



Riding for the Disabled Association SA Inc

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MEDIA RELEASE

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The planned removal of Black Hill Pony Club from its Woodforde site to make way for a housing development will make it difficult for Riding for the Disabled (RDA) to plan for services in the north-eastern metropolitan area.

RDA is a not-for-profit charity providing horse-riding therapy and active recreation for people with disabilities. RDA currently has three centres servicing the metropolitan area. Two are south of the city and one is north, at Globe Derby. *

RDA SA state manager Kay Milton says, "We feel anxious when we see horse facilities being closed or rezoned. RDA needs more potential sites in metropolitan Adelaide – not fewer.

"Every safe riding space lost by one equestrian organisation is lost to all horse organisations.

More than 75% of RDA's 464 riders are aged under 18 years, and of these 120 – a quarter of all its riders – ride at one of the three metropolitan centres.

As Adelaide's population increases, demand for RDA services is also expected to increase – but they may have nowhere to go as horse facilities like Black Hill Pony Club are closed or rezoned.

Ms Milton says Black Hill Pony Club site has many advantages for RDA.

She says, "Its proximity to the north-eastern suburbs is ideal to service a large part of Adelaide. The grounds are well developed and could be used by RDA with minor modifications to provide safe use by people with disabilities (ramp, arena fencing). And we would work with the Pony Club to involve its members as RDA volunteers.

Riding for the Disabled is one of many horse organisations and individuals urging the Premier the Hon. Mike Rann MP to retain Black Hill Pony Club site as open space for equestrian use, particularly by the Pony Club and as a potential site for RDA.

Ms Milton says, "I have advised the Premier of my willingness to participate in a delegation to meet with him about this matter.

"Government messages encourage young people to be active and to play sport. At RDA we take that further by helping young people with disabilities become active and fitter.

"Yet the plight of Black Hill Pony Club members is in direct contradiction of the 'Be Active' message. Closing Black Hill Pony Club will mean the end of horse riding for about 200 young riders, and will also reduce our options for an RDA service catering to the north-east."

Ms Milton says, "It is not too late for the state government to reverse its decision to sell off the land occupied by Black Hill Pony club. And if the decision is reversed, then people with disabilities in the north-eastern suburbs might gain a local RDA centre."

ENDS

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