

**NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL WELFARE (NCCAW)  
STANDARDS FOR THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF RODEO LIVESTOCK  
10 June 2006**

**PART 1 - INTRODUCTION**

**Preface**

The National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) is a national body whose role it is to provide advice to the Australian Government and assess animal welfare issues. Its membership is made up of representatives from a cross section of government, animal industry and community organisations.

This document is the NCCAW recommended national standard for the management and control of rodeos. It has been developed following extensive consultation with the major rodeo associations. All states and territories should adopt the contents of this document when developing rodeo standards.

**Acknowledgment**

The NCCAW would like to thank the Australian Professional Rodeo Association for its help and support with the development of these Standards and the provision of its Code of Conduct for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock on which these standards are largely based. NCCAW would also like to acknowledge the support and advice of the National Rodeo Council of Australia, the Australian Bushmen's Campdraft and Rodeo Association and other Rodeo Associations who contributed to the development of these Standards.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of these NCCAW Standards is to set minimum requirements for the care and welfare of rodeo livestock and to establish benchmarks for effective co-regulation between industry and animal welfare agencies to facilitate regulation and to ensure the welfare of animals at all rodeos in Australia.

The Standards define the responsibilities of all personnel involved in conducting rodeos in their respective roles.

**General Principles**

Proper consideration must be given to the health and welfare of animals used in rodeos. Events and procedures in rodeos should be specifically designed to prevent cruelty and minimise the impacts on the welfare of the animals used. Furthermore, people who have responsibilities in the organisation and running of rodeos must have appropriate training to ensure that the animal welfare needs are met.

All people associated with rodeo animals must comply with prevention of cruelty legislation and adhere to the national, Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals. These NCCAW Rodeo Standards are designed to address issues that specifically arise with rodeos and are complementary to legislation and national Codes of Practice.

Rodeo Associations should have written rules that are based on and consistent with these Standards. Such rules should be specifically designed to prevent cruelty and

minimise the risk of injury to livestock. Associations should monitor compliance with the Standards and enforce them as required.

Associations should have in place formal accreditation programs for Rodeo Organisers and Stock Contractors based on the Standards and actively promote them to all those involved in running rodeos.

If other animal events, not covered these Standards, are run in conjunction with a rodeo, then further standards should be established by the organising bodies, which takes into account the welfare of those animals.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of these Standards are to:

- Protect the welfare of livestock in rodeos;
- Ensure that rodeo personnel are aware of their responsibilities as outlined in these Standards;
- Provide guidelines and standards for arena conditions, yard and chute design;
- establish criteria for rodeo participants and staff in the handling and care of livestock; and
- Provide a basis for monitoring the welfare of animals at rodeos.

### **Definitions**

Throughout this document, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions apply:

#### **Rodeo**

For the purposes of these Standards, a rodeo is a competition using cattle and/or horses which includes one or more of the following events:

- Saddle Bronc Riding;
- Bareback Bronc Riding;
- Bull Riding;
- Steer Riding;
- Roping and Tying;
- Steer Wrestling;
- Team Roping.

It is not acceptable to use animals other than cattle and horses in a rodeo. Maturity, weight and size of animals is specified for some events.

#### **Rodeo Association**

An incorporated association established for the purpose of coordinating and assisting in the running of rodeos and/or governing the sport

#### **Rodeo Organiser**

A natural person who instigates and promotes the rodeo. If a committee undertakes these tasks, one of the committee must be designated to take on the responsibilities of the Rodeo Organiser under these Standards.

#### **Judge**

The judge appointed to officiate at a rodeo.

#### **Stock Contractor**

A person who provides livestock for rodeo events.

### **Livestock Supervisor**

The person who assumes the responsibilities of the stock contractor if animals are not sourced from a stock contractor.

### **Veterinarian**

A veterinary surgeon appointed by the Rodeo Organiser who must be registered in the state or territory of Australia in which the rodeo is held.

### **Competitor**

A competitor in a rodeo event

## **PART 2 - RESPONSIBILITIES OF RODEO PERSONNEL**

### **Policy Statement**

Animals used in rodeos must be treated humanely.

States and territories are encouraged to license rodeos within their jurisdictions to encourage compliance with and adequate monitoring of these standards.

The Stock Contractor, Judges, Veterinarians and competitors must have a high level of knowledge of these Standards and must ensure the welfare of animals used in rodeos within their areas of responsibility. They also must comply with relevant animal protection legislation.

### **Rodeo Organiser's Responsibilities**

The Rodeo Organiser is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all equipment owned by the club or association or individual organising the rodeo complies with the requirements of these standards
- Appointing the Stock Contractor and ensuring that he/she is competent to undertake his/her duties;
- Appointing a competent Livestock Supervisor (if there is no Stock Contractor) to undertake the duties of the Stock Contractor;
- Appointing judges, clowns and pick up teams (this responsibility may be delegated to the stock contractor);
- For appointing the Veterinarian (note that the stock contractor is required to do this in some states). In those jurisdictions where veterinary attendance is not mandatory and where the rodeo is being held in a remote area, the Rodeo Organiser must make reasonable attempts to secure the services of a veterinarian;
- For ensuring that the Veterinarian inspects all animals used in a competition prior to the commencement of the rodeo and each animal after it is utilised on the program;
- Ensuring that all personnel appointed are aware of their responsibilities under these Standards; and
- The provision of a rodeo report to the Judge, Stock Contractor and Veterinarian for completion.

*\* If a veterinarian is not in attendance, the Rodeo Organiser must appoint a person who is experienced and competent in assessing and dealing with health and welfare problems of*

*cattle and horses, including having the knowledge and means to undertake safe and humane euthanasia, to assume the responsibilities of the Veterinarian as outlined in this standard. The Rodeo Organiser must make prior arrangements for this person to be able to contact a veterinarian for advice and direction should it be required. In the case where a veterinarian cannot attend and a Rodeo Organiser has appointed a person to act in this position, then that person assumes the duties and responsibilities of the Veterinarian.*

### **Stock Contractor's Responsibilities**

The Stock Contractor is responsible for the welfare and appropriate husbandry and handling of all rodeo livestock except when animals are competing in the arena (where the Judge and competitors are responsible). Rodeo Associations are encouraged to accredit Stock Contractors to ensure that they have the required knowledge of the standards and the skills to comply with them.

The Stock Contractor must ensure that:

- The welfare requirements of livestock en-route to and from the rodeo are met;
- Transport and handling of animals is undertaken in accordance with the relevant Model and State Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals, and legislation, including the provision of appropriate food, water and shelter;
- All animals supplied are in good health and all animals used in any event conform to the specifications of these Standards;
- Yards, chutes and the arena surface are inspected prior to the rodeo and comply with these Standards;
- Only properly qualified and competent personnel are appointed to care for, handle and treat rodeo livestock;
- No stimulant, hypnotic or other substance is used on any animal which is to take part, other than that prescribed by a veterinarian for the legitimate treatment of injury or illness;
- Unsuitable animals are withdrawn from competition;
- If the Veterinarian determines that an animal is not suitable for competition that the animal is not used;
- Cattle and horses are penned separately in the yards and during transport.
- Aggressive and injured animals are isolated from others and animals with young at foot are not yarded or used in connection with a rodeo;
- Proper treatment for any injury is given promptly and, if required, veterinary assistance obtained;
- The requirements of these Standards are met outside the arena, namely in chutes, yards, surrounding areas and, if aware of non-compliance by other personnel, advise the Judge;
- All stock handlers used are competent to undertake their duties in compliance with these Standards; and
- Require that an animal be turned out of the chute if of the opinion that the risk is unacceptable. The Judge may order the stock contractor to release an animal.
- Contribute to the report of the event

### **Livestock Supervisor**

If appointed, a Livestock Supervisor must have the same level of knowledge and competence expected of a Stock Contractor and assume all the duties and responsibilities of the Stock Contractor as outlined in these Standards.

### **Judge's Responsibilities**

Judges have responsibility for animals which are competing in the arena. They should have a thorough knowledge of these Standards and must ensure that:

- Any competitor who breaches these Standards in the arena is penalised or reported as appropriate;
- Any animal which becomes lame, sick, injured or has defective eyesight during the competition is removed from the competition and direct the person in charge of the animal to seek appropriate treatment for the animal;
- Inspections are performed on all competition equipment and ensuring that the manner in which the equipment is set or used on the animal complies in all respects with these Standards;
- A report is provided to the State/Territory authority for animal welfare within 21 days of the rodeo being held. The report should detail the date and location of the rodeo, the names, addresses and contact details of the Rodeo Organiser, the Stock Contractor, the Judge and the attending Veterinarian. The report should also detail the number and type of events and the number of animals used, the number, types, and severity of any animal injuries or breaches of these Standards and corrective actions taken;
- Appropriate action is taken against personnel who fail to comply with these Standards and rodeo rules.

### **Competitors' Responsibilities**

A competitor in a rodeo event is responsible for the animals he or she uses during that event. All competitors must:

- Not treat animals in a way which causes injury or harm;
- Only use equipment complying with these standards;
- Obtain prompt and proper treatment for any injury to any of the animals they use in the competition (other than animals supplied by the contractor); and
- Comply with all relevant sections of these Standards.

### **Veterinarian's responsibilities**

The Veterinarian is responsible for:

- Providing expert advice on the health, injury or disease status on an animal and its suitability for competition. The Veterinarian has the final say on this;
- Inspecting animals before and after events;
- Dealing with emergencies;
- Being present during all events (if required by the jurisdiction); and
- Contributing to the report of the event;

The Veterinarian must have the necessary experience with cattle and horses to deal with the health and injury issues that might arise in a rodeo.

## **PART 3 - RULES FOR THE CARE OF LIVESTOCK**

### **Sick and Injured Animals**

- The Stock Contractor is responsible for ensuring that no sore, lame, sick or injured animal, nor an animal with defective eyesight is permitted in the draw. In the absence of a Veterinarian, the Stock Contractor assumes this responsibility.
- Should an animal become sick or injured between the time it is drawn and the time it is scheduled to be used, that animal must not be used.
- Sick or injured animals must be given appropriate treatment.

### **Veterinary Attendance**

A Veterinarian is the most appropriate person to look after the animal welfare issues. It is expected that a Veterinarian should be on site at all times to handle animal emergencies and to inspect all animals prior to and after competition. In some jurisdictions the attendance of a Veterinarian is mandatory.

The decision of the Veterinarian as to the suitability of an animal for competition shall be final.

### **Response to Serious Stock Injuries**

- A conveyance must be available to remove a seriously injured animal to a suitable place for further examination and treatment. If an animal is to be euthanased, this must be done humanely.
- A seriously injured animal must be yarded such that it is not endangered by other livestock, housed in an appropriate manner, and be examined and treated immediately by the Veterinarian.
- A means to euthanase seriously injured animals and a person licensed and qualified to use the means must be available at all times while the rodeo is in progress. Livestock must be euthanased in accordance with the national Model and State Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals for the species concerned and legislation.

### **Injury Prevention**

- Chutes, yards, lanes and races must be designed, constructed and maintained in a manner which minimises the risk of injury to handlers or animals and facilitates the quiet and efficient handling of stock.
- An animal that repeatedly gets down in the chute; repeatedly tries to jump out of the chute; or becomes excessively excited must be released and examined by the Veterinarian and, if found to be unfit for any reason, must be withdrawn from participation for that day or session.
- Appropriately trained people and suitable equipment should be available to humanely assist an animal should it become caught in the chutes, yards or races and to make any repairs necessary to ensure that the facilities meet the required standard.

### **General Safety and Welfare Provisions**

- Livestock must be removed from the arena promptly after completion of the individual entry.
- No small animal or pet will be allowed in the arena or in the line of sight of livestock without the consent of the Judges. Note that the presence of small animals or pets in the arena is prohibited in legislation in some States.

Livestock must not be directly exposed to fireworks that are likely to cause them fear or distress. The use of fireworks is legislated in some States.

## **PART 4 - EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

### **Rodeo Livestock Handling Equipment**

- All livestock must be treated humanely and handling equipment must not be used cruelly or excessively.

- Equipment for livestock handling must be of the type and specification generally used for the transport and handling of horses and cattle and must comply with the national Model and State Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals for the species concerned and legislation.

## **Electric Prods**

Electric prods may be used subject to the following conditions:

- They must be of low amperage powered by dry cell batteries only;
- Be of a type and standard used generally for the handling, yarding and transport of livestock;
- Used with restraint and restricted to the minimum amount necessary as an aid for loading and handling livestock (including to encourage an animal that is down leaning heavily against the chute to reposition); and
- Applied only to those parts of the animal covered by hair.

In time events electric prods must **not** be used:

- If an animal is loaded and standing in the time event chute/box; or
- To send an animal into the arena when the chute/box gate is opened.

In riding events electric prods must **not** be used:

- when the animal is secured in the chute (except in the circumstances above); or
- when the chute gate opens;

unless it is necessary to protect both the animal and the contestant from possible injury against the chute or chute gate or to turn out a chute stalling animal. In such cases the electric prod may only be applied to the shoulder or hindquarters of an animal to clear it from the chute and by, or under the direct supervision of, the Stock Contractor.

**Under no circumstances may an electric prod be used in the arena.**

## **Handling Aids**

The use of aids which encourage movement **in response to sound** such as flappers, metallic rattles and light polythene tubing is acceptable to encourage movement and for handling animals in yards, lanes and races. The use of aids which can be used to strike or poke animals with sufficient force to cause pain or injury are not permitted. This would include sticks, lengths of heavy plastic, metal piping, fencing wire or heavy leather belts.

## **Event Equipment**

Event equipment is used to facilitate the event and in doing this should be designed to ensure that the animal is not injured. The suitability of equipment is the responsibility of the person who owns or supplies the equipment used.

Equipment must conform in all respects to the specifications below.

## **Spurs**

Spurs are used to help the rider's timing and purchase on the animal in bucking stock events and should not be used as a goad. To reduce possible injury to the animal, the spur rowel must be dulled and not less than three millimetres in width at its narrowest part; there must be a minimum diameter of 2 cm to the point of the rowel.

- For bucking horse events the rowels must be free running.

- For bull riding the rowels may have restricted movement but must not be fully locked (they must be able to move at least a quarter turn).

### **Flank Straps**

Flank straps are used to improve the animal's bucking style. Only lined, quick release flank straps can be used. The lining must be soft and flexible such as a soft plastic, felt or sheepskin. The lined portion of the flank strap must be positioned in such a way that it covers both flanks and the belly of the animal. The coverings and linings of flank straps must be soft and flexible and must not be hard, brittle, worn or damaged. Sharp or cutting objects must not be used in a flank strap.

### **Protective Horn Wraps**

Horn wraps must be used in team roping to protect the ears, eyes and base of horns from possible injury.

### **Neck Ropes**

The neck rope is used to maintain the horse's head towards the steer while the rider dismounts and to discourage dragging. A neck rope must be fitted to horses used for roping and tying, through which the catch rope must pass before it is tied to the saddle horn. Placement of the neck rope must be no more than half the distance down the roping horse's neck, as measured from the head.

### **Jerk Line**

The jerk line is used for roping and tying events. It is a rope from the bridle fed through a pulley on the saddle to the rider. As the rider dismounts to throw the steer, the jerk line plays out in a series of jerks which encourages the horse to move backwards slowly, retaining the tension on the rope thus preventing entanglements. The contestant must adjust the catch rope, reins and jerk line to prevent the rope horse from dragging the roped animal.

## **PART 5 - STOCK SELECTION AND USE**

### **Stock Source**

Ideally a Stock Contractor should supply all stock used in rodeos. It is acknowledged however, that in some areas and for some events local stock may be used. Where there is no Stock Contractor the Rodeo Organiser must designate a Livestock Supervisor to assume the responsibilities of the Stock Contractor.

### **Horses**

- Horses used in rodeo rough stock events must be mature, sound and fit for the intended use. Age should not be used as the sole criterion of maturity, other factors such as size and physical conformation must be taken into account.
- The criterion for determination of the suitability of a rodeo bucking horse should be complete epiphyseal closure. This can best be determined by the presence of the central adult incisors in wear, or, where there is doubt, by radiography.
- Horses under three (3) years may not be sufficiently mature for bucking events and must **not** be used.
- Horses used for bucking events may not be used on more than three occasions on any one day.
- If a time event horse shows signs of injury or fatigue it must not be used.

## **Cattle**

All cattle must be fit, healthy and suitable for the intended use. The number of times that cattle may be used in competition varies according to the rigours of the event and the conditioning of the cattle to rodeo competition.

The following limitations must be observed:

- The same cattle must not be used for steer wrestling and roping events on the same day
- Cattle may not be used for steer wrestling and roping more than three times on any one day for contract stock and two times a day for local stock. This includes practice for events and the event itself.
- Cattle may not be used as bucking stock more than three times on any day. This includes practice for events and the event itself.
- Each competitor is allowed only one loop (throw) in roping and tying events and in team roping only two loops are allowed in each team.

### **Selection of Animals for Rope and Tie**

Cattle used in Roping and Tying must be fit, healthy and without defects. The optimum weight for roping and tying is 115 kg with a minimum of 100kg and a maximum of 130kg. Note that there are varying restrictions on minimum weight of animals in some States.

### **Selection of Animals for Steer Wrestling**

Animals used in steer wrestling must be fit, healthy and without defects. The optimum weight for animals is 250 kg with a minimum of 200 kg and a maximum of 300 kg. All animals must have suitable horns and the horns must be a minimum of 23 cm in length.

### **Selection of Animals for Team Roping**

Animals used in team roping must be fit, healthy and without defects. The optimum weight for animals in team roping is 250 kg with a minimum of 200 kg and a maximum of 300 kg. All animals must have suitable horns and the horns must be a minimum of 17cm in length.

## **PART 6 - ARENA SELECTION AND USE**

### **Arena, Chutes and Yards**

The Veterinarian and the Stock Contractor must be assured that the arena, chutes, yards and races will not compromise the welfare of the animals.

### **Surfaces**

The Stock Contractor is responsible for ensuring the arena surface provides traction, stability, reduction of shock and improved safety for personnel and livestock. In general, the standard arena should be a suitable, soil based surface, rotary hoed or softened to an approximate depth of 8-10cm. The arena must be free of rocks, holes and obstacles. Other surfaces may be used provided that they are well drained, provide a secure footing and be at least as safe for the animals as an appropriate soil based surface.

### **Size**

Arenas which are too small for the particular event create a danger to livestock, competitors and the spectators. The arena must be of a size suitable for the events taking place.

### **Fencing**

The fencing surrounding the arena is the responsibility of the rodeo organiser on behalf of the club, association or individual who organises the rodeo. Fencing must be inspected and approved by the stock contractor prior to the rodeo. If fencing is supplied by the stock contractor, its suitability is the contractor's responsibility. Careful planning and construction of arenas will make the handling and removal of stock from the arenas easier and will also increase stock, competitor and public safety. The top rail of arenas should be made of steel to prevent breakage in the event of an attempted escape.

The construction, height and appearance of arena fencing should discourage stock from attempting to push through the fence or jump over it. There must be no protrusions on fences or gateways likely to cause injury.

Arena fences should be clearly visible and not appear open to the animal.

Where it is thought that stock will pressure certain points of an arena more than others, care should be taken to ensure that the fencing is suitable.

### **Portable arenas**

Portable arenas must have panels which are suitably braced and secure. As a guide the minimum height should be 1.8 metres. If fencing, yards or chutes are supplied by the Stock Contractor, their compliance to these Standards is the responsibility of the Stock Contractor.

### **Fixed arenas**

Fixed arenas should be of secure construction and flush on the inside. Where cable is used in steel arenas, it should be strained and the space between the cables should not be great enough to allow stock to pass through it.

As a guide the minimum height should be at least 1.6 metres.

### **Time Event Chute**

The time event chute for steer wrestling must be at least 0.75 metre wide at the head height of the animal in the chute and when the gate is open.

## **PART 7 - SPECIFIC RODEO EVENTS**

### **All Events**

The Judges have the final decision on the suitability of equipment. Any piece of equipment, either on the animal or which may be used on the animal, which may compromise its welfare, is **not** allowed. A judge may instruct any person to remove or modify any piece of equipment for which they are responsible in accordance with these standards.

### **Saddle Bronc Riding**

The saddle must not be set too far forward on the withers and must be correctly fitted. There must be a minimum clearance of 10 cm under the gullet of the saddle. Sharp or cutting objects must not be used in a cinch, saddle or girth.

The front cinch of the saddle must be a minimum of 12.5 cm in width. The back cinch of the saddle must not be over-tightened.

### **Bareback Bronc Riding**

The bareback rigging must not be more than 26cm in width at the handhold and not more than 16cm in width at the D rings. Suitable pads must be placed under the rigging and extend a minimum of 5cm past the back of the rigging. The girth on the bareback rigging must be not less than 12.5 cm in width.

### **Bull Riding**

The equipment used in bull riding rigging shall be a loose rope with or without a hand hold. There must be no knots or hitches preventing the rope from falling from the animal after the contestant has been thrown or dismounted. A contestant must not re-set and re-pull the rope more than twice if the bull is standing quietly in the chute.

### **Roping and Tying**

Note: Calf roping is not a permitted event in Victoria. Steer roping is permissible if the steer is at least 200 kg in body weight.

### **Limits**

The time limit to rope, throw by hand and complete the tie is thirty (30) seconds from when the barrier is released. After the tie is completed and the time signalled, the roper must immediately mount the horse and ride it forward to loosen the catch rope.

Only one loop is allowed a contestant in each round of the event. If the first throw fails to catch the animal the roper is not permitted a second attempt. The purpose of this is to prevent the prolonged chasing of an animal around the arena.

### **Jerking down and dragging**

It is not acceptable to pull an animal backward off its feet (jerk down) or to drag a roped animal. Contestants must use an appropriate technique and appropriate and properly fitted equipment to protect the animal against an abrupt stop after being roped and to prevent the rope horse from dragging a roped animal.

There should be a disqualification if a contestant continues to tie the calf after the 30 second siren or if the calf is jerked down or dragged.

A contestant will be deemed to have been in breach of these Standards if s/he:

- Pulls the calf backwards off its feet; or
- Drags the calf more than one metre once it is tied.

### **Steer Wrestling**

#### **Time Limit**

The time limit to catch and throw the steer is thirty (30) seconds from when the barrier is released.

**Legal Throws**

The steer must not be knocked down or thrown before the catch is made and it is brought to a stop. If the animal is off its feet before a legal throw is made it must stand on all four feet and be properly thrown.

**Team Roping Protective Horn Wraps**

Horn wraps must be used in team roping to protect the ears, eyes and base of horns from possible injury.

**Time Limit**

The time limit to rope the head and the heels of the steer is thirty (30) seconds from when the barrier is released. The time will be taken when the steer is properly roped with the catch ropes dallied, with both horses facing the steer and with no slack in the ropes. To prevent slack being taken up too hard both horses front feet should be on the ground when the time is taken.

Only two loops are allowed in each round of the event (one for the header and one for the heeler). If a throw fails to catch the animal the ropers are not permitted a second attempt. The purpose of this is to prevent the prolonged chasing of an animal around the arena.

**Catching**

The steer must be standing when it is roped by both the header and the heeler. The steer must not be roughly handled. The only permitted head catches for team roping are around both horns, around the neck, or around a half head. The heel catch should be around both back legs including behind the shoulders, provided the catch is made over the heels.

The heeler should not attempt a heel catch before the header has dallied his catch rope and changed the direction of the steer.