

Have you ever wondered how your horse compares to others?

The International Society for Equitation Science is proud to announce that our Honorary Fellow, Professor Paul McGreevy has been awarded the Fulbright Future Scholarship, funded by The Kinghorn Foundation. The scholarship will allow Paul to spend 3 months at Colorado State University (CSU), promoting the Equine Behaviour Assessment Research Questionnaire (E-BARQ) project.

The E-BARQ Project

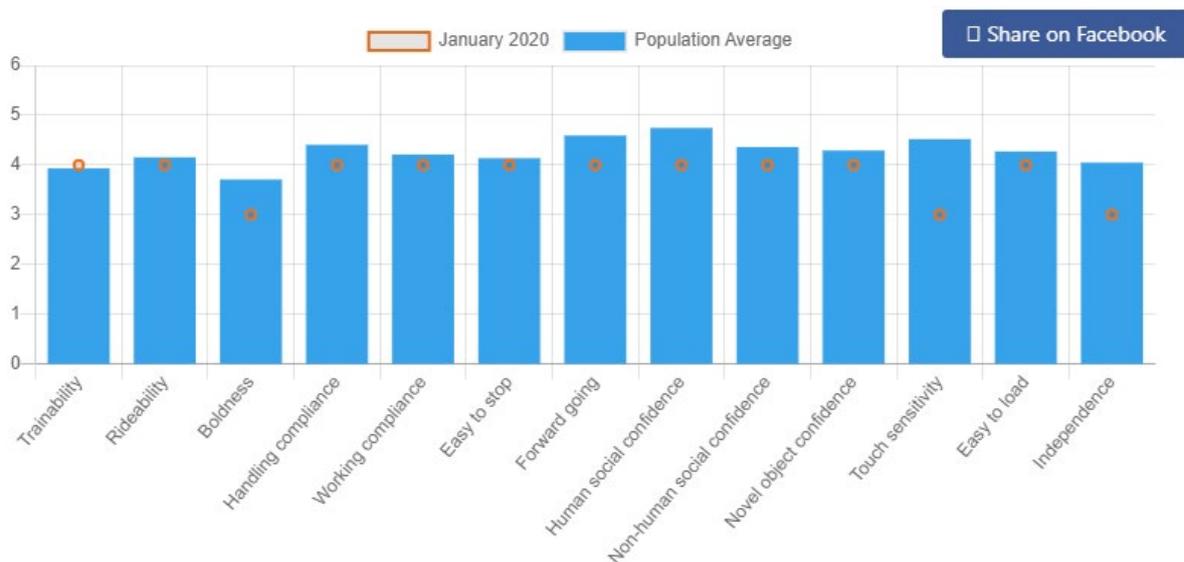
Since ancient times, horse behaviour, and the bond between horses and humans, has been a source of intrigue and fascination.

The horse-lore that has accumulated over the centuries is a rich mix of both useful practice (approaching horses from their left side, making them slightly less reactive) and unsubstantiated myth, such as the one that chestnut horses are especially difficult to deal with.

This is why Paul and his team at the University of Sydney have launched the [Equine Behavior Assessment and Research Questionnaire \(E-BARQ\)](#), a global database of horse behaviour. The study explores how horse training and management interact with behaviour. It will reveal invaluable information on how our training and management affects behaviour and how, in turn, behaviour affects horse welfare. Beyond the immediate and direct research outcomes, E-BARQ also offers great benefits to horse owners, riders and trainers.

On completion of the questionnaire, contributors receive a graph that compares their horse with 1000's of other horses across various attributes. They also receive a private dashboard where they can log each of their horses and view their E-BARQ results. This innovative tool is completely free of charge.

Horse owners can upload photographs to a custom-built app, recording their horse's progress in training over time. For the first time, they'll also be able to compare their horse's behaviour with that of other horses. The "share-&-compare" graphs will reveal attributes such as trainability, rideability, handling, compliance, boldness, and human social confidence.



E-BARQ's main benefits:

- 1) E-BARQ is open to all horse owners/handlers, regardless of their horses' breed, height or age, and provides users with a free dashboard to store their horses' results and track their progress.
- 2) E-BARQ participants can compare their horses' behaviour to others around the world, giving them a useful benchmark.
- 3) E-BARQ participants can monitor their horse's progress over time as they can return to their E-BARQ dashboard every 6 months and re-take the questionnaire, updating their scores.
- 4) E-BARQ participants will obtain a new insight into which areas their horses are performing well in and where they may require help.
- 5) E-BARQ participants can monitor the consequences of different training methods over time, so E-BARQ data can be a powerful tool for advancing horse welfare. E-BARQ data will also inform evidence-based judgements on the ethics and sustainability of horse sports.
- 6) E-BARQ will reveal the true impact of ancient traditions and modern trends. This can be used by everyone, from the general riding public to equine scientists and veterinarians.

This project builds on a similar project for dogs (C-BARQ), which has collected information on over 85,000 dogs and been used in more than 70 research studies that have revealed behavioural differences that relate to head and body shape and the astonishing effect of de-sexing on behaviour. Without doubt, C-BARQ has revolutionised our understanding of dog behaviour.

After 8 years of planning, we are very excited about E-BARQ. It is a not-for-profit project that allows the global horse-folk community to donate their observational data to the University of Sydney and gain useful benefits in return.

You can access E-BARQ here: <https://e-barq.com/>

You can access an E-BARQ how-to video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBKry6Wz2gc>

The questionnaire and app will expose how training and management influences horse behaviour, and vice versa. They will reveal how breeds differ in responses and illuminate breed-typical personality types, how male and female horses differ, how horses used in different disciplines (such as show-jumping versus dressage) differ in their behaviour and how horse behaviour changes with maturation and training.

Information provided by E-BARQ could potentially help buyers identify warning signs of dangerous behaviours and make more informed choices. E-BARQ also holds great promise in tracking, welfare monitoring, promoting early intervention and the education of new owners in the areas of horse rescue and re-homing.

The current focus of the McGreevy group's equine work is firmly on E-BARQ (launched late last year) and *horseslogbook* (later this year). Both of these data collection systems have University of Sydney ethics committee approval. They lend themselves to student data collection and to citizen science programs.

Paul will use his time at CSU to ensure that US horses and their humans obtain maximal benefit from the EBARQ initiative. He will be based in the Equine Sciences Program at Fort Collins, working with Dr Jerry Black and Sarah Matlock who are building the program's research capacity in equine behaviour and welfare. The trip to the US will allow Paul and the CSU team to explore interactions between

management regimes and observed behaviour. As an enthusiastic teacher, Paul is particularly excited about the prospect of working with US students to appreciate the potential of E-BARQ.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the E-BARQ research team at info@e-barq.com and be sure to complete an E-BARQ for your horse at <https://e-barq.com/>. To find out more about Fulbright Australia, click here: <https://www.fulbright.org.au/>.

