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To whom it may concern,

**Re: Equine welfare and safety impacts – Sydney Metro West project**

There are currently 400 high value Thoroughbred racehorses housed in the stable complexes at Rosehill Gardens racecourse in an area adjacent to the Unwin Street entrance to the racecourse and the former Carlingford rail corridor to the east of James Ruse Drive. The resident horses are subjected to routine training exercise on the various training tracks from 0400 to 0815 hr seven days per week, 365 days per year, as well as walking and swimming exercise in and around the stable complexes during other parts of the day.

There are also 25 race meetings annually conducted at the Rosehill Gardens racecourse, usually on alternate Saturdays, where resident horses and horses from other training centres gather to compete in races conducted on the course proper over a period of 7 hours commencing from approximately 1130 to 1630 hr in the winter (i.e. May to September) and from approximately 1200 to 1800 hr in the summer (i.e. October to April). Additionally, there are approximately 25 official barrier trials annually, usually conducted between 0830 and 1100 hr on certain weekdays, where both resident horses and horses from other training centres compete under race conditions.

Thoroughbred racehorses are naturally a prey animal and so respond to any immediate threat by taking flight. Threat may come through visual stimuli, noise or vibration or any combination. This is a natural response, and while horses have been domesticated for many years, in terms of evolution these traits remain as an overriding response. There is no doubt the response of each individual horse can vary substantially, and young fit thoroughbred horses are known to be highly unpredictable. While there is evidence that horses can habituate to some stimuli, sudden, loud or high frequency noises or a sudden change in stimulus, such as those associated with heavy construction processes, can lead to an extreme and uncontrollable flight response. Horses can react in a variety of ways to sudden, loud noise while being ridden or exercised, such as abrupt changes in direction (baulking), galloping uncontrollably and irrationally propelling themselves into traffic, fixed objects or crowds, or rearing on their hindlimbs and flipping backwards or onto their side or striking their head. These reactions pose serious risks to the horse, the rider/handler and to the public and have been known to cause serious and sometimes fatal injuries to both. Such a situation poses a profound workplace safety risk as well as a major horse health and welfare concern.

Further, resident horses stabled at Rosehill are likely to be affected by the noise and vibration produced during the tunnelling process which will take place adjacent to the stabling complex. Possible reactions to this noise and vibration might be acute/chronic stress, gastric ulceration, loss of sleep, reduced appetite leading to poor body condition

and general malaise and which will have detrimental effects on the wellbeing and competitiveness of the animals.

While there is some limited information available on crowd noise and the effects of aircraft on horse behaviour and welfare, there appears to be little objective information on the effects of construction noise, vibration and air quality on horses. It is envisaged that benchmark monitoring of stress indices will take place before and during the tunnelling process. Once the project is completed, it is also conceivable that there might be chronic physiological aberrations in resident horses in the event there is perceptible vibration due to the transit of trains through the tunnels adjacent to the stable complexes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suann', with a stylized, flowing script.

**Dr Craig Suann N2685**