



**2017**

# RACEHORSE DEATHWATCH

A report by the Coalition for  
the Protection of Racehorses



**DEADLIEST  
YEAR YET**

# INTRODUCTION

Deathwatch Report 2017 is the fourth annual report that summarises all on-track deaths of racehorses around Australia over the past 12 months. Research and production is by the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses.

This report was initiated because the racing industry does not collate and publish specific information relating to on course horse deaths themselves. From the period 1st of August 2016 to 31st of July 2017 (the racing year), we have monitored every race Australia-wide and gathered data on the deaths of racehorses on Australian racetracks.

**This year the death toll is 137 horses - 4 more than last year.**

In addition to the 137 horses killed on racetracks in the last 12 months, many thousands of horses die every year from racing related injuries off the track in training or they are killed prematurely when they are no longer commercially viable.

The 137 horses that died on track during this period represent 0.38% of the approx 36,000 horses racing each year. Many thousands more disappear or cycle out of the racing industry, also known as *wastage*.

# SOURCES OF DATA

Data for the Deathwatch Report has been gathered from each state's official stewards reports, which are published on the individual state websites, as well as the Australian Racing Fact Book and various media outlets.

However, it is important to note that most states do not report deaths while training or in trials.

From this, it can be drawn that if these deaths were disclosed, the total number of deaths would be far higher.



# KEY FINDINGS

## Catastrophic front limb injury

was the most common cause of death with **75 horses** dying from a range of injuries relating to their front limbs

On average one horse will die every

**2.6 days**

**5 horses collapsed and died**

11 horses died from cardiac issues

**6 horses died from massive bleeds** **NSW had the most deaths (59) followed by Victoria (26)**

4 horses died in jumps races

**63 horses had raced at 2 years old**

**5** was the most dangerous age

**Morphettville** was the most lethal track



# CAUSES OF DEATH

Of the 137 horses that died on track, by far the most common cause of death was catastrophic front limb injury with 75 occurrences.

Catastrophic hind limb injury was the second leading cause of death with 20 instances. Other causes of death were bleeds and cardiac failure.

# COMPARISON TO OTHER YEARS

<b>Year</b>	<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
2014	125	1 death every 2.9 days
2015	116	1 death every 3 days
2016	132	1 death every 2.8 days
2017	137	1 death every 2.6 days





# CASE STUDIES

## **Almoonqith** *Sydney Cup tragedy*

Almoonqith was a 7-year-old gelding, who started racing as a 2-year-old gelding in America.

After being brought to Australia, he was very successful, making almost \$1million in prize money for his connections.

However, on 8 April 2017, Almoonqith broke his off-hind cannon bone while running in the prestigious Sydney Cup, and was killed right there on the track.

## **Harmonic Lass** *Raced as a baby*

Harmonic Lass was a 2-year-old filly running in the Wellington Boot. It was just her third time on a racetrack.

During the race, she fractured her near fore fetlock and was killed. Unlike more prestigious racehorses, her death was not spoken about as she had only made around \$4,000.

Her story highlights a huge welfare concern in the

Australian racing industry - racing horses at just 2 years old.

Putting young, underdeveloped racehorses on the racetrack is absolutely culpable. And if they do not suffer catastrophic injuries at a young age, it still pre-disposes them to cumulative injury further on down the track.

## **Finke**

### ***Bleeding to death***

Finke was a 5-year-old gelding who had been racing since 2 years old. After a relatively successful racing career, making over \$300,000 in prize money, his life abruptly ended at Morphettville on 25 Feb 2017.

Finke pulled up from his race distressed, and collapsed in the mounting yard. A necropsy found that he had ruptured his aorta - suffering a massive internal bleed.

## **Wheeler Fortune**

### ***Jumps racing cruelty***

The annual Oakbank Carnival is renowned for its cruel jumps races - which regularly result in the deaths of horses. This year was no exception - with Wheeler Fortune falling over the final hurdle right in front of a crowd of racegoers, including young children.

A photo of him standing with a



dangling front leg injury (which was reported to be a break to his near fore cannon bone) shaped the image of the rest of the Easter Carnival, and once again renewed calls for the 'sport', which is 20 times more dangerous than flat racing, to be banned.

Wheeler Fortune had race as a 2-year-old, and was brought to Australia from New Zealand.

## **I'm Captain Oats**

### ***Never made a race***

If I'm Captain Oats had have died in any state but New South Wales, we would have never known about his death.

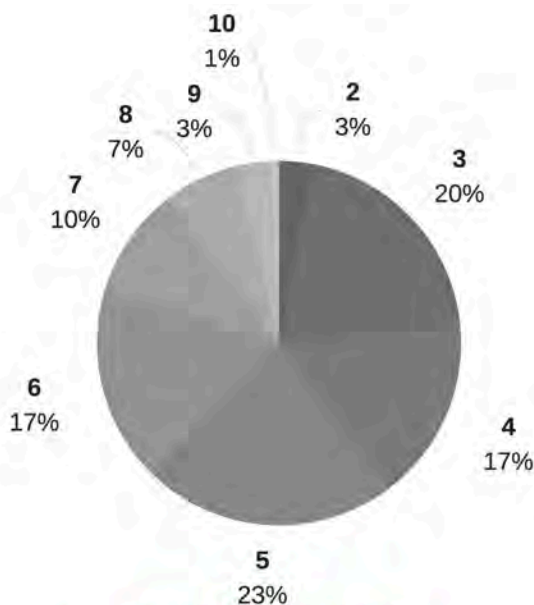
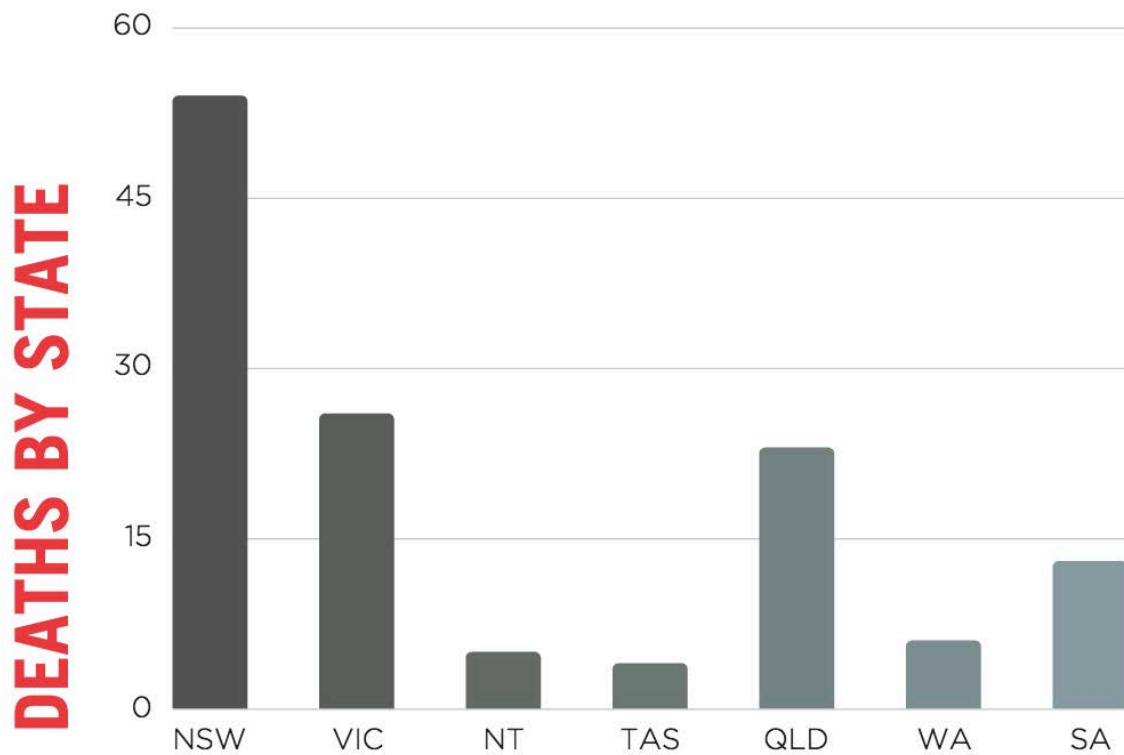
The 2-year-old colt

died while in trackwork on Hawkesbury racetrack, suffering a comminuted fracture to his off fore metacarpus (a catastrophic front limb injury).

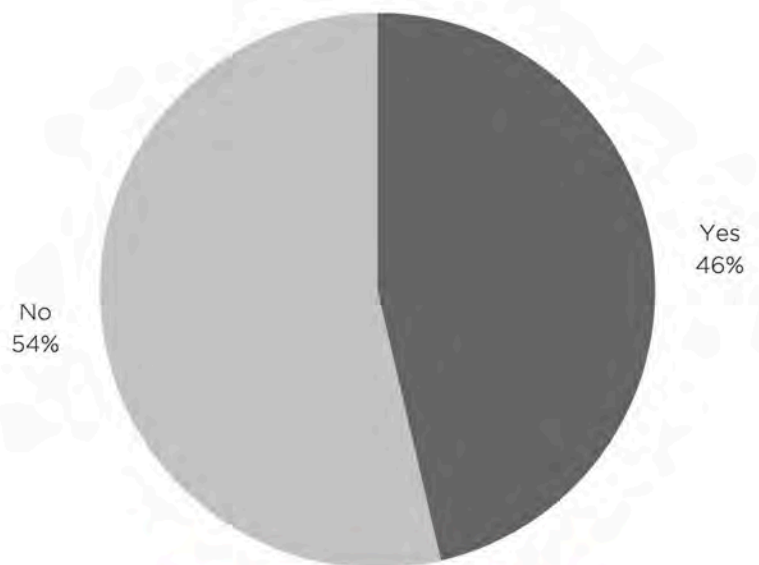
New South Wales is the only state in the country that reports deaths in training and trackwork in their stewards reports. If I'm Captain Oats had have been training anywhere else, his fate would not be public knowledge. Presumably, this is the case for many other racehorses dying outside of official races in every other state.



# STATISTICAL INFORMATION



**DEATHS BY AGE**



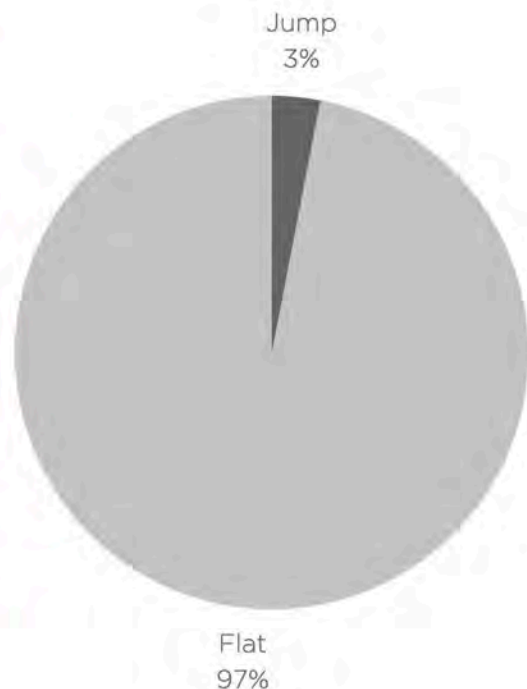
**RACED AT 2YO**

# DEATHS BY CAUSE

CAUSE	NUMBER
Catastrophic front limb injury	75 horses
Catastrophic hind limb injury	21 horses
Bleed	6 horses
Cardiac	12 horses
Collapsed and died	5 horses
Other	18 horses



## DEATHS BY DISCIPLINE





Coolcat Dancer  
Mine Craft  
Desert Land  
Cent To Be Good  
Cee Tee  
Fizza Ma Wizza  
Worth The Wait  
unknown  
Zuprising  
Pencita  
Clarify Claude  
Kiss and Wish  
Chilly Reception  
Warlight  
Secret Stealth  
Redoutable Heart  
Sebrarian  
Weatherly  
Wee Frankie  
Baby Boy  
Above Suspicion  
Dashing Bella  
Eternal Key  
Dunamite  
Montana Man  
Spanish Love  
The Gold Trail  
Lepaute  
Cosmic Pearl  
Mr Andre  
Red Fire Lady  
Caprivi Strip  
Finke  
Artful Jack  
Brown Bob  
Surface To Air  
Couldnotbebetter  
Kestrel  
Lord Burghersh  
Drop On In  
Vital Force  
Wheeler Fortune  
Cool  
Jayzown  
Black Cat Moan

Dragon's Magic  
Wine & Chocolates  
Be the Magic  
Rambling Raider  
Arwoc  
Perfect Weapon  
Miss Golden Globe  
Just Junior  
Swingitlikesayers  
Ronn's Moss  
Cylinder Beach  
She's a Ruby  
Red Magic  
Ready Above  
Unnamed filly  
Hungerford Star  
Swiggin'  
Accepting  
Vite Loni  
Dancing Derina

## IN MEMORIAM

Harare  
In Taipei  
Croissants  
Legally Cool  
Flying Toucan  
Fastnet Thunder  
House of Lords  
Sound Strings  
Vitervo Star  
Crown Him  
Almoonqith  
Orbec  
Pelerin  
Linsang  
Bella Lucinda  
Hikikomori  
Hoshi  
Foreign Fighter  
Simply Ming  
Recompence  
Puissance Decheval  
Heaps Good

Noble Harris  
Cape Londonderry  
The Conspirator  
Lord Lonhroe  
Western Dream  
Mrs Ed Misses Ed  
Rattlesnake Bat  
Stylish Lad  
I'm Captain Oats  
Kirkimack  
Redsera  
Hard Liquor  
Unnamed filly  
The Golden Pig  
Spiritina  
Weekend Shadow  
Real Time  
Zafiro  
Adventure King  
Peace Talks  
Hazy Blur  
Hoagy  
My Girl Ella  
Taiyoo  
Quaternion Eagle  
Jansz  
Gee Gees Free Hero  
Magic Greg  
Nature Bites  
Sidereus Attacks  
Knight Esprit  
True Commitment  
Montague Clan  
Bring Back  
Scasrak  
Elusive Star  
War 'N' Peace  
No When To Hold Em  
Masked Model  
Harmonic Lass  
First Defence  
Conteur  
Fast Cut  
Lubricate  
Da Vine Warrior

This report was written by the Coalition  
for the Protection of Racehorses.

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