

1% WELFARE LEVY SPEND –

2025/26 Season End of Year Report

The industry-funded 1% Thoroughbred Welfare Levy provides dedicated funding to support the welfare of New Zealand Thoroughbreds before, during and after racing.

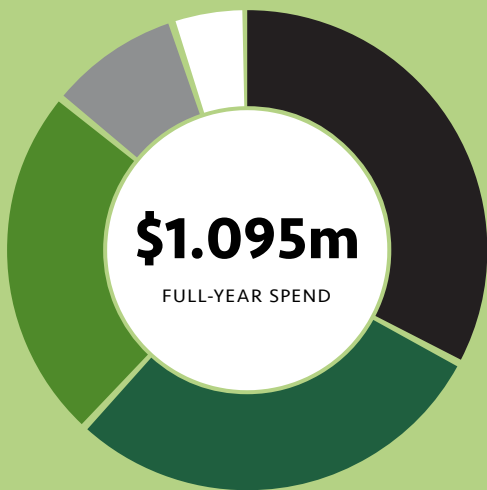
Across the 2025/26 season, \$1.095 million was invested through the Welfare Levy in racing safety and research, retraining and rehoming, initiatives promoting Thoroughbred versatility, direct welfare support, education and traceability.

This end of season report provides an update on activity and expenditure during the fourth quarter of the season and brings together the investment and outcomes delivered across the full 2025/26 year.

The year also marked an important step forward for NZTR's approach to welfare, with the launch of the 2026–2030 Thoroughbred Welfare Strategy, providing the framework that will guide future priorities and investment.

2025/26 AT A GLANCE

WHERE THE 1% THOROUGHBRED WELFARE LEVY WAS INVESTED



- **33%** Racing Safety & Research
- **29%** Retraining & Rehoming
- **24%** Promoting Thoroughbred Versatility
- **9%** Welfare Support & Intervention
- **5%** Education, Engagement & Traceability

\$1.095m

total 2025/26 investment

98.6%

of annual budget utilised

\$233k

invested during Q4

Racing Safety & Research

33% of total Welfare Levy expenditure

\$357,556

FULL-YEAR INVESTMENT

Q4 \$85,541

Q4 update

A further \$85,541 was invested in racing safety and research during the final quarter of the season, bringing total investment in this area to \$357,556 for 2025/26.

Investment continued to support specialist horse ambulance services across New Zealand racing, research contributing to a stronger evidence base for Thoroughbred health and safety, and cremation and transportation services supporting appropriate care following serious racing and training incidents.

Across 2025/26

NZ Horse Ambulance Trust services represented \$269,490 of annual investment, providing specialist emergency response and transport capability when horses are injured or require urgent veterinary attention at racedays and trials.

A further \$71,621 was invested in research during the year, helping improve our understanding of the factors that influence catastrophic injuries, supporting evidence-based improvements to racing, training and veterinary practices.

The Welfare Levy also contributed \$16,445 towards cremation and transportation, supporting the appropriate and dignified management of horses following serious incidents.

Together, this investment supports NZTR's approach to racing and training safety across prevention, emergency response and appropriate care following serious incidents.

2025/26 outcomes

306

race meetings
supported

52

horses transported
or assisted

26

raceday deployments

100%

raceday & trial fatalities
investigated by EMRP

Retraining & Rehoming

29% of total Welfare Levy expenditure

\$321,507

FULL-YEAR INVESTMENT

Q4 \$77,170

Q4 update

During Q4, \$77,170 was invested directly in retraining and rehoming, including \$38,000 in Acknowledged Retrainer fees and \$34,650 through Leg Up Grants. This brought total investment in retraining and rehoming to \$321,507 across the 2025/26 season.

Across 2025/26

Supporting Thoroughbreds to transition successfully from racing remained a significant area of Welfare Levy investment.

Across the year, \$149,752 supported NZTR's Acknowledged Retrainer network, while \$155,228 was provided through Leg Up Grants to contribute towards the needs of horses transitioning from racing.

Further investment supported retrainer resources, safety equipment and other initiatives designed to strengthen the network available to Thoroughbreds leaving racing.

The Acknowledged Retrainer network provides an important pathway for horses requiring professional assessment, retraining and rehoming, while also helping NZTR maintain greater visibility of horses through the transition process.

2025/26 outcomes

260

horses supported

239

horses successfully rehomed

185

Leg Up Grants

9

Acknowledged Retrainers

Promoting Thoroughbred Versatility

24% of total Welfare Levy expenditure

\$267,844

FULL-YEAR INVESTMENT

Q4 \$41,330

Q4 update

A further \$41,330 was invested during Q4 in sponsorship and initiatives promoting the versatility of Thoroughbreds beyond racing. This brought full-year investment across these activities to \$267,844.

Across 2025/26

Creating sustainable opportunities for Thoroughbreds after racing extends beyond the initial retraining and rehoming process. During 2025/26, Welfare Levy investment supported events, sponsorships, clinics and initiatives designed to showcase the versatility of the Thoroughbred and encourage participation across a wide range of disciplines and activities.

This included \$83,327 supporting Thoroughbred versatility initiatives, \$72,598 in OTTB sponsorship, \$41,858 supporting clinics and lessons and \$37,373 supporting Thoroughbreds in polo, alongside contributions to non-athletic opportunities like New Zealand Riding for the Disabled and Anna Rehab.

By supporting opportunities for Thoroughbreds and their owners beyond racing, these initiatives help demonstrate the breed's versatility, strengthen connections between racing and equestrian communities and contribute to long-term demand for Thoroughbreds after their racing careers.

2025/26 outcomes

380

OTTBs in
supported events

34

events supported

6

clinics delivered

153

individual horse/rider
combinations
attending clinics

Welfare Support & Intervention

9% of total Welfare Levy expenditure

\$98,582

FULL-YEAR INVESTMENT

Q4 \$14,231

Q4 update

During the final quarter, \$14,231 was invested in direct welfare support and intervention. This brought full-year investment to \$98,582, providing support for Thoroughbreds requiring additional assistance and enabling NZTR to work alongside relevant regulatory and animal welfare organisations like the RIB, SPCA and MPI where intervention was required.

Across 2025/26

The Welfare Levy provides an important safety net when Thoroughbreds require additional care or intervention.

During the year, \$79,235 supported welfare activity involving MPI, alongside \$8,632 associated with RIB support and \$7,219 supporting SPCA-related activity.

A further \$3,496 supported rescue organisations.

These partnerships help ensure appropriate expertise and support can be accessed when welfare concerns arise and provide pathways for horses requiring additional assistance.

2025/26 outcomes

24

horses directly supported

7

welfare cases supported

4

welfare organisations supported

Education, Engagement & Traceability

5% of total Welfare Levy expenditure

\$49,285

FULL-YEAR INVESTMENT

Q4 \$14,983

Q4 update

Investment in education, communication and traceability increased during the final quarter, with \$14,983 invested during Q4.

The majority of the year's traceability investment occurred during this period, including the purchase of bulk microchip scanners for distribution across the industry in conjunction with the ID My Thoroughbred (IDMYTB) App.

The scanners are intended to make it easier to identify Thoroughbreds and access their information, supporting improved identification and traceability throughout a horse's life.

Across 2025/26

A total of \$49,285 was invested in education, engagement and traceability during 2025/26, including \$34,608 in communication and education initiatives and \$14,677 in Thoroughbred traceability.

A major focus of education and engagement investment during the year was the inaugural National Thoroughbred Week, held from 20 to 24 November. The initiative provided an opportunity to invite the public behind the scenes of the Thoroughbred industry and build greater understanding of the people, environments and care involved throughout a horse's life.

In New Zealand, more than 750 people attended 23 events nationwide, including trackwork mornings, stud and farm visits and aftercare open days. Trainers, stud farms, agistment properties, retrainers, racing clubs and their teams opened their doors to give the public a closer look at the Thoroughbred and the care provided at different stages of their lives.

Traceability investment focused on providing practical tools to improve Thoroughbred identification, including the purchase of bulk microchip scanners for distribution alongside the IDMYTB App. Together, the scanners and app provide a more accessible way to identify Thoroughbreds and strengthen visibility of horses throughout their lives.

2025/26 outcomes

389

microchips scanned
through IDMYTB

15

new IDMYTB accounts

750

National Thoroughbred
Week attendees

23

National Thoroughbred
Week hosts

LOOKING AHEAD

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR THOROUGHBRED WELFARE

The completion of the 2025/26 season coincides with the beginning of the next phase of NZTR's approach to Thoroughbred welfare.

The 2026–2030 Thoroughbred Welfare Strategy, Together for the Thoroughbred, establishes a whole-of-life approach to welfare and provides a clearer framework for future investment, programme development and measurement.

From the 2026/27 season, Welfare Levy investment will increasingly support delivery across six strategic initiatives:

Welfare & Support

Thoroughbred Traceability

Safer Racing & Training

Retraining & Rehoming

Responsible Breeding & Ownership

Education & Communication

The focus will continue to move beyond measuring activity and expenditure alone towards demonstrating the outcomes this investment achieves for Thoroughbreds.

The launch and continued development of Beyond the Track will provide a stronger connection between racing and the wider Thoroughbred community, while improving access to information, support and post-racing pathways.

Other key priorities for the year ahead include strengthening post-racing traceability, evolving NZTR's aftercare programmes, supporting greater responsibility for horses transitioning from racing, continuing investment in racing safety and research, and improving access to practical welfare information and support.

