

Death at Oakbank Racing Carnival

Another horse falls victim to Russian roulette of jumps racing

A jumps racing tragedy in full view of hundreds of spectators has marred Oakbank's Easter Racing Carnival.

Wheeler Fortune fell during the running of the Somerled Hurdle race of nearly three kilometres in which horses are whipped at full gallop over jumps. It was the first jumps race of the Oakbank Carnival. The five-year-old gelding suffered a horrendous leg injury at the last hurdle of the race and was euthanised.

He is the 17th horse to die during a South Australian jumps race since 2009. A total of 79 horses have died in Australian jumps races since 2006, with South Australian and Victoria now the only states left that allow this cruel and unnecessary 'sport' to continue.

"No-one should be surprised that we've had yet another horse killed by this inhumane activity," said RSPCA South Australia's Animal Welfare Advocate, Dr Rebecca Evers, who attended today's event.

"Forcing horses to gallop long distances and jump over obstacles in a pack is a sure recipe for this kind of tragedy to occur. It will keep occurring as long as we continue to allow it.

"To witness this horse suffering such a catastrophic injury is an image I know I won't forget, and I'm sure many others won't either.

"It shocks me that there are still people who regard this cruel activity as an acceptable form of family entertainment."

A 2006 University of Melbourne study found a horse competing in a jumps race is nearly 19

times more likely to die compared to a horse competing in a flat race.

Yet despite such compelling evidence supporting an immediate ban on jumps racing, a parliamentary inquiry completed last November gave Thoroughbred Racing SA three years to address multiple welfare concerns. All the while horses continue to die.

“Two weeks ago at Oakbank we had three horses fall during jumps races and two jockeys were injured....and today the jumps racing death toll increased again,” Dr Evers said.

“How much evidence is needed before we as a civilised society say enough is enough?

“No changes can ever make this sport safe enough to be acceptable on animal welfare grounds.

“We can’t afford another three years of death and carnage on our racetracks.

“It has to stop now.”

For more information and resources on jumps racing, visit the RSPCA South Australia campaign site ‘ The Illogical Races’ - www.theillogicalraces.org.au

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