



NSW RACEHORSE OWNERS ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2004

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NSWROA BOARD

At the AGM held on 25 May 2004, Max Whitby, Chris Keogh and Bernie McMahon were re-elected to the Board of the Association. The President's Report, presented to the AGM on behalf of the Board, is available to members on the website.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

As members will be aware, the Board of Racing NSW is engaged in the preparation of a Strategic Plan, to guide the future of thoroughbred racing in the State.

The Association has been actively involved in this process through meetings with Racing NSW and the lodgement of several submissions, covering such issues as country racing; race programming; prize money and incentive schemes and BOBS. Many of these submissions have succeeded in promoting change favourable to owners.

Since the appointment of Peter V'Landys as CEO of Racing NSW, the planning process has been accelerated, with a view to getting a Strategic Plan in place by 1 July this year. The Board of the Association met with Mr. V'Landys and Stephen Ferguson, Racing NSW's General Manager –

Corporate Affairs on 26 May, to put forward its views on strategic planning for racing and to discuss the planning process to date.

In summary, the Association's submission to Racing NSW is based on the premise that the greatest threat to a sustainable future for racing in the State is inadequate returns to owners. A secondary threat is cannibalisation of the racing product by Betfair and non-NSW based bookmakers, which has the potential to drive down returns to owners, through siphoning off revenue derived from the investment of owners and that of all other sectors of the industry.

The proposals put forward to increase returns to owners are as follows:

- A minimum 100% return to owners of TAB monies to race clubs, as a basic benchmark;
- Black-type prize money over \$100,000 to be frozen for 3 years, with additional funds directed to the remaining 98% of the programme;
- An immediate increase in prize money to country racing, TAB and non-TAB meetings;
- Starters incentives to be paid down to at least tenth place in all races;
- The number of races run at non-TAB country meetings be increased to six;
- Trainers bonuses and other race club bonus schemes be abolished; and
- Continued implementation of the NSWROA's race day package of owner's benefits.

In addition that:

- A reduction in the number of race tracks would take away vital elements of interest and variety;
- A Trainers' Code of Conduct should incorporate the owner/trainer agreement already adopted by NSWROA and ATA (NSW); and

- A serious breach of the Code of Conduct should become a Breach of the Rules of Racing.

Also, that the strategic plan should endorse and support an alternative dispute resolution process to deal with disputes between owners and trainers through voluntary mediation. The NSWROA and the ATA (NSW) have already reached agreement on this and have drawn up protocols for its operation. A compulsory arbitration system is not supported by NSWROA nor ATA, as any party has to retain rights to normal legal recourse. The introduction of an owner's bond is not supported. This would only serve to increase the cost of ownership and deter entry of new owners. All creditors in the racing industry are at risk, as with any commercial transaction and there is no justification for singling out owners as needing to lodge a bond with racing authorities.

The Strategic Plan should contain clear criteria for eligible industry bodies, in terms of the TRB Act, and should propose an amendment to that Act to establish separate owners and breeders nominees on the Board of Racing NSW.

BOBS should be revised, to make it inclusive of owners in NSW, rather than just owners of some NSW-bred horses. This will provide a justification for the diversion of monies that would otherwise be available as a return to all owners, to only those owners whose horses are eligible for the scheme. It will encourage owner-ship in NSW and integrate BOBS payments into the overall returns to owners.

The draft Strategic Plan is to be put to the Board of Racing NSW on 21 June 2004. It is a significant document that has the ability to give racing in NSW a sustainable future and increase the return to owners for their investment and enthusiasm. It is

certainly a vital document for the future of the industry and we hope that the submissions and discussions that have taken place will enshrine the recognition of the position of owners in NSW and that what is good for owners is good for racing. The full text of the submission and accompanying correspondence is available on the website.

JAMIE WALTER'S COLUMN

On 1 April, 2004, it became compulsory for NSW trainers to ensure their staff and horses were turned out in gaudy, fluorescent, vests/bibs when ridden or led on a street or thoroughfare before sunrise.

This 'safety' innovation from Racing NSW is designed to eventually lower the crippling workers compensation payments trainers must confront each year. An admirable intention but it becomes yet another regulation/expense owners have to absorb. And why, in 2004, should we be working horses in the dark anyway?

It's fair to say we're past the colonists' belief that the Australian heat precluded the exercise of horses after breakfast. What has evolved is a long-held union stranglehold on the hours worked by track staff.

While ever the maintenance of tracks is practised between approximately 8am and 4pm, there'll be a rush to work teams of horses in a 3-4 hour window. This creates problems for trainers especially as that window generally narrows to 1-2 hours pre-dawn for grass track gallops.

Apart from the obvious visible difficulties of monitoring a galloping horse in fog or artificial light the dangers associated with crowded training tracks in such conditions are heightened.

Safety of horse and rider can never be secured in racing nor any other equine discipline, at any hour of the day. However when large numbers of horses are galloped in a short space of time before light and time is at a premium I would suggest

workplace 'safety' is at an increased risk.

Staff are not only required to complete the job in a limited time span, but the numbers and quality of strappers and work riders prepared to work inhuman hours are also restricted. And more staff naturally means higher training fees for owners.

In Britain most stables kick off the morning around 6.a.m. and work through to lunchtime. And other than at Newmarket, very few training stables are located on or near a racecourse so all horses have to travel to race. Consider this. Why couldn't tracks be maintained between, say, 11am and 7pm? That would give trainers a solid 5 hours to work horses assuming they started at 6 am.

NEW MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

At the EGM held on 25 May 2004 a new membership category – **Partnership Membership** – was introduced. This is to cater for groups of 3-10 people in partnership of a horse. The membership fee for 2004 and 2005 has been set at \$500 (plus GST), although persons who are already members do not have to join again. The fee will be adjusted *pro rata* in such cases. For full details, contact the Association's office on 9232 4300.

MEMBERSHIP ID CARDS

Photo ID Cards enable you to gain free entry at the various provincial and country race tracks as well as exclusive parking at Royal Randwick and Warwick Farm. These are supplied free to members on application, so why not **order one today**. Send a passport size photo to Caroline Fara with your name and membership no. on the back.

SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

If you have an email address or have recently changed your email address, please advise us by sending an email to nswroa1@ozemail.com.au. Newsletters will then be despatched by email.

PRE-PURCHASE X-RAY

The Association lobbied hard, and continues to do so, for full disclosure at yearling sales. There are some interesting figures available (with acknowledgements to Firstholme Racing) in regard to X-rays.

A South Australian vet conducted a survey of x-rays taken from 165 yearlings that were being considered for yearling sales last year.

In each of the 165 cases there were 34 individual x-rays taken of each horse. The results indicated 53% (87 horses) showed no abnormalities; 25% (41 horses) showed minor abnormalities which would not hinder a horse's career while 23% (41 horses) had significant abnormalities that would prejudice a horse's career.

The same veterinary practice also looked at x-rays of 61 yearlings offered at a secondary sale last season. This was a sale where there was a mix of local horses as well as horses bought in for the sale from other States.

Of the local (S.A.) yearlings the averages of good, satisfactory and poor results were the same as the first survey, however the results of those bought in for the sale were that, of the 22 yearlings 45% (almost double) had significant abnormalities; 32% had minor but present problems. Only 23% were clean.

This suggests that around 25% of horses at the auctions had significant abnormalities that would prevent them from racing and clearly indicates the value of inspecting x-rays at the sales.

RACING'S NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS

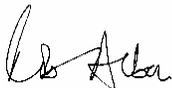
Plans are well advanced for this year's Racing's Night of Champions, to be held on Thursday 5 August at the Pavilion Royal Randwick. Spectacular entertainment is planned, and a top class dance band, superb cuisine, along with the presentation of the Awards for 2003/4. **Be assured of a GREAT night!**

FREE ENTRY - JUNE

- 1st Muswellbrook
- 3rd Hawkesbury*
- 4th Taree-Wingham, Canberra
- 5th Kembla Grange Albury
Lismore
- 6th Quirindi
- 7th Tweed River, Wellington
- 11th Grafton*, Goulburn
- 10th Gosford*
- 12th Broadmeadow*, Corowa
- 13th Kempsey, Sapphire Coast
(Kalaru)
- 14th Ballina
- 15th Scone
- 17th Hawkesbury*
- 18th Bathurst, Canberra
- 19th Broadmeadow, Grafton,
Tamworth
- 21st Corowa, Goulburn
- 22nd Muswellbrook
- 24th Gosford*
- 26th Kembla Grange, Grafton,
Wellington
- 27th Tweed River
- 28th Narrandera, Taree-
Wingham
- 29th Wyong

(*conditions apply, contact NSWROA)

Yours in Racing



Rob Albon
President

ANOTHER DANCE HERO!

* **GUY WALTER** will train this stylish **DANZERO** colt
* Like **DANCE HERO** this great walking colt carries **SIR TRISTRAM** blood on the dam's side
* His grand dam is another **GOLDEN SLIPPER** winner in **CENTURY MISS**

SIRE CUSTODIANS invite NSWROA members to race this cracking type in a partnership at just \$10,835 a share. Only a few shares left so phone JAMIE WALTER NOW on **0418 281 447** or **9310 0363**, email aiwalter@bigpond.com.au or log onto the website www.sirecustodians.com

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BREEDING-RACING PACKAGE

Good opportunity for an owner-breeder looking to have a small interest in a well bred black-type mare and her progeny;
*Black-type winning mare in foal to ARENA
*Her winning 2YO filly by KING's THEATRE (trained at Caulfield)
*Her weanling filly by ARENA
1/10th interest in all above \$7,950
For further enquiries phone **GRAEME** on **0407 948 483**



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