

# Media Release

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## Export dream receives funding boost

**A dream inspired by the Sydney Olympics to export the Australian Stock Horse is one step closer, following a funding boost of almost \$70,000.**

A grant of \$67,158 has been made to the Australian Stock Horse Society (ASHS). NSW Minister for Regional Development David Campbell today announced to employ a part-time development project officer to be based at the Society's head office in Scone.

Commenting on the funding ASHS Executive Manager Steve Guihot said, "A project officer will enable us to expand the recreation and work horse industry in the Hunter. Perhaps more importantly it will help us to realise the dream to develop its export potential.

"This dream was fuelled by the opening ceremony of the 2002 Olympics which incorporated probably the most impressive showcase of the Australian Stock Horse ever seen. As billions of TV viewers learned, the Australian Stock Horse was developed from bloodstock transported on the first fleet and evolved through selective breeding in response to the demands of the environment.

"For this reason it is popularly referred to as '*the breed for every need*,'" Mr Guihot added.

*Interestingly the forebear of the Australian Stock Horse was first exported in the early 1800s and used by cavalry in three wars. They were initially ridden by the British in the Indian conflict (it was they who named them 'Walers'), later ridden by Australian troops in the Boer War and then in World War I. Of almost 400,000 Walers exported to serve in these conflicts, sadly only one horse returned home.*

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In 2001, the horse farming industry generated \$86 million in turnover, and contributed \$24.9 million in gross domestic product. The export level of the industry is high but the commercial export potential for this popular breed is virtually untapped.

Mr Guihot said, "The Society is delighted to have been successful in securing this grant. The Australian Stock Horse is an integral part of our heritage and a great living icon.

"Earlier this year international participants at the Inaugural Polocrosse World Cup were unanimous of their praise for the horses which they had been loaned during their visit. Many of the Brits and the Americans said these horses were more versatile and had greater stamina than those they rode back home. That positive first hand experience builds on the exposure from the Sydney Olympics and makes a perfect launch pad for our export drive.

"This funding enables us to make the dream a reality," Mr Guihot added.

*Support for the Australian Stock Horse Society comes from the Developing Regional Resources program of the New South Wales Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD). The Society will advertise the position.*

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### **EDITOR'S NOTES:**

#### **ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK HORSE SOCIETY:**

1. The Australian Stock Horse Society has 9000 Members and has registered over 150,000 horses since establishing itself in 1971.
2. The Society is the largest organisation of recreation/work horses in the country.
3. Its mission is to maintain the heritage and to promote the bloodlines and high performance of the Australian Stock Horse among equestrian activities and the general public. It aims to (i) preserve the heritage and identity of the Australian Stock Horse; (ii) promote the development and popularity of Australian Stock Horses throughout Australia and the world and (iii) maximise the benefits of owning a Registered Australian Stock Horse and being a Member of The Australian Stock Horse Society.
4. The ASHS is headquartered in Scone, NSW and currently employs ten staff.
5. For more see [www.ashs.com.au](http://www.ashs.com.au)

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