

## EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

### PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of seven minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on **12 November 2019**

Name	Subject/Comments
<b>Public Forum – 9.30am</b>	
Coral Anderson	NOM19/008 Treatment of Racehorses in NSW
Peter Cormick	NOM19/008 Treatment of Racehorses in NSW
Theresa Matthews	Petition

**Public Forum Presentation to Council 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 by Coral Anderson, Animal Liberation Batemans Bay.**

I'm Coral Anderson. I am here to speak on Agenda item NOM19/008 TREATMENT OF RACEHORSES IN NSW put by Clr Lindsay Brown. I am a member of the RSPCA Eurobodalla Volunteer Branch.

Today I speak on behalf of Animal Liberation Batemans Bay.

Animal Liberation Batemans Bay is a satellite group of Animal Liberation NSW. Our objectives are to permanently improve the lives of all animals through legislation, consumer advocacy, action, and humane education. To raise public awareness initiatives to empower and inspire the community to adopt cruelty-free lifestyle choices.

We believe in a world where all sentient beings are treated with respect and compassion.

Animal Liberation is a worldwide organisation founded by DrChristine Townend in 1976.

The oppression, exploitation, and abuse animals are subjected to makes the contemporary animal rights movement one of the most prescient social change movements around the world.

Clr Brown's Notice of Motion, whilst appreciated, we feel, does not go far enough. The full extent of the cruelty and exploitation that is inherent in all forms of racing where animals are used and gambling is involved, is yet to be exposed to the public. The recent 7.30 Report on retired thoroughbred racehorses ending up in a Queensland knackery came as no surprise to animal welfare/rights organisations.

If not for the bravery of undercover activists, the general public would not have become aware of the demise of ex racehorses ending up as pet food.

Yet our government seems hell bent on tightening the laws around activists who expose the atrocities and cruelty towards animals whilst at the same time lacking the will to prosecute the perpetrators.

*In the United States, horses are not allowed to be used for human consumption nor for pet food, Yet, here in Australia, it is shamefully legal. The unpalatable truth is that horse traders, referred to as 'kill buyers' regularly purchase horses no one wants and truck them to a place no horse wants to end up - the abattoir where they are beaten, kicked and abused before being slaughtered.*

The horses are bought by these kill buyers direct from trainers, licensed participants in an industry which has, since the 7.30 report aired, spent the past few weeks claiming it had no idea so may thoroughbreds are sent to the slaughterhouses. Is the public expected to believe them?

Respected organisations like the RSPCA, Animals Australia, the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses and Animal Liberation all condemn the use of whips and tongue ties used in the thoroughbred racing industry. Yet, it continues here in Australia. Just as horses deserve a better retirement, they also deserve to be treated humanely while in the industry. Horses are routinely subjected to the use of painful devices in both training and racing with little oversight or awareness of how they are used, how often, and whether they're actually effective.

While the use of electric shock 'jiggers' has been banned for years, unfortunately there are other painful or aversive devices used in racing and training which remain completely legal under the Rules of Racing.

Racehorses are also routinely hit with whips, in our most public form of violence toward animals. This is despite ample evidence showing the use of whips doesn't affect the race outcome. If horses were whipped in the same way away from the track, it would be a prosecutable animal cruelty offence.

Many Australians also don't know about the use of 'tongue-ties' – a tight strap that ties a horse's tongue to their jaw in an attempt to prevent them 'choking' or avoiding the bit when it cause discomfort. Tongue ties are uncomfortable and distressing to the horse, are used without any requirement for veterinary diagnosis, and there's little or no evidence that their use is effective.

So what needs to change?

Right now, the RSPCA and other animal advocates are calling for an urgent review into the use of painful and aversive devices, including an end to the cruel and unnecessary routine use of whips.

Given the recent revelations about the use of illegal electric shock jiggers at the highest levels of racing in Australia (including by leading trainer Darren Weir) it's clear that Racing Australia needs to better investigate and assure the community against illegal practices.

However, while jiggers are banned by racing authorities, the routine use of whips and tongue ties is permitted, despite evidence that these are painful, aversive or distressing to horses.

It's an inevitable reality of racing that some race horses will ultimately be sent for slaughter; however, the industry must acknowledge this is happening, minimise the numbers, and put proper standards in place.

Animal Liberation Batemans Bay respectfully urges Clr Lindsay Brown to amend his motion with a minor correction as follows:

1. Replace 'for' with the word 'by'
2. Add the following paragraphs:

“THAT Council write to Racing NSW urging it to immediately ban the use of whips and tongue ties and other painful or aversive devices in the thoroughbred racing industry in line with recommendations by animal welfare organisations and the expectations of the general public.

THAT Council write to Racing NSW to immediately put in place a plan to reduce the number of horses being bred, change training and racing practices to minimise the risk of injury, and to put better plans in place for the retirement of every horse bred, to assure their welfare.

THAT Council write to Racing NSW to provide accurate information about the experience of every racehorse it produces, from birth to death.

THAT Council write to Racing NSW calling on it for the compulsory collection and publishing of comprehensive life cycle and injury statistics, and the development of a national identification and traceability system for racehorses.”

Animal Liberation Batemans Bay is grateful to Clr Lindsay Brown for bringing the serious matter of animal welfare/rights into this Chamber. It is certainly our hope and expectation that Clr Brown will continue the same display of compassion toward all animals, in particular, he will shine a light on the cruelty of animals abused and exploited in rodeos licensed by this council and conducted on council managed land.

PUBLIC FORUM - 12 November 2019

Item NOM19/008 TREATMENT OF RACEHORSES IN NSW

Presentation by Peter Cormick

Good morning councillors.

I am here to support the Notice of Motion to be put forward by Councillor Brown, in which he seeks information from Racing NSW on the protocols, the standards and the monitoring and enforcement of those standards, in relation to the welfare of racehorses, whether currently racing or, most importantly, when retired from racing.

It is my commitment to animal welfare that has brought me here, in spite of my view of the now-diminished state of this forum. And I thank Councillor Brown for bringing this matter to the attention of the chamber and thereby to the wider public.

Given the importance of open discussion in a democratic society, it's a shame that commendation of Councillor Brown for his action in this instance, by a community member, is not able to be shared live with those of our community who are unable to be here in the chamber. But he has only himself, and others of you, to blame for this situation.

As the background to the motion explains, it has arisen from the exposure of gross cruelty inflicted upon defenceless, beautiful, magnificent horses, transported en masse as nothing more than objects to be processed.

Those of us who have, or have had, the privilege of spending time with horses, especially riding and grooming them, and thereby being able to develop a close relationship, will have found the footage shown on the ABC 7.30 program to have been particularly sickening. To see the terror in the horses' faces as they were about to be brutalised, was extremely distressing. Those responsible, apparently of our species, should now be serving time.

And yet this brutality, by those who have no awareness or regard whatever for the feelings and welfare of animals, happens routinely – and not just to horses. If you have the stomach for it, I suggest you watch the documentary Dominion. Animal welfare is a matter that goes well beyond the welfare of horses.

Given that we live in a region that is blessed with many beautiful horses and some world class horsemen and horsewomen, I have every confidence that Councillor

Brown's motion will receive unanimous support. How could anyone object to it? But as admirable as it is, it does not go quite far enough.

Expecting *any* organisation to examine itself, identify its own failings, to put in place protocols, standards and methods of enforcement to address those failings and ensure maintenance of the standards, and then in the interests of transparency, making all of this known to the public, is really expecting too much; so too with Racing NSW. It is not in that organisation's interests to paint anything other than a rosy picture.

But for the undercover investigation, we would have known nothing of the brutality inflicted upon the horses; so too with the live export trade and the barbaric treatment of Australian livestock when it reaches foreign shores. But for undercover investigators and whistleblowers, none of the abuses we have become aware of through the media would have ever seen the light of day. Government does nothing on this score. We rely entirely on those whom our Federal and State Government dare to criminalise for exposing the crimes committed by others. How twisted is that?!

Self regulation, across all industries, has been shown time and time again to be an abject failure. Self interest, incapacity for acknowledging failures, and secrecy, prevail. Thus, there is a clear need for *informed, independent* oversight of all industries, including those which are concerned with the treatment of animals, if there is to be any chance of achieving genuine improvement.

And so, a concern I have with Councillor Brown's motion, admirable as it is, is that we can be sure that Racing NSW will provide us with answers which will almost certainly please the reader, to some extent at least, but it will be missing an *informed, independent* view of its protocols and standards. I therefore ask Councillor Brown if he would consider making a slight amendment to part 3 of his motion, along the following lines (as indicated by italicisation).

3. How are standards monitored and enforced *and to what extent are your standards and practices assessed by an independent expert body and reported upon publicly, and what involvement does the RSPCA have in setting such standards?*
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My name is Theresa Matthews and I am the owner of the Mogo Lolly Shop. I am here today to present my 72 page petition and submission to council to advocate for funding for a disabled/elderly/parenting accessible toilet block in the John Street Reserve in Mogo Village.

I joined the Mogo Business Chamber when it was first formed. Consistently my plea was to approach council for a toilet block to be built in the John Street Reserve. People were already gathering there due to the lawn and the bbq, but I found that families were consistently asking all stores in the business precinct for use of a toilet. The look of despair in their faces when they are advised that there is none in the main street prompted me in September 2018 to begin collecting signatures from every person who asked me where the public was located. 100% of the signatures contained within the petition are those who were horrified to find that the toilet is located on the most southern end of Mogo across the busy Tomakin Road.

I attended a meeting at the reserve when the council had an open discussion with the community about its plans to upgrade the area. Mogo Business Chamber had already decided and completed renovations to the towns notice board which had been left in disrepute for many years. I took my petition to the community meeting and discussed with council staff what was being planned for John Street Reserve and discovered that the upgrade would not include toilets. What followed was further discussions and a decision to redesign the area to include a multi-function toilet facility. I was advised by council that there was no funding available for the toilet facility. Knowing that the Premier and Andrew Constance would be in our area speaking to the community at Moruya about another issue I took my 72 page petition to present to them publicly. Later the same petition was handed to Lindsay Brown to take to the council as I wanted it tabled for discussion. Since March this year I have exhausted every avenue possible which included contacting the Premier, Minister for the Disabled, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Families, Minister for the Elderly and also applied with the councils support My Community Project. It would appear that all roads lead to Rome and I find myself standing here today advocating for this much needed facility.

During my time in Mogo I have watched many mothers change newborn babies on our front lawns, I have seen the elderly left on my veranda with their walking aids while family has gone to get their cars as the distance is too far for them to make.

I draw your attention to page 12 a victim impact statement of a lady who is in a wheelchair who had been taken down to the Tomakin Road Toilet block but upon her leaving had been thrown from her wheelchair. This caused great embarrassment for the poor lady and she felt compelled to write to the council about her poor experience.

I myself on December 26<sup>th</sup> 2013 had an 8 year old child cross the Tomakin Road on her own to my then store location in need of toilet paper for her mother who was trapped in the toilet block. I rendered assistance and then phoned the council which the answering machine advised me that the council was closed. What followed was 3 days of me personally replenishing toilet paper at the toilet block. I also did the exact same thing in December 2014.

Page 3 paragraph 10 refers to the many conversations I have had with nursing staff whose signatures also form part of the petition. These female nurses will not stop and use the Tomakin Road facility on their way home from night shift due to the remoteness and darkness in the area. They advise that they do not feel safe and would prefer to stop in the main street where it is more central.

I draw you to page 10 another impact statement of a mother of a young teenage girl who used to visit Mogo with her family but now does not do so after losing her sight last year. She has a shunt in her head and the fear of falling in the present toilet block and surrounding area is too great a risk for them to take.

Through my many discussions with visitors to my store I have found that disabled tourists especially those from Canberra as it is a classified day excursion have been unable to visit Mogo as we do not fit the toileting requirements for their needs. I now ask you to look at page 12 where you will notice in this advocacy statement the comment "that the fear of an accident which could create loss of dignity" is too high.

Please now look at paragraphs 21,22,and 23 on page 5 in relation to disability discrimination law. It states that a basic human right is the ability to use public facilities when required. Paragraph 23 makes mention of "PARKS" under Section 23 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

My argument remains today that with the upgrading of John Street Reserve/Park and inclusion of tables, bbq and play equipment that we are creating a beautiful community area which will lack the basic human fundamentals of a toilet. This will leave people with disabilities, walkers and children trapped on the side of the Highway trying to navigate two busy roads to get a bathroom.

Paragraph 19 on page 4 I draw your attention to the former owner of Leannes Café reporting to me that people were defecating underneath her café. I myself as recently at the October long weekend this year had a man go behind my store and I found him urinating on my back fence. This just can not continue.

The Councils newest advertising Campaign "All Kinds Of Natural" is expected to bring tourists to the area. Mogo Business Chambers proactive advertising campaigns will also do the same. With a further influx of tourism we fall well short of being able to provide adequate accessible toilets to the increased volume of tourists.

I am seeking that the ESC find the \$94,000 to build this toilet facility before December next year. I am happy to work with the council to see this happen post haste.

Lastly I draw your attention to the Mayors message in the Eurobodalla Disability Inclusion Action Plan page 13 ... Everyone not just council has a role in building a community that is accepting and inclusive of all people, regardless of ability. The action plan 2017-21 is the next step in improving access and in mainting momentum towards an even more inclusive Eurobodalla.

Thankyou for accepting my petition and for allowing me to speak today.