



"Large Animal Rescue is the removal of a large animal from a place of danger to a place of safety by the most humane method, without causing injury or death to the victim and with overriding regard for the safety and welfare of responders as well as members of the public."

Jim Green, Senior Animal Rescue Specialist, Hampshire Fire and Rescue, UK

The rescue of a horse is an infrequent, highly dangerous emergency that is often mishandled. Fire and Rescue, SES, RFS, large animal veterinarians and RSPCA Inspectors are not routinely trained in specialised animal rescue techniques and are generally ill prepared to respond effectively to the wide variety of scenarios presented by horse rescues. However, these professionals must be involved to ensure the safety of humans and animals and prevent the incident turning into a disaster.

Horses in distress present an immediate danger to life or health and a rescue incident is no place for untrained personnel and distressed owners or onlookers. Invariably, there is immense pressure from owners, veterinarians and willing but untrained helpers for emergency responders to 'do something'. Risk assessment goes out the window, a lack of understanding on all sides leads responders to engage in unsafe practices that place everyone at the scene at high risk of injury or death and, consequently, reduce the viability of the animal.

The Gambling Community Benefit Fund Grant has enabled Queensland Horse Council Inc. to purchase specialist Large Animal Rescue equipment from the UK, USA and Australia and to offer training courses in 2012 and 2013 to those who need them, as follows:

QHC Large Animal Rescue workshops

- ❖ **Purga** 3-4 November 2012 - instructor Dr Rebecca Gimenez, USA
- ❖ **Waterford** 10-11 November 2012 - instructor Dr Rebecca Gimenez, USA
- ❖ **Caboolture** 8 September 2012
- ❖ **Cedar Grove** 13 October 2012
- ❖ **Peachester** 24 February 2013
- ❖ **Purga** 6 March 2013 - Scenic Rim Regional Council Animal Control rangers
- ❖ **Atherton** 5 May 2013
- ❖ **Wallumbilla** 26 May 2013
- ❖ **Townsville** 9 June 2013
- ❖ **Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade** 16 June 2013
- ❖ **Boonah Donkey Society of Queensland** 23 June 2013
- ❖ **Mackay** 7 July 2013
- ❖ **Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade** 16 July 2013
- ❖ **Blackbutt** 21 July 2013
- ❖ **Mudgeeraba** 28 July 2013
- ❖ **Beaudesert** 15 September 2013
- ❖ **Samford** 21-22 September 2013
- ❖ **Rockhampton** 29 September 2013
- ❖ **Wacol RSPCA Queensland Inspectors** 15 October 2013
- ❖ **Toowoomba** 20 October 2013
- ❖ **Nambour** 16 November 2013



**417 attendees at 22 QHC
workshops:**

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Rural Fire Brigade volunteers

SES volunteers

Equine veterinarians

Vet students

Vet nurses

Animal Control Officers

Racecourse vets and barrier
attendants

Biosecurity Queensland

Stock Inspectors

RSPCA Inspectors

Show Society ring stewards

Horse and donkey owners

Queensland Police

TAFE instructors

Event organisers

Successful rescue of a horse performed during a QHC one-day workshop

The Brisbane suburb of Greenbank has a significant horse population and horse owners occasionally call on Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade to rescue their trapped horses. First Officer Fabian Stangherlin, who has no experience with horses beyond these rescues, recognised that, for their own safety, he and his crew needed skills not provided in their normal training.

First Officer Stangherlin asked for a Queensland Horse Council one-day Large Animal Rescue workshop to teach him and his crew what to do – and not do – when next they are called to rescue a large animal, and to show them how to use their new rescue equipment.

We were only two hours into the workshop on the 16th of June 2013 when First Officer Stangherlin received a call to rescue an old mare that had fallen into a gully. Duchess the mare is 32, has arthritis and a debilitating endocrine disorder and she had tumbled into the gully when a bank collapsed. The gully was deep, steep and narrow, Duchess was head-down, feet up and could not self-rescue.

With guidance from QHC's instructor, the crew assessed all risks before planning the rescue and establishing a contingency plan. Using Greenbank's own equipment and QHC equipment that we had been using during the workshop, Greenbank volunteers conducted a textbook rescue, removing an anaesthetised Duchess using a vertical lift sling. She has recovered fully from her six-hour ordeal.



Testimonials

"Rescuing horses is not our core business but we need to know what to do." Fabian Stangherlin, First Officer, Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade.

"I will not allow my animal control rangers to attend to a trapped large animal unless they have done QHC's Large Animal Rescue training." Mark Duncan, Supervisor - Pest & Animal Management, Scenic Rim Regional Council

"Thank you for inviting us, it was well worthwhile. It was also well presented and laid out with regard to incident control." Darren Gracie, Station Manager, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Mackay.

"On behalf of ATHRA as Regional Manager, THANK YOU! This was a most informative and educational workshop for horse clubs, QFRS, SES and RSPCA." Merrilyn Green, ATHRA Regional Manager Mackay

"Most training courses we go to are boring but your workshop is brilliant!" Errol Younger, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Mackay

"It was an excellent workshop. I got heaps from it, much I would never had thought about unless shown, and also the hammering home of personal safety. I was impressed at the turnout." David Ferrar, RSPCA Inspector Mackay

"Thanks for a wonderful day. We learnt heaps and are still talking about it!" Paul Beelaerts, Mt Tamborine Rural Fire Brigade

"The workshop was very confronting, but necessary...what you are doing will save other animals in the future." Bettina Pittman, NSW SES

"I loved the workshop. I consider it profoundly important and thank you so much for your expertise, passion and care." Debbie Dennien, Kingaroy

"I thoroughly recommend this workshop to anyone with horses but especially to rescue and emergency people. Thanks for putting it on." David Bartholomeusz, equine vet

"A captivating workshop - relevant and engaging. As both a vet of 10 years and a horse owner of 30 years I learnt lots of valuable information." Lizzie Jensen, veterinarian

