



# Australian Animal Care and Management Industry Sector

## Annual Update 2020

### IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work

Prepared on behalf of the Animal Care and Management Industry Reference Committee (IRC) for the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC).



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# Purpose of this Annual Update

This Annual Update to the Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work presents information and industry intelligence as requested by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) from the Animal Care and Management IRC, inclusive of national and industry data sources and input from key stakeholders. It further proposes vocational education and training (VET) Training Package review and development work that the IRC deems necessary to meet the needs of industry. The AISC considers this information and includes commissioned work in the National Schedule<sup>1</sup>.

In 2019, the AISC changed the requirements for the annual Skills Forecast. IRCs are now required to submit comprehensive Skills Forecasts once every three years, with abridged annual updates in the intervening two years. As IRCs submitted comprehensive Skills Forecasts in 2019, the next are due in 2022.

This document is not intended to be representative of every issue encountered across all industry sectors; it identifies and addresses the challenges and opportunities that industry has determined as 'priority' for this stage of the schedule, and is a resource for industry and associated skills, learning and accreditation bodies seeking to act upon them.

Detailed information concerning industry skills needs across all sectors covered by the Animal Care and Management IRC, including information from previous Skills Forecasts, can be found on the Skills Impact website: <https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/animal-care/skills-forecast/>.

## Method & Structure

This is an annual update to the comprehensive Skills Forecast submitted in 2019. IRCs are required to answer the questions in **Section A** to provide updates on issues such as industry skills and workforce development, and qualification utilisation.

IRC's are also permitted to propose additional Training Package development work projects to be included in the Proposed Schedule of Work. Where relevant, these are included in **Section C**, which includes:

- Evidence of employer and industry need for graduates;
- Alignment to Ministers' Priorities;
- Consultation plan.

**Section B** details the extensive, robust and ongoing industry consultation undertaken by IRC members and Skills Impact, including with rural, regional and remote stakeholders. In line with Skills Impact's values<sup>2</sup>, this helps to ensure transparency and accountability in the process of industry research and Training Package development work.

This Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work is developed in line with:

- Standards for Training Packages 2012<sup>3</sup>;
- Training Package Products Policy<sup>4</sup>;
- Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aisc.net.au/content/national-schedule>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/about/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/standards-training-packages-2012>

<sup>4</sup> <https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/training-package-products-policy>

<sup>5</sup> <https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/training-package-development-and-endorsement-process-policy-0>

# Industry Reference Committee

The Animal Care and Management IRC is responsible for national Training Package qualifications relevant to animal care and management industries.

Qualifications overseen by the IRC are in the ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package.

The Animal Care and Management IRC is supported by the Skills Service Organisation, Skills Impact.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation or Area of Expertise</b>
Dr Laurie Milner (Chair)	Expertise in animal care, handling and welfare
Dr Julia Crawford (Deputy Chair)	Australian Veterinary Association (AVA)
Belinda Smith	Expertise in veterinary and related services
Brenton Myatt	Expertise in pet and companion animal services
Elly Neumann	Taronga Zoo
John Sunderland	Expertise in animal breeding services
Julie Fiedler	Expertise in animal care, handling and welfare
Kaye Hargreaves	Expertise in pet and companion animal services
Mike Butcher	Expertise in animal control and regulation
Rebecca Coventry	Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA)
Dr Robert Johnson	Expertise in captive wildlife operations
Sonia Western	Expertise in veterinary and related services
Dr Tim Mather	Expertise in animal technology

# Executive Summary

The public's interest and concern about animal welfare, care and management continues to escalate, driven by major events in Australia, including COVID-19, major bushfires and concern over the welfare of horses' post work or sport involvement.

The roles of pets, companion and assistance animals as a central component of human health and welfare has more recognition now, both through formal research and public attitudes.

As a result, industry services are also expanding into new fields of care for animals, and current services are experiencing market growth.

Current projects are addressing expansion and growth in relation to pets, companion and assistance animals, and exhibited animals. Consultation is continuing with industry to ensure outcomes that meet industry needs, both now and for the future expansion of services.

Services provided to equines have not been covered in the current projects. The Animal Care and Management IRC commissioned a survey to ascertain how work is being done and who is doing that work. While several representative bodies have strong views on scope of practice, the survey was designed to provide evidence of the type and nature of services being accessed by equine owners, carers, trainers, riders and others responsible for the day to day welfare of equines.

The combinations of direct consultations, the equine survey, workshops and other feedback mechanisms identified two key issues to be addressed:

- The re-design of current training to provide an equine care career path, that provides clearer direction, better foundations for equine welfare, and expansion of service coverage
- The need to remove specific pre-requisite units of competency, which have created a barrier to training, and to incorporate the important safety and handling aspects across a broad range of existing units of competency

A further concern is the lack of available services of reasonable quality in regional, rural and remote Australia. Equine carers are often limited in choices of service providers, including having no access to services for long periods.

The Animal Care and Management IRC is concerned about the lack of completion of qualifications in the training package, given that the qualifications have been designed based on the best available evidence of knowledge and practice. When it comes to the welfare of living creatures, the IRC believes that practitioners across the industry should be appropriately qualified, given the dangers that inappropriate treatments and services can create if undertaken poorly, carelessly or ignorantly. This concern was expressed clearly by consumers of services in the equine survey and is a concern shared by many in Australia. States and territories should be considering the role of the qualifications in protecting the welfare of animals and the safety of industry participants. A potential approach may be to introduce more robust industry participation requirements. The Animal Care and Management IRC will continue to monitor consumer sentiment and industry views, including those presented by representative bodies, while acknowledging that this is currently an issue for state and territory governments.

# Section A: Overview

## Industry Developments

### Report on Research into Equine-related Job Roles

In the Animal Care and Management Skills Forecast 2019–2022, the IRC reported that research would be undertaken to identify issues relating to scope of training, prerequisites, performance horse training, equestrian training and equine dentistry across ACM, RGR and SIS Training Packages. This work was undertaken throughout 2019.

#### Consultation Process

The consultation process included direct consultations with industry participants who have a) been involved in previous consultations concerning equine elements of training packages, b) were recommended by IRC members, and c) were members of relevant industry associations or recommended by members.

The Skills Service Organisation (SSO) for the Sports and Recreation IRC was contacted, and contact was made with stakeholders through that IRC also.

As a result of this work, a survey was designed and administered to individuals and organisations who own horses and are responsible for ordering the services relating to the care of horses. The major aim was to determine the types of work that is being undertaken in equine industries, the types of horse care service providers they engage and the skills and knowledge they possess (whether through formal qualifications or on-the-job experience).

The survey received 546 responses. To download a full copy of the *Equine Industry Survey Report* visit <https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/site/skilliampactmedia/uploads/2020/03/EquineIndustrySurveyReport.pdf>

#### Equine Skills Needs

Results from the *Equine Industry Survey Report* identified that the skills most in demand are associated with horse safety, animal behaviour and animal welfare. There are skills needs related to horse care and a need for customers to be able to identify quality services. The survey found that choice of service provider was largely guided by personal recommendations and by apparent credentials, including qualifications.

A shortage of skilled labour was mentioned in reference to specific occupations, including farriers, track (including exercise) riders, grooms and saddle fitters. The occupations of farrier and track riders have been addressed in recently updated qualifications. While the occupation of groom has been addressed through updated training in the Racing and Breeding RGR Training package, this may not be relevant for grooms outside of the horse racing industries, and in particular in performance horse.

The occupation of saddle fitter has not been previously addressed, and further direct consultations after the completion of the survey indicate that saddle fitting is considered one of the most important elements in horse and rider safety.

The survey results included calls for workplace-based training and practical skills, although some scepticism is expressed about its effectiveness given the lack of regulation in these areas of the industry.

Another finding is that it is difficult to access equine services in regional, rural and remote (RRR) areas. Many customers feel limited to 'what they can get', bemoaning the reliability of, or waiting times for, providers who service broad geographical areas. In addition, as higher quality service providers gain reputation for service, those previously providing services in RRR areas become busier within their local region and travel less, resulting in either lower quality or a lack of services in the RRR area.

Due to a lack of options, customers cannot always engage service providers with the credentials and insurance cover that they feel necessary, with associated concerns over the quality and ethics of the work completed.

## Equine Dentistry

Most respondents (95%) to the IRC survey said they engage service providers for equine dental care, indicating widespread knowledge of the importance of horses' teeth to their overall health and the ongoing demand for services. The majority (53%) selected equine dental technicians as their service provider, while veterinarians were engaged by 23% of respondents. Around 24% arranged for both equine dental technicians and veterinarians to be present, with many echoing Thompson and Clarkson's<sup>6</sup> findings that people experience difficulties in affording and scheduling sedation at the same time as an equine dentist.

The majority (60%) of respondents' equine dental providers do not practice with motorised tools. Of those service providers who do use motorised tools, most (90%) sedate the horse. Sedation prior to dental care procedures using motorised tools is a topic of great concern to many in the equine industries, and this was apparent in the survey results. On a state-level, legislation varies as to whether sedation procedures are restricted to registered veterinary surgeons. Largely, survey respondents stated that sedation is administered by a veterinarian (75%), although some equine dentists (19%) and owners/carers (5%) perform this task.

While more research is required in this area, it appears that sedation is sometimes administered by individuals who may not be under the supervision of a veterinarian. There are clearly practical challenges in accessing/providing equine dental care services, especially when sedation is deemed necessary. Numerous survey participants proposed solutions through policy development and the advancement of education and training.

## Retired Racehorse Welfare

The welfare of retired racehorses poses challenges for the racing industry. There were 12,898 live foals registered as born in Australia in 2017-2018<sup>7</sup> through systems related to thoroughbreds and standardbreds, while the overall birth rate is unknown. Horses leave the racing industry at various stage of their lives: as foals, during training, their racing career or at retirement age. Most racehorses will have a racing career of between two and three years and, given their life expectancy is 25 to 30 years, caring for them over the remainder of their lives is potentially complex and expensive. While many female racehorses begin a new career in breeding, geldings and slower runners are often not repurposed<sup>8</sup>.

There are few independent research publications on what happens to horses after their racing career, nor is there a transparent lifetime traceability system for racehorses. However, there has been increased public scrutiny of racehorse welfare after a 2019 ABC exposé of their slaughter for pet food and human consumption in New South Wales and Queensland<sup>9</sup>. There is now increasing public expectation that these horses will be appropriately cared-for in their post-racing life, which is expected to catalyse an increase in horse rescue centres, sanctuaries and charities. Equestrian Australia have also highlighted the care of retired horses in presentations during 2019. Extra skills will be required for the rehoming, care and management of geriatric horses, and horses unable to retrain. These are most likely to be available through importing units into the ACM Training Package from the RGR Training Package, which incorporated units of competency to aid in retraining horses during work undertaken and approved in 2017 and 2018..

In 2019, a Senate inquiry<sup>10</sup> into the feasibility of a national horse register published 18 recommendations for better management and promotion of equine welfare, rider safety and biosecurity. Following this, the country's state agriculture ministers agreed upon a working group to help create a National Horse Traceability Register to make horses easier to trace<sup>11</sup>. The Queensland Government will also lead the development of new animal

<sup>6</sup> K. Thompson and L. Clarkson, 2016, p.42, Issues faced by horse owners in Australia: Implications for vet-client communication, *The Australian Equine Veterinarian*, Vol 36, No 4, pps. 41-47

<sup>7</sup> Racing Australia, 2019, *Fact Book 2018/19*, viewed February 2020, <<http://publishingservices.risa.com.au/otherpublications/FactBook2018-2019/>>

<sup>8</sup> ABC News, 2019, *Retired racehorses' welfare poses huge challenge to racing industry, amid calls for change across the board*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-11-07/racings-awkward-truth-industry-at-long-odds-to-end-horse-wastage/11677514>>

<sup>9</sup> ABC News, 2019, *Hundreds of racehorses sent to slaughterhouses in contravention of racing rules*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-17/racehorses-sent-slaughterhouses-contravention-racing-rules/11611688>>

<sup>10</sup> Parliament of Australia, 2019, *Feasibility Of A National Horse Traceability Register For All Horses: List Of Recommendations*, viewed February 2020

<[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Rural\\_and\\_Regional\\_Affairs\\_and\\_Transport/NationalHorseRegister46/Report/section?id=committees%2freportsen%2f024292%2f27686](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Rural_and_Regional_Affairs_and_Transport/NationalHorseRegister46/Report/section?id=committees%2freportsen%2f024292%2f27686)>

<sup>11</sup> ABC News, 2020, *National Horse Traceability Register working group established after Senate inquiry*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-28/national-horse-register-to-make-animals-more-traceable-planning/12011962>>

welfare guidelines relating to abattoirs' processing practices for horses. Equine businesses will require training in the scanning, recording and tracking of horses.

## Environmental Impacts

The current droughts, bushfires and flooding have had a huge impact on wildlife and animal welfare. For example, the Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA) has supported a large-scale, coordinated response of zoos, wildlife parks and aquariums, focussing on wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and long-term species recovery<sup>12</sup>. This has required significant expertise, resources, equipment and facilities across a network of accredited organisations to help native animals in crisis-affected areas.

With estimates of more than one billion native animals killed by Australia's bushfires between September 2019 and January 2020<sup>13</sup>, there is extensive short and long-term wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and recovery work ahead. Veterinary services, already experiencing a shortage of skilled workers, especially veterinarians<sup>14</sup>, are likely to be confronted by unprecedented challenges, particularly in RRR areas. As has been reported<sup>15</sup>, alongside the injured animals, there can be a huge impact on the physical and emotional wellbeing of the people working in the response, who can be "scratched, bitten and mauled" while treating animals.

## National Survey of Pets and People

In 2019, Animal Medicines Australia released the results of their latest widescale survey<sup>16</sup>, including peoples' practices and expenditure relating to pet health care and management, and associated services and information sources. The importance of the animal care and management industry is laid bare through statistics showing that:

Australia's pet population of 29 million, is now higher than its human population

[Animal Medicines Australia, 2019]

- Australia's pet population, 29 million, is now higher than its human population.
- 61% of Australian households currently have a pet, which is higher than many countries.
  - 57% of American households have pets.
  - 40% of households in the United Kingdom are estimated to have pets.
- 90% of Australian households have had a pet at some time.
- 70% of pet owners live in rural areas.
- Over \$13 billion is estimated to be spent each year keeping pets fed, healthy and well-accessorised (see Figure 1).
  - In all service/product categories but 'pet food' there has been a steady or increasing amount spent since 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia, 2020, *Zoos develop plan to help wildlife recover from Australia's bushfire crisis*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.zooaquarium.org.au/Public/News/Articles/Zoos-develop-plan-to-help-wildlife-recover-from-Australia-s-bushfire-crisis.aspx>>

<sup>13</sup> The University of Sydney, 2020, *More than one billion animals killed in Australian bushfires*, viewed February 2020 <<https://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2020/01/08/australian-bushfires-more-than-one-billion-animals-impacted.html>>

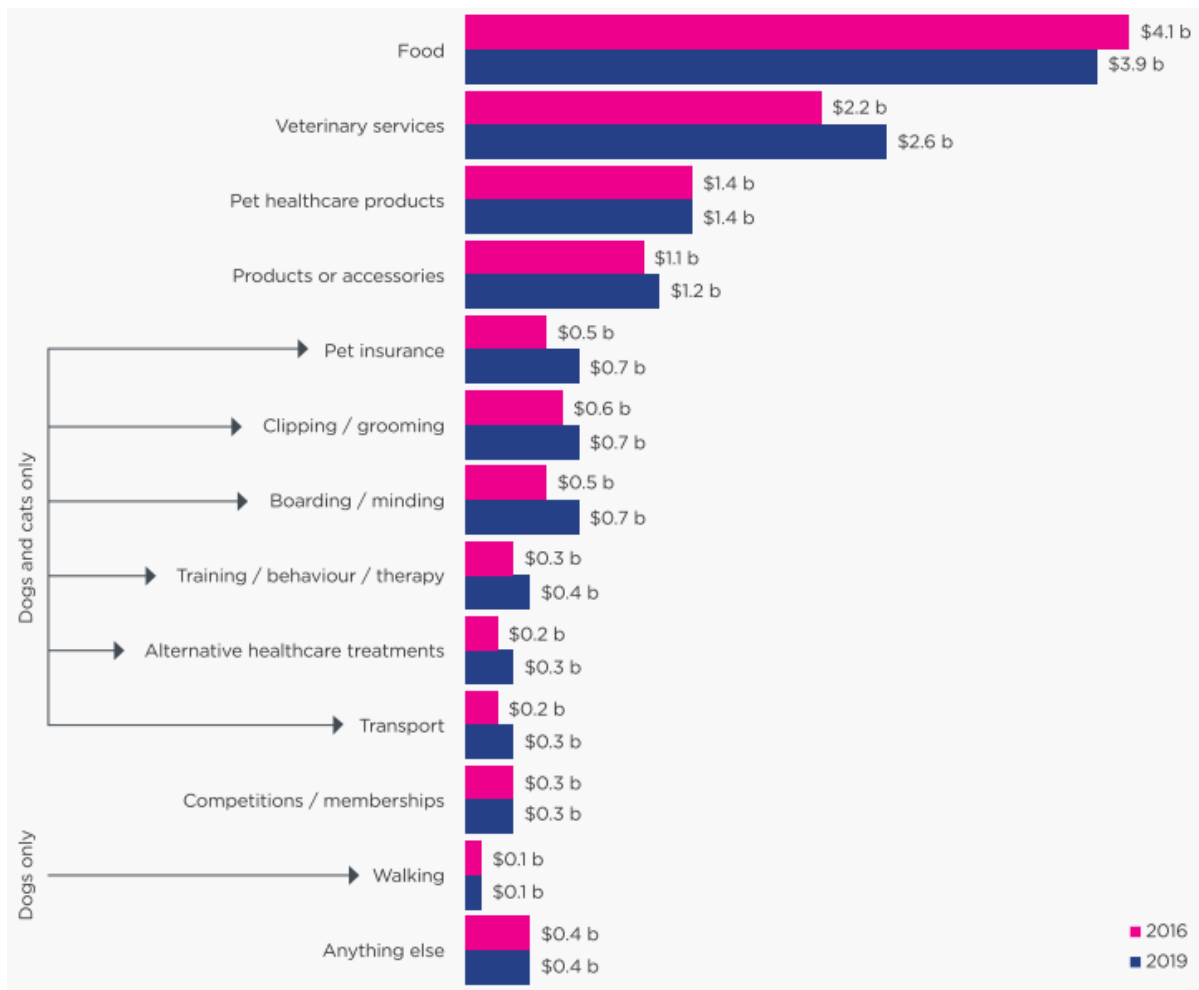
<sup>14</sup> [https://docs.employment.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/234711ausveterinarian\\_1.pdf](https://docs.employment.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/234711ausveterinarian_1.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> The New Daily, 2020, *Horrifying injuries confront volunteers treating bushfire-ravaged wildlife*, viewed February 2020 <<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2020/02/15/bushfire-sydney-wildlife-rescue/>>

<sup>16</sup> Animal Medicines Australia, 2019, p.4, *Pets in Australia: A national survey of pets and people*



**Figure 1: Expenditure on pet-related products and services in Australia**



Source: Animal Medicines Australia, 2019, p.34, *Pets in Australia: A national survey of pets and people*

## VET Qualifications & Employment Outcomes

The animal care and management workforce, as trained through the VET system, has a great degree of variance, with highly regulated industries, regulated professional services, public institutions, retail sector business, NFP and unregulated businesses and sectors. As a result, it is likely that there will be wildly varying data about the use of the different qualifications in employment decisions. The Animal Care and Management IRC has no access to data at this level.

The high-level NCVER data<sup>17</sup> that is available about graduates shows that:

- 42% of those not employed before training became employed after training.
- 23% of those employed before training became employed at a higher skill level after training.
- 72% of those employed after training received at least one job-related benefit.
- 43% of those employed after training were in the 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Services' sector (which includes veterinary services).

<sup>17</sup> NCVER, 2019, *VET graduate outcomes*, viewed January 2020, <[https://va.ncver.edu.au/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer\\_guest.jsp?reportName=VET%20graduate%20outcomes&reportPath=/Visual%20Analytics/NCVER/sos-student-outcomes-survey/Reports/3.Published&appSwitcherDisabled=true&commentsEnabled=false&reportViewOnly=true](https://va.ncver.edu.au/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportName=VET%20graduate%20outcomes&reportPath=/Visual%20Analytics/NCVER/sos-student-outcomes-survey/Reports/3.Published&appSwitcherDisabled=true&commentsEnabled=false&reportViewOnly=true)>

These figures are generally below the national averages in each category. However, the Animal Care and Management IRC believes, based on the feedback received during projects, that the recent and current updating of the *ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package* will be a step in the right direction, and will positively influence these figures in coming years. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that the data does not provide a great deal of guidance, and that issues such as the nature of the cohort with higher levels of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, may be factors.

Many animal care and management sectors have been expanding, as have awareness of animal welfare and care issues. Where once experience may have been seen to be enough, employers and consumers appear to be looking for more, and it would appear that long-term trends suggest qualifications in animal care and management will be in greater demand in the future, while more areas of work (and skills needs) will open up. Where there are fewer regulatory or professional requirements, employers consider various skills, attributes and evidence of proficiency, whether gained formally or informally, for employment purposes. Businesses have different reasons for employing or not employing people with VET qualifications, depending on their locations, size, type of business and other factors.

*The reasons identified for employing people with VET qualifications include:*

- There are sectors where considerable expertise is expected and must be demonstrated, including in the veterinary, exhibited animals, animal training and animal protection areas.
  - There are sectors with regulatory and professional requirements
  - Competency in the unit 'ACMMIC401 - Implant microchip in cats and dogs' is required in some states as a regulatory requirement.
- It can act as evidence that potential employees have shown commitment by staying with a previous employer for at least the duration of their apprenticeship/traineeship.
- It may be relevant to awards and wages:
  - For example, Zoo-based stakeholders consider the Certificate III in Captive Animals a requirement for reaching "trade-level".

*Reasons for not employing people with VET qualifications:*

- The labour market is so tight that businesses cannot always choose from a pool of applicants with the desired qualifications.
  - In RRR areas, where relevant formal training is difficult to access, there is a greater incentive to employ and train informally.
- Possession of a qualification is not necessarily a non-negotiable condition of many industry occupations. Certain employers report that it is only an advantage for applicants, but that previous industry workplace experience is equally important.
- In some cases, and states, funding is unavailable for a traineeship/apprenticeship if the candidate has already achieved a qualification at that AQF level. Employers might therefore miss out on government incentives depending on their choice of trainee/apprentice.

The equine industry appears to be polarised in employing people with or without VET qualifications. Responses to the Animal Care and Management IRC Equine Industry Survey illustrated an over-riding tension between industry participants who consider formal training does not – and *cannot* – prepare people for working with horses (who can be characterised as preferring a 'traditional' approach) and people who believe that formal training is key to advancing horse management techniques and welfare. The 'traditionalists' are sceptical of industry workers who are not 'horse people' and, conversely, there are concerns over the 'cowboy' practices of some of the 'traditionalists'. It must be noted, of course, that many 'traditionalists' are far from disapproving of formal education but are simply critics of the perceived lack of practical skills and experience facilitated. Likewise, not all people who value education and training believe that this is the only pathway.

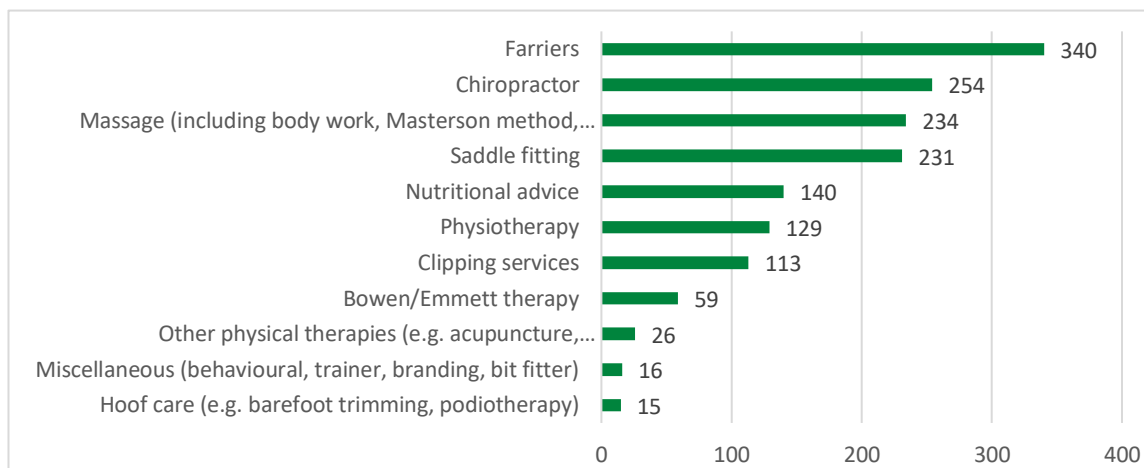
Despite these issues there is an opportunity for assessing whether relevant qualifications could or should have a greater requirement for hands-on, workplace-based delivery, which may be to the satisfaction of all parties.

In relation to broader issues around qualification usage, the Animal Care and Management IRC supports further widescale research, to collect and present statistics and evidence around these issues, many of which are relevant across all training packages.

## Service provider credentials

In addition to the people that they employ, VET qualifications are significant in relation to the services that people engage for the care of their animals. Results from the Animal Care and Management IRC Equine Industry Survey show that people who own, work with and care for horses use a broad range of service providers:

**Figure 2: Horse care services engaged**



Around 70% of respondents stated that “Service provider credentials (e.g. qualifications)” are the basis upon which they choose the provider. Credentials are especially important to people due to concerns over the quality and ethics – and insurance cover – of some service providers who have not engaged in formal training:

***“There are large numbers of people who practice these services that are not qualified who advertise their services for a cost. There are also a lot of them that shouldn’t be practicing.”***

***“There seems to be a lot of persons claiming to be qualified / trained but unfortunately there are too many that aren’t and cause harm.”***

***“It is unfortunately common for ‘coaches’ to teach riding lessons without any qualifications and/or insurance. In my opinion this is wrong.”***

***“Very few recognised qualifications are seen for farriers/trimmers [...]. Seems like anyone can advertise as such without being qualified.”***

***“People should be qualified in their field as professionals and licenced to practice. This should be mandatory for anyone that charges for their services. Also have insurance cover.”***

*Skills Impact, 2019, Equine Industry Survey Report, conducted on behalf of the Animal Care and Management Industry Reference Committee*

The above responses show that, should a provider be under-qualified in their field, there is a broad concern for the welfare of the animal and the service’s adherence to industry legislation and ethical practices.

Other respondents detailed that they do not have much choice of service providers in regional, rural and remote areas: they may be limited to anyone willing to travel to their location and, as such, their services may be engaged despite their not having the credentials that the customer would like to see.

## Skills Shortages, Especially in Rural Regional and Remote (RRR) Areas

According to numerous respondents to the Animal Care and Management IRC Equine Industry Survey, there is also a shortage of adequately qualified and experienced applicants for industry roles, especially in RRR areas.

Many feel that such issues are a reflection of the lack of available training and, therefore, job candidates:

***“There is a need for formal education and recognition of current competencies. Unfortunately, the cost of education is proving to be an issue to new and existing workers.”***

***“The farrier course is only offered in NSW not ACT this means leaving home and becomes a reason not to take up the craft.”***

***“[We need] greater upskilling overall to create greater availability of qualified and regulated practitioners – particularly in regional areas.”***

***“There is no entry level vocational training available in WA. Therefore it is hard for new people interested in working with horses, whether Racing, Breeding, Agistment, Riding School, Trail riding or performance horse to enter.”***

“The performance horse (and other industry sectors) workforce are under skilled and low in knowledge. A lot of employees are taken from the street into the work situation without understanding why you do with horses what you do. Often managers lack the underpinning knowledge which then becomes a culture. There are skills shortages in the whole horse industry but in performance horse there are shortages of good stable hands and grooms who are equipped with good sound skills and knowledge relevant to their jobs such as being able to ride, train and help with breeding facets of the business etc.”

[Respondent to Skills Impact Equine Industry Survey, conducted on behalf of the Animal Care and Management Industry Reference Committee]

As a result of these perceived shortcomings, many businesses are forced to hire under-qualified applicants or employ people with skills with which they are not satisfied.

## Other Training Used by Employers

Extensive training is undertaken outside of the nationally recognised accredited training system and is not usually acknowledged through a qualification or credential<sup>18</sup>. The extent of unaccredited training is unknown as it is not publicly recorded or consolidated, an issue likely exacerbated by it being more prevalent in industries with smaller organisations, which tend to have less formal record-keeping<sup>19</sup>.

The last wide-scale national survey to report on training outside of the national system was the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ ‘Employer Training Expenditure and Practices’, conducted in the financial year 2001-2002<sup>20</sup>. There is a compelling case to repeat this extensive survey. The Animal Care and Management IRC supports further research to collect and present statistics and evidence around this issue, which is of relevance across all training packages.

Smaller-scale research, such as NCVET’s 2019 ‘Survey of Employers’ Use and Views of the VET System’, has found that around fifty per cent of employers look beyond the VET system to deliver employee training, whether unaccredited (a program of structured training/instruction) or informal (on-the-job, unstructured training)<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> T. Griffin, 2016, *Costs and benefits of education and training for the economy, business and individuals*, NCVET, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/2873>>

<sup>19</sup> A. Smith, G. Burke, M. Long & T. Dumbrell, 2008, *Approaches to measuring and understanding employer training expenditure*, NCVET, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/file/0017/4508/nr05009.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0017/4508/nr05009.pdf)>

<sup>20</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003, *6362.0 - Employer Training Expenditure and Practices, Australia, 2001-02*, viewed January 2020, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/00D5FE2BE9FCA5B1CA256CFB008083B0?Open>>

<sup>21</sup> NCVET 2019, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: employers’ use and views of the VET system 2019*, NCVET, Adelaide.

Australian Industry Group's 'Workforce Development Needs Survey'<sup>22</sup> reports that the main approach to meeting skills needs used by employers is retraining existing staff on-the-job, and that there has been a significant increase in the strategy of employing workers with basic skills – often new entrants to an industry – and then upskilling them. The unaccredited or informal training that is delivered can also be used to complement and enhance employees' VET learning<sup>23</sup>.

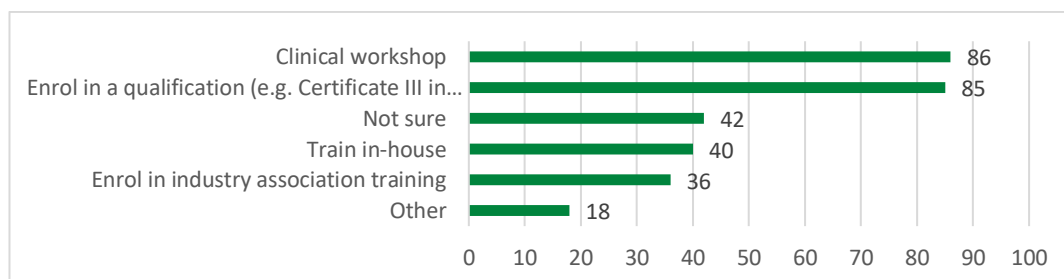
### Performance horse industry

Results from the Animal Care and Management IRC Equine Industry Survey show that industry participants who care for or own performance horses would take a mix of approaches if they wanted to progress their skills and knowledge. Participants' choices would be largely determined by the extent of their training needs and how much time they felt they could afford away from their normal work.

Clinical workshops, which typically run for between one and three days, are the preferred method of upskilling for 28% of respondents. For example, The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA), a leading provider of continuing professional development opportunities in Australia for veterinary professionals, offer workshops such as 'Large animal practice management efficiencies'<sup>24</sup>. The Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA) offers a range of professional development opportunities to members and non-members throughout the year; for example, a series of "short self-paced courses designed to deliver high quality continuing education in a range of topics covering medicine, surgery and emergency medicine"<sup>25</sup>.

For 27% of participants, enrolling in a qualification is the preferred option for upskilling. Around 14% are unsure as to what option they would pursue. 'Other' answers included university-based learning, overseas/interstate training and pony clubs.

**Figure 3: Preferred method for progressing skills and knowledge**



NCVER<sup>26</sup> note that employers are less concerned about who provides training and whether it is accredited, because they focus more on the perceived relevance of the training to meeting their needs. Mawer and Jackson<sup>27</sup>, for example, established that many employers are more comfortable and satisfied with unaccredited training, citing flexible structures, shorter durations, and a focus only on relevant equipment and workplace practices. In this light, NCVER<sup>28</sup> found that "employers have consistently rated satisfaction with unaccredited training significantly higher than with nationally recognised training and with the training to apprentices and trainees provided through the VET system".

Some equine survey respondents pointed out that they would choose the most suitable option (and perhaps more than one) based upon their specific needs and contexts, often with the advice of trusted colleagues in the field.

<sup>22</sup> Australian Industry Group, 2018, *Workforce Development Needs Survey Report – Skilling: A National Imperative*, AIGroup, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <[https://cdn.aigroup.com.au/Reports/2018/Survey\\_Report\\_WFDNeeds\\_Skilling\\_Sept2018.pdf](https://cdn.aigroup.com.au/Reports/2018/Survey_Report_WFDNeeds_Skilling_Sept2018.pdf)>

<sup>23</sup> I. White, N. De Silva & T. Rittie, 2018, *Unaccredited training: why employers use it and does it meet their needs?*, NCVER, Adelaide

<sup>24</sup> AVA, 2020, *Large animal practice management efficiencies*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.ava.com.au/education-events/education-and-events-search/event-detail/?eid=EV000216>>

<sup>25</sup> VNCA, 2020, *VNCA e-CPD*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.vnca.asn.au/education/vnca-ecpd/>>

<sup>26</sup> I. White, N. De Silva & T. Rittie, 2018, *Unaccredited training: why employers use it and does it meet their needs?*, NCVER, Adelaide

<sup>27</sup> G. Mawer & E. Jackson, 2005, *Training of existing workers: issues, incentives and models*, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed January 2020 <[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/file/0014/5144/nr3017.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0014/5144/nr3017.pdf)>

<sup>28</sup> I. White, N. De Silva & T. Rittie, 2018, p.12, *Unaccredited training: why employers use it and does it meet their needs?*, NCVER, Adelaide

Several respondents emphasised that they would not choose any formal learning, instead valuing peer and on-the-job coaching:

***“Symposiums, lectures (even at Equitana etc) but mostly asking questions and learning from vets and professionals and other riders. Have also worked for radiography specialist vets etc as well – just go and be a lackey doing rounds with them.”***

***“We do not need to be given new techniques to give people tickets. All we need is it to be handed back to the old system of the stewards and trainers who are hands on and can pass on lifetime of knowledge and practical skills that you cannot get from sitting in a classroom doing paperwork just to get a ticket.”***

*Skills Impact, 2019, Equine Industry Survey Report, conducted on behalf of the Animal Care and Management Industry Reference Committee*

Numerous participants felt that skills are best learnt on the job due to the nature of the tasks for which the individual is being trained for and the nature of the workplace.

According to Smith et al.<sup>29</sup>, unaccredited training is often preferred by organisations with a lower level of workforce skills. These include smaller businesses, which may have less of a culture of ‘professional development’, perhaps without established human resources procedures. Equine survey respondents with a preference for ‘in-house training’ echoed these sentiments. There was a view that most participants exit the VET system with up to date knowledge, but not the basic skills or proficiency for jobs according to workplace standards. As such, other methods are used to provide the direct workplace learning and experience needed for individuals to develop their careers because:

***“No one is teaching the very basics, being aware of horse soundness or wellness, knowing how to clean a box properly.”***

***“Where future jobs still require actual handling of horses, the need for understanding of horse behaviour and needs will remain paramount. As each generation of young people tends become further removed from rural/animal husbandry skills, these skills will become harder to acquire.”***

The current system focusses on RTO delivery – rather than workers and on-the-job learning – and, the Animal Care and Management IRC have advised, this is exacerbated by the animal care and management industry’s low level of involvement across the VET system, with specialist roles mainly confined to skills identification and subject matter experts. While the Animal Care and Management IRC promotes formal VET (RTO learning), the system is misaligned with the views and requirements of industry, which prefers a more flexible, workplace-based approach to vocational learning. TAFE Enterprise<sup>30</sup>, for example, found that the greatest barriers to businesses facilitating formal staff training were the time employees spend away from their usual work, a lack of training budget and low staff motivation to participate.

<sup>29</sup> A. Smith, G. Burke, M. Long & T. Dumbrell, 2008, *Approaches to measuring and understanding employer training expenditure*, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/file/0017/4508/nr05009.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0017/4508/nr05009.pdf)>

<sup>30</sup> TAFE Enterprise, 2018, *Skills and Australian business report 2018*, viewed January 2020, <<https://www.tafensw.edu.au/documents/60140/86282/TAFE+Enterprise+Training+Report.pdf/bf500d82-3956-2ed5-5b39-b80d9c090dd5>>

## Equine Dentistry

Several respondents to the Animal Care and Management IRC Equine Industry Survey discussed equine dentistry training outside of the national system. One respondent, who is an equine dental practitioner (rather than a customer), in their professional opinion, considers that:

***“As an EDP (Equine Dental Provider) that has practiced, learnt and taught advanced equine dental skills worldwide, Australian practitioners, both veterinary and non-veterinary, severely lack knowledge and experience in this field.”***

Another participant states that:

***“The EDAA provides an extremely thorough Equine Dental technician training course with practical placement being a core element. Run over the course of 15-18 months, it provides students with the skills, knowledge and experience to set up their own business on completion. A key strength of this course was the required amount of practical days that need to be completed before sitting the final practical exams. Students must also spend time with a minimum number of EDAA members. This ensures the student learns more than one way of doing things and gains exposure to a large number of animals and how different people run their own businesses. I believe there has been another TAFE since providing the same qualification without anywhere near the same amount of experience required or as strict an examination process and at a cheaper cost. This is a real concern to me as a customer and I'm sure also for approximately qualified dental technicians in their bid to safeguard their profession.”***

## VET Navigation Difficulties and Other Uses of the Training Package

Multiple publications<sup>31, 32, 33, 34</sup> report that employers find it difficult to source information about qualifications and establish which training providers offer flexible packaging and delivery. This can create an aversion to attempting to further navigate the VET system. One participant in IRC equine industry elaborated on the difficulty of assessing the available training options:

***“There are inconsistencies which I believe is based on the ambiguity of an overarching training system of the workforce in Australian performance equine industry. A lot of equine business owners aren't really aware of the VET system and tend to do in-house training or through the Equestrian Federation of Australia. Unlike UK etc which have one system which is well recognised in the performance industry. Therefore the consistency of how someone is trained to manage performance horses can be mixed.”***

There are many alternatives to enrolling learners in RTO-delivered VET. While some employers may look for training elsewhere or develop their own training in-house (which may be structured or formalised to varying degrees), other businesses may develop their own training by utilising the ACM Training Package in recognition of its industry and occupational relevance. The below example has been provided independently from an industry stakeholder, who expresses multiple challenges associated with VET, not least in its cost and time investment, navigation and required learner volumes. Regardless, they consider the ACM Training Package to be foundational to their activities (which do not appear in NCVER-published VET statistics):

***“As I mentioned when we met, we do find all the units that we have previously inputted into very useful. We often use them as a guide to informally align our own educational content and resources that we prepare for industry participants. As you will be aware, we had quite a lot of input into them during their development. While one day in the future we might seek to have some of the content we develop formally aligned, at this stage we [are] not in a position to do so and we tend to go down***

<sup>31</sup> M. Cully, 2005, *Employer-provided training: findings from recent case studies – at a glance*, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/employer-provided-training-findings-from-recent-case-studies-at-a-glance>>

<sup>32</sup> T. Griffin, 2016, *Costs and benefits of education and training for the economy, business and individuals*, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/2873>>

<sup>33</sup> A. Smith, G. Burke, M. Long & T. Dumbrell, 2008, *Approaches to measuring and understanding employer training expenditure*, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/file/0017/4508/nr05009.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0017/4508/nr05009.pdf)>

<sup>34</sup> C. Shah, 2017, *Employers' perspectives on training: three industries*, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed January 2020, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/employers-perspectives-on-training-three-industries>>

***a line of biting off chunks that are particularly relevant to our participants. Further, we probably would not at this stage have the critical mass to enable providers to find it cost effective. In addition, we do not believe this form of delivery would be taken up by our participants at this stage.”***

This demonstrates how numerous employers who engage with the national system – both in the review and use of training package products – are not necessarily considered as participants; they are part of creating, and a user of, this national resource, yet the added value of this is not recorded in RTO enrolment figures or VET research more generally, either qualitatively or quantitatively.

## Enrolment Levels

### Systemic Challenges Causing Low/No Enrolments

The Animal Care and Management IRC faces competing priorities regarding the standards that govern their activities and the minister’s objective to delete qualifications with low/no enrolments. The IRC is required to support “nationally consistent qualifications that reflect the skills and knowledge required to successfully operate in a particular occupation”, while training products must reflect “occupational skills needs of an industry, or a group of industries, to facilitate employment and vocational outcomes for individuals”<sup>35</sup> The IRC’s role is to engage with industry to describe current (and future) occupational skills standards, and *not* to ensure formal RTO enrolments within the VET system.

Feedback from employers, industry participants, members’ associations and other stakeholders indicate that general reasons for low and no enrolments include:

- The use of non-accredited training (as detailed in question 3), usually to address delivery issues, enable timely, tailored upskilling of industry participants and avoid navigating the complexities of the Recognition of Prior Learning process. Horse Safety Australia, Greyhound Racing Victoria and the Animal Welfare League have all reported utilising ACM units of competency in the design of internal training.
- The lack of available, fully qualified assessors. There are extremely few farriery and equine dentistry assessors nationally and their focus is on areas (i.e. cities) with high student volumes. People who want to enrol in animal care qualifications often have to move to cities for training, and do not return to the rural areas from which they came, where skilled workers are needed.
- Prior to recent updates, several ACM qualifications were considered by industry to be outdated. Where there are new, superseding qualifications, there is an enrolment lag as RTOs develop training and assessment strategies and materials and seek approval to have it on scope.
- The updated ACM Training Package set industry skills standards based on the best available evidence of knowledge and practice, but these standards are not appropriately supported by regulation and formal quality standards in most States and Territories: there are indications (supported by the findings of the equine survey) that a proportion of learners only undertake the training they want (in form and volume) rather than the level of training they need, and then portray themselves as service providers in fields dominated by self-employed or small businesses
- RTO delivery issues relating to the cost of formal training in rural, regional and remote areas. RTOs struggle to afford the simultaneous expenses of assessment and training materials, hiring trainers with industry currency, maintaining regulatory compliance, dispersed workplace visits and significant capital expenditure.
- There is limited scope for the introduction of online and virtual training, and workplace experience is critical to delivering the Training Package. The Australian Horse Industry Council believe that On-line training is not a substitute for Hands-on training<sup>36</sup>. This makes the continuing delivery of the training more expensive and less attractive to RTOs, a situation that will persist due to the nature of the industry.
- Anecdotally, state funding priorities are creating an artificial market for enrolments because employers

<sup>35</sup> Australian Industry and Skills Committee, 2019, pps.4-5, *Industry Reference Committees: Operating Framework for the Development of Training Packages*, viewed February 2020, <[https://www.aisc.net.au/sites/default/files/documents/IRC%20Operating%20Framework%20-%20201912\\_0.pdf](https://www.aisc.net.au/sites/default/files/documents/IRC%20Operating%20Framework%20-%20201912_0.pdf)>

<sup>36</sup> Australian Horse Industry Council, 2019, *Industry Advisory Committee Meeting Highlights - August 2019*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.horsecouncil.org.au/news-2/industry-advisory-committee-meeting-highlights-august-2019>>

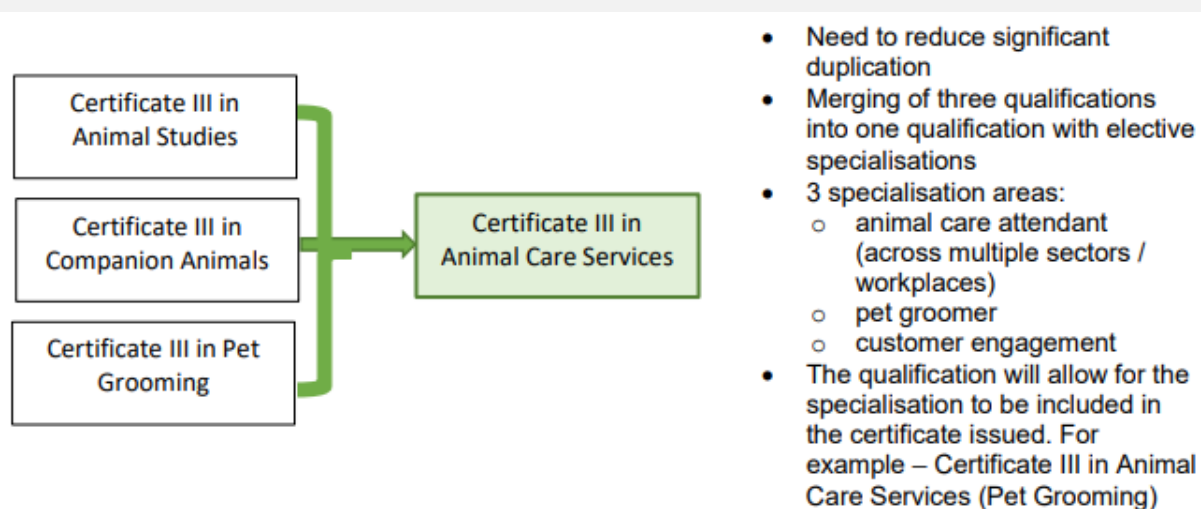


are enrolling trainees in higher-funded qualifications rather than the ones that are the best fit for the learner and their intended job role. The funded qualification appears to be more of an industry priority (due to inflated enrolments) when it is the funding that is priority.

### Example of state funding priority creating an artificial market for enrolments

Some states do not fund the Certificate III in Pet Grooming. In order to access funding for students who intend to become pet groomers, RTOs have enrolled learners in the Certificate III in Pet Grooming (so that the student gets the desired qualification) *and* the Certificate III in Companion Animal Services (so that funding is accessed). As there is a degree of cross-over between the units in these qualifications, the student will then complete the units as part of the Certificate III in Companion Animal Services and then have them applied to the Certificate III in Pet Grooming as Credit Transfers.

Recognising such issues, the Animal Care and Management IRC have developed a 'Pet Care & Animal Training Project'<sup>37</sup> that proposes the amalgamation of three qualifications into one:



### ACM Training Package Products that Should be Retained

There are various reasons why a qualification may appear as a 'low enrolment' but should be retained.

*Please note, all enrolment figures below are inclusive of the current and any superseded versions of qualifications where there is data provided by NCVER. This is to more accurately assess demand for, and uptake of, a particular occupational skills need.*

#### New Qualifications

NCVER data currently covers enrolments up to the end of 2018. The Animal Care and Management IRC advises that it can take up to two years for RTOs to develop training and assessment materials and get a new qualification (that has no superseded versions) on scope. As such, any qualification released after 01/01/2017 cannot yet be assessed as 'low enrolment' because there has not been sufficient time to analyse RTO/industry supply and demand. Relevant ACM qualifications include:

<sup>37</sup> Skills Impact, 2020, *Pet Care & Animal Training Project*, viewed January 2020 <<https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/animal-care/training-package-projects/pet-care-animal-training-project/>>

<sup>38</sup> NCVER's database, VOCSTATS, only displays enrolments for the years 2015-2018 at present. This is partly because it only became mandatory for RTOs to report their training activity from 2014. NCVER have now stated that "2014 was a transition year" and that only data from 2015 is considered reliable. This Industry Skills Forecast Annual Update, therefore, presents only data for the years 2015-2018 because many RTOs did not report their activity in 2014, and combining new and old datasets could result in spurious trends being shown.

**Table 1: New ACM Qualifications**

Current Qualification	Enrolments				Release 1 of Current Qualification	Any superseded quals (TGA)?
	2015	2016	2017	2018		
ACM30817- Certificate III in Performance Horse	0	0	0	22	29/11/2017	No
ACM20217- Certificate II in Horse Care	0	0	0	0	29/11/2017	No
ACM30918- Certificate III in Equine Hoof Care	0	0	0	0	11/12/2018	No
ACM50417- Diploma of Performance Horse Management	0	0	0	0	29/11/2017	No

Source: NCVER VOCSTATS, TVA program enrolments 2015-2018

#### Qualifications recently reviewed/updated

Demand may reasonably be expected to rise if a qualification has been significantly updated to meet industry needs (in relation to skills and occupations). For example, the new Certificate III in Animal Technology only superseded the previous version on 10/09/2019, and included industry-backed changes to the core units and packaging rules (amongst others).

**Table 2: Qualifications recently reviewed/updated**

Current Qualification	Enrolments				Release 1 of Current Qualification	Any superseded quals (TGA)?
	2015	2016	2017	2018		
ACM30219- Certificate III in Animal Technology	99	48	40	46	10/09/2019	Yes

Source: NCVER VOCSTATS, TVA program enrolments 2015-2018

#### Contextual reasons for low enrolments

Some qualifications cannot be reasonably be expected to encourage high enrolment figures when they are intended for employment in a niche occupation (which, by their nature, tend to have relatively low turn-over and few new entrants). Such qualifications often facilitate socially-valuable or geographically-specific skills that are critical for jobs with few employees nationwide. These qualifications may also address critical safety factors, both for the learner and the animals for which they care or manage. For example, the Australian Horse Industry Council, at an Industry Advisory Committee Meeting in August 2019, discussed their concerns over training for coaching qualifications being delivered online and the breadth of safety issues that could arise from such hands-off, unregulated courses<sup>39</sup>.

The Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry is an example of a qualification intended for a niche occupation. As detailed under question 1 of this Annual Update, 95% of equine industry participants surveyed engage services providers for equine dental care. Those respondents represent industries, including in the racing, breeding, competition, working horse and leisure horse sectors, worth billions of dollars to the Australian economy. These industries are largely dependent on positive welfare outcomes for their horses, of which equine dentistry is a vital factor<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Australian Horse Industry Council, 2019, *Industry Advisory Committee Meeting Highlights - August 2019*, viewed February 2020 <<https://www.horsecouncil.org.au/news-2/industry-advisory-committee-meeting-highlights-august-2019>>

<sup>40</sup> American Association of Equine Practitioners, 2020, *The Importance of Maintaining the Health of Your Horse's Mouth*, viewed February 2020, <<https://aaep.org/horsehealth/importance-maintaining-health-your-horses-mouth>>

Industry and IRC members have further advised that, at present, a lack of funding for the Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry has been a major impediment to its being offered and to uptake.

**Table 3: Contextual reasons**

Current Qualification	Enrolments				Release 1 Current Qualification	Any superseded quals (TGA)?
	2015	2016	2017	2018		
ACM40517- Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry	2	13	17	11	29/11/2017	Yes

Source: NCVET VOCSTATS, TVA program enrolments 2015-2018

The Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry will be included in a Case for Change in the 2020 Skills Forecast Annual Update to review and potentially update the qualification to ensure that it retains industry relevance, and that broad industry and VET provider consultation supports maximal potential uptake.

Overall, enrolment volumes here have very little relationship with the criticality of these skills to the equine industry, nor the indirect value of those skills to the economy, or the risks to society of not having properly trained equine dental practitioners.

#### **ACM Training Package products that potentially should be deleted**

The Certificate IV in Pet Styling is a 'low enrolment' qualification for which, at the time of writing, feedback is being sought, with a view to potential deletion. The qualification would be replaced by a new skill set.

The current Certificate IV in Pet Styling includes no ACMGRM units that cannot be chosen as electives in the Certificate III in Pet Grooming. This means that, while there are imported BSB business units at a higher AQF level, the Certificate IV does not facilitate additional technical grooming skills.

The new proposed skill set/units would more accurately reflect industry's determination of the level of training individuals should complete before advancing to more senior professional pet groomer or stylist positions.

**Table 4: For potential deletion**

Current Qualification	Enrolments				Release 1 Current Qualification	Any superseded quals (TGA)?
	2015	2016	2017	2018		
ACM40617- Certificate IV in Pet Styling	22	25	24	19	29/11/2017	Yes

Source: NCVET VOCSTATS, TVA program enrolments 2015-2018

# Reasons for Non-Completion

The Animal Care and Management IRC suggests that it is not privy to the level of detailed non-completions information and data to which the AISC may have access to. NCVER have released reports<sup>41</sup> which detail reasons for non-completion, but they do not provide detail to the level of individual training packages.

More research is required to explore reasons for qualification non-completion. This contention is a result of the apparent contradiction between the relatively low completion rates of qualifications and high rates of satisfaction with training. Specifically, more research is required to establish the true extent of course non-completion issues<sup>42</sup>. Current data suggests low 'success' rates in the *ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package*, with a completion rate of 42.7% as at 2017<sup>43</sup>, yet 84.0% of ACM students were 'satisfied with the overall quality of training' and 78.2% 'achieved their main reason for training'<sup>44,45</sup>. While there are many reasons for students not completing qualifications besides dissatisfaction with their training, current surveys and research do not look beyond a student's personal circumstances or opinions. More research is required to explore these systemic issues.

Stakeholders have commented extensively on how different state and territory funding models affect enrolments; for example, because skills sets are not funded in some places, learners who want a limited number of unit competencies may be enrolled in funded qualifications but will cancel their training contract after achieving the skill set (the system shows them as cancellations when they are in fact satisfied customers with enhanced job outcomes). The IRC recommends that such anecdotal evidence should be explored further, especially in the context that non-completions are clearly a far more complex issue than is implied by the completion rates alone.

## Purposes for Undertaking and Completing Qualifications or Skill Sets

The IRC does not have access to RTO-submitted AVETMISS data that would allow it to track ACM enrollees' reason for study and collate statistics on those who complete qualifications or skills sets. It can, however, access NCVER's 'VET graduate outcomes' data visualisation tool, which uses data sourced from the National Student Outcomes Survey (which, by its nature, collects data on students' retrospective reflections). Of ACM graduates, 78.2% achieved their main reason for training (although 'reasons for study' are undefined).

Graduates perceived personal benefits after their training include:

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<sup>41</sup> NCVER, 2019, p.15, *Apprentice and trainee experience and destinations 2019*, viewed January 2020  
<[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0037/8379181/Apprentice\\_and\\_trainee\\_experience\\_and\\_destinations\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0037/8379181/Apprentice_and_trainee_experience_and_destinations_2019.pdf)>

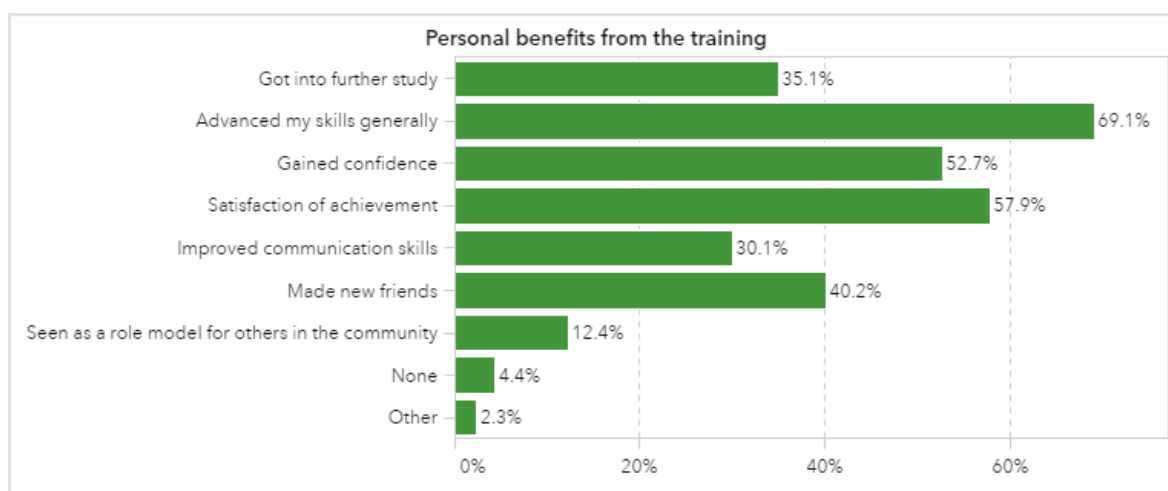
<sup>42</sup> Building on work by NCVER, such as: A. Bednarz, 2014, *Understanding the non-completion of apprentices*, NCVER, Adelaide.

<sup>43</sup> NCVER, private data request

<sup>44</sup> Including all National Student Outcomes Survey respondents who completed at least one subject, whether they completed their qualification or not.

<sup>45</sup> NCVER, 2019, *VET graduate outcomes*, SAS Visual Analytics

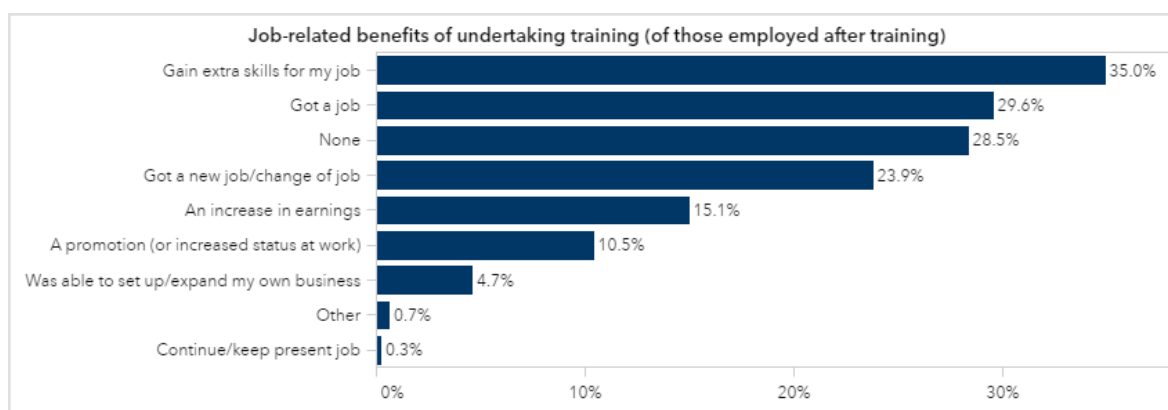
**Figure 4: Personal benefits from training (ACM)**



Source: NCVET, VET graduate outcomes

The job-related benefits of undertaking training (of those employed after training) perceived by ACM graduates are as follows:

**Figure 5: Job-related benefits of undertaking training (of those employed after training) (ACM)**



Source: NCVET, VET graduate outcomes

Despite recent improvements in NCVET data<sup>46</sup>, there are many areas in which a higher level of detail would facilitate more nuanced analyses. For example, future data releases on graduates could include data so that they can be assessed according to variables such as their training package qualification and 'student remoteness region' to allow comparison of outcomes in major cities, regional and remote areas.

## Cross-Sector Units

Cross-sector units are not currently applied within qualifications that are part of the *ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package*. During the course of the activities identified in Section C of this Annual Update, the potential for using cross-sector units will be investigated.

The focus for the Animal Care and Management IRC to this point has been to update the training package which

<sup>46</sup> COAG Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) agreed to the introduction of mandatory reporting of nationally recognised training activity from 2014 onwards. Under this mandatory reporting, all Australian training providers (excluding those exempted by regulators) delivering nationally recognised training to students, either in domestic or in overseas locations, are required to report their training activity to NCVET.

had fallen out of date, as well as addressing specific issues that have been raised, especially in relation to safety and welfare issues. As the training package will almost be fully updated by the end of 2021, opportunities will be undertaken to re-examine the whole training package using the new tools that have been provided by the AISC.

## Changes to Skill Requirements

In 2019, the Animal Care and Management IRC requested that Skills Impact survey individuals and organisations who own horses and are responsible for engaging services for their care. The work was to build upon what has already been identified for, and covered in, qualifications within the *RGR Racing and Breeding Training Package*. The objective was to determine the types of work being undertaken in the equine industries, the types of horse care service providers that are engaged and the skills and knowledge possessed by workers (whether through formal qualifications or on-the-job experience).

The survey, along with previously collected data and intelligence, identified the following:

- Customers' preference for service providers to have credentials, including qualifications, for roles in farriery, chiropractic care, saddle fitting and body work (massage, biomechanics, etc.).
- Many customers are concerned about equine dentists' proper use of modern motorised instruments.
- Skills in horse care, safety and welfare are in high demand.
- There is a growing recognition of emerging technologies, for instance in tasks associated with traceability, and how they may impact on the industry.
- Recent industry controversies have highlighted the need for additional skills and knowledge in the rehoming of horses, including care for geriatric horses and horses that are unsuitable for retraining.

An Australian Computer Society report<sup>47</sup> on the impact of technology on the Australian workforce highlights that, projected across the next 15 years, 53% of work by 'Animal Attendants and Trainers' will be 'unimpacted' by technology, 45% will be 'augmentable', and only 2% will be 'automatable'. As such, professions in this category are amongst the most susceptible to 'augmentation'. This 'augmentation' of roles and tasks will require significant upskilling of existing workers and training of new entrants.

## Apprenticeship and Traineeship Barriers

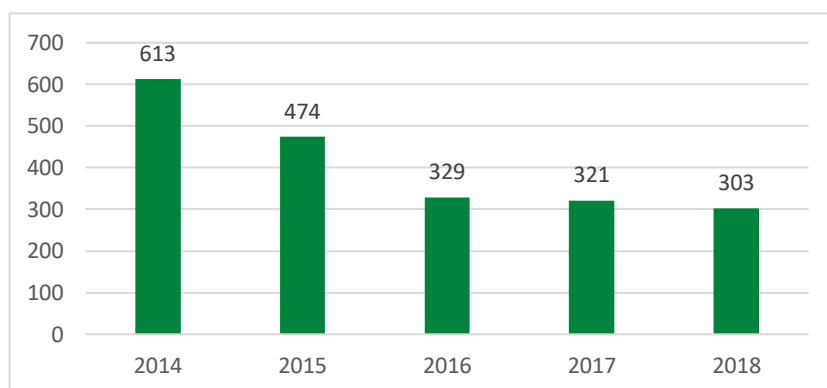
The Animal Care and Management IRC supports further research to collect and present statistics and evidence around this issue, which is of relevance across all training packages. This research should be driven at an AISC level rather than at the level of individual IRCs.

Apprenticeships and traineeships in the *ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package* are decreasing (see Figure 6). Employers find them to be increasingly unviable, in part due to their inflexibility, lack of funding and increased administration requirements.

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<sup>47</sup> Australian Computer Society, 2020, *Technology Impacts on the Australian Workforce*, viewed March 2020  
<<https://www.acs.org.au/insightsandpublications/reports-publications/technology-impacts-on-the-australian-workforce.html> >

**Figure 6: ACM apprenticeships commencements**



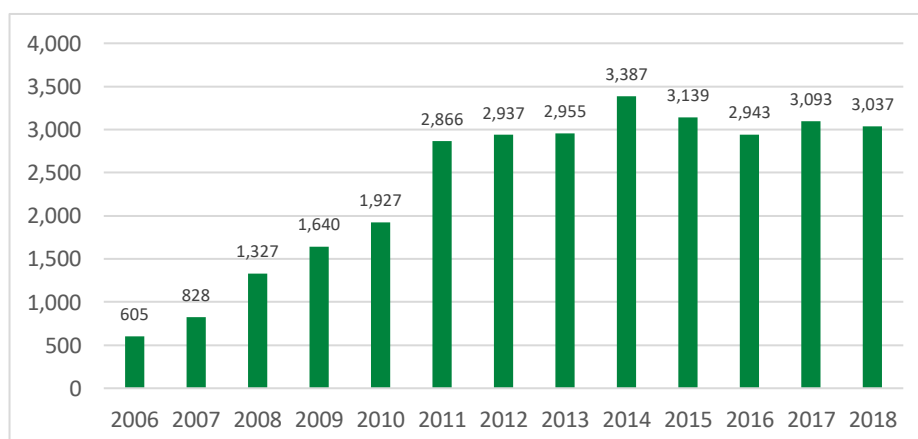
Source: NCVET VOCSTATS: Apprentices and trainees

Another barrier is that many employers are unaware that taking on apprentices/trainees is even an option. As detailed under question 3, employers experience difficulties in navigating the VET system, and this relates here both to ascertaining the rules and regulations around taking on apprentices/trainees *and* in determining which qualifications are available as part of apprenticeship/traineeship program. For example, Dr Joanne Sillince, CEO of Pets Australia, was unaware that Certificate III in Pet Grooming was available as a traineeship in most states (except in Queensland and South Australia).

In some states, in order to sign off on a trainee completing a workplace component, the employer/supervisor is required to hold the relevant qualification or higher. No amount of (uncredentialed) experience can act as a substitute. This rules out many businesses in the animal care and management industry from employing workers under a traineeship. Sole proprietors and small businesses find it especially difficult to comply; also, having few or no staff members means there is scarce time in which to complete the onerous and time-consuming documentation requirements. Such employers may instead choose to employ an unskilled worker and train then informally.

Despite an ever-decreasing number of enrolments in apprenticeships and traineeships, the *ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package* is popular as part of the VET in Schools program, with the Certificate II in Animal Studies showing 2,540 enrolments in 2018 alone.

**Figure 7: ACM VET in Schools enrolments**



Source: NCVET VOCSTATS: ViS program enrolments 2006-2018

## Section B: Ongoing Consultation

Details of industry consultation undertaken by IRC members and Skills Impact, including with rural, regional and remote stakeholders will be included in the final document that is submitted to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). Once submitted, the final document will also be published on the Skills Impact website.

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# Section C: Proposed New Work

## 2022–2021 Project Details

### Project 1: Equine Care Careers

#### Description

The Animal Care and Management IRC proposes a review of equine-related qualifications, units of competency and skills sets in order to meet current and long-term industry skills needs for the equine industries. It is recommended that units of competency and skills sets are reviewed and repackaged to facilitate transferable skills across a variety of equine sectors and, in so doing, reduce the complexity of the VET system. The aim of this work is to ensure that training package products are up to standard and enable a variety of job outcomes. The IRC have identified that current training package products do not meet industry expectations with regards to practical skills in handling traditional and modern equine tools, horse safety, horse behaviour and horse welfare. Review of the Performance Horse qualifications will be included in this project.

#### Rationale

Following a process of extensive consultation and feedback collection, the Animal Care and Management IRC has assessed that equine-related job roles and associated skills needs are expanding. During 2019, the IRC requested that a widescale survey of individuals and organisations who own horses be conducted to identify new equine services being provided and to ascertain the ways that work is currently being undertaken, inclusive of how people learn to fulfil their roles. This was undertaken to build on work previously identified by, and covered in, qualifications within the *RGR Racing and Breeding Training Package* (although people in the racing and breeding industries were included in the survey). The survey collected 546 responses.

Based upon the results of the Animal Care and Management IRC-led research, they recommend a project to address multiple current issues and gaps surrounding equine service provisions. To achieve this, a 'job family' is being proposed by the IRC to reflect the 'equine care' sector, which groups a range of current and emerging occupations. The proposed training package development work will establish a foundation to facilitate future skills needs without adding undue complexity to the VET system and is intended for training delivered both to new entrants to the industry and existing workers wishing to upskill.

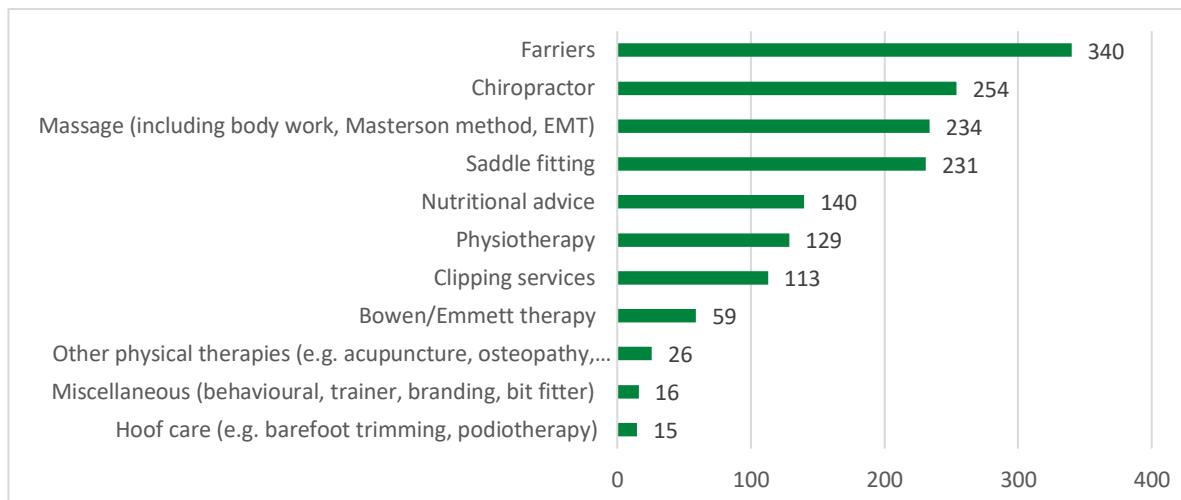
The IRC recommends revising current qualifications so that they share a set of foundational units, and to allow specialised streaming for current and future services. While some streams will be established during the project, other streams may be developed in the future as new services and skills emerge (these may initially be developed as skill sets and later incorporated into existing qualifications).

#### Equine qualifications, units of competency and skill sets

##### Issue 1: Training Package Coverage

There is currently a disjointed vocational pathway for workers in the equine industry, which serves to restrict access to funding and workplace training, while also limiting the development of transferable skills. The current vocational education and training system caters for a narrow selection of equine-related job roles across the ACM and RGR (racing and breeding) Training Packages; however, the range of industry job roles is expanding (see Figure 8, which excludes veterinary and equine dental service providers) and many of the emerging occupations are not covered by existing Training Package products. Training is now required for roles such as agistments workers, rescue centres, equine therapy support workers, general stable hands, groomers, riders, exercisers and equine hospital support workers/veterinary nurses.

**Figure 8: Horse care services engaged**



The equine survey highlighted industry need for graduates of revised components, with around 70% of respondents stating that “Service provider credentials (e.g. qualifications)” are the basis upon which they choose a provider. Credentials are especially important to people due to concerns over the quality and ethics of some service providers who have not engaged in formal training:

“There are large numbers of people who practice these services that are not qualified who advertise their services for a cost. There are also a lot of them that shouldn't be practicing.”

“There seems to be a lot of persons claiming to be qualified / trained but unfortunately there are too many that aren't and cause harm.”

“It is unfortunately common for 'coaches' to teach riding lessons without any qualifications and/or insurance. In my opinion this is wrong.”

“Very few recognised qualifications are seen for farriers/trimmers [...]. Seems like anyone can advertise as such without being qualified.”

“People should be qualified in their field as professionals and licenced to practice. This should be mandatory for anyone that charges for their services. Also have insurance cover.”

The above responses show that, when providers cannot demonstrate their credentials, they are perceived to be more likely to flout industry legislation and ethical practices, which can directly endanger a horse's welfare. Participants overwhelmingly showed a desire for choosing operators with formal certification, and that includes occupations and services that are not yet covered by the ACM or RGR Training Packages.

### **Solution 1**

When reviewing ACM equine units of competency and skill sets, consideration will be given to flexibility and skills transferability within specific horse safety, behaviour, welfare and practical components. This project proposes that units of competency and skills sets are re-packaged to provide industry with clearer pathways. This will give employers the flexibility of training that they have been requesting (so as to upskill for emerging services and to provide customers with credentials relating to particular operations) and provide greater access to funding for traineeships.

## Issue 2: Applied Training

The Equine Industry Survey found that, currently, industry is generally divided according to two training philosophies. There are 'traditionalists', who believe that formal training is delivered to the detriment of practical horse skills, which, they feel, can only be gained through hands-on experience and handed-down knowledge. 'Progressives', on the other hand, believe that vocational training is crucial for learning new skills and best-practice methods.

'Traditional' philosophy	'Progressive' philosophy
<p>"[Workers need] farm sense, common sense, animal intuition, horse sense, all the things that can't easily be taught and don't get taught in school/college. [...] Ability to work physically hard in all conditions."</p> <p>"You cannot learn to take care of horses from a textbook. This is the issue with the ongoing care of horses people do not realise the expense and time involved. Hence horses are placed in paddocks and starve to death."</p> <p>"Training needs to be done by common sense professionals with horse sense and years of experience in the racing industry. Not a TAFE teacher."</p> <p>"There is no proper training for people in the racing industry. You CANNOT learn how to handle horses from a textbook!!"</p> <p>"[Workers should be] Learning from true horse people, not books."</p>	<p>"The equestrian industry is highly traditional and resistant to change. I personally continually update my knowledge and skills with accredited training (currently masters degree in equine science – university qualified) but still come across pockets of industry who doubt these credentials and feel they are unnecessary. They seem to believe medals or being a "Good bloke/horseman" are the only qualifications required. Extremely frustrating..."</p> <p>"There is still a big gap in evidenced based knowledge of horse behaviour. Still too big a reliance on tradition or industry practices which are not evidence based. Linkage between evidence-based knowledge of horse behaviour, equine welfare and human safety is frequently missing. Knowledge of equine welfare is also often outdated."</p> <p>"There are plenty of people who say they are experienced because they have "been working with horses for years" but have no formal qualifications. When asked for references they profess to not need them."</p>

There is, however, conceivably a way of bridging this gap: by ensuring that industry has access to learners who have undertaken a greater volume of practical skills training. In so doing, this will help allay the concerns of individuals who feel that basic horse skills are underdeveloped, while also improving access to applied training, which will satisfy those concerned by a lack of participation in formal skills and knowledge development.

### Solution 2

This project will strengthen the practical components within the identified units of competency, thus unifying a hands-on approach to training with current best-practice knowledge.

### Allied Care Services and Equine Dentistry

Equine dentistry is one of the most used services for the care of horses. From the equine survey results, 95% of respondents engage external providers for equine dental care, indicating widespread knowledge of the importance of horses' teeth to their overall health and the on-going demand for services.

Several factors were identified as barriers to gaining acceptable dental care, notably:

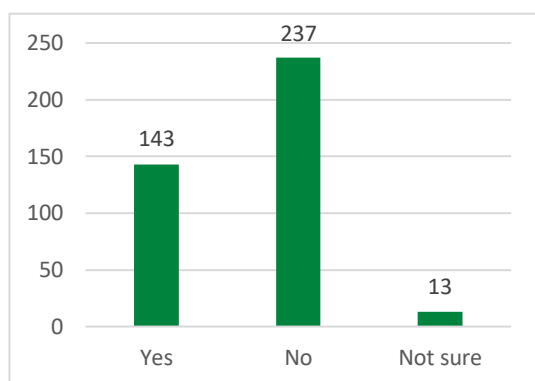
- Lack of access to services (especially in regional, rural and remote areas).
- Cost and scheduling (particularly when a veterinarian accompanies the equine dentist to administer sedation).
- The equine dental technician's lack of capabilities (there are concerns that some dental service

providers do not possess the required skills and knowledge to undertake the work effectively).

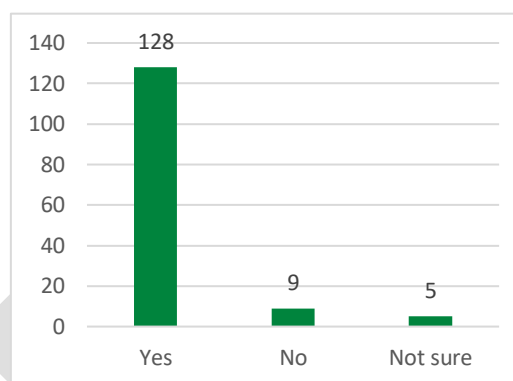
### Issue 1: Motorised Instruments

Approximately 40% of the equine dentists (including veterinarian and non-veterinarian dental care providers) engaged by survey participants use motorised instruments.

**Figure 9: Does the equine dental care provider use motorised tools?**



**Figure 10: Is the horse sedated when motorised tools are used?**



Equine dental care with motorised tools mostly involves horses being sedated, a procedure that is largely carried out by veterinarians (either as the exclusive dental care provider or working alongside an equine dental technician). The increasing use of motorised instruments necessitates that skills training pertaining to new tools and techniques be available in order to ensure that equine dentistry businesses maintain productivity and are internationally competitive.

#### Solution 1

The identified units of competency will be reviewed to ensure that they are applicable to both manual and motorised tools. Depending on the guidance of subject matter experts, a skill set may be created for the use of motorised tools which may be packaged as an upskilling to the qualification. The review will also confirm that all relevant legislation and equine welfare, safety and behavioural factors are captured, and that the training delivered in these important fields of skills and knowledge enables the equine dentistry sector to maintain a high level of expertise.

### Issue 2: Overseas Qualifications

It has been identified that some equine dental practitioners currently practising within Australia have gained overseas qualifications and must attend mandatory professional education events in the country where their credential was issued. The USA and UK have recently raised the standards of their training for non-veterinary equine dental service providers and many qualified equine dental technicians are now employed in these countries by veterinary practices, horse businesses and training organisations, or work as sole traders running their own businesses.

#### Solution 2

The review of the qualification will ensure that it meets required standards as outlined by the Australian industry, with the potential for providing an alternative pathway for those currently going overseas. Providing formally recognised qualifications will open a local Australian market, which should attract both local and international learners.

### Issue 3: Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry

The qualification *ACM40517 Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry* currently includes units of competency that were created in 2012 and have been the subject of minimal changes besides the addition of pre-requisites during the

Safety in Equine Training project in 2017. The qualification also includes imported units in both the core and electives that are superseded and thus should be reviewed in the context of the wider qualification to determine whether they should be retained. Also included in the qualification are some current equine units of competency that contain duplication within the performance criteria, while the content of other units is relatively voluminous and so poses delivery issues for learners and registered training organisations.

### Solution 3

All equine units are to be reviewed, with any duplication removed, and the unit content volume reduced where applicable. The following core and elective units of competency included in the Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry are superseded and should be changes to the updated unit or replaced/deleted if they are no longer suitable for industry needs:

Core:

- RGRPSH308A - Provide first aid and emergency care for horses is superseded by [RGRPSH308 - Provide first aid and emergency care for horses or other equines](#)
- BSBSMB405 - Monitor and manage small business operations is superseded by [BSBSMB420 - Evaluate and develop small business operations](#)

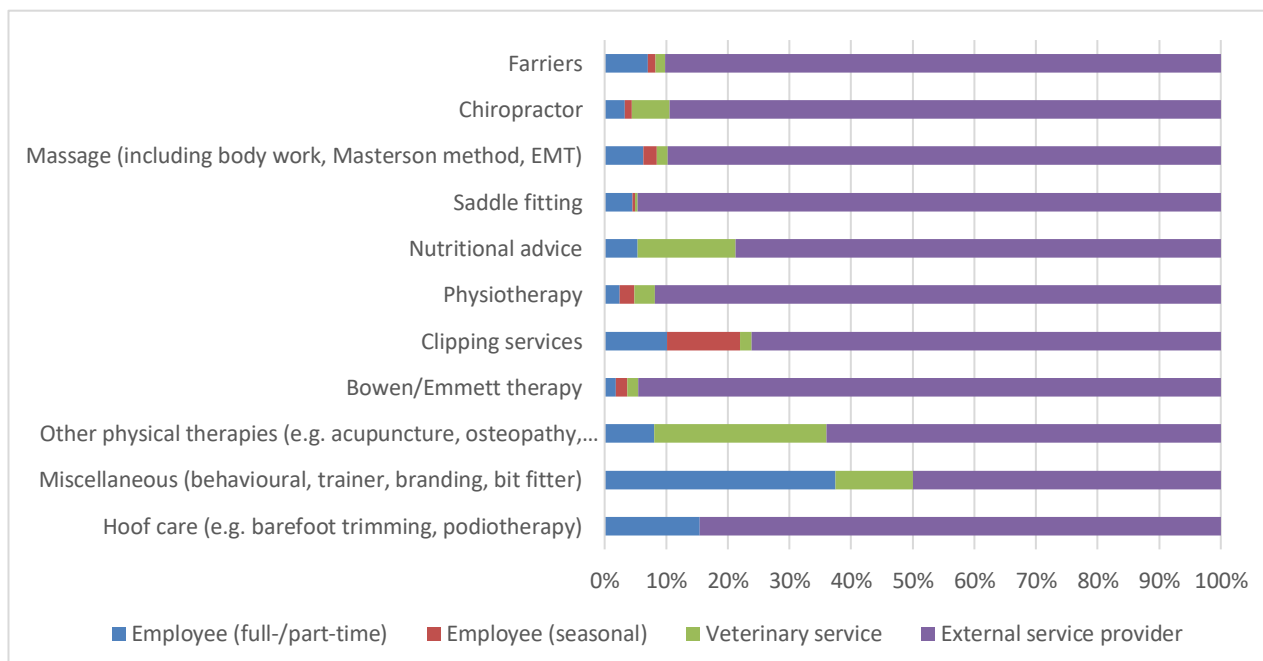
Elective:

- RGRPSH304A - Identify factors that affect racehorse performance is superseded by [RGRPSH304 - Identify factors that affect racehorse fitness and suitability to race](#)

### Issue 4: Qualifications Facilitating Industry Self-Regulation

Responses to the equine survey indicate that horse-owning organisations and individuals engage external service providers for 88% of their horse care services (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Horse care service provider**



Besides equine dentistry and farriery services, the most commonly engaged operators are chiropractors, massage/body workers and saddle fitters (see Figure 8).

Industry engagement has established that equine “chiropractors” and “massage/body workers” are often qualified with degrees in human chiropractic science and physiotherapy. As operators in the equine industry are unregulated, these allied service providers do not hold licences. However, respondents in the equine owner survey displayed an appetite for greater industry regulation on the basis of formal qualifications due to the harm that can be caused by inexperienced practitioners:

“Many in the industry are using outdated methods and do not understand the science and are not willing to change. Particularly difficult to find qualified service providers for farriery, chiro and massage. Too many educators providing short courses that are not approved by any formal education body and are being run by people with no training. Industry needs a good shake up and some regulation around who can operate and work, formalise some of the qualifications to be industry requirements.”

“More regulation needed to ensure that only accredited and insured service providers can advertise and provide services.”

“The horse industry needs regulating to improve the welfare of the animal and ensure its participants are educated and trained appropriately.”

“I see a need to have some sort of overarching level of training and certification for competency for those in pretty much any area of the equine industry, from massage to farriers and dentists. Anyone can get a set of tools or do a two-day course and call themselves a “whatever” and the vast majority of them are not!!”

In order to help industry maintain required standards and assist consumers in their choices of service provider, there needs to be accepted, notional minimum standards and nationally recognised qualifications to reflect the skills and knowledge required for these highly sought-after roles.

#### Solution 4

The Animal Care and Management IRC proposes that, to broaden equine career pathways, the review of the *ACM40517 Certificate IV in Equine Dentistry* consider the skills and knowledge associated with the occupations ‘chiropractor’ and ‘physiotherapist’, with the possible outcome of developing a superseding *Certificate IV in Allied/Professional Equine Services*. The project will conduct a workforce analysis of these professions, establishing whether there are core competencies that can form the basis of the qualification, which will include occupation-specific streams (see **Error! Reference source not found.** for further details).

### Equine Veterinary Nursing (Postponed activity order from 2018)

#### Issue

Veterinary nurses require highly specialised skills in order to specialise in equine nursing as part of the Diploma of Veterinary Nursing. The key areas that are required include:

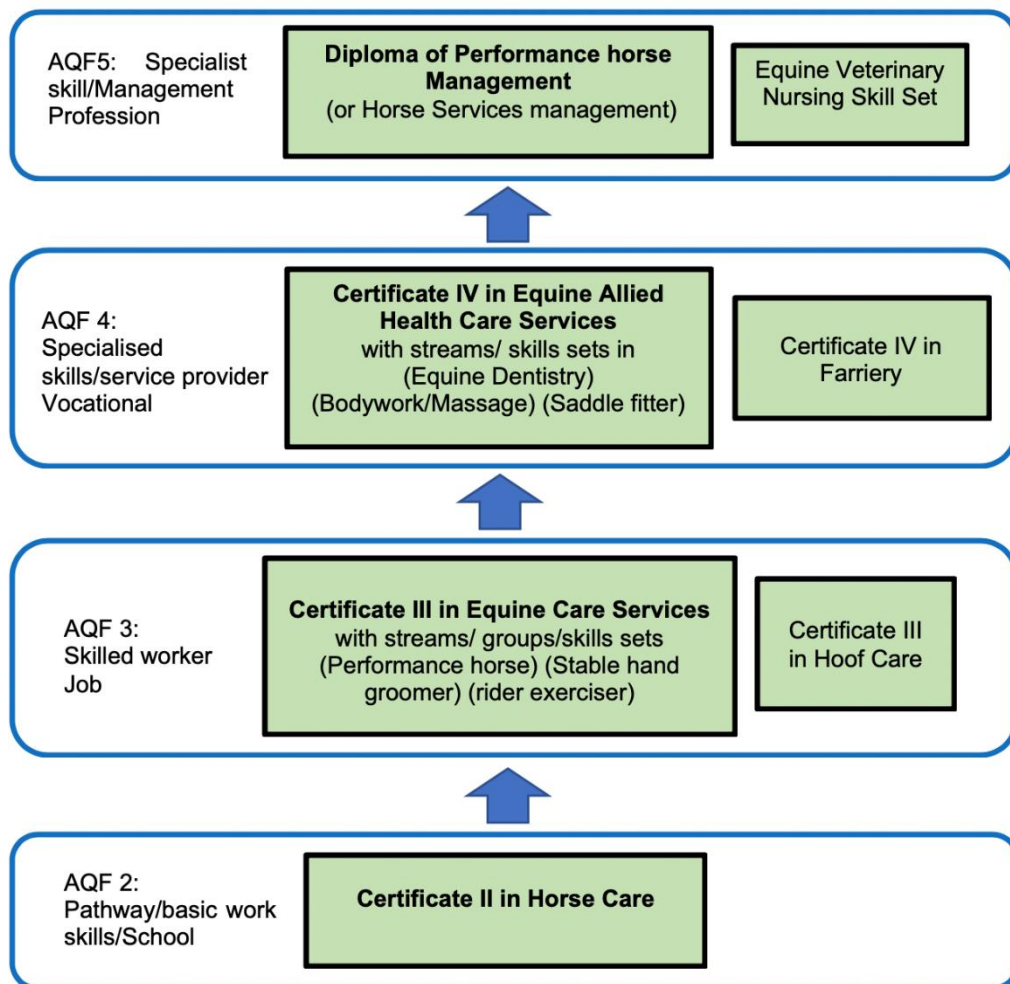
- Manual handling of foals
- Foal neonatal gastric tube feeding
- Total parenteral nutrition (tpn)
- Placatitis
- Coordinate equine theatre routines
- Assist with equine imaging and diagnostics
- Carry out post-operative and critical care equine nursing routines.

#### Solution

An activity order was issued in 2018 for the development of up to ten new units of competency; however, this

was postponed due to the late release, in September 2019, of the *ACM50219 - Diploma of Veterinary Nursing*. To house the new the units of competency (covering the job functions listed above), the Animal Care and Management IRC proposes that a skill set is created, which may then be incorporated into the *ACM50219 - Diploma of Veterinary Nursing* when the qualification is next reviewed.

**Figure 12: Proposed ACM equine career pathways**



### Ministers' Priorities Addressed

This project has an opportunity to support the minister's priorities to specifically address the following three key ministers' priorities:

#### Obsolete and Duplicate Qualifications are Removed from the System

The project aims to identify and analyse current and emerging skills needs, identifying which current units of competency are no longer required due to changing job functions. It will create a broad-based qualification to replace an existing narrowly-defined qualification, to ensure that emerging job roles and skills needs can be addressed without adding qualifications.

#### The Training System Better Supports Individuals to Move More Easily Between Related Occupations

The project aims to identify, analyse and update qualifications and units of competency to ensure they maintain longevity of relevance to the industry by being broad and flexible enough to be adaptable as job roles and skills evolve over time. Furthermore, the project aims to address industry demands for the broadening of current qualifications to cover a wider range of job roles within the equine industry.

## Foster Greater Recognition of Skill Sets

The project aims to identify and analyse opportunities to develop skill sets and qualification streams relevant for current and emerging job roles. This in turn, will provide greater clarity to learners and RTOs regarding the skills that industry require for these job roles both now and into the future.

## Consultation Plan

The Animal Care and Management IRC will oversee and guide consultation, identify relevant subject matter experts and employers/employees. Initial work will be to conduct a work force analysis identifying the current and future job functions relevant for existing and emerging job roles. Initial development of this work will be undertaken with the identified industry subject matter experts. A first set of draft components will then be created and presented to a Horse Safety Expert Group to ensure the standards has sufficient rigour around the compliance of horse safety standards. These drafts will then be made public for feedback, for a minimum of 4-weeks on Skills Impact's website with industry having the ability to provide feedback via online, email, phone or face-to-face conversations. A series of webinars, face-to-face consultations workshops will also be held across Australia and regular notifications and updates will be circulated via emails to the various state Industry Advisory Groups, Skills Impact's Animal Care and Management registered members and key associations. Following this review, a set of final draft components will be created and validated through a minimum 2-week consultation period both online and at a face-to-face validation meeting. Once validated and supported by industry, the components will go through a finalisation process that includes Edit and Equity and independent Quality Assurance processes plus a 2-week State Training Authority review. The Case for Endorsement will then be finalised and submitted to the Animal Care and Management IRC for review and final approval, prior to submission to the AISC.

Broad consultation will be undertaken during the project, covering skills and training needs relating to Equine industry job roles including:

- Stable hand
- Riders/exercises
- Performance horse care and management
- Equine therapy support workers
- Horse sanctuaries and rescue centres
- Equine Veterinary Nurses
- Service Providers (Massage, body worker, Chiropractors)

A list of which stakeholders this may include will be outlined in the final document that is submitted to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). Once submitted, the final document will also be published on the Skills Impact website.

## Other Relevant Information

*ACM30817 - Certificate III in Performance Horse* and *ACM50417 - Diploma of Performance Horse Management* qualifications were released as nationally accredited qualifications in 2017 previously they were NSW accredited courses. With only minor changes and the addition of pre-requisites to equine units of competency.

Pre-requisites added to all equine units of competency without proper industry review which has been identified as creating barriers to training and inadequate overall skills in horse safety, horse behaviour, and horse welfare. Industry have identified that due to the barriers some RTO's have taken equine qualifications off scope. There is a need for more qualified service providers to ensure horse welfare.

Industry are looking for better practical skills for new employees with a stronger vocational pathway. Currently little is offered in state and territory funding for general equine job roles.



## Scope of project overview

Overall timing: 12 months from delivery of signed Activity Order  
Expected Date for Endorsement: July 2021

A timetable of key activities will be outlined in the final document that is submitted to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). Once submitted, the final document will also be published on the Skills Impact website.

## Summary of components

All work is within the ACM Training Package.

### *Qualifications*

- Review – ten qualifications
  - Update – up to six qualifications
  - Delete – up to two qualifications
- New – up to one qualification

### *Units of Competency*

- Review 38 Units of Competency
  - Update – up to 38 units of competency
  - Delete - up to 5 units of competency
- New – up to 15 units of competency

### *Skill sets*

- Update – up to three skills sets
- Delete – nil
- New – up to four new skill sets

# Project 2: Pre-Requisite Barriers To Training

## Description

The Animal Care and Management IRC proposes a review of the implementation of the pre-requisite units developed as part of the horse safety project in 2017/18. The aim of the project is to remove barriers to training and to strengthen skills in horse safety, behaviour and welfare. Following extensive industry consultation, the IRC recommends that, for more effective on-going learning, pre-requisites should be removed, with the practical components of the pre-requisites instead being embedded within the elements of the equine units of competency.

## Rationale

### Issue 1: Horse Safety, Behaviour and Welfare Skills

Respondents to the Equine Industry Survey identified horse safety, behaviour and welfare as priority skills.

They recommended:

***“Theory in relation to nutrition, monitoring signs and symptoms of illness and knowledge regarding the unpredictability of horses, how to manage their behaviours and personalities without mistreating them.”***

***“Health, nutrition and pasture management understanding is generally poor and will become more important as the rural fringe is squeezed out.”***

***“More qualified horse handlers with particular skills in equine behaviours, management, nutrition, care and breeding skills and better safe handling skills to reduce injury to horse and human.”***

***“There is overall a lack of good sound basic skills and knowledge [...] So the skills required will include:***

- ***Good horse care which is VITAL to ensure animal welfare requirements are being met.***
- ***The requirement to understand biosecurity and implementation if and when necessary.***
- ***Work Health and Safety – very much lacking in industry, getting better but still lacking. Examples of such are the recent EA eventing accidents and what could have/should have been implemented prior etc. WHS is so important now and for the future.”***

The numerous calls for more holistic horse care and management are very often motivated by concerns for welfare. This issue is discussed by Thompson and Clarkson, who suggest that “owner awareness of the interdependence of issues such as horse health with pasture management, fencing, yarding and facilities” can facilitate favourable outcomes<sup>48</sup>. Survey participants are concerned for improving overall knowledge and action surrounding such variables as equine behaviour, nutrition, biosecurity and general safety:

***“At a very basic level: horse behaviour, safety around horses, equine welfare.”***

***“Basic horse health and needs related to performance horse care and horse husbandry”***

***“Same type of quals for horse welfare, husbandry, nutrition (together), horse handling, first aid.”***

***“More understanding of facial pain markers and alternative natural holistic options”***

***“The understanding of the muscles or bio metrics of the horse should be addressed to further the students understanding of limbs, injuries and recovery”***

<sup>48</sup> K. Thompson and L. Clarkson, 2016, p.47, Issues faced by horse owners in Australia: Implications for vet-client communication, *The Australian Equine Veterinarian*, Vol 36, No 4, pps. 41-47

***“A greater understanding of the musco-skeletal system. More emphasis on proper nutrition (less reliance on processed foodstuffs). The importance of feeding relevant to training regimes.”***

***“Nutrition, Fitness, Health, Biosecurity, Business Management, Safe working methods, which leads back to the traditional horse husband”***

***“I believe the understanding of Biosecurity, safety working with horses and health and welfare are in need throughout the performance horse industry.”***

***“Infection control. Recognising swellings, signs of fatigue (long term and short term). Long term i.e. when a horse has been in work and racing for too long”***

***“Comprehensive knowledge of podiatry, nutrition, illness/disease and injury management are significantly lacking.”***

***“Qualifications in saddle fitting, in-depth understanding of anatomy. Understanding of equine behaviour. Changes to horse training to ensure it is humane. The list is very long as we are a long way behind...”***

***“In general people start horse businesses or enter the horse industry with minimal knowledge, particularly in the areas of horse behaviour, safety around horses and equine welfare.”***

***“Greater proficiency in safe horse handling management. Improved knowledge of horse welfare in a climate of increasing public scrutiny of animal welfare. Improved knowledge of environmental management, such as pasture management/erosion etc. to adapt to changing climate, altered rainfall patterns etc.”***

In 2017, following the death of a TAFE student, the Animal Care and Management IRC updated occupational skills standards to improve safety, quality and consistency in the delivery of equine training. As the focus of this project was to insert safety measures into the units of competency, a comprehensive review of all 51 relevant units was not included in its purview. An outcome of the project was to apply two units of competency, *ACMEQU202 Handle horses safely* and *ACMEQU205 Apply knowledge of horse behaviour*, as pre-requisites to many of the equine units.

Despite the good faith of all who were involved in 2017’s Safety in Equine Training project, an unintended barrier to the delivery of training has been implemented: many learners wishing to specialise in an equine field are limited in the specialist equine electives that they can choose because two of their electives must be the pre-requisite units.

## **Solution 1**

The Animal Care and Management IRC proposes that horse safety, behaviour and welfare skills become fully embedded in every practical unit of competency. This will negate the need for pre-requisite units and remove barriers to developing specialist skills and knowledge. It will also ensure the robustness and consistency of training, and will reflect the holistic approach to equine welfare that survey participants overwhelmingly demanded.

## **Issue 2: “Load and unload horses” component**

Industry engagement has established that the unit *ACMEQU202 Handle horses safely* has an element, “Load and unload horses under supervision”, that is not suitable for all work situations: many industry roles do not require that the worker load and unload horses on and off floats. Furthermore, industry also consider that the element is too high-level for an AQF level 2 unit.

## Solution 2

As the majority of *Certificate II in Horse Care* training is expected to take place at secondary school level<sup>49</sup>, the Animal Care and Management IRC deems it more appropriate to change this component to “lead horses into small or confined areas”.

Training for occupations that do require the learner to “Load and unload horses under supervision” would instead be able to utilise an imported elective unit, such as *RGRPSH202 Assist with transportation of horses* or *ACMHBR301 Transport horses*, for this specific job function.

### Ministers' Priorities Addressed

This project has an opportunity to support the minister's priorities to specifically address the following three key ministers' priorities:

#### **Obsolete and Duplicate Qualifications are Removed from the System**

This project has identified pre-requisite units that should not be separate to peoples' chosen electives but embedded within them. This removes an unintended barrier to learners' intended specialisations, ensuring the VET system is easier to navigate.

#### **The Training System Better Supports Individuals to Move More Easily Between Related Occupations**

The equine industries were extensively surveyed to support Training Package development. There was an overwhelming unanimity that equine safety, behaviour and welfare skills are fundamental to jobs in each sector, whether working with horses for racing, breeding, leisure, competition, riding schools, training or retraining. As this project proposes to embed practical elements to facilitate safety, behaviour and welfare skills, learners undertaking equine units and qualifications will be better-placed to move easily between related occupations, and industry will benefit from rising welfare standards, thus responding to public demand.

#### **Foster Greater Recognition of Skill Sets**

The project aims to identify and analyse opportunities to develop skill sets and qualification streams relevant for current and emerging job roles. This, in turn, will provide greater clarity to learners and RTOs regarding the skills that industry require for these job roles both now and into the future.

#### **More Information about Industry's Expectations of Training Delivery is Available to Training Providers to Improve their Delivery and to Consumers to Enable More Informed Choices**

This project will embed horse safety, behaviour and welfare skills within every practical unit of competency (instead of defining pre-requisite units for these skills). This will allow training delivery to address these issues holistically throughout peoples' learning, ensuring industry's calls for increased horse skills are met, and allowing students to select a broader range of specialist units as electives to progress their capabilities.

#### **Improved Efficiency of the Training System through Units that can be Owned and Used by Multiple Industry Sectors**

By embedding horse safety, behaviour and welfare skills within every practical unit of competency, other industry sectors, such as those associated with the RGR Racing and Breeding Training Package, will be able to utilise the equine units without being compelled to select the pre-requisites, thus freeing peoples' choices in order to develop more specialised skills within their industry's contexts.

### Consultation Plan

The Animal Care and Management IRC will oversee and guide consultation, identify relevant subject matter

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<sup>49</sup> As this qualification has no superseded versions and was only released at the end of 2017, NCVET statistics (which display up to 2018) have not yet registered enrolment data. Eight RTOs now have the qualification on scope; thus, the Animal Care and Management IRC await enrolment figures when NCVET release data up to the end of 2019.

experts and employers/employees.

## Scope of project overview

Overall timing: 12 months from delivery of signed Activity Order  
Expected Date for Endorsement: July 2021

A timetable of key activities will be outlined in the final document that is submitted to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). Once submitted, the final document will also be published on the Skills Impact website.

## Summary of components

All work is within the ACM Training Package.

### *Qualifications*

- Reviewed – two qualifications
  - Updated – up to two qualifications
  - Deleted - nil
- New – nil

### *Units of Competency*

Review – 14 Units of Competency

- Updating – 14 units of competency
- Deletion - up to 2 units
- New – No new units will be created

### *Skill sets*

- Updating – Up to three skills sets
- Deletion – Nil
- New – Nil