
28/1/16

The Secretary
Select Committee on Jumps Racing
Parliament House
GPO Box 572
ADELAIDE SA 5001

By email to rachel.stone@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Ms. Stone,

Submission by the South Australian Racehorse Owners Association to the Select Committee on Jumps Racing.

SAROA represents South Australian thoroughbred racehorse owners on local matters to do with the SA Racing Industry and on National matters through its affiliation with the Australian Thoroughbred Racing Owners Council (ATROC).

The SAROA membership is made up of a diverse group of people who share an interest in thoroughbred racing and own horses mainly racing in SA but also on occasions, interstate.

As such the views each owner has on any matter involving the Australian Racing industry in general and the SA industry in particular are as diverse as the views held by the general SA population on most subjects.

In the case of the subject of this submission, namely Jumps Racing, SA racehorse owners' opinions vary from strong passionate support to violent opposition and everything between.

However, SAROA believes that the emotional responses of not only racehorse owners but of the public in general should be tempered by facts rather than emotions.

There are minority groups adept at the use of social, print and electronic media that voice outlandish claims relating to the cruelty of horse racing in

general and particularly, jumps racing. These groups make outrageous and insulting statements that evil racehorse owners buy horses to race simply to make huge profits and if the horse does not measure up and earn its owner substantial prizemoney it is sent to the slaughterhouse. These groups claim 10,000 racehorses are slaughtered each year in Australia.

These claims do not stand under even the most rudimentary scrutiny.

Firstly very few owners increase their financial position by racing horses. The cost to race a horse in SA (excluding the purchase of the horse) is in the region of \$30,000 per horse per annum and the total prizemoney available per horse is less than \$11,000 per annum. As in most speculative pursuits a very small minority may win but the large majority pay dearly for the privilege of participating.

In racing circles the answer to the question "How do you make a small fortune racing horses?" is "Start with a large fortune!"

Secondly, the actual number of racehorses euthanised each year is less than one thousand not the 10,000 claimed by pressure groups. Many of that 1,000 are the very old and injured. Unfortunately some do find their way to the slaughterhouse but that is usually after all other options have been exhausted.

The great majority of retired racehorses find second careers as show jumpers, riding hacks, show ponies.

Racehorse owners race horses for a variety of reasons and only the pitifully demented do so to make their fortune. The underlying reasons are the love and admiration of a magnificent animal and the thrill owners hope to have when their horse wins a race somewhere, sometime, regardless of cost.

Similar emotive claims are made about horses being forced to compete in jumps races against their will and forced do so by using cruel practices. Once again anyone who has been around horses will know that it is extremely difficult for a 55kg jockey sitting on a 500Kg horse to force that horse to do anything it does not want to do. Nor is there any evidence that trainers use cruel methods to train horses to do something the horse does not want to do. There are occasional examples where the strength of the horse overcomes the will of the jockey and the horse may simply refuse on any given day to comply be it by refusing to go to or enter the starting stalls, or on rare occasions even refusing to race. No amount of coaxing or urging will convince the horse to perform.

As with all animals, horses have varying temperaments and personalities, some love to run some less so, some love to jump and others not at all.

If a horse does not want to jump it is likely to balk at the obstacles thus negating any chance of winning a race. These horses are identified at the training stage and the trainer will then decide not to pursue a jumping career for that horse. Therefore the horses seen in jumps races either like to jump or have no objection to jumping.

Horses unable to be competitive in flat races often find their niche in jumps races thus prolonging their racing life.

Recent changes to improve the safety of horses in jumps races include improvements in the structure of the obstacles, trainers must undergo special training before being permitted to train jumpers, changes in whip rules and the structure of the whip itself and requirements that any horse that is not competitive in a jumps race, for whatever reason, is retired from the race.

SAROA is disappointed that the Minister for Sport whose portfolio includes Racing has seen fit to express his personal opposition to jumps racing. Whilst it may be his personal opinion his position lends greater weight to any statements he makes on this subject. As a Member of Parliament the Minister is representing his constituents and as a Minister, the SA public and the Racing Industry and as such he should support the opinion of those groups.

SAROA respectfully suggests that the Committee ignores emotional and emotive arguments and considers only the facts and the benefits that Racing brings to the people of SA.

A 2013 study commissioned by the Racing codes identified the importance of racing not only economically but also socially.

(Economic, Social and Community Benefits of the South Australian Racing Industry- Appendix 1) at link

https://www.dropbox.com/s/9db15xfuxl99ro9/IER_SARacingStudy_July%202013.pdf?dl=0

A summary of the key points of the report is also attached (**Key Points of EIS – Appendix 2**).

This report provides a snapshot of the Racing Industry taken at the time the report was prepared. What it does not do is show the lack of progress of the SA Racing Industry over the preceding years.

Unfortunately the news is bleak.

Since 1991 the SA Racing industry has fallen from 3rd top in Australia to 6th – behind Tasmania.

Governments interstate have recognised the importance of Racing to the State Economy and have stimulated their respective industries by injecting funds to boost prizemoney. Successive SA governments have largely ignored the Racing industry and that has disadvantaged the SA Racing Industry and made it less competitive with the Racing Industries in other States.

Facts about the Australian Racing industry can be found in the Racing Australia Fact Book at this link (**Appendix 3**)

<http://www.racingaustralia.horse/Aboutus/FactBook.aspx>

The Oakbank Easter Racing would suffer considerably should jumps racing be banned in SA. This carnival attracts interstate and international tourists and gives a substantial boost to the SA economy and is a great social and community function.

The loss of jumps racing in SA will impact on jobs in this State. Especially in youth employment and regional areas the 2 most difficult demographics for employment. The IER Racing Study (see Appendix 2) states

- The direct impact on employment generated by the activities of the racing industry sustains 1,524 FTE jobs each year. When the indirect impact generated by the flow-on of economic benefits to other industries is taken into account, the total employment impact rises to 3,628 FTE jobs each year.

These 3,628 jobs are generated by 2900 horses racing in SA. Therefore each horse lost means the loss of 1.25 jobs. Conversely an increase in horses racing will generate 1.25 jobs per horse. The current total prizemoney available to the owners of the 2900 horses is \$28million per annum. An injection of \$20million per annum to increase prizemoney would lead to an increase in horses racing of 2000. The effect of these extra horses racing would improve employment by 2500 FTE jobs and return an extra \$13 million in GST. If the other flow on effects to the economy are taken into account this investment by the SA Government in the employment and economic future of our State would effectively be cost neutral.

Absent any meaningful help to the Racing Industry, at the very least the SA Government should not do anything that may cause a further decline in the SA Racing Industry.

SAROA respectfully submits that the Committee recommends that Jumps Racing not be banned and further recommends that the SA Government investigates the provision of a prizemoney funding stimulus to SA Racing to reverse the alarming decline in the SA Racing Industry and to stimulate employment and economic growth.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "lk".

Luke Koumi
President
South Australian Racehorse Owners Association
There is no Racing without Owners