

Towers title slammed

By ROBYN MCLEAN and SARAH CATHERALL

Kiwi director Peter Jackson has been called tasteless for naming his next movie The Two Towers.

An internet site has gained nearly 4000 signatures on a petition to change the name of the second instalment of The Lord of the Rings. The site has drawn angry responses from people on both sides of the debate.

"The name The Two Towers was around long before Mr Bin Laden was probably even a glint in the milkman's eyes. What happened on 9/11 is a tragedy yes, but life goes on and we can't afford to be such pussies as to be offended by the word `towers'," wrote one.

The petition reads: "Those of us who have seen The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring know what an amazing director Peter Jackson is ... However Peter Jackson has decided to tastelessly name the sequel The Two Towers. The title is clearly meant to refer to the attacks on the World Trade Center. In this post-September 11 world, it is unforgivable that this should be allowed to happen. The idea is both offensive and morally repugnant."

The Lord of the Rings publicist Claire Raskind said changing the title had not been discussed. The Two Towers was the title used by author JRR Tolkien in 1954 in the second book of the trilogy. That didn't wash with some. "I lost a family member in the WTC attacks and I don't want to cry again every time I see an ad for the movie."

Meanwhile, a Hollywood animal rights group has visited the film set to investigate whether a lame horse was sent to slaughter, two had to wear electric shock collars and a horse stampede occurred due to poor safety measures.

Three weeks before The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring was released, the American Humane Association asked the film distributors to remove a credit from New Zealand's **Animal Welfare Institute** which declared no animal had been ill-treated, abused or neglected during the making of the movie.

"The investigation into the allegations did not satisfy the requirements necessary for an AHA assurance that `no animal was harmed'," the association said.

But the **Animal Welfare Institute** argues it has investigated the allegations which arose two years ago. It accuses the the Hollywood body of meddling. The Lord of the Rings producer Barrie Osborne defended animal welfare, saying every care had been taken to ensure horses were well treated and the Hollywood association's rules had been used as a guide.