

Warrnambool's dead track produces 2011's first dead horse.

RSPCA Victoria is demanding Premier Baillieu immediately suspend the Victorian jumps racing season following the death of Casa Boy on the first day of the Victorian jumps racing season in Warrnambool.

Dr. Hugh Wirth, President, RSPCA Victoria, said: "In just two races, three horses have fallen heavily, with Casa Boy the first death of the season. We know that Casa Boy was already having difficulty during trials, and even lost his jockey less than two weeks ago in Cranbourne. His recent racing history would also determine him as unfit to even qualify for the race as it would appear that he did not meet eligibility criteria based upon competitiveness, jumping ability, placing within a trial or on fitness. Just how many more horses' welfare are the jumps racing industry compromising to give the community the impression that jumps racing is viable?"

"What is even more disgusting is that our government has injected \$2 Million of taxpayer's money into funding this cruelty. Clearly a jumps racing event cannot be run safely or humanely. However our state leaders have chosen to invest in an activity that clearly compromises horse welfare rather than in hospital beds, better education resources, law enforcement or a hundred other areas where this money is desperately needed.

"Racing Victoria Limited (RVL) can shout from the rooftops that improving horse safety is a primary concern of theirs, but year after year we continue to see horses die, and can only assume that the vast number of jumps horses that disappear each year without a trace have done so because of injury. The RSPCA fails to see how RVL has achieved its goal in any way shape or form. The only way RVL can improve horse welfare is to stand by its original decision to ban jumps after the 2010 season instead of bowing to peer pressure by a handful of jumps racing enthusiasts.

"It is time for our Premier to step in and take the reins by responding to community expectations and getting rid of jumps racing once and for all. RVL certainly doesn't have the gumption to stand up to a small portion of the racing community otherwise we wouldn't have had to witness this death today. Premier Baillieu, the RSPCA would like to ask you, do you have the guts to stand up for horse welfare? We eagerly await your response."

For more information or interviews, please contact:

Tim Pilgrim

RSPCA Victoria Media Coordinator

P: 03 9224 2237 or 0425 787 243

E: tpilgrim@rspcavic.org.au