

Submission  
No 97

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL  
RACECOURSE**

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 18 July 2024

---

Partially  
Confidential

I will be addressing ToRs a, f, g and h.

**Term of Reference f and g: impacts on the racing industry in New South Wales; and, the impact on animal welfare and any integrity concerns associated with the proposal which relate to animal welfare.**

Currently, the ATC has a monopoly on metropolitan racing in Sydney, with five racetracks: Randwick, Kensington (Randwick Inner), Warwick Farm, Canterbury and Rosehill. Only the Randwick and Rosehill tracks are used for Saturday metropolitan racing, primarily because wagering turnover decreases if any other track is used. This is mainly because Randwick and Rosehill are larger and longer tracks, which is fairer for all horses, giving each of them a better chance of winning.

If Rosehill were sold, there would be 23 Saturday meetings (based on the 23-24 season) that would have to be moved to other racetracks.

Randwick is already too heavily used, and it cannot sustain any more meetings as turf tracks need time to recover after racing. Replacing it with a synthetic/all weather or dirt surface is not a solution as these track types are associated with increased horse breakdowns and therefore are a welfare issue.

The options to solve the problem of where else to hold Saturday Metropolitan class racing floated by the ATC have been at best, optimistic, and really should be described as thought bubbles. They stated in their first members forum that at Warwick Farm they could increase usable land available for horses to live and train by placing a membrane over what is thought to be contaminated land. They haven't bothered to do any testing of this land, so they didn't know the full extent of the contamination. The idea that anyone would want to pay for their horses to live on land that may or may not be a health risk never mind the humans that look after the horses also working on this land) is abhorrent and shows a disregard for horse welfare.

Another plan is to very slightly change the shape and camber at Canterbury racecourse. This would slightly increase the size and length of the course but would be exorbitantly expensive for a very small improvement.

Further, the facilities for humans at both Warwick Farm and Canterbury have been neglected for a long time (particularly Warwick Farm) and neither of them have the grandstand or hospitality infrastructure required to sustain any sort of feature race meeting. In the last 30 years we have seen feature races, including the Canterbury Guineas, Canterbury Stakes, Chipping Norton Stakes and Warwick Stakes moved away from these tracks for the reasons listed above. Some of the profits from the sale of Rosehill have been flagged for this purpose. However, the ATC has a very poor record for racecourse development and project management, so they honestly cannot be trusted to get this right either. Some examples of this include:

- They sold a parcel of land at Warwick Farm to Inglis, but then had to spend money on developing the roads around it, leading to a net LOSS of \$6 million.
- The remodel of Randwick, whilst it no doubt looks pretty to an outsider, was very poorly thought out. The parade ring, called the Theatre of the Horse, is too small – consider getting 16 excitable two-year-olds (and their excitable owners) in to parade before the Golden Slipper, which will no doubt be moved to Randwick if Rosehill were sold. This would be a huge OHS risk and they would need to consider reducing the size of the field.
- The horse stalls at Randwick are very narrow so some horses cannot walk into them and turnaround, they need to be backed into them.
- Moving the parade ring (Theatre of the Horse) to the back of the racetrack was a bad decision. On busy days, it can be difficult for patrons to get from watching the horses parade in the Theatre to the front of the track due to limited through access points. The design also left nowhere for horses to return to after the race. Normally they would return to the parade ring for unsaddling, but it is too far away (we know this because they tried it when the redesign was opened). Now the horses are unsaddled at the entrance onto the track, with some of them having to stay on the racetrack itself because there is not enough room for them all in that small area. This is ridiculous for a so-called flag piece racetrack.

The alternative suggested that the training facilities be moved to Horsley Park and ‘options for the establishment of another track be investigated’ are fanciful and frankly, (as a financial member of the great race club the STC), offensive, for the following reasons:

- As with Randwick, the ATC would not own this property. Any money spent developing infrastructure will not be spent on an ATC asset. Further, the ATC could be evicted from either property if the Government decided to do so. This would obviously have an impact on the future of the industry in NSW.
- Horsely Park is in an extremely hot and unpleasant part of Sydney. The horses would suffer negative welfare consequences from living in the sorts of temperatures which are now becoming commonplace in summer in some parts of Sydney. Air-conditioning could be installed but of course this is environmentally irresponsible and extremely expensive.
- There is already a severe staff shortage in the industry. Staff work long hours in split shifts (usually 3.30 am – 9 am and then 2 pm – 4 pm), so living near their work is desirable. Moving a major training complex to an undesirable place to live (or a place that costs \$20 to complete a return trip on the M7) will drive more people to leave the industry, worsening the staff crisis. This will lead to further contraction of industry and a decline in welfare standards.
- In 2010 the NSW Harness Racing industry sold the inner-city racetrack Harold Park and moved to a superior facility at Menangle. This has not driven an improvement in the visibility and popularity of harness racing in NSW, instead, it is now a dying sport

that no one attends. The same will happen to Thoroughbred racing if the ATC build a new racecourse in an undesirable location. There is no location available that is easy to get to so this white elephant will languish and lead to further decline in the industry.

The ATC does not own Randwick, and therefore are vulnerable to the wishes of a change of government. It seems crazy (and fiscally irresponsible) that a club that doesn't own its flagship would spend so much money on it, and then sell an actual asset.

There is also an impact on ATC members and race goers. Believe it or not, there are some people (many that live in the west, southwest and northwest of Sydney, i.e. the most populous parts of Sydney) that prefer attending Rosehill to Randwick. Western Sydney is the working-class heart of Sydney. We deserve our own facilities, and not to have to travel to the Eastern Suburbs all the time. Rosehill itself has a much better layout, and it doesn't cost \$30 in tolls just to get there.