
News and updates

Update on the implementation of *The Next Lap: a plan for the future of Queensland racing*

Work underway - remainder of 2026

The remainder of 2026 will focus predominantly on progressing governance and construction priorities.

Key work underway includes:

- Establishing *The Next Lap* Oversight Committee, comprising senior representatives from the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games (DSROPG), Department of Primary Industries (DPI), RQ and QRIC to guide implementation of *The Next Lap*.
- Ongoing work to progress governance and legislative options to support a future streamlined model, including the integration of RQ and QRIC functions within a hybrid governance structure.
- Preparing the Nowell and Bowen Hills sites for sale, including market valuation, legal compliance and approvals, alongside engagement on the future of Deagon Racecourse.
- Establishing a Racing Infrastructure Advisory Board to provide recommendations on projects for consideration under the Racing Future Fund.

Proposed governance model

Collectively, we are progressing towards a model for the future governance of racing in Queensland.

Of course, the next steps are subject to thorough consultation and part of a Parliamentary Committee process whereby public submissions are welcome.

The timing of legislation is dependent on government priorities.

What is the model?

The Queensland Government is proposing a hybrid governance model that amalgamates the functions of RQ and QRIC into one statutory organisation, while preserving independent integrity and animal welfare oversight through a statutory Chief Integrity Officer (CIO).

The model is designed to:

- provide clearer accountability across the racing industry
- reduce duplication between RQ and QRIC
- improve coordination and decision-making
- deliver operational efficiencies
- maintain strong integrity and animal welfare oversight.

Independent Chief Integrity Officer

- The CIO to be equal standing to the CEO, and cannot be dismissed by the Board or CEO directly.
- The CIO will have direct reporting obligations to both the Racing Minister and the RQ Board on integrity and animal welfare matters.
- Independent reporting safeguards.
- Quarterly reports by the CIO to the Board and Minister.
- CIO must advise whether sufficient resources are being allocated to integrity and animal welfare functions.
- CEO and CIO must immediately report any matters to the Minister that significantly impact on public confidence in the integrity of the Queensland racing industry.

Integrity and welfare subcommittee

- To ensure integrity is front of mind, a dedicated Integrity and Welfare subcommittee will be established featuring a member from the RQ board as well as independent members.

- This is an important inclusion for the future governance and strategic direction of racing in Queensland.

Other key features

- The Racing Appeals Panel will continue with its existing review and appeal functions.

Looking ahead - 2027

Implementation of *The Next Lap* will continue throughout 2027, with a focus on progressing the next phase of governance, infrastructure and industry reforms.

Key areas of work will include:

- Commencing works to re-invigorate harness racing at Toowoomba, including re-instating and lighting the harness track at the Toowoomba Turf Club.
- Establishing the Jockey Retirement Fund.
- Establishing a formal stewarding qualification pathway to help address workforce challenges.
- Undertaking a strategic assessment and consultation on essential safety measures for greyhounds.
- Finalising the design for the new Racing HQ at Albion Park – the future home of RQ and QRIC.
- Commencing operation of the Racing Future Fund.
- Demolition of the John Power Stand at Eagle Farm.
- Trialling of a 'Hub and Spoke' model for regional clubs.
- Continuing preliminary works on the Marburg Super Site, a new elite training centre for Queensland harness racing.

Implementation to date

Progress has been made across several of *The Next Lap* initiatives, including preliminary infrastructure works, stronger integrity protocols, a new-look racing calendar, enhanced participant education and animal welfare initiatives.

Key actions implemented to date include:

- The reformed RQ Board now includes broader representation across the industry, including from regional Queensland, ensuring the perspectives and priorities of regional and rural racing are reflected in decision-making.

- Preliminary planning works have commenced on the Bundaberg Greyhound track rebuild, including conversion of the grass track to sand.
- RQ has reviewed and updated its Whistle Blower Policy and Anti-Money Laundering/Counter-Terrorism Financing compliance across Racing-Controlled Entities.
- QRIC is progressing recruitment for the Senior Wagering Integrity role.
- RQ has approved a new Lighting Up Racing Strategy to enhance fan engagement and commercial outcomes for the industry.
- An initial \$25 million investment from the Racing Infrastructure Fund has been committed to the first phase of the \$100 million redevelopment of the John Power Stand at Eagle Farm.
- RQ has launched The Racing Institute, a state-of-the-art racing education and high-performance training centre on the Gold Coast and the new home of the Queensland Apprentice Jockey Program.
- RQ has completed a review and benchmarking process of the Queensland Off-The-Track (QOTT) Program, which remains one of the most comprehensive programs of its kind nationally.
- Enhancements to the Battle of the Bush thoroughbred country racing series have been announced, with a new regional harness racing series commencing in October.
- The Queensland Government's 2026–27 Budget included \$200 million to deliver a new Racing Future Fund to help deliver modern and fit-for-purpose racing infrastructure across Queensland.



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