

**Submission
No 51**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL RACECOURSE

Name: Mr William Rutledge

Date Received: 17 July 2024

**SUBMISSION TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL RACECOURSE**

From:

William Rutledge

Member of Australian Turf Club

This submission is addressed to items a, b, e and f of the terms of reference.

I believe the proposal for the Australian Turf Club is wrong for the following reasons;

Tradition

Rosehill has been one of the main sites for thoroughbred racing in Sydney since the 19th Century, and many of the greatest racehorse have performed there. On entering the course to one's right is statue of Todman, winner of the first Golden Slipper, one of Australian's best sprinters and a most successful sire. To the left is a statue of Winx, the winner of 33 races in succession and could claim to be the greatest mare to race in Australia.

Importance for Racing

Rosehill and Randwick are the only racecourses in Sydney that host Group 1 races. The other two metropolitan tracks (Canterbury Park and Warwick Farm) are mainly used for mid-week racing. The proposal for the sale of Rosehill talks about developing a new racecourse but does not specify where or when that will happen. Anyway, a new track would take time to be established.

Established Facilities

There has been a lot of investment into the facilities at Rosehill which are now up with the best in the World. It seems a complete waste to destroy what has been built up over many years.

Training Base

Many trainers are based at Rosehill, including one of the leading ones in Australia, Chris Waller. The facilities at the site are very good. Again, why destroy what has been built up? The trainers are to be offered a new base at Horsley Park, which will be hotter. Some will not want to move there and may move interstate and be lost to Sydney racing.

Situation

Rosehill is conveniently placed being near Parramatta, a major regional hub for the Sydney metropolitan area. On days when there is no racing the racecourse is used for conferences and trade fairs. A new racecourse, which is likely to be in the outer suburbs may not get the same amount of non-racing use.

Greenspace

There is much industrial use in the vicinity of Rosehill. The racecourse provides an area of open green space which is an important environmental benefit. It may be feasible to use the inside of the racecourse for sporting facilities to be used by the local community on non-racing days.

Members' Rights

The Government's advisors have advised that only the ATC Board is required to approve the sale of Rosehill. This is a slap in the face for the Members, particularly as it is not fully representative of the membership as three of its seven members are appointed by the Government.

Control of Proceeds

Racing NSW wants to have full control of the proceeds of any sale and keep them out of the hands of the ATC. This is a blatant move by a semi-government authority to grab funds that are not rightfully theirs. When the Sydney Turf Club was set up by Bill McKell, then Premier of NSW in 1943, it was instructed to purchase the racecourse owned by the deregistered proprietary clubs that it replaced. It completed the purchase of Rosehill and Canterbury Park and sold Moorefield, Rosebery and Victoria Park. (see *The Essential Club: A History of the Sydney Turf Club 1943-2011* by Gary Lester; Playright Publishing, Sydney, 2011. pp. 60-62, 75-84.) Therefore Rosehill Racecourse was owned outright by the STC. One assumes that the ownership would have passed to the ATC when the two Sydney clubs merged.

I am happy to have this submission published with my name.

I am willing to appear as a witness at a hearing if required.

William Rutledge

17th July 2024