

Castle Hill & Hills District Agricultural Society ~ Horse Committee

Submission in relation to Showground Station Precinct Proposal

Background

The Exhibition of Breeds and competition of equestrian events at the Castle Hill Agricultural Show make up a significant proportion of the Annual Shows animal exhibits and at the Horse events held throughout the year. Castle Hill Agricultural Show is one of the few remaining metropolitan shows which allows for competition to qualify for Sydney Royal Easter Show without local Hills District horse community having to travel distances to gain performances to qualify.

There are various disciplines of equestrian competition that make up the Castle Hill Agricultural Annual show events. The various horse competitions have developed over the years, from ploughing and high jumping, to those remaining that continue to this day, the Breed Classes, Hacking competitions, Dressage days, Showjumping and Harness Racing, annual Show trotting races and of course mini-trots for the ponies and children.

Horse competition has been a part of the castle hill show since 1890. From the days in which the community travelled by horse & buggy to now where horses are transported to the Show in horse floats and large semi trailers.

The Horse Section, in particular holds historical significance at the Castle Hill Showground having the arena named after a former society president and local veterinarian, the late Aub Juliffe and the Milton Evans Stables named after the late Milton Evans, a highly respected and well known horse breeder in the area.

Since the 1940s the Castle Hill Show has had the reputation of being the second only the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Castle Hill Show remains known for its reputation and as a great qualifier for Sydney Royal, being held two weeks prior to the Sydney Royal each year.

Perpetual Horse Section trophies are sought after awards dating back to Prize donations by exhibitors and families involved with the Show Society over 60 years ago.

Until more recent years, the trotting track at the Showground was a training facility for the local harness racing industry and in addition, trotting races have always been a feature at the Castle Hill Show and continue to be keenly supported. The late Vern Carn, was a keen supporter of the trotting and Poultry at Castle Hill Show. His efforts in the Poultry Section live on with the current Poultry Pavilion at the Showground named after him. His son, Steven Carn continues to be involved with the Harness Racing industry and with the announcing for our annual Show trots at Castle Hill.

We support maintaining a trotting track as part of the Showground planning process, so the Society can continue this tradition for the local Harness Racing community and in particular, given the limited harness racing facilities in the Metropolitan area, would like to see the opportunity for a training track to continue to be available within the Hills District.

Showjumping competition held at the Annual Show is also a very well attended event, both by competitors and spectators. The high level of competition and reputation of this section at Castle Hill Show led the Show Society receiving the Equestrian Australia award last year for the "Best Agricultural Show in NSW for Showjumping". Without our beautiful arena, Showjumping at the Grand Prix level and attracting Olympic level competitors could not be held.

The local Show movement is the starting opportunity for many young horse competitors. It is an opportunity for amateurs to come and compete and often these enthusiasts go on to win competitions at State and National levels. Castle Hill has been the training ground for competitors from the Hills District who have gone through the international levels to the Olympic ranks.

Within the Hills District, there is a large population of horses that compete across all disciplines of equestrian competition. There are many families within the Hills District that are second & third generation breeders, exhibitors and competitors at our Castle Hill Show. The Hills District prides itself as a semi-rural Shire and without a facility within the district to hold its own agricultural show would be significant loss.

Summary

In summary, the Castle Hill & Hills District Agricultural Society, Show Horse committee would like to be included in the planning process for the Castle Hill Showground precinct and in particular, raise the following concerns with the current precinct proposal:

- The area shown on the proposal for equestrian area would appear to be a very small area compared to the size of the current arena which whilst not to scale would appear to be insufficient to run a Showjumping or dressage competition. All of our horse events currently use the entire arena and surrounds.
- The arena access needs to facilitate the entry large vehicles transporting showjumping course components and also for the construction of internal arenas for dressage competition.
- There is no indication of pavilions on the proposal for the exhibition and display of animals.
- There is no area shown on the proposal where the Agricultural Society could store implements, vehicles, a tractor and showjumping and horse event equipment as currently is available.
- There is no provision for parking of horse floats and long vehicles (often trucks and semi- trailers) transporting horses to events, nor is any additional parking indicated on the Showground for general event attendees.
- There is no indication of maintaining the stable and day stall facilities at the Showground, as is currently available to equestrian competitors. In addition, Castle Hill Showground facilities are known as a stabling point for horses to be rested when travelling long distances.
- There is no trotting track evident on the proposed arena.

We request that the Castle Hill & Hills District Agricultural Society, Horse Committee be consulted and given the opportunity to be involved in the future planning of the Castle Hill Showground so that the Hills District horse community may continue to enjoy the current facilities and events that are held locally.

Submission by the Horse Committee
Castle Hill & Hills District Agricultural Society