



Thursday 19 December 2013

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH: NZTR CHIEF EXECUTIVE GREG PURCELL

I wrote last week about how clubs throughout the country have reported unprecedented interest from people keen to get trackside this summer.

Christmas at the Races and its family-focused cousin, Interislander Summer Festival, are delivering excellent, customer-focused raceday events during the festive, summer months.

More and more people are coming to race meetings and customer feedback shows franchise events are working:

- 80.3% customer satisfaction score
- 74.3% of customers said they would “definitely attend (another race meeting) in the future”
- Net Promoter Score of 56.8 (ie. customers who are now advocates for racing)
- 19,000 customers were attending a race meeting for the first time

Impressive results from a customer service perspective, but the financial results from all clubs running CATR are equally as impressive, with total club non-wagering revenue (hospitality, admissions and food and beverage) growing to more than \$3.5 million, with combined on-course turnover at almost \$5.4 million.

By working closely with clubs and the NZ Racing Board we have created an attractive programme of summer racing events.

While looking ‘outward’ at how we provide racing to our customers, NZTR has also looked ‘inward’ in terms of industry participants in terms of investing significantly in a vibrant racing structure.

NZTR has:

- Introduced a new hierarchical structure of race meeting categories
- Lifted prizemoney levels (from January 1, 2014) at the top five Iconic and top 15 Premier meetings to provide attractive targets and retain good horses in New Zealand
- Lifted base prizemoney at all Feature race meetings
- Lifted Group Two minimum prize money by \$15,000 to \$100,000 per race
- Scheduled more twilight meetings

In addition, NZTR plans to initiate a Country Cups series, programme more racing later in the day and provide increased heritage race prize money and expanded Sunday racing fixtures.

Prizemoney increases from 1 January 2014

Description	Open	R85	R75	R65	3&4YO	2YO	Maiden
Iconic	\$40k	\$40k	\$40k	\$40k	\$40k	\$40k	N/A
Premier 1	\$40k	\$30k	\$30k	\$30k	\$30k	\$30k	\$30k
Premier 2	\$40k	\$30k	\$25k	\$20k	\$20k	\$20k	\$20k
Feature	\$25k	\$17.5k	\$15k	\$15k	\$15k	\$15k	\$10k
T2 Feature	\$15k	\$12k	\$10k	\$8k	\$8k	\$8k	\$7k
Industry	\$12k	\$8k	\$8k	\$7k	\$7k	\$7k	\$7k

Variance in minimum stakes compared to pre-31 December 2013

Description	Open	R85	R75	R65	3&4YO	2YO	Maiden
Iconic	\$0	+\$10k	+\$15k	+\$20k	+\$20k	+\$20k	N/A
Premier 1	\$0	\$0	+\$5k	+\$10k	+\$10k	+\$10k	+\$10k
Premier 2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Feature	\$0	+\$2.5k	+\$2.5k	+\$2.5k	+\$2.5k	+\$2.5k	-\$2.5k
T2 Feature	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Industry	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

NZTR's investment in prizemoney is important. As per our stated policy we have purposely set out to increase the differentiation between Saturday and midweek prize money levels. Saturdays are our prime wagering days and the new classifications have been devised to maximise that opportunity.

Crucially, increases in prizemoney are sustainable, with NZTR able to fund them out of operating expenditure without having to prop them up out of reserves. Therefore, these new prizemoney levels have become a new baseline on which we will seek to build in coming seasons.

Vale Ron Murphy

Thoroughbred racing lost a much-loved and respected participant on December 12 with the tragic death of Ron Murphy. Ron was a true stalwart of racing and his loss is felt keenly by all of us. Our deepest condolences go to Ron's partner, Davina Waddell, and their families.

Best of the season

On behalf of the Board, management and staff of NZTR I would like to wish all thoroughbred racing participants a very Merry Christmas, a happy New Year and a prosperous 2014. Be safe, and best of luck to all those racing during summer.

MEETING ABANDONMENT COMPENSATION PAYMENT

There have been six full or partial race meeting abandonments already this season due to weather and track conditions – the latest being Otago's Monday twilight meeting earlier this week which was called off after one race after two horses lost their footing in the opening event.

Earlier this year the Board of NZTR announced that where any race meetings and/or races were abandoned after scratching time on raceday that NZTR would make a \$200 compensation payment to the connections of all horses that were intending to start at that meeting.

This payment recognises the cost and inconvenience incurred by owners when a race meeting has to be called off. New Zealand Trainers Association Executive Officer Wendy Cooper said NZTR's policy went some way to acknowledging the high costs for trainers to take horses to the races.

"The Trainers Association fully supports a meeting being called off where there are serious safety concerns, however, it was always disappointing and frustrating for the connections of horses that are affected when this happens.

"The recent Otago race meeting had trainers travelling horses and staff from as far afield as Canterbury and this would be at a cost of well in excess of \$500, with some not getting home till 2am in the morning."

RE-WEIGHTING OF RACES AT WITHDRAWAL TIME

NZTR Handicappers are now required to re-weight all Ratings-based and Open class Handicap races at withdrawal time to ensure there is a 59kg topweight for any Handicap race where the original highest weighted horse comes out prior to the fields being released.

The amendment to Standard Regulation 8.3(a), as published in the Thoroughbred Racing Monthly magazine, was introduced last week and was utilised for the first time at the Manawatu Racing Club's meeting on 14 December for two races, the Open 2000m McDonald's Manawatu Cup Prelude and the Rating 85 Benchmark 1600m Handicap.

Previously the handicappers would increase all horses in these races by the same amount when the topweight was withdrawn and the weights had to be raised. Under the new policy, the handicappers now re-weight the race to ensure that there is a 59kg topweight and there is a minimum 5kg spread in the weights, which will likely mean that horses at the bottom end of the handicap may not have their weight changed, or the increase will be less than they would have received under the previous policy.

The change to the handicapping policy was introduced in consultation with the New Zealand Trainers' Association and Regional Programming committees.

In the Open Cup Trial at Manawatu on Saturday, the John and Karen Parsons-trained Santos was originally weighted at 57.5kg. When topweight Sacha was withdrawn just before 10am deadline last Wednesday morning, the weight for Santos had to be increased by 1.5kg to maintain a minimum 59kg topweight in the race.

The weights for the other horses, instead of all being raised 1.5kg each, were scaled by the handicapper in accordance with the published handicapping template for an Open Feature Handicap race. This meant that Hell Yeah, a Rating 77 horse contesting an Open Handicap, which was originally weighted on the minimum, remained on 54kg and was not subject to the weights for that race being raised as would have the case prior to this change.

NZTR Chief Handicapper Brett Scelly said one of the major benefits of the new handicapping policy was that horses racing out of their grade would now not be penalised when weights had to be increased for a race with a more appropriate spread in the weights able to be maintained.

“The new policy has addressed the issue that happened in the Counties Cup last month, when the weights were all required to be raised 2.5kg, resulting in a number of the lower-rated runners being disadvantaged as the weight they had to carry was increased by 2.5kg above the 53kg minimum, however they were not able to utilise their 2kg sex allowance.”

LEO MOLLOY LICENSING DECISION

A New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing-appointed Independent Licensing Panel has relicensed Auckland trainer Mr Leo Molloy for the 2013-14 racing season, subject to strict conditions.

Mr Molloy has been training under an interim trainer’s licence while the review of his licence renewal application was considered.

In July 2013 NZTR delegated its powers to determine whether Mr Molloy should have his trainers’ licence renewed to an Independent Licensing Panel of Chris McVeigh QC and John Henderson. NZTR appointed an Independent Licensing Panel as a result of Mr Molloy's history of abuse of various NZTR board members and senior management.

The Panel has decided to renew Mr Molloy's trainers’ licence but has placed conditions on his licence, which Mr Molloy has undertaken to adhere to. NZTR will keep the Panel in place for the foreseeable future to monitor Mr Molloy's adherence to these conditions.

In May 2013 Mr Molloy pleaded guilty to three representative charges of Misconduct under Rule 340 of the New Zealand Rules of Racing and was fined \$1050 by the Judicial Control Authority. The charges related to three insulting and offensive posts on a social media website. Subsequently, Mr Molloy had left an inappropriate voice message on the phone of a racing official and continued to publish offensive and unacceptable posts about racing officials on a social media website.

Mr Molloy has issued a public apology to NZTR and its Chief Executive Greg Purcell available on NZTR’s website and includes the following extracts:

“Some of my comments have said, or implied, that you are corrupt, fraudulent or dishonest...I acknowledge and accept that is not the case...I am sorry that I made these statements and regret any hurt or distress that this has caused... I am in the process of withdrawing them from the website and have undertaken to stop making such statements in the future...I fully and sincerely apologise to you for making them.”

NZTR Chairman Matthew Goodson stated: “NZTR welcomes robust, constructive and open debate and fully supports an individual’s right to comment on matters relating to the racing industry in New Zealand, however we will not tolerate offensive or abusive communications which have no place in our industry.”

ENHANCED TRAINERS’ SERVICE CENTRE UP AND RUNNING

The enhanced Trainers’ Service Centre is now available to all trainers.

Alongside enhancements to the core functionality of the Trainers' Service Centre, a major focus of the redevelopment has been the addition of tools to make it easier for trainers to communicate with their owners. The Service Centre is designed so that it will work on handheld devices such as tablets and phones.

The new Trainers' Service Centre delivers improvements in current functionality across:

1. Nominations
2. Withdrawals
3. Rider Declaration
4. Gear request
5. Stable returns
6. Horses Trained
7. Accommodation

It also delivers a range of new features, including:

1. Owners' communication tools, including communication templates and automated messaging
2. Personalised news feed
3. To-do list

Further development next year will see the delivery of:

1. Campaign planning notifications – automated emails of races your horses are eligible for
2. The ability for trainers to deliver image and movie files to owners

Detailed instructions on how to use the new Trainers' Service Centre, including a handy "how-to" video tutorial, can be found at www.nzracing.co.nz.

CENTRAL OTAGO RACING CLUB – FRIDAY 3 JANUARY 2014 – STAKE INCREASES

The following races at the Central Otago Racing Club race meeting on Friday 3 January 2014 have had stake increases:

- Maiden (Spec Cond) SW 2000m, was \$7000, increased to \$8000
- Maiden (Spec Cond) SW 1400m, was \$7000, increased to \$8000
- Maiden 2YO +(Spec Cond) SW 1100m, was \$7000, increased to \$8000

These amendments will not be listed in the regional programming booklet or the January edition of Thoroughbred Racing Monthly.

CLUB/VENUE CHANGE – WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2014: WAS RIVERTON RC NOW GORE RC

The race meeting on Wednesday 5 February 2014, previously programmed for Riverton RC, has been changed to a Gore RC meeting at Gore. The programme will now be as follows:

- Benchmark Rating 85 Hcp 2000m: \$8000
- Benchmark Rating 85 Hcp 1200m: \$8000
- Benchmark Rating 75 Hcp 1335m: \$8000
- Benchmark Rating 65 Hcp 2000m: \$7000
- Benchmark Rating 65 Hcp 1335m: \$7000
- Maiden SW 2000m: \$7000
- Maiden SW 1335m: \$7000
- Maiden 2YO+ SW 1200m: \$7000

The changes will be recorded in the January 2014 edition of Thoroughbred Racing Monthly.

CANTERBURY JC VENUE CHANGES IN EARLY 2014

With work on the second stage of the Riccarton Park drainage project commencing immediately following the club's Christmas at the Races meeting on December 6, the Canterbury Jockey Club will not be racing at Riccarton in the first part of next year.

NZTR, in consultation with the Canterbury Jockey Club and the NZ Racing Board, has confirmed the following licence/venue changes:

- Saturday 25 January 2014: Canterbury JC at Riccarton becomes a Canterbury JC licence at Ashburton
- Wednesday 29 January 2014: Transfer Canterbury JC licence to an Ashburton RC licence at Ashburton
- Monday 10 February 2014: Transfer Canterbury JC licence to an Ashburton RC licence at Ashburton
- Friday 21 February 2014: Transfer Canterbury JC licence to a South Canterbury RC licence at Timaru on Sunday 23 February (note: this will become a dual code race day in conjunction with the Timaru HRC)
- Thursday 6 March 2014: Canterbury JC proposed venue change to be confirmed

CENTRAL REGION TRIALS: CHANGE OF VENUE, FOXTON TO WAVERLEY

As a result of the unavailability of the Foxton venue due to the start of the demolition of the grandstand, the following trials meeting has been moved from Foxton to Waverley:

- Tuesday 14 January 2014

TURNOVER INFORMATION (FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 15 DECEMBER 2013)

Date	Club	On-Course (Tote & FOB combined)		Totalisator (Off & on-course combined)		Fixed Odds (Off & on-course)		Races		Starters	
		13-14	12-13	13-14	12-13	13-14	12-13	13-14	12-13	13-14	12-13
9-Dec	Otago	20,902		383,319		163,101		8		86	
11-Dec	Auckland	183,221	208,690	839,454	1,025,436	353,133	295,890	6	7	65	77
12-Dec	Hawke's Bay	85,048	92,070	683,435	840,129	294,834	259,126	8	8	77	81
13-Dec	Tauranga	167,045	154,829	948,813	840,680	290,925	220,041	9	8	115	97
14-Dec	Manawatu	192,197	249,348	1,300,442	1,568,787	352,038	388,139	9	10	105	118
14-Dec	Southland	213,440	218,747	896,691	848,352	197,967	180,283	9	9	90	90
14-Dec	Waikato	475,552	511,558	2,213,120	2,428,768	734,115	678,354	10	10	119	131
15-Dec	Auckland	88,204	80,160	1,000,269	917,819	509,796	389,027	8	8	87	86

- Otago RC Monday meeting no equivalent meeting last season (was Winton JC).
- Auckland RC ran 6 races on Wednesday in FY14, 7 races in FY13.
- Racing Tauranga Friday meeting ran 9 races this season, 8 races last season.
- Manawatu RC Saturday meeting ran 9 races in FY14, 10 races in FY13.

NZ Thoroughbred Summary	This Season, Year to Date	Last Season, Year to Date	Variance +/-	Variance +%/(-%)
Meetings	132	134	(2)	(1.49%)
Races	1,093	1,133	(40)	(3.53%)
Total Starts	11,668	12,034	(366)	(3.04%)
Avg Field Size	10.68	10.62	+0.05	+0.51%
Number of races less than 8 starters	156	136	+20	+14.71%
Off-Course Turnover (Totalisator & FOB)	150,968,873	154,719,296	(3,750,423)	(2.42%)
On-Course Turnover (Totalisator & FOB)	13,493,461	14,231,778	(738,317)	(5.19%)
Total NZ Thoroughbred Turnover	164,462,333	168,951,074	(4,488,741)	(2.66%)
Subtotal Totalisator Turnover	126,840,190	134,268,327	(7,428,137)	(5.53%)
Subtotal FOB Turnover	37,622,129	34,682,747	+2,939,381	+8.48%
NZ Thoroughbred Turnover per Race	150,469	149,118	+1,350	+0.91%
NZ Thoroughbred Turnover per Starter	14,095	14,039	+56	+0.40%
Total NZRB Racing Turnover	582,489,335	581,163,979	+1,325,356	+0.23%
Total NZRB Sports Turnover	102,029,584	91,631,268	+10,398,316	+11.35%
Total NZRB Turnover	684,518,919	672,795,247	+11,723,672	+1.74%

NZ Thoroughbred Export Turnover \$NZ (to 30 Nov)	116,399,947	140,785,539	(24,385,592)	(17.32%)
Total Races (to 30 Nov)	966	988	(22)	(2.23%)
NZ Thoroughbred Export turnover \$NZ per race	120,497	142,495	(21,999)	(15.44%)

- Total NZ thoroughbred turnover is down 2.7% year to date.
- With 40 less races than run over the same period last season, turnover per race has actually increased, up 0.9%.
- Total starts made by thoroughbreds in NZ are down 366, 3.0% less.

- Average field size is up from 10.62 in FY13 to 10.68 in FY14, 0.05 starters per race (0.5%) more.
- The number of races with less than 8 starters is 20 higher than a season ago.
- Decline in NZ thoroughbred totalisator turnover (down 5.5%) has been partly offset by an increase in FOB turnover (up 8.5%).
- \$NZ export turnover per race to 30 November is down (15.4%). The variance in the \$NZ/\$A exchange rate is responsible for 9.9% of this decline. The remainder (5.5%), as well as the absence of any growth appears to have resulted from the loss of coverage on Sky 1 in Australia for midweek races run after 2pm.

Note: Meetings, races, starters and turnovers are totals of NZRB supplied meeting by meeting turnovers. Off-course turnover is totalisator and FOB combined. On-course turnover is totalisator and FOB racing combined, placed on-course at NZ thoroughbred meetings. Total NZRB racing turnover is NZ thoroughbred, harness, greyhound and all imported racing turnover; total NZRB turnover also includes sport. NZ thoroughbred export turnovers are now included, up to the most recently available meetings. All turnover figures are supplied by the NZRB, derived from various sources.

NEW ZEALAND THOROUGHBRED RACING INC

P O Box 38 386, Wellington Mail Centre ☒ Telephone: (04) 576 6240 ☒ Fax: (04) 568 8866

Internet: www.nzracing.co.nz ☒ E-mail: office@nzracing.co.nz