

Back in harness: Glory days return to Wayville

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HARNESS racing is to trot back to its former inner-city home at the Wayville Showground in October.

Harness Racing SA is expected to formalise the Friday-night meeting in coming weeks – the first harness program there since 1973.

"It's fantastic news," HRSA chief executive John Lewis said yesterday.

"We're hoping to draw 10,000. That might be ambitious, but there isn't a lot on that time of the year," he said.

Wayville was the home of South Australian harness racing from 1925 to 1973, during the halcyon days of the sport.

The circuit on the city fringe was the scene of some of Australasian harness racing's greatest moments, including the 1963 Inter Dominion, won by New Zealand champion Cardigan Bay before a record crowd of 47,000.

Mr Lewis said the Friday-night spring timeslot would give every chance of drawing a massive crowd.

"We're very excited. It's the middle of the spring carnival, Williams Reid Stakes night, the Friday night should be attractive option and hopefully draw a big crowd," he said.

"Given the proximity of the venue to city and the outstanding public transport options, we're expecting a massive crowd. Footy is finished, cricket hasn't ramped up and we're not competing against any other festivals."

The October 27 meeting has been endorsed by UBET and Sky Racing but is awaiting the final regulatory approval from the Independent Gambling Authority. "We're anticipating that to come in the coming week," he added.

Mr Lewis said a huge amount of work had already been undertaken by HRSA in conjunction with the Adelaide Show Society to make the meeting a success, including



INTEREST: A record crowd of more than 47,000 watches the Inter Dominion trotting championship at Wayville in 1963.

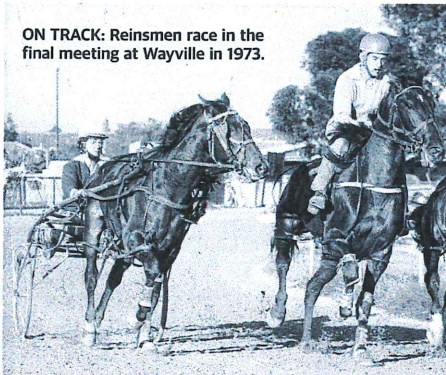
trials during last year's Adelaide Show.

"Our Chairman of Stewards has done a report for the board on the infrastructure and what's required," Mr Lewis said. "There is whole range of things we'll be addressing, from size of the track to the surface, and we're working closely with the Show Society at present."

Mr Lewis said the smaller Wayville circuit would see reduced field sizes but offer the chance to showcase the sport's best drivers.

"It's going to be a full book of racing, eight races all covered by UBET and Sky Racing. It's exciting," he said.

ON TRACK: Reinsmen race in the final meeting at Wayville in 1973.



LOOSING REINS ON HISTORY

- Track size – 510m
- Home to the SA harness racing from 1925 to 1973
- 1963 Inter Dominion won by New Zealand champion Cardigan Bay with a record crowd of 47,000 people
- Hosted the Inter Dominion championships on six occasions – 1937, 1949, 1954, 1958, 1963, and 1969

SEE CARDIGAN BAY WIN THE INTER DOMINION IN 1963: ADVERTISER.COM.AU