



Uncomfortable about watching the Cup?

Rest assured, you're not alone.

Australians have long supported horse racing, and the Melbourne Cup remains a significant event in our annual calendar.

Getting dressed up and enjoying great food and drinks with our family, friends or workmates is a huge part of the event – much more so than the actual race.

But for those of us who also love animals and want to see them treated well, watching horse racing is becoming increasingly uncomfortable viewing.

There are serious animal welfare concerns in horse racing.

Recent media coverage has shone a spotlight on the fate of horses that never even made it to the track, or who retired and were no longer wanted.

But what happens on retirement is the last of many challenges these horses endure throughout their racing careers.

In training and racing, they will be hit again and again with whips, for no real reason - even as they tire and are unable to respond.

Whips use fear and pain to push horses to their absolute limit. In addition to the distress they cause, over-exertion of horses can lead to injuries and a premature end to the horse's career – and sometimes, their life.

It's our most public form of animal cruelty and something that would be a prosecutable offence if it took place away from the track.

Many will have their tongue tied uncomfortably to their jaw, in an attempt to stop them 'choking' or evading the bit when it causes them discomfort.

Tongue ties are aversive and distressing to horses, and there is no evidence to suggest they're effective or beneficial to the majority of horses they are used on.

And while a select few ex-racehorses and trotters will go on to enjoy a happy retirement, many will exit racing prematurely due to poor performance, illness, injury or behavioural problems, and will have an uncertain fate.

So what can you do?



Don't be afraid to express your concerns – we know there are many people out there feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the spectacle of racing in its current form.



If you don't want to place a bet or join the sweep, consider donating to an animal welfare organisation that cares for horses.



Write to Racing Australia and Harness Racing Australia, to ask for immediate action to improve the welfare of racing horses - throughout their lives.

For more information, visit rspca.org.au/horse-racing

RSPCA 