



Shane Patton APM
Chief Commissioner
Victoria Police

Via e-mail: shane.patton@police.vic.gov.au

13 September 2024

Dear Mr Patton:

I hope this finds you well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to urge Victoria Police to remove horses from the force following reports that several horses used by the police for crowd control on 11 September were punched and struck by projectiles during a protest at a weapons exhibition held in Melbourne's CBD.

Unlike human police officers, equines don't choose to serve but are thrust into unpredictable circumstances in which they may be subjected to violence – as we saw this week. As prey animals, horses have a strong natural flight instinct, and it is nearly impossible for them to become fully desensitised to loud noises and crowds, and no matter how well trained they are, it can never be guaranteed that they won't bolt or otherwise react while on duty. When these large, powerful animals run amok, riders and bystanders can very easily be injured or killed.

As society modernises, so should our institutions to reflect our values and protect sentient beings from harm. Animals are living, feeling individuals, not police equipment, and horses deserve to live free from the stress they're subjected to when steered through large, agitated crowds in a busy capital city with a human on their back, only to become the target of abuse.

Please, phase out the use of horses in the police force by ending breeding programmes and retiring those currently being used.

Yours faithfully,

Mimi Bekhechi
Senior Policy Advisor
PETA

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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- PETA Foundation (U.K.)