

PUBLIC REPORT

TO: Chief Executive
FOR: Council Meeting – 27 July 2022
FROM: Emma Hodgkin (Project Manager)
DATE: 18 July 2022
SUBJECT: HORORATA CROSS-COUNTRY EQUESTRIAN COURSE

RECOMMENDATION:

“That Council :

- (a) receives the report on the Hororata Cross-Country Equestrian Course; and*
- (b) notes that the Equestrian Course has been closed until further work is undertaken.”*

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the decision made by staff to close the Hororata cross-country equestrian course following advice on the health and safety of the course.

2. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT/COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The recommendation that is the subject of this report has been assessed against the Significance and Engagement Policy.

Consideration of the criteria in Council's Policy has been made, particularly in respect to:

- the potential effects on delivery of the Council's policy and strategies;
- the degree to which the decision or proposal contributes to promoting and achieving particular community outcomes;
- the level of community interest in the proposal, decision or issue; and
- the values and interests of Ngāi Tahu whānau, hapū and rūnanga, as mana whenua for the region.

The level of significance in respect to the issue is considered to be low due to the expected level of community interest and impact on the levels of service this decision will have on Council.

3. HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The Hororata Reserve Committee designed the course and managed this project, very little involvement from SDC

Community interest drove the development of an equestrian cross-country course and walking tracks which were opened in 2008 by Mark Todd. It is unclear who the course designer was at the time. The initial course build was supported by Class 4 Gaming Trust funding (from Canterbury Community Trust and Pub Charity), Selwyn District Council and the Hororata Reserve Committee.

Incorrect - the Reserve Committee developed and managed this project in full, the SDC has not had involvement until late Feb 2021 when a SDC ranger advised the committee that they were no longer allowed to carry out any work on the Domain.

The management of the course over the past 14 years has been vested in the Reserve Committee on behalf of the Council. This has seen community investment, user fees, gaming trust investment and funds allocated to the Reserve Committee by Council (from rates) spent on the basic maintenance and upkeep of the reserve and cross-country track. The course is 14 years old and has required significant maintenance for some time. Two years ago, Council staff attempted to get a formal assessment of the course, but this was unable to be undertaken due to access to approved and experienced course assessors willing to undertake a review of the course for the following reasons:

There are experienced people who offered to help with the assessment. The committee carried out assessment and identified work that needed to be done on some jumps - the SDC did not do this work

- The course/site has no affiliation or membership to Equestrian Sports New Zealand (ESNZ) or the NZ Pony Club Association Inc (NZPCA).
- The course has not been designed or assessed by an approved assessor or to an approved standard as is outlined in ESNZ Guide to Cross Country Course Design.
- No ESNZ or NZPCA affiliated events or activities are held at the Hororata site, nor is there an affiliated pony club in the area, using the course.

For these reasons, the course is not being managed in accordance with the health and safety requirements of either of the national governing bodies.

Additional information on the course, the role of the governing bodies and the health and safety implications for Council is attached in Appendix 1.

4. PROPOSAL

Following discussions with Buddle Findlay, Nick Pyke (until recently FEI and National Course designer, and previous ESNZ Board Chair), and Don Robertson (National Equestrian Centre Convenor) the only logical course of action to address the issues with the course and protect the health and safety of horses and riders (as well as other reserve users), was to close the course immediately.

The potential future options for the cross-country course and horse activity within the reserve is further outlined in Appendix 1. Note that this currently does not include the use of the existing trotting track. This is a separate issue that will need further investigation in line with the next phase of work required for future horse activities on Hororata Reserve.

5. OPTIONS

Why was Go Hororata cut out of this decision?

In making the decision to close the cross-country equestrian course, Council considered the following options:

a. Status Quo – Course remains open with no remedial work undertaken

Due to the number of significant health and safety issues that have been identified by experts in the area and users, this is not the recommended option and creates risk for Council.

b. Undertake an assessment of the cross-country course and then determine level of remedial work and investment required

Undertaking this assessment could take considerable time to be completed (due to availability of experts), and there was a significant risk to health and safety of horses and people during this time if the course continued to remain open until an assessment was completed.

c. Close the course immediately to public use and undertake further investigation into the future of this course as a Council owned and operated asset.

This was identified as the Council's preferred option and the decision to close the course was made on Thursday, 7 July. This decision was verbally communicated internally and to GO Hororata by Douglas Marshall. The community was notified via Council communications on Monday, 11 July and by formal letter from Douglas Marshall which was sent on 11 July 2022.

6. VIEWS OF THOSE AFFECTED / CONSULTATION

Horses have been on the Domain since its beginning in 1878 with no issues, this must be taken into account

Equestrian activities are important to the Hororata community, with both the cross-country course and trotting track playing an important role in the history of the reserve and community. The community and users of the course, have for some time however, raised concerns over the health and safety of the course and the jumps located within.

DM rang the GoH secretary on 7th July to advise of this impending decision. The secretary asked for this in writing to forward onto the committee, this was not received until 20th July. We do not consider DM phone call formal advise.

Douglas Marshall advised GO Hororata on 7 July 2022 of the Council's intention to close the course immediately and undertake further investigation around the requirements to operate and manage a course such as this on Council reserve land into the future.

Note this report was not provided to Go Hororata, the secretary searched for it in the public agenda. It was not shown to Go Hororata prior to going to Council, if it was then the mistakes would have been picked up. As far as Go Hororata is concerned an inaccurate and misleading report has been tabled.

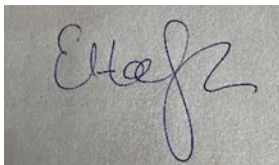
He also briefed the Mayor, Ward Councillors and the Council management team of this decision at the same time.

7. FUNDING IMPLICATIONS

There is no immediate funding implication to this decision as the only cost being incurred at this time relates to the removing of the jumps from where they are located to a central area on the domain. No income has been taken by Council from the users of the course for the past 18 months (which was a \$5 fee per use).

Users have paid the \$5 fee for a number of years and the income has been credited to the Hororata Reserve account. Between 2008 and 2020, income of \$7,615 GST exclusive has been collected, which equates to 146 uses of the course on an annual basis. There will likely be some users who have not paid to use the course.

The closure of the course will cause some inconvenience to users but there are alternate courses to use while the future of the course is considered. Ultimately the safety of horses, riders and the general public is paramount and the course closure is therefore required.



Emma Hodgkin
PROJECT MANAGER (MAJOR PROJECTS TEAM)



Murray Washington
GROUP MANAGER INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROPERTY

APPENDIX 1: Hororata Equestrian Park – Recommendations for Future Use

Introduction and Background

Hororata Reserve is a large reserve, owned by the Crown and vested in Trust to Selwyn District Council. It is in the Malvern ward and is made up of two land parcels, which combined total 92.0154 ha. One parcel of land is currently being farmed and is leased to a local farmer in the area.

A range of formal and informal recreation activities take place on the reserve and at its peak, included facilities for the Hororata Trotting Club, Netball Club, Tennis Club, Target Shooting and rifle range, Cubs and Scouts, gliding hanger, ornamental lake, playground, horse stables and barn, and public toilets and playground.

Community interest drove the development of an equestrian cross-country course and walking tracks which were opened in 2008 by Mark Todd. It is unclear who the course designer was at the time. The use of the course over the past 14 years has been vested in the Reserve Committee on behalf of the Council. This has seen community investment, user fees, gaming trust investment and funds allocated to the Reserve Committee by Council (from rates) spent on the basic maintenance and upkeep of the reserve and cross-country track. The course is 14 years old and has required significant maintenance for some time. Two years ago, Council staff attempted to get a formal assessment of the course, but this was unable to be undertaken due access to approved and experienced course assessors willing to undertake a review of the park.

The paper outlines the work done to date, the rules and regulations governing equestrian activities in New Zealand and poses a series of strategic considerations for Council before deciding on the future of this facility within Hororata Reserve. A series of immediate recommendations are also provided based on the professional advice received to date from the governing bodies.

Current Ownership and Management Model

The course was initially built and supported by Class 4 Gaming Trust funding (from Canterbury Community Trust and Pub Charity), Selwyn District Council and the Hororata Reserve Committee.

The SDC cannot just assume ownership of these jumps

There is currently no record of the cross-country jumps being listed in the Council's Asset Management System (AMS) however, by default, the jumps are Council assets and should be reflected as such.

No confusion in Feb 2021 Keely told the committee they were not allowed to carry out any work on the Domain and that they were to submit a report with maintenance needed. This was done. Keely meet with the committee and walked around the jumps 17/2/2021. The SDC stopped engaging with the committee following this. So despite it being officially disbanded in 2022, the SDC took this approach 18 months prior

Previously, the collection of fees and any bookings for the course have been undertaken by the Reserve Committee which was disbanded on 30 June 2022. The requirement to complete a waiver or make payment (a minimal \$5 per use) was stopped in 2021. *The SDC stopped this in 2021*

Incorrect it was \$10, See attached

There appears to be confusion over the role of the Reserve Committee and Council to undertake the repairs and maintenance required on the course and little budget was put aside for the ongoing capital replacement of the jumps. No formal assessment has been undertaken since the facility opened 14 years ago to determine how effective the management and maintenance of the facility has been. It is deemed appropriate that the life of a well-built jump should be around 6-8 years before repair or replacement is needed.

There is no specific designations on the Hororata Reserve for equestrian activities and the SDC Parks and Reserves Bylaw (2020) does not specifically reference horses or equestrian activities on reserve land. The bylaw does however state that (clause 7.1f) "that no person shall, while at the Facility, permit any Animal or dog, except for a disability assist Animal or dog, under their control or ownership to enter a Facility unless approval has been granted by an Authorised Officer".

Regulatory and Governing Bodies in New Zealand

Equestrian activities relating specifically to jumping and eventing is vested in two national bodies – Equestrian Sport NZ and NZ Pony Club Association Inc. For clarity, this report excludes other national bodies such as Harness Racing New Zealand who are more focused on horse racing activities.

Equestrian Sport New Zealand (ESNZ)

ESNZ was founded in 1950 and has been affiliated to Equestrian Federation International (FEI) since 1951. It is the National Sports Organisation (NSO) representing all equestrian disciplines in New Zealand. NZES currently has over 5,500 horses registered as well as over 6,600 members across all membership categories.

ESNZ implements the national body's governing constitution which includes setting the general rules and regulations for all activities, administering the judicial processes, setting membership fees and levies, providing infrastructure of national competitions and importantly, insurance for all members for Public and Statutory Liability.

ESNZ is responsible for the governance of all arms of equestrian activities including

- Jumping and Show Hunter (of which there are 20 area groups and an annual turnover of \$486K)
- Dressage (of which there are 28 groups and branches and an annual turnover of \$494K)
- Evenings (of which there are 18 Area Groups and an annual turnover of \$376K)
- Endurance (of which there are 11 affiliated clubs and an annual turnover of \$46K)
- Para-equestrian activities
- High Performance activities which are funded by HPSNZ and is focused on events such as the Olympics

As an entity, they also own two significant equestrian venues – the National Equestrian Centre at McLeans Island in Canterbury, and the Taupo Equestrian Centre.

ESNZ plays a significant and leading role in the health and safety of all horses and riders involved in all equestrian disciplines. They provide a range of policies and detailed resources and templates for equestrian officials and Area Groups and Organising Committees – with a focus on supporting the planning and delivery of official equestrian events. This extensive advice covers all aspects of event management including

- Incident reporting
- Horse death reporting
- Helmet tagging
- Concussion policies
- Insurance cover and policy documents
- Health and safety briefing guidelines and plan templates
- Risk management guidelines
- Crisis management procedures
- Equestrian hazard identification and management registers and templates
- Waiver templates
- Checklists for health and safety, site inductions
- Health and safety inspection requirements and templates
- Incident reporting requirements and templates

We are not talking about holding events we are talking about a recreational horse area that includes some practice jumps. User use at their own risk.

The Hororata cross-country equestrian track has no affiliation or membership to ESNZ. The course has not been designed or assessed by an approved assessor or to an approved standard as is outlined in ESNZ Guide to Cross Country Course Design. No ESNZ affiliated events or activities are held at the Hororata site therefore, it is unlikely that any of the health and safety templates and guidance have been completed for the course or are currently being followed or implemented.

ESNZ are however currently embarking on the development of a National Facilities Strategy in conjunction with the NZ Pony Club Association in an attempt to map equestrian facilities nationally, their use and future growth and needs of facilities for equestrian related activities, acknowledging that many of these activities are currently delivered through Pony Club and volunteer-based clubs and organisations affiliated to NZPCA Inc. ESNZ have indicated that the Hororata cross-country course, and its potential place in a network of equestrian facilities will be looked at as part of their strategy development.

New Zealand Pony Club Association Incorporated (NZPCA Inc)

The New Zealand Pony Clubs Association (NZPCA) is a not for profit, voluntary organisation for young people interested in ponies/horses and riding that was formed in 1946. It is represented nationally by 81 Clubs, 238 Branches and nearly 9,500 members. As an Incorporated Society, NZPCA branches and club fall under the NZPCA constitution as affiliated members.

NZPCA provides instruction on riding and horse/pony management with a structured certificate system that allows young people to gain qualifications, promoting the highest ideals of behaviour, sportsmanship, citizenship and loyalty, to create strength of character and self-discipline. A coaching system is in place which allows for a progressive pathway for those who teach at pony club and encourages them to attain qualifications and develop their skills enabling a consistency of teaching standards throughout our Branches.

All pony clubs are largely volunteer based organisations and there are two nearby Branches encompassing clubs across the greater Canterbury region – Ashburton/South Canterbury/North Otago (which includes Methven and Rakaia Pony Clubs) and Canterbury Branch (which includes, among others, the Ellesmere, Little River, Springston, Waihora and West Melton Weedons Pony Clubs).

The objectives of NZPCA are to be the national body for the administration, promotion, development and delivery of Pony Club Events and Activities. Constitutionally the organisation has a long list of objectives however the health and safety of participants and welfare of horses is high on the list of objectives.

NZPCA Inc, like ESNZ, plays a significant and leading role in the health and safety of all horses and riders involved in all pony club activities. They provide a range of policies and detailed resources and templates for all pony club members – including all branches, clubs, and technical officials with a focus on supporting the planning and delivery of official pony club. This extensive advice covers all aspects of event management including:

- Annual pre- and post- season health and safety audit requirements and checklists
- Minimum medial cover requirements
- Crisis management plan
- Body protector and helmet policies
- Health and Safety Manual requirements and templates
- Risk management templates
- Safety guidance for officials

It is important to note that all NZPCA policies, guidelines and templates are consistent with, and in line with ESNZ guidance and guidelines.

Selwyn-Based Pony Clubs

There are several pony clubs affiliated to NZPCA Inc located in the Selwyn region (or near the Selwyn boundaries). These clubs are:

- Ellesmere Pony Club (Leeston)
- Halswell Pony Club
- Little River Pony Club
- Methven Pony Club
- Rakaia Pony Club
- Springston Pony Club
- West Melton Weedons Pony Club
- Waihora Pony Club

Bangor is the local pony club and has not been listed??? Show how little understanding the write of this report has

Many of these are operated on SDC or Department of Conservation owned land and are leased to the Club under a grazing license (for example Springston Pony Club). These agreements permit pony club activities.

Pony club activities are indemnified under their constitution and affiliation to NZPCA, and the health and safety requirements set out by the national body. The pony club sites are fenced and well maintained, with most providing facilities for dressage and show and cross country jumping. The health and safety of the courses are **checked prior to every use or event**. Access to the wider public is available but this is closely managed via a booking and payment system, which includes signing of waivers. Access is limited due to the areas being fenced off and inaccessible to the general public.

The fees for hire are small – ranging from \$10 per horse per day to use the grounds and \$50 to use the dressage arena at Springston Club; \$15 per horse per hour at West Melton Weedons Club through to \$20 per horse at Waihora Pony Club.

Currently, there is no pony club operating in the Hororata area, or that uses the Hororata cross-country equestrian course for pony club activities. Therefore, the Hororata course has no affiliation or membership to NZPCA Inc. No NZPCA affiliated events or activities are held at the Hororata site therefore, it is unlikely that any of the health and safety templates and guidance have been completed for the course or are currently being followed or implemented.

In addition, a number of private providers are popping up through the District, offering private hire to users and/or riding and jumping lessons. In Selwyn, the known facilities include:

- Lincoln Riding School (Lincoln)
- Selwyn Equestrian Centre (Burnham)
- Holly Farm Equestrian (Leeston)
- Scarlett Oak Equestrian (West Melton)
- Oakfield Equestrian (West Melton)
- Melton Park Equestrian Centre (West Melton)
- Rolleston Riding School (Burnham)
- Brugs Nicolls Dressage (Burnham)
- Southbridge Equestrian (Southbridge)
- National Equestrian Centre (ESNZ owned – McLeans Island)

What about:

Woodend

Spencer Park

Bottle Lake

West Melton Forest

- All have mixed horse, walker, runner and bike users in same space.

Of the areas list only 3 have Cross country jumps

Very poorly researched

4 qualified ppl in Canterbury to do this, why are then not involved in looking at Hororata? ?

Bangor and West Melton used in last 6 months

Regulations and Guidelines

There are a range of regulations and guidelines set by the governing bodies that affiliated members are required to follow. These range from general guidelines and health and safety requirements but also guidelines and requirements for the design and build of equestrian courses.

While no club exists in Hororata, the Council should be actively promoting and supporting the implementation of these to ensure the health and safety of horses and people is protected. The key regulations Council should be familiar with and actively following include:

- ESNZ A Guide to Cross Country Course Design
- ESNZ General Regulations
 - Article 132: Abuse of Horses
 - Article 136: Disclaimer of Liability
 - Chapter 10: Risk Management, Health and Safety
 - Article 149: Guidelines for Organising Committees
 - Article 150: Health and Safety at Events
 - Article 151: Protective Headgear
- ESNZ Veterinary Regulations
 - Article 2: Horse Fitness to compete
 - Article 4: Desensitised and Hypersensitised Limbs
- NZ Pony Club Association Inc General Regulations
 - Clause 16: Dress Code which outlines the requirements for body protectors and helmets
 - Clause 19: Gear Safety Inspections
 - Clause 20: Concussion and Falls / Accidents
 - Clause 24: Minimum Standards of Medical Cover
 - Clause 26: Health and Safety
 - Clause 27: Welfare of the Horse

This is all only relevant to competitions where the event organizer has responsibility to people attending their event. Not causal ride at your own risk

Problem Identification and Advice

There are clearly two problems that Council needs to investigate further and look to resolve, and the second problem cannot be addressed, until the first has been resolved by Council.

Firstly, is the current facility safe for horses and riders to use, and does it meet the requirements for cross-country courses as outlined by ESNZ and NZPCA Inc?

Council has sought advice on the first question from (until recently), FEI and National Course designer and previous ESNZ Board Chair Nick Pyke, as well as Don Robertson, the Convenor of the National Equestrian Centre in Christchurch. Julian Bowden, CEO ESNZ and Samantha Jones, CEO NZPCA have also been consulted in the preparation of this paper.

Over the past four years, both Don and Nick have walked the Hororata course and both expressed concerns then, and now, verbally and in writing as to their high level of concern for the health and safety of horses and riders using the course at Hororata reserve. Both noted the following issues and concerns in relation to the course

- Limited repairs and maintenance appear to have been undertaken for some time
- They viewed the course as unsafe around 4 years ago, but no significant work has been done to replace or upgrade jumps. It is likely that it would require significant investment by the Council to bring the course up to an appropriate standard. This would also then need ongoing checks and management to ensure health and safety was maintained

- The course was not designed by or been checked by an approved ESNZ assessor *Only needed for competition*
- The jumps have not been designed as per the ESNZ Cross Country Course Design guidelines which puts horse welfare and safety at high risk
- *Incorrect, majority of the jumps are fixed to the group* **None of the jumps are fixed to the ground** – which is a requirement to ensure a horse doesn't flip the jump if it misses. This must be undertaken by someone qualified to secure and attach the jumps. The jumps at Hororata are moveable and not fixed to the ground *Moveable jumps are heavy and horse would need to be 2 tonne to move them!*
- The ground quality in front and behind the jumps has not been assessed as safe. This is important as the horse can lose footing if the ground is uneven before or after the jump *Casual riders assess this themselves*
- The current Council signage is inadequate and does not currently reference the health and safety requirements and standards that must be adhered to for the use of helmets and back/body protectors. This signage also fails to provide adequate warning to pedestrians and other users of the park that horses could be in the park *Asked SDC to updated signage in Feb 2021 - no action was taken*
- *Gates to the road can be closed - there are only 2 of them!!* The lack of fencing around the trotting track and the equestrian course is inadequate and as a minimum, ESNZ would expect these areas to be fully fenced and gated to protect the safety of the public and the horses.
- *We have the skills within the community to manage but since Feb 2021 SDC has blocked us* In their view, a Council should not be running or managing these type of facilities as they lack the skills, expertise, and capacity to give it the time, management, and assessment that this requires. These are best managed by Pony Clubs who have the skills and experience to do this effectively

Based on their advice, they have made the recommendation to Council staff that the course should be closed immediately until such time as the jumps can be assessed and the ESNZ Facilities Strategy be completed (circa 6 months).

Council staff also sought legal advice from Buddle Findlay regarding the level of risk that Council should assume through operating this facility. Their informal advice is that they agree with the approach recommended by ESNZ to close the course immediately, and they would have provided the same recommendation based on the health and safety risk by having the course open.

Should Council make the decision in the longer term to continue to operate the course, Buddle Findlay should be further consulted for a formal opinion as to whether the Council should and/or could operate this facility in line with health and safety legislation and requirements.

While the course is temporarily closed, Council must consider the following further issues created by an unsafe course

1. What level of funding is Council prepared to invest in this course to ensure it meets all health and safety requirements for horses and riders?
2. Given this is the only facility of its kind in the country (that is unfenced and completely open to the public in a public reserve, with no links to an affiliated ESNZ facility or NZPCA club), should this be a facility provided for by Council on Reserve land? *What about West Melton, MaCleans Island, Spencer Park. Bottle Lake????*
3. What level of investment is Council prepared to commit in the long term to ensure the facility is maintained and kept to a standard deemed safe for horses and riders?
4. What is the risk to Council if the facility was no longer provided for and if the jumps were removed from the Domain?

5. Given that there are a number of private providers and Pony Clubs in the region, affiliated to NZPCA Inc which offer affordable casual bookings for use, is a public facility at Hororata necessary?

Secondly, if Council wishes to continue to provide this facility, **how will the Council manage the operations of the cross-country course going forward, to ensure all legislative requirements and health and safety requirements of the governing bodies are met?**

- Is Council happy to fence a significantly large area of the Hororata Reserve to separate the trotting track and the equestrian course, and what impact would this have on the wider operations of the reserve for other activities which require vehicle movements and access? *Include the committee in the discussion they already have a fencing plan which would solve the problem and help other activities run*
- Is Council comfortable to invest the level of funding required to make the course safe and continue to ensure it's safe? This may include new jumps (est. at \$1,00 per jump – of which 55 currently are in place), as well as fencing, expert checks and ongoing repairs and maintenance
- What will be the charges for use of the facility? Will this be cost recovery to fully cover R&M or will this be rate-payer subsidised? *Why is it different to other recreational activity areas the SDC is happy to pay for with no charge??*
- Who will undertake the bookings for use? *Could be managed through hororata.org.nz very easily*
- What health and safety plans will be put in place such as risk assessments, identification and management, participant waivers?
- Who will undertake regular health and safety checks to ensure the jumps are safe to use for horses and people? *Appoint someone in the community*
- Who will monitor participant use to ensure that ESNZ and NZPCA policies are being followed (such as helmet, body protector and horse welfare requirements? *Do you monitor a skateboard park or bike area for this??*
- Who will determine the capability and skill of the hirer to ensure they have the equestrian skills to use the course?
- Will participants be able to sign a waiver for use and how will this be managed? Will this be enough for Council to meet its OSH and health and safety requirements by providing the facility for use? *Yes horse riders are used to this system*
- Does Council want this upgraded to a certain standard (such as CCN65 or CCN80 level or to CCN95 or CCN105/CCN1* level) so that it is available for ESNZ/NZPCA events? *Don't run events, casual use only*
- Are Council comfortable with assuming all the risk for the facility given there is no pony club in the area (or potentially little appetite to establish one)?
- How and where will near misses/incidents and/or accidents be reported to? How will these be followed up? *Do you do this for a skate or bike park??*
- Does Council have the skill set and risk appetite to manage this facility on a daily basis? Is there the level of staffing required and is Council prepared to invest further resources to support the level of administration required to run a facility of this nature (that is likely to have minimal use)?

In determining the best operational model going forward, Council will need to consider and address the following issues outlined by a number of sources, including the governing bodies for the sport, to ensure that the course remains safe for horses, riders and other users of the public accessing the Domain.

Initial Recommendations

Considering the advice received from the current governing bodies (ESNZ and NZPCA Inc), it is recommended that the following actions are undertaken immediately until the future of the course is determined:

- Immediately close the course to all use, providing some clear and key messaging around the concerns and reasons for this and the work that will be undertaken to assess the future of the course. Council Reserves staff to move the jumps together and store them so they are unable to be used. *Do not move the jumps!!*
- Develop and erect new temporary signage – outlining closure of the course and the rationale why.
- Prepare and send a letter to the Community Committee and release information via social media channels and other Council communication platforms
- SDC engage and work with ESNZ on the development of their Facilities Strategy to determine the future role of Hororata in this strategy.
- Investigate options for having a fenced public hacking area in the park as opposed to a cross-country course in future.
- Have a formal assessment undertaken of the site urgently, as was recommended in February 2021 to assess and make recommendations on the health and safety of the jumps and footings within the Domain. This needs to be paid for by Council and undertaken by an appropriately qualified professional, as endorsed by ESNZ.
- Undertake a value assessment of the jumps and assets within the Domain and ensure these are added to Council's AMS
- Investigate the opportunity for establishing a Pony Club in the District or for an existing affiliated Pony Club (under the NZPCA Constitution) to take on the management of the Hororata Domain course. Also investigate the option and requirements of Selwyn District Council becoming affiliated to NZPCA Inc under their 'casual membership' option in their constitution
- Ensure all future signage accounts for changes in the requirements to wear body protectors which came into force in August 2021. NZPCA has a Body Protector Policy requiring all riders, from August 2020 to wear body protectors that meet at least one of the following standards:
 - BETA EN13158 2009(or newer) Level 3
 - ASTM F1937. *For competition*
- Prepare a Report to Council outlining that the course should be closed and the rationale behind its closure.
- Prepare options for the operations of the cross-country course, should Council ownership and operations continue post-health and safety assessment and ESNZ Facilities Strategy. This will need to look at options for ongoing repairs and maintenance, health and safety documentation and checks, monitoring of health and safety requirements of riders, whether payment for use is required, and how bookings and payments will be taken (considering existing project on bookings for outdoor/reserves spaces, and the need for a more robust charging structure to cover repairs and maintenance).

Appendix A: Timeline of Events

The Hororata Equestrian Cross-Country course was opened in April 2008 by Mark Todd. The timeline of events and activities leading up to its development and subsequent operations (to the best of my knowledge and ability with the information provided) is summarised below:

Date / Time	Activity / Event
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserve Committee secure \$17,500 from Pub Charity and \$20,000 from Canterbury Community Trust towards construction of the cross-country track Selwyn District Council contributed funds as reimbursement to support the construction of the jumps by local builders
2010	Hororata Reserve Management Plan approved by Council. The Plan outlined plans to promote a number of new activities in the reserve including Equestrian. The Plan states that "the equestrian course will help generate income with riders contributing \$5 per event and the course being marketed to Pony and Riding Clubs throughout Canterbury". A subsequent action identified in the Plan was to "complete application for funding for the completion of the equestrian course, walking tracks and children's cross-country track (\$40,000 received).
2012	Glenroy Windwhistle Pony Club is established in the area (although unclear whether they used Hororata Domain)
2013	Appears a second grant from Canterbury Community Trust of \$15,000 for additional jumps
2013	Council financial systems show some expenses to update and replace/add some jumps
2016	Glenroy Windwhistle Pony Club dissolved due to lack of membership and committee. Noted on website that it was to be merged with Bangor Branch and future events would be held at least once a year at Hororata
2016 2019/2020	Master Plan and Community Centre Concept developed for Hororata Reserve developed for SDC and GO Hororata. Community consultation during this process identified that the trotting track and cross-country course were important assets and features of the reserve that should be retained and further enhanced
2018 <i>Show us this report</i>	<p>Eventing Canterbury undertake a viewing of potential facilities to use outside of NEC following the Amberley cross country site becoming unavailable. Hororata was viewed as part of this process to determine potential suitability for use of ESNZ and PCNZA events but they concluded that the site would take massive investment to make the footings and the jumps safe. They identified risks of ownership and no horse type organization being established in the region.</p> <p>ESNZ cross country course designer raised concerns around the low level of safety in place at the facility and the very poor standard of the track and jumps.</p> <p>Council spends around \$400 for danger signage and labour on the track</p>
2020	Decision to disband Reserve Committee made in Dec 2020, at which point concerns over the future management and fee collection of the cross-country course was raised <i>Decision made by Council, opposed by committee</i>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early in the year concerns raised over the health and safety of the jumps – Hororata Committee meets with SDC Reserve staff Course subsequently inspected by SDC reserve staff along with members of the committee and local equestrian users (plus a local builder) Feb - Agreed that Council was to fund a professional formal assessment of the track, trees and jumps to ensure they are safe for users. This was not actioned Reserve Committee members were asked to rope off / remove any unsafe jumps

Surly you know how much you put in \$4 - \$5 max

From opening until 2016 or 17 the fee was \$10. For many years this money was never recorded by council in a separate account despite several requests by me and Penny to do so. At some point an estimate was made regards this income and a substantial amount of money was used to help fund the tennis pavilion.

Amounts in this report are for the trotting track.

Local Pony Club started in early 80's, did not always operate on the Domain

Why not!

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April – June 2021 – as assessment of all the jumps is undertaken as above with photos prepared as well as recommendations. This was provided to SDC Reserves staff • SDC advised that no fee was to be charged until the jumps were all up to standard nor was any maintenance work to be undertaken by members of the public. Any issues were to be reported to Council for action • Signage amended to remove reference to paying a fee for use, signing a waiver and the key contact for the Reserve Committee (chairman name and phone number) • Sicon (now Corde) undertake some basic maintenance work at the domain to tidy up the area at request of Council • New Reserve Management Plan under development
30 June 2022	<p>Reserve Committee dissolved and control for the reserve and activities comes back into Selwyn District Council</p> <p><i>No comment of Go Hororata, committee ended up being completely cut out of this process</i></p> <p>Council walks over the track again and note that significant changes have not been made to the jumps, but tow loops have been added.</p> <p><i>These loops were always there on the moveable jumps as that is how they are moved. They were marked as a hazard by SDC staff in Feb 201</i></p> <p>Contact made with ESNZ and NZPCA Inc for advice on the safety of the current course and options for operation of the facility going forward</p>