

**Submission  
No 78**

## **INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL RACECOURSE**

**Name:** Mr Bjorn Baker

**Date Received:** 18 July 2024

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18th July 2024

To whom it may concern,

My name is Bjorn Baker, I am a licensed Thoroughbred Horse Trainer and have been based at Warwick Farm since relocating from New Zealand in 2011. I love Horse Racing in NSW and we are the envy of the world in many ways - I believe our racing is more competitive week by week than any jurisdiction in the world.

Selling Rosehill is a discussion of huge importance to the racing industry. Rosehill is regarded as a premier racecourse throughout Australia and the world. It is vital that Sydney has two premier racecourses that can host elite races. I own stables at Warwick Farm and could well be a beneficiary of the sale of Rosehill but feel it would be detrimental to the Thoroughbred Racing Industry as a whole.

It is of concern to hear that the Chairman of the Australian Turf Club, Peter McGauran, state the club are struggling to afford to maintain the current facilities; with Mr McGauran having told a recent meeting that \$12 million should be spent annually on this task, but the ATC can only afford \$4 million.

This admission comes despite the significant sums that are available in prizemoney: the ATC's five most valuable races are worth a combined \$45 million. While I have been the beneficiary of such prizemoney, I and others would contend that some races have prizemoney that is beyond their standing. For example, the Golden Eagle is worth \$10 million and the Big Dance \$3 million (this is the sixth most valuable race held at the ATC). If these races were worth less I contend they would still attract the same quality of racehorses in the field. I was fortunate to have four runners in the field of the Big Dance in 2023 (and will certainly try to qualify more horses this year), but the field was far from top class and I am sure there would have been similar quality, and the same excitement amongst owners, if the race had been held for \$1 million.

As a trainer in Sydney the prizemoney on offer has been a great benefit but the facilities available to trainers in Sydney are substandard. The Rosehill boxes and training precinct are the most modern, largest and well managed stables in Sydney. The stabling is of huge importance to the health and wellbeing of the horses and modern, clean and safe stabling is imperative in the current environment. If Sydney is to maintain its standing in global racing it needs to invest far more in its training and racing facilities, not consider selling off its most valuable asset.

I understand there has been some discussion of the Brickpit at Sydney Olympic Park being turned into a racecourse. As a former resident of both Wentworth Point and Rhodes I used to run around the Brickpit and its surrounds on a daily basis and, being somewhat familiar with the topography, roads and wildlife zones I do not believe this is a feasible option as a racecourse.

I believe the discussion of the sale of Rosehill has not been of benefit to an industry that is already struggling with its perception and standing in the community. The talk of billions of dollars has not helped us with the general public who already perceive racing as elitist; when in reality the majority of industry participants are under financial pressure.

Kind regards,

Bjorn

Bjorn Baker Racing Pty Ltd

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