

Outdated bull riding event unethical and inhumane *Yet Adelaide Entertainment Centre set to continue with tomorrow's event*

Serious animal welfare concerns expressed in a letter from RSPCA South Australia six months ago have failed to convince management of the Adelaide Entertainment Centre to cancel a bull riding event this weekend.

RSPCA has described the event being staged at Adelaide's iconic entertainment facility as inhumane, unethical and outdated, making Adelaide appear backward when compared with contemporary attitudes towards animals and their welfare.

Adelaide Venue Management Corporation (which manages the Centre) will host the Professional Bullriders Australia (PBR) event this Saturday.

The Centre's website promotes the event as a conquest between riders and bulls - *"There is only one man, one bull and 8 desperate seconds..."*

Welcome to the roller coaster world of the adrenalin cowboy as they take on the nation's most extreme bucking bulls.... It's a showdown like no other - Twenty-two riders all eager for glory as they strive to overcome the power of the 52 most extreme bucking bulls in a head to head battle of power, agility and the fight of the fittest 8 seconds at a time...

Choreographed with pyrotechnics, lasers, concert sound system and mega screen replays.....

This event encompasses pain, fear, blood, courage and glory!"

RSPCA South Australia Animal Welfare Advocate Dr Rebekah Evers questions how it is that in 2017 - knowing all that we do about animals, their sentience and their natural behaviours - some people still accept the human-animal contest as being legitimate, especially where animals (who have no choice whether they participate or not) experience stress.

Dr Evers says it's "extremely concerning" that Adelaide Venue Management Corporation has agreed to host an event that exploits an animal's fear and stress response, all for entertainment. She highlighted these concerns, based on scientific evidence, in a letter sent to the Corporation in June.

"Like all rodeo events, bull riding fails to meet the basic principles of good stock handling practises, namely to minimise stress, fear and suffering," Dr Evers said.

"A bull that's not agitated and stressed won't buck.

"Bucking is a bull's instinctive survival reaction to a perceived predator on its back, in this case a rider, and the equipment they use further heightens the bull's reaction."

Flank straps and spurs are standard bull-riding equipment, with the rider gaining extra points for spurring the bull in its sides. According to PBR Australia's website, *"the spurring action displays the level of complete control of the cowboy during the ride"*.

Defendants of these events often claim that bulls are bred and trained for extreme bucking and that they enjoy it, a claim Dr Eyers describes as “nonsense”.

“If bulls enjoy this extreme bucking, then let’s remove the flank strap and the spurs.

“No rodeo organisers have ever accepted this challenge because they know the animals will either not buck or not buck strongly enough to give the rider much of a ride.

“Add in the fireworks and loud music planned for the Adelaide event, and you have an environment about as far removed from the natural environment for these animals as possible,” Dr Eyers said.

“No animal should be subjected to this kind of treatment and we urge people not to support this event or any event that profits from forcing animals to endure an aversive experience.

“Bull riding events belong in the dark ages and we are shocked that our iconic Adelaide Entertainment Centre would showcase an event that provokes bulls’ stress responses for entertainment.

“We want to be better than this in South Australia - as individuals and as a community,” Dr Eyers said.

Background Information

Rodeo and bull riding events are still legal in South Australia.

Due to animal welfare concerns, rodeo events (including bull riding) are illegal in the UK and the ACT and there is a growing push to ban them in other jurisdictions as well.

For more information about the RSPCA’s position on rodeos -

http://kb.rspca.org.au/RSPCA-Policy-C08-Rodeos_645.html

http://kb.rspca.org.au/Do-horses-and-cattle-enjoy-participating-in-rodeos_404.html

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