



**Racing
Victoria**

RACING VICTORIA

25/09/25

www.rv.racing.com

Jobs and Skills Australia
Submitted via website.

To Whom It May Concern,

Draft Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL) for Consultation

Racing Victoria (RV) is the governing body of the thoroughbred racing industry in Victoria, a critical sector that provides more than 25,000 FTE jobs and contributes more than \$3.4 billion to the State's economy every year. Nationally, the thoroughbred industry supports more than 71,000 FTEs and contributes more than \$9.1 billion to the Australian economy.

The Australian thoroughbred racing industry is clearly one of the world's leading racing jurisdictions. From our economic contribution to the level of attendance at major racing events, through to the size and success of its breeding sector, the Australian thoroughbred industry is the envy of many international jurisdictions.

This is due to the significant community support the sport receives, particularly in regional Australia, the support of multiple levels of government over many decades and most importantly, the quality, skill and dedication that our participants have in caring for the hero of our sport, the horse.

While RV, along with interstate principal racing authorities, have invested significantly to support our existing participants, and develop and train future participants, the industry has faced challenges filling labour shortages. While industry participants continue to maintain world-leading standards of care for almost 10,000 Victorian thoroughbred racehorses currently spelling or training, ongoing shortages have the potential to impact the reputation and standing of the Australian racing jurisdiction in comparison to others.

RV welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Core Skills Occupation List* (CSOL) consultation and supports the work undertaken by the Australian Government to review skills shortages, to appropriately direct training investment in Australian talent and inform the migration policy.

Within this submission, RV strongly supports moving Track Rider from the *Targeted for Consultation List* to the CSOL and maintain Horse Trainer on the CSOL. We note and support the Thoroughbred Breeders Association's (TBA) representation for Horse Breeder to be on the CSOL, given the key role that the occupation and broader sector have in the industry's ecosystem.

Like many sectors, the racing sector has faced several challenges in recruitment and retention of both unskilled and skilled workers. Ongoing shortages in both stable hands (not considered a skilled occupation but in shortage), and track work riders is evidenced through daily job advertisements across Facebook Racing Jobs groups and consistent Trainer / Racing Stable feedback of the same.

The challenge of filling key roles in racing has been exacerbated over the long-term by the significant shift towards urbanisation of Australia, with a corresponding decline in engagement in agricultural / animal care, and the skills associated with this work.

In circumstances that are not unique to the Victorian thoroughbred industry, the challenge for the sector is procuring highly skilled horse persons who can assist in not only delivering the world-leading standards of equine welfare exhibited here in Australia but also assist in training and retaining our future workers.

RV has invested significant resources and funding to address key areas of labour shortage faced by the Victorian sector. It has been a strategic direction of the organisation since the early 2010's with programs such as Ride to Time, and partnerships with Registered Training Organisations (RTO) to ensure equine/horse racing offerings remained on scope. RV developed *Stable Start*[™] in 2022 and continues to partner with the Racing Education Centre to deliver this off-the-job entry level training program for people wanting to work as a stable hand and/or track work rider in Victoria.

Stable Start enrolments have dropped significantly in 2025 compared to 2024, by almost 50%. Reasons for this are unclear but may include competing job opportunities and the reduction in funding available for Certificate I in Victoria which has created accessibility issues.

Enrolments in Trackwork Rider programs overseen by Racing Victoria see a total of 39 new enrolments in 2025. This compares to 61 in the same period in 2024. Similarly to stable hand enrolments in *Stable Start* we see a notable reduction, despite active investment in attraction and development of talent through the appointment of a dedicated Track Work Rider Development Coordinator in late 2024. The pipeline is not flush with future candidates according to the Rider Development Coordinator. The local workforce is unable to satisfy demand despite our targeted investment.

The training programs developed by RV are complemented by our demonstrated commitment to the well-being of our participants, with the nation leading roles of Participant Protection Manager and Participant Wellbeing Manager. These roles support *Stableline* - a 24/7, free counselling service for all licensed Victorian Thoroughbred Racing Industry (VTRI) persons and their families; the Speak-Up confidential report line; and various campaigns to promote healthy and safe workplaces, aiding staff attraction and retention efforts.

Despite the investment of resourcing and funding into training programs over a substantial period, the sector continues to face key shortages across several occupations integral to the ongoing growth and development of the industry.

RV understands that these shortages are not unique to the Victorian jurisdiction, and in large part, are faced by all interstate racing jurisdictions and associated sectors such as the breeding sector.

Racing Victoria provides the following feedback with regards the ANZSCO occupation **361116 Track Rider**, currently on the *Targeted for Consultation List*. It is integral Track Rider is on the CSOL, and that **36112 Horse Trainer** *remains* on the CSOL.

Track Rider 361116

RV submits that the Track Rider occupation should be on the CSOL, for the reasons outlined below:

- The Victorian racehorse population is strong, whilst the number of skilled track riders is not. This is despite the availability of RVs *Track Rider Programs* and the comparative appeal of Victoria as a destination of choice for track riders.
- Methods used by the Government to measure skilled occupation shortages may be resulting in an under representation of vacancies for track riders. Employers in the racing industry commonly only utilise social media or word-of-mouth for advertising of vacancies, which exacerbates the discrepancy between government data of job categories and the actual shortages faced by the sector.
- RV has been concerned about the track rider shortage for years now, as evidenced by the attached submission made to the Migration Minister in December 2022 [[Racing_Victoria.pdf \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](#)].
- **2023 Australian Racing Industry Job Vacancy Survey (Racing Australia) results:** One hundred Victorian licensed horse trainers/racing stables (from a total licensed number of 820) responded to the question on track rider shortages, with all indicating they required two track riders to meet their operational requirements. This situation has not improved to date.
- **Racing Victoria's talent pipeline experience:** RV has responded to the track work rider/horse trainer shortage in Victoria by partnering with the RTO, Racing Education Centre to educate track work riders and ensure a pipeline of new talent.

On average, from January until 30 June 2025, we have received the following applications through our portal to undertake training for track riding (which is a no-cost course for trainees):

- 0.53 applications per week for the Certificate I in Racing (Stablehand) RGR10118
- 0.69 applications per week for the Certificate III in Racing (Trackwork Rider) RGR30518
- 1.23 applications per week across both programs combined

These figures indicate a limited labour market for growing and developing local talent. Regionally, the situation is worse with poor applications for the track rider and Stable Start programs, often necessitating the cancellation of RV funded free courses.

- The key stakeholders for VTRI, being the Victorian Jockey's Association (VJA) and the Australian Trainers Association (ATA) strongly support Track Riders on the CSOL. Shortages are persistent and directly impact workforce supply, animal welfare and regional racing ecosystems.
- **The International Experience:** Internationally track riders are in shortage. The British Horse Racing Authority (BHA) has celebrated the addition of 'work riders' (the equivalent of track riders) onto to the Government's Immigration Salary List

(ISL). The updated ISL now facilitates the recruitment of work riders ([link to article](#)). The Australian equivalent is to have track riders listed on the CSOL.

- In Victoria we have experienced a minimal uptake of training courses against a strong horse population. While RV is committed to continuing to work with registered training organisations and horse training organisations to develop a domestic pipeline, it is imperative that the Track Riders are maintained on the CSOL for the ongoing viability of the horse training sector of the thoroughbred industry.

Horse Trainer 36112

Currently on the CSOL, RV takes this opportunity to reinforce that Horse Trainer must be retained on this listing, for the reasons outlined below:

- The Horse Trainer occupation provides the VTRI with skilled people to perform senior and technical expert roles within horse training stables and breeding operations. 'Horse Trainer' is an umbrella term covering a variety of skilled roles in both racing and breeding organisations.
- Methods used by the Government to measure skilled occupation shortages may be resulting in an under representation of vacancies for horse trainers, and therefore the 'churn' in the industry. Employers in the racing industry commonly only utilise social media or word of mouth for advertising of vacancies, which exacerbates the discrepancy between government data of job categories and the actual shortages faced by the sector.
- British Horse Racing is experiencing the same labour market shortages resulting in the UK Government acknowledging the concerns raised by their racing industry and updating the ISL to facilitate the recruitment of racing grooms, work riders, stallion handlers, stud grooms, stud hands, and stud handlers from abroad (see [here](#)). The Australian equivalent is to have Horse Trainer retained on the CSOL and adding Track Riders and Stable Hands to this list.
- **Racing Australia's 2023 Australian Racing Industry Job Vacancy Survey.** In March 2023, 120 horse training operations in Victoria responded to this Racing Australia survey. The significance of this is that 50% of those respondents required a either a full time or part-time stable employee/horse trainer.

Stable Hand 841516

Stable Hand is an occupation in thoroughbred horse racing which is not considered to be a 'skilled occupation'. Racing Victoria agrees with the submission of Racing Australia (RA), that thoroughbreds require a high level of skilled care and attention. The perception that Stable Hands are limited to feeding and cleaning out the boxes of racing thoroughbreds is inaccurate. A Stable Hand requires the knowledge to safely handle and exercise a thoroughbred, provide complex care and triage matters which may arise with the animal in their care. In Victoria, Stable Hands must be registered with Racing Victoria, and complete mandatory units of competency. The level of skill required to manage a thoroughbred is not reflected appropriately in a Certificate I level, which has ramifications for funding and therefore accessibility of training, plus hinders the attraction of people to this role.

RV considers it appropriate for Stable Hand to be a skilled occupation and added to the CSOL.

Horse Breeder 152933

Racing Victoria notes the significant concern raised by TBA in their submission that Horse Breeder (OSCA 152933) is not on the CSOL. Shortages exist across all States, they are persistent, disrupting workforce supply, animal welfare and regional racing ecosystems. Farms want to take on trainees and give locals a start, however, the lack of recognition of Horse Breeder as a priority skill shortage, means training incentives don't exist, reducing the pipeline of local and regional trainees.

The breeding sector is a critical part of the horse racing ecosystem. It contributes more than \$1.68b annually to the Australian economy and provides 10,000 FTE jobs, predominantly in rural and regional areas. Shortages will persist if it is not added to the CSOL. RV strongly supports the submission made by the TBA to ensure that the sector maintains its key role as an important pillar of the Australian racing framework.

In summary

RV strongly advocates for Horse Trainer to remain on the CSOL, and Track Rider to move onto the CSOL. We support TBA's position that Horse Breeder should be on the CSOL. Similarly to RA, we consider Stable Hand to be a skilled occupation which is currently unrecognised, and in short supply. We remain committed to sustainability measures, including investment in workforce development and training initiatives, however, these alone will not remedy the skills shortages facing our industry.

We thank Jobs and Skills Australia for the opportunity to provide a submission on the CSOL, RV would welcome an opportunity to further discuss the matters raised, noting the critical role that the CSOL will have in supporting the growth of the thoroughbred industry which provides considerable economic and social benefit to Australia, especially in regional areas.

To arrange a meeting, or to discuss the contents of this submission, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

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