

Parliamentary Jumps Racing Inquiry fails to deliver ban *But industry on notice with recommendations targeting transparency and welfare*

A parliamentary select committee has agreed to allow jumps racing to continue in South Australia, despite dwindling interest in the 'sport' and public support for it to end.

"To give a green light to a sport like this in the 21st century, where horses are routinely injured and killed, is disappointing," Tim Vasudeva, RSPCA South Australia CEO, said.

"However, the findings are clearly damning of the jumps racing industry and demonstrate they have a lot of work to do to meet community expectations.

"In the absence of the committee's support for a complete ban, RSPCA South Australia welcomes the specific recommendations, and looks to Government to now ensure the industry is compelled to follow them and is held accountable for implementing them within the three-year timeframe."

The committee yesterday handed down its findings, and identified clear concerns around transparency of industry data as well as stipulating a raft of welfare improvements to be made. In particular, RSPCA South Australia is pleased to see the industry must:

- Broaden the scope of the data that is collected, recorded and made publicly available, including the number of fatalities, falls and injuries occurring in training, trials and races. (Currently, only deaths during races - not training or trials - are made available.)
- Ensure greater scrutiny by stewards and vets of the performance of jumps horses where there is evidence of a history of lameness, injury, falls, collisions with other horses or obstacles or both, jumping obstacles awkwardly or poorly or both, to prevent avoidable suffering and address high attrition rate
- Develop, fund and implement a retirement plan for thoroughbred race horses to address wastage
- Collect and make publicly available data on the number of horses leaving the racing industry annually to provide an understanding of racehorse attrition rates
- Collect, collate and publish data to enable research to be undertaken to determine the proportion of horses that are registered to race that go to slaughter and the reasons for this.

RSPCA South Australia has long campaigned against jumps racing due to the high risk of injury and

death to horses who are required to clear obstacles which are at least a metre high, in a pack, at speed and over long distances.

Since 2009 alone, 16 horses have died participating in jumps racing in South Australia.

The Parliamentary Jumps Racing Committee received 1,811 submissions in a range of forms from individuals and groups including the RSPCA South Australia and the Law Society of SA. The majority of submissions received were in support of a ban on jumps racing. The Law Society of SA submitted that jumps racing is arguably in breach of the Animal Welfare Act because it places horses at significant risk of serious harm or death.

“While we are disappointed there has been no ban, these are strong recommendations that should force transparency on the true number of horses dying at the hands of the industry and ‘wastage’ rates, as well as an improvement in welfare standards,” Mr Vasudeva said.

“It’s clear the industry is on notice that it needs to clean up its act.

“We look to Government to ensure all these recommendations are adopted and the jumps racing industry is compelled to apply them.”

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