

Submission
No 111

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL
RACECOURSE**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 14 July 2024

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into the Proposal to Develop Rosehill Racecourse

Dear Select Committee,

Thank you kindly for this opportunity to make a submission regarding the proposal to develop Rosehill Racecourse in NSW.

I stand firmly against horse racing because of the abhorrent animal cruelty rife in this industry, along with the problems associated with gambling on horse racing.

In recent times Singapore made the sensible and pragmatic move to shut down its sole horse racing track for the purpose of housing. Housing for people is FAR more important and meaningful than inflicting cruelty on horses to line the pockets of avaricious people. This is what one would call a “no brainer”.

Rosehill Racecourse should follow suit. No question.

I have significant concerns about the potential impacts on thoroughbred welfare, which fall under the Terms of Reference (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.”

It is my understanding that the Australian Turf Club (ATC) could benefit by up to ten billion dollars from the sale of Rosehill. Regardless of the type of development at Rosehill, I am concerned that such a large influx of funds will enable the racing industry to expand and intensify its operations in ways that may negatively impact the lives of thoroughbreds. Instead, I hope the ATC will use the sale proceeds as an opportunity to improve the welfare of NSW racehorses, which would also help to restore its somewhat tarnished image. To date, however, the racing industry has demonstrated little genuine concern for its racehorses and is notorious for its lack of transparency regarding the fate of horses that exit racing.

I support the proposal for Rosehill Racecourse to be sold and developed for purposes other than racing. My support hinges on the use of the sale proceeds, particularly those that could negatively impact thoroughbreds.

I request that the NSW Government intervenes to impose conditions on the ATC regarding the use of the potential ten-billion-dollar Rosehill sale income. The sale of Rosehill presents an opportunity for NSW racing to make a genuine contribution to the welfare of racehorses. A lack of funds will no longer be an excuse.

I would like to see the sale proceeds used to benefit thoroughbred racehorses as follows:

1. Ensure lifelong traceability of every horse in the NSW racing industry.
2. Fund a safe, lifelong retirement for every horse in the NSW racing industry.

3. Implement immediate actions to improve racehorse welfare on and off the track by adopting the 2020 Five Domains Model for animal welfare assessment and ensuring that industry members are educated accordingly.
4. Provide a fund to help transition members of the racing industry into professions outside racing.

Introduction

NSW is a major player in the Australian thoroughbred racing industry, accounting for almost 30% of all tracks, race meetings, races, and starts. In 2023, NSW comprised 29% of individual racing thoroughbreds (10,534 animals), and 38% of broodmares (7,123 mares), who birthed 5,778 foals, making up 45% of Australian foals. The sale of Rosehill Racecourse will significantly impact racing in NSW and the surrounding area. This substantial financial windfall is an opportunity for the racing industry to address the many animal welfare concerns that pervade it.

1. Horse Traceability Register

The potential ten-billion-dollar sale income from Rosehill would enable Racing NSW to establish its own traceability register, ensuring transparency and traceability for all thoroughbred horses born into the NSW racing industry. This would account for all unregistered foals, breeding horses, and ex-racehorses, and allow responsibility for their welfare to be traced back to their owners at any point.

2. Rehabilitation and Retirement Plan for Racehorses

The racing industry has a moral obligation to care for all the racehorses it breeds. To date, the industry's promises to rehabilitate and rehome retired animals have proven inadequate. An estimated 3,500 thoroughbred horses exit racing in NSW each year, far exceeding the capacity of pony clubs, private buyers, and other rehoming programs. The industry does not disclose the whereabouts of these horses.

I urge the NSW Government to ensure a properly funded rehabilitation and rehoming program is implemented to guarantee the lifelong retirement of all current and future thoroughbred horses in the NSW racing industry.

3. Breeding

Horses are bred based on industry demand without considering their welfare after racing. Approximately one-third of all horses bred for racing will not even make it to the racetrack. Mares are typically bred every year until they exit around the age of 10, with little hope of being re-homed. The industry keeps no publicly available records of mares exiting breeding.

I urge the NSW Government to cap breeding numbers and make the NSW racing industry responsible for the welfare of all the horses they breed and profit from. Funding could be provided by the sale of Rosehill Racecourse.

4. **Animal Welfare in Racing**

The racing industry prioritizes profit over animal welfare, compromising thoroughbred welfare through breeding programs, racetrack treatment, and causing early deaths on track and at slaughterhouses.

- **Cruelty on Race Day:**

The effects of cruelty on the racetrack can be seen on television every race day – horses breaking down, distressed, injured, and their deaths hidden from the public. Common cruelties include whipping, the use of tongue ties, sharp mouthpieces, earplugs, and blinkers or blindfolds, causing physical and psychological harm. Negative reinforcement is commonly used to force horses to race, denying them agency.

- **Day-to-Day Cruelty:**

Racehorses suffer from poor management practices throughout their racing lives: inadequate housing, diet, training, racing, and breeding regimes. Horses are confined to stalls for up to 23 hours a day, leading to painful stomach ulcers and stereotypical behaviours due to stress. Conventional feeding and housing regimes do not accommodate horses' natural needs, causing behavioural issues when they are retired and rehomed.

I urge the NSW Government to ensure the NSW racing industry improves thoroughbred welfare by introducing the Five Domains Welfare Model for all racehorses.

5. **Racing-Related Deaths and Injuries**

According to the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorse's 2023 Deathwatch Report, 168 thoroughbreds died on track or shortly after being raced as a direct result of racing, with NSW racetracks responsible for approximately 30% of these deaths. The average Australian no longer accepts the abuse of animals for gambling and entertainment.

6. **Social Impact of the Racing Industry**

Studies show that cruelty to animals correlates with violence towards humans. Public displays of cruelty on race days normalize animal cruelty and increase the risk of violence towards humans. The horseracing industry is also linked to gambling-related problems, with elevated incidents of police-recorded assaults and family issues on major race days. The NSW Government should

help combat these social problems by funding problem gambling aid initiatives.

I urge the NSW Government to prevent any sale proceeds from Rosehill Racecourse from being used to expand the NSW racing industry, as this would exacerbate these social impacts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

History has shown that profit-driven industries prioritize profit over animal welfare, and the NSW horseracing industry is no exception. If the sale proceeds from Rosehill Racecourse are used to expand the racing industry, the issues described in this submission will be exacerbated, severely impacting thoroughbred welfare.

Therefore, if the proposal to develop Rosehill Racecourse is approved, I request that the NSW Government imposes conditions on the ATC regarding the use of the sale income. These conditions should ensure that the proceeds are not used to maintain or expand current racing industry practices but are instead allocated to improve the welfare of racehorses in NSW.

I would like to see the sale proceeds used to benefit thoroughbred racehorses as follows:

1. Ensure lifelong traceability of every horse in the NSW racing industry.
2. Fund a safe, lifelong retirement for every horse in the NSW racing industry.
3. Implement immediate actions to improve racehorse welfare on and off the track by adopting the 2020 Five Domains Model for animal welfare assessment and ensuring that industry members are educated accordingly.
4. Provide a fund to help transition members of the racing industry into professions outside racing.

The horse racing industry needs to be relegated to where it belongs – the ash heap of history. In its place, sensible and useful amenities need to ensue.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully,