

**Submission
No 22**

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

Name: Ms Sydnee Sallivan

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To Relevant Ministers of Parliament and Local Council:

It is my sincere hope that federal, state and local governments genuinely regard the concerns expressed by the horse owners and the local community of the Canada Bay area, about the Yaralla estate and the many important and valuable functions that Yaralla holds in our community life including, in particular, the horses agisted at Yaralla.

Over 500 local residents attended the community meetings, organised at short notice, and then the rally, and passionately expressed their concerns as to the way this situation has been handled while demonstrating the level of interest in Yaralla and the concern about the public use of, and continued unchanged access to, the estate.

While it is somewhat heartening to note that the agreement with the Mounted Police has been cancelled, it does not in any way allay the concerns that have been raised given the horses are being evicted nonetheless.

To date what we have learned is the following in the mishandling of this situation:

- There is a complete lack of information and answers about the agreements which were not at all forthcoming by the Sydney Local Health District representatives (Dr. Anderson and Ms. Flood).
- It was suggested that this department did not have the expertise to manage the lands or appropriate knowledge to manage the process both of which are inexcusable and demonstrate the lack of competence with which your local health districts manage local issues.
- The Sydney Local Health Districts actions to date have been grossly negligent towards the agisters, the local community-at-large, and the local member for the State Government, in providing appropriate management of the Estate.
- Quite specifically, the SLHD were grossly negligent in not taking an interest in the horses owned by the agisters who demonstrated at the meeting that several of them were even involved in supporting autistic children and the elderly in homes and hospitals – a clearly identifiable health benefit of having community horses there
- More worryingly, it is surprising that after all this time and it being brought to their attention, as the horse owners can show through their records of correspondence, the SLHD took no action as regards community health in the management of the weeds and asbestos on the property - instead using that as the excuse to evict the horses.
- In the handling of the agreement with the Mounted Police the SLHD a government bureaucracy further risked the trust of the police. The police have a hard enough job in the community without generating this level of distrust and concern through the actions of an irresponsible local health district department.

- These are the issues that are of great concern to the community and the local electorate and unnecessarily generate distrust of government and government bureaucracy practices, and unfortunately the police as well.

Truly the SLHD decision makers on the handling of all of these issues should be made to resign their positions and be named and shamed so that better people can take over and make decisions for the long term.

There is an entire trust fund available for the upkeep of the property and this should be available for the care of the land for the agistment of horses as well as for the facilities available for health. It is my understanding that the bequest does not stipulate and either / or as regards the agistment of horses but rather makes the land available for health AND the agistment of horses - a paid requirement rather than a facility for mounted police who would not pay and have already shown a poor record at their Redfern facilities which I understand they are having to vacate so the state can sell the land to the highest bidder. If this is how the liberal party put money into the coffers in the short term, heaven help our nation in the long term!!!

The local community expects and dearly hopes that people of good will and ethical standing are in power making the right decisions and will now be prepared to come together and make clear their best endeavours to seek a more fair and just solution to the issues surrounding the use and maintenance of the Yaralla paddocks and the estate as a whole.

I urge the committee handling this enquiry to ensure that future processes and any compromise will include the following considerations:

1. That the community horses will continue to be agisted at the Yaralla Estate given their obvious benefits to members of all ages (autistic children and the elderly)
2. That the community will continue to have access to the lands unfettered as has been the case for so many years
3. That such clandestine agreements between government departments and between the government and any other body as regards the Yaralla estate, will not be allowed to take place in future
4. That since the SLHD have responsibility for the management of the estate lands they have an appropriate advisor on their board to manage and inspect these lands and to ensure public/community awareness of any "plans" they are putting in motion prior to the signing of such agreements
5. That when people of foresight such as the Walker family bequeath such a land gift to the people of NSW, the government does not abuse its managing position by acting as owners of said lands and treating the land as a profit-making asset. It is truly an ASSET but for the benefit of overall health (providing outdoor spaces, horses for autistic children and the elderly, pleasure of having animal families for the local residents and members of the community); overall natural heritage and architectural beauty of this area (when I moved into this area 14 years ago every taxi driver used to call it the garden of Sydney - it is a little place of paradise that is accessible to all the

city satellite centers of CBD, Parramatta and Macquarie Park); **and when people over 100 years ago recognised the importance of such a gift please could the politicians of today understand what they were trying to do?**

It is important that the community be involved in the allocation of use for this estate directly, given the land has been bequeathed to the people. Seeing the manner in which the government or government departments are really abusing their position acting like this is a government asset to be sold off or dealt with as they please has been a most unfortunate indictment on the government and is precisely why citizens of our nation simply cannot trust the government.

Unfortunately I have no faith in the liberal party (which is now our state government) to think long term about this area, so I am sincerely hoping that this committee of members from several parties will do the right thing for the long term. Please consider your actions in the preservation of this area of natural heritage which we desperately need to keep in mind. There is amazing bird life, wild life and the horses that all have a right to be there and given this area and its value and health benefits, it is truly important to protect this heritage bequeathed us. I am not sure that the Chair of this committee from the Shooters Party of Australia will appreciate the value of having our natural heritage protected; or the value of having the horses in our community and I find it somewhat absurd that this party should chair a committee inquiry into an area of natural heritage however, I can only hope that this committee will truly work through these issues for the long term and ensure that the negligent parties (SLHD) are made to appropriately manage this area in order that it is safe for the agistment of horses and the local community.

Thanking you in advance

Sydney Sullivan