



GROUP RACING GUIDELINES

1. Harness Racing Australia (HRA) is the body ultimately responsible for the Group Racing Guidelines and the compilation of the Harness Racing Feature Race Calendar.
2. Harness Racing Australia delegates to the Group Racing Panel (GRP) the responsibility to appraise applications and to review lists from time to time and submit recommendations to the HRA Executive.
3. No race shall be entered in the Group Racing Schedule until its listing therein is approved by the HRA Executive.
4. The GRP shall consist of a Panel Chair, along with one Principal Club Chief Executive, State Controlling Body Chief Executive and 2x HRA representatives. Members of the GRP are to be appointed annually at the HRA Annual General Meeting.
5. The GRP shall receive applications from State Controlling Bodies as to a request of Group Status of a particular race. The GRP may at its entire discretion decide which races it shall designate as comprising Group or Listed status.
6. The GRP shall meet regularly to consider applications and shall compile and endorse the Feature Race Calendar to the HRA Executive prior to the harness racing season. Acceptance of races into the Group Calendar is on an annual basis, and the GRP may remove or add races from the Calendar as it sees fit in accordance with the Guidelines.
7. The following guiding principles shall be observed by the GRP in assessing Group eligibility of a particular race:

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Group races shall be races open to all horses and free of eligibility restrictions.

Races that are bound by age, sex or gait that are otherwise open in nature are included as Group Races.

The GRP shall ensure that the guidelines are followed and in considering feature race applications, shall consider the number of feature races nationally in totality and at a state level in line with the Pyramid for each gait and age and sex.

Group One, Two, Three and Listed Race status is not automatic based solely on the listed prizemoney minimums – each race should be considered on merit according to all principles.

B. THE PYRAMID

The GRP shall consider the national group racing pyramid model when assessing Group Races. The pyramid structure should exist where, by gait, age and sex, the number of Group One races are less than the number of Group Two Races which are less than the number of Group Three Races. In turn, Group Races are to be considered blue ribband and the GRP should be cognisant of the overall number of Group Races to maintain the rarity and value of Group Races.

C. QUALITY OF RACES

The GRP shall consider and ensure that races in the Group Listing are of a high quality according to their Group Status. The GRP may consider the relative strength of a race over a period in considering its inclusion. Factors considered in assessing the quality of races include:

- Ratings;
- Competitiveness and depth of field;
- Interstate and International entrants; and
- Future Performances of previous winners and placegetters.

D. GROUP ONE RACES

A Grand Circuit event, Trotting Masters event, Free For All, Classic or State event of National Importance where the minimum advertised stakemoney threshold must be at least \$150,000 for pacers and, \$75,000 or more for trotters and be rated of sufficient quality for a period of time of not less than five years.

E. GROUP TWO RACES

A Free For All, Classic or State event of Major or State Importance, where the minimum stakemoney threshold must be at least \$75,000 or more in respect of races for pacers, and, \$50,000 or more for trotters.

F. GROUP THREE RACES

A Free For All, Classic or State event of State Importance, where the minimum stakemoney threshold must be at least \$50,000 or more in respect of races for pacers, and, \$30,000 or more for trotters.

G. LISTED RACES

An event of Major, National or State Importance that is not eligible for Group Status, however where the GRP in its discretion agrees is worthy of Listed Status.

H. OAKS & DERBIES

Recognising the time honoured and historical significance of the State Derby and State Oaks races conducted in each State, these races are exempted from the minimum stakemoney threshold requirements. The GRP shall appraise the Group Status of Oaks and Derbies that do not meet the stakemoney minimums upon application by a State Controlling Body.

I. SALES RACES

Races that are recognised as 'Sales Races' are those that will only accept nomination if a horse has been entered in a sale. These races are not eligible for Group Status, irrespective of stakemoney. These races may be subject to Listed Status upon application to the GRP.

J. RESTRICTED RACES

Races that are restrictive in horse eligibility in their nature shall not be eligible for Group Status, irrespective of stakemoney.

Examples of restricted races include races restricted by rating, seasonal restricted earnings, place of birth and consolations.

K. HEAT RACING

Races that are listed as heats of feature races shall not be eligible for Group Status, irrespective of stakemoney.

L. STATE FUTURITY/STAKING RACES

Races that are state-bred futurity races, or races that require horses to be sustained (paid-up) for may be eligible for Group Status.

The GRP shall consider the merit of the application of such races based on the eligibility conditions of the race, and the races must meet the minimum stakemoney thresholds.

The GRP is to consider more favourably as to the application if the eligibility of such race is broad in nature.

Further, the GRP is to consider the National or State Importance of the race including the time-honoured status of the race. These races may also be subject to Listed Status upon application to the GRP.

- 8.** For the purpose of the Group Races list, all Australasian Grand Circuit and Trotting Masters races shall be listed as Group One races.
- 9.** Application in writing must be made and recommended by the State Controlling Body, GRP, and then approved by the HRA Executive.
- 10.** Harness Racing Australia may at its discretion decide the criteria for entry of races into the respective Group and Listed Race lists.

Date of Effect: 1 January 2023