

Submission  
No 54

## INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL RACECOURSE

**Organisation:** Advocacy For a Kinder World

**Date Received:** 17 July 2024

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## Advocacy for a Kinder World

### Submission to the Proposal to Develop Rosehill Racecourse

Advocacy for a Kinder World is an organisation whose goal is to create a kinder world for animals and marginalised people by promoting, and advocating for, animal rights and a just and inclusive society. We believe that the information provided in our submission is grounded in scientific research and guided by strong ethical principles.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the 'Proposal to Develop Rosehill Racecourse' consultation.

#### Details of the Consultation:

*That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on the proposal to develop Rosehill Racecourse, and in particular:*

- (a) the unsolicited proposal process including associated probity measures,*
- (b) the involvement of the Government prior to the unsolicited proposal being made,*
- (c) the role of the proposal in meeting housing targets,*
- (d) impacts on the cost and delivery of the Sydney Metro,*
- (e) potential impacts on parkland in Western Sydney,*
- (f) impacts on the racing industry in New South Wales,*
- (g) the impact on animal welfare and any integrity concerns associated with the proposal which relate to animal welfare, and*
- (h) any other related matters*

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We will address Items (f), (g) and (h) in our submission.

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## **(F) Impacts on the racing industry in New South Wales**

There is a plan to relocate Rosehill racecourse to Sydney Olympic Park (or one of 2-3 other potential sites) in an attempt to placate trainers who oppose the redevelopment of the Rosehill racetrack. This is a totally unnecessary move as the racing industry should be phased out rather than encouraged and supported financially. Thoroughbred racing is organised mainly to attract gambling: without this money it would not exist. Gambling has several detrimental impacts on society, it is known to cause relationship breakdown, family violence and poverty. This redevelopment proposal offers an opportunity for the N.S.W Government to take positive steps in supporting local communities both by providing increased housing and moving away from promoting harmful industries.

Social licence for horse racing is also decreasing due to concerns around animal cruelty and the fate of horses who can no longer race. Racing involves striking animals with a whip in an attempt to enhance performance. The number of times the horse is whipped in the last 100 metres is totally unlimited. A program on Catalyst in 2015 showed scientifically that this definitely inflicts pain.<sup>1</sup>

Horses have extremely sensitive skin which can be observed by their reaction to even a fly landing on them. In addition metal spurs are used by some jockeys to dig into the horses ribs in an effort to make them run faster and tongue ties lead to difficulty in horses swallowing, and can result in cuts and lacerations to the tongue. The RSPCA is opposed to the use of tongue ties because of the pain and distress they inflict on horses.<sup>2</sup>

Horses are prey animals and will naturally try to run faster to escape danger when stressed. This can ultimately cause the death of horses through trauma such as broken legs, back, pelvis or neck, bleeding lungs, spinal injuries and heart attacks. At least 168 horses were killed on Australian racetracks in the last racing year. This equates to one horse suffering a painful, life-ending injury in the name of gambling profits every two days.<sup>3</sup>

This is socially unacceptable in today's society.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-24/whip-use-racehorses-questioned-study/6345296>

<sup>2</sup> <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-is-the-rspcas-view-on-the-use-of-tongue-ties-in-horse-racing/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://horseracingkills.com/issues/deathwatch/#>

## **Recommendations:**

1. Redirect the money that was planned to be used to develop a new racecourse to instead create transition packages to assist people to leave the racing industry.
  2. Educate the general public about the cruelty involved in the racing industry and the harm caused by gambling.
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### **(G) The impact on animal welfare and any integrity concerns associated with the proposal which relate to animal welfare**

The Olympic Park site, proposed as a potential new racecourse, currently houses a wildlife sanctuary which is home to a population of endangered green and gold bell frogs.

According to the NSW Department of the Environment, the green and gold bell frog is an endangered species which needs careful management to ensure its survival. It has specific habitat needs throughout its life cycle. There are only about 40 isolated remnant populations left scattered across the coastal parts of NSW. It is listed as endangered in the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act) and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). One of the main reasons for their disappearance is habitat loss.<sup>4</sup>

Building a racetrack on the site containing an endangered species is simply not conducive with the Federal Government's plan to stop threatened species extinction.<sup>5</sup>

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## **Recommendations:**

3. Exclude Olympic Park from development as a racetrack.
4. Ensure that provisions are made for the protection of green and gold bell frog habitat.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/08510tsdsgreengoldbfbpg.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://minister.dcceew.gov.au/plibersek/media-releases/minister-launches-threatened-species-action-plan-toward-zero-extinctions>

## **(H) Any other related matters.**

The plan to develop Rosehill racecourse involves the building of 25,000 dwellings on a 59 hectare site. This land clearing will remove habitat which already impacts millions of native animals and plants every year. Native birds will also be impacted.

Rosehill was part of the lands of the Dharug Indigenous people, including the Wategora, Barramattagal and Bidjigal. How will this development impact their land? The details of the proposal do not appear to include consultation with Traditional Owners, or any consideration for the impact of redevelopment on their lands.

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## **Recommendations:**

5. Consider the natural environment and ecosystems when developing Rosehill racecourse.
  6. Consult with First Nations people about the development of Rosehill racecourse.
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## **Conclusion:**

Horse racing is an industry which provides more harm than good, particularly for those who have no choice but to take part; the horses. It is a sport that condones a public display of cruelty as horses are whipped in an effort to get them “first past the post”.

Horse racing would not exist were it not for the gambling industry, another industry which often results in addiction, financial issues, family violence and break up and loss of community space which could be used for more conducive activities.

Advocacy for a Kinder World would like to see the horse racing industry phased out and Rosehill racecourse either developed as public open space and rewilding or for sensitively developed social housing where biodiversity can be encouraged and protected.

The Federal government is working to increase Australia's capacity to adapt to the climate crisis. The development of another racecourse would not be congruent with this aim. There is certainly no need to build another racecourse for the benefit of the few people benefitting from the egregious racing and gambling industries.