

PONY CLUB AUSTRALIA FACILITY GUIDELINES

2026



PONY CLUB
AUSTRALIA

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DOCUMENT PURPOSE

The 2026 Pony Club Australia (PCA) Facility Guidelines document has been developed to support Pony Club Australia, state bodies, affiliated clubs, facility owners and operators and government partners in identifying, assessing and enhancing the facilities that underpin Pony Club participation across the country. This document defines what makes a facility fit-for-purpose for Pony Club activities, from local rallies/musters through to major competitions and for all core disciplines throughout the national facility provision network.

The guidelines aim to:

- » Assist clubs in evaluating their current facilities, identifying areas for improvement and prioritising future upgrades
- » Inform local government and facility operators about the infrastructure required to support Pony Club and equestrian activities safely and effectively
- » Provide clear, consistent specifications for key facility components including arenas, courses, stabling, yards, amenities, parking and accessibility
- » Strengthen grant funding applications by outlining recognised national standards for Pony Club facilities
- » Support the development of a self-reporting and data collection framework integrated with Pony Club Australia's Just Go system
- » Enable the categorisation of facilities by capability and competition level to inform strategic planning
- » Contribute to a comprehensive national dataset that maps the location, capability and gaps in the current Pony Club facility network

This document underpins a broader strategic approach to building a sustainable, equitable and high-quality facility network for Pony Club activities across Australia. By supporting consistent standards and capturing facility data in a structured way, these guidelines provide a critical tool for driving investment, improving participation outcomes and shaping the future of Pony Club.

NETWORK CATEGORISATION

The Pony Club Australia Facility Guidelines have been defined largely by activity scale which is overlaid by competition level. The following categories have been used:

- » Rally/Muster facilities
- » Local competition
- » Zone competition
- » State competition
- » National and international competition
- » Riding centres

At each activity scale, guidelines for minimum requirements have been provided and/or a description of the ideal facility at each level.

Disciplines with specific requirements, such as campdrafting or polocrosse, are described separately with consideration of what's needed for skill development, syllabus completion and competition.



FACILITY GUIDELINES

RALLY/MUSTER FACILITIES

A Pony Club rally or muster is a regular gathering or meeting of club members — usually held at a club's home grounds where riders come together to participate in structured equestrian activities, lessons and training. Rallies/musters are core to the Pony Club experience and typically include:

- » Riding instruction across disciplines like dressage, showjumping, cross country or games
- » Horsemanship education covering topics like horse care, safety, tack maintenance and stable management
- » Mounted and unmounted sessions, often aligned with the Pony Club syllabus and certificate levels
- » Social interaction and teamwork, building club spirit and a sense of community among riders, families and volunteers

Rallies/musters are usually held monthly or fortnightly, depending on the club, and cater to all ages and skill levels. They are an essential part of how Pony Clubs teach safe, responsible riding and horse care in a supportive environment.

MINIMUM FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirements to host Pony Club rallies/musters are:

- » Horse proof, safe perimeter fencing containing riding and parking areas
- » Safe riding surface
- » Potable water tap
- » Access road and entrance suitable for horse floats
- » Proximate public toilets
- » Local area plan zoning that supports community use

A safe riding surface is described as level and even, consistent throughout, non-compacted yet stable underfoot, providing appropriate grip without being slippery or jarring, well-drained to prevent pooling and bogging, low in dust and free from debris or foreign objects and be enclosed or marked with safe, unobstructed boundaries. For more information see the surfaces section of this document.

A Pony Club muster facility site is subject to local area plan zoning that supports community use, including activities involving public gathering. This zoning aligns with the intended use of the site for events, recreational activities and general public access, confirming its suitability for ongoing or expanded community-based use. Typically clubs have leases, right of use agreements, hire arrangements, or in rare cases own the club grounds. Often the land is owned by the local government or is state government reserve land held in trust by the local government. Given these tenure arrangements, permission or approval is generally required before a club undertakes facility improvements.

IDEAL FACILITY PROVISION

Ideally a facility to host Pony Club rallies/ musters would have, in addition to the minimum requirements:

- » Riding arena with >4,800m² with a minimum long size of 80m
- » Fenced learn to ride area with a minimum 20m x 30m (600m²) (alternatively provision of a round yard)
- » Area with undulating terrain but still safe footing for cross country training incorporating a small number of obstacles at varying heights (may be portable)
- » Covered area for gathering, learning and spectator shade provision
- » Power and water
- » 2 wash bays
- » Small canteen/servery window or similar catering space
- » Storage sufficient for at least a dressage arena fence and markers, one full jumping kit and one full set of gymkhana equipment (approximately 50m²)
- » PWD toilet facilities and all-gender toilet option
- » Public announcement system
- » >3,200m² fenced horse float vehicle parking (up to 40 horse vehicles)
- » At least 20–40 day yards (ideally 4m x 4m) with proximate water tap

An ideal Pony Club muster facility can deliver training and local competition level for at least the following disciplines:

Campdraft (dry work only)

- » Combined training
- » Dressage
- » Equitation
- » Eventing (training only unless course available)
- » Horseball
- » Mounted games (potentially with modified layout if the arena size is insufficient)
- » Polocrosse (training only unless arena size is sufficient)
- » Pony racing (jump start education and possibly familiarisation)
- » Ride to time
- » Show riding
- » Showjumping
- » Stockman's challenge (dry work only)
- » Tentpegging
- » Tetrathlon with phase specific activities (like swimming) held off site

FACILITY MANAGEMENT, SAFETY AND OPERATIONS

WAYFINDING AND GENERAL SAFETY

Safety, risk management and user experience are critical considerations in the design and operation of a Pony Club facility. Clear directional signage should be installed throughout the site to help all users, especially visitors, navigate easily to arenas, tie-up areas, parking, amenities and emergency exits. This improves day-to-day usability and supports coordinated responses during emergencies.

The entire site should be enclosed or have clearly marked boundaries, with regular inspections and maintenance of fencing and gates to ensure they remain safe and functional. Separated traffic zones for vehicles, horses and pedestrians must be clearly defined to avoid collisions and animal stress. Adequate emergency vehicle access must also be maintained at all times.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Pony Club facilities should adopt simple and proactive risk management practices according to the PCA or state body handbook. A risk register can help identify, track and mitigate hazards over time, while all incidents or near misses (whether involving people, horses or property) should be reported and recorded. Prominent signage should display emergency contact information, including site address, GPS coordinates, nearest road access and emergency services numbers, particularly important for rural locations.

VOLUNTEER AND USER INDUCTION

To support a safe and welcoming environment, clubs should provide a basic site induction for new riders, volunteers and visitors. This might include a site map, key safety messages, emergency procedures and behavioural expectations around horses. Clubs may also consider adopting a simple code of conduct to reinforce respectful, responsible use of shared spaces and resources.

HORSE CARE FACILITIES

Facilities for horse care must prioritise both safety and functionality.

- » Wash bays should be well-drained, slip-resistant and situated away from high-traffic zones. Aggressive cooling with cold water is the primary method for managing heat stress in horses. It's recommended to have multiple cooling stations with continuous water supply for high-risk conditions. Facilities should allow simultaneous cooling of several horses to prevent delays in treatment during hot weather or after strenuous activity. An overhead swinging arm for the hose is ideal for safety and usability.
- » Feed and tack storage must be secure, dry and organised to avoid clutter or trip hazards.
- » Shelter options (natural or constructed), should be provided in turnout areas or arena side to protect horses from sun, wind or rain.
- » First aid kits for both horses and humans must be well-stocked, easily accessible and regularly checked.
- » A designated measuring bay and swabbing box or yard to support event day welfare and compliance requirements.

CLEANLINESS AND SITE PRESENTATION

A tidy and well-presented facility is essential for safety, functionality and community pride. The grounds should be kept free from:

- » Overgrown grass or weeds
- » Rubbish or manure build-up
- » Excess, broken or unused equipment

Rubbish bins should be provided throughout the site and emptied regularly. Clubs are encouraged to host routine working bees and maintenance rosters to support general upkeep and complete larger maintenance tasks.

BIOSECURITY MEASURES

Good biosecurity practices are essential when horses are moved between properties. Facilities should provide clear guidance on:

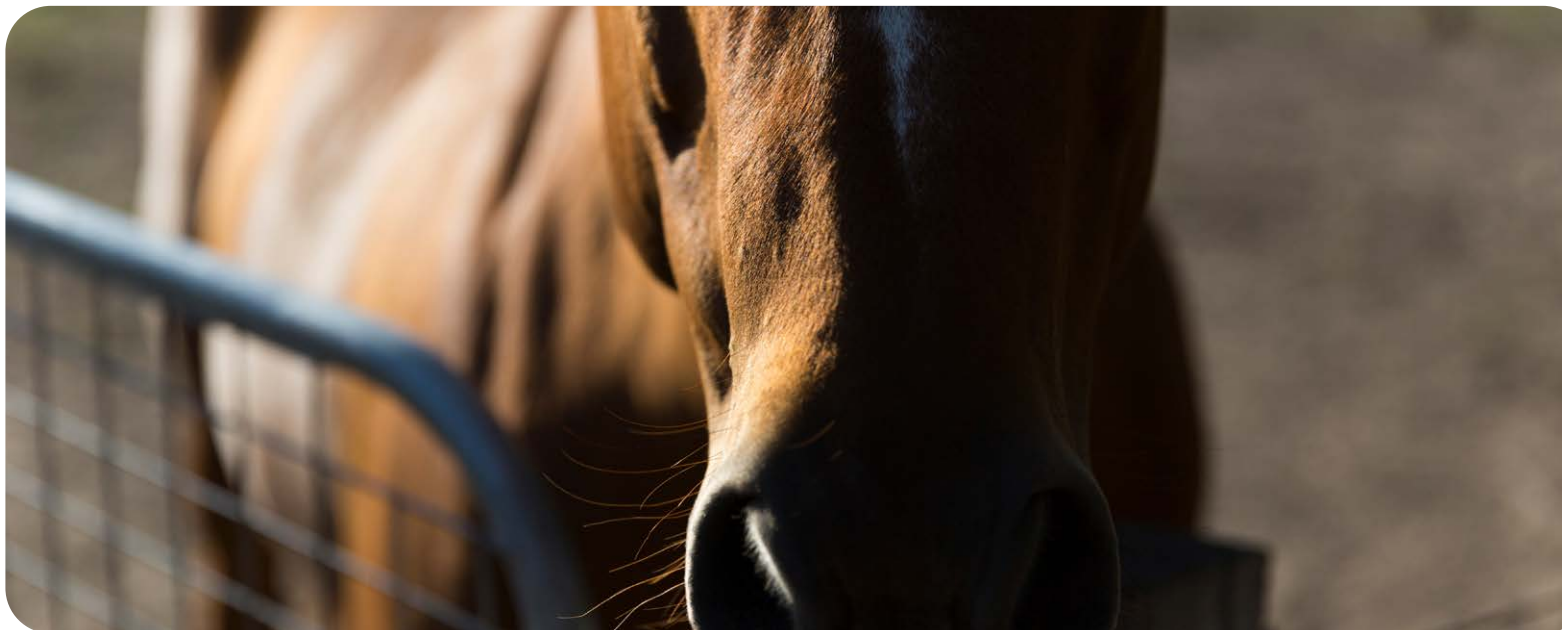
- » Manure and waste management during events
- » Avoiding shared use of water and feed containers
- » Encouraging all users to clean tack, equipment and floats before and after attending
- » Hand hygiene stations and signs can help promote awareness.

Clubs may also choose to implement a biosecurity plan for larger events or outbreaks.

MANURE MANAGEMENT

Effective manure management is critical.

- » Manure must be removed daily from arenas, tie-ups and stables
- » Storage areas should be located away from flood-prone or runoff-sensitive locations
- » Clubs should implement a removal or compost reuse system to reduce build-up and support sustainability



ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL USERS

To promote inclusive participation, Pony Clubs should consider the needs of people with physical, sensory and cognitive differences. In addition to accessible toilets and mounting aids, facilities should:

- » Use clear, high-contrast signage
- » Design quiet zones or low-stimulation areas near arenas
- » Provide flexible spaces that support carers or assistance animals where needed
- » Provide accessible car and float parking with easy access to the riding area

These measures ensure the whole community can feel welcome and supported.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Environmental responsibility supports long-term facility viability and tenure security. Pony Club grounds should manage:

- » Stormwater runoff, especially from arenas and wash bays
- » Use of water-efficient systems such as timed taps or irrigation control
- » Designated recycling and waste bins
- » Manure composting and reuse where feasible

Shade planting, habitat buffers and eco-friendly materials can also enhance the natural character and sustainability of the facility.

ASSET MAINTENANCE AND RECORD KEEPING

Regular asset maintenance supports safety and the long-term function of club facilities. All clubs should maintain a maintenance schedule and log to record tasks and inspections, such as:

- » Test and tag of electrical equipment
- » Air conditioner servicing
- » Pest control
- » Fence, gate and fixture inspections
- » Toilet and septic servicing
- » Arena surface maintenance

Clubs should also manage a key register to track access to secure areas, ensuring only authorised individuals can unlock storage rooms, offices or first aid facilities.

A proactive maintenance approach helps reduce long-term costs, manage risk and ensure a welcoming, well-run facility for all users. It is important to understand and act on the maintenance obligations if specified within a club's tenure arrangement. If these obligations are shared, clear communication with other parties is essential.



OPTIONAL CLUB LEVEL FACILITIES

AGISTMENT

An ideal Pony Club agistment facility is safe, secure and co-located with club grounds, offering well-fenced paddocks, reliable water, shelter and access to shared facilities. It supports responsible horse care, easy supervision and encourages regular participation in club activities.

A common recommendation in Australia is about 0.4–0.6ha of well-maintained pasture per horse. However, this can vary depending on factors like pasture quality, climate, soil type and whether supplementary feeding is provided.

For Pony Club agistment, where horses may be stabled or fed regularly, a smaller land area can work if managed carefully.

Local laws set by local government authorities may specify land provision for keeping horses and should be referred and adhered to over and above these guidelines.

Provision of agistment should not exclude the use of riding arenas for all members on a daily basis. If horses are agisted in paddocks with cross country courses within them, yard facilities should be provided to contain horses during instructed training activities and this should be coordinated with agistees.

Agistment stables should meet the minimum requirements for enclosed covered stables.

OTHER

Depending on the facilities available at club grounds, the club may be able to offer a wide range of Pony Club activities. For more information, see the Discipline specific sections of this document.

ACCOMMODATING HORSES

Stables or day yards are used to safely secure horses during competitions in preference to tying (or tethering) to a horse float or fence. Stables and day yards can be multi-used by all equestrian disciplines.

Stables are generally covered, with solid walls and concrete base filled with a bed of wood shaving, sawdust or similar material. Stables house horses for a longer period of time (overnight or longer) and provide all-weather protection. Day yards are a simpler, lower cost alternative to stables and depending on their size and construction can be used for one day only or longer term in some situations.

Stables should be of sufficient size that a horse can comfortably lay down overnight without the risk of injury. All passageways should provide sufficient room to enable horses to be led safely past others. The PCA Horse Welfare Policy recommends a stable with area not less than 12m² and at least 2.4m roof height for the average horse.

While 12m² is the minimum size recommended by PCA, it is often more practical to build to house larger horses, as constructing smaller boxes can be a false economy over the life of the facility. However, if using larger stables to house ponies, ensure belly rails are appropriately sized and secure for smaller animals to prevent injury. Where permanent lower rails are not feasible, lunge ropes or similar flexible barriers can be installed at a lower height to help contain smaller ponies safely.

Day yards can also provide an overnight-stay option. For this to occur, the ideal size is up to 4m x 4m, depending on fencing type, and should ensure horses can move away from each other if challenged over the fence. Covered day yards provide a lower cost stable option.

SURFACES

An arena surface can compromise horse and rider safety if horses are prone to slip, trip or fall, making arena surface a very important aspect of equestrian facility provision.

Generally for most Pony Club disciplines and activities a turf (grass) riding surface is sufficient and it should ideally be level and even, consistent throughout, non-compacted yet stable underfoot, providing appropriate grip without being slippery or jarring, well-drained to prevent pooling and bogging, low in dust and free from debris or foreign objects. Grass surfaces require regular minor and major maintenance which may include mowing, weed control, irrigation, fertilisation, aeration and top dressing with appropriate materials. When establishing new or improving existing surfaces, earthworks may be required to establish a level surface.

As competition levels rise, discipline demands increase or arena use becomes intensive, a sand or sand–synthetic surface becomes a more desirable option.

When used extensively, grass arenas are difficult and costly to maintain to ensure they remain level, even, consistent and free from compaction. While sand arenas address many of these issues, they still require regular maintenance to perform reliably.

Higher level dressage competitions (there are 10 levels) require a higher quality surface because the paces are more collected and extended and some of the movements are lateral (sideways) and rotational. These movements put more pressure on the horse's body and the surface becomes

critical to safely achieve high performance. The jumping surface, at higher levels, must respond to even higher loading rates than dressage due to the speed between jumps, the impulse required at take off and the landing velocity. Other horse sports, such as barrel racing and reining, involve sharp turns, circles, rapid changes of speed and direction and sliding stops. For these sports, the balance must be met between providing enough resistance to prevent the horse from falling but not too much resistance (with depth or density) that tendon injuries occur or in the case of reining, the sliding stop cannot be freely performed.

A purpose built arena should always have a base and a top layer. Depending on the composition of the top layer, and the design of the arena, there can also be a middle layer which most permanent arenas have. Traditionally a rigid base layer, which provides a foundation over the underlying soil, is used, much like a road base used for highway construction. Drainage will be accommodated by the base layer. The top layer provides the horse with an even and stable surface on which to work.

The top layer performs differently and has different ideal depths, compaction, looseness, fluffiness and moisture content depending on the materials used—these differences are created by the type of sand used (grain size and cleanness) as well as the additives applied and the maintenance approach. The properties of the top layer defines its suitability for each equestrian discipline.

FENCING

The fencing required around the arena perimeter differs depending on the discipline and often compromises are made. Safe livestock proof fencing is also required around the facility perimeter and the horse vehicle parking area.

Disciplines which include cattle (e.g. rodeo, cutting, campdrafting, working cow horse) require cattle proof fencing which is higher, more robust and requires more rails or even rubber belting.

Arenas used for riding lessons are ideally smaller (for example 30m x 30m) and enclosed by a simple rail fence (>1.4m high) for safety. Round yards can also be used for this purpose and tend to have higher, closed-in fences (>1.65m high).

Fencing may function in a dual role to contain the arena surface materials and it is common to line fences with rubber belting for this purpose. Alternatively arena surfaces are contained by in/on-ground boards.

For some disciplines, larger participation spaces may be divided up with simple temporary barriers such as PVC piping or bunting (depending on the competition rules) to define multiple arenas within a larger space. For the purpose of temporary fencing, stakes should not be driven into arena surfaces as they can cause permanent and severe damage to the base layer, compromising safety and increasing the risk of injury; traffic bollards with weighted bases are a suitable alternative to stakes as temporary fencing uprights.

The position of the judges and spectators, and the position of access gates, should always be considered as part of arena fencing.

Ponies should be considered when determining appropriate fencing design since they are inclined to slip out underneath rails which are not positioned low enough. Fencing with only two rails (top rail and belly rail) may not be sufficient to contain some ponies.

SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS

A Pony Club facility that supports volunteers should be thoughtfully designed to make their contributions easier, safer and more enjoyable. Storage areas should be well-organised, clearly signed and accessible. A dedicated storage space for equipment commonly used during events, located as close as possible to where it will be used, will reduce set up and pack down time. Canteens and serveries positioned with clear sightlines to arenas allow volunteers to stay engaged with the event while fulfilling their roles. Where space is limited, day yards should be prioritised for volunteers to ensure their horses are safely contained while they assist. Shaded seating areas, access to clean toilets, and simple creature comforts such as hot water, tea and coffee facilities also contribute to a more positive experience. Clear signage, volunteer-specific parking and easy-to-navigate site layouts reduce stress and make it easier for new volunteers to participate. Ultimately, facilities that value and accommodate volunteers help strengthen club culture, build capacity and ensure the smooth running of equestrian activities.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Pony Club facilities that support riders and spectators with disabilities (PWD) must be inclusive, accessible and thoughtfully designed. This includes reserving the closest day yards and float parking spaces for PWD, with clear signage and safe, level access to arenas and amenities. Accessible mounting blocks, ramps or purpose-built mounting platforms are essential to support riders with limited mobility. Pathways should be wide, non-slip and navigable for wheelchairs and mobility aids, even if it is only feasible for these paths to be gravel or firm soil, connecting all key areas including arenas, amenities, viewing areas and the canteen. Toilets must include accessible cubicles with appropriate fixtures and turning space. Spectator viewing areas should incorporate dedicated spaces for wheelchair users and companions, with unobstructed sightlines to the arenas. Tie-up points and wash bays should also have accessible options with firm and even footing. Providing shaded seating, visual and auditory signage, and training for staff and volunteers in disability inclusion, further enhances the facility's ability to welcome and support PWD. An inclusive facility not only enables equitable participation but strengthens the entire equestrian community.



LOCAL COMPETITION

A facility suitable for hosting a small local Pony Club competition (open event with nominations for neighbouring Pony Clubs) should have at least one safe, well-drained riding arena or grassed area with appropriate footing, space for warm up and clearly marked boundaries. It should also offer fenced float parking, basic amenities such as toilets and water access and sufficient open space for yarding or tying up horses. While not elaborate, the venue should allow for safe spectator viewing, equipment storage and a facility to allow basic event coordination, supporting a low-key, community-focused one-day competition, with spectator access planned so it does not cross through horse areas to avoid potential collisions or injury.

MINIMUM FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

A facility which has at least **the ideal facility provision for the delivery of rallies/musters** has the opportunity to deliver a successful local level Pony Club event accepting members from neighbouring Pony Clubs.

IDEAL FACILITY PROVISION

Facility size will dictate the competition size which can be held. The availability of discipline specific infrastructure will limit the provision of competition such as cross country courses or cattle yards.

HORSE VEHICLE PARKING

Horse vehicle parking is a limiting factor determining competition size.

It is not recommended to schedule or marshal competitions in a way that encourages early departure of competitors to free up parking for others. In Pony Club, competitors often also serve as event volunteers, and shared moments such as lunch breaks, march pasts and presentation ceremonies are important in fostering community spirit and connection. Keeping all participants on site supports the inclusive, collaborative values that underpin Pony Club culture.

Parking areas should be relatively flat and designed to allow safe entry, exit and turning manoeuvres. Sufficient space must be provided between floats to allow horses and handlers to move safely between vehicles. Where horses are tethered to floats due to limited availability of day yards or stables, additional spacing is essential to ensure safety and to prevent congestion.

The numbers below assume tightly marshalled parking and 100% usable area so these should be regarded as minimums. In reality, only some day yards may be provided and some bigger vehicles will need to be accommodated.

Competitors/ Horses	With day yards (m ²)	With day yards (ha)	Without day yards (m ²)	Without day yards (ha)
40	3,200	0.32	6,000	0.6
60	4,800	0.48	9,000	0.9
80	6,400	0.64	12,000	1.2
100	8,000	0.8	15,000	1.5

Table 1: Horse vehicle parking
Assumes one horse per float specifically for Pony Club. With other equestrian disciplines ratios up to 1.5 to 2.5 horses per float/truck may be feasibly applied.

ARENA PROVISION

Arena provision is a limiting factor determining competition size.

Dressage

It is assumed for these PCA guidelines that an unlit dressage arena, supported by an additional warm up space can accommodate 40 tests per day provided judges and volunteers don't also become limiting factors. Lower level dressage tests may be completed quicker than upper level tests, however green horses and beginner riders might also need more time between tests. Considering that most horses compete at two levels (e.g. preliminary and novice), each dressage arena supports approximately 20 horses.

Jumping

It is assumed for these PCA guidelines that an unlit jumping arena, supported by an additional warm up space, can accommodate a maximum of 120 rounds¹ per arena per day (including jump offs). Commonly, horses might be in 2 classes and have 3 rounds per day. With this level of participation, each jumping arena can support approximately 40 horses.

Cross Country

Time taken for a cross country course is dependent on the level (course length, number of obstacles and speed). As an example, a 105cm cross country with the following attributes would require a 5 to 6 minute period.

- » Course length: Approximately 2,200 to 2,800 metres
- » Speed requirement: Typically 450–520 metres per minute
- » Optimum time: Usually between 4 minutes 30 seconds and 6 minutes

In some cases competitors can start before the previous competition begins (2 to 3 minute intervals) shortening the time. In these situations, care must be taken in course design to ensure clear visibility and that horse and rider pathways do not cross. Several factors can extend cross country time, including refusals, loss of rhythm or cautious riding. Adverse ground conditions, elevation changes and technical course design can reduce pace. Horse fitness, experience and deliberate time management strategies also impact speed. External delays like course holds or weather may further affect overall time. Judge breaks should also be accounted for. Up to 150 horses per day is a reasonable maximum allowance depending on the circumstances.



¹ A round is one complete trip around the course for a horse in that class.

ZONE COMPETITION

Zone-level Pony Club competitions typically serve as a step between local club events and state-level championships. They bring together clubs within a geographic zone to compete in a structured, team-oriented environment. These events help riders develop competitive experience and build connections beyond their home club and are often state championship qualifier events.

Some common examples of zone-level Pony Club programs or competitions held across Australia include:

Zone Dressage Championships

- » Individual and team tests at varying levels
- » Often used as qualifiers for State Dressage Championships

Zone Showjumping and Jumping Equitation Championships

- » Multiple height classes (e.g. 45cm to 120cm)
- » May include individual and team rounds

Zone incorporating Cross Country including Eventing, Horse Trials, Hunter Trials, Hickstead/ Derby

- » Full one-day eventing or horse trials format including dressage, cross country and showjumping
- » Hunter trials is a single phase cross country and may be in pairs
- » Derby is a long showjumping course that combines natural cross-country-type obstacles with showjumping fences
- » May be used for State team selection or rider qualification

Zone Combined Training

- » A dressage test followed by a single round of showjumping
- » Popular introductory format for eventing

Zone Tetrathlon

- » Involves riding (showjumping or cross country), swimming, running and shooting (laser pistols)
- » Zone level tetrathlons often lead to State/National opportunities

Zone Mounted Games

- » Team-based competition involving mounted relay races and skills games
- » Fast-paced, encouraging teamwork and rider confidence

Zone Gymkhana or Sporting Gymkhana

- » Timed individual and team sporting events (e.g. bending, barrels, flags)
- » Combined with a hack or turnout competition

Zone Quiz (Pony Club Knowledge Competition)

- » Riders compete in teams to answer questions based on the PCA syllabus
- » Encourages horsemanship education and teamwork

Zone Camp or Training Day with Competition Elements

- » Multi-day gatherings that include training sessions, fun competitions or certificate assessments



IDEAL FACILITY PROVISION

It is assumed that zone championships are typically one day events, with participants being relatively local so provision for camping is not usually required. However, camping may be needed where the zone is regional or remote, or where very early start or late finish times increase the likelihood that participants will request to stay on site.

Other than the scale required for arena size, horse vehicle parking and horse accommodation, all other features of an ideal local competition facility are required.

Ideally, a minimum of 9,600m² of arena space and >6,400m² of parking space for at least 80 horses is required, however this will depend on the discipline being offered.

COMPETITION SIZE

The following competition sizes provide a rough guide for the scale and therefore facility requirements of zone championships across the disciplines. If championships are combined (e.g. dressage and combined training), then the number of arenas required will be cumulative.

Event Name	Number of competitors	Number of competition days
Zone Dressage Championships	80	1
Zone Showjumping and Jumping Equitation Championships	120	1
Zone Eventing (Horse Trials) Championships	60	1
Zone Combined Training Championships	60	1
Zone Tetrathlon Championships	40	1
Zone Mounted Games Championships	40	1
Zone Formal Gymkhana or Sporting Championships	120	1
Zone Campdraft Championships	40	1
Zone Camp	50	4

Table 2: Zone competition size

LIMITING FACILITY FACTORS

Facilities hosting zone championships should ideally have the following attributes in addition to competition hosting facilities (administration, catering and amenities):

Event Name	Arenas/ Courses	Arena area	Parking space#	Horses
Zone Dressage Championships	4 dressage arenas includes warm up area	11,200m ²	>6,400m ²	80
Zone Showjumping and Jumping Equitation Championships	3 jumping arenas plus warm up area	13,000m ²	>9,600m ²	120
Zone Eventing (Horse Trials) Championships	Courses up to 110cm 2 dressage arenas 1 jumping arena	5,600m ² dressage 4,000m ² jumping	>4,800m ²	60
Zone Combined Training Championships	2 dressage arenas 1 jumping arena	5,600m ² dressage 4,000m ² jumping	>4,800m ²	60
Zone Tetrathlon Championships	1 jumping arena Large activity area	4,000m ²	>3,200m ²	40
Zone Mounted Games Championships	4 lanes ²	5,800m ²	>3,200m ²	40
Zone Formal Gymkhana or Sporting Championships	6 rings	7,350–15,000m ²	>9,600m ²	120
Zone Campdraft Championships	1 campdraft arena 90 head of cattle	10,000m ²	>3,200m ²	40
Zone Camp	2 dressage arenas 2 other arenas Course if possible Large activity area	5,600m ² dressage 8,000m ² other arena	>4,000m ²	50

Table 3: Zone competition limiting facility factors

Assumptions

Horses are able to be kept in day yards or stables so vehicles marshalled tightly. Alternatively, since only a one-day competition, float tethering may be permissible and therefore an increased parking space would be required. See Table 3.

- » One horse per horse vehicle
- » Two dressage tests per horse per day (1 for eventing and combined training)
- » Three jumping rounds per horse per day
- » Two campdraft rounds per competitor per day
- » For campdraft, one spare beast (steer or heifer) per 8–10 competitors is commonly provided in each camp
- » Gymkhana assumes eight classes in six rings with rotation with rider, Pony Club mount, hack and pleasure classes held across 2 rings and 4 games; noting that in Western Australia a traditional gymkhana would typically include showhorse/hacking, jumping and novelties.

LIGHTING

While lighting is not essential at all Pony Club facilities, it brings considerable benefits by enabling safe riding, training and even competition outside of daylight hours. A lit arena extends the usable hours of a facility, improving scheduling flexibility, supporting attendance for riders with school or work commitments and allowing events or lessons to be held during cooler evening periods in hot weather. Lighting also supports volunteer availability by offering after-hours options for instruction, coaching and event preparation.

If a facility includes a lit arena suitable for evening riding, associated areas such as day yards, toilets, parking areas and walkways should also be lit to ensure safety for horses, riders, volunteers and spectators. Lighting in these areas doesn't need to match arena standards but must provide clear and even coverage without glare or deep shadows.

Lighting design should be carefully planned to minimise light spill and glare, especially near neighbouring properties or roadways. The use of directional, down-facing fittings, timers and shielding can help focus light where it is needed while respecting the amenity of surrounding landholders. Where applicable, clubs should check for local planning requirements or curfews relating to lighting use.

Recommended LUX Levels (guideline only):

Facility Area	Training Level	Competition Level
Riding arena	150–200 lux	300–500 lux
Day yards and tie-ups	50–100 lux	100–150 lux
Toilets and amenities	100 lux	100 lux
Parking areas	20–50 lux	50 lux
Pathways/walkways	20–50 lux	50–75 lux

Table 4: Recommended LUX levels for training and competitions

Lighting systems should be designed with safety, durability and energy efficiency in mind, with solar powered options now often providing a more cost effective solution for many clubs. Motion sensors or timers may help reduce running costs and ensure lights are only used when needed.

COVERED ARENAS

Covered arenas are not a requirement for Pony Club facilities as equestrian is fundamentally an outdoor sport, but they can offer significant benefits. A roofed structure provides an all-weather environment for training, events and instruction, improving rider comfort, surface protection and member experience year-round. While a 60m x 20m cover is sufficient for many activities, a more versatile option is 70m x 30m, allowing for multidiscipline use, including showjumping, games and dressage.

To maximise functionality, covered arenas should include suitable lighting, a surface watering system and safe fencing or kick rails. Cattle proof fencing may also be considered. Facilities should provide safe, all-weather access routes for vehicles to enter arenas for surface maintenance (e.g., grading, watering, or top dressing). This ensures the riding surface remains level, consistent and safe for horses and riders.

Access should also accommodate vehicles towing trailers with jumps, dressage arena markers, or other equipment required for event setup and pack-down. Ideally, this access route should have sufficient turning space for vehicles with trailers.

The substantial capital and ongoing maintenance costs mean these facilities are only viable where high utilisation can be achieved. The overall size of the site, including available float parking and circulation space, directly influences a club's capacity to support larger memberships and host competition events, both of which are critical to justifying the investment in a covered arena.

Where covered arenas are provided, cost recovery models such as user-pays arena hire should be considered. Technology like keypad or app-based access systems can streamline booking and secure entry while reducing administrative overhead.

STATE COMPETITION

State-level Pony Club competitions in Australia vary slightly by state, but generally align with the major disciplines recognised by Pony Club Australia (PCA). Most states hold annual State Championships or State Titles across a range of core disciplines. The following lists the common state-level Pony Club competitions held across Australian states:

- » Dressage State Championships
- » Showjumping and Jumping Equitation State Championships
- » Eventing (Horse Trials) State Championships
- » Combined Training State Championships
- » Tetrathlon State Championships
- » Mounted Games State Championships
- » Formal Gymkhana or Sporting State Championships
- » Quiz (Pony Club Knowledge Competition)

The process for Pony Club zones or clubs to host State Championships varies between states. The process can include an annual expression of interest coordinated by the state Pony Club association. Nominations are assessed based on venue suitability, capacity to host and geographic balance, with successful hosts working closely with the state body to deliver a safe, well-organised event in line with national and state standards.

Ideally, a minimum of 16,000m² of arena space and >9,600m² of parking space for at least 120 horses with provision for overnight camping is required however this will depend on the discipline being offered.

IDEAL FACILITY PROVISION

The following defines the ideal facility requirements for state championship events on top of the ideal requirements for rallies/musters. For all disciplines, overnight camping facilities (toilets and showers), fenced horse vehicle parking areas and horse accommodation (stables or day yards) must be available. Arena and course types and numbers are dependent on the discipline (see below and the Discipline specific section of this document).

CAMPING PROVISION

For toilets, if there is a mix of self contained and non-self contained toilets, in an event style recreational camping setting 1 per 25–30 campers is a reasonable ratio.

For short term campers in event style circumstances, showers can be provided at 1 per 20–25 campers. This compares to the recommendation for commercial holiday parks or high-service sites at 1 per 8–10 campers.

Accessible toilets and showers should also be provided. Non-gendered toilets are ideal. Portable toilets should be considered to temporarily increase the capacity of a facility to cater for events of a scale infrequently held.

For every competitor, it should be assumed they have an average of an additional two companions.

To calculate the number of toilets and showers for a 120 competitor event:

120 competitors plus 240 companions = 360 people

Toilets = 360/30 = 12 toilets

Showers = 360/25 = 15 showers

COMPETITION SIZE

The following competition sizes provide a rough guide for the scale and therefore facility requirements of state championships across the disciplines. If championships are combined (e.g. dressage and combined training), then the number of arenas required will be cumulative.

Event Name	Number of competitors	Number of competition days
Dressage State Championships	160	2–3
Showjumping and Jumping Equitation State Championships	120	2
Eventing (Horse Trials) State Championships	120	2
Combined Training State Championships	100	2
Tetrathlon State Championships	80	2
Mounted Games State Championships	70	2
Formal Gymkhana or Sporting State Championships	170	3
State Campdraft Championships	100	2
State Camp	70	4

Table 5: State competition size

LIMITING FACILITY FACTORS

Facilities hosting state championships should ideally have the following attributes in addition to camping and competition hosting facilities (administration, catering and amenities):

Event Name	Arenas/ Courses	Arena area	Parking space	Horses
Dressage State Championships	8 dressage arenas (includes warm up area)	22,400m ²	>12,800m ²	160
Showjumping and Jumping Equitation State Championships	3 jumping arenas plus warm up area per arena	13,000m ²	>9,600m ²	120
Eventing (Horse Trials) State Championships	Courses up to 110cm 3 dressage arenas 2 jumping arenas (plus warm up area)	8,400m ² dressage 8,000m ² jumping	>9,600m ²	120
Combined Training State Championships	3 dressage arenas 1 jumping arena	8,400m ² dressage 4,000m ² jumping	>8,000m ²	100
Tetrathlon State Championships	2 jumping arenas Large activity area Access to swimming pool and enclosed area	8,000m ²	>6,400m ²	80
Mounted Games State Championships	6 lanes	10,000m ²	>5,600m ²	70
Formal Gymkhana or Sporting State Championships	8 rings	9,800– 20,000m ²	>13,600m ²	170
State Campdraft Championships	1 campdraft arena 225 head of cattle	10,000m ²	>8,000m ²	100
State Camp	2 dressage arenas 2 other arenas Course if possible Large activity area	5,600m ² dressage 8,000m ² other arena	>5,600m ²	70

Table 6: State competition limiting facility factors

Assumptions

- » One horse per horse vehicle
- » Two dressage tests per horse per day (1 for eventing and combined training)
- » Three jumping rounds per horse per day
- » Two campdraft rounds per competitor per day
- » For campdraft, one spare beast (steer or heifer) per 8–10 competitors is commonly provided in each camp
- » Gymkhana assumes eight classes in six rings with rotation with rider, Pony Club mount, hack and pleasure classes held across 2 rings and 4 games; noting that in Western Australia a traditional gymkhana would typically include showhorse/hacking, jumping and novelties.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The ideal scale for a facility hosting a combined discipline 5-day national championship is:

- » Horse accommodation for 370 to 550 horses
 - Approximately >29,600m² horse vehicle parking
- » Three discipline riding areas (total 31,872 to 36,672m²):
 - Dressage: 5-7 arenas with one reserved for warm up (A “next in” arena may be used if space permits) - 12,800 to 17,600m²
 - Showjumping: 2 arenas with additional warm up area - >10,000m²
 - Mounted games: 9,072m² (6–7 lanes)
- » Camping facilities (powered, watered camping area, showers, toilets)
- » Catering facilities
- » Administration buildings

Note: The 2025 event was held at Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre with two large indoor arenas, multiple outdoor arenas, general purpose grass arena and two polo fields, 181 stables, 395 day yards, 250 campsites, amenities, administration buildings and an international level cross country course.

Although two indoors were available, only one was used for ridden competition; the shooting phase and trot up were held in the second indoor, but could have been conducted elsewhere on suitable harder ground, as trot ups are often held on a firmer surface than an indoor arena.

The Pony Club Australia National Championships is a premier biennial event that brings together young equestrians from across the country to compete in a diverse range of disciplines typically scheduled across five days.

The event features multiple disciplines, including dressage, showjumping, eventing, tetrathlon, gymkhana, mounted games and quiz. Each discipline is designed to test different aspects of horsemanship, from precision and control in dressage to speed and agility in mounted games. The inclusion of quiz emphasises the importance of equestrian knowledge alongside riding skills.

Participation in the championships is determined through a selection process managed by individual state Pony Club associations. Riders are chosen based on their performance, commitment and adherence to the standards set by their respective associations. This ensures a high level of competition and representation from all parts of Australia. The event also provides opportunities for riders to be considered for international exchanges and competitions, furthering their development and exposure on the global stage.

The following provides a typical competition format with the addition of feature events such as international exchange and internal qualifiers:

Dressage	Eventing	Show jumping	Mounted games	Mounted games pairs	Tetrathlon	Quiz	Gymkhana or other activity
5 levels 41 classes	5 classes	10 classes 3 rounds	23 races (inc 2 spares)	10 races	4 phases	4 levels 3 phases	8 classes

Table 7: Typical national competition format

The following provides the typical competition groups:

Team and Individual					Individual		
Sub Junior	Junior	Senior	Masters	Open	All Abilities	Riding Centre	Para-Equestrian

Table 8: Typical national competition groups

The following has been considered regarding competitor numbers and assumes that all seven states compete including Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Northern Territory:

Competitor number range per class and event	Team and Individual					Individual			TOTAL
	Sub Junior	Junior	Senior	Masters	Open	All abilities	Riding centre	Para	Maximum competitors
Dressage	21–42	21–42	21–42	21–42	21–42	21	21	21	168–273
Eventing	21–42	21–42	21–42	21–42	21–42				105–210
Showjumping	21–42	21–42	21–42	21–42	21–42				105–210
Mounted games		35	35						70
Mounted pairs	14–42	14–42	14–42	14–42					56–168
Tetrathlon	56	56	56	56					224
Gymkhana	21–42	21–42	21–42	21–42					84–168
Quiz	28	28	28	28					112

Table 9: National competitor numbers by event and group

The following table calculates the upper range of competitors for each day:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Tetrathlon swim (unmounted) 224	Tetrathlon run (unmounted) 224	Tetrathlon shoot (unmounted) 224	Tetrathlon ride 224	
Dressage 168–273	Dressage 168–273	Dressage 168–273		
Gymkhana 84–168				
		Eventing dressage 105–210	Eventing cross country 105–210	Eventing showjumping 105–210
		Showjumping 105–210	Showjumping 105–210	
		Mounted games practice	Mounted games teams 70	Mounted games pairs 56–168
Quiz written 112 (unmounted)		Quiz practical 112 (unmounted)		
Totals#				
210–373	273	294–557	377–536	75–326

Table 10: Upper range of daily competitor participation

#Totals assume that 25% of riders participate in a second discipline on the same day and that all seven states compete in all classes.

The calculations above consider the following overall rules that each state or territory is permitted to enter a minimum of three and a maximum of six riders per age group in dressage, eventing, showjumping and formal gymkhana. In the tetrathlon, four male and four female riders may be entered per age group. For mounted games, each state or territory may enter one team of five riders in the teams event, and up to three pairs (six riders) in the pairs event. In the quiz, four riders per age group may be entered. All teams must consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of six riders. To constitute a PCA National Team Championship event, at least three states or territories must compete otherwise the event will proceed as an individual competition only.

Each rider must compete on a single horse and each horse may participate in up to two disciplines with the same rider. The exception is for tetrathlon, where riders are permitted to borrow a horse already being ridden in another discipline for the ridden phase. However, this still counts as one of the two allowed disciplines for that horse.

PONY CLUB AUSTRALIA MOUNTED GAMES NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

For a standalone Pony Club Australia Mounted Games National Championships horse accommodation for approximately 70 horses and a mounted games arena of approximately 10,000m² is required. The most significant limitation for this event may be the availability of loan ponies.

The Pony Club Australia Mounted Games National Championships is held when a combined discipline Pony Club National Championships is not held. Due to an increase in demand, virtual competitions will be considered in alternating years. Other discipline specific events may also be held in alternating years where demand warrants. The championships use loan ponies which overcomes the need to transport horses while also providing a challenge to riders to quickly adapt to unfamiliar mounts and work as a team under pressure and replicating the situation for international competition.

For example, competitors were eligible for selection in the Australian team for the 2025 PCIA International Mounted Games Exchange in the UK at the 2025 National Championships, offering a prestigious opportunity to represent Australia on the world stage.

Juniors compete for the Prince Philip Cup Trophy, named in honour of H.R.H Prince Philip, whose vision helped create opportunities for children to compete in equestrian sport regardless of financial background. Seniors compete for the Allan Hession Memorial Trophy, recognising his significant contribution to mounted games in Australia.



FACILITY GUIDELINES TABLE

The following table summarises the minimum or ideal facility attributes across the levels of participation:

Activity level	Rally/Muster	Rally/Muster	Local competition	Zone competition	State competition	National competition
Facility attribute	Minimum	Ideal	Minimum	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal
Riding arena (m ²)	Yes	>4800	>4800	>9600	>16000	>32000
Long side (m)		>80	>80	>126	>126	>126
Riding area 2 (m ²)		>600 or round yard	>600 or round yard			
Horse vehicle (m ²)	Yes	>3200	>3200	>6400	>9600	>29600
Horse accommodation (no.)		>20	>20	>80	>120	>370
Perimeter fence	Yes					
Potable water tap/s	Yes					
Road access for floats	Yes					
Wash bay/s		2 wash bays				
Covered gathering area		Yes				
Cross country (height cm)		Training area	Training area	110	110	110
PA system		Yes				
Electricity		Yes				
Canteen (or similar)		Yes				
PWD toilets (no.)	In proximity	Yes			12	37
Storage (m ²)		>50	>50	Yes		
Showers (no.)					15	44

Table 11: Facility guidelines

RIDING CENTRES

In Australia, riding centres accredited by Pony Club Australia play a vital role in broadening access to equestrian education and activities. These centres are integral to PCA's participation network, offering structured programs aligned with PCA's nationally recognised syllabus.

Accredited riding centres provide inclusive opportunities for individuals to participate in horse riding and care without the need to own a horse, opening the door for a diverse range of participants. These centres deliver PCA's structured Syllabus of Instruction through both mounted and unmounted lessons, allowing participants to work towards nationally and internationally recognised proficiency certificates. As accessible entry points to the equestrian community, riding centres help newcomers gain experience and potentially transition to local Pony Clubs or competition pathways. They also support coaches and staff by providing access to professional development, lesson plans and other resources that ensure high standards of instruction and safety.

By integrating riding centres into its network, Pony Club Australia enhances the accessibility and quality of equestrian education across the country, fostering a lifelong engagement with horse riding and care.

The following provides ideal facility guidelines for riding centres:

Riding spaces

- » Enclosed arena: At least one well-drained, fenced arena (e.g. 20m × 40m or larger), with non-electrified fencing and suitable surface
- » Round yard: For groundwork, lunging and beginner instruction
- » Open riding/trail space: Safe access to paddocks or short trails
- » Mounting area: Safe, stable surface with mounting block or ramp, structure and condition to be regularly assessed

Horse facilities

- » Stables/shelters: Weather-protected structures with safe fencing and suitable drainage
- » Yards/paddocks: Adequate space, drainage and shade, fencing must be in good condition with clearly visible electric tapes and capped star pickets where used
- » Tie-up and tacking areas: Designated areas with safe surfaces and appropriate drainage
- » Day yards: Priority should be given to volunteers and PWD participants when needed

Participant amenities

- » Toilets and handwashing facilities: Clean, accessible, with inclusive (PWD) access
- » Shelter and seating: Covered viewing areas for spectators, companions and riders
- » Classroom or indoor space: For unmounted instruction and theory
- » Directional signage: Clear signage throughout to help customers find key areas easily

Horse care facilities

- » Wash bays: Safe, drained areas for horse cleaning and cooling off
- » Feed and tack storage: Secure, dry and accessible
- » Shelter in paddocks: Natural or constructed shelters for horses at turnout
- » First aid point: Human and equine kits easily accessible

Safety and supervision

- » Clear fencing and boundaries: All areas enclosed or signposted to reduce risk
- » Fire safety: Fire extinguishers installed and maintained, fire evacuation plan displayed publicly
- » Emergency and risk management: a whole of site emergency evacuation plan with designated muster points, supported by a risk management and maintenance plan with regular inspections prior to rallies and events
- » Emergency access: Designated, unobstructed access routes for emergency vehicles
- » Separated traffic zones: Clear demarcation between pedestrian, horse and vehicle areas
- » Gate and fence safety: All structures in sound condition and regularly maintained

Accessibility and inclusion

- » Mounting support: Blocks or ramps to assist less mobile riders
- » Inclusive tack/equipment: Available where needed
- » Accessible pathways: Stable, wide paths connecting key areas for wheelchair/mobility aid users

If competitions are held at riding centres, the facility guidelines for that level of activity should also be applied.

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC

CAMPDRAFTING

Campdrafting is a uniquely Australian sport where riders demonstrate their skills in handling cattle. It involves cutting a beast (cattle) out of a mob in an enclosure (called a camp or cutout), then maneuvering it around a set course (in a clover leaf pattern). Points are awarded for both the cut out and the work on the course, showcasing the rider's ability to control and direct the cattle safely and effectively.

From an infrastructure perspective the following are required to accommodate a full campdraft:

- » Main ring ideally 80/90m diameter—minimum 40m x 70m
- » Camp (or cut out) area approximately 16m x 25m
- » Main ring and camp to be suitably fenced to contain cattle which are being drafted
- » Supported by cattle handling facilities—typically yards, races, gates, a crush, loading ramps and holding pens
- » If maximum competition entries are required, cattle facilities would ideally accommodate 500 head per day
- » Sand surface (over a base) at sufficient consistent depth for traction and grip (less ideal, native soil may be ploughed to provide sufficient traction and softness)

If campdraft facilities are not available, training for campdrafting may still be undertaken.

CAMPDRAFT DRY WORK TRAINING

Dry work is campdraft training undertaken without cattle. To undertake the dry work training the following is required:

- » Surface suitable for safe stopping and turning (ideally a sand surface or loose soil surface at least 16m x 25m)
- » Optionally a mechanical cow* may be used

*A mechanical cow is a motorised, rail- or pulley-driven training aid that simulates cattle movement, typically installed along a straight fence line or arena wall, with an electric control box and cable system allowing precise stop-start and directional control for rider training.

CAMPDRAFT WET WORK TRAINING

Wet work is campdraft training undertaken with cattle. This may be an option if a facility has cattle handling facilities (even if portable) and cattle proof arena fences.

The facility requirements for campdraft wet work training include:

- » Arena with cattle proof fencing a minimum 20m x 40m, ideally no bigger than 25m x 55m
- » Cattle handling facilities - yards and loading ramp at a minimum
- » Ideally a sand or loose soil surface

If these facilities are available, working cow horse and team penning may also be considered as part of campdraft training.

WORKING COW HORSE

Working cow horse is a western equestrian sport where horse and rider demonstrate control, agility and cow sense by performing a reined pattern (dry work) followed by working a single cow down the fence, turning it and circling it in a set time.

TEAM PENNING

Team penning is a timed equestrian sport where a team of three riders work together to separate three specifically numbered cattle from a herd and move them into a pen at the opposite end of the arena within 60 to 90 seconds.

COMBINED TRAINING

Combined training is an equestrian competition consisting of two distinct phases; dressage and showjumping. Unlike eventing, it does not include the cross country phase. The dressage phase always precedes the showjumping phase. Similar to eventing, the winner is determined by the rider with the fewest penalties accumulated from both phases.

See Dressage and Showjumping facility specifications.



DRESSAGE

Dressage is a judged riding test conducted in a rectangular arena. Riders perform a pre-learned test, where each competitor in a class executes the same routine consecutively. The focus is on demonstrating the rider's ability to guide their horse or pony willingly and calmly through various movements. Scores, ranging from 1 to 10, are awarded by judges for each part of the test. The winner of the competition is determined by the highest cumulative score achieved by horse and rider.

Facilities required include:

- » Competition arena is 60m x 20m (1,200m²)—with 10–15m buffer
- » Competition is typically outdoors but can also be indoors
- » Rarely for the lowest level of competition or for training, a 40m x 20m arena may be used
- » Typically one dressage arena per 40 competitor tests per day
- » For lower levels of competition, the arena surface can be flat, consistent, non-slip, well maintained grass
- » For medium to higher levels of competition a sand surface is expected (moist, firm and shallow—depth dependant on sand type and maintenance)
- » At the highest levels an artificial surface is expected

ENDURANCE

Endurance riding is a long-distance equestrian sport where riders and their horses must demonstrate stamina, fitness and excellent horsemanship. Competition courses cover substantial distances, with riders navigating predetermined routes and completing the course within a set time. Horse care is paramount in endurance riding, with regular vet checks before, during, and after the ride to ensure the horse's well-being.

A Pony Club endurance course should be 10 to 40km in length, using well-marked trails over varied but safe terrain such as forestry roads, paddocks or bush tracks. The surface must provide firm, consistent footing, free from major obstacles and deep sand or sharp rocks. All land access must be authorised by relevant landowners or managers, with permissions secured prior to the event. Courses should avoid technical hazards, include clearly signed turns and checkpoints and provide designated water points for horses. Any road crossings must be supervised and risk-assessed. The course should support sustained trot and canter work for safe pacing.

The “home base” area must include sufficient float parking, safe tie-up points or yards, access to clean water, wash bays and toilets. A flat, secure vetting area is required for pre- and post-ride horse checks. There should be space for ride timing and record keeping and appropriate planning for first aid access and emergency response.

EQUITATION

Equitation encompasses various disciplines focused on the art and skill of horseback riding, emphasising the rider's technique, balance, and communication with the horse. It includes disciplines like working equitation and jumping equitation, each offering unique challenges and opportunities for riders to refine their equestrian abilities.

WORKING EQUITATION

Working equitation originated in southern Europe and has evolved into a global sport that simulates practical farm and livestock skills. Competitions typically involve four phases:

- » Dressage—A precise test of the horse's obedience and the rider's control, focusing on executing prescribed movements with elegance and precision
- » Ease of handling obstacles—Judges assess the rider's ability to navigate obstacles with finesse and accuracy
- » Speed obstacles—A timed event where riders negotiate obstacles at speed, showcasing agility and quick decision-making
- » Cattle work (optional)—In some events, riders demonstrate their ability to work with livestock, reflecting traditional ranching skills

A standard 60m x 20m Dressage arena is used for the dressage phase. A working equitation obstacle course requires an arena of at least 30m x 70m to safely accommodate 10 to 16 obstacles with adequate spacing and flow. This allows for elements such as a gate, bridge (3m x 1m), slalom (6–8m spacing), figure 8, livestock pen, bell corridor (1.2m wide), pole pick-up, side pass and a low jump. The space must support safe transitions, lateral work and canter movements, with consistent, non-slip footing. Smaller arenas (e.g. 25m x 60m) may suit training or reduced obstacle layouts, but full courses benefit from the larger dimensions.

Cattle yards, ramp and cattle proof fencing is required for the cattle phase to be included similar to training level wet work campdrafting facilities.

JUMPING EQUITATION

Jumping equitation is a variation of showjumping where riders are evaluated not only on their ability to clear obstacles cleanly but also on their riding position, balance and overall presentation. Judges provide constructive feedback on the rider's performance, focusing on aspects such as leg position, seat, hand control, rhythm and approach to jumps.

Jumping equitation requires the same facilities as Showjumping.



EVENTING/HORSE TRIALS

Eventing or horse trials is a tri-discipline equestrian sport designed to showcase the all-round ability of horse and rider. It includes:

- » Dressage—A test of precision, control and harmony between horse and rider, performed in a standard arena with prescribed movements
- » Cross country—A timed course over varied terrain with solid, natural-style obstacles that test endurance, courage and jumping ability
- » Showjumping—A timed round over coloured, lightweight fences in an arena, assessing the horse's agility and carefulness after the rigours of cross country

Eventing can be run over one, two or three days, and penalties from each phase are combined to determine the overall score — the lowest score wins. It originated from cavalry training and is now an Olympic discipline.

CROSS COUNTRY

The cross country phase of eventing is a rigorous test of endurance, courage and partnership between horse and rider. Conducted over an extended course of varied terrain, it features solid, fixed obstacles such as logs, banks, ditches and water complexes designed to simulate natural riding conditions. Competitors must maintain a controlled yet forward pace to complete the course within an optimum time. Penalties are incurred for refusals, run-outs, falls, or failing to meet time requirements. As obstacles do not fall when struck, precision and mutual trust are essential. Contemporary course design incorporates safety measures such as frangible devices and protective equipment to mitigate risk while preserving the challenge and integrity of the discipline.

The guidelines and terminology used to describe eventing or horse trials varies from state to state however the table to the right provides a rough guide based on national rules. The rule book for each state should be referred to for the exact course requirements.

Fixed jump max height	Course length	Efforts (jumps)	Key features
Up to 35cm	750–1,200 metres	10	Very simple, inviting fences. Ideal for beginners and green horses
Up to 45cm or 50cm	1,000–1,600 metres	14–18	
Up to 60cm or 65cm	1,200–2,000 metres	14–20	Basic course, no combinations, suitable for early-stage riders
Up to 80cm	1,500–2,500 metres	15–25	Moderate technicality, some terrain variation, may include simple combinations
Up to 95cm	2,000–3,000 metres	18–25	Includes combinations, water, ditches and more challenging lines
Up to 105cm	2,000–3,000 metres	20–25	Full technical course with complex obstacles and varied terrain
Up to 110cm	2,600–3,120 metres	20–30	

Table 12: Cross country course specifications by level (based on national rules)

The following should be considered for cross country courses:

- » Cross country course length depends on the level (see table above)
- » Depending on the landscape and competition level, courses could be accommodated on 4–20ha
- » Track between jumps should be consistent, non-slip, well maintained grass/turf or earth, over undulating ground with water jumps, steps and banks
- » Road crossings should be covered with shavings, sand, soil or similar to provide safe and non slip footing
- » The starting box is a three-sided, enclosed structure (fence with top rail) approximately 4–5 metres square, positioned on level ground at the beginning of the cross country course
- » A shared obstacle zone (or complex) features multiple versions of the same jump type, each built to suit different competition levels by varying height, width or technical difficulty

CROSS COUNTRY TRAINING

If a Pony Club facility does not have a permanent cross country course, training can still be conducted using a range of portable cross country-style obstacles.

HUNTER TRIALS

Hunter trials involve riders completing a course of solid cross-country fences, usually against the clock, either individually or in pairs. The focus is on safe, efficient riding with penalties for refusals, run-outs and exceeding the optimum time. It is a single phase event (i.e. no dressage).

GYMKHANA AND SPORTING

A formal gymkhana is an equestrian event featuring a variety of activities designed to test and showcase a rider's skill, agility and horsemanship. These events typically include timed races, obstacle courses and skill-based demonstrations such as flag races, bending, barrel racing and figure-eight patterns and often horse show elements such as hacking and rider classes. Formal gymkhanas encourage versatility, teamwork and good horse management practices, promoting values such as sportsmanship and camaraderie.

Sporting gymkhanas are high-energy competitions involving fast-paced mounted games for riders of all ages. These events prioritise speed, coordination, determination and competitive spirit, often requiring strong riding skills and athleticism. While both types of Gymkhana involve mounted events, formal gymkhanas present a broader focus on skill and discipline, whereas sporting gymkhanas place greater emphasis on speed and agility.

Gymkhana games vary greatly in their size requirements depending on the games (as specified within the relevant rule book). As a result, gymkhanas are set up based on the number of competitors, number of events, available space and equipment, number of volunteers and length of competition. Examples of the space required for some games include: bending race 42m x 11m, barrel race 47m x 27m, keyhole 24m x 6m, scuddo ho 31m x 17m—with 5m buffers for all. Since games are often participated in at speed, and horses often finish well past the finish line, sufficient runoff areas are an important safety consideration for games layout within an arena.

Facility requirements include:

- » Fenced, flat, consistent, non-slip, well maintained grass or sand arena
- » In some cases fields are ploughed to provide sufficient traction and softness
- » Sufficient space to safely accommodate rings and games including buffers and finishing line runoff areas
- » Separate space for riders to warm up safely away from competition arenas
- » Smaller enclosed arena for beginner riders and led classes

HORSEBALL

Horseball is an action-packed sport that combines elements of basketball, rugby and even some quidditch, but all played on horseback. Introduced to Australia in 2009, it has gained popularity following its success throughout Europe. In Horseball, two teams of four players each compete to gain possession of a leather-bound ball.

Facility requirements include:

- » Field size 65–75m long and 25–30m wide
- » The surface should be flat and even, made of grass or suitable arena footing and must be well-drained and non-slip
- » Goal areas are marked as semi-circles at each end with a 10-metre radius
- » Goals are ring-shaped and suspended 3.5m high
- » The boundary is defined by clearly marked lines or flexible arena fencing
- » A 1–2m safety zone is required outside the playing area
- » Indoor venues require a ceiling clearance of around 7m

MOUNTED GAMES

Mounted games is a dynamic team sport that showcases the agility and precision of both riders and horses. Typically featuring six events per competition, participants engage in thrilling challenges such as maneuvering around barrels or flags on poles, quick baton handovers, swift vaulting or mounting and high-speed galloping against rival teams. Mounted games captivates both participants and spectators alike with its fast-paced action and skillful displays.

While specific dimensions can vary based on the level of competition and available space, general facility guidelines include:

- » A field size typically 126m in length and 63m in width allowing for 6 teams with 9m lanes. This is a guide only and alternative sizes and layouts may also be suitable
- » Safety zones with 5m clearance around the perimeter to ensure the safety of participants and spectators
- » A surface which is flat and even, such as well-maintained grass or an appropriate all-weather surface, to provide secure footing for horses and riders

NAVIGATION RIDE

A navigation ride, or nav ride, is a team-based competition where groups of two or three riders navigate a predetermined course by following a list of instructions.

Teams start at staggered intervals and must complete tasks and answer questions at various checkpoints along the way. Unlike a race, navigation rides are timed events with both minimum and maximum time limits and teams can be penalised for finishing outside these limits.

Navigation rides require access to a safe, varied riding environment such as reserves, forests or rural properties, with permission from landowners or councils as required. Courses are typically 10–20km long and follow well-defined trails over mixed terrain, suitable for horses and riders of varying experience. Courses should be easily mapped with easy access to checkpoints for the organisers. A central base area should support float parking, horse water, toilets and event coordination.

POLOCROSSE

Polocrosse combines elements of polo and lacrosse, originating in Australia and now enjoyed internationally. Played on horseback, participants use racquets with a loose net to handle a white ball, carrying, passing, catching and bouncing it, as they aim to score goals. Matches feature two teams of three players each, with alternating chukkas (periods) lasting six minutes, followed by recovery breaks to ensure the well-being of riders and horses.

The facility requirements for polocrosse are:

- » Field size is 146.5m long and 55m wide
- » Goal scoring area is 27.5m long, centre area is 91.5m long and the radius of the goal circle is 10m
- » Goal posts are a minimum of 3m high, 2.5m apart and flexible enough to be pushed over if a collision occurs
- » The run-off area from the sidelines is a minimum of 3m
- » The clearance at the end of the field is 12m
- » If more than one field is used, the minimum clearance between fields is 10m and end-to-end clearance is 24m
- » The surface is flat, consistent, non-slip and with well-maintained grass
- » In some cases, fields are ploughed to provide sufficient traction and softness

MODIFIED OR TRAINING POLOCROSSE

If there is insufficient arena space for the full polocrosse field size, polocrosse can be played on a smaller, modified field, particularly for juniors, training or where space is limited, as long as key features and safety clearances are maintained. If the field is quite small, restricted paces such as limiting play to trot only may be necessary to ensure horse and rider safety.

PONY RACING

Pony Club Australia's National Pony Racing Series is a progressive pathway for young riders to develop and showcase their racing skills. The series comprises four key stages, each with specific requirements:

- » Jump start days/weekends
- » Training days
- » State qualifying race day
- » National grand final

Educational activities associated with Jump Start Days or weekends should be held in a comfortable learning environment which may include the host club's own Pony Club facilities.

Ideally, the familiarisation and selection activity associated with Jump Start Days and the Training Days should be held at a thoroughbred racing track which meets the minimum requirements for the state racing body. Starting barriers are not used as pony racing uses a standing start.

If club facilities have an appropriately fenced area (200m–800m long) with good footing, jump start familiarisation and selection may be held at Pony Club facilities.

Common shorter distances include:

- » 200m – often used for introducing riders to the concept of maintaining an even pace
- » 400m – a good intermediate distance to practice consistency and build rhythm
- » 600–800m – useful for progressing towards competition distance while maintaining control

All State Qualifying Race Days and Grand Finals events were held at thoroughbred racing venues which comply with the state body's minimum racing facility standards.

Facilities designed for large horses should be carefully assessed before use for ponies, as ponies may be at risk of slipping under tie-up rails or belly rails. All infrastructure should be checked to ensure it is appropriately sized and secure for smaller animals to prevent injury or escape.

The following list provides state based rules of racing document references:

State/ Territory	Organisation	Document title	Link
New South Wales	Racing NSW	Rules of Racing of Racing NSW	Rules of Racing of Racing NSW
Queensland	Racing QLD	Rules of Racing of Racing Qld	Rules of Racing of Racing Qld
Victoria	Racing Victoria	The Rules of Racing of Racing Victoria	The Rules of Racing of Racing Victoria
Western Australia	Racing WA	Thoroughbred Rules of Racing	Thoroughbred Rules of Racing
South Australia	Thoroughbred Racing SA (TRSA)	Rules of Racing	Rules of Racing
Tasmania	Tasracing	Tasmanian Local Rules of Racing	Tasmanian Local Rules of Racing
Northern Territory	Thoroughbred Racing Northern Territory (TRNT)	Track Regulations	Track Regulations

Table 13: State based rules of racing document references

RIDE TO TIME

Ride to time, also known as speed to safety, is an equestrian discipline focused on teaching riders how to accurately gauge and maintain a specific pace on their horse.

This skill is essential for Pony Club riders, especially when competing in showjumping or eventing, as riding too slowly in these events can result in time faults.

The facility requirements for ride to time are:

- » A measured course, usually 1000m or 1200m, but shorter distances like 200 to 800m can be used for training
- » A flat, even and safe surface such as well-maintained grass, sand or loose soil
- » Clear distance markers at the start, finish and optional intervals
- » A safe run-off area beyond the finish line to allow horses to slow down
- » Designated areas for coaches, judges and spectators away from the riding line
- » A separate warm up area for riders to prepare before using the course

SHOW RIDING

Show riding encompasses gymkhana and show events where horse and rider showcase their skills on the flat. In these competitions, horses are judged on their conformation, paces and manners, while riders are evaluated on their riding ability. Some classes emphasise grooming and presentation, highlighting the overall appearance and turnout of horse and rider. Competitors can participate as individuals, pairs, or teams of three, demonstrating their proficiency and teamwork in various show classes.

The facility requirements for show riding are:

- » 1 main ring approximately 60m x 30m (1,800m²)
- » For two or more rings minimum of 40m x 20m (800m²)/ring
- » Flat, consistent, non-slip, well maintained grass
- » At higher levels and for indoor competition, a specially prepared sand or sand and artificial surface could be used
- » For led classes a moist rolled surface may be desirable

SHOWJUMPING

Showjumping challenges both horse and rider as they navigate a course of fences, aiming to clear each obstacle without any faults and within the designated time.

Before competing, riders walk the course to plan their route and visualise the jumps from their horse's perspective. Those who complete the course without faults often progress to a jump-off, where they face a shorter, more challenging course against the clock to determine the winner. Judges assign faults for knocked-down fences, refusals or run-outs. Like other Pony Club disciplines, riders advance through graded levels based on their skills, moving up as they improve.

The facility requirements for showjumping are:

- » Indoor minimum: 2,100m² with short side minimum 30m
- » Outdoor minimum: 4,000m² with short side minimum 50m
- » For lower levels the surface can be flat, consistent, non-slip, well maintained grass
- » For medium to higher levels a sand surface or excellent grass surface heavily top dressed with sand is expected
- » At the highest levels an artificial surface is expected

HICKSTEAD/DERBY

Hickstead (often called a derby) is a showjumping-style event run over a long, challenging course that combines natural cross-country-type obstacles (e.g. banks, ditches, water jumps) with showjumping fences. It tests both precision and bravery and is usually timed.

STOCKMAN'S CHALLENGE

The stockman's challenge is a uniquely Australian equestrian discipline that celebrates the traditional skills of working stockperson. It is a versatile and demanding sport designed to test both the horse's ability and the rider's horsemanship across a range of tasks drawn from station life.

A typical stockman's challenge begins with the dry work phase, which is similar to a dressage test or reining pattern. Riders guide their horses through a set sequence of movements such as walk, trot, canter, flying lead changes, sliding stops, rollbacks and turns on the haunches and forehand. At times a whip crack is included. This phase is judged on precision, control, smoothness and responsiveness to the rider's aids.

A full stockman's challenge event includes a cattle work phase, where the rider must demonstrate their ability to manage and manoeuvre a beast in a controlled environment. Tasks may involve cutting a cow from the herd, guiding it around pegs or penning it. This tests the horse's agility, cattle sense and the partnership between horse and rider. In a Pony Club context, similar skills may be developed through events such as Pony Club Mount and Handy Pony, which adapt stockman style tasks into controlled pattern or obstacle courses, often without cattle.

In addition to the practical elements, judges often consider overall horsemanship and presentation, including rider position, effective use of aids and the turnout of both horse and rider. Stockman's challenge events are commonly held at rural shows, campdrafts and equestrian festivals and they highlight the importance of versatility, partnership and tradition in Australian horsemanship.

The facility requirements for stockman's challenge are similar to campdrafting.

TENTPEGGING

Tentpegging is an equestrian sport where riders aim to knock down or pick up a peg with a stick or lance while riding at speed. It is often conducted as a team race or relay, emphasising speed, precision and coordination between horse and rider.

The broader class of tentpegging games also includes:

- » Ring jousting: A galloping rider tries to pass the point of their lance through a suspended ring
- » Lemon sticking: The rider attempts to stab or slice a lemon suspended from a cord or sitting on a platform
- » Mounted archery: Riders shoot arrows at targets while riding
- » Jousting: Traditional jousting competitions where riders engage in mock combat with lances

The facility requirements for tent pegging are:

- » The minimum track length is 100–150m, depending on the type of event
- » Each lane or rider requires a track width of 4–6m
- » Team events require a wider track or multiple lanes, with a total width of around 20–30m
- » Perimeter fencing or clear boundary markers must be in place to keep spectators at a safe distance
- » A run-off area of at least 20–30m beyond the finish line is needed to allow safe deceleration
- » The competition area must be free of obstructions both within and nearby
- » Pegs (targets) are placed on the ground in line with the track
- » Pegs must be firmly set and include breakaway or safety features in line with competition rules
- » Additional setup may be required for specific events such as rings, lemons or quintain (rotating target) challenges

TETRATHLON

Tetrathlon is a unique competition exclusive to Pony Club, encompassing four distinct disciplines; showjumping, running, shooting and swimming. Similar to the Olympic pentathlon but with one less event, tetrathlon serves as a primary feeder into the sport of modern pentathlon. Participants compete within designated age groups, with final rankings determined by combined scores across all four disciplines. Shooting involves the use of air pistols and precision target shooting, while the running segment challenges participants with a cross-country course rather than a sprint. The swimming portion measures distance covered within a specified time frame.

The facility requirements for tetrathlon are:

- » Safe and appropriately sized showjumping arena with suitable footing and adjustable jumps to accommodate various age groups (see showjumping)
- » A running course is required, ideally cross country style, with varied terrain that is safe, clearly marked, and appropriate for youth competitors.
- » A secure shooting range, approximately 15m in length to accommodate a 10m range, must be provided. It should be an enclosed area with power and lighting, designed for air pistols, with proper backstops, target systems, safety controls and supervision in line with Pony Club and firearm safety regulations
- » A swimming pool is needed, preferably 25 or 50 metres long, with marked lanes and the ability to measure distance swum within a set time
- » The overall venue must support safe movement between each discipline area, with clear scheduling and marshalling areas to manage event flow
- » Adequate spectator and support areas should be provided while maintaining appropriate safety buffers around active competition zones



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