



**MINUTES OF AGM OF THE
NORTHERN BRANCH of NZ TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION**

**Held in the Skyline Lounge, Cambridge Raceway
Monday 16th April 2018 at 11am.**

IN ATTENDANCE:

L Somervell, T Pike, N Tiley, S Marsh, R Rogers, K Fursdon, K Kelso, J Miller, R Manning, A Forsman, M Walters, T Wenn, K Opie, K Parsons, S Hale, L Laing, J Bell, N O'Dowd, M Fraser-Campin, C Campin, S Ramsay, M Forbes, C Thornton, K Zimmerman, J Steffert, R James, M Baker, F Ritchie, M Brooks, S Ritchie, D Guy, J Richards, G Hennessy, K Fawcett, W Cooper

GUESTS: B Saundry, I Long, J Allen, P Wilcox, T Gillespie – notes follow minutes

APOLOGIES:

S McKee, C Gibbs, G Sanders, D Sweeney, G Richardson, L Noble, B Hawtin, G Rogerson, P Lock, S Autridge

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting dated 17 July 2017 were passed as a true record. *T Pike/S Ritchie* Matter arising – there were no matters arising

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

L Somervell thanked everyone for their attendance – it is good to see so many trainers present. Thanks also to special guests for coming to speak. It was fair to say that racing was at its lowest point. At the grass roots, trainers are genuinely suffering and have been threatening to take action. The glimmer of hope is Winton Peter's appointment of John Messara who is well qualified to do a report. This is due out at the end of the current season, so it will be a matter of hanging in there. The report will need to provide some hope and evidence of a way forward towards sustainability and growth.

TREASURER'S REPORT – no funds held by the branch so not applicable.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

PRESIDENT– L Somervell nominated by F Ritchie and seconded by K Fursdon. There being no further nominations, L Somervell duly elected.

VICE PRESIDENT/S – A Forsman nominated by R James and seconded by L Somervell.
There being no further nominations, A Forsman duly elected.

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY/TREASURER – W Cooper appointed to look after secretarial duties. Nominated by L Somervell, seconded by N Tiley

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE – L Somervell, A Forsman, K Zimmerman, K Fursdon, S Ritchie, K Opie

PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES – T Pike, S Marsh, A Forsman, J Richards, L Laing

TRACK REPRESENTATIVES

Matamata – T Autridge
Cambridge – Stephen Marsh
Tauranga – Jim Pender
Te Aroha – Keith Opie
Waipa – Keith Hawtin
Counties – N Tiley
Byerly Park – K Zimmerman
Ruakaka – C Gibbs

GENERAL BUSINESS

Apprentice Allowance changes – N Tiley asked when these were to be introduced. B Saundry advised target was 1st May. Process required sign off from Minister.

Te Rapa trials track - Questioned whether there was confidence from both trainers and the RIU to hold trials meetings. T Pike advised small fields of Open Class horses would be suitable. Update required from Waikato Racing Club and confirmation from RIU view.

2 YO Trials and balloting in races– subject to be raised at Handicapping Review meeting. Current policy meant horses who had more trials had less chance of making the field. There was support for half-mile 2yo races.

Trial fields v Racing fields – Lack of grass galloping options. Not just horses being sold overseas, but not enough going through the grades.

Paying stakes to 9th place – Auckland Racing Club are paying till 9th. Discussion on the possibility of a consistent policy across the country that would mean horses placed from 6th to 9th in the majority of races (not stakes/group races) would cover their nomination and acceptance fee. Motion put forward to the NZTA National Executive for a review of prizemoney structure
Moved by N O’Dowd and seconded by K Fursdon. There were no votes against the motion.

Early nominations – B Saundry advised that there needs to be a consistent policy on a national level rather than the current club by club basis. He will take this to the Club Advisory Group who are meeting next week.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.01pm

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Tim Gillespie/Paul Wilcox – Auckland Racing Club

Plans for the new Eilerslie stables and track drainage were presented. There will be 126 stalls and 4 overnight stables. Addressed previous Health & Safety, ventilation and space concerns and allowed safe viewing access for owners. A café/kiosk and trainers room were included.

K Kelso questioned if there would be prior allocation of stalls and whether ponies were to be allowed. K Zimmerman questioned if horses could be led left-handed in the parade ring.

P Wilcox advised he would take these matters into consideration.

The work on the track for improved drainage was also discussed. A Strath-Ayr had been considered but the levels of rock were such that it would be an investment of circa \$17million. Timing for drainage was hopefully late October/early November. Will get senior jockeys to jump-out first, then trial some horses. Trainers will have option to come and walk the track.

John Allen/Ian Long – NZ Racing Board

John Allen advised he understood the struggle that trainers were having and wanted to offer some hope through three major projects:

1. Racefields – we must push for this legislation to go through. Any chance trainers have they must advocate for this.
2. Fixed Odds Betting Platform – there was much discussion on the costs and benefits of this project. Money has been borrowed to fund some of the cost. J Allen advised that it was 85% built and was a top quality product. It was running to time but there could be a modest delay and that it was under budget.
3. Increasing customers – currently 1.5% of the customers provide 56% of the turnover so base must be grown to reduce vulnerability.

When questioned on cost control, J Allen advised that the distribution of \$153.9million would be held for next season. There were extra costs for credit card privacy compliance. He advised that there were 2 less staff on salary levels over \$100,000 and that his salary was \$650,000. In regards the Messara report, J Allen advised that it was a real opportunity and he was expecting real insights increasing benefits to the industry. That support would be needed to implement the changes.

He further advised that the codes were collaborating well with the Racing Board and that the Deloitte report on outsourcing wagering was being looked at. It was his belief that outsourcing was a lesser risk option than the current RB strategy and it would deliver more returns in the short term, however in the longer term this would not be the case.

Bernard Saundry – NZ Thoroughbred Racing

Racefields does need to get through.

Contracts are due for renewal with TABCorp next year and commercial options need to be considered that deliver the best for future growth. Therefore decisions need to be made at this end for the best strategy.

Clubs own their own land in NZ and can unlock financial value – venue plan currently being undertaken.

Need go get tracks right.

The industry is fixable, but hard decisions do need to be made.

It is likely that the Messara report may recommend changes that will require legislative change.