

**Submission
No 36**

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

Name: Mr Patrick Webster

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The Director, Select Committee on the Agistment of Horses at Yaralla Estate Legislative Council.

Parliament House
Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000

To The Hon Robert Borsak MLC Committee Chair,

RE: CURRENT AND FUTURE AGISTMENT OF HORSES ON THE YARALLA ESTATE

I am a local resident of the Inner West of Sydney and have been visiting Yaralla and interacting with the horses on the estate my entire life. I was extremely alarmed to learn of the government action to enforce the removal of the local horse community from the Yaralla Estate in Concord in favour of Police occupancy, effective 31 May 2013. As a former resident of the local area, with friends and family utilising the paddocks, I have experienced and witnessed first-hand the benefits provided to the community by local horses on the Yaralla Estate. The Yaralla Estate allows the public to experience and enjoy a little piece of country in our suburban sprawl. Section 19B of the Walker Trusts Act 1938 clearly states the Yaralla Estate is to be leased or licensed for public hospital/public health, public open space or horse agistment purposes.

Nowhere does it state that Paramilitary forces are permitted to use the land. The Walker family was dedicated to the health and recovery of persons injured during the course of War or by other Forces, and should the Walker family or relatives be alive today I'm certain they would be disgusted that their property is co-hosting those that injure or kill the very people they are trying to assist.

The suggested changes do not have the support of the community, as shown by the sheer number of attendees at the public meeting at the Concord RSL, the Public Rally on the 29th March at the Arthur Reserve, and over 500 signatures on the parliamentary tabled petition opposing the removal of the community horses at Yaralla. I have also learnt from the campaign that there is overwhelming evidence of SLHD failing in their duty of care as Trustees of the Yaralla estate. It is the government and the health department that has allowed one of the most historic and iconic crown land areas in Sydney Metropolitan to fall into the reported state of disrepair, yet SLHD and its bureaucrats have shirked any accountability for the lack of due care of the estate.

Anyone that has visited the Estate over the past 30 years will notice the failings of management by SLHD. Areas which were growing native plant species have been not been maintained, allowing for significant weed growth which has subsequently eliminated the local species. The fencing has not been upgraded in over 15 years. The Walker Estate left a significant amount of finance to the Trust to maintain these very issues; clearly the Trustee has failed in their duties.

It should be noted the "independent" audit of the site was made by "Blue Vision". This company specialises in development projects, and this has given further fear to the community that the long term use of the Estate will not be one that meets the terms of the Walker Trust Act.

Please stop the coordinated and planned reduction of public access to the Yaralla Estate. It is hoped that the Select Committee on the Agistment of Horses at Yaralla Estate Legislative Council recommend reinstating community horses. The Yaralla Estate needs the Legislative Council's support and advocacy for agistment of community horses owned by ordinary community members to continue for generations to come. Please recognise that SLHD actions have been untrustworthy and improper and alludes to the larger plan for development. Please advocate that the Yaralla Estate remains as it has been used for the last 65 years and fight for the people of NSW maintaining our current and continued access to and enjoyment of Yaralla. I will eagerly wait to hear of the

Legislative Council's recommendations in addressing this very important community issue and look forward to a positive and just outcome for the entire community's benefit.

Yours Faithfully,

Patrick Webster