



HorsePower

Horses, health and happiness

Volunteer Induction Pack

HorsePower Australia

Introduction

Welcome to HorsePower Australia (HorsePower), we are a registered voluntary, charitable not for profit organisation that provides people with **diversabilities** opportunities that empower them to break through physical, cognitive, emotional and social barriers utilising the power of the horse to develop new skills, discover new abilities and define the life they want to live.

We are looking forward to you participating in the HorsePower Australia program. As you can imagine many elements must work in harmony in order to provide the best service possible. We need suitable horses, dedicated volunteers, trained and accredited coaches, community support and the cooperation of our participants and their families to keep our centres running smoothly. We are very thankful for the great community that is HorsePower Australia and look forward to welcoming you at one of our centres soon.

Please take the time to read this volunteer handbook as it will help to familiarise you with HorsePower Australia's policies and procedures.

We understand that you may feel nervous or uncertain as to what will be expected of you: however through this handbook we hope that you will develop a deeper understanding of what to expect and what will be expected of you as a volunteer.

Our Purpose

To empower people living with diversabilities to develop new skills, discover new abilities and define the life they want to live.

About HorsePower Australia

HorsePower Australia was founded in 1972 as the Riding for the Disabled Association of Western Australia Inc. to provide horse riding for people with disabilities throughout Western Australia. Today HorsePower Australia has 13 member centres and over 400 volunteers who help and support over 440 men, women and children with diverse abilities each year through a variety of equine-assisted activities and therapy programs.

Though HorsePower Australia began with a focus on horse riding as a form of recreation and physical therapy, the organisation and its dedicated members have since developed a range of different equine-facilitated activities for therapeutic purposes. These activities include horse riding; carriage driving; interactive vaulting, which is similar to gymnastics on horseback; walking with horses, which partners individuals with the horse in cognitive and behavioural programs. Coaches and volunteers are committed to identifying and developing more disciplines and activities that might be put to use in a therapeutic environment to benefit those with adaptive needs.

HorsePower Australia Coaches work with participants to develop new abilities and discover new skills through the power of the horse.

HorsePower programs benefit people of all ages, and abilities in a variety of ways, including increasing strength and flexibility, improving motor skills, promoting speech and cognitive reasoning and building relationships and social skills.

HorsePower Australia centres are separately incorporated allowing them to be independently managed and financed. The full list of current HorsePower Australia centres can be found on the HorsePower Australia website www.horsepower.org.au.

Centre Affiliation

In choosing to affiliate with HorsePower Australia, a Centre recognises the benefits of working together to enhance its service provision in their local community. Benefits of HorsePower Australia affiliation include:

- being able to use the HorsePower name and brand;
- centre accreditation;
- standards, training, resources and support;
- sharing ideas, good practice and feedback within the wider HorsePower community;
- state wide marketing campaigns and website;
- centralised NDIS management;

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- access to state fundraising initiatives;
- central insurance program including Public liability insurance and personal accident.

The key requirements of affiliation are to:

- obtain and maintain centre accreditation;
- comply with HorsePower Australia policy and procedure;
- complete approved training;
- utilise the HorsePower Australia brand guidelines;
- sign Centre affiliation agreement;
- pay all associated affiliation fees.

Centres are primarily staffed by Volunteers, with some centres employing paid Coaches and/or managers. Positions vary according to the needs and resources of individual centres.

Centre Governance

Centres are governed by an elected Committee ultimately responsible and accountable for everything to do with their Centre. These responsibilities and accountabilities can be broadly summarised as follows:

- To focus everyone on using the horse to achieve successful participant outcomes.
- To uphold the centre's rules.
- To meet the requirements of HorsePower Australia affiliation.
- To implement a strategy and plan to secure the long term success of the centre.
- To keep up-to-date books and records including meeting government body requirements.

The Committee will usually include a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

HorsePower Australia Governance

The HorsePower Australia Council is responsible for the governance of HorsePower Australia, an incorporated registered charity in WA responsible for leading the HorsePower movement within the state. The Council comprises elected Executive Committee Members and representatives of each centre. The members of council are elected by the Centres. The primary responsibility of the Council is to develop and implement a Strategic Plan. The day to day operational management of HorsePower Australia is delegated to the Executive Committee and Executive Officer. The Council meets quarterly and as and when required.

The Annual General Meeting is held in December.

The State Office together with the State Executive and Coaching & Safety Committee provide the following services.

- **Setting relevant and appropriate standards for HorsePower Australia centres and HorsePower specific roles.**
 - *Through issuing policy and procedure to ensure the safety and effectiveness of HorsePower Australia programmes.*
- **Provide training and resources for Centres to meet the standards.**
 - *State, regional and in-Centre Training is available*
- **TackShed is the primary repository for HorsePower Australia resources.**
- Accreditation of people and Centres against the standards;
 - *This includes Coaching and centre accreditations.*
- **Support to Centres to meet standards, maintain their affiliation status and run operations effectively.**
 - *This includes support from the State Office and the Coaching & Safety Committee.*

The State Office also manages the HorsePower Australia brand guidelines and fundraises to support the cost of providing the above services to Centres as well as providing some direct funding to centres for their operations.

The State Coaching and Safety Committee comprises of sub-committees each reporting to the Coaching & Safety Committee Chair who reports to the Executive Committee and Council. The specialist discipline sub-committees are as follows:

- Dressage
- Hippotherapy
- Vaulting
- Walking with Horses
- Carriage Driving

We rely greatly on the generosity of the WA community to provide support and donations that helps us provide therapeutic goal-based activities for children, youth and adults with diversabilities.

HorsePower Australia

Our Horses



Matching Participant and Horse

The care and wellbeing of participants and horses are of the utmost importance to HorsePower Australia. We strive to provide the best care we can for our horses. One aspect of this is the consideration we give to the amount of weight we ask our horses to carry. It is not just the weight of an individual participant that we take into account, but other factors such as the age, fitness, soundness, and conformation of the horse. Factors including whether a rider has unsteady balance, sits crookedly, or has low muscle tone must be taken into account, as all these things can cause a rider to be harder for the horse to carry.



HorsePower Australia horses are specially selected for temperament and conformation, and specifically trained to work with people who have physical, intellectual, emotional and social challenges. Each horse undergoes specific training before they are accredited to be used in the HorsePower Australia program.

The enjoyment of working with horses is an integral part of our programs. Most sessions involve basic instruction in horse management. This encourages participants to respect and be considerate of other beings, and motivates them to participate. It is also possible that a participant may be offered a program that concentrates solely on unmounted activities with our horses.

HorsePower Australia Coaches continually monitor the suitability of a horse and participant combination and there may come a time when a participant must cease riding a particular horse. We will endeavor to find a suitable replacement but, unfortunately, this cannot be guaranteed as there are many issues involved with selecting a suitable horse for individual participants. Where a suitable horse cannot be found, a participant may be required to exit our riding program.

HorsePower Australia

Our Programs

HorsePower Australia member centres provide opportunities for individuals to enjoy stimulating, therapeutic, educational and recreational programs, utilising the horse in a safe environment. Our coaches and volunteers are all specially trained in how to assist individuals to achieve the most from their session in a safe and fun manner.

Our equine facilitated programs are provided by specially trained and accredited coaches, volunteers and horses. Their training provides them with expertise in specialised, adaptive teaching methods which allow people with physical, intellectual, emotional and social challenges the opportunity to learn horsemanship skills and experience the equine environment.

Sessions are approximately 1 hour and including mounting and dismounting but this can vary depending on the needs of the individuals and the number of volunteers available on the day. Sessions can include but are not limited to teaching equestrian skills, fitness exercises, horse care, team building and life skills.

The simple pleasure of working with horses is the basis of our programs, which are designed to complement conventional therapies and education through the freedom of movement, gaining confidence, creating friendships and achieving individual outcomes and goals.

Research shows that there are significant therapeutic benefits for individuals who participate in horse riding programs, the rhythm and three dimensional movement of the horse is transferred through the rider's body, helping to make it more relaxed and supple, strengthening core stability, reducing spasms and improving balance, posture and co-ordination.

HorsePower Australia member centres welcome people of all ages and abilities, who may be referred in a variety of ways, including from a health professional, a teacher, caregiver or friend of the family.

Equine facilitated programs are of great benefit to people with physical, intellectual, emotional and social challenges. There are however some instances where our programs are contraindicated (not recommended). To ensure the health and needs of the individual are put first, medical advice

is sought prior to commencement in our programs.

HorsePower Australia provides support personnel to assist participant learning and development and to provide a safe and supportive environment.

HorsePower Australia volunteers are specially trained in assisting people with physical, intellectual, emotional and social challenges. We provide up to three specialised volunteers per participant to assist during programs i.e. a 'horse leader' and up to two 'side walkers'.

The number of support personnel is determined when the participant is assessed by our accredited coaches. This is a risk assessment based on the support needs of the individual and determines the appropriate level of support the participant requires in order to minimise risk to the participant's safety.

Once a participant submits an expression of interest in our programs an assessment session is organised at their local HorsePower centre.

Horse Riding

HorsePower Australia riding programs focus upon performing specific movements whilst riding the



horse. Structured programs conducted under the instruction of accredited HorsePower Australia coaches with the assistance of specially trained volunteers and horses provides individuals with a range of challenging tasks and exercises designed to develop both physical, emotional and social abilities.

HorsePower Australia

Our Programs

The therapeutic benefits of horse riding are numerous and as well as the physical benefits such as improved posture and balance, exercising with a horse is great fun! Horse riding can also improve communication, confidence and decision making abilities as well as provide the opportunity to engage with a community of like minded people.

HorsePower Australia offers a number of pathways for people with disabilities who wish to try something a little more challenging and compete in the sporting arena. These include opportunities to become involved in Para-equestrian and Special Olympics programs.



Interactive Vaulting

Interactive vaulting is an activity in which participants perform various physical movements on and around a horse. These movements can be very simple, such as sitting astride without holding onto a surcingle, or a more elaborate vaulting position, such as kneeling or standing on the horse.

Emphasis is placed on particular movements and compulsories, foundational gymnastic movements performed in a series, depending on the individual strengths and needs of the vaulter(s). Interactive vaulting sessions are designed to foster group interaction between the vaulters, instructor and Horse.

Interactive vaulting is an integrated team activity that promotes teamwork, improves balance, stability, motor skills, flexibility, teaches respect for the horse, supports independence, encourages

confidence and social interaction, offers individualised instruction while mounted and introduces all gaits in a short period of time. HorsePower Australia offers opportunities for participants to compete at a state level and provides pathways to National and International competition.

Interactive vaulting is taught by HorsePower Australia Accredited Interactive Vaulting Coaches.

Hippotherapy (Equine facilitated Therapy)



Despite first impressions this program does not involve the hippopotamus. “Hippo” is the Greek word for horse therefore Hippotherapy is treatment or therapy aided by a horse. Hippotherapy is carried out by specially trained physical, occupational and speech therapists who work with HorsePower Australia coaches and volunteers to use the movement of the horse to influence the participant.

Hippotherapy is the medical application of the horse in therapy. The movement of the horse makes hippotherapy unique in comparison to other equine facilitated programs. The horse’s unique multi-dimensional walk transfers variable, repetitive and rhythmic movement to the participant, which provides sensory input to the brain and nervous system. The resultant responses in the participant are similar to the human movement patterns of the pelvis while walking. During a session the therapist, working in conjunction with a HorsePower Australia horse handler, can analyse and adapt this movement to provide increased challenges for the participant.

HorsePower Australia

Our Programs

The horse provides a dynamic base of support, making it an excellent tool for therapy, increasing core strength, control, balance, and posture which can all lead to the development of fine motor skills and bilateral co-ordination.

Hippotherapy is a one-on-one hands on intervention program where the therapist works with the participant and the horse to achieve functional outcomes. The sessions are a form of enjoyable therapy where the interaction with the horse often motivates the participant to actively participate in their treatment. The HorsePower setting is an ideal place to achieve therapeutic goals.

Carriage Driving

HorsePower Australia Carriage Driving Coaches can



offer participants with physical, cognitive, sensory or emotional disabilities the rewards of interaction and partnership with a horse or pony while driving from a carriage or cart seat or in a vehicle modified to accommodate their wheelchair.

Driving can provide participants with an alternative to riding, opening up the world of horses to those who may be unable to ride. It can also provide the individual with an entirely new form of partnership with a horse.

As well as participating in a fun activity Carriage Drivers can also benefit from the fantastic therapeutic benefits of the program including improved coordination, muscle power and balance.

Walking with Horses



Walking with horses is an unmounted health and wellbeing program that provides people with varying abilities the opportunity to spend some time with the horse.

Something transformative happens when you spend time with a horse. The walking with horses program uses interaction with horses to promote positive life skills, teamwork, confidence and fitness.

Horses are majestic, gentle creatures and as participants bond with them they learn valuable lessons about respect, empathy and communication that assist them in living the life they want.

Participants interact with horses with the help of specially trained volunteers. Through practices like bathing, grooming and caring for the horse, participants can explore their own feelings, behaviours and interactions with others.

Benefits of the Walking with Horses program include:

- increased sense of responsibility and self-confidence;
- better communication, decision-making and problem-solving skills;
- better ability to express feelings, needs, hopes and desires;
- increased connection to self and others;
- better understanding of teamwork and community;
- increased trust and respect in relationships.

HorsePower Australia

Our Participants



Participants may be referred to HorsePower by teachers, doctors, therapists, other health professionals, caregivers, parent or other participants. In all cases there is a defined process that must be followed prior to commence in HorsePower programmes. Most importantly, the relevant medical background needs to be known for the safety of both participant and the Centre, to ensure no harm comes to anyone and that appropriate participant goals are set. The wider support team will need to know some of this information to be effective in supporting the participant to achieve their goals - it is important this information is shared on a need to know basis and otherwise kept confidential.

HorsePower programmes benefit children, youth and adults with a diverse range of needs including but not limited to:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Cerebral Palsy, Cystic Fibrosis, C.V.A (stroke).
- Developmental Delay, Down Syndrome
- Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability
- Hearing and Visual Impairments
- Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy

- Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury (Para/Incomplete Tetraplegia)
- ADHD
- Anxiety, depression, bi-polar and other mental health problems

HorsePower Programmes can develop, increase and improve

Physical ability

- Muscle tone, balance, coordination
- Muscle strength, flexibility, fitness
- Posture, gait, ability to walk
- Respiration, circulation, metabolism
- Sensory perception and integration
- Independence, self-care and mobility

Psychological ability

- Concentration, problem-solving and decision making
- Insight, motivation, self-worth, confidence
- Learning/practising concepts e.g. letters, numbers, colours, distances, shapes, body parts, etc.

HorsePower Australia

Our Participants



Social skills

- Communication
- Learning appropriate behaviours and manners
- Interaction with peers, individuals and groups
- Human to animal contact and building relationships
- Consideration for others and taking on responsibility

Sport and Active Recreation

- Develop interests
- Challenge and success in competition with self and others
- Stimulation or relaxation
- Integration into a community activity

The participant's individual goals will be determined and documented by the Coach and/or Therapist based on information from the medical practitioner, school, parent, etc. They also decide on the appropriate support team who will work with the participant and ensure the team understands their specific needs. At the end of each session, notes are made for each participant to keep an important record of their progress. participants goals are set at

the beginning of their programme and updated when required.

Working with people with disabilities

- Be yourself. Relate to a person with a disability the same way you relate to other people.
- Use conversation and social behavior that you might use in any new situation.
- Allow the person with a disability to be themselves. With or without disabilities, each of us is a unique individual.
- Appreciate what a person with a disability can do. Once you get to know them, their interests and their ability may surprise you
- Remember that the difficulties the person may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barriers rather than from the disability itself.
- Explore mutual interest in a friendly way. Talk about their disability if it comes up naturally, but don't pry.

Our Participants

People First Language



- People with disabilities
- Rider with Down syndrome
- Participant with autism spectrum disorder
- Child with Cerebral Palsy
- Person who uses a wheelchair

People First Language



- Disabled people, handicapped people
- Down syndrome rider
- Autistic participant
- CP child
- Person confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound person.

- Develop a friendship by showing an interest in the person, not their disability. Most people prefer to have someone ask them about their disability rather than receiving stares.
- Be patient. Let the person with the disability set the pace for walking, talking and other activities.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take to accomplish something or respond to something.
- Do not separate a person with a disability from a wheelchair, crutches or other aids unless they ask. These aids may need to be nearby.
- Offer encouragement but not pity. The person with the disability should be treated as an equal in all things. Give them a chance

- Respect a person's independence. They may prefer to do things for themselves. Wait until help is needed or requested. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist upon helping when they are managing alone.
- Have fun. You will be developing a friendship with a person from whom you may learn a great deal about life and how to live it.

People First Language

When discussing individuals with disabilities, you should make a commitment to use People First Language. This use of words shows respect for people with disabilities and adaptive needs and reflects their dignity as individuals who live with disabilities, not people defined by their diagnoses.

HorsePower Australia

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers come in all different shapes and sizes, large groups or individuals. Wherever your interest we have a volunteer opportunity for you. We welcome your willingness to help our diverse community achieve their hopes and dreams while being a part of something special. No matter what your skills or abilities, we can put them to very good use at HorsePower.

Individuals aged 12 years and older are welcome to join our volunteer teams. In fact, volunteers up to the age of 90 can come on board. Just remember that if you are volunteering in an arena support role i.e. leading or side-walking it can be quite physically demanding, so let us know if you have any limitations. If you are unable to assist in the area there are other job categories designed to give individuals an opportunity to make use of their personal skills.

The amount of time you commit is up to you, however we ask if you are volunteering in an arena support role such as leading or side-walking that you please commit to these sessions for a minimum of a term (10 Weeks). It is important to provide consistency for our participants.

If you have any questions please direct them to the Executive Officer, local centre Volunteer Coordinator or staff member so we can assist you to determine the role that best suits your needs. Volunteer opportunities include:

State and Centre Committees - role can be virtual (work from home) with meetings usually held once a month.



Our committees are led by volunteers and are an integral mechanism for HorsePower Australia's continued success. As such we depend upon our volunteers to contribute in any way they can in order to ensure that these committees run as

smoothly and effectively as possible. Please read the descriptions closely to see where you may be of the most help,

- **Promotions and Fundraising** Members of this committee help promote the benefits of HorsePower by reaching out to the local community and businesses for support. They assist with the development of newsletters and management of our online presence i.e. social media. They are passionate about the organisation and want to share the benefits of our programs to all.
- **Executive/Management** Members assist with the strategic, governance and day to day operational aspects of providing our services. Individuals use their business knowledge, skills and connections to develop the programs offered to the community and ensure good governance and best practices are followed. Individuals can nominate for office bearer positions such as; President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or they can become a general/individual member. Please refer to our Constitution for more details on nominating for the Executive/Management Committee, a copy of which is available via the ACNC <https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity> or by asking a member of our staff.

Administration Support - Hours can be flexible and role can be virtual (work from home)

Administrative support is an integral aspect of HorsePower Australia providing the help needed to function day-to-day. Volunteers in this role help with duties such as:

- answering phones and general enquiries;
- data Entry and Database Maintenance, coordinating promotional materials i.e. newsletters, photos, video;
- managing online presence i.e. social media;
- drafting correspondence;
- preparing documents for meetings;

Arena Support

Providing support to our participants during program sessions is what we do therefore volunteers in this role are integral to our service delivery. Volunteers in arena support roles assist participants to actively participate during their sessions. These roles include:

HorsePower Australia

Volunteer Opportunities

- Leading a horse
- Sidewalking
- Coach support - assisting with arena set up prior and during sessions.
- Padock care and maintenance
- Feeding
- Maintaining tack and horse equipment
- Grooming
- Preparing horses for sessions

Previous horse experience is welcomed but not required as on the job training will be provided.

Facilities Maintenance



Fundraising

Raising funds is important for the day-to-day operations of HorsePower. Fees from participants for services delivered covers approximately 40% of our operational costs. Individuals in this role are passionate about our programs and the benefits they offer people with diversabilities. They harness this passion to spread the word about our programs and raise funds to help care for our horses and keep participants in the saddle. Volunteers in this role assist with:

- **Special Events**
 - Pony Rides
 - Sausage Sizzles
 - Open days
 - HorsePower Australia Night at the Races
- **Grant Writing**
- **Fundraising Campaigns**
 - Back a Real Winner (Melbourne Cup)
 - Help our Horses
 - Giftmas
 - Hearts & Horses
- **Containers for Change**

Horse Welfare Teams

The care and welfare of our equine friends is paramount, without these wonderful animals we would not be able to offer the programs that we do. Individuals in these roles assist with the health and maintenance of our herd including:

The safety of all involved in our programs is important, therefore we need to ensure all our facilities are safe environments. Individuals in these roles assist with maintaining our facilities including:

- Fixing fences
- Mowing grassed areas
- Grading arenas
- Removing fallen trees & debris
- Cleaning gutters
- Fixing water troughs etc.
- Creating new props for programs i.e. games equipment
- Maintaining vehicles

What to wear

Please wear:

- appropriate clothing for weather and safety. Most HorsePower activities occur outdoors during the day;
- plenty of sunscreen and insect repellent when necessary
- well-fitting hats (so they don't blow off).
- closed, flat, comfortable footwear. Elastic sided or lace up work/hiking boots are ideal.

HorsePower Australia

The Arena Support Team

What to expect during a session

The Coach and volunteers may work with a group or individual participant in an enclosed arena or safe accredited space to teach the participants a variety of skills including how to ride, care for the horse and tack up. Participants may play games in the arena, learn dressage, go for a trail ride, learn how to drive a carriage, vaulting techniques or work with a therapist to achieve their goals. Each participant has individual goals that they are working towards.



A team of individuals is needed to provide quality equine-assisted activities. Each member of the team has a role to play in ensuring safety and a positive experience for everyone involved.

The Coach, leader, side-walker and horse work as a team to support the participant to achieve their goals.

- The Coach plans the programme, organises the sessions and leads the session that works towards achieving the participant's goals. All volunteers follow the directions of the Coach in charge.

- In the case of our Hippotherapy program the Therapist works with the Coach advising on therapeutic goals and strategies for participant's, along with any precautions indicated.
- The leader is responsible for controlling the horse when the Participant is not able to and takes full control of the horse in the event of an emergency.
- Side-walkers ensure the participant's safety at all times whilst encouraging and enabling independence. The Sidewalker also assists the Participant in carrying out the Coach's directions by repeating the instructions, guiding the Participant or focussing the Participants attention on the task they are performing when necessary.
- The horse and the way we are able to use their abilities is our chosen method of achieving participant outcomes. Ideal HorsePower horses are hard to find – not all are suited to this specialised work. A lot of time and care goes into their selection and welfare. Education and training is needed to ensure they can be correctly matched to participants and respond to both leader and participant aids. Suitable training programmes are developed for each horse to ensure they are at a fitness level suitable for their work. All training and welfare is documented to keep an accurate record of each horse's individual needs.

Key Responsibilities

All volunteers are required to:

- Undertake relevant volunteer induction, orientation and training including reading this Volunteer Induction Package and other relevant documentation.
- Complete the NDIS Worker Orientation Module 'Quality, Safety and You'. <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/workers/training-course>
- Be safety conscious at all times; taking care of self and others.
- Understand and follow HorsePower Australia and Centre Policy and Procedures. Ignorance of these policies and procedures does not constitute an excuse. If you do not understand

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The Arena Support Team

these policies and procedures please see the volunteer coordinator or Coach in charge for further assistance.

- Maintain and respect Participant confidentiality.
- Attend at agreed times and notify in advance when unable to attend.
- Effectively communicate with other members of the team.

Communication

Volunteers need to feel confident in the tasks they are being asked to perform, and to achieve this, effective communication is vital. Some basic communication tips that will help are



- Our participants are individual people first and foremost.
- Participants may use non-verbal methods of communication due to hearing or speech difficulties. Talk to participants even if they can't verbalise a response. Listen and try to understand their form of communication when they speak to you. Give the person time to respond;
- Speak directly to participants, not through their carer/support worker. Talk to and treat participants in a way that is appropriate to their physical age.

- Be yourself in conversation and encourage eye contact.
- Allow Participants to attempt things for themselves.
- Keep directions simple and explicit, and tasks short and achievable.
- Showing rather than telling is often more effective.
- Be generous with quality praise.
- Be consistent with language and terminology.
- consult both coach and participant about the way they prefer to perform a task.
- Communicate with the other members of the HorsePower team and talk to the Coach in charge if you have a problem or concern.
- use physical contact only when it is appropriate to the activity they are involved in. For example, holding a participant's leg as support during mounting. If you need to adjust a participant's leg in the stirrup during a lesson, you should tell them that you are about to do so.
- use Hi-5's and shaking hands as forms of greetings and congratulations. Hugging and kissing are a form of affection reserved for family members and should be discouraged in the HorsePower setting;

Please don't

- assume a rider can't hear or understand you.
- move a rider suddenly or force a limb which is stiff as this can cause muscle strain.
- take any images of participants without permission and written consent from a parent/guardian. Please refer to their photo permission preferences on file.

HorsePower Australia

Important Policies & Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance is vital to our program. We ask that an Arena Support volunteer commit to a full term (10 weeks). In the event that you must be absent, please contact the session coach or volunteer coordinator as soon as possible so a substitute can be organised. Upon arrival at the centre please ensure you sign in and remember to sign out before you leave.

Punctuality

Volunteers should arrive at least 30 minutes before the session is due to start. Those assisting with horses should arrive 45 minutes before to assist with grooming and tacking up. If you are running late please contact the coach or volunteer coordinate to advise.

Worker Screening

Complete a Successful Worker Screening Check (NDIS Workers Screening or National Police Clearance and Working with Children Check).

Personal Records and Administration

The task of handling personal records and related administration functions at HorsePower is assigned to the centre secretary and/or administration assistant. Personal files will be kept confidential at all times and details only provided to those that require them as part of their role within HorsePower. These records include some of the following documents:

- emergency medical Information
- volunteer and participant registration forms.
- signed documents including liability waiver, and photo release.

All personal records are kept in a secure location.

Change of Personal Details

Any change in a volunteer's name, address, telephone number, emergency contact, needs to be reported in writing without delay to the Volunteer Coordinator or Secretary to ensure uninterrupted communication.

Code of Conduct

It is mandatory that everyone complies with all posted safety rules and abides by all posted off-limit areas. HorsePower Australia centres are no smoking facilities.

No mistreatment, abuse, or suggested abuse of any person or animal will be tolerated. HorsePower Australia and its member centres reserves the right to ask anyone to leave the premises.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by public liability and personal accident insurance when they:

- have completed, signed and submitted a HorsePower Volunteer Application form;
- signed the volunteer attendance register/book at their HorsePower centre;
- are participating in approved HorsePower activities and are following HorsePower policies and procedures;
- working with accredited HorsePower horses,
- are under the supervision of a qualified HorsePower coach

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

HorsePower Australia and its member centres do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion or disability. HorsePower Australia and its member centres does not, and will not, tolerate any type of harassment of our employees, participants, their families, or our volunteers.

Feedback, complaints and disputes

HorsePower Australia and its member centres are open to suggestions for improvement. The goal is to help every participant have a meaningful experience with the horse to facilitate independence, community participation and life skills

If a volunteer wishes to give HorsePower Australia or its member centres feedback, they can talk to a member of their centre committee. Alternatively they can contact the Executive Officer of HorsePower Australia on 0499 606 238 or at Kelly.mansfield@horsepower.org.au.

If a volunteer is not satisfied with their experience at HorsePower or has a grievance they can talk to their nominated centre grievance officer, details of which should be available at their member centre. If they do not want to talk to this person or feel their grievance is not being resolved, the participant can contact HorsePower Australia's Grievance Officer, Jane Danzi on 0411 625 642 or Jane.danzi@horsepower.org.au.

HorsePower Australia

Important Policies & Procedures

More information about HorsePower Australia's Grievance procedure can be found online in our constitution which you can download from the ACNC website <https://www.acnc.gov.au/>.

Return of HorsePower property

Any HorsePower property issued to volunteers, such as computers, keys, mobile phones must be returned to HorsePower at the time of termination. Volunteers will be responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Volunteer Dismissal

In the event of misconduct by a volunteer, the volunteer's direct supervisor will counsel the volunteer in order to provide the opportunity for corrective action. A written record of any actions or suggestions will be maintained.

Conditions that may lead to dismissal:

- Failure to comply with HorsePower Policies & Procedures.
- Repeated violation of safety rules including smoking on the property.
- Use of, or under the influence of, drugs and alcohol on the property
- Disruptive or inappropriate behavior, theft, or violence
- Threat of violence or mistreatment to any person or animal

Social Media

HorsePower recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics that help promote the work we do in the community. We ask that individuals follow our social media policy and:

- Protect privacy rights/obtain permission of those shown or mentioned
- Do not speak on behalf of HorsePower Australia, or its affiliated member centres unless permitted to do so
- Do not bring the HorsePower name into disrepute
- Do not set up any social media accounts on behalf of HorsePower Australia or its member Centres without prior authorisation from relevant executive/management committees.

Personal Property

HorsePower centres maintain a lost and found system, if you are looking for a lost item please

contact the centres office or coach in charge. HorsePower assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal property.

Workplace Occupational Safety and Health

Everyone has a right to be safe at work, including volunteers. Volunteers must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to ensure they don't adversely affect the health and safety of others.

In Western Australia, occupational safety and health in the workplace (referred to as OSH) is regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 WA and the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 (WA) (WA OSH Laws).

What should you do as a Volunteer?

The organisation you volunteer for must make sure you are as safe as possible while you are volunteering, but as a volunteer you must:

- take reasonable care for your own health and safety
- take reasonable care to ensure you don't affect the health and safety of others
- carry out your tasks in a safe way
- follow the Coach in charge instructions. They are responsible and accountable for overall health and safety during HorsePower sessions.
- co-operate with the reasonable policies and procedures of the organisation you volunteer for that relate to work health and safety.
- don't undertake work that you consider is unsafe.

Manual Handling

Repetitive strain to your back or shoulders can be a painful and debilitating injury so always:

- Use correct physical handling techniques.
- Get help with moving heavy objects or use equipment e.g. trolley.
- Regularly straighten back and lean backwards to stretch.
- Stop the activity (e.g. sidewalking) if you need to rest or change positions.

Safe Horse Handling

The centre will provide training and the opportunity for volunteers to become familiar with the centre's horses, to ensure safety when volunteers interact with horses.

HorsePower Australia

Important Policies & Procedures

Safe Use of machinery and farm equipment

Some centres use machinery. Special training and approval will be given to nominated volunteers to use these pieces of equipment. More information regarding safety issues can be found at Farmsafe Australia <https://www.farmsafe.org.au/>

Sun Safe

Volunteers are exposed to all types of weather and it is important to be protected from wind, rain and sun at all times. Exposure to the sun and heat pose serious risks to health. Volunteers should manage their risk and are strongly recommended to follow the Cancer Council's Sun Smart steps <https://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/reduce-your-risk/be-sunsmart.html>

When working outside on a sunny day

- Wear sunscreen and hat
- Drink plenty of water
- Sun-glasses can hamper effective communication in some instances so avoid wearing them if you can.

Inclement Weather Conditions

Inclement weather can make working conditions unpleasant for horse, participants and volunteers.

- The Coach in charge will determine if the session should be stopped if conditions become too difficult or dangerous.
- All our affiliated centres have different facilities available to them with some having undercover arenas, therefore each centre has its own inclement weather policy, please check with them for details of this policy.

Fatigue

Fatigue reduces concentration and alertness so take regular rest breaks and/or rotate jobs, ensuring adequate fluid intake during the day

Electric fences

Treat all fences as "live" unless known as otherwise.

Carrying hand tools

- Be aware of the results of a slip.
- All hand tools are to be carried in a way that they can be thrown clear in the event of a fall.

Handling hazardous substances

- Chemicals must be handled with great care. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Correct protective clothing and equipment must be used when handling hazardous materials.
- Specific training may be required before using chemicals for pasture management.

Dealing with minor injuries

- Get a registered First Aider (all coaches are first aid trained) or if you are a registered First Aider apply first aid yourself.
- Advise the Coach in charge and support completion of the Incident Report Form.
- The Coach in charge will then complete any further requirements including advising the carer/support worker in the case of a participant.

Dealing with serious injuries

If you are staying with the patient, get others to do these things immediately

- Call 000.
- Get a registered First Aider and Coach in charge if not you
- Ensure the access way is clear for the Ambulance, watch out for it and direct it to the scene.
- Do not leave the injured person alone unless it is essential to get help.
- Do not move the injured person unless it is essential to prevent further injury.
- Keep the injured person warm.
- Once the injured person is being cared for, support completion of the Incident Report form, ***ensuring it is sent to HorsePower Australia within 12hrs of the incident as HorsePower Australia in turn have to report the incident to the NDIS within 24hrs.***
- The Coach in charge will then complete any further requirements including advising the emergency contact for the patient.

Health & Safety definitions

- **Hazard** an actual or potential cause or source of harm to any person.
- **Incident** an event resulting in, or having a potential for harm to a person, or damage or other loss to anything else e.g. horses, property. Incidents include accidents and near misses.
- **Near miss** a situation or incident where harm did not occur, but could potentially have done so.

HorsePower Australia

Important Policies & Procedures

Hazard, risk and incident management are critical to making HorsePower safe.

- The analysis of incidents and near misses are useful for showing up a pattern that could help avoid future trouble. For example, it could show a certain horse, situation or person is involved in a number of incidents, giving a starting point for trouble shooting or training.
- Volunteers have a key role to play in hazard, risk and incident management.
- The Committee is responsible for ensuring all relevant lessons are learnt and important changes made.

Hazard reporting. If you notice a hazard;

- Eliminate it if you can e.g. water spilt on the floor can be removed immediately thus eliminating the risk of somebody slipping and hurting themselves.
- If you can't eliminate it, report it to the Coach in charge or Risk Management Officer and support an entry on the Centre Risk Register.

Safe use of Communication Devices

Using mobile communication devices while engaging in horse related activities can cause distraction which may lead to adverse reactions, awareness and incidents. Volunteers are encouraged to manage this risk and not use their phone in the arena unless in an emergency.

Emergency Dismounts

As part of your volunteer training, your centres will go through and practise the steps involved in an emergency dismount.

General Safety

Volunteers should know:

- where the human and equine First Aid kits are located;
- who is trained to administer first aid;
- where the list of emergency contact numbers is located;

Illness & Communicable Diseases

PLEASE STAY HOME if you have:

- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Cold, flu symptoms and/or severe, persistent cough
- Oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Temperature should be normal for 48 hours before attending lessons

- A contagious or exposed skin rash
- A communicable disease such as head lice, strep throat, chickenpox, etc.

Smoking

- No smoking of any kind is permitted inside any buildings, arenas or stalls.
- Smoking may take place only in designated smoking areas.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

HorsePower Australia is firmly committed to a policy against the use of illegal drugs or alcohol. In keeping with this commitment, HorsePower strictly prohibits the use, transfer, possession, distribution, sale or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while

- on HorsePower premises (whether or not on duty),
- operating a vehicle owned or leased by HorsePower, or borrowed from one of their employees.

This policy will not be construed to prohibit the use of alcohol at social or business functions. However, volunteers must remember their obligation to conduct themselves properly at all times while representing HorsePower. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Health Related Issues

Volunteers who become aware of any health-related issue should notify HorsePower of their health status as soon as possible.

HorsePower Australia

Where to from here

The Volunteer Coordinator or other person designated by the Committee will support your ongoing training.

Since starting at HorsePower, you will have completed your induction and orientation. This included;

- Site Orientation
- Health and Safety Orientation
- Volunteer Orientation
- All other relevant information and training to enable you to participate safely from day 1.

You have now read this Volunteer Handbook and associated materials. Your future training depends on where your HorsePower career goes. All staff and volunteers are expected to participate in training for their own and participants safety and delivery of outcomes so at a minimum you will complete annual refresher training for your role.

Further opportunities for training include; attending Centre workshops to develop further skills in e.g. Leading, Sidewalking, Manual Handling, Mounting/ Dismounting. There are also opportunities to attend HorsePower Australia state training workshops which includes sessions along with discussion on matters of significance to all Centres, participants and volunteers. Obtaining First Aid certification through a recognised provider is also useful.

We encourage and support all our volunteers in taking their volunteering to the level that they desire. We offer continuing education to our volunteers so that they may become certified HorsePower Australia coaches.

HorsePower Australia is eternally grateful for the effort and time volunteer commit to this organisation. Without your help HorsePower would cease to exist.

HorsePower Australia

Love what we do? Please help support this unique service for the future benefit of people with diversabilities.

Donations

HorsePower Australia and its member centres gratefully accepts donations. There are many ways to help. Some ideas are listed below.

Ways to help:

- Sponsor a rider by contributing to the Hearts & Horses Scholarship Fund
- Sponsor a horse/pony where you can feed or care for the needs of a HorsePower horse through a monthly, yearly, or a one-time donation.
- Make a donation in memory or honor of a special person, pet or horse.
- Become a partner. There are many opportunities for you or your company
- to partner with HorsePower Australia. Contact us on 0499 606 238 to find out more information.
- Check if the company or corporation you work for matches donations. This is a great way to double your donation to HorsePower Australia or a member centre.
- HorsePower Wish List. It doesn't matter what season it is, HorsePower member centres are always in need of items; be it for humans or horses! With approximately 125 horses, 450 + participants, 500 volunteers, arena and facilities to maintain the list just seems to grow. Please contact HorsePower Australia or your local member centre for more information.

Leave a lasting gift in your will

A legacy donation could mean so much to the next generation, providing support for them to develop their strength, muscle tone and confidence to realise their full potential and dreams for a better tomorrow.

Making a legacy donation to charity is not a decision to rush. You may choose to provide HorsePower Australia with one of the following bequests in your Will:

- **Residual bequest:** A percentage or whole of what is left of your estate after you have provided for your loved ones.
- **Pecuniary bequest:** A fixed sum of money.
- **Specific bequest:** A particular item which can

be sold to support the organisation i.e. shares, real estate, art etc.

If you do wish to include a bequest to HorsePower Australia please let us know . We want to make sure you are happy with that decision and that you are kept up to date with what we are doing in the local community.

Fundraising

Because HorsePower Australia's sessions fees do not cover the expenses of the program, various fundraisers are conducted each year by HorsePower Australia and its member centres.

Some events include:

- **HorsePower Australia's Night at the Races Gala Dinner.**
The evening is a unique event filled with fun and activities such as the Barrier Draw, Mystery Wine Sales, Sweepstakes, Bookies, Live & Silent Auctions, delicious three course meal, drinks, a testimonial speaker sharing their personal experience of the magic of horses, a highly entertaining MC and much, much more.

There are a variety of sponsorship packages on offer, giving you the opportunity to become a part of Night at the Races, which can assist in establishing and maintaining your company's reputation as a socially responsible corporate citizen.
- **Back a Real Winner - Melbourne Cup Campaign**
You can help create winning photo finishes when you choose to support HorsePower's therapeutic programs by hosting a fundraiser on the day that stops the nation.

Information about HorsePower Australia or member centres events will be available throughout the year. Each event is a lot of fun and a great way to meet people involved in the HorsePower Australia community.

You can stay up to date with everything that is happening by liking and following us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HorsePowerAus>



HorsePower

Horses, health and happiness

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