

FACILITATOR GUIDE

The Melbourne Cup Challenge 2026

Everything your team needs to run a fun, inclusive race day session. Just print and play.

45 min

session

5 races

short, gentle games

Compete

friendly team rivalry

At a glance

A friendly Melbourne Cup themed group activity with five short games. Residents take part individually while earning points for their team. Celebrate effort, connection and enjoyment.

BEFORE RESIDENTS ARRIVE

- **Teams:** prepare 4 teams of up to 5 residents (adjust to suit your Home).*
 - Each team has a lane colour:
 - ● Red
 - ● Blue
 - ● Yellow
 - ● Green
- **Space:** set up an accessible table for the racetrack and scoreboard, with clear wheelchair access and room for staff support.
- **Gather:** 1 large dice, beanbags, 3 hoops or buckets, soft balls, tape, hats or fascinators, pens, music and the printed pack.
- **Print the pack** (see page 3) and write team names on the scoreboard and racetrack lanes.
- **Supporting Safe Participation:** check individual care plans and staff guidance before movement activities. Offer rest breaks, water and opt-out choices.

* Suggested team names: Galloping Grannies, Silver Stallions, Golden Hooves and Racing Legends.

STAFF QUICK REFERENCE: THE SCOREBOARD

- Write team names on the scoreboard and the racetrack lanes before the session.
- After each race, enter each team's points in the matching column. Add up the total (out of 50) at the end.
- If the overall total is tied, announce joint winners or hold one tie-break dice roll.
- Before each race, read the instructions aloud and demonstrate the activity.

BEFORE THE BIG RACE!

Schedule the Melbourne Cup Challenge before the official race to build excitement and encourage participation. Allow approximately 45 minutes for the activities, followed by presentations and celebrations. Residents can then enjoy watching the Melbourne Cup together.

Melbourne Cup 2026 - Tuesday 3 November

Race time: 3:00 pm AEDT (2:00 pm QLD · 2:30 pm SA · 1:30 pm NT · 12:00 pm WA).

Make it work for your Home. Run all five races in one session, or spread them across the day or week. Skip or swap any race. It's entirely up to you.

What's in the pack

Item	Paper	Used for
Poster (fill in date, time and location)	A4	Advertise the session around your Home
Team scoreboard	A3	Recording points for all 5 races
Race 2 zone sheets (Start Here, Good Try, Almost There, Finish Line)	4 × A4	Race 2: Roll to the Finish
Jockey Fitness chart	A4	Race 3: put it up where everyone can see
Grand Final racetrack	A3	Race 5: dice race
Horse markers (print, laminate, cut, fold)	On a card	Race 5: one per team, plus spares
Certificates (5 designs)	A4	Awards and participation for everyone

Print tips. Print at **100% / actual size**. Everything is A4 except the scoreboard and racetrack (A3). No A3 printer? Print them on A4 using "fit to page". Type your details into the poster, scoreboard and certificates before printing, or print them blank and write by hand.

45 MINUTE RUNNING ORDER

Activity	Facilitator cue
Welcome & warm-up	Introduce teams; gentle seated shoulder rolls and arm movements
Race 1: Horse Derby	Beanbag target throws
Race 2: Roll to the Finish	Soft ball rolling challenge
Race 3: Jockey Fitness	Gentle seated movement to music
Race 4: Fashions on the Field	Celebrate hats and outfits
Race 5: The Cup Grand Final	Dice-and-horse racetrack race
Awards & cool-down	Announce results; recognise every participant

SIMPLE TEAM SCORING

Award up to **10 points per team for each race**. Maximum total: **50 points**.

- **Race 1:** 2 points for each successful throw, capped at 10.
- **Race 2:** 1, 3 or 5 points depending on the zone where the ball stops, capped at 10.
- **Race 3:** up to 10 points for participation and encouragement.
- **Race 4:** up to 10 points for creativity and team spirit.
- **Race 5:** 10 / 8 / 6 / 4 points by finishing order. Tied teams share the higher points.

The five races

1 The Horse Derby

- Place 3 hoops or buckets at about 1 m, 1.5 m and 2 m from a seated throwing position. Move them closer for anyone who needs it.
- Each resident tosses a soft beanbag at a target: 1 turn each (up to 3 if time allows). Allow an assisted release.
- 2 points per successful throw**, up to 10 per team. A staff member collects the beanbags.

YOU'LL NEED

Beanbags, 3 hoops or buckets, scoreboard

2 Roll to the Finish

- Lay the 4 zone sheets in a row on a table or the floor and tape the corners.
- Each resident rolls a ball from Start Here: 1 turn each (up to 3 if time allows). Staff can steady the ball or help start the roll.
- Score the zone where the ball stops** (rolls past the Finish Line count as 5), up to 10 per team.

START HERE

GOOD TRY 1

ALMOST THERE 3

FINISH LINE 5

YOU'LL NEED

Soft balls, 4 zone sheets, tape

3 Jockey Fitness Challenge

- Put up the Jockey Fitness chart. Lead gentle seated marching or heel taps, rein pulls, forward reaches and arm raises (up to 10 each), then a big cheer.
- Residents choose their own range and pace. Standing is optional, only when appropriate.
- Up to 10 points** per team for participation, smiles and encouragement.

YOU'LL NEED

Jockey Fitness chart, music

4 Fashions on the Field

- Invite residents to wear or show a hat, fascinator or racing colours. Offer props to anyone without an outfit.
- Allow seated modelling, a wave or a short introduction. Nobody needs to walk or stand.
- Up to 10 points** for creativity and team spirit. Extra non-scored awards such as Best Hat or Brightest Smile.

YOU'LL NEED

Hats, fascinators, props

5 The Cup Grand Final

- Place one horse marker per team on its lane's START on the racetrack.
- Teams take turns rolling a large dice and move their horse forward by the number shown, until a horse reaches or passes FINISH. Other teams finish their turns to decide places.
- 10, 8, 6 and 4 points** for first through fourth place.

YOU'LL NEED

Racetrack, 4 horse markers, 1 large dice

Inclusive adaptations

If a resident has...	Try this
Wheelchair / limited reach	Use tabletop targets and shorter distances; keep materials within comfortable reach.
Reduced strength or coordination	Use larger, lighter equipment and allow supported turns without pressure.
Cognitive impairment	Offer one-step directions, demonstrate, use visual cues (lane colours help) and repeat calmly.
Hearing or vision impairment	Face residents, speak clearly, use high-contrast large-print labels and tactile props.
Fatigue or discomfort	Offer rest, cheering or judging roles; stop movement if symptoms occur.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Refer to each resident's care plan to ensure safe and appropriate participation.
- Stop if a resident becomes dizzy, breathless, distressed or uncomfortable, and follow facility procedures.

AWARDS

Cup Champions Top team overall	Best Team Spirit Loudest cheers	Fashions on the Field Best race day style	Custom award Your choice	Cup Day Star Every resident
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SESSION DETAILS

FACILITY

DATE / TIME

FACILITATOR

LOCATION