

**Submission
No 4**

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

Name: Ms Anna Laios

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The Director

Select Committee on the Agistment of Horses at Yaralla Estate

Legislative Council

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Submission on Why Horses at Yaralla Should Be Allowed Back for Agistment

I am writing this letter to state my feelings on the eviction of the horses at Yaralla Estate and the disappointment the community and I feel about these wonderful creatures being evicted.

I have written many letters to the so called people in charge of this matter, and I never have my questions answered, it's like a generic letter being printed out and posted. It is not just the horse owners and their horses that have been let down, but the community as well. They brought such beauty to an estate that was bequeathed by Dame Edith Walker for the people of Concord and for health services.

Horses are therapy, especially in this dog-eat-dog world, you could always count on going to Yaralla for a walk and seeing and patting all the horses in their paddocks. We are told to exercise more these days, but what's the point if a place is made unattractive, especially to the children that are encouraged to exercise instead of sitting at their computer for hours on end.

Horses are very emotional animals, can you imagine how they must feel not seeing their human and equine friends now that they are scattered all over Sydney? How would we feel if we were evicted from our homes and not given a choice to fight and stay in our rightful home? They have no voice, so we are their voice. The under-handed way in which they were evicted is cruel. Horse owners have been paying agistment fees for obviously the upkeep of the property, so where has all the money gone I ask over the years.

If you read Save the Horses at Yaralla on Facebook, you can see where we are told that several horses have had serious injuries at the new premises, they are frightened, stressed and cannot understand why they are not at home at Yaralla. Seamus, the oldest horse I know about spent 20 years there and was probably living out his senior years in comfort till he was cruelly evicted. This is not good enough.

The most distressing thing that occurred was when SLHD published their open letter in the local newspaper and stated lies to the public. The Open Letter from Sydney Local Health District is incorrect in its statements on a number of factors:

The fencing was not of an acceptable standard: well, that is how fencing is on all the stud farms in the USA and it was SLHD's responsibility to maintain fencing with the agistment fees paid to them.

Paddock condition was poor; the paddocks are fine, in the USA the horse live on dirt. The horses at Yaralla were being fed twice a day by their owners and had hay to chew on throughout the day, grass grows back. The horse owners were picking out the weeds that can be poisonous to horses themselves, whereas the upkeep of the paddocks should be maintained by the people the agistment fees go to, that's why they are called agistment fees.

Water supply was limited; False, there was plenty of water for the horses to drink.

There was evidence of rubbish in the paddocks; well, the horses did not throw the garbage there, but irresponsible people who are selfish. The person who maintains Yaralla should be cleaning it up. I would go on my daily walks and bring plastic bags and pick up the garbage because it was disgraceful what I found, and so that SLHD would not use the garbage as an excuse to evict the horses, but they did. I found used condoms, pizza boxes, drug paraphernalia, newspapers strewn along the tree-lined road. How is that the horse owner's fault.

The site was severely overstocked; the site was not severely overstocked, horses are herd animals and prefer company.

And the last point which made me very upset was:

And the condition of some of the horses was questionable; I work with race horses and believe me, their condition at Yaralla was great! Race horses come back from spelling skin-and-bone at agistment places. The owners love their horses very much, and when horses live in paddocks they can get dirty as they roll in the mud and on the ground, and cover themselves with dirt to prevent flies and mosquitoes from biting them.

It's all very fine to make an argument to evict someone, but it is obvious there is a hidden agenda, as in the past nothing was said till now, after the mounted police were offered the property for the agistment of their horses. I have been depressed since the news came out of this eviction, and not a day goes by that I do not think of the horses and how they're doing. Yaralla Estate looks like a ghost town now. People in the hospitals would look down at the paddocks and feel better through their illness just seeing them, grazing and playing in their paddocks.

I implore you to please make the people responsible see sense to what they have done, and to please bring the horses back to their home. I'm sure they'll appreciate it and the community will be happy once again. Horses helped us in the two World Wars, mining and sowing our lands, now it is our turn to return the favour and respect these beautiful animals in their time of need.

I am sorry if I don't write like a politician but I have written from the bottom of my heart and really do hope you are successful in bringing the horses back to Yaralla.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully

Anna Laios