

Submission
No 99

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL
RACECOURSE**

Name: Debbie Prest

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Partially
Confidential

Dear Committee,

I am a lifetime participant in Racing and so are my family. I have held roles on boards and been a local councilor. I pride myself on my understanding of governance and fair process.

The list of RNSW's questionable uses and misuse of its power is very long and touches so many people in the industry.

I first became very active in the politics of racing, all codes, when the first rounds of rationalization of country racing started.

PARTICIPATION

When Mr V'landys was employed as CEO of Racing NSW a Strategic Plan highlighting a decline in participation levels was headlined as a major issue, in his time at the helm trainer numbers have gone from 1,416 to 785. Fair to say he has done nothing to increase participation, in fact the opposite is true, participants are hounded out of the sport, particularly at a country level. I am constantly contacted by participants who have been denied trainers licenses for silly reasons...one chap was told no because it had been so long since he was previously licensed.

PRIZEMONEY

Increases in prizemoney are touted as his great legacy but in the natural scheme of time increases occur eg a bag of chaff was \$10 then and is now \$35.

Prizemoney increase percentages are always quoted from 2012, that's because RNSW converted "appearance fees" to prizemoney and claimed an increase in prizemoney. It boosts the percentage claims.

2020/2022 Country racing lost over \$20 million dollars in allocated prizemoney due to Covid19 and wet weather cancellations, last year and this year roughly 6 million each year where does this money go if not to the participants?

STRAPPERS BONUS

July 2012 RNSW introduce Strappers Bonus by deducting 1.5% (increased to 2% April 22) from ALL prizemoney supposedly to reward Strappers and low paid workers in the industry, but the conditions \$7,500 wages paid by trainer placed on the payment excluded roughly 65 % of workers from being eligible. RNSW was aware that was the case as they had abandoned the \$7,500 wages paid condition regarding the collection of Workers Compensation payments. When I highlighted in a letter to Mr V'landys that so many little people were missing out, even though we were all contributing, he said they were aware but they envisioned the payment would help those that would be professional in the industry and I should take comfort from the fact that the undistributed funds would go in to a welfare fund.

Recently Mr V'landys allowed a interstate trainer to claim strappers bonus for his strapper because the horses rich owner publicly called out the conditions excluding interstate trainers. This of course didn't change the conditions for those in NSW who are ineligible.

WELFARE

All prizemoney is taxed 1.5% welfare except the Everest, it is only deducted at half the rate, one wonders why?

Welfare spending is very poorly reported by RNSW.

Participants are held to rigorous reporting regarding welfare of horses and rightly so. But it does leave a sour taste in the mouth when we have our prizemoney taxed and no transparency on how those funds are used.

There are constant reports of horses surrendered to Racing NSW welfare farms are being euthanized.

In transcripts from Mr Vlandys defamation case against the ABC Mr Vlandys is asked about the rehoming numbers RNSW claims and if those numbers include horses in fact rehomed by owners and industry participants Mr Vlandys replies that RNSW have in place rules that force participants to do the right thing, so yes RNSW claim those horses as rehomed by them.

Recent changes to the Equimillions horse show run by RNSW are extremely discriminatory against owners who rehome directly to the public. RNSW have offered free entry to the show for horses rehomed through their Team Thoroughbred program, leaving all other horses rehomed by their owners to pay substantial entry fees to a show funded by the tax on our prizemoney.

Why is RNSW purchasing properties if not for the purpose of homing retired racehorses?

Why are individual trainers able to train from state of the art industry owned properties, maintained by the industry?

Why weren't expressions of interest advertised regarding these properties as would be the right thing to do for all the industry?

Why was Racing NSW looking to purchase 3 trainers properties in Port Macquarie for Social Housing through ? Are our welfare dollars being used for property development?

WORKERS COMPENSATION

The stories of injured workers being bullied and their struggles for compensation are numerous.

Racing NSW has been placed on a Remediation Plan by SIRA, but if you read the CEO'S report In the Annual Reports he claims RNSW CHOSE to engage the services of independent provider to manage claims.

STRATEGIC PLAN

RNSW last strategic plan proposes purchasing imported horses for “selected” trainers to train for a micro share lifestyle group. Why when there are so many questions over welfare and rehoming of domestically bred horses? Why would a regulator favor certain trainers? The governance issues this raises are immense.

PRIVACY ACCESS

When I inquired in Sept 2018 about RNSW being subject to GIPA I was told by RNSW they were not. Given my background I found this hard to believe so I investigated further and was assured by a contact in the government that they were subject to the GIPA Act. I then rang RNSW and asked to speak to their information officer, they said they didn't have one. I said well you better find one because I wish to put in an information request. I now notice that RNSW has Privacy and Access section on their website that wasn't there prior to my request.

GOVERNANCE

Racing NSW hadn't listed all their Annual Reports until recently there were several years missing.

CEO and Board members are too long in their roles and seem to think that there is no need to consult with the participants/stakeholders.

Legislation has provided a structure of consultation called RICG that is largely ignored by Racing NSW, and is in fact a toothless tiger.

I had to write to the previous Racing Minister and inform him that a disqualified person was sitting on RICG representing the Trainers and that Racing NSW had that disqualified person listed in their official magazine as a racing official.

Mid September 2017 Mr Vlandys barred the leading of horses from cars for exercise adversely effecting 315 country trainers, there was no inquiry, no notice and no review despite the urgings of the then CEO of the NSW Trainers Association to conduct a broader WH&S safety review of all training practices including electric walkers and treadmills. Several trainers were disqualified(the severest punishment in racing) for the offence, no warning nor implementation period.

The RICG meeting around this period voted, without key stakeholder representatives present, to support the ban but this was later over turned. Racing NSW still to this day have not reviewed the ban.

Mr Vlandys has been known to step in on inquiries and at one inquiry into the sending of horses to the knackeries he amended the terms of the disqualification to allow the stud to still operate but the disqualified principle could not attend sales, hardly fair punishment when others have had their whole incomes decimated by disqualification.

admitted to breaking the rule regarding horses sent to Knackeries, no prosecution. In fact felt comfortable enough to say “it's hardly a hanging offence”.

NSW Trainers Association for some 8 years received a management fee from RNSW for the Public Liability and Personal Accident Schemes, July 2019 RNSW sent correspondence saying

they would no longer receive the fee. The Association was in danger of trading insolvent. There was pressure from RNSW to remove the then CEO to be able to again receive the management fee. resigned along with four other Association board members. was installed as the CEO of the NSW Trainers Association despite being a previously disqualified person.

BULLYING

There are many cases of bullying by Racing NSW/Clubs most seem to be dealt with by way of non disclosure agreements etc and then of course the high profile reported input of

INFRASTRUCTURE

Well what can be said the promises are there but the delivery is nothing short snails pace or non existent.

I have been fined and suspended by Racing NSW for expressing my opinions regarding the administration of our industry, I expect repercussions from this submission, but it has to be said there needs to be a full parliamentary inquiry into Racing NSW along with a full forensic audit

Thank you again for this opportunity

Regards

Debbie Prest