

Racing offers \$267k sweetener for early access to Levy's Beach



Warrnambool Racing Club has offered a nice little sweetener to the Warrnambool City Council as part of discussions to get racehorses back on Levy's Beach by December. Image: Love Backyards.

By Carol Altmann

There is an update to this story: the council is now seeking \$400k from the WRC for the carpark in exchange for approval to run horses on Levy's and Lady Bay. It is now listed for a decision at next Monday's council meeting (1/10/18). [You can read the full documents from page 335 onward here.](#)

The W'bool Racing Club is offering the W'bool City Council a big lump of sugar as part of its push to have racehorses back at Levy's Beach by December: a \$267,000 "bespoke" carpark at Lady Bay, no less.

Under a proposal put forward by the WRC, it will pay for a \$267,000 upgrade to build the "bespoke" carpark at the Lady Bay breakwater, next to the existing carpark at the Pavilion cafe, specifically for use by horse trainers.

A specialist horse training carpark with proper wash-down facilities was part of the masterplan prepared for the breakwater.

It is understood the WRC hopes the State Government will chip in at least some of the \$267,000 for the carpark but, if not, the racing industry will fund the carpark anyway.

The sweetener comes as the WRC seeks to have some horse training back on to Levy's Beach in time for the all-important Spring racing carnival that includes the Melbourne Cup on November 6.

A temporary training arrangement at Levy's Beach ended on September 14, pending the full implementation of the new Belfast Coastal Reserve Management Plan.

Under the controversial management plan, up to 120 racehorses a day will be allowed to train on the beach and up to 40 a day in the dunes.

The new, temporary arrangement, however, would allow up to 60 horses a day on Levy's Beach and 40 a day in the dunes between now and December.

For the arrangement to go ahead, the WRC must get the approval of council, Parks Victoria and the Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

As such, gaining the Warrnambool City Council's approval is an important step.

Another part of the deal is a reduction in the number of racehorses training on Lady Bay beach.

As the council knows, people are less enthusiastic about the damage done to the foreshore from hundreds of hooves, than they are about watching the horses swimming.

Under the new proposal, the number of horses along Lady Bay beach would be almost halved – from a maximum of 96 to 50 per day – and up to 116 per day swimming, with a combined total of no more than 116 horses either on sand or in the water.

The council is expected to make a decision on all of the proposals shortly, but given its previous support (the vote was 6/1) for racehorses training at Levy's Beach, it is unlikely to turn such a deal down.

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