

**Submission
No 43**

INQUIRY INTO AGISTMENT OF HORSES AT YARALLA ESTATE

Organisation: City of Canada Bay

Date received: 1/08/2013

CITY OF
CANADA BAY

SUBMISSION TO NSW PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE AGISTMENT OF HORSES AT YARALLA ESTATE

Effective date: 31/07/2013

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the parliamentary inquiry into the agistment of horses at Yaralla Estate.

This submission will address the terms of reference as outlined by the Select Committee, in particular:

- a. the actions of the Sydney Local Health District
- b. the eviction of community members whose horses are agisted on the Estate lands
- c. the “independent audit of the site” referred to in a 19 April 2013 media release issued by the Sydney Local Health District, and
- d. any other related matter

Yaralla Estate

The Dame Eadith Walker Estate (also known as Yaralla Estate) was bequeathed to the people of New South Wales in 1938 under the Walker Trust Act for a public hospital, public open space and for agistment of horses.

Executive Summary

The City of Canada Bay has been disappointed by the lack of transparency by the Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) regarding such an important asset to our community. The SLHD did not consult with Council regarding potential developments and/or changes at Yaralla Estate. Council were first made aware of these most recent issues by community members following receipt of eviction notices for community horses agisted on the Estate. Council supported negotiations between the agisters and the SLHD.

Council has major concerns regarding the continued public access to the Estate and also concerns regarding the SLHD's seeming reluctance to include the agisters in ongoing discussions (per a meeting with Dr Teresa Anderson where she questioned why a representative from the agisters

would be attending). A motion was put forward, requesting a six-month deferral of the proposed eviction of community horses. This was denied by the SLHD.

There is overwhelming community support for the agisters and continued public access to Yaralla as evidenced by the attendance of 500 people at the public meeting at Concord RSL in April and again at the public rally through the Estate grounds on 26 May.

Community horses evicted

The SLHD did not engage with the community agisters prior to meetings with the Royal Mounted Police (RMP) and entering into a Memorandum of Understanding. Nor did the SLHD engage with the agisters following the audit report referred to in the media release of 19 April 2013.

Despite the best efforts of Council, the agisters and community support, the eviction of community horses occurred as at 31 May. The eviction of these horses is a huge loss for the community. Yaralla Estate has always been open for all to enjoy and our community loved visiting the horses in a rural setting – right in the heart of Concord, with local community members having the option to agist horses close to home.

Council concerns

Council supports continued public access maintenance to Yaralla as stated in the Act. Following receipt of recent plans regarding Yaralla, there is a very real concern that public access arrangements are being reduced, fenced off and/or altered. The agistment paddocks appear to be moved behind the SLHD secured fence area, which is concerning and could potentially mean public access will be cut off to future horses agisted on the grounds.

Council strongly supports an open and fair tender process into ongoing agistment at Yaralla Estate, with community agisters given an opportunity to maintain their horses at the Estate.