

Is the *Brookvale* ride your first or one of your first endurance rides?

If so, here is what you need to know:

Before you leave home

- Ensure you have everything required for your horse (e.g. hard feed, hay, buckets for feed, water and strapping, electrolytes, if you plan entering the 52 or 80 km ride, saddle, saddle pad, bridle, possibly breast plate, hoof protection, if required, rug(s), strapping and brushing gear, portable yards), yourself (don't forget your helmet!) and the filled in horse health declaration form

When you arrive:

- At the entry gate, the horse health declaration form will be collected from you. If you do not have one, your horse will be inspected by a vet at the gate, its temperature will be taken and you will need to sign a health declaration on the spot.
- You will also be given a flyer and directions on where you can set up your camp. Please, follow those directions.
- Set up your camp in a way that you do not obstruct access to other camps or to the creek and make your horse comfortable with food and water.

Registration:

- Go to the admin area across the creek and register. All paperwork you need to fill in is there, if you have not been sent it when you pre-nominated or did not have the opportunity to print it out. You do not take your horse or riding gear for registration, but if you are less than 18 years old, you have to take one of your parents/your guardian for the day to authorize your participation in the event
- Fill in the following paper work: (1) Ride entry form, (2) Notice to all participants – Dangers on track, (3) Day membership & non-member waiver, if you are not a member of the NSW Endurance Riders Association
- Hand over all paperwork to the person taking entries, pay the appropriate entry fee, if you have not paid already via online booking. You will be given a vetting card for your horse, if it does not have a NSWERA logbook, and a bib with your rider number. This bib has to be worn at all times during vetting and during the ride.

Pre-ride vetting:

- All horses participating in an endurance event have to be vetted before the ride and after each leg/at the end of the ride. So, after you have registered and received your vetting card, you need to get your horse and present it to the vets. Your horse will need to wear a halter with a long lead. If it still has a rug on, that is fine, too, although the rug needs to come off when the vet inspects the horse. Also take the vetting card with you to the vetting area.
- The vetting area is adjacent to the registration tent.
- For the pre-ride vetting, temperature, respiration and heart rates are taken by a so-called TPR steward and entered in the vetting card, before the vet sees your horse. Only after those parameters have been taken, you move on to the vet.
- After the vet has checked your horse and assessed various parameters that are recorded in the vetting card, you need to trot your horse out on a long lead so the vet can see whether it is sound. You must not hold the lead at a point close to the horse's head, as this could steady the horse's head and make it difficult to assess whether the horse moves freely (if possible, practice this with your horse at home, for ideally it should trot on command). Then you will be told, whether you are okay to start or not (for example in case the horse is lame). The vetting card is then kept with the vets.

Pre-ride talk and assembly for the ride start:

- Before you head off for the ride, prepare buckets with water for strapping and water and feed (e.g. lucerne and/or other hay) for your horse for when you return from the ride
- About 1/4 of an hour before the start, you need to assemble with your horse, ready to start, at the starting point, which is the entry gate to the ride base on Doctors Flat Road. A pre-ride talk will then be held by the chief steward and ride secretary to give you a run-down on the course and what to pay

attention to. **This pre-ride talk is compulsory to attend! Spurs and whips are not permitted and an approved helmet has to be worn.** No other tack or clothes are prescribed.

The ride:

- Follow the arrows and ribbons with the colour and number of your ride. The chief steward will tell you which number/colour to follow during the pre-ride talk, but to give you already the heads up, here they are:
13 km ride: follow green '4' and green flagging tape
22 km ride: follow blue '3' and blue flagging tape
52 km ride: follow black '2' and white flagging tape for Leg 1 (30 km) and blue '3' and blue flagging tape for Leg 2 (22 km)
80 km ride: follow red '1' and red tape for Leg 1 (50 km) and black '2' and white tape for Leg 2 (30 km)
If you see a road marked with a red or black cross, do not enter but look which way your ride's arrow is pointing.



- The minimum riding time for your ride will be announced by the chief steward during the pre-ride talk. In general, to complete in minimum riding time, you would need to trot for most of the time and compensate with canter episodes for times, where you only walked. For completion in maximum riding time, you could walk a lot of the time on an average horse with some trot. Listen to your horse during the ride and do not be afraid to get off and walk with him on steep uphill or downhill stretches.
- Do not arrive back at the ride base before minimum time is up or you will be disqualified!**

Arrival back at ride base and strapping:

- When you arrive back at the ride base, you do not immediately return to your camp but need to go with your horse to the time keeper tent (beside the WICEN communication tent in the admin/vetting area) to receive a ticket telling you by which time (1/2 hour after your arrival) you have to present your horse for post-ride vetting.
- Then, go back to your camp site, give your horse something to drink and a bit to eat and strap it with plenty of water, particularly if it is sweaty and it is not windy.
- Immediately start with the strapping once you have taken the saddle and bridle off. Also have drinking water and something to eat ready for your horse. Eating and drinking will stimulate its guts, resulting in healthy gut sounds when the vet listens for them. When you strap and the horse is still hot from the ride (if you went relatively fast), it is particularly important to cool the chest and girth area, as this will help to reduce the heart rate. In addition, if the horse is hot, the water you put on it gets hot very quickly, too. It therefore has to be removed as soon as possible, for otherwise there is no cooling effect. You are better off sponging or pouring plenty of water on two or three times and removing it quickly each time than once and then leaving the water on for too long. After you have finished strapping, put a towel or blanket over your horse's rump to keep it warm. This is important, as the large rump muscles could start cramping, if they get cold, resulting in uneven gait and a possible vet-out.
- If it is very windy, your horse will likely not be that sweaty and strapping it will make it cold and raise its heart rate. In that case, do not put a lot of water on your horse or even not any at all, and particularly, do not put any on the rump and thigh muscles, as they could get cold and stiff, potentially resulting in your horse being declared lame. Cleaning the face with a sponge and otherwise only brushing the horse to remove most of the sweat is often better in windy weather.
- About 10 minutes before the vetting time, take the food away from the horse, if it has started eating, and start walking it around, leaving the towel/blanket/rug on its rump. Eating increases the heart rate, therefore, stopping your horse from eating for now will help to reduce and stabilise the heart rate. Walking your horse will prevent it from getting stiff. **Make sure you arrive in the vetting area no later than just before the time noted on the time slip! Late arrival can result in disqualification!**

Post-ride/Post-leg vetting:

- Again, first the TPR steward will be taking your horse's heart rate, before the vet will check your horse and have you trot it out on a long lead. Hopefully, you will then be given the thumbs up for a successful ride completion or for continuing your ride.
- After the vetting, you and your horse can relax and eat and drink until the presentation of prizes or until you want to leave.
- If you want to leave early, you need to get your horse's vetting card from the office. The head vet's signature on it indicates that your horse is free to leave the ride base. Therefore, should not leave unless you got your card. Please, also return your bib to the office before you leave.

Good luck!