



**Brant Dunshea Speech – Axe The Racing Tax Campaign Event – Wednesday 10  
September 2025**

Today, some 400 years after King Charles I established standardised rules for British Horseracing, embedding the importance of the sport in our national heritage, and almost 250 years since the oldest British Classic the St Leger, which takes place on Saturday at Doncaster, was first run, and just five months since our Government published a proposal and consultation which may destroy British Horseracing, we have come together from different perspectives, but with a shared purpose, to protect it.

Today has been characterised as a strike but of course that is not the case because thousands of our racing family are hard at work up and down the country caring for our amazing Thoroughbreds, just as you do every day, and for that, we thank you.

Our racehorse owners fear this Government proposal because it will make our racing a less competitive product and further reduce their return on investment making France and Ireland more attractive to them than Great Britain to race their horses.

Our bloodstock industry, breeders, trainers, and Jockeys fear it because they depend on our owners.

Our racecourses and the thousands of people who depend on them for work fear it because they fear for their futures, and reasonably so.

The betting industry fears it because betting and horse racing are symbiotic. This symbiosis is unique.

And our new Chair, Lord Charles Allen, who is here today to support us, expressed his fear in his recent statement that the proposed changes would not only negatively impact on racing's communities, but would also reduce our ability, to be a world leader in horseracing.

But most of all, the British public, whose love of horse racing, which is at the heart of British culture, and second only in terms of attendances to football, fear it because this proposal threatens part of their identity.

The fondest memories from my childhood are those Saturday afternoons at the races, with my late mother enjoying our shared passion for racing, the last thing she said to me when she passed as a young boy was follow your passion for racing, it can take you anywhere.



As young man working in a stable yard, it was a privilege to work with racehorses and experience the joy they give in return, I found it immeasurable, and industry colleagues in this room understand that. I want our sport to thrive so that future generations can experience that same joy.

My job now, as Chief Executive of the British Horseracing Authority is to create an environment in which our owners, breeders, trainers, racecourses, jockeys and all our wonderful stable staff, can thrive.

If they thrive, our sport thrives. And when our sport thrives, the people of our great nation thrive. But when people fear for their future, the nation struggles, its people suffer, and hope in an industry can decline, overnight.

The Government says the purpose of this proposal is to create a simpler system. The Government says its purpose is to create a more streamlined system, and the Government says its purpose is to create a fairer system.

The Government has encouraged us, all interested parties, to participate and respond fully to this consultation.

**We have. We are. And our response is clear: NO, we do not support this proposed racing tax hike.**

British Horseracing must be treated differently and this is why.