**Research fund brings focus to horse welfare**

A new funding source is available for research which has the potential to help horses thrive during their racing careers and beyond.

The Racing and Wagering Western Australia Research Fund is now open and Head of Animal Welfare Dr Anna Smet welcomes applications for racehorse study projects.

“Our aim is to ensure the highest and most up-to-date standards of care for racehorses both while they’re racing and after they retire,” Anna said.

“Our welfare strategy is data driven so we are throwing open the doors for research projects which can provide transparent and dependable information to guide us and those who care for horses in making decisions to safeguard animal wellbeing.

“The new RWWA Research Fund will support projects that enhance the health, welfare and safety of racehorses as well as those that assist horses to move on to lives of ongoing purpose and good health after racing.”

The research fund is the latest in an increasingly wide range of RWWA welfare initiatives and follows the recently established Off the Track WA Community Fund, which supports education and therapy projects where retired racehorses are involved.

The initial round of research funding has $100,000 available and projects eligible to be considered can either focus on welfare for thoroughbred and standardbred horses active in racing and training or those transitioning to retirement.

“Welfare standards are constantly being enhanced and good research gives us the foundation for effective and measurable advances in animal care,” Anna said.

“There are plenty of opportunities for research areas, such as assessing husbandry practices for their welfare impact to horses, injury prevention or interventions which may improve rehoming options for horses when they retire from racing.”

Applications are open for legitimate research projects until 4pm on 5 May 2023.

Further information is available by contacting the Animal Welfare team at animalwelfare@rwwa.com.au.