



EQUESTRIAN SPORTS
NEW ZEALAND

Strengthen & Adapt
2023 roadshow
summary report and
where to now...
January 2024

Connecting the equestrian system
for a horse and human centred
future



Background to Strengthen & Adapt



The NZ Strengthen & Adapt project is a government response to COVID-19 to provide sports organisations and networks with the opportunity to strengthen their capability and capacity, post-pandemic, and create a better future for those who take part. It has been rolled out across New Zealand to cover many sport codes including Equestrian sports.

In recognition that the Equestrian landscape is very broad in New Zealand, there are a huge number of New Zealanders connecting with horses at some stage in their lives and the lucky ones getting to explore the sport further. The aim was to consult with as many people as possible, both non-members and members of Equestrian Sports New Zealand.

Phase One of Strengthen & Adapt included a survey in September 2022, with 1,600 responses.

Phase Two included 22 in-person consultation workshops (our roadshows), and 2 online workshops.

Phase One identified a series of themes that our Equestrian Community wished us to ‘keep’, ‘stop’ and ‘start’.

Phase One: Keep, Stop, Start Themes



KEEP

- provision of competitions and events
- encouraging participation for all
- listening to and communicating with participants
- providing services and support to members and organisations
- providing training & education
- promoting horse welfare

STOP

- raising costs
- not addressing the poor culture and behaviours
- organisational inefficiency or ineffectiveness
- over-complicating rules
- enabling elitism
- condoning bad behaviours that affect horse welfare

START

- create approaches that support grassroots participation
- design membership & competition fee approaches that provide value for money
- make competition offerings & pathways more inclusive of all levels
- be more inclusive & supportive of diversity
- provide education offerings & pathways
- develop user-friendly information-sharing tools
- foster a healthy equestrian community culture

Roadshow Methodology



During Phase Two, our workshops connected with 336 people across 21 locations and two online sessions. Workshops were held in the following locations: Northland, Auckland (Albany and Clevedon), Waikato (Taupō and Cambridge), Bay of Plenty (Tauranga), Hawkes Bay (Waipukurau and Havelock), Gisborne, Wellington (Otaki and Hutt Valley), Taranaki (New Plymouth and Hawera), Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury, Southland (Gore and Dunedin), Greymouth.

Workshops provided the opportunity for an independently facilitated conversation and were hosted by Michelle Hollands, Freshminds Consultancy Limited. We were deliberate in our decision to employ the services of an independent consultant to ensure that any unconscious bias by our internal team was removed, providing for the opportunity to hear the voices of our community and truly listen to their feedback.

All workshops followed the same format including establishment of personas, regional rankings, key themes (celebrations and challenges) and ideas/concepts for the future.

The following slides summarise the common celebrations and challenges that were voiced across the regions of NZ.

Celebrations



Across our workshops participants were asked to list the things they celebrate about delivery in the environment in which they participate and compete. Key themes identified included:

- **Community** - Strong sense of community, inclusive and friendly
- **Collaboration** - Evidence of working together to support and welcome riders of all disciplines and all capabilities
- **Events** - Access to quality events of all disciplines for all riding levels, multi-discipline events supporting community engagements, many options for other equestrian competitions (some areas - especially those with facilities), affordable opportunities to compete, year round events within a reasonable and affordable driving distance, events at all heights and all levels
- **Pony Clubs** – are good in the area and play an important role in nurturing young riders, a growing number of ribbon days and opportunities for young riders
- **Cost** - is considered to ensure entry fees and event participation is affordable
- **Volunteers** - a strong and enthusiastic group of volunteers, large committees that are willing to work together
- **Support for Riders** - there is availability of good education and skill development for riders through clinics, pony clubs, riding groups, and various coaching opportunities, opportunities for riders to have access to horses (e.g. for RDA transition), provision of pathways and support, opportunities for education and development
- **Membership** – grassroots option to encourage joining
- **Coaches** - encouragement for upper-level coaches to visit the area, access to quality instructors and coaches, support for coaches wishing to develop their skills
- **Facilities** - diverse range of safe riding environments available, multi-discipline hubs support multi-discipline events
- **Horse Welfare** - a positive emphasis on horse welfare
- **Culture** - encouraging and supportive, learning from one another as newcomers join the sport
- **Funding and grants** – support participation and provision of events
- **Connections** - exist with schools to extend invitations to young people who are interested in equestrian sports.

Challenges



In addition to the celebrations, participants identified the following key challenge themes, in many cases the celebrations (where one region or discipline celebrated success) were the same as the challenges another faced:

- **Events** - limited one day events, conflicting schedules and a need for better coordination, limited Show Jumping heights, management becoming increasingly difficult especially increasingly Health and Safety, limited access to recreational riding opportunities, lack of access to year-round events (some areas), need to improve administration efficiency of event management - ESNZ support, cost of delivery
- **Facilities** - limited all-weather appropriate surfaces for adverse weather (some areas), limited parking in some areas, lack of access/variety of access to bridleways, beaches and roadsides, safe access - especially roadside, lack of visible national advocacy for access, need to strengthen connection to cycling and walking for trails
- **Coaching** - limited access to quality coaches (especially performance coaches) in some areas, lack of pathway/career options for coaching profession
- **Culture** - sometimes negative and uninviting, anxiety and fear or lack of confidence a challenge for new riders, not always a sense of community belonging
- **Volunteers and Officials** - burn out - especially with event frequency, ageing workforce, lack of volunteers, fear for volunteers of getting it wrong
- **Riders** - horse availability - for adults and children who are not owners, rules and regulations are complicated, safety requirements are increasing costs, lack of adult riding clubs/groups (some areas), lack of clear pathway (some areas), a need to bridge the gap between Pony Club and ESNZ competitions, support for youth and new riders
- **Communications** - limited marketing and celebration of athletes and a lack of positive storytelling / communications, need to share the benefits of horse related activities for wellbeing and health
- **Professionals** - shortage of skilled professionals for equine sports (especially smaller remote areas), shortage of farriers, physio's, saddle fitters, vets etc.
- **Cost/Funding** - increasing cost of fuel - distance to travel, hard to access funding - time consuming sponsorship and grant applications for little return, cost of entry and membership, increasing cost of equipment and gear, cost of living
- **Membership and Registration System** – complicated, expensive
- **Rules** – complex, difficult to find/understand
- **Lack of Collaboration** - need for disciplines to work together, lack of network for sharing ideas across areas
- **Public Perceptions** - impact of sport not always seen as positive for the horse (right to ride), seen as elitist and for the wealthy

Delivering Change



Ideas and concepts identified to support change have been grouped into three themes. These themes have a number of possible actions or initiatives that will need further definition and prioritisation by the Equestrian community and ESNZ Management and Board:

One Equestrian Voice :

Initiatives to improve leadership structures, connections and presence

- Establishment of a cross discipline national leadership group to :
 - Assess the potential to bring Equestrian sports together and the options to improve existing structures.
 - Improve collaboration between ESNZ and NZPCA
 - Advocate for and support important concepts:
 - Social licence ‘right to ride’ and animal welfare
 - Facilities – access and quality of all facilities (multi-use, indoor arena’s, bridleways, roadside riding),
 - Funding and Sponsorship – establishment of models to support local applications and initiatives that enable community funding; guidance and national training programmes/workshops to support local sponsorship/funding success
 - Cost reduction initiatives (joint procurement) – insurance, first aid, health and safety
- Regional establishment of cross-discipline committees to:
 - Share knowledge and resources and deliver multi-discipline events
 - Advocate for important regional and local concepts including facility development, safe access to riding spaces, funding and sponsorship

Delivering Change



Supporting Riders to Ride

Initiatives to enable participation, competition and access to quality riding experiences

- Review of Membership model with a focus on – simplification, flexibility and value. Options include:
 - First year free, membership holidays, multi-discipline membership, discounted event entry models (enter 4 get the 5th free), rural membership, student discount, increase to the adult age (18 years), national approach to flexi starts, community membership (not competitive riders)
- Delivery of Events that enhance the opportunity to ride. Options include:
 - Multi-discipline events calendar
 - Improved event entry software and support line for entry
 - Lower heights (including cross country)
 - Fun and introductory activities – "give it a go" days
 - Adult and child events - family-based day out
 - Recreational riding events and activities (lower heights, less competitive)
- Review of the Rules – assessment of rules 'adding value' or 'adding cost/complexity'
- Development of a Rider Resource: Introductory handbook for new riders (all disciplines):
 - Simplify entry requirements
 - Overview of rules
 - Online workshops on how events run
- Sharing Riding Resources and the creation of platforms to enable this conversation (i.e. social media):
 - Connecting riders with horses (for those who do not have a horse)
 - Pay it forward or second-hand equipment sale

Delivering Change



Strengthening the System

- Promoting positive attitudes/inclusive culture: Change The Rein plus other concepts
- Nationally Coordinated Volunteer Support including:
 - Succession planning
 - Recruitment resources (job descriptions)
 - Training programmes
 - Celebration and recognition of volunteers
- Coach Development – establishment and delivery of national training and resourcing including:
 - Coach Qualifications
 - Mentoring
 - Coach Development
 - Coaching clinics parallel to Riding clinics
- Rider Development:
 - National Certificate in Equine Care
 - Pathway provision and delivery of planned national/regional/local rider development programmes – RDA to Para, Grassroots to ESNZ
 - Coordinated Coaching Clinic Calendar (ensuring availability of quality coaches nationwide)
- Website Improvement:
 - Contacts Database
 - Multi-discipline Events Calendar – regional and national to avoid clashes
- Officials Development – establishment and delivery of a national training programme and pathway
- Establishment of a Course Builder Network – to share knowledge and plan for events
- Establishment of an Allied Health Service Network – to create sufficient provision, share contacts and plan health events
- Event Management Guide / Handbook – to enable quality events and ease the load on volunteers
- Communications Network – to share knowledge, learnings, grow professionalism of all communications
- Social Licence Communications Programme

The Questionnaire



In order to understand where we should prioritise our focus and resources, we collated the 'voice' themes from our Roadshows into a questionnaire that was distributed to our Roadshow participants, ESNZ & Discipline boards, and made available to our membership in late 2023.

The questionnaire was delivered under the three themes as outlined in prior slides :

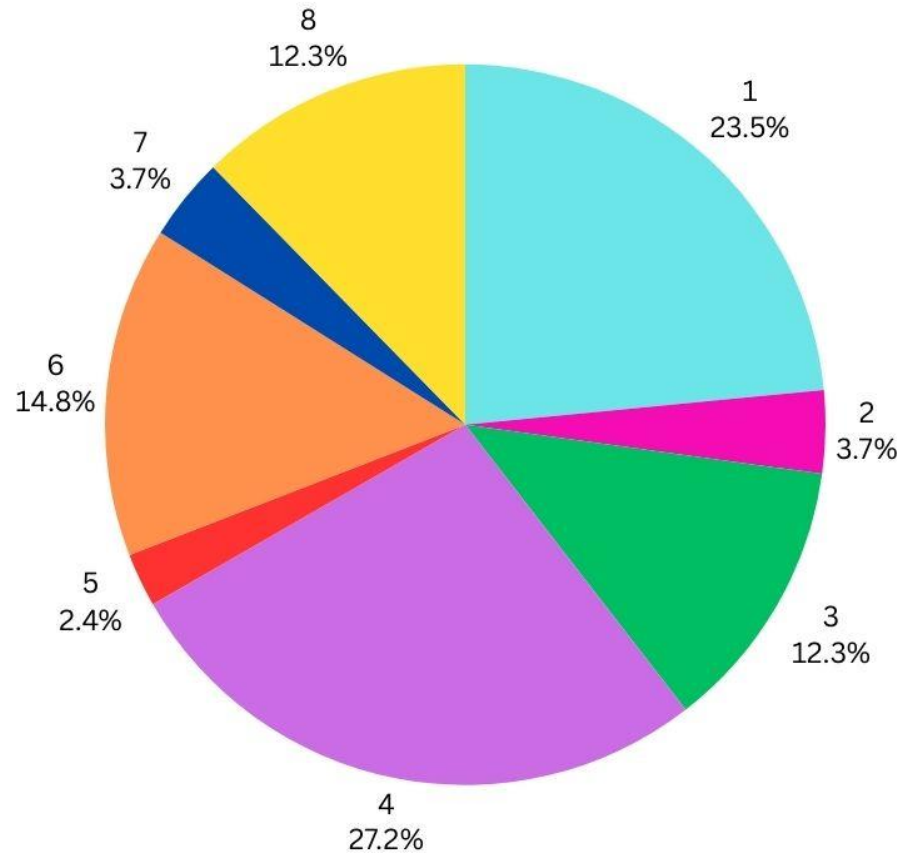
- One Equestrian Voice
- Supporting Riders to Ride
- Strengthening the System

Participants, ESNZ & Discipline boards and members views have been considered in determining the outcomes for the project for the remaining term.

The results of these views have been graphed on the following slides under each theme. The results have been analysed in terms of the 'top priority' and the 'overall most popular' areas of work under each theme.

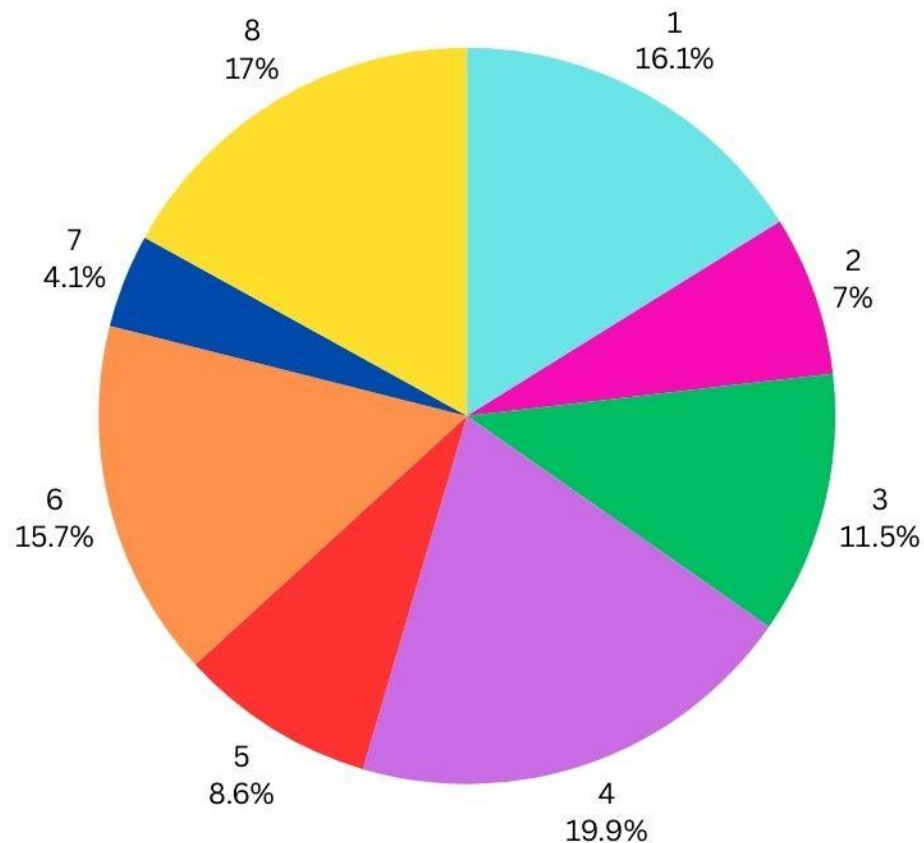


One Equestrian Voice – Top priorities



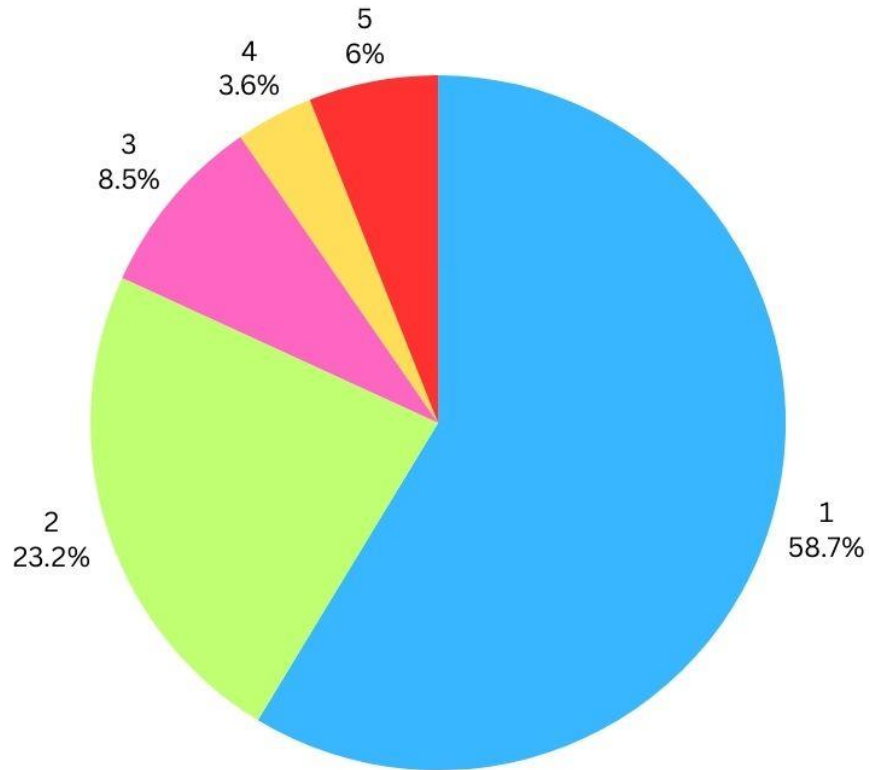
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2. Establishment of a cross discipline national leadership group to: Improve collaboration between ESNZ and Pony Club
3. Advocate for and support important concepts: Social licence 'right to ride' and animal welfare.
4. Advocate for and support important concepts: Facilities – access and quality of all facilities (multi-use, indoor arenas, bridleways, roadside riding).
5. Advocate for and support important concepts: Funding and Sponsorship – establishment of models to support local applications and initiatives that enable community funding; guidance and national training programmes/workshops to support local sponsorship/funding success
6. Advocate for and support important concepts: Cost reduction initiatives (joint procurement) – insurance, first aid, health and safety
7. Initiatives to improve leadership structures, connections and presence [Regional establishment of cross-discipline committees to: Share knowledge and resources and deliver multi-discipline events]
8. Regional establishment of cross-discipline committees to share knowledge and resources and deliver multi-discipline events: Advocate for important regional and local concepts including facility development, safe access to riding spaces, funding and sponsorship

One Equestrian Voice – Overall most popular



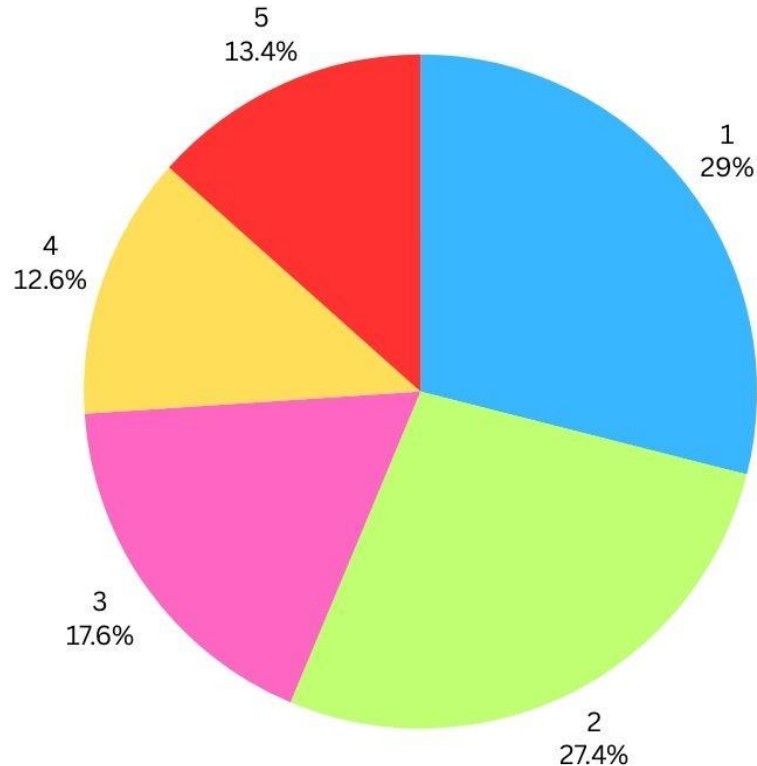
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Supporting Riders – Top Priorities



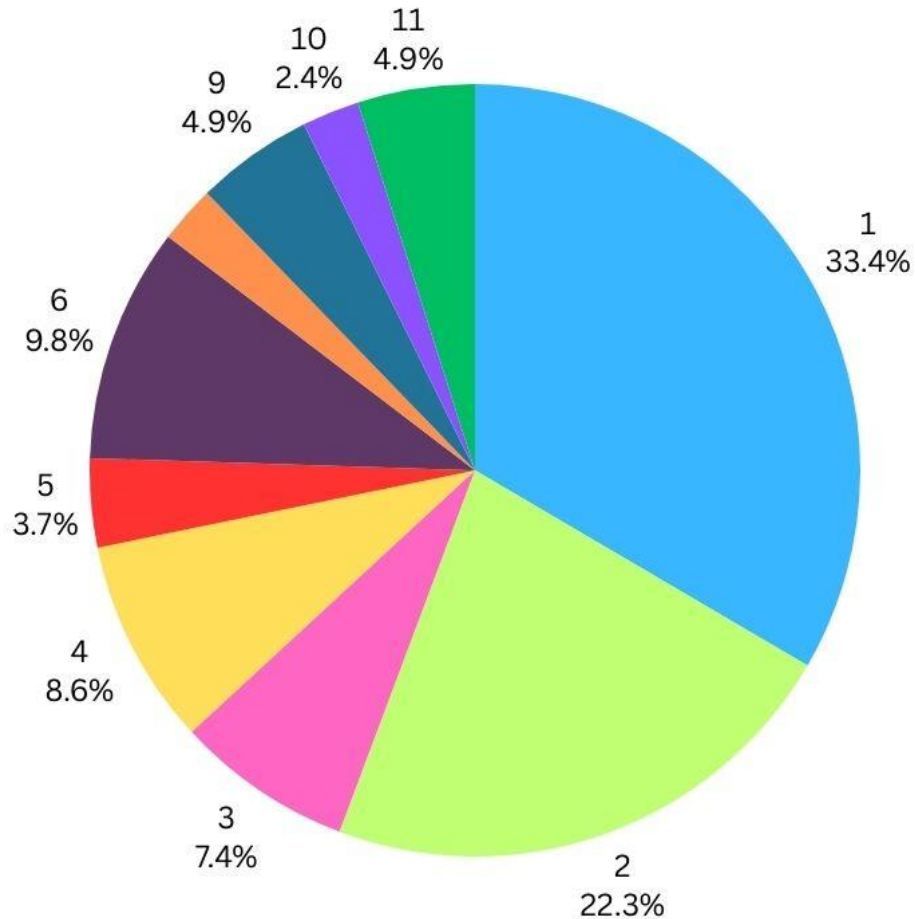
1. Review of Membership Model with a focus on – simplification, flexibility and value. Options could include e.g. a national approach to flexi starts, a community membership for non-competitive riders
2. Delivery of Events that enhance the opportunity to ride. Options could include e.g. Multi discipline events calendar, recreational riding events and activities (lower heights, less competitive)
3. Review of the Rules – assessment of rules ‘adding value’ or ‘adding cost/complexity’
4. Development of a Rider Resource: Introductory handbook for new riders (all disciplines)
5. Sharing Riding Resources and the creation of platforms to enable this conversation. Options could include e.g. connecting riders with horses (for those who do not have a horse, pay it forward or second hand equipment sale)

Supporting Riders – Overall most popular



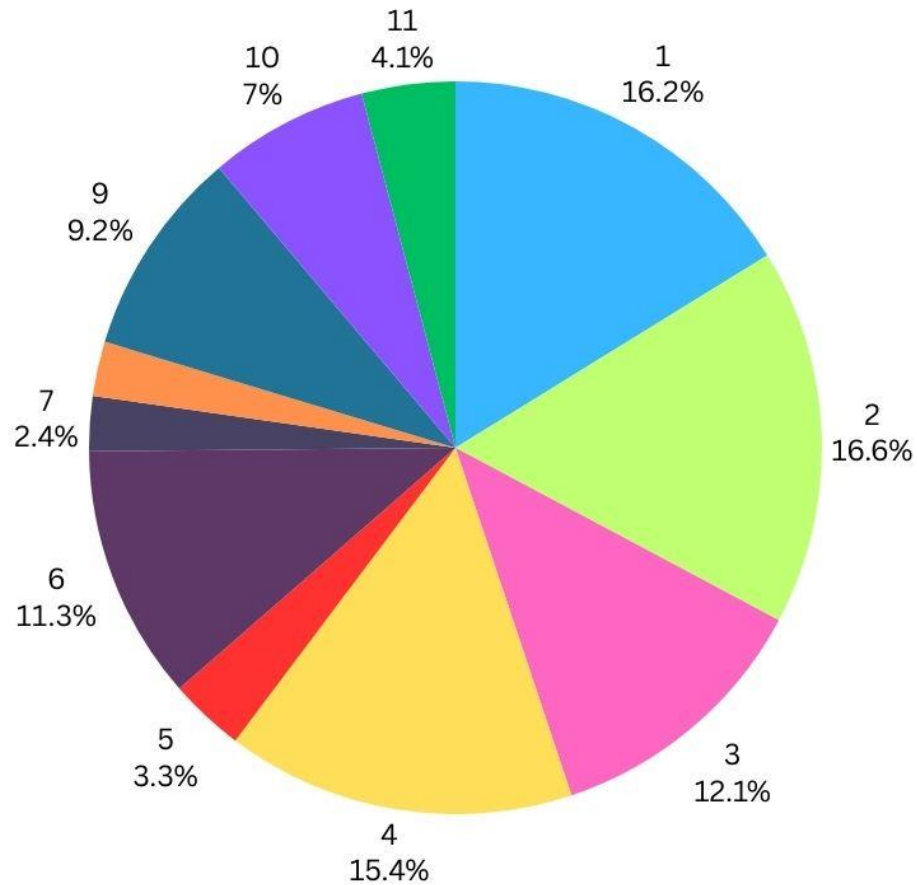
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Strengthening System– Top Priorities



1. Promoting positive attitudes/inclusive culture: Change the Rein plus other concepts
2. Coordinated Volunteer Support e.g. Succession planning, recruitment resources (job descriptions), training programs, celebration and recognition of volunteers
3. Coach Development – establishment and delivery of national training and resourcing which could include e.g. coaching qualifications or mentoring
4. Rider Development e.g. National certificate in equine care, pathway provision and delivery of planned national/regional/local rider development program – RDA to Para, Grassroots to ESNZ
5. Website Development & Improvement
6. Officials Development – establishment and delivery of a national training program and pathway
7. Establishment of a Course Builder Network – to share knowledge and plan for events
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11. Social Licence Communications Program

Strengthening System– Overall most popular



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Questionnaire outcomes



One Equestrian Voice

1. Advocate for and support important concepts: Facilities – access and quality of all facilities (multi-use, indoor arenas, bridleways, roadside riding)
2. Establishment of a cross discipline national leadership group to: Assess the potential to bring Equestrian sports together and the options to improve existing structures

Supporting Riders to Ride

1. Review of Membership Model with a focus on – simplification, flexibility, and value. Options could include e.g. a national approach to flexi starts, a community membership for non-competitive riders
2. Delivery of Events that enhance the opportunity to ride. Options could include e.g. Multi discipline events calendar, recreational riding events and activities (lower heights, less competitive)

Strengthening the System

1. Promoting positive attitudes/inclusive culture: Change the Rein plus other concepts
2. Coordinated Volunteer Support e.g. succession planning, recruitment resources (job descriptions), training programs, celebration and recognition of volunteers

Proposed direction 2024 - 25



One Equestrian Voice – Focus	Action
<p>Advocate for and support important concepts: Facilities – access and quality of all facilities (multi-use, indoor arena’s, bridleways, roadside riding).</p>	<p>With an existing Facilities review being undertaken, we will connect into this work and help guide and shape it to support this identified priority. Facilities review currently in action – continued work in this space for 2024.</p>
<p>Establishment of a cross discipline national & regional leadership groups to: Assess the potential to bring Equestrian Sports together and the options to improve existing structures.</p>	<p>Bring Discipline Boards together to explore how we can work more effectively together and ensure a culture that supports the “One Voice” identified priority. Regional Connectivity and collaboration – work with an identified regional collective of equine organisations in partnership with councils and Regional Sport Trust to ‘test and learn’ what a regional “One Voice” can do to drive quality equine experiences and competitions.</p>

Proposed direction 2024 - 25



Supporting Rider to Ride – Focus	Action
<p>Review of Membership Model with a focus on – simplification, flexibility, and value. Options could include e.g. a national approach to flexi starts, a community membership for non-competitive riders.</p>	<p>2024 planning to action a first step change e.g. more flexible membership options or payment methods.</p> <p>Longer term 2025 planning to investigate options for a multi-tiered membership model. Potential for a variety of membership options to better serve a variety of riders from recreational to competitive to elite. Potential for varying benefits across different membership options.</p>
<p>Delivery of Events that enhance the opportunity to ride. Options could include e.g. Multi discipline events calendar, recreational riding events and activities (lower heights, less competitive).</p>	<p>Pilot a multi discipline event, modelled on Interschools but aimed at adults / recreational / grassroots riders.</p>

Proposed direction 2024 - 25



Strengthening the System – Focus	Action
Promoting positive attitudes/inclusive culture: Change the Rein plus other concepts.	Support and further develop CTR campaign. Investigate potential for building and encouraging positive attitudes and culture through positive role models and recognition schemes.
Coordinated Volunteer Support e.g. succession planning, recruitment resources (job descriptions), training programs, celebration and recognition of volunteers.	Development of a volunteer pathway and training system as a pilot. Model developed encouraging volunteers of all ages to train and take on roles.

**“To quote Winston Churchill,
*‘There is something about the
outside of a horse that is good
for the inside of a man’*”**

