

CASE CARD - Rodeos

THE ISSUE

Rodeos cause stress, fear, pain and injury to the animals involved. Subjecting cattle and horses to these experiences is not necessary or justifiable.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is a rodeo?

A rodeo is promoted as a form of entertainment or sport by the meat livestock industry. At a rodeo cattle and horses are used to demonstrate what organisers frame as riding and handling skills. Events usually include bronco riding, bull riding, calf roping, team roping and steer wrestling.

Where are rodeos held?

Rodeos are held in all states and Territories in Australia except for the Australian Capital Territory where they are prohibited. Rodeos are held frequently in and around Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

Why are rodeos a concern?

Rigorous studies of observed behaviour conclude rodeo events cause the animals involved stress, fear and pain and minor to mortal injury; there is no evidence for claims that 'animals enjoy' the rodeo experience.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) is opposed to rodeos and rodeo schools because of the significant potential for injury, suffering and distress to the animals involved.

Governance in the Northern Territory

Legislation: NT Animal Protection Act 2018

Part 3 Care and protection of animals Division 1 states

- (1) A person in control of an animal must provide a minimum level of care to the animal
- (2) A person must not be cruel to an animal

Part 1 Division 4 states something is not appropriate for an animal if:

- (a) it causes, is likely to cause, contributes to, or is likely to contribute to the animal suffering that is unjustifiable, unnecessary or unreasonable in the circumstances

Please Note - This Act is currently under review

Administration of the Act: (including compliance): Chief Executive Office
Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (DITT)

Minister Responsible: Minister for Agribusiness

BRONCO RIDING

Rodeo horses and bulls are kicked with metal spurs and have a flank strap tightened around their sensitive and vulnerable underbellies.

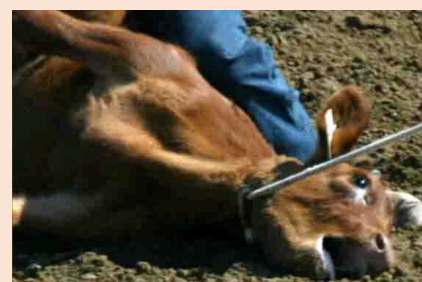
Horses and cattle are prey animals, they kick and buck repeatedly when they are in a state of fear, stress and panic. Their reaction to being ridden in rodeos is the same as being attacked by a predator.



CALF ROPING



Calf roping subjects young, vulnerable animals to harm and distress. Injury risks include damage to the calf's neck, bruising, broken ribs and choking. Studies from Australian universities have found calves involved experience extreme fear, stress and anxiety.



ACTION REQUEST:

Prohibit rodeos in the NT.

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IDEAS FOR ACTION (WHAT YOU CAN DO)

Write a letter

Other Actions

- Report the treatment of animals in rodeos to the Animal Welfare Unit animalwelfare@nt.gov.au (be sure to cc the DITT CEO ceo.ditt@nt.gov.au)
- Post the RSPCA position on social media (see link in references)
- Have Your Say on the review of the Animals Protection Act his consultation will close at **6pm** on Friday **20 September 2024** <https://haveyoursay.nt.gov.au/animal-protection-act-review>



REFERENCES

- RSPCA Knowledge Base: What are the animal welfare issues with rodeos <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-are-the-animal-welfare-issues-with-rodeos/>
- NT Animal Protection Act 2018 <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/ANIMAL-PROTECTION-REGULATIONS-2022>
- Goldhawk C, Bond G, Grandin T, Pajor E (2016) Behaviour of bucking bulls prior to rodeo performances and relation to rodeo and human activities. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 181:63–69.
- Sinclair M, Keeley T, Lefebvre A, and Phillips C (2016) Behavioural and physiological responses of calves to marshalling and roping in a simulated rodeo event. *Animals* 6(30).
- Rizzuto S, Evans D, Wilson B, McGreevy P (2020) Exploring the use of a Qualitative Behavioural Assessment approach to assess emotional state of calves in rodeos. *Animals* 10(1) 113 doi.org/10.3390/ani10010113.
- Dixon S, Evans D, Vindevoghel T, Ward MP, Quain A (2023) Behaviours expressed by rodeo calves during different phases of roping. *Animals* 13(343) <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13030343>.
- Stonebridge M, Evans D, Kotzmann J (2022) [Sentience matters: Analysing the regulation of calf-roping in Australian rodeos](#). *Animals* 12, 1071
- [New Zealand National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (2018) [Rodeo events – How do they impact the sentient animal?](#) Assessing the animal welfare impacts that rodeo events may have, through a five domains of animal welfare approach.
- Australian Veterinary Association (2023) Welfare of animals used in rodeos. [Rodeos \(ava.com.au\)](https://www.ava.com.au)



LETTER WRITING TIPS - Rodeos

Your Address

Recipient Address

Date

Dear.....

Introduce yourself

Example - I live in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

Identify the issue you are concerned about

Example – Rodeos cause animal suffering from stress, fear and pain as well as injury. Subjecting cattle and horses to these experiences is unjustifiable and unnecessary.

Include some facts / evidence

Example - The RSPCA is very clear – animals involved in rodeo events such as bronco riding and calf roping suffer. The RSPCA's position is supported by many rigorous scientific studies support.

(you can describe the issues with specific event in detail - see the case card side boxes or RSPCA booklet).

Explain in your own words how this issue affects you

Example - I want to live in a community that demonstrates a minimum level of care for animals. Knowing that rodeos are frequently being held in and around Mparntwe and that animals are suffering in the name of sport or entertainment is very upsetting.

Tell the recipient what you want them to do

Example to DITT CEO / Minister for Agribusiness – I call on you to prohibit rodeos and thereby ensure a minimum level of care is provided for animals in the NT.

Example to your local candidate – if elected will you prohibit rodeos and thereby demonstrate your intent to ensure a minimum level of care is provided for animals in the NT?

Example letter to editor: Isn't it time the NT prohibited rodeos?

I look forward to your response.

Regards,

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WRITE TO:

**NT DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM
AND TRADE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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