

Submission
No 68

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL
RACECOURSE**

Name: Cr Helen Hughes

Date Received: 18 July 2024

Partially
Confidential

Submission – regarding the proposal to develop Rosehill Racecourse.

Rosehill Racecourse is a significant site overall, but strongly for the people of Greater Western Sydney.

The site in its current layout is critical for Greater Western Sydney. Huge events can be held there – the ‘Camping and Caravan Show’ and the ‘Pool & Spa Lifestyle Expo’ as examples. Additionally, very large conferences and personal events such as very large wedding receptions are held at this site. There is nowhere else in western Sydney that can accommodate these big events.

Parramatta is Sydney’s second CBD and, of course, the major CBD for Greater Western Sydney. It needs to be a comprehensive area and the racecourse adds enormously to this precinct. Additionally, Parramatta is a very heritage based area. Rosehill racecourse, also, is known as being historic – with aspects such as the Golden Slipper. Whilst this first commenced in approximately 1957, the creation of this race, which was the world’s richest race for juveniles, has historic nature in this industry and at that location. Simply relocating the Golden Slipper will take away from the realm of its meaning and attachment to Rosehill Racecourse. It won’t be ‘the same’. Some people may not give a toss, but for mainstream people and the racing industry people who are genuinely enamoured with this, and Greater Western Sydney overall, retention of the Golden Slipper at Rosehill is very meaningful.

If the development was to proceed, the financial return that has been verbally made public is also somewhat questionable. It’s very easy to throw figures out in the public, but the breakdown is the important factor. Many areas of Rosehill and Camellia are known to be highly contaminated. This is very publicly known and is one of the aspects that questions the appropriateness of such a major residential development and, subsequently, the alleged financial return for the ATC. Additionally, what is the reality of health and safety of residents who may live there, if this development proceeds?

The former STC was in a very healthy financial position. The AJC was not. Reluctantly, the amalgamation occurred, and funding was provided by the state government. The intent was to do a range of upgrades at Randwick and Rosehill. Disappointingly, Rosehill was only provided far less than what was ‘planned’, but Randwick, of course, was updated considerably. Prior to the amalgamation, the STC had an preliminary plan in place for an entertainment precinct within the Rosehill Racecourse area and appropriate residential development in the outer area of the racecourse. This would have contributed further to the western Sydney area.

Regarding the proposed new site at Horsley Park for training, is impractical. This concept has been questioned by some industry people. There is considerable concern as there is no viability of residential areas for training staff at that area. They have early starts to the days and close livable proximity is needed. In a practical sense, a large open space to be developed for training is only a small aspect of the entire needs for the trainers. This intended area is Crown Land. It will not be owned by the ATC and it, therefore, is contentious of long-term future use for trainers, and the racing industry overall.

Regarding public transport facilities, the current light rail has mapping for inclusion of a stopping point now called ‘Camellia light rail station’. Whilst this is a further distance to

Rosehill racecourse than the 'Royal Randwick light rail station' is to Randwick, it is within walking distance proximity. Additionally, there are bus stops along James Ruse Drive – so accessibility by public transport is possible.

Sale of Rosehill is only looking after the people of eastern Sydney. Given that Randwick Racecourse is Crown Land, retention of the ATC's biggest asset is important. It's only about money, not the reality of members, community and the industry. People from Greater Western Sydney should not have to solely go to Randwick as the major racing site. Rosehill is a pinnacle racing site appropriately located. Additionally, the proposed 'upgrade' to other racing sites means little when the loss of such a major site is undertaken. Any alleged 'upgrade' to Hawkesbury, Warwick Farm and/or Canterbury would not make those racetracks premium sites. Why sell your best asset? It's just dumping on the people of western Sydney again.

I had previously said at a Member's meeting that, if a racing site needs to be sold, then it should be Canterbury racecourse. Misinformation was made in response to us that this was not permitted by the Canterbury Bankstown Council - as a large amount of open space was required. This is not correct. It is a 'wish list', which I referenced. Of course, other commentary was made that this was a requirement by the Council. I had sought publicly available information – it is a 'wish list', not a 'must do'. Members deserve to be given full and accurate information.

Evidently, too, advice of this Rosehill site was made to the Premier, by a high level ATC staff member, who also is, evidently, a member of the ALP. Is this appropriate? You may have political 'mates' and be a member of a political party, but any employee has a responsibility factor of working for their employer (business they are engaged by), addressing matters with members and the community – not reaching out politically at the outset. Members should come first.

If the sale of the site proceeds, and this development occurs, the site will be a ghetto. Sketching of architectural arrangements and how sites will look is always 'nice, warm and fuzzy'. Reality is that sites are never look this way. This whole proposal and the method undertaken is a sham. Rosehill Racecourse needs to be retained. It is important. The people of Greater Western Sydney deserve better than any such development of this site.