

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

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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 Ryde and formerly from country NSW. When we moved to area I was delighted to find Yaralla, such a unique and special property. Myself and my family visit Yaralla often, and have, until recently, been able to freely interact with the horses on the Estate. It was therefore with considerable concern I first became aware that the local horse community were to be summarily removed, and an arrangement had been made between the Sydney Local Health District and the Mounted Police, without consultation with the local council or community. I attended a meeting at Concord RSL on April 29th 2013 where, due to public demand, representatives from the community, the horse owners and SLHD were invited to speak. It was clear from this meeting that, amongst other discrepancies, the SLHD and their appointed licensee had failed maintain the property with the agistment fees paid. Many questions posed to the SLHD went unanswered on that evening, promises were made to address all concerns at an unspecified later date. None of these were addressed and the horse community was evicted on the 31st of May 2013.

Yaralla was bequeathed by Dame Eadith Walker, Section 19B of the Walker Trusts Act 1938 clearly states that Yaralla Estate is to be leased or licensed for public hospital/public health, **public open space or horse agistment** purposes. I have the greatest respect for the Mounted Police Unit but the proposed changes giving them exclusive use of the property are in breach of the Trust. As shown by the sheer number of attendees at the public meeting at the Concord RSL, the Public Rally on the 26th May at the Arthur Reserve, and over 500 signatures on the parliamentary tabled petition, many of us feel strongly about this issue and remain opposed the removal of the community horses at Yaralla.

It has become overwhelming evident through this process that the SLHD have failed in their duty of care as Trustees of the Yaralla Estate. The Government and the Health Department 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. In fact their representative, Dr. Teresa Anderson, disgracefully attempted to apportion blame for the neglect and the state of fencing and paddocks on the horse owners. Having been caught out with their clandestine deal with the Mounted Police has forced the SLHD to put out a public Tender, but have already indicated their preferred recipient will still be the Mounted Police Department.

Also of concern is the company appointed by the SLHD to conduct an "independent" audit of the site. "Blue Vision" is a company specializing in development projects, which further fuels speculation within our community that this is the thin edge of the wedge, and that plans for the Estate are not those that honour the terms of the Walker Trust Act.

We're asking for your help to stop the coordinated and planned reduction of public access to the Yaralla Estate. We sincerely hope that the Select Committee on the Agistment of Horses at Yaralla Estate Legislative Council recommend reinstating community horses, and can understand their importance to the community. The Yaralla Estate needs the Legislative Council's support and advocacy for agistment of community horses, owned by ordinary community members, not by the wealthy and privileged.

Please allow all of us the ongoing joy of seeing and experiencing Yaralla as Dame Eadith intended by her generous bequest. This is our oasis and Centennial Park, one that we can all appreciate for generations to come. The actions of the SLHD have been far from transparent and honest, prompting real fears of their future plans for Yaralla, especially any plans 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,