

# Equestrian Strategy



## **Document Control**

*Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy at [www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies](http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies) to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.*

*Responsible Department – Sport and Leisure*

*This version includes all updates and amendments to 4 October 2011*

*Electronic reference library version 2.1*

## **Preamble**

*In accordance with a resolution of Council on 21 June 2005 to include definitions of Council, Councillors and Council officers in all Council policy documents, the following definitions are provided:*

*Council – means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989*

*Councillors – means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council*

*Council officers – means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.*

## **Administrative updates**

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

## **Acknowledgments**

SGL Consulting Group Australia Pty Ltd were appointed to assist in the preparation of the Equestrian Strategy

Council would like to acknowledge the advice and support provided by members of the Casey Equestrian Reference Committee.

## 1. Purpose

The aim of the Equestrian Strategy is to provide a strategic approach for the future provision of equestrian facilities and trails within the City of Casey, including recommendations for the location, enhancement and development of facilities.

## 2. Scope

The Equestrian Strategy covers the recreational and sporting equestrian activities that are utilised by residents and visitors to the City of Casey.

Equestrian sporting activities consist of dressage, show jumping, and cross-country which occur primarily at the formally operated horse and pony clubs and private equestrian centres.

The majority of the recreational equestrian activity occurs along the formalised trail network, road verges or unmade road with low traffic levels.

Thoroughbred and Harness Racing and the future of the horse racing industry have not been considered as part of the Equestrian Strategy, however utilising the Cranbourne Racecourse for equestrian activities such as dressage and showing jumping has been considered.

## 3. Definitions

CERC – means the Casey Equestrian Reference Committee

GAA – means the Growth Area Authority

SEVEN – means the South East Victorian Equine Network

Equestrian Strategy Reference Document – A document developed by an independent external consultancy detailing the methodology underlying the development of the Equestrian Strategy, along with research findings and operational detail to assist with its implementation.

## 4. Context

In 2009 the Casey Equestrian Reference Committee (CERC) acknowledged the changing landscape of the municipality as the Urban Growth Boundary moves. A lot of current agricultural and rural areas are nominated for future urban development. In this context, the committee discussed the importance of having a robust strategic direction and a clear vision for equestrian activities within the City to ensure that equestrian routes and activities are considered within these areas as they are developed. In response CERC moved:

*“That the funds allocated within in the City of Casey 2009-10 Forward Capital Works Program for equestrian trails be utilised to prepare an updated Equestrian Strategy nominating future equestrian routes for development throughout the City of Casey”.*

The preparation of the Equestrian Strategy is in line with the key direction, “Strengthening Casey’s Communities”, of the 2009 to 2013 Council Plan and is based on the Equestrian Strategy Reference Document, which was developed by an independent external consultant. The Reference Document details the methodology and research findings underlying the Strategy. These research findings will inform the implementation of the strategy at an operational level.”

## 5. Strategy

The Equestrian Strategy is based on 6 Strategic Principles, which provide a framework for the implementation of the Strategy. A number of key directions have been developed for each principle which will inform and guide decisions on the future of equestrian over the next 10 years.

### 5.1 Consultation and Outcomes

The nature of equestrian activities makes it difficult to quantify participation rates within the municipality, therefore a broad consultation program was developed. Activities included surveys, focus groups, workshops and a public submission process. Consultation was also conducted with state and national equestrian bodies as well as local land management agencies including Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria. Five key outcomes were identified:

#### 1. Trails and infrastructure:

There is a need to develop an interconnected network of trails that provide increased recreational opportunities. This should include road crossing location and opportunities to link to key equestrian destinations. The necessary infrastructure to support participation in horse related activities such as watering areas, hitching rails and float parking areas also need to be provided.

Additionally there is a need to provide effective communication and information for residents and visitors to the municipality on equestrian facilities.

#### 2. Regional Equestrian Facility

Consider the development of a regional equestrian facility in the area to support training and competition activities for horse and pony activities.

#### 3. Management and Operation

A trail hierarchy system is required that links the type and level of trail to an agreed maintenance standard and a priority works program.

#### 4. Economic Impact

Council and the community highlighted the importance of the equine industry to the Casey economy and the need to preserve opportunities for equestrian activities.

#### 5. Urban Growth

Council and the community highlighted concerns in relation to the impact of significant population growth on access to and retention of equestrian facilities within the municipality

## 5.2 Strategic Principles

### 5.2.1 Partnerships

Council will work in partnership with land managers, equestrian clubs and organisations, commercial operators, schools, industry groups and Government to plan and develop equestrian facilities across the City to meet identified community need.

#### Actions:

- Advocate for the inclusion of community equestrian facilities, including trail connectivity, as part of the Cranbourne Racecourse Master Plan.
- Advocate to Parks Victoria for the inclusion of access to horse trails and associated facilities as part of the Cardinia Parkland Master Plan.
- Advocate for an agreement with land management agencies such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria to use their land for potential equestrian trail and facility locations.
- Strengthen relationships between Council and representatives from the equestrian community.
- Pursue opportunities with neighbouring municipalities to enhance regional facilities, connectivity, events and support services.

### 5.2.2. Access, Participation and Equity

**Council will plan for the provision of accessible equestrian facilities across the City.**

#### Actions:

- Undertake a feasibility study for a regional equestrian facility to service Casey and the wider region. (This study will incorporate the existing research completed by SEVEN)
- Advocate to the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) for the provision of a north to south horse trail along the Cardinia Creek buffer and an east to west horse trail along the fringe of the Urban Growth boundary as part of the Precinct Structure Plan process.
- Advocate for the development and or upgrade of trails to provide the necessary support facilities i.e. hitching rails and watering areas
- Ensure access to horse trails and support facilities are provided and implemented as part of the Kurlll Park Master Plan.
- Advocate for the development of accessible community equestrian facilities at Akoonah Park.

### **5.2.3. Sustainability**

**Council will ensure that universal design principles are incorporated into the design, development, and or redevelopment of equestrian facilities.**

**Actions:**

- Council will plan, design and manage equestrian trails on its land in accordance with best practice.
- Advocate for universal design principles to be incorporated into the planning, design and management of equestrian trails on land owned by other authorities.

### **5.2.4. Communication and Information**

Council will inform residents about existing equestrian opportunities and how they can access and utilize the resources.

**Actions:**

- Develop and maintain a database of equestrian based facilities and clubs.
- Encourage horse and pony clubs to provide participation statistics to enhance the understanding of equestrian activity across municipality
- Enhance the quality of the information on the location of equestrian facilities.
- Expand the warning and advisory signage for both horse riders and motor vehicle drivers across the municipality.
- Develop an awareness campaign to provide information to the community on equestrian etiquette.
- Encourage horse and pony clubs to participate in the Casey Sports Club Development Workshops.
- Develop and maintain an equestrian GIS layer which existing trail and proposed trail network.



## 5.2.5 Management, Operation and Maintenance

Council will work in collaboration with land managers, equestrian clubs and organisations to advocate for the management, operation and maintenance of equestrian facilities achieves the best possible outcomes and supports access opportunities.

### Actions:

- Utilise the trail hierarchy system (Appendix A) to develop an agreed maintenance standard for equestrian facilities including trails, signage, cavelettis etc.
- Undertake an audit of equestrian facilities and prepare a priority works program
- Develop a manual for the management of horse and pony club facilities located on Council land in line with best practice models.
- Encourage equestrian participants to take an active role in reporting of ongoing management and maintenance issues and activities on equestrian facilities and trails.
- Review the occupancy arrangements for equestrian facilities/clubs including the provision of assistance with maintaining the grounds and facilities in line with other recreation and sporting facilities.

## 4.3.6 Infrastructure Renewal/Development

**Council will develop an ongoing program to upgrade and renew existing equestrian assets.**

### Actions:

- Advocate for an interconnected network of trails that provide increased recreational opportunities.
- Enhance the provision of equestrian support facilities on council land i.e. hitching rails and watering areas
- Investigate the provision of barriers along roads verges that are heavily used by traffic and horse riders.
- Promote and encourage equestrian clubs to seek funding opportunities through the City of Casey's Minor Capital Works at Community Facilities Program and other avenues for the development of their facilities

## 5.4 Implementation and Review

The Strategy will be implemented utilising the high, medium and low priorities listed in the Equestrian Strategy Reference document and in consultation with CERC.

Progress towards the implementation of the Equestrian Strategy will be reported annually to Council.

The Equestrian Strategy will be reviewed in 2013 after the adoption of a new Council Plan and biennially thereafter.

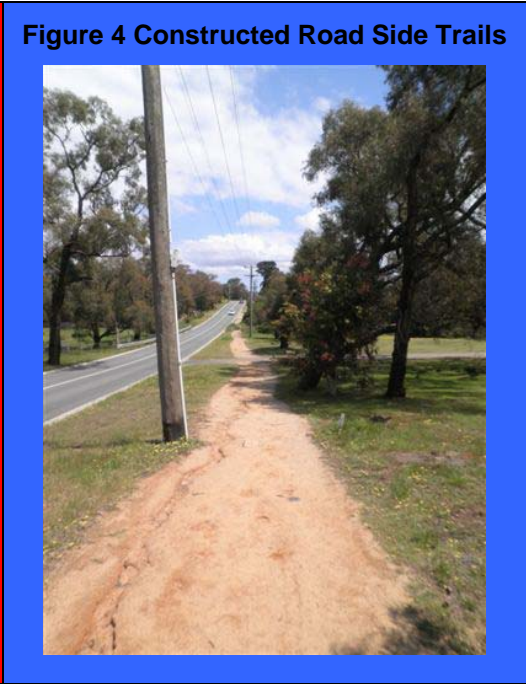
## Appendix A: Hierarchy of Equestrian Trails

The preference for equestrian trails to be located off road in open space areas provides the safest and most enjoyable riding experience, however to create a connected trail network alternative types of trails are required to link to these open space opportunities. In response the following hierarchy of trails has been developed:

Key to Map	Trail Category	Key Elements	Comment
	Off road trails in open space areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unstructured open space areas</li> <li>• Informal trail</li> <li>• Minimal impact on vegetation/natural surroundings.</li> <li>• Provides high experience value</li> <li>• Potential for safe interaction with other users</li> </ul>	Preferred trail method
	Unconstructed road side trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide road side verge</li> <li>• Minimal impact on vegetation/natural surroundings.</li> <li>• Quite roads speed limit max 60km/hr</li> <li>• Safe crossing areas available</li> </ul>	These roads are ideally situated in rural settings with low traffic volumes and speeds. If traffic conditions change with increased development the classification will need to be amended to ensure safety of all users
	On road equestrian route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quite unsealed roads in rural setting i.e. foothills/ rural and farm land/no through road</li> <li>• Minimal impact on vegetation / natural surroundings</li> <li>• Speed limit max 60km/hr</li> </ul>	Under the road rules, horses are regarded, basically, as a vehicle and riders are subject to the same road rules as apply to other drivers. <b>See section 2.3.3 in relation to riding on roads</b>
	Roadside Constructed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the least preferred trail type but required in some areas to ensure safety and connections to trail network</li> <li>• Wide roadside verge with sufficient area to construct trail</li> <li>• Buffer required between road and trail</li> <li>• Speed limit 60km/hr to max 80km/hr</li> <li>• Crossing areas available</li> </ul>	<p>In some areas the level of use of the constructed trail leads to conflict between user eg: bike riding and horses</p> <p>It this situation the following design options are suggested;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.5m shared path in concrete is provided and a 4m wide unstructured horse trail provided next to it.</li> <li>• 2.5m shared path in concrete is located on one side of the road and the equestrian trail on the other</li> </ul>



### Visual representation of the Hierarchy of Equestrian Trails





### **Customer Service Centres**

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**Narre Warren**  
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