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**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **HORSE RIDERS TO BE RECOGNISED AS VULNERABLE ROAD USERS IN VICTORIA**

The *Victorian Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee's* Final Report for the Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users has been released, bringing particularly positive news for horse riders.

In May 2023, peak animal welfare body Animal Care Australia worked together with national equestrian association Bitless Inc, to conduct a survey of equestrian experiences on Victorian roads. The results of that survey were presented in submissions by both organisations and witness testimony to the Inquiry. All but one of Animal Care Australia's recommendations were adopted by the Inquiry Committee.

Between 2019 and 2023, two riders and at least six horses were killed on Victorian roads. Karri Nadazdy, Horse & Livestock Representative of Animal Care Australia said: “We were concerned to see that horse riders and carriage drivers were not recognised as vulnerable road users in the establishment of this inquiry, but today, we are delighted to see the Committee recommend that horse riders be included in the definition of vulnerable road users in future. This means horse riders will be considered when policy is made that affects us.”

Beyond being recognised as vulnerable road users, horse riders stand to gain from several of the 56 Recommendations in the Final Report, many of which were advocated for by Animal Care Australia. These include the development of a vulnerable road users' advisory group to contribute to development of road safety interventions; awareness campaigns and new avenues on where to report dangerous driving; adding the words 'Pass wide and slow' on diamond road signs alerting drivers to horses in the area; and review the need to specify a lower speed limit when motorists pass horses in the road rules.

*Recommendation 1: The Victorian Government develop a road user hierarchy system to provide guidance so that all road users understand their responsibility towards others' safety on the road* was adopted from Animal Care Australia's submission, and could be the most significant to benefit horse riders.

“The recently implemented hierarchy of road users in the UK prioritises the safety of the most vulnerable individuals - pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders - by placing them at the forefront” said Ms Nadazdy. “This system de-emphasises the convenience of motor vehicles, which has traditionally overshadowed the needs of others.”

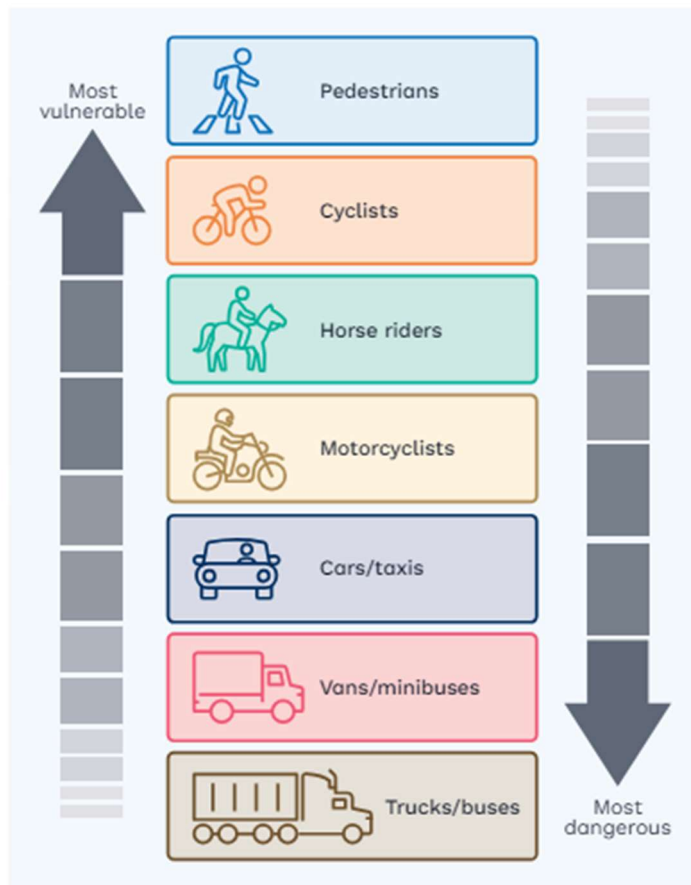
The Final Report by the Committee still needs to be accepted and then implemented by the Victorian Government. Animal Care Australia thanks the *Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee's* work to date, and will continue to engage with the Victorian government to ensure these recommendations come to fruition.

The full report can be found here:

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/roadsafetybehaviours/reports/>

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Figure 3.1 United Kingdom Highway Code road user hierarchy (adopted 2022)



Source: Adapted from Slater and Gordon Lawyers UK, "The new 'Hierarchy of Road Users' gives those most vulnerable on the roads, the highest priority putting pedestrians and cyclists at the top of the list". Facebook post. 2 February 2022. <<https://www.facebook.com/slatemordenUK/photos/a.10151273354153366/10158580032623366>> accessed 28 November 2023.

## About Animal Care Australia

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to advocate for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

Animal Care Australia was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare. Animal Care Australia estimates our foundation clubs currently represent well over 150,000 members and that is just in NSW alone!

By educating our members and the general public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs, and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of collaborating, consulting and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- consulting with government for stronger welfare outcomes
- encouraging government to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educating the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educating the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights