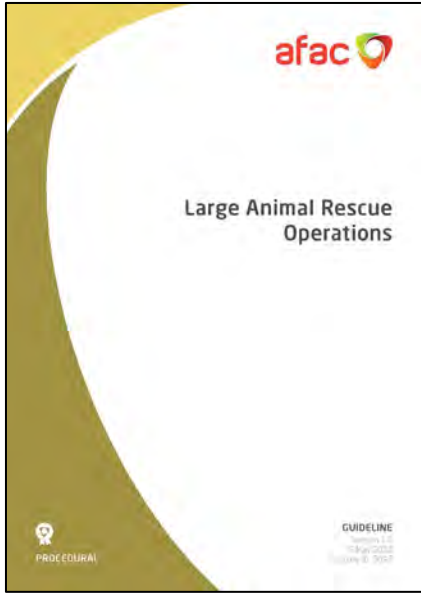
1. To **advance** all aspects of animal emergency incident management.
2. **Engage** with local, national and international organisations.
3. **Develop knowledge and skills** through setting standards and facilitating inter-agency training.
4. **Influence** policy, **advocate** to government, emergency services, vet profession and the public.



All Images: David King



# AEIMN ANZ - Contributing to policy and practices



**Conferences**  
Victoria 2022  
NSW 2023



**Education**  
Zoom Mtgs,  
Conference poster



**Media**  
Print, radio,  
TV, digital.



**Standards & Guidelines**  
AFAC LARO Guidelines  
Units of Competency



**Representation**  
Committee Reps  
Consultations



**Resources**  
E.g. Tips for  
animal welfare




Winner 'People's Choice Poster Award'  
AFAC 22 Conference, Adelaide



Vet Practice Magazine Article Sept.2022




# AFAC Large Animal Rescue Operations Guideline



## Large Animal Rescue Operations


GUIDELINE  
Version 1.0  
5 May 2023  
DocRef ID: 5097

PROCEDURAL




**Backward skid**

- Avoid using the animal's legs, tail or head for traction and can be used to manoeuvre animals through a narrow gap.
- Apply a lot of pressure around one side of the abdomen.
- Care needs to be taken to avoid pressure on joints or udders.
- Can need to be taken to protect the eye and body from abrasions.
- May require animal to be secured to a rescue sled.



**Sideways skid**

- Avoid the animal rolling (which can result in a situation of the animal not providing a lot of manoeuvrability).
- Having two points of contact minimises the pressure on the thorax and abdomen with the weight spread between two lines of emergency responders.
- May require animal to be secured to a rescue sled.
- Care needs to be taken to protect the eye and body from abrasions.



**Barrel skid**

- Can be used to move a standing animal when they are pinned or restrained.
- Can be applied from one side of the animal's rear.
- Care needs to be taken to protect the eye and body from abrasions.
- May require animal to be secured to a rescue sled.

**Roll-over or controlled rollover**

- Provides an effective method of rolling an animal.
- Can be carried out with most sizes of animals with the minimum number of personnel.

**Hobbled dorsal rollover**

- An option for quickly moving an animal that is lying on its back (normally recommended).
- Use of this technique may be appropriate if the animal is trapping clothing, or if the animal is to stand.

**High-pressure equipment**

Mechanical lifting and/or winching equipment can cause significant injury to them. In emergency responders or the animal if not operated correctly.

Personnel can should be taken when working with other agencies who are operating machinery. Safe working systems will need to be selected under the guidance of the animal rescue team leader, veterinarian and incident controller.

The following recognised lifting techniques and equipment form part of the training for large animal rescue:

- Rescue slings set**
  - A system to rig a large animal for a vertical lift, providing anti-slip straps and catch-release coupling.
  - Can be used with a mechanical lifting device for a combination lift or stand.
  - Due to the pressure on the animal's abdomen, the maximum recommended suspension time is five minutes.
  - May not be suitable for a pregnant animal.

**Should be carried out under general anaesthesia unless things are emergency, such as the animal trapping themselves.**

Key highlights are not a recommended medical rescue lifting tool. They are not designed for vertical lifting as they do not spread the load of the animal.

**It is recommended team commanders/team leaders:**

- determine the most appropriate and humane technique for moving or lifting the animal
- select the most appropriate equipment and ensure it is used effectively and safely
- allow with a suspension to ensure sufficient contact of the animal to the ground prior to moving or lifting, such as chemical restraint
- ensure that the animal's limbs are free from obstruction before lifting; a quick release mechanism should be used
- have a contingency plan that can be implemented if the animal resuscitates itself, resulting in the animal moving or lifting plan being unusable.

**Equipment**

The large animal may need to be euthanased due to the animal's medical condition or injuries. This decision will also be influenced by:

- the safety of the emergency responder(s)
- welfare decisions, such as the severity of the animal's injuries and suffering
- environmental considerations (such as gas quality)

**Methods of euthanasia include:**

- chemical euthanasia
- gun shot
- captive bolt stunning


Euthanasia can only be carried out by:

- registered veterinarians
- RPCA officers/inspectors
- police officers
- the Ministry of Veterinary Industries or Local Land Services (Victoria)

To avoid distress to the public, or to prevent injury, it may be appropriate to screen off the area where the animal will be euthanased. This will also provide a degree of privacy to those carrying out the task, for example:

- shaded alleys
- barriers
- animal curtains

Personnel may carry items of personal property.




**Figure 10: Rescue slings set with anti-slip and a quick-release system prior to stand**

**Medical suspension harness, including a Downer cow harness**

- Can be used for trauma based on the medical or anatomical requirements of the animal.
- Can be used post-rescue to help an animal to stand, and can be left in place for up to two hours if necessary.

**Hobbled lift**

- Can be used to quickly remove an animal, including horses and bovine, lying on its back (for early resuscitation).



afac National Council for Fire and Emergency Services

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MANAGING EMERGENCIES DOCTRINE COLLABORATION MODEL EVENTS/CONFERENCE INITIATIVES

More about AFAC

AFAC by AFAC Rescue Technical Group and AFAC Urban Operations Group v1.0

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AFAC: Australasian Fire Authorities Council





# Supporting safer rescues

AEIMN ANZ 'The Network' aims to advance all aspects of incidents involving animals

Another 'aspect' the Network identified:

Tips for respondents think about applying animal welfare considerations for the animal patient.

*Images: David King*





# About animal welfare



Above: AEIMN ANZ Right: David King





Image: David King

# The social licence to operate

Responders and vets on the scene

Rescues often occur in full view of the public  
(in person & online).

- **Perceptions** – *how* we do things as well as *what* we do.
- **Casualty-centered** approaches to animals *and* humans.

**Communication – Actions - Holistic**

# The Five Freedoms

| Freedom                                     | Provisions   |
|---|--|
| 1 Freedom from hunger, thirst, malnutrition | By providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain health and vigor         |
| 2 Freedom from discomfort and exposure      | By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area |
| 3 Freedom from pain, injury, disease        | By prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment   |
| 4 Freedom from fear and distress            | By ensuring conditions avoid mental suffering  |
| 5 Freedom to express normal behaviour       | By providing sufficient space and company of the animal                                  |

# The Five Freedoms and the Five Domains Model



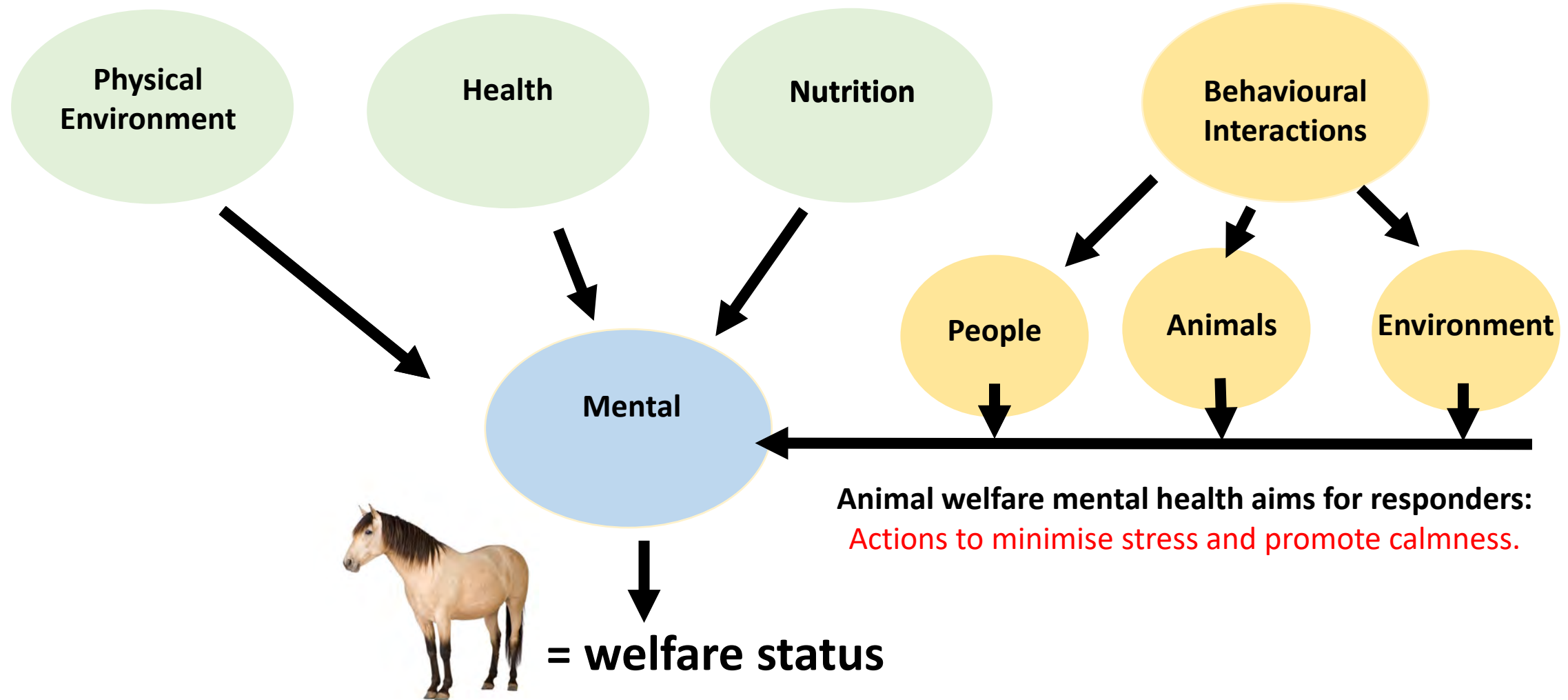
## The 2020 Five Domains Model

Mellor, D., et al., *The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including Human-Animal Interactions in Assessments of Animal Welfare*. Animals, 2020. 10(10): p. 1-24.





# The Five Domains Model



# Calmer incident scenes – calmer horses



What actions can we take to promote calmness?





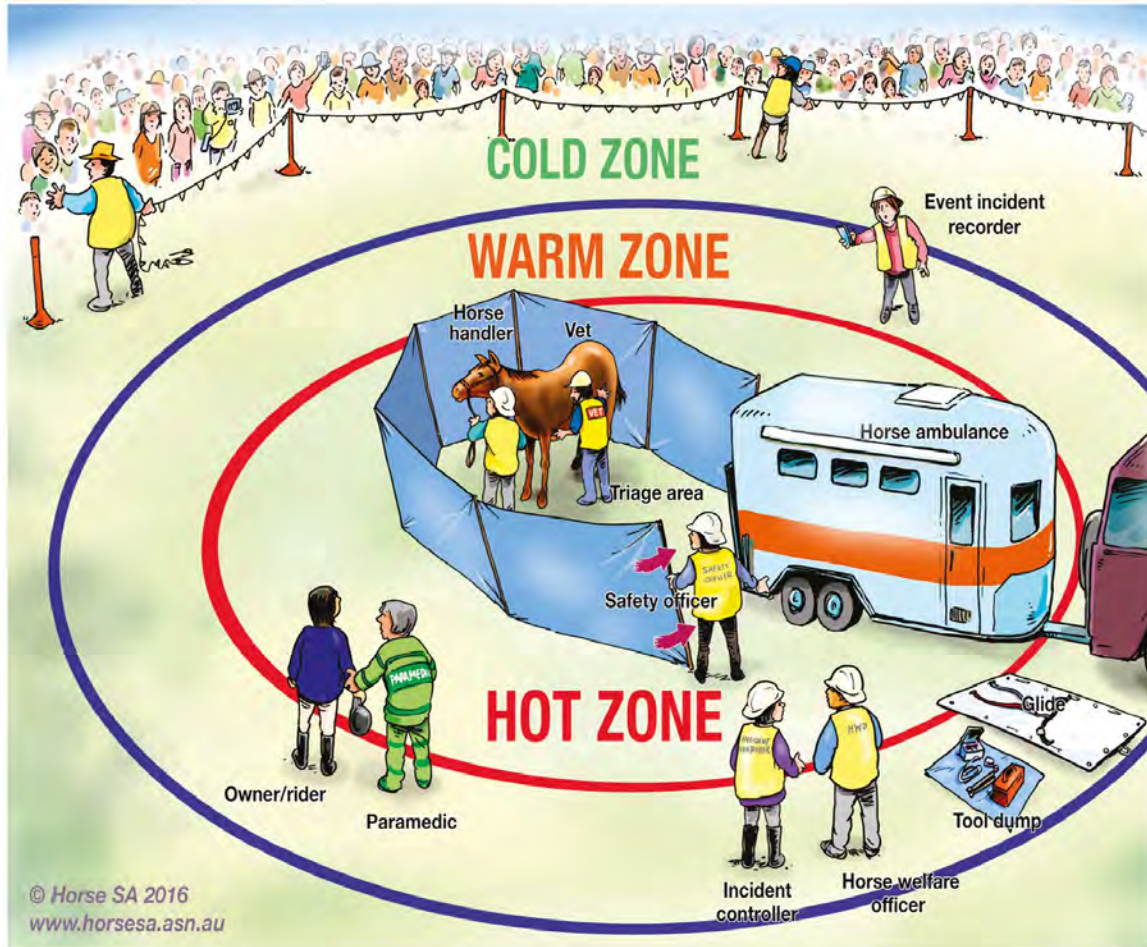
# Horse welfare at incidents

## Tips for responders



Image: David King

# Animal welfare: built into procedures at rescue scenes



Standard Operating Procedures for incidents involving animals need to have ‘built in’ considerations for welfare because responders are not trained animal welfare specialists.

- veterinarians are responsible for managing the equine patient.
- Vet advice: decisions to rescue or leave in situ
- if the horse feels safe, people will benefit from ‘calm’ horse behaviours and a safer working environment.



# Sample group exercise no. 1

What can responders do to promote positive mental states (animal welfare) at an incident?

| Domain  | Things with a negative impact | Things with a positive impact |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Nutrition</b> (feed, water, quantity, quality, right type) WITH ADVICE                                     |                               |                               |
| <b>Physical environment</b> (suitability, space, light, noise, temperature, smells/noxious gases, pollutants) |                               |                               |
| <b>Health</b> (disease, injury, pain, metabolic problems, loss of function)                                   |                               |                               |
| <b>Behavioural interactions</b> with:<br><b>Environment</b> (choice, decisions, autonomy, movement)           |                               |                               |
| <b>Animals</b> (opportunity for normal social interactions, offspring, threats from other animals)            |                               |                               |
| <b>People</b> (skills, experience, attitude, aptitude, handling, voice)                                       |                               |                               |

# Sample group exercise no.2

**What can responders do to promote positive mental states (animal welfare) at an incident?**

| Domain  | Before | During | After | In situ |
|---|--------|--------|-------|---------|
| Nutrition   |        |        |       |         |
| Physical environment                                |        |        |       |         |
| Health  |        |        |       |         |
| Behavioural interactions with their surroundings    |        |        |       |         |
| Behavioural interactions with other horses/ animals |        |        |       |         |
| Behavioural interactions with people                |        |        |       |         |



# Tips for responders: Applying animal welfare considerations to large animal rescue or relocation

Download here:

<https://www.aeimanz.org/resources>



## Tips for responders: Applying animal welfare considerations to large animal rescue or relocation

Animal welfare at a rescue scene relates to how an animal is coping with the conditions in which they are found. An animal requiring rescue or relocation will likely be in a situation where their welfare may be compromised or at risk.

The following tips for responders will aid in monitoring and improving the animal's welfare throughout the rescue, in situ, or relocation operations. The involvement of a veterinarian, referring to the Five Domains Model, will ensure the animal's welfare is monitored and all activities to aid the animal are done with the animal's welfare in mind.

The key goal for responders is to keep the animal calm and minimise their stress.

| Tips for responders | Pre-rescue / relocation  | Decision NOT to rescue/relocate   | During the rescue/relocation  | Post-rescue / relocation   |
|---------------------|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Nutrition</b>    | Observe the animal's general condition ( <i>seek assistance if poor condition is observed</i> )<br><br>Provide hay/forage/ water (if possible/ appropriate)  | Provide hay/forage and fresh water for the duration of isolation  | Strictly only on veterinary advice  | Provide hay/forage<br><br>Provide fresh water (+ molasses if appropriate)<br><br>Ensure the animal(s) is handed over to someone responsible for ongoing care.  |
| <b>Environment</b>  | Provide shade and a non-slip surface (if feasible)<br><br>Keep the animal's head out of the water<br><br>Remove hazards preventing the animal from breathing fresh air, resting, and remaining calm.<br><br>Trapped animals often remain calm<br><br>Wait until veterinary examination before extraction.<br><br>Management options for deceased animals | Ensure animals are out of the water or safe from bushfires or other hazards.<br><br>Arrange containment if required<br><br>Ensure there is shade or protection from wind and weather extremes<br><br>If standing in water for [duration], seek veterinary advice regarding euthanasia | Clear hazards and monitor for snags or limbs catching or bumping into objects when skidding<br><br>The animal moved to a flat area well away from the source of entrapment.<br><br>Positioned to aid standing – legs downhill | Safe non-slip, hazard-free area to come out of sedation/ anaesthetic<br><br>Follow Washing & decontamination procedures<br><br>Warming<br><br>Drying off<br><br>Dry rugs<br><br>Moving to a safer location<br><br>Or ensure the animal(s) is handed over to someone responsible for ongoing care |

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| Tips for responders  | Pre-rescue / relocation   | Decision NOT to rescue/relocate  | During the rescue/relocation  | Post-rescue / relocation  |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Health</b>  | Obtain pre-rescue information incl. health status, e.g., age, and Hendra vaccination status<br><br>Obtain veterinary advice on how (if possible and safe) to provide comfort for animals and reduce pain, e.g. protect eyes<br><br>Veterinary initial assessment (triaged to identify non-viable animals and zoonotic risks)<br><br>Provision of resuscitation fluids and other veterinary support <b>before</b> the tactical plan is deployed<br><br>Check suitable transport & post-rescue site, e.g. equine hospital | Veterinary monitoring of individual animal flock or herd condition<br><br>Veterinary sedation or anaesthetic & medications to reduce the animals stress & pain | Veterinary advice to responders regarding techniques being considered (effects on anatomy and physiology)<br><br>Minimise time being skidded or lifted (pressure on the anatomy)<br><br>Use wide slings (min 75mm)<br><br>Don't use the head and neck to rescue an animal.<br><br>Don't use ears, tail or fleece to lift or move an animal<br><br>Minimise the time chest area is compressed (Forward skid) | Veterinary assessment for post-rescue or relocation injuries<br><br>The animal is positioned in a sternal position to aid recovery<br><br>Support veterinary provision of resuscitation fluids and ongoing veterinary care<br><br>Seek veterinary advice and supervision for transport<br><br>E.g., Standing or recumbent, monitoring, application of leg protection etc. |
| <b>Behaviour in response to interactions with surroundings, other animals, people.</b> | Awareness of freeze, flight, and fight behaviours, & effect of adrenaline<br><br>Observe body language<br><br>Keep a companion animal nearby (if appropriate)<br><br>Keep mothers and young together<br><br>Remove owner (if emotional)   | Keep flock or herd together<br><br>Report changes in behaviours to monitoring veterinarian   | Minimise emotional responses by owner or bystanders<br><br>Awareness that behaviour may suddenly change, e.g., become reactive  | Monitor behaviour and report any changes to the veterinarian<br><br>Return to the herd as soon as feasible<br><br>Minimise the animal's stress once rescued<br><br>Reunite animal(s) with owners  |

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# Tips for responders - Environment

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# Promoting emergency preparation for horse owners

Horse welfare and the safety of horses is a topic of common interest amongst owners.

Use the 'tips' as an engagement tool when talking with horse owners.

Link this interest in welfare to emergency planning, including making sure horses are uniquely identified to help reunite with owners.



## Tips for responders: Applying animal welfare considerations to large animal rescue or relocation

Animal welfare at a rescue scene relates to how an animal is coping with the conditions in which they are found. An animal requiring rescue or relocation will likely be in a situation where their welfare may be compromised or at risk.

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\* Universal Equine Life Number



**GET READY ANIMALS**

# Summary



1. **Animal Emergency Incident Management Network ANZ (AEIMN ANZ)** aims to **advance** all aspects of animal emergency incident management. Visit [www.aeimanz.org](http://www.aeimanz.org)
2. **Animal welfare incorporates physical +mental.** Promoting positive experiences for animals at incident scenes.
3. The **'Tips for responders'** helps with asking animal welfare-related questions of experts, such as veterinarians, and to take steps to improve animal welfare at incidents.

A calm horse who 'feels' safer = a safer incident scene for people.

Download a copy of this presentation from:  
[www.aeimanz.org/resources](http://www.aeimanz.org/resources)







Animal Emergency Incident Management Network  
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Make a difference – Get involved  
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*Images: David King*





Animal Emergency Incident Management Network  
(Australia & New Zealand)

## Animal Emergency Incident Management Network ANZ

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Australia and New Zealand Inc.

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The Swift Code for Commonwealth Bank, Melbourne,  
CTBAAU2S3FX (international transfers)

