

**Submission
No 27**

**INQUIRY INTO AGISTMENT OF HORSES AT YARALLA
ESTATE**

Name: Ms Catherine Webster

Date received: 30/07/2013

Yaralla Inquiry Submission

1. I would like to see 'community' horses again agisted on the Yaralla Estate with a preference being given to the horses recently relocated, some of whom have been at Yaralla for over a decade.

I have lived in Concord all my life and spent much of my leisure time throughout those years on the Yaralla Estate. I have taken pleasure in introducing first my children and more recently my grandchildren to the horses. I have always found their owners friendly and willing to share their knowledge of horse matters.

2. An entrance near Moala Street would facilitate access to the foreshore for some local residents. I would not use it – my preference being The Drive entrance (if there are any horses there with whom to interact) or the Majors Bay entrance to the foreshore.

3. I attended the previous community meeting and am disgusted at the SLHD's total disregard for the motion overwhelmingly supported (to allow the horses a further six months) at that meeting, which of course would have allowed time for an independent review by qualified people of a very questionable report. I am firmly of the opinion that this report was produced to fit and to justify a predetermined objective (to remove current agisters in favour of the Mounted Police).

4. I am further disgusted at the scapegoating by the SLHD bureaucracy of both horse agisters and the agistment licence holder. Mr Wales held the licence for decades - at any time he could have been told to improve his performance or had his licence cancelled by SLHD (the trustees). Apparently they were quite happy until a new agenda was decided upon.

5. I believe there is a history of neglect of this estate by 'area health' (variously named over the years). blew the whistle on the destruction of parts of this estate decades ago. Without the dedication and many hours of work (plus monetary contributions) of the members of the local historical society the stables, dairy and squash court would be dilapidated. Till the recent

extensive repairs and renovation on the main mansion it also was falling into disrepair. Sometimes the gardens have been neglected for months at a time.

6. SLHD insisted all the horses be removed by the end of May yet little work has been done on the paddocks since. The fireweed has been allowed to flower and is starting to set and disseminate seed. The licence holder and various of the horse agisters used to slash to prevent this. I have witnessed many of the horse owners spend hours weeding and cleaning the paddocks. Over the years some have mown the grass under the avenue of trees and ensured the foreshore access remained open (slashing encroaching weeds).

7. I am told (yet another example of the scapegoating tactics of SLHD) it has been insinuated that the horse owners are responsible for the asbestos contamination along the driveway of Yaralla. Being such a frequent visitor to this estate I know the contaminated fill was dumped many months ago. Thinking it illegal dumping I approached Mr Wales about it at the time and was assured it had been approved by 'area health' (no doubt without ensuring it was clean fill).

8. SLHD has suggested only 15 horses be allowed at Yaralla. Taking into consideration that the horses agisted there were attended and fed daily (some twice daily) I would not consider it previously overstocked. Naturally the Yaralla paddocks reflect the prevailing weather conditions. When Sydney experiences drought, the paddocks are dry and dusty (so is my backyard).

Will the matter of the agistment of horses on the Yaralla estate be a small scale example of what is happening across NSW under Barry O'Farrell's government planning laws – the disempowerment of local communities by totally ignoring their wishes and concerns?

Catherine Webster