

Lel Doon



QRIC - 60KSD

13 NOV 2019

Mail Received

9 November 2019

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC)

Re: INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY IN THE MANAGEMENT RETIRED THOROUGHBRED AND STANDARD BRED HORSES IN QUEENSLAND

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make a submission to the Inquiry into Animal Cruelty in the Management of Retired Thoroughbred and Standardbred Horses in Queensland.

There is a lot wrong with the racing industry in Australia and the cruel and inhumane treatment of racehorses at Meramist Abattoir in Caboolture is perhaps the worst example of how vulnerable animals are when ineffectual regulation and greed collide.

In response to the evidence of systematic mistreatment of race horses I raise the following problems and solutions.

1. Problems with the racing industry

- 1.1. There are too many race meetings and too much horse racing. If you follow racing it is clear that the same horses go round and round.
 - 1.1.1. The more that horses race the earlier they retire.
- 1.2. There are too many horses bred for racing and thus too few homes for retired horses resulting in retired racehorses being sent to the abattoir.
- 1.3. Australian horses race too young - two year olds are too young to race.
 - 1.3.1. Racing two year olds encourages the training and racing of juvenile horses who are not adequately developed for this demanding work.
 - 1.3.2. Racing two year olds encourages owners to seek a quick return on their investment.
 - 1.3.3. Horses that race too often and too young are more prone to injury and thus earlier retirement.
- 1.4. Animal welfare is not the first priority of horse racing.
- 1.5. The whip is unnecessary and overused, and justification for carrying a whip on safety grounds is spurious.
- 1.6. Gambling interests have too much power in horse racing.
- 1.7. There is too much gambling advertising particularly at inappropriate times on television.

2. Solutions for the racing industry

Horse racing is about the beauty and athleticism of the thoroughbred horse. It should not simply be a decadent party for the wealthy and followers of fashion. Racing has lost its way, needs to return to the magnificent horse, and recognise that we see them in their prime and must care for them when they are not.

- 2.1. Race horse retirement properties or homes should be set up for those racehorses that are unwanted or become homeless.

- 2.1.1. Such a scheme could be run by the RSPCA or charities similar to Save a Horse Australia.
- 2.2. These homes should be an extension of the racing industry and paid for by the racing industry.
- 2.3. They should be open to the public and those horses that are suitable available for public use and pleasure eg. Available for riding, therapy, schools, community service etc.
- 2.4. These homes should not be in remote locations where they cannot be easily accessed and monitored by the public and Regulator.
- 2.5. This would create a new industry that would demonstrate and reinforce kind and humane treatment of horses and animals generally and have far reaching benefits for the community as a whole.
- 2.6. There are many existing shelters for animals rescued from neglect. The racing industry should use and fund existing shelters now.
- 2.7. Jockeys may need a whip for safety reasons between the mounting yard and the barrier but they do not have the time nor ability to use the whip for safety reasons during a race.
 - 2.7.1. A safety incident during a race happens too quickly for the jockey to take preventative action with the whip.
 - 2.7.2. If jockeys do carry whips for safety reasons then they should not be used to urge a horse forward during the race and if they do use them in this way penalties such as disqualification of the horse and immediate suspension for the jockey should be imposed without the right of appeal - earnings would be forfeited.
- 2.8. The Queensland Government should enquire into the racing industry from an animal welfare and sustainability perspective comparing the international and Australian industries. The inquiry should include:
 - 2.8.1. The age at which a horse begins to race
 - 2.8.2. The frequency that a horse should race
 - 2.8.3. What a sustainable racing industry looks like, that is, the number of race meetings and hence the number of horses required based on retirement rates, best practise animal welfare standards, and community support and acceptance.
 - 2.8.4. New regulations to manage a racing industry that operates at best practise animal welfare standards with the support of the community.
- 2.9. Gambling advertising should be limited. There should be no gambling advertising on television during the day and limited advertising during sporting events at night eg. One advertisement per hour.

3. Consequences for Meramist Abattoir

Horses hold a special place in Australian society both historically and today. It is incongruous that with this special status they are butchered for domestic animal consumption and exported for human consumption.

- 3.1. The Meramist Abattoir at Caboolture should be closed down.
 - 3.1.1. Longstanding breaches of their operating conditions and complaints from the community about the facility must have repercussions otherwise public confidence in the government's ability to properly regulate the industry and guarantee standards is diminished.
- 3.2. The operators of Meramist Abattoir are not fit and proper persons, should lose their licence, and be banned from operating a similar facility in the future.
- 3.3. The operators at Meramist Abattoir should be charged with animal cruelty.
- 3.4. Horses should not be butchered for human nor animal consumption in Australia.

4. Prevention of cruelty to animals in Queensland

4.1. All forms of animal cruelty should be actively pursued and punished, and additional resources committed to this end.

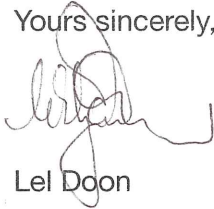
4.1.1. Little to no response to community complaints and concerns about the Meramist Abattoir over years demonstrate there are insufficient resources allocated to enforcing existing regulations.

4.2. Community service at the RSPCA or racehorse retirement homes should be mandatory for those convicted of animal cruelty.

I am a stakeholder in the racing industry and believe I am qualified to make this submission. I have a lifelong connection with horses and horse racing. My family were successful race horse owners and jockeys. I rode and grew up with horses, and competed on the show circuit including aat Royal Shows. I continue to attend race meetings and punt.

It is intolerable to have sensitive animals treated in the manner exposed in the 4 Corners program that has prompted this inquiry. The reputation of the racing industry and all horse owners are diminished by this cruelty and it must be stopped and regulations put in place to protect horses before, during and after their racing careers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lel Doon', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Lel Doon