



Queensland Trail Horse Riders

An Overview of Results from the Queensland Trail
Horse Riding Survey, 2018

Developed for the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation/ Outdoors
Queensland

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Acknowledgements

This overview is based on data captured through a survey distributed by the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF/ Outdoors Queensland). The survey was developed by the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA) in association with QORF to capture a range of perspectives regarding horse trail riding needs, experiences, club engagements and participation.

Overview collated by:

way to be...

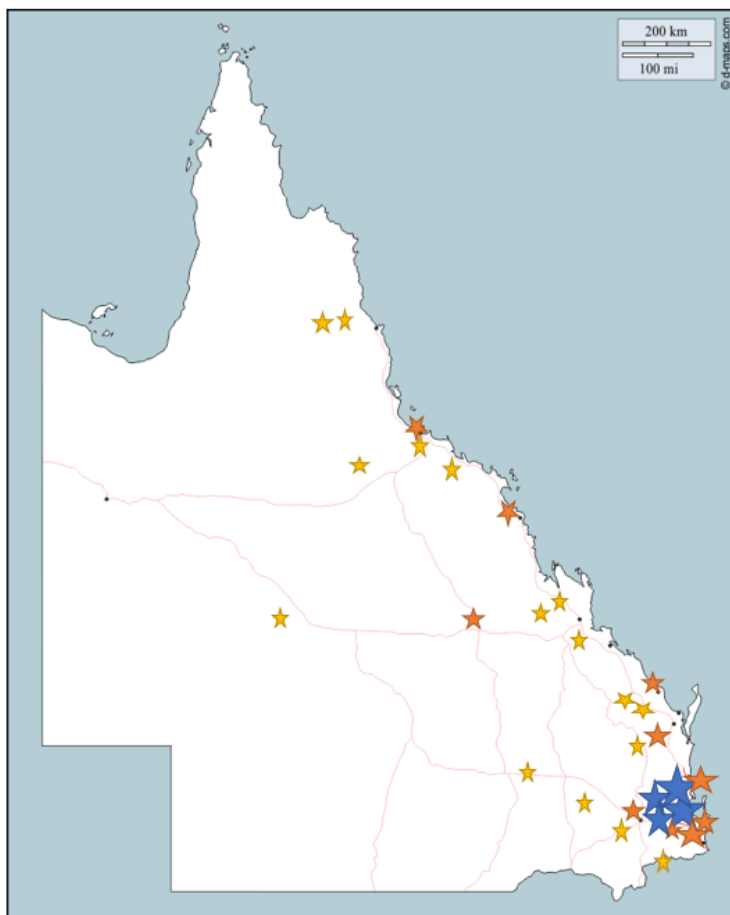


Qld Trail Horse Riding Survey

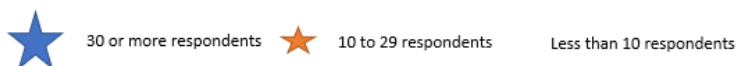
Throughout November 2018, Queensland Trail Horse Riders were invited to complete a survey. The focus was on capturing trail horse rider:

- demographics,
- motivations,
- riding patterns,
- satisfaction with trail ride sites,
- club or association membership, and
- use of communication and technology.

A total of **539 responses** were received from riders across the length of the state. This represented individuals from the Tweed ranges on the southern border through to those from the Tablelands of Far North Queensland; and from Roma and Cunnamulla to Longreach in the west.



Legend



A Snapshot of Rider Demographics and Motivations for Riding

HORSE TRAIL RIDERS: THE RESPONDENTS



AGE & GENDER

91% of respondents were **female**
More than half were aged 41-60
40% were aged 40 years or younger

WHERE ARE THEY FROM?

63% of respondents from SEQ
4.5% from SW Qld
18% from Central Qld
2.5% from Western Qld
10% from North/ Far North Qld



HORSE OWNERSHIP

98% own at least one horse
24.5% own 2 horses
19% own 1 horse
18% own 3 horses
11% own 4 horses
8% own 5 horses
17% own 6 or more horses

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

62% at least \$50,000
17.5% \$100,000 - \$149,999
15.5% \$50,000 - \$74,999
15% prefer not to say



TOP 5 REASONS TO RIDE

RELAX
I find it relaxing and helps manage stress
Keep my horse fit and healthy
Exploring new places and scenic trails
Being with friends enjoying common/ much loved pursuit
Keeps me fit and healthy

OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Bushwalking 48%
Swimming 31%
Kayaking/ Canoeing 15%
Cym 10%
Walking 9%



OTHER HORSE RIDING ACTIVITIES

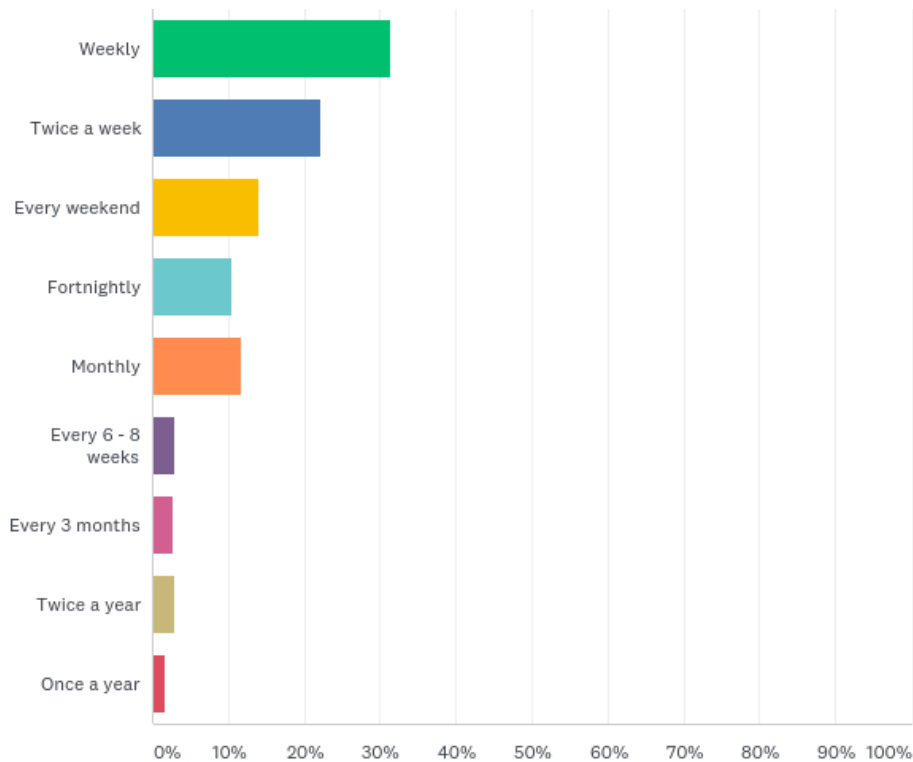


Dressage (45%)
Eventing (24%)
Endurance (19%)
Western pleasure (18.5%)
Camp drafting 916%)
Cutting (10.5%)

Horse Trail Riding Patterns

Frequency of Riding

Riders horse trail riding habits and patterns were explored. These revealed that **67% of riders participated in horse trail riding at least every week**, and nearly 90% went trail riding at least monthly.

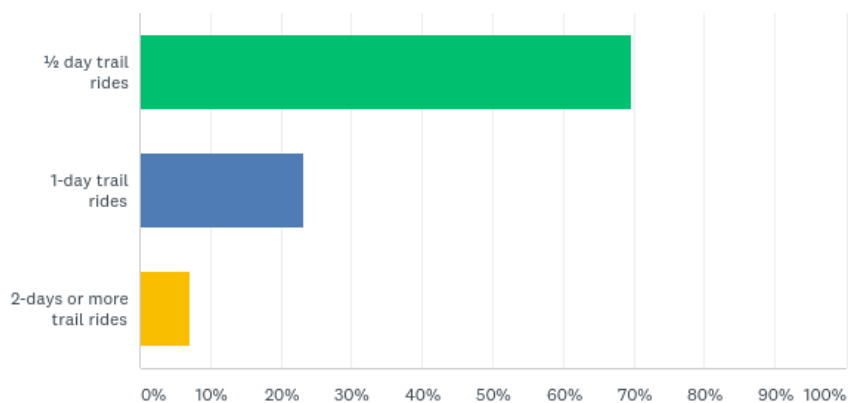


Duration of Ride

The horse trail riders mainly do **½ day rides** with nearly **70%** indicating this as their predominant duration.

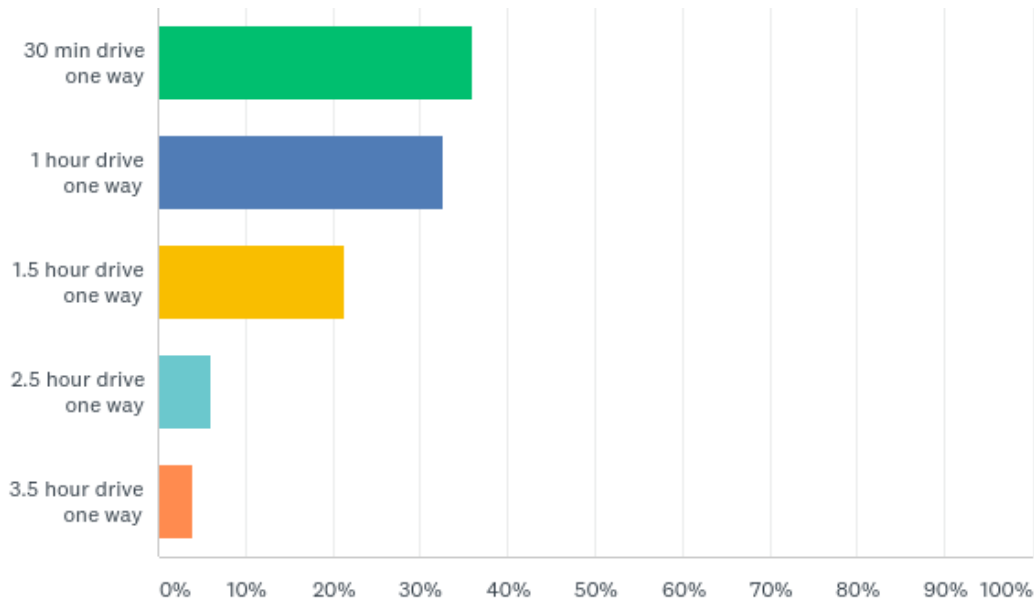
A further **23%** mainly do **1-day rides**, with 7% most commonly participating in 2 or more day-rides.

Analysis of the respondent's comments reinforced that rides of 1 – 3 hours were the most common ride duration.



Travel to Ride

On average **two thirds** (68.5%) of the respondents **travel up to one hour one way** to do a trail ride, though people will travel up to 3.5 hours. Respondents comments revealed they will especially travel further when there is a special event or desirable competition.

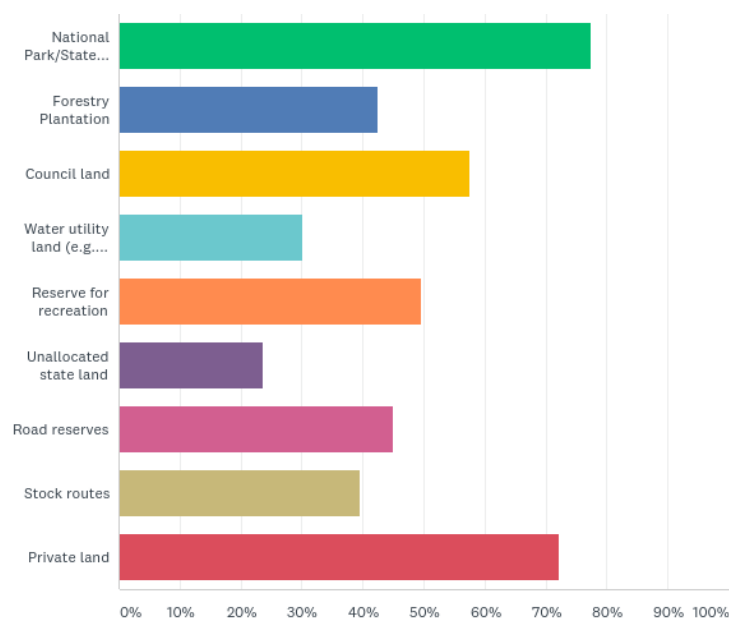


It was also clear that some respondents do not travel at all to ride. Rather, they access horse trails from their home or very locally: *'I don't drive, I ride to trails'*.

Where they Ride

Respondents were provided with a list of land classifications and asked to indicate where they undertook their trail horse riding. Responses revealed that:

- more than **77%** (417) of the 539 respondents ride in **National Park / State Forest**; and
- **72%** (389) ride on **Private Land**.



More specifically, the riders also indicated their preferred parks or trail networks where they most like to ride. A range of small and large parks and trail systems were identified across the state, with some areas commonly identified. Reflecting the geographical base of nearly 2/3rds of the respondents, these locations tended to fall in the south east corner of the state.



Top Ten – Horse Trail Riding Locations

1. Noosa Trail Network (108)
2. D’Aguilar National Park (51)
3. Wyaralong Dam/ Mt Joyce (47)
4. Daisy Hill Conservation Park (39)
5. BVRT (34)
6. BNT (30)
7. Nerang State Forest (27)
8. Spring Mountain Reserve/ White Rock (27)
9. Sheep Station Creek Reserve (26)
10. Wivenhoe Dam (25)

Expenditure while Trail Riding

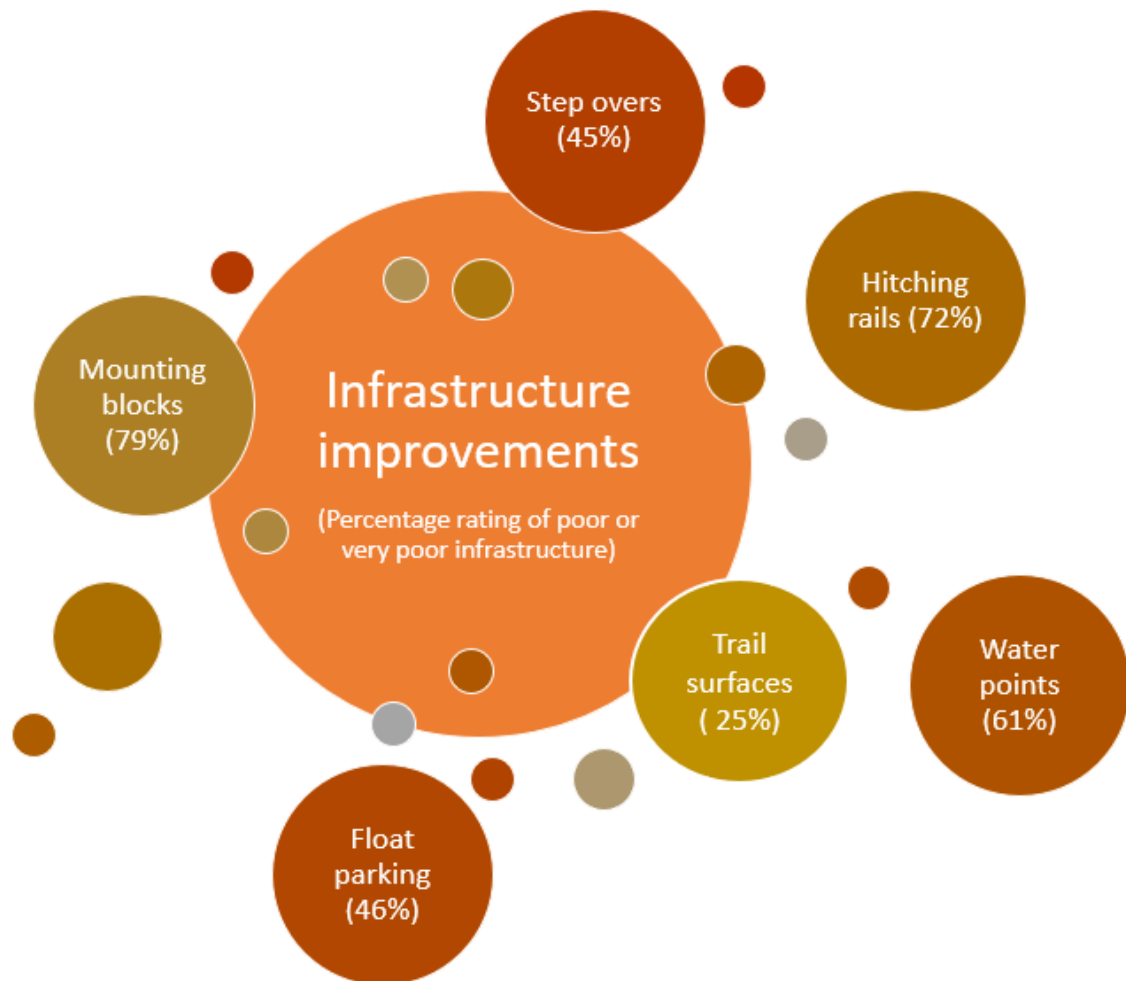
On a weekend trail ride, respondents indicated they would spend on average \$179.05. This was comprised of:

Fuel	\$71.48
Food & Drink	\$45.40
Ride Costs	\$31.34
Incidentals	\$30.83

Satisfaction with Trails

Some common concerns and preferences regarding trail infrastructure were evident from the rider’s perspectives. A review of both qualitative and quantitative responses showed a consistent overarching desire for horse trails and networks across the state to be better supported with float parking and turnarounds, mounting blocks, as well as more water points. Descriptive statistics also revealed that the infrastructure that was most consistently considered to be poor or very poor were:

- mounting blocks
- hitching rails and
- water points.



Trail Horse Clubs and Membership

In terms of horse club membership, nearly 53% of respondents were, or had been, a member of a club. However, respondents also demonstrated a breadth of group riding involvement or affiliations. This included 66% indicating they predominantly, but not exclusively, rode socially with friends. In addition, some were also members of registered clubs and/ or part of an informal group that regularly meet to ride (refer to Figure 1).

The most important reasons people indicated they were members of clubs included:

- Keeping the trail riding profile alive
- Being with friends and meeting new people
- Lobbying for access
- Access to private land
- Organised rides

Those who were not members of a registered group or association predominantly acknowledged the benefits of clubs and associations but were non-affiliated because:

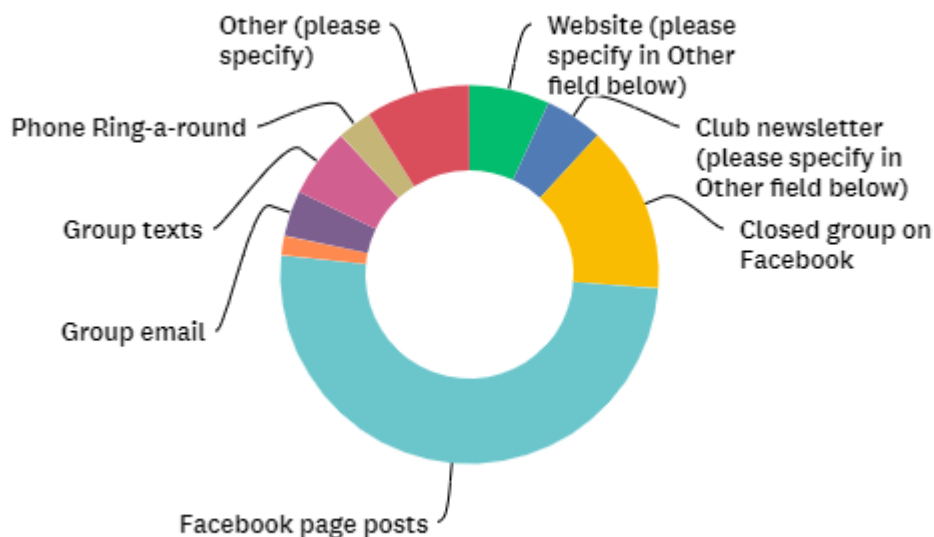
- We just want the freedom of riding, nothing else (24.5%)
- Fees too high/ could not afford it (13.9%)
- We like to be spontaneous with our ride dates and events (12.3%).

Figure 1: Club and Association Membership



Communication, Technology and Horse Trail Riding

When asked how they kept informed about potential and upcoming horse rides and events more than half of the respondents used **Facebook posts (50.46%)**. When this result is combined with the communication choice of 'closed group on facebook', Facebook accounted for 65% of all communications.



Facebook and social media were used regularly. For example:

- **Facebook** was used **daily by more than half of the respondents (55%)** and at least weekly by more than 90%, and
- **Messenger** was used **daily by 34%** and at least weekly by 74%.

Instagram was used at least weekly by nearly 23%, YouTube at least weekly by 16.74%, Snapchat used at least weekly by 11% and Twitter was identified as being used at least weekly to communicate with other horse riders, by under 3%.

Mapping Rides

A range of GPS applications were used to map rides though the tools used were very diverse. Of the provided options:

- 15.4% of respondents used Garmin,
- 3.5% used Strava.

While **53% of respondents used no GPS functions** or did not map their rides, others used disparate mechanisms to track rides. While these were not always clearly defined, they included:

- Equilab (5%)
- Google Maps (3.5%)
- MapMyRide/Walk (3.3%).

Other Comments

The survey contained 15 questions that enabled respondents to provide comments to expand or clarify their response. This produced a rich pool of qualitative description that demonstrated both the shared and common concerns of riders, as well as helped to unpack some of their regional and location specific concerns.

What was evident from these comments was that the trail horse riding group were predominantly enthusiastic in contributing to a survey and hopeful their combined voice could be used to further the activity of horse trail riding, raise its profile, and help inform maintenance and future development of safe trail riding opportunities.

When asked if they had any final comments, many indicated 'no', 'no thank you', or 'no, just hope this helps'. Nearly 38% did provide specific feedback. When overviewed, this demonstrated that key issues of interest and concern for riders are:

- The need to ensure **current riding areas remain open**, and **future trails are developed**;
- Concern that the **transfer of lands to National Park** is reducing the SEQ Horse Trail Network;
- Wariness about **road riding** and how the need for this appears to be increasing as trails are not connected, or there is **insufficient parking** on site;
- A desire to assist in the **education of other road and trail users** – drivers, MTB riders, motorbike riders;
- A reminder that horse trail riding is a **healthy pastime** for mind and body and should be supported and encouraged;
- A willingness to **contribute to the mapping** of existing rides and identifying connections and gaps that might expand and diversify the ride experience.