

Annual Report 2020





*There is
no finish line*





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Acting Chairman's Message

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As for so many industries across the globe, 2020 has been a year like no other for harness racing in Australia, and for Harness Racing Australia (HRA), as we continue to support each other and navigate a path through COVID-19.



Chairman's Message

Regarding traceability, HRA has continued to strongly advocate for a National Horse Traceability Register and is pleased to be a part of the newly formed State Government working group that has been charged with making recommendations for the implementation of a national horse traceability system following a Commonwealth Senate Inquiry into The feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register for all horses.

Following last year's introduction of an online system for notifying deceased and retired horses a 6-week "Amnesty" was held from the end of 2019 to the beginning of 2020 which allowed industry participants to notify the death or retirement of horses retrospectively without incurring the usual

penalty for late notification. This, combined with a personalised email/mail out to the owners of 'inactive' horses in mid-2020, netted nearly 13,000 responses - which is outstanding progress toward HRA's goal of achieving continuous real-time lifecycle traceability.

Traceability and identification go hand-in-hand and having encountered no issues in the 3-year period since the introduction of microchips, it was satisfying that the practice of freeze branding alpha-angle neck brands be discontinued as the primary means of identifying Standardbred horses in Australia from 1 September. Horses do not need both a microchip and a freeze brand - one method will suffice and transitioning to microchipping is not only logical, its

irreversible. What is now critical is the database support and interaction between the microchip and Harvey databases.

2020 also saw the introduction of the latest iteration in whip use rules for harness racing. This has been a 10-year process of modification with the latest rules permitting a wrist only flicking motion (no use of shoulder or wrist) and no overt force - this in effect limits the whip to a communication aid only. Independent observations suggest Australian harness racing now has the most stringent whip rules in the world - across all codes of racing.

The Australian harness racing industry also leads the way in critical welfare and integrity regulation. The most recent statistics set

HARNESS RACING IN AUSTRALIA - HEALTH AND WELFARE STATS

FIRST RACE START

2YO RACING



LONGER SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

A 2011 STUDY HAS SHOWN THAT STANDARDBREDS WHICH HAVE THEIR FIRST RACE START AT TWO YEARS OF AGE END UP HAVING SIGNIFICANTLY LONGER AND MORE SUCCESSFUL RACING CAREERS THAN THOSE THAT BEGIN RACING LATER.

BANNED SUBSTANCES

28,777 **DOPING TESTS** 2018/19 SEASON



> **0.3% POSITIVE TO DRUGS**



EACH HORSE IS DRUG TESTED AN AVERAGE 2.9 TIMES PER RACING SEASON. LESS THAN 0.3% POSITIVE TO BANNED

LIFE AFTER RACING

69.9%



AFTER RETIRING FROM RACING MORE THAN 69% OF STANDARDBREDS GO ON TO EQUESTRIAN, PLEASURE RIDING OR BREEDING CAREERS

86.3% REHOMED

86.3% OF RETIRED STANDARDBREDS ARE REHOMED TO EQUESTRIAN, PLEASURE RIDING HOMES OR A RETIREMENT PROGRAM

16.4%



16.7% OF RETIRED STANDARDBREDS GO ON TO A BREEDING CAREER

WORLD'S STRICTEST WHIP RULES

INTRODUCED 1 SEPTEMBER 2020



WRIST ONLY ACTION AND PROHIBITION ON OVERT FORCE

BREEDING

13%



3335 STANDARDBRED FOALS WERE BORN IN 2018/19 SEASON **13.6% DECREASE** SINCE 2014/15 BREEDING SEASON

INJURIES 2018/19

RACE INCIDENT 0.52%



14,087 RACES

FATAL 0.003%

127,346 STARTERS

OVER 14,000 HARNESS RACES ARE CONDUCTED ACROSS AUSTRALIA EACH YEAR WITH AN INCIDENT/INJURY RATE OF 0.52% AND FATAL ACCIDENTS AT 0.003%



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out in a new HRA Infographic (below) illustrate that almost 29,000 doping tests are conducted annually (equivalent to 2.9 tests per horse) with less than 0.3% returning a positive result to a prohibited substance. Similarly, race incident injuries and fatal accidents are at an all-time low, while there has been marked improvement in the rehoming of horses – currently at a staggering 86.3%.

On the commercial front, the great work of the harness racing industry mentioned earlier in this report has produced some stunning results with wagering turnover on harness racing in Australia growing to an all-time high of \$3.3B in 2020 – an increase of 15.7% on the previous year.

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Following the well documented challenges faced by TAB's, and the compounding impacts of COVID, turnover trends from Tabcorp and the WA-TAB continued, decreasing by 17% year to year on the back of a 9% fall in the previous year.

However, the TAB pari-mutual/fixed odds split remained steady year on year with fixed odds betting accounting for 53% of total TAB turnover.

Following stable growth (13%) in FY19, turnover on corporate bookmakers showed remarkable growth in FY20, climbing to \$1.94B which was a 52% increase on the

prior year. Corporate turnover now accounts for 63% of total turnover on harness racing. Corporate Bookmaker turnover has more than doubled in four years (223%).

Lastly, after Net Customer Winnings (NCW) on Betfair dropping by a third in FY19, solid growth was made in FY20 with the total rebounding to \$141M in FY20, representing a 29% increase year on year.

The National Ratings System, implemented on 1 July 2019 was comprehensively reviewed in February 2020, with only minor adjustments considered necessary. This new system is constantly reviewed via the Ratings Review Team (with representatives from all States at the table), but continues to produce successful results and outcomes across all States using the system and the original KPI's set to measure effectiveness.

In closing, I wish to record a special thanks to the many people who serve our industry on the various HRA Committees and Working Parties.

During the year there were also several changes around the HRA Executive table. I for one joined the organisation in February 2020 replacing the former HRNSW Chair, Mr Rod Smith whose term in New South Wales had come to a compulsory close in accord with The Racing Act, while Mr George Fiacchi assumed the role from Mr Gary Crocker. Further, former Chairman, Mr Michael Taranto, finished his term earlier than expected, requiring my formal appointment to the position of Deputy Chair and in turn assuming the role of Acting Chair until now – the 2020 Annual General Meeting, where a new Chairman will be voted upon.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all of these gentlemen who were outstanding contributors and placed the national interests above all others in their role on the HRA Executive.

I'd also like to record my gratitude to the Members of the HRA Executive Committee who have been so gracious and supportive since assuming this role, namely Mr Dale Monteith, Ms Margaret Reynolds, Mr George Fiacchi, Mr John Dumesny, Mr Bob Fowler and Mr Joel Wallace, as well as all of the HRA Membership who participate and contribute to the national agenda.

We also have an excellent, dedicated Chief Executive in Andrew Kelly, and the small team in the HRA office who do an outstanding job – your efforts are much appreciated, particularly given the challenges of Victoria's lockdown Rules which have required extended stay home periods and impacted so much on everyone's day to day lives. The productivity and quality of work generated in this backdrop is nothing short of remarkable, illustrating the dedication of our staff.

HRA is also fortunate to have the wise advice and services of HRA's legal counsel, Mr Dean Cooper, and I thank him for his endeavours during the past year.



K M Brown AM
Acting Chairman

CEO's Message



Andrew Kelly



“ *To maintain an almost continuous racing program... is a testament to the collaborative efforts among governments, regulators, administrators, participants and resilience of the great sport of harness racing.* ”

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There are many events and issues to reflect upon when reviewing the 2019–20 harness racing season, but I wanted to start this report with acknowledging the courage, determination and teamwork displayed by the entire industry when dealing with the challenges and obstacles experienced both on and off the track due to the global pandemic COVID-19.

To maintain an almost continuous racing program across the nation, when, with the exception of Sweden, all other jurisdictions across the globe took a break, is a testament to the collaborative efforts among governments, regulators, administrators, participants and resilience of the great sport of harness racing.

Despite the difficulties faced due to COVID-19 restrictions in the State of Victoria (due to the geographic location of our office in Flemington), Harness Racing Australia did its best to maintain a business-as-usual approach, and I am indeed proud of the way our small team of staff responded to the challenges of working from home while maintaining outstanding productivity levels and continuing to serve the industry efficiently.

Similarly, the HRA Executive provided valuable leadership while steering a steady path through a dynamic situation. But more

than that, in many ways 2020 will be looked back on not just for “COVID”, but some of the most significant industry Breeding and Racing reforms instituted for some time.

While detailed elsewhere in this *Annual Report*, at the time of writing, these reforms were already generating extremely positive results, which are designed to underpin a sustainable future.

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COVID could not stop some wonderful performances by magnificent standardbred horses, as well as outstanding driving and training feats.

Racing Highlights - Horses

King of Swing (by Rocknroll Hanover USA out of Twist And Twirl NZ) swept the 2020 Harness Racing Australia Awards in taking out the **Harness Horse of the Year, Australian Pacer of the Year and Aged Horse/Gelding Pacer of the Year.**

Owned by B Richardson, M Congerton, Go Racing Group, K Hall, G Moore, S McGregor and R & F Patriarca, King of Swing, had an amazing season – winning \$1.1 million dollars and amassing four Group 1 victories.

In addition, his wins in the three Grand Circuit events, the TAB Blacks A Fake, Ainsworth Miracle Mile and Del-Re National AG Hunter Cup earned him the title as the **APG Grand Circuit Champion** for trainers Craig Cross and Gary Hall Snr.

Star pacing mare **Bettor Enforce** (Bettors Delight USA – Their Excuse) won the **Australian Aged Pacing Mare** title for owners E Basham, A Peacock and R Warner after a brilliantly consistent season in winning 13 races and only being out of the placings 3 times from 25 seasonal starts. Also trained by Craig Cross, Bettor Enforce took away an incredible 1:48.9 record.

Trainers Emma Stewart and Clayton Tonkin capped off another bumper season, each winning titles with horses in their own right. Clayton secured his debut Horse of the Year award training **2YO Pacing Colt** of the Year, **Major Moth** (Art Major USA – Macy Lila), for owners L & I Parker. Meanwhile, Emma added to her record with the **2YO Pacing Filly** title via, **Ladies In Red** (Mach Three CA – Kabbalah Karen B CA), for Lauriston Bloodstock, while also managing to secure her very first trotting title taking out **2YO Trotting Filly** of the Year, Banglez (Majestic Son CA – Gypsy Flair), for a large contingent of owners in S J Murray, E Crews, R J Letch, K F Shelly, John Anderson Group no. 2, Slim Four Group, H Geraldene, S J Watt and I E Woolridge.

Dual Group 1 winning filly, **Dr Susan (Bettors Delight USA - Safreda NZ)** took out the **3YO Pacing Filly** of the Year category for owner Christina Dalgety. Dr Susan was trained during the year by the New Zealand partnership of Cran Dalgety & Nathan Purdon, in addition to Sonya Smith at Menangle later in the season.

Owners Emilio & Mary Rosati continued their outstanding run of Horse of The Year titles, winning the 3YO colts and geldings divisions for both gaits with **Line Up (3YO Pacing Colt & Gelding of the year)** (Bettors Delight USA – Beach Parade NZ) and **Elite Stride (3YO Trotting Colt & Gelding of the year)** (Muscle Hill USA – Real Babe USA), who were both trained by Anthony Butt. Line Up was the dominant pacing colt winning two derbies, whilst Elite Stride won 9 from 14 season starts including a huge win in the Group 1 Need for Speed Final.

In the trotting divisions, the Norm Jenkin owned and Andy Gath trained champion **Tornado Valley** (Skyvalley NZ – Begin NZ) took out his successive **Trotting Horse of the Year** title and **Aged Trotter of the Year** title.

The now ten-time Group 1 winner added these accolades to his **APG Trotting Masters** Title for 2020.

Star mare **Dance Craze** (Muscle Hill – La Coocharacha) also took out her second **Aged Mare of the Year** title after yet another brilliant season. Trained in partnership by trainers Anton Golino and Jack MacKinnon, she franked her class with victory in the **Australian Trotting Grand Prix** for owner Pat Driscoll of Yabby Dam Farms.

Pink Galahs (Skyvalley NZ – Sweetasay) swept the voting in the **3YO Trotting Filly of the year** division for trainer/driver Matthew Craven and owners C G Lewis, L J Lewis and B R Healy. In what was an astonishing season, **Pink Galahs** beat the best free-for-all trotters including **Dance Craze** and **Tornado Valley** in the Group 1 **Bill Collins Sprint** before returning to her own age group and securing successive victories in the **Victorian Trotters Oaks and Derby**.

Season 2020 was breakout season in the short career of the progressive trainer Kate Hargreaves. Not only did she record 119 training winners in the extended season, but 2YO trotting colt, **Dont Care**, provided her with her first Group 1 victory. **Dont Care** (Used To Me FRA – My Dreamweaver NZ) was also the winner of the **Australian Two Year Old Trotting Colt or Gelding** of the year providing a great thrill for owners K P Hargreaves, B T Cairns, J G Mathews, A F Mathews, M Delzotto, B M Palfreyman, D G Carroll, K W Weidenbach, A Mifsud and T Cairns.

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Thanks again to Australian Pacing Gold for continuing their sponsorship of the two elite pacing and trotting series on the Australasian calendar and the connections of the winners receive a \$20,000 bonus to be spent at the APG sales.





Racing Highlights – Trainers/Drivers

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The nation's leading Trainer and Driver each season receives an award named after legendary trainer J. D. (Jack) Watts, who trained and drove winners in all States of Australia and New Zealand spanning a 50-year+ career.

The 2019/20 Trainer of the Year was Queensland's Grant Dixon, who led the nation with 290 wins during the season. This was Grant's 8th J. D. Watts Award and second in succession. Previously Grant was leading trainer from 2012 to 2017 (inclusive).

Meanwhile, Victorian reinsman Chris Alford had another season to remember with a host of victories and remarkable strike rate, 283 in all, claiming his 14th J. D Watts national title. Astonishingly, Chris first claimed the title 26 years ago in 1994 and has subsequently taken honours in 1996 – 1999 (inclusive), 2012 to 2014 (inclusive) and 2016 to 2019 (inclusive).

Breeding Highlights

On the breeding front, a full list of Breeding Awards and achievements in the Globe Derby Awards for breeding excellence, which are sponsored by IRT, is contained elsewhere within this Annual Report, but noteworthy was the introduction of a new award for the Trotting Broodmare, of the

Year during the year – aptly named the **Maori Miss Trotting Broodmare of the Year Award.**

Previously, trotting broodmares were eligible to win the Australian Broodmare of the Year Award title through the Winona Award and square-gaiting dams had competed against their pacing counterparts since that award was established in 1976.

From this year the Winona Award will be awarded to Australia's Pacing Broodmare of the Year, with the establishment of the Maori Miss Award providing the opportunity for Australia's standardbred breeding industry to shine a spotlight on magnificent achievements in the trotting gait.

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Australia has a rich history of producing outstanding trotters that have completed spectacular feats on racetracks around the country and further abroad. The strength and proud history of the trotting gait and its outstanding contribution to our breeding industry will now be further recognised through this Award.

When the HRA Executive established the new award for trotting broodmares, one name stood out as the champion broodmare. Maori Miss has not only left one of Australia's greatest ever trotters, Maoris Idol, she is responsible for an

incredible square-gaiting legacy that spans six decades, is arguably the most influential trotting family in our country's history and responsible for a host of star trotters including Blitzthemcalder, Sumthingaboutmaori and Maori Time as well as reigning 2020 3YO Trotting Filly of the Year Pink Galahs.

Ironically, Maori Miss completed the outstanding feat of winning the Winona Award three consecutive times from 1977-79 and she is one of just two trotting mares to win Australia's previous Broodmare of the Year title the other being her daughter, Maori Trump, the dam of former Australian Horse of the Year Noopy Kiosk, who took out the title in 1996.

The inaugural Maori Miss Award for the 2020 Trotting Broodmare of the Year was former champion race mare La Coocaracha (By Safely Kept out of Poetry and bred by Castle Family Pty Ltd) who was the 2002 Australian Trotter of the Year.

Following her retirement in 2004 after a stunning career, the progeny of La Coocaracha have continued the legacy of a mare that has left an impression on the sport like few others.

Whilst her first five foals all made the racetrack with moderate success, remarkably her seventh foal, Reina Danzante (by Armbr Invasion USA) provided La Coocaracha with her first Group One as a Broodmare.

Purchased by Pat Driscoll of Yabby Dam Farms shortly after, Driscoll had immediate success with his first foal, a filly by Muscle Hill that turned out to be star mare Dance Craze.

A winner of 24 races from 50 starts, Dance Craze is a two-time winner of Australian Trotting Mare of the Year, a three time Group 1 winner and half a million dollar earner who is recently retired and will join the breeding barn.

Full brother, Group 2 winner La Grange was the next foal and continues to race in the United States where he holds a 1:54.2 record and has earned \$163,350.

Since then, La Coocharacha has left the promising five-win horse Mataderos, with her latest foal being a colt by Muscle Mass USA.

For the Pacers, Alldatglittersisgold NZ (by Caprock USA out of Glitter and bred by C Jones & I Stormont) stamped her place in history taking out the Winona Award – 2020

Pacing Broodmare of the Year for a third time after winning previously in 2013 and 2014 – joining Liza Storm and Maori Miss as the only mares to win the award three times.

Owned by Harshell Investments Pty Ltd and the Estate of Kaye Kilgour, the unraced Alldatglittersisgold was imported into Australia in 2010 after having four New Zealand foals including the Miracle Mile winner Baby Bling (by Western Terror USA).

Amazingly, for the owners of Alldatglittersisgold, it turned out that Baby Bling would not turn out to be the best progeny from the mare, as her first Australian foal born in October 2010 was the champion pacer and current sire, Bling It On (by American Ideal), a winner of \$1,882,957 and six time Group One winner including the Victoria Cup in October 2019.

Other progeny include Show Me The Bling (\$68,110 by Grinfromeartoear USA), Blingittothemax (\$117,944 by Art Major USA), Bletchley Park (by American Ideal USA \$310,436) and The Code Breaker (by American Ideal USA \$24,619).

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In total, the progeny to date of Alldatglittersisgold have started 463 times for 129 wins and \$3,372,095 – a remarkable achievement.



industry culture. Harness racing, like many industries, has operated within a bubble for quite some time and this insulated existence can no longer be sustained. Transparency and integrity across all areas, but particularly in health and welfare matters are critical to harness racing's ongoing sustainability and success.

Many parts of our strategy are designed to ensure that the industry operates openly and transparently; that participants can proudly state that they are involved in harness racing knowing that it's most important and visual assets, the horses, are treated with the highest levels of care throughout their career and that the entire industry has a post racing plan that places their welfare first.

HRA's Equine Traceability and Welfare strategy can be broken down into 8 segments:

- Amendments to the Notification of Deregistration and Deceased procedures and documentation and shortening the associated timelines related to these events;
- Amendments to the HRA Welfare Code of Conduct;
- An increase in focus and resourcing at a State level for traceability related work including rule changes as required;
- A strong focus on traceability of horses within the industry at all life stages from foaling to yearling stage, breaking in, through to racing and spelling;
- Changes to licensing including introduction of new categories to encompass all participants and compulsory online training modules relevant to the licence category;

- The investigation and development of tailored rehoming programs in each state that suit the industry size and demographic;
- KPI setting and regular reporting on key industry traceability statistics; and,
- HRA working in collaboration with government and other equestrian bodies to progress other broader welfare strategies including a national horse registry; transportation; and, equine specific destruction standards for knackeries and abattoirs.

Harness Racing as an industry in Australia has many strengths. The Standardbred are a healthy and robust breed with the ability to lead long, sound racing careers with exceptionally low rates of catastrophic injury.

The housing arrangements of most harness racing stables favour outdoor yards and paddocks, and often pair or group situations rather than individual stabling which allows for more freedom to express natural behavior such as mutual grooming, play and grazing.

Another strength lies in the availability of the online portal HarnessWeb and its ability to input, collect and report data from one central source.

But perhaps harness racing's greatest strength is its people. A high percentage of small and hobby participants who are involved for the love of the sport and the love of the horse.



That's why we know these changes will be embraced in the knowledge that they are being put in place to protect our greatest assets – the horses, and in turn, the industry itself and its people.

It is vital that, as an industry, harness racing takes this opportunity to be masters of our own destiny, to create workable, sustainable solutions for ourselves. Practical industry knowledge is critical in developing these solutions and is a luxury that some other industries have not been afforded.

We can either reform ourselves for the love of our horses and our sport, or we can have it done to us – with bureaucracy, red tape and unworkable, impractical regulations.

The industry will see many changes over the coming year. While change can be difficult, confusing or inconvenient to some, it must be remembered that the Standardbred is our common passion and that these changes are for them and for the future of our sport.

That said, we know that all within the industry will play their role – as we have seen throughout the year in dealing with COVID-19.

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Many thanks to all who have served on the HRA Executive during the year and also to the numerous people who give up their time to sit on our committees and working parties.



APG Grand Circuit Review



By Chris Barsby

It's been a season like no other. The 2019/20 Australian Pacing Gold Grand Circuit was basically turned upside down owing to the complications of the COVID-19 pandemic which brought the world to a grinding halt.

Nothing was spared. And the APG Grand Circuit was no exception.

But the season was eventually completed, albeit with some tweaking along the way which took in some double ups of both the Victoria and WA Pacing Cups while the Blacks A Fake Queensland Championship shifted from the traditional winter timeslot to the summer.

Naturally, the action was exciting, exhilarating and highly emotive.

The season started with the Gr.1 \$250,000 Pryde's Easifeed Victoria Cup at TABCORP Park, Melton and comeback pacer Bling It On stormed to victory in track record time.

Prepared by Craig Cross and handled by Luke McCarthy, the American Ideal stallion defeated Colt Thirty One and Cruz Bromac in a time of 1:51.5 for the 2240m mobile start feature.

Race favourite Cash N Flow finished 6th.

Bling It On has now claimed both features in the Garden State, the Hunter and Victoria Cups while taking his Gr.1 tally to six.

The victory provided McCarthy with his third Victoria Cup trophy after previous victories with former North American star Mr Feelgood (2010) and For A Reason (2013).

The Gr.1 \$750,000 Christchurch Casino New Zealand Cup at Addington was the next leg of the season and the powerful All Stars operation was expected to dominate like they have done in recent years.

With four entrants in the field of 13 in the 3200m stand start feature, the famous stable provided four of the top five finishes.

The Australian owned Cruz Bromac provided star reinsman Blair Orange with his maiden New Zealand Cup success when he beat stablemate Spankem and Classie Brigade in a time of 3:56.9 – the mile rate was 1:59.1 – well outside of the Cup record of 3:53.1 set by Lazarus in 2016.

Stablemates Chase Auckland and Thefixer finished fourth and fifth.

Action remained in New Zealand but headed north to Auckland for the Gr.1 \$500,000 IRT Inter Dominion Final at Alexandra Park and the All Stars were once again, the team to beat.

Rising star Ultimate Sniper made a clean sweep of a traditional series when dominating his rivals including his Grand Final victory over Mach Shard and Thefixer in a time of 3:14.7 – the mile rate was 1:56.0 for the 2700m mobile start feature.

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The season was eventually completed, albeit with some tweaking along the way which took in some double ups of both the Victoria and WA Pacing Cups while the Blacks A Fake Queensland Championship shifted from the traditional winter timeslot to the summer.



At the line, King Of Swing beat Lochinvar Art and Alta Orlando.

The winning time of 1:48.0 ranks as the fourth fastest time in Miracle Mile history behind My Field Marshall (1:46.9), Have Faith In Me (1:47.5) and Spankem (1:47.7).

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The victory provided both Cross and McCarthy with their maiden victory in the famed sprint feature.

With COVID-19 taking full effect, Grand Circuit action was put on hold until October when the second edition of the Gr.1 \$300,000 Pryde's Easifeed Victoria Cup at TABCORP Park, Melton and Lochinvar Art proved triumphant.

With pre-race hype reaching fever pitch, the David Moran trained and driven four-year-old took on the best possible field assembled amid COVID-19 restrictions and clearly solidified himself as the most dominant pacer in the land with a brutal beat down of his star-studded rivals.

It was both vicious yet mesmerizing.

Lochinvar Art beat King Of Swing and Bling It On.

The overall time was 2:35.1 which equates to a mile rate of 1:51.4.

It eclipsed the previous mark of 1:51.5 set twelve months earlier when Bling It On won the same event.

The Gr.1 \$450,000 TABtouch WA Pacing Cup was staged in early December and iron tough pacer Vultan Tin secured his biggest victory when upsetting his rivals in the state's biggest event.

Grand Circuit Champion King of Swing



Prepared by Phil Costello, the eight-year-old thrived on a genuine speed and a perfect Shannon Suvaljko drive to win the state's biggest event in front of a massive Perth crowd.

Lining-up in his fourth Pacing Cup, Vultan Tin finished 10th in his three previous attempts – Soho Tribeca in 2018, Rocknroll Lincoln in 2019 and Mighty Conqueror earlier this year.

But with the change in calendar, Vultan Tin took his opportunity and etched his name into the record books alongside some of the all-time greats of the sport.

Vultan Tin beat race favourite Chicago Bull and Mighty Conqueror in the 2936m mobile start feature.

The winning time was 3:32.2 – a winning mile rate of 1:56.3 and a new race record.

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The season eventually ended with the running of the Gr.1 \$175,660 TAB Blacks A Fake Queensland Championship at Albion Park on December 12.

And King Of Swing was looking to put an exclamation mark against his season and unbelievable transformation.

Following victories in the Hunter Cup and Miracle Mile and a second placing in the Victoria Cup earlier this year, the star pacer held an insurmountable lead going into the Queensland feature, but connections were keen to stamp their season.

Under rain-soaked skies, King Of Swing thrashed his rivals when easily accounting for Colt Thirty One and Turn It Up in the 2680m mobile start Brisbane feature.

The winning time was 3:17.3 with the winning mile rate being a sedate 1:58.5.

King Of Swing ended the APG Grand Circuit season with 360 points, well clear of nearest rivals Cruz Bromac (175) and Lochinvar Art (164).

Since transferring from the Perth stables of Gary Hall Snr, King Of Swing has raced 13 times for the Cobbitty Equine outfit for 10 wins while being the runner-up in the other three starts.

The Rocknroll Hanover entire has banked more than \$1 million this year.

King Of Swing is raced by Beth Richardson, Mark Congerton, Go Racing (Mick Harvey), Karen Hall, Glen Moore, Sylvie Macgregor plus Rob & Frank Patriarca.

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Congratulations to all winners of APG Grand Circuit events during the past season.





Trotting Masters Review



By Chris Barsby

To put it bluntly, the 2019/20 Australian Pacing Gold Trotting Masters season was ravaged.

The COVID-19 global pandemic claimed the final two legs of the season with the Auckland features leaving the season short, only four of the six trotting features were held.

The Dominion, Inter Dominion, Great Southern Star and Australian Trotting Grand Prix were staged before the worldwide disruption took hold.

But rather focusing on the negative, let's focus on the positives.

The opening leg of the APG Trotting Masters is the Gr.1 \$300,000 Airpark Canterbury Dominion staged at Addington during Cup week in November, the 3200m stand-start feature is the biggest trotting event on the New Zealand calendar.

With a field of 15 listed to start, the richly talented Oscar Bonavena representing the All-Stars operation of Mark Purdon and Natalie Rasmussen was the punters elect but a crucial break soon after the start cost him any winning chance.

Master horseman Paul Nairn combined with reinsman Blair Orange with Habibi Inta to claim the famed two-mile feature easily defeating Australian raider Tough Monarch and Monty Python in a time of 4:02.1 – a mile rate of 2:01.7.

The victory provided Nairn with his third winner of the Dominion after previous victories with Call Me Now (1995) and Stig (2008).

The next leg of the Trotting Masters was held in the north, the Gr.1 \$150,000 HR Fiske & Sons Inter Dominion at Alexandra Park, Auckland and the All-Stars operation were chasing feature race glory.

After missing out with Oscar Bonavena in the Dominion, the stable had an excellent chance in the shape of Winterfell in the 2700m mobile start feature.

Beginning nicely from gate two, Purdon allowed Winterfell to stride freely at the start but was unable to match the flying strides of Majestic Man who crossed to the marker line and rather than sitting in the pocket spot, Purdon kept Winterfell moving forward and reclaimed the premier position passing the 2100m marker.

In a driving finish, Winterfell held off the efforts of Majestic Man and Massive Metro to score in a time of 3:21.6 – the mile rate was 2:00.1.

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Tornado Valley became the first Australian trained trotter to be crowned Trotting Master since Sparkling Success back in 2018.



The victory provided Purdon with his sixth Inter Dominion Trotters Grand Final after scoring previously with the likes of Pride Of Petite (x 2), Buster Hanover and I Can Doosit (x 2).

Action then headed across the ditch with Melbourne hosting the next two legs of the season and the Gr.1 \$250,000 What The Hill Great Southern Star at TABCORP Park, Melton.

With Kiwi star Oscar Bonavena starting favourite, locally trained hero Tornado Valley was seeking to claim another feature and make amends for the previous season when he was deemed to be a scratching when favourite for the event.

Making full use of his prime draw, Tornado Valley sped to the lead in the 2760m mobile start feature and his rivals were left to play catch-up thereafter.

Tornado Valley proved too strong for his rivals when defeating Red Hot Tooth and Massive Metro in a time of 2:01.2.

The husband-and-wife combination of Andy and Kate Gath became the first dual winners

of the Great Southern Star following their success with Glenferrie Typhoon back in 2017.

With three legs run and won, no multiple winner had appeared and the Gr.1 \$100,000 Hygain Australian Trotting Grand Prix at TABCORP Park, Melton was a golden opportunity for Tornado Valley to make his claim to be crowned champion trotter.

Sent off as favourite, Tornado Valley had a tough trip early with plenty of pressure telling over the concluding stages as the beautifully bred Dance Craze stormed to victory for Anton Golino and Glen Craven.

Dance Craze scored over Tornado Valley and Temporale in the 2240m mobile start event.

The winning time was 1:58.2.

And that was it for the season, the Gr.1 \$100,000 Anzac Trotters Cup and Gr.1 \$150,000 Reharvest Rowe Cup at Alexandra Park were cancelled because of COVID-19.

With a tally of 160 points, Tornado Valley was crowned the 2019/20 APG Trotting Master while Dance Craze (105), Winterfell and Habibi Inta (100 each) were next in line.

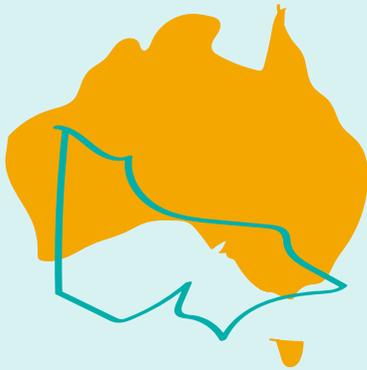
Congratulations to Andy and Kate Gath plus owner Norm Jenkin.

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It's the second time an Andy Gath trained trotter has been declared Trotting Master following the efforts of La Coocaracha back in 2002.

State Controlling Body Reports





Victoria



Dale Monteith

Chairman
Harness Racing Victoria

On behalf of the Board I present this report on the current state of the industry.

In a difficult year for most, I am proud of the resilience of our industry. Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) was one of the first racing bodies in Australia to implement attendance restrictions to protect the health and wellbeing of industry participants, HRV and racing club staff, and communities throughout Victoria.

Thanks to the stringent COVID-19 protocols introduced and the efforts of all in the industry, harness racing was able to continue, sustaining the approximately 4,367 full-time equivalent jobs the sport provides throughout Victoria during a difficult time.

We introduced a regional racing model, limiting participants to participate in one of six regions throughout the state. Not only did the regional racing model allow harness racing the best chance of continuing if a participant tested positive to COVID-19, the regional racing model provided many participants with a greater chance to win races, competing only against other participants from their region.

Like all industries, the COVID-19 pandemic provided an unprecedented challenge for harness racing. As the outbreak began to hit Victoria in March, HRV moved quickly to establish a Business Continuity Team (BCT).

This team met daily for several months to establish industry protocols to safely navigate the pandemic. It also met regularly, and as needed, with an industry participants group established to assist HRV to navigate through the COVID-19 crisis.

At the heart of every decision made by HRV during COVID-19 has been the health and wellbeing of our people. Clearly communicating these decisions with industry has been critical.

CEO Dayle Brown initiated regular industry stakeholder meetings shortly after he commenced in the role in November.

These meetings have been ongoing and well received by stakeholder groups and their members. This collaboration has the Victorian harness racing industry functioning strongly as one.

On the racing front, we have made some substantial gains in FY20, running more race meetings, increasing the number of starters per race, reducing the number of fields containing fewer than seven horses, and dramatically reducing (by 28.5%) the number of short-priced favourites (\$1.3 or shorter). These are important key performance indicators, which make our product more attractive to punters and this has shown in wagering performance at the back end of FY20.

The Racing team developed the inaugural Mercury80 (80-second challenge) race series during the 2019-20 summer months, a result of the Racing Innovations Team comprising members from multiple HRV departments and facilitated by General Manager of Racing Stephen Bell. The Mercury80 races attracted enormous interest, evident from the way the huge crowd reacted on New Year's Eve at Melton as the sprinters turned for home in the 1200-metre event.

The introduction of the Elizabeth Clarke Mares Triple Crown series, which will take place in late 2020 for the first time, is another wonderful initiative. This series honours a long-time harness racing administrator, passionate advocate for the industry and a former HRV Board member, who has dedicated a lifetime of advocacy to this industry. This series attracts the best pacing mares from throughout Australasia over a three-week period, culminating in the running of the Group 1 Queen of the Pacific.

In the back end of FY20, I am pleased to report strong growth in turnover on HRV races with wagering up 13% year on year on HRV races from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2020.

This growth helped offset an increase in over-rounds (margins) by wagering service providers and the impact of the Point of Consumption Tax (PoCT), which had initially dulled turnover and race field fees with turnover down 13% year on year for the eight months to 29 February 2020.

For FY20, HRV recorded an overall loss of \$0.4m. Included in this result is \$5m in additional government funding, which helped offset the significant reduction to budgeted Tabcorp Joint Venture

distributions and race-field fee revenues, and \$0.8m in profit generated by the partial sale (72%) of RISE to other Australian harness racing state jurisdictions.

Overall revenue for the year decreased by 4.7% to \$85.6m (down from \$89.8m). The majority (67%) of revenue is garnered from wagering, which at \$57.5m was down on the prior year (\$60.2m). Tabcorp revenues declined by 11.4% (or \$4.7m) to \$36.3m. The revenue garnered from the existing Tabcorp Joint Venture is significantly down on the \$48.3m secured in Year 1 of this agreement (FY13)



HRV is continuing to develop a bold, forward-thinking strategic vision for our industry, which engages both traditional harness racing people and those who are yet to discover our sport.

During the year HRV paid out \$41.6m in stakemoney (including breeding bonuses), in line with record stakemoney payments the prior year, however before the COVID-19 outbreak we were on track to post another record in stakemoney payments with a budget of \$43.2m. This was not achieved due to the postponement of the Vicbred Super Series and APG series races (to be run in late 2020 and 2021 respectively). HRV, with government support, was able to maintain stakemoney levels to instil confidence in industry and maintain country club funding levels despite significant financial challenges. The \$24m in Emergency Funding Assistance secured from the Victorian Government

will be allocated across FY20 and FY21. This support has been very important during a complex year.

Revenue derived from Tabcorp Park was also significantly reduced due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the lockdown periods.

In our marketing, media and communications space, several exciting developments were introduced in FY20 as HRV continues promoting harness racing to multiple audiences. Our digital streaming channel Trots Vision continues to develop, and this was fast-tracked at the onset of COVID-19 to keep owners unable to attend the races due to restrictions engaged.

The introduction of The Parade Ring at metro Melton meetings and Saturday night regional meetings has proven popular, showcasing the horses and drivers, and promoting wagering and participation. Trots Vision is an important flagship and key driver of traffic to our industry-leading website thetrots.com.au. The audience to thetrots.com.au grew by 50.6% on sessions (from 1,092,198 to 1,645,221) year on year, while pageviews increased by 50.0% from 2,108,454 in FY19 to 3,162,157 in FY20. The relationships with our media partners, such as Crocmedia, RSN, Sky Racing and the Herald Sun, continue to garner HRV important mainstream coverage.

The Marketing department also produced successful campaigns for the Country Cups Carnival, Summer of Glory, Gordon Rothacker Medal, Hall of Fame night and pony trots. These events were well attended and provide important opportunities to showcase our industry. HRV Marketing also took on the responsibility of managing sponsorship in FY20, with improved

engagement between HRV and its commercial partners and supporters a focus. Ownership is another important area of emphasis for our Marketing team, which is working closely with the Victorian Harness Racing Club on a range of exciting new initiatives.

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The harness racing industry also continues to provide an important promotional platform and be a strong contributor for several philanthropic causes.

The Team Teal campaign to raise funds and awareness for ovarian cancer research in February and March has long been a passionate cause for HRV. This year

HRV committed \$51,200 thanks to our female drivers winning races during the promotional period. HRV committed \$10,000 to the Victorian Bushfires Relief Fund in January, with Tabcorp Park also donating \$1 from every drink sold at its New Year's Eve meeting to that appeal. HRV also committed over \$15,000 to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia courtesy of a September promotion which saw the PCFA silks displayed in our races.

Sadly, harness racing has lost many dear friends in the past 12 months, including Board member Danny Frawley, who died tragically in September. Danny's sudden passing deeply shocked our industry and all who knew him. After a lengthy and brave battle with illness, we lost champion horseman Gavin Lang in April 2020. Just a month later his father, Graeme, an industry legend, also passed. And in June we lost Rod

Osborne to illness. Rod was a man of the highest integrity and a great friend of the industry. Our thoughts are with the families of all dear friends the industry has lost in the past year.

HRV is continuing to develop a bold, forward-thinking strategic vision for our industry, which engages both traditional harness racing people and those who are yet to discover our sport. Everyone in harness racing has a critical role to play on this journey and the current collaboration between HRV and industry will be vitally important in achieving our shared vision.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank you Minister for the support that you and your office have provided harness racing during 2020 and we look forward to a prosperous 2021.

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Our digital streaming channel Trots Vision continues to develop, and this was fast-tracked at the onset of COVID-19 to keep owners unable to attend the races due to restrictions engaged.



New South Wales



Ken Brown AM

Chairman
Harness Racing NSW

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The 2019/2020 season will be remembered for the extraordinary challenges it has thrown at our Industry and for the resilience and fortitude all have shown in dealing with this crisis.

It has been a time unprecedented in our history, the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the outset, as opposed to a possible shutdown of activities HRNSW gave the assurance that it would do everything in its power to continue racing so as to provide a much-needed revenue flow to industry participants. That was and remains the number one priority of the Board of HRNSW.

At the same time an undertaking was given that HRNSW would not knowingly put at risk the health and safety of participants, employees and the public. This approach was evidenced by the immediate action taken to suspend racing in the latter part of March when faced with a possible positive test to the coronavirus by one of our stewards.

That action was a clear example of the highly responsible approach of the Harness Racing fraternity in accepting the situation and in doing so ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all participants and the public

Unfortunately, in April when faced with a dramatic downturn in wagering revenue (the very lifeblood of the Industry) the Board of HRNSW, in addition to drawing down on available funds within its "Future Fund" had

reluctantly found it necessary to impose a raft of austerity measures, including a reduction in base prizemoney of 20% effective from 11 May.

The Covid-19 restrictions and protocols then in place had directly and materially impacted on the operations of the NSW TAB culminating in its need to close on 23 March its various retail outlets throughout Australia including those in hotels and clubs.

There were some 3850 outlets closed with no indication from Government when these premises would be permitted to reopen. The TAB historically provides circa 60% of the total wagering revenue of our Industry.

The COVID-19 austerity measures implemented by HRNSW were amongst other things very much predicated on the need to reduce the risk to the future viability of the Industry should the COVID-19 restrictions persist and best position the Industry in going forward.

The decision to reduce prizemoney was certainly not a pleasant or easy one as all arms of the Industry (including HRNSW) wished otherwise. It was a decision which came some six weeks later than that of other jurisdictions and codes of racing. It was the last savings measure adopted and an undertaking was given by HRNSW that it would be the first put aside when there was evidence of an improvement in wagering revenue.

In that regard with the easing of certain of the COVID-19 restrictions by Government, specifically those that permitted the re-opening of TAB outlets throughout the State, revised wagering revenue forecasts provided by TabCorp, increased revenue via

the transference of wagering investments to other operators as well as the various other austerity measures put in place, base prizemoney levels were able to be restored as and from 1 July.

Ultimately, with the austerity measures introduced having the desired effect, HRNSW was able to post a Net Deficit for the financial year 2019/2020 of but \$34,527. This was a highly satisfactory result having in mind the negative impact of the Coronavirus as well as the fact that contained within that result was unbudgeted expenditure of \$679,766 for Drought Assistance Subsidies bringing to a total \$1.525 million provided to participants over the past 2 years and \$1,493,498 for Drivers Superannuation back payments.

In December 2019 the Federal Court of Australia made two rulings in relation to the payment of superannuation guarantee to jockeys. As a consequence of these rulings and following advice received by HRNSW it was determined that an obligation had arisen to make retrospective superannuation payments to harness racing drivers for the period 1 July 2009 through to 30 Jun 2016.

The backdated payments have been made by HRNSW on behalf of owners. HRNSW has been making superannuation guarantee payments to drivers on behalf of owners since 1 July 2016.

HRNSW is resolute in its endeavours to continue racing and will of course monitor very closely the impact of COVID-19 on the future viability of our industry and, as when opportunities permit, will take the necessary action to put aside the remaining savings measures which have by necessity been put in place.

To that end, buoyed by an upward trend in wagering revenue streams, HRNSW will as at 30 September 2020 undertake a full review of its 2020/21 budget with a focus on improving returns to Industry participants.

At the same time and in accordance with the requirements of the Harness Racing Act 2009, HRNSW in consultation with HRICG and other Industry stakeholders has embarked on the preparation of a new 3year (2021-2023) Industry Strategic Plan.

The first half of 2020-2021 will also see the launch of the NSW Harness Racing Industry Standardbred Rehoming Company Ltd, a joint initiative of HRICG and HRNSW.

The Company's Mission is to provide the leadership, education, information, guidance, support and resources required to ensure all retired Standardbreds have a safe and humane quality of life.

When fully operational the Company will form an important pillar of the animal welfare policies of the Industry and I do thank and congratulate my fellow Board Member Mr Peter Nugent the Chairman of the Company and his Directors for bringing this important initiative to fruition.



On behalf of the Board of HRNSW I express our thanks to the Hon Kevin Anderson MP Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, his personal staff and the staff of the NSW Office of Racing for their support throughout the year.

Appreciation is also extended to Mr Robert Marshall, Chairman of Club Menangle and his Board of Directors, Mr Bruce Christison CEO Club Menangle, Mr Mark Croatto Chairman of HRICG and its members, the various Industry Associations and the Harness Racing Clubs throughout the State for their collective endeavours to improve and provide for the welfare and wellbeing of the Industry and its participants.

Finally and very importantly might I express the Board's thanks and gratitude to Mr John Dumesny Chief Executive of HRNSW, his senior management officers, the stewards and staff of the Authority for their commitment to the Board and for their untiring efforts in enabling the continuation of racing throughout the State. It is a management and regulatory team of the highest order.





While the happenings of 2019/2020 have sorely tested the resolve of us all, the NSW harness racing fraternity can be justifiably proud of its respect of and strict adherence to the COVID -19 protocols that have been put in place and with a continuation of that responsible attitude I believe we can all be confident that the Industry will emerge from these challenging times in a better place.



Queensland



Steve Wilson AM

Chairman
Harness Racing QLD

The resilience of the Queensland racing industry came to the fore in 2019/20.

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As I reflect upon a year quite like no other, I am grateful for the manner in which our participants galvanized together to continue to race amidst a global pandemic which has changed our very way of life.

Building upon the strong foundations laid by this Board, Racing Queensland was able to transform a parent company loss in FY16 of \$19.9 million (the sixth consecutive loss) to a normalised parent profit of \$7.0 million in FY20. The normalised consolidated result was a \$4.4 million profit versus a \$1.5 million loss last year.

While the numbers represent a significant improvement from the start of our tenure, they only paint part of the picture this year, with COVID-19 playing a significant role in FY20.

In conjunction with the Queensland Government and its health officers, RQ moved swiftly to implement patron-free meetings in mid-March.

As the global health crises continued to escalate, a range of measures were required to be introduced including but not limited to:

- On-course access to licensed racecourses and training venues being restricted to essential licensed personnel;

- A requirement for participants to leave racecourses immediately after their racing commitments (once cleared by stewards);
- A mandatory 14-day self-isolation period for any licensee – Queensland or otherwise – who travelled from inter-state;
- Stringent transportation protocols for intra-state and inter-state animals competing in Queensland;
- Mandatory temperature testing for all on-course personnel attending race meetings; and
- The application and reinforcement of strict physical distancing and personal hygiene requirements including additional spaces for participants.

Building on the foundations of a successful FY19, RQ maintained our commitment to increased transparency by publishing our 'key performance indicators' on a quarterly basis and opening up the lines of communications with our key stakeholders.

To support our endeavours, we committed to a strategic review of our Advisory Panels – including the required skillsets, framework and composition numbers – to ensure that we were optimising their capacity to positively influence the Queensland racing industry.

Moving forward, the Advisory Panels will continue to be chaired by our respective code directors (ex-officio), but have been streamlined to align with modern governance practices and to draw upon the appointed members' strategic expertise.





We thank our outgoing Panel members for their respective contributions.

As part of the Martin Inquiry, RQ advocated for the organisation to play a greater role in the aftercare of our animals – both equine and canine – in collaboration with the Queensland Racing Industry Commission.

As an industry, we cannot take our social license to operate lightly and that means committing to change.

The appointment of an Animal Care Manager reinforces our commitment to animal welfare, along with the creation of an Off The Track Program, which has been established and will be governed by an independent Board.

A one per cent prize money levy for harness racing – and thoroughbreds – was introduced from January 1, 2020 to support our animal care initiatives.

For the first time, wagering on Queensland harness racing product surpassed \$500 million in turnover, representing a 10.1% increase on FY19.

In total, \$521 million in turnover was recorded throughout FY20, whilst revenue reached a new high of \$13.1 million.

Over the course of the year, Racing Queensland conducted 290 TAB meetings – a 5.8% increase on FY19 – and featured 2,467 races.

These included the introduction of the successful stand-alone grass track meeting at Kilcoy and an emphasis on more Sunday race meetings to provide more racing

opportunities particularly to grassroots and part-time participants.

A non-TAB meeting with four races was also conducted at Redcliffe on Melbourne Cup Day in November.

For a successive year, TAB field sizes grew, with 22,114 starters representing a 2.3% increase on FY19.

QBRED highlights

The nation's premier breeding incentive scheme, QBRED, enjoyed another record-breaking year.

Having introduced a range of enhancements over the past year, including QBRED For Life, \$2.65m in QBRED bonuses were paid out in FY20 compared to \$1.67m in FY19, which represents a 59.4% increase.

Under QBRED For Life, the age restrictions on the first and second win bonuses were lifted in FY20, launching an exciting new chapter for standardbreds.



The initiative paved the way for a number of older horses to benefit from the scheme, with the Brittany Graham-trained Glencoe Reign, 10, among the beneficiaries.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Mal Charlton-trained Mistakes Were Made created a slice of history when she became the first two-year-old trotter to win a QBRED first win bonus.

Racing highlights and premierships

Grant Dixon's decade of dominance as Queensland's premier trainer remained intact.

Since taking the reins from his legendary father, Bill, who sadly passed away in December, Grant has chalked up eight consecutive training premierships.

Dixon also claimed the drivers' premiership, while Nathan Dawson was crowned the leading concession driver for a fourth and final occasion.

A record-breaking \$2 million in stakes and bonuses headlined the 2019 TAB Queensland Winter Harness Racing Carnival.

During the two-month campaign, RQ was able to attract some of Australasia's premier standardbreds including a 12% increase in inter-state and New Zealand starters.

With 20 black-type races, the Queensland Oaks, Queensland Derby, Sunshine Sprint and the Queensland Trotters Cup were all elevated to Group 1 status.

In total, eight Group 1s were conducted with the \$250,000 TAB Blacks A Fake featuring three of the top-five place getters from the Grand Circuit including Inter Dominion champion, Tiger Tara.

A new Albion Park track record was set by hometown hero, Colt Thirty One, underlined the quality of the Blacks A Fake field, while in the Queensland Derby, New Zealand raider, Self Assured, maintained his unbeaten start to his career with his first victory at Group 1 level.

The 2019 TAB Queensland Summer Harness Racing Carnival included the \$50,000 DJA Trotting Championship, which was elevated to Group 1 status for the first time.

Wee Man Trouble secured the main event, with Albion Park hosting three black-type races worth almost \$500,000 in stakes throughout December.

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Throughout 2020, RQ continued to innovate with the inaugural Trot Rods series proving to be an early hit.

Staged over nine weeks at Redcliffe Paceway, the new initiative provided a \$10,000 cash bonus for the quickest lap throughout the promotion – with fields limited to just five horses – and a raft of broadcast enhancements including driver cam.

In a fitting finale, Paul Diebert drove With The Band to a thrilling victory in the 16th and final heat with RQ enjoying a 10% turnover uplift in comparison to the other races on the cards throughout the series.

While the 2020 TAB Constellations, including the newly announced Rising Sun, was unable to proceed due to COVID-19, a number of winter features were still run and won.





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As an industry, we cannot take our social license to operate lightly and that means committing to change.

.....

In the Redcliffe Yearling Sale Final, Manilla Playboy provided the biggest night of Shane Fraser and Kelli Dawson's racing careers with a scintillating win.

Finally, with Harness Racing Australia extending the season through until the end of the 2020 calendar year, a new-look Summer Carnival was held.

For the first time in Australia since 2018, harness racing was seen on free-to-air with the Group 1 TAB Blacks A Fake being broadcast across the nation on the Seven Network.

I extend my congratulations to King Of Swing, who was dominant in his breathtaking Grand Circuit victory ahead of Colt Thirty One.

Earlier in the Summer Carnival, Grant Dixon drove Colt Thirty One to victory in the Group 3 Be Good Johnny Sprint before narrowly being eclipsed by Cruz in the Group 2 Queensland Cup.

The free-to-air coverage provided a great opportunity for RQ to showcase our harness racing code to a broader audience and we look forward to continuing to build on that momentum throughout 2021.

The Group 1 winners were:

- **Blacks A Fake:**
Colt Thirty One (2019);
- **QBRED Triad 2YO Fillies:**
Jiggle And Jive;
- **QBRED Triad 2YO Colts & Geldings:**
Expensive Ego;
- **Queensland Oaks:**
Our Princess Tiffany NZ;
- **Queensland Derby:**
Self Assured NZ;
- **Sunshine Sprint:**
Ohoka Punter NZ;
- **Queensland Trotters Cup:**
Majestic Courtney NZ;
- **DJA Trotting Championship:**
Wee Man Trouble NZ;
- **APG Brisbane Yearling Sale Final:**
Expensive Ego;
- **Redcliffe Yearling Sale Final:**
Manila Playboy; and
- **Blacks A Fake:**
King Of Swing NZ (2020).



South Australia



George Fiacchi

Chairman

Harness Racing SA

Overview

2020 was a year of change, firstly we had a new totally independent board established, with a variety of different skill sets. Our first charter to find the lay of the land through consultation with the industry.

We went to market with a survey and the first 2 questions were:

1. What is going well?
2. And what needs work?

When one of the respondent's replied:

1. Nothing
2. Everything

We knew we had a bit of work to do!!!

We quickly learned that SA harness racing participants are passionate people who love harness racing, with the sport having been a part of their family for generations. They wanted change for the future survival and success of the industry.

Unfortunately, the key findings were:

- That the industry was fractured.
- That, there are lots of personal agendas and vested interests being put ahead of the greater harness racing good.
- That while many wanted change, this was only acceptable as long as it doesn't affect them.

- That those engaged at all levels, craved strong leadership and direction for the industry in SA.
- That harness racing in SA should be run by one governing body only – HRSA.

As a board we rolled up our sleeves and started to tackle some of the key issues, the first step being to make the industry in SA financially sustainable. We commenced working on our financial modelling to find our true position, then bang, COVID-19 hit.

The year that was

The year 2020 will be remembered as the year of COVID. But while many suffered as a consequence of the pandemic, harness racing in SA did not, and instead it was in many ways, a blessing. We were able to peel back all the layers and concentrate on the basics, by getting rid of all the white noise and simply focus on our core product racing.

The HRSA team did an amazing job keeping us racing consistently and even increasing the numbers of meetings we held with limited resources. Some of the SA centric initiatives the team implemented were outstanding:

- Combo Racing, where we merged two country race meetings together so Pt Pirie and Mt Gambier could host consistent race meetings
- Modification to the national ratings system to suit SA racing (thanks to HRA for authorising)

On behalf of the Board, I'd like to recognise the HRSA Team led admirably by CEO Ross Neal on what they have achieved and their tremendous work ethic.

The support from the participants was outstanding and they were the true heroes who showed their resilience and took the challenges all in their stride...well most of them anyway!!!

Consequently, wagering increased to numbers not seen in a long time. Our responses to the challenges thrown at us by COVID enabled us to give back to the industry the gains achieved through enhanced turnovers. Harness racing in SA returning to pre COVID levels before the other codes in the state.

Additionally, we introduced the \$10,000 Super Saturday concept, giving participants a taste of what the future may hold if we all work together.

As an industry we were given an insight into the future of harness racing. Digital participation is the future, harness racing in SA could be accessed by not only locals but from around the world and internationally.

If the program is strong, has quality fields and consistent they will interact with racing in SA.

As a result, we were able to post a substantial profit, (+\$76K) and accrue for breeding incentives programs such as the Southern Cross into the future.

Considering HRSA was coming of such a low base, we were able slow the haemorrhaging and ticked a lot of boxes that had become KPI's for the board:

- **Wagering up**
- **Prizemoney up***
- **Number of race meetings up**
- **Profitable / sustainable**
- **Stable horse population**

**Prizemoney levels not compared during COVID period.*

Award Winners

Congratulations to the following winners who will be presented with their trophies at the annual Horse of the Year function.

- 1. Leading State Horse**
JOES A CHARACTER (14 wins)
- 2. Leading Claiming Horse**
ALWAYS MY MATE
(10 wins in claiming races)
- 3. Leading State Driver**
DANIELLE HILL (197 wins)
- 4. Leading Young Driver**
TIANA MCMAHON (43 wins)
- 5. Leading Concession Driver**
TIANA MCMAHON (43 wins)
- 6. Leading State Trainer**
RYAN HRYHOREC (67 wins)

Congratulations also to Samantha Pascoe who tied with Tiana McMahon and drove 43 winners for the season but lost on countback.



The Future

For harness racing to be successful it is essential that everyone is working together.

It is hoped that Harness Racing Australia (HRA) can take a lead and unite all the states to work collaboratively on growing the industry for future success. While locally the racing codes can work together to grow prizemoney levels and encourage local growth and employment.

Locally we have identified key areas to work on:

Target Markets

- As a Board we are identifying who are our Key stakeholders are
- Once identified we will personalise our communication and interact with them regularly

Growth

- How can we attract new people to the industry, without alienating the core?
- We must engage with the Millennials for the industry to be successful
- Whether they are punters, trainers, drivers, owners
- Growing organically has not worked

Sustainability

- As an industry we need to be sustainable
- We must live within our means and grow incrementally

Revenue

- When 85% of our revenue comes from wagering, it is a very dangerous scenario to be so reliant on one revenue stream.
- We must think outside the square and find other revenue streams

Marketing

- What does racing look like in 2025 and beyond?
- We have to think digital and interact with our punters and participants online

Teamwork

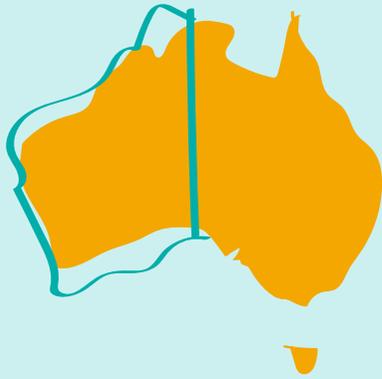
- We need to work together especially in SA
- If we continue to fight and argue and put our own self-interest in front of harness racing then our industry in SA will become irrelevant



Thanks to everyone who have made our first 12 months “entertaining”, we look forward to rewarding those that have stayed loyal to harness racing and cementing a strong future for the sport.







Western Australia



Jeff Ovens

Chairman
Harness Racing WA

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On behalf of Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWVA), it is my pleasure to present the 2020 State report for harness racing in Western Australia.

Strategic Direction

During 2020, RWVA's strategic focus for harness racing in Western Australia remained on the implementation of the Conditioned Racing System to improve the commercial competitiveness and generate greater revenue streams for the code. Throughout the year, RWVA continued to develop the programming for the system and monitor the impact on wagering, race fields and participation levels.

COVID-19

In a year where almost all national and international sport came to a halt, the Western Australian harness racing industry demonstrated its collective resilience and was able to continue safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A range of strict bio-security measures were implemented to protect both the health and livelihood of the industry's workforce, and as a result, the wellbeing of the State's racing animals. Measures included restricting racecourses to essential personnel only, consolidation of race meetings to reduce unnecessary travel, as well as implementing good hygiene and social distancing practices on-course.

From 6 April to 31 July 2020, in addition to reductions in its own cost base, RWVA made the decision to reduce prizemoney and associated breeding bonuses by 20 per cent to assist in mitigating the risk of a potential reduction in income due to COVID-19. This resulted in a reduction of \$1.6 million in prizemoney and \$160,000 in breeding bonuses for the period.

Racing

Western Australia hosted 258 race meetings throughout the season, encompassing 2,089 individual races, which provided racing opportunities for 1,471 individual horses.

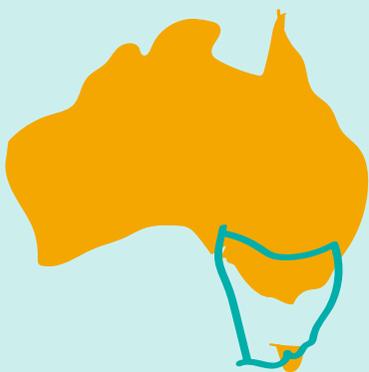
In total, RWVA provided funding and subsidies to clubs and participants to the value of \$35.7 million.

During the season, 280 Western Australian trained mares earned \$242,490 in EPONA credits as a result of winning 557 races. Six mares each earned the maximum credit amount of \$5,000, and a total of \$115,074 was paid in subsidies to the owners of 47 mares.

The Australian Pacing Gold Yearling Sales recorded a sale aggregate of just under \$2 million (\$1.6 million in 2019) and average sale prices of \$20,000 for fillies and \$21,500 for colts. The median sale price was \$20,800, up from \$15,000 in 2019.

An important part of summarising racings' key achievements for the year is to also recognise the winners of the major Group races, as follows:

- Fremantle Pacing Cup (Group 1) won by CAVIAR STAR (NZ); Gary Hall Snr (trainer); Stuart McDonald (driver); and K A Hall, S D MacGregor, R Patriarca, P Chivers and N Patriarca (owners).



Tasmania



Gene Phair

Chairman
Tasracing

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The impact of COVID-19 saw the cessation of racing across the state from 1 April, recommencing 14 June 2020.

Tasracing implemented the Tasmanian Racing C-19 Welfare Subsidy which saw payments being made to the industry within two weeks of the shutdown.

This welfare package, paid to trainers, with standardbreds in work amount to a \$35 per day payment for each horse.

The package saw just over \$1.46 million paid to 111 trainers to assist with keeping their standardbreds in work over the shutdown period. This would then ensure at the commencement of racing the industry could resume without issue.

Key feature events such as the Sires Stakes, Easter Cup, TTC Sweepstakes, Golden Slipper and Blue Bonnet which were programmed over the cessation or just on commencement of racing were reviewed and a decision to either run at a later period in the year of abandon was made. The major TASBRED races (Sires Stakes) were rescheduled to October / November with the TTC Sweepstakes and Blue Bonnet to be held in September. The Easter Cup was abandoned.

There were 9 feature races in Tasmania during the season with stakes money of \$20,000 or more, with prize money across these races totaling \$340,000.

The Rohan Hillier 'Ryley Major' has had an outstanding season with 22 starts, 14 wins and 7 places. Included in those was the \$25,000 Hobart Pacing Cup, the \$30,000 Golden Apple and \$75,000 Tasmania Cup.

Harness Racing across Australia seen an extension of the racing season to 31 December, providing the code an extra 4 months of opportunities at their current age. The permanency of this change was approved by HRA Executives and Members late August. This decision will have a major impact on the programming of Feature Events, specifically for two and three year-olds as well as a massive positive for the Welfare of the industry.

Tasracing completed a Harness industry review with many areas of the industry discussed across multiple forums in the state. The review went through a three-stage process. Stages one and two included forums at three locations around the state with discussions initially on statistics from the previous ten years covering all aspects of the industry. Feedback from stage one collated as part of Stage two. Stage three included outcomes and strategies to achieve the items raised in stages one and two. Changes to the Breeders Support was well received and many within the industry see that as a positive step forward to help increase the population within Tasmania.

Tasmania was host to the annual Australian Drivers Championships on 9th November at Hobart. Welcoming two of the top drivers from each state, 7 heats were held with some outstanding results achieved. WA representative Gary Hall Jnr took out the title on 77 points with Tassie's own Mark Yole a close second on 63 points.

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Launceston was scheduled to host the annual Female Driver's Championship which unfortunately had to be called off due to COVID-19. This has been rescheduled to the 21st March 2021.

With the extension of the season, Trainers and Drivers will have an extra four months tallied on to their premiership totals which generally end 31 August. Considering the 10 weeks of cessation in Tasmania and the permanent change to the harness racing calendar we have already seen some outstanding results.

Leading on our state premiership tables for the extended 19/20 season:

Trainer Ben Yole with 189 winners

Leading driver was a sprint to the finish with Gareth Rattray taking the title on 73 wins. Rohan Hillier and Conor Crook not far behind finishing equal 2nd on 71 wins.

Twenty-two-year-old Taylor Ford had a stellar season leading not only the Leading Female Trainer, but Leading Female Driver and the Junior Driver tables for the majority of the season. Moving to Victoria

towards the end of the season seen Hannah Vandongen overtake Taylor to take out the Leading Female Driver and Juanita McKenzie winning the Leading Female Driver. Taylor still maintained her lead winning the Leading Junior Driver on 31 winning drives with Samantha Gangell second on 26.

Team Teal, the campaign to raise awareness about women's cancer, ran over a 6-week period beginning 1 February. Samantha Gangell, the 2018/19 leading female driver, represented Tasmania as their ambassador. This year an ambassador was also chosen from the Mini Trots with Tamsyn Davis representing Tasmania. More than \$165,000 was raised from female wins across Australia during this period.





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Changes to the Breeders Support was well received and many within the industry see that as a step forward to help increase the population within Tasmania.



2020 Australian Harness Racing Awards

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Lawn Derby Awards - Pacers

AUSTRALIAN HARNESS HORSE OF THE YEAR

KING OF SWING NZ

AUSTRALIAN PACER OF THE YEAR

AGED HORSE/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

(bh 2014 by ROCKNROLL HANOVER USA from TWIST AND TWIRL NZ)

Performances: 22 starts 11 wins 7 placings \$1,154,865 1:48.0MS

Breeder: Breckon Farms Ltd

Owners: B Richardson, M A Congerton, Go Racing Group, K A Hall, G L Moore, S D McGregor, R Patriarca, F Patriarca

Drivers: L A McCarthy, A M Butt, G E Hall Jnr, S A McDonald, K N Prentice

Trainer: C A Cross, G E Hall Snr

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AGED MARE PACER OF THE YEAR

BETTOR ENFORCE NZ

(blkm 2012 by BETTORS DELIGHT USA from THEIR EXCUSE NZ)

Performances: 25 starts 13 wins 9 placings \$259,390 1:48.9MS

Breeder: B L Calder, K E Calder | **Owners:** E R Basham, A L Peacock, R O Worner

Drivers: L A McCarthy, B R Gath, A L Peacock | **Trainer:** C A Cross

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3YO FILLY PACER OF THE YEAR

DR SUSAN NZ

(brf 2016 by BETTORS DELIGHT USA from SAFEDRA NZ)

Performances: 17 starts 6 wins 5 placings \$214,870 1:52.1MS

Breeder: C M Dalgety | **Owner:** C M Dalgety

Drivers: A M Butt, J E Trainor | **Trainer:** S L Smith, C T Dalgety, N Purdon

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3YO COLT/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

LINE UP NZ

(bc 2016 by BETTORS DELIGHT USA from BEACH PARADE NZ)

Performances: 5 starts 3 wins 2 placings \$238,800 1:52.8MS

Breeder: Woodlands Stud Ltd | **Owner:** E&M Stride

Drivers: A M Butt | **Trainer:** A M Butt



2YO FILLY PACER OF THE YEAR

(bf 2017 by MACH THREE CA from KABBALAH KAREN B CA)

Performances: 10 starts 9 wins 1 placing \$263,290 1:51.9MS

Breeder: Lauriston Bloodstock Pty Ltd | **Owner:** Lauriston Bloodstock Pty Ltd

Drivers: D N Moran, K M Gath, J N Quinlan | **Trainer:** E Stewart

LADIES IN RED

2YO COLT/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

(bc 2017 by ART MAJOR USA from MACY LILA)

Performances: 9 starts 6 wins 2 placings \$203,565 1:55.4MS

Breeder: L A Parker, I Parker | **Owner:** L A Parker, I Parker

Drivers: D R Wilson | **Trainer:** C Tonkin

MAJOR MOTH

Vancleve Awards – Trotters

AUSTRALIAN TROTTER OF THE YEAR AGED TROTTING HORSE/GELDING OF THE YEAR

(bg 2011 by SKYVALLEY NZ from BEGIN NZ)

Performances: 16 starts 7 wins 5 placings \$283,710 TR1:55.4MS

Breeder: P L Gaugler, T M McMillan | **Owners:** N R Jenkin

Drivers: K M Gath | **Trainer:** A P Gath



AGED MARE TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(brm 2013 by MUSCLE HILL (US) from LA COOCARACHA)

Performances: 18 starts 6 wins 7 placings \$164,600 TR1:56.4MS

Breeder: Yabby Dam Farms Pty Ltd | **Owner:** Yabby Dam Farms Pty Ltd

Drivers: J P Lee, J A MacKinnon, G A Craven | **Trainer:** A M Golino, J A MacKinnon



3YO FILLY TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(brf 2016 by SKYVALLEY NZ from SWEETASAY)

Performances: 13 starts 10 wins 2 placings \$162,140 TR1:54.3MS

Breeder: L J Lewis | **Owner:** C G Lewis, L J Lewis, B R Healy

Drivers: M J Craven | **Trainer:** M J Craven



3YO COLT/GELDING TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(bc 2016 by MUSCLE HILL (US) from REAL BABE USA)

Performances: 14 starts 9 wins 4 placings \$118,840 TR1:55.8MS

Breeder: E&M Stride | **Owner:** E&M Stride

Drivers: A M Butt, C A Alford | **Trainer:** A M Butt

TORNADO VALLEY NZ

DANCE CRAZE

PINK GALAHS

ELITE STRIDE

2YO FILLY TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(bf 2017 by MAJESTIC SON CA from GYPSY FLAIR)

Performances: 6 starts 2 wins 2 placings \$61,700 TR2:01.9MS

Breeder: D J Poole, S B Poole | **Owner:** S J Murray, F Crews, R J Letch, K F Shelley, John Anderson (Group), Slim Four Group, H Geraldene, S J Watt, I E Woolridge

Drivers: G R Sugars | **Trainer:** E J Stewart

BANGLEZ

2YO COLT/GELDING TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(chg 2017 by USED TO ME FRA from MY DREAMWEAVER NZ)

Performances: 12 starts 5 wins 2 placings \$87,855 TR1:59.9MS

Breeder: Yabby Dam Farms Pty Ltd | **Owner:** K P Hargreaves, B T Cairns, J G Mathews, A F Mathews, M Delzotto, B M Palfreyman, D G Carroll, K W Weidenbach, A Mifsud, T Cairns

Drivers: A M Ashwood, E J Tormey | **Trainer:** K P Hargreaves

DONT CARE



Globe Derby Awards

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

(for the 9th time)

Leading Sire by Stake money

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

(for the 5th time)

Leading Juvenile Sire by Stake money

MAJESTIC SON CA

(for the 5th time)

Leading Sire of Trotters by Stake money

2019/2020 Statistics

LEADING SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

654 starters 460 winners 1438 wins \$14,568,341

LEADING SIRE OF 2YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

MACH THREE CA

43 starters 29 winners 69 wins \$973,362

LEADING SIRE OF 3YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

115 starters 90 winners 300 wins \$2,930,908

LEADING JUVENILE SIRE BY STAKEMONEY (2&3YO'S)

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

192 starters 138 winners 397 wins \$3,862,897

LEADING SIRE OF TROTTERS BY STAKEMONEY

MAJESTIC SON CA

174 starters 109 winners 293 wins \$2,751,053

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF TROTTERS BY STAKEMONEY

SUNDON USA

213 starters 136 winners 378 wins \$3,671,438

LEADING SIRE BY WINNERS

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

460 winners

LEADING SIRE OF 2YO'S BY WINNERS

ART MAJOR USA

48 winners

LEADING SIRE OF 3YO'S BY WINNERS

ART MAJOR USA

101 winners

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

CHRISTIAN CULLEN NZ

423 starters 298 winners 903 wins \$9,112,847

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 2YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

ART MAJOR USA

85 starters 45 winners 88 wins \$887,898

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 3YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

ART MAJOR USA

106 starters 61 winners 209 wins \$1,653,945

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE BY WINNERS

CHRISTIAN CULLEN NZ

298 winners

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 2YO'S BY WINNERS

ART MAJOR USA

45 winners

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 3YO'S BY WINNERS

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

68 winners



Media Awards

Media Awards

Best News Story

ROD LAKEY BACK ON BOARD AFTER 14-YEAR HIATUS

Written by Kieran Iles and published in the Bendigo Advertiser on 2 April 2020

Best Feature of the Year

FROM IMPOSSIBLE TO KIMPOSSIBLE

Written by Paul Courts and published on nationaltrotguide.com.au on 9 August 2020

Best Regional Story

STILL PLENTY IN THE TANK

Written by Toby Prime and published in the Geelong Advertiser on 5 November 2020

Best Historical Feature

WAYNE CAMPBELL FAREWELLS ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CHIP DEL

Written by Andrew Adermann and published on harness.org.au on 11 October 2020

Special Commendation

THE BENDIGO JOCKEY CLUB OPEN

Written by Noel Ridge and published on thetrots.com.au on 11 August 2020

Best Book or Publication

MIRACLE MILE MAGAZINE

Author: Club Menangle – Production by Kate Butt and printed in January 2020

Best Published Action or Still Photograph

HARNESS KILCOY

Taken by Dan Costello at Kilcoy on 30 December 2019 and published in the Pace Magazine in February 2020

Best Feature Television/Video Film to Air

MAGICAL MELTON VICBRED 2020 FINALS BROADCAST

Hosted by Andrew Bensley and Jason Bonnington and aired on 31 December 2020 on 7Mate

Best Radio Feature to Air

GAVIN LANG TRIBUTES

Gareth Hall, Adam Hamilton and Mick McGuane on RSN Central on 27 April 2020

For Demonstrated Excellence in Promotion

PAUL CAMPBELL

Campbells Comments

For Demonstrated Excellence in Social Media Usage & Innovation

FOLLOW A FOAL CAMPAIGN

Desiree Pettit-Keating – Harness Breeders Victoria



Best Historical Feature

"Her first few starts she used to come from the back, but from there she used to always be able to park herself in the death seat and switch off.

"When they knew she was coming then they knew they had to let her go otherwise she would just destroy them.

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"Before the big races, you'd just give her a little slap on the bum and that's all she needed to know that the big races were coming – it was my way of telling her that this is when we change gears.

"It's something I've never experienced before."

Chip Del was retired in July 1989, two short of 100 starts, with Campbell taking her to a final race in Rocklea to ensure that her stakes earnings surpassed the \$100,000 mark.

Campbell tried his hand breeding with Chip Del post-racing, and at the age of 25 when she started to slow up, she was given free reign of the property to be close by the family at any given time.

In recent years, her eyesight started to go, but her health remained intact as she continued to enjoy the carefree lifestyle of the Campbell property, but as she ticked past her 38th birthday, the family knew that her time may soon come.

"Up until about a month ago, she used to love getting down to roll but at 38 we thought one day she just won't be able to get herself back up, and the other week that's exactly what happened," Campbell said.

"At that point we knew, that's when she'd had enough – and that's when we said goodbye to her. "We buried her here on the property, so she'll always be here with us.

"I think she just loved being with us, and she trusted us – we just had a bond and she just enjoyed living life every day."

In the wake of Tina's passing, Wayne's daughter Sam organised a special tribute to their beloved mare, contacting the Albion Park Harness Racing Club to name a race after Chip Del – unbeknownst to her father.

On the evening of Saturday, October 3, the 2138-metre Remembering Chip Del Open Pace took centre stage at Albion Park, fittingly featuring a handful of the state's top-class pacers.

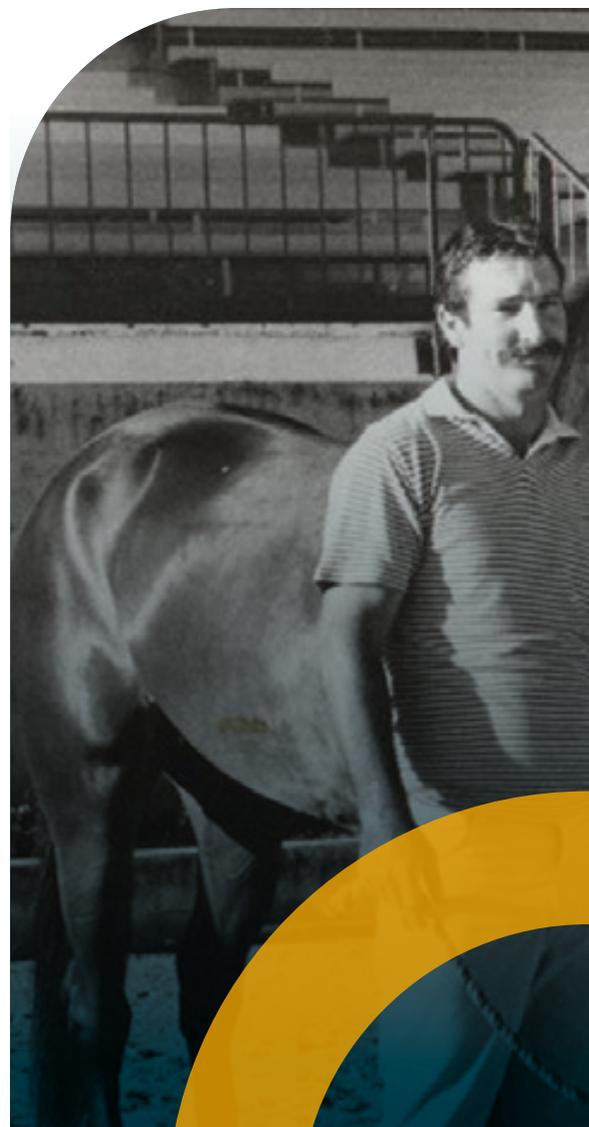
Up-and-coming pacer Ashley Locaz reversed the result on their last start over reigning Queensland Horse of the Year Colt Thirty One, scoring a thrilling one-metre victory in a run reminiscent of Chip Del sweeping down the outside from the one-one position.

"My daughter Sam organised the race to be named after her last Saturday night," Campbell said, holding back tears.

"I had handled everything okay after Tina passed but when my daughter told me what she'd done I just broke down – that's what got me.

"After everything we went through with her passing, it was that moment that really got me. "I was so proud of Tina, and I was so proud of my daughter.

"My kids grew up around the racetrack, and they experienced the highs and the lows with me so I just could not have been prouder of Sam when she did that for both Tina and myself."



There is no finish line



www.harness.org.au

www.thereisnofinishline.com.au

