



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

1 November 2018

Via email: [philip.dalidakis@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:philip.dalidakis@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Minister Dalidakis,

Public holidays are occasions to celebrate events significant to Australia's history. Considering Australians hate cruelty to animals, commemorating a day on which horses routinely die in the Melbourne Cup is fundamentally un-Australian. We're writing to urge you to cancel this public holiday and instead designate one in Victoria on a more suitable day, such as World Animal Day, which marks an occasion in line with Aussie culture, attitudes, and sensibilities.

The Melbourne Cup epitomizes the dark side of the racing industry. Researchers at the [University of Melbourne](http://www.unimelb.edu.au) discovered that more than half the horses they studied used for racing had blood in their windpipes – an abnormal condition that indicates that horses are being run beyond what their bodies can withstand. During last year's event, Regal Monarch broke his leg and was later euthanised. In 2015, Red Cadeaux sustained the same deadly injury.

The 2014 race resulted in the death of two horses: Admire Rakti, who collapsed and died in his stall after the race, and Araldo, who broke his right hind leg and had to be euthanised. A year earlier, Verema was euthanised right on the track as officials scrambled to erect tarps around the downed horse.

Of course, horses are dying at lower-profile racing events all the time: 119 were pronounced dead on Australian tracks between August 2017 and July 2018 – that is, one animal every three days. They've died from cardiac arrest, haemorrhaging, ruptured aortas, and broken necks, legs, or pelvises. Supporting such carnage – with a holiday, no less – is unacceptable. The outrage over the death toll is evident from decreasing attendance at the Melbourne Cup Carnival, which has declined a whopping 25 per cent since 2006. Indeed, recognition of the deadly impact on horses will ultimately stop the nation from going to the track at all.

While public holidays give Aussies a break, horses are breaking legs. There's no reason to continue to celebrate a day which is responsible for so much pain and suffering. May we meet to discuss other possibilities more in keeping with evolving sentiments? I can be reached at [EmilyR@peta.org.au](mailto:EmilyR@peta.org.au) or on 0404 896 405. Thank you for your time and attention.

Yours truly,

Emily Rice  
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