

NZ TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION (INC)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Thursday 26th September 2024 at 11.30am

Goldstar Room Room, Ellerslie Racecourse

IN ATTENDANCE: Shaun Clotworthy, Moira Murdoch, Michael Pitman, Robert Wellwood, Paul Claridge, Kezia Murphy, Jim Burns, Gary Vile, John Wheeler, Tony Pike, Andrew Forsman, Sally McKay, Stephen Marsh and Wendy Cooper

GUESTS: Russell Warwick, Bruce Sharrock, Darin Balcombe, Matthew Williamson, Dr Eliot Forbes, Cameron Rodger

APOLOGIES: Roger James, Graham Richardson, Victoria McArthur, Andy Cowan

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE LAST AGM – 10 September 2023. Passed as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising. *Claridge/Murphy*

There were no matters arising.

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS – FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024 – Approved unanimously.

Matters arising: Cashflow had revenue accrued from previous season.

Term Deposit proposed of \$100,000 – approved unanimously.

ANNUAL REPORT OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT - attached

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Shaun Clotworthy nominated – *Wheeler/Murphy*

There being no further nominations, Shaun Clotworthy duly elected.

ELECTION OF TWO NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Moira Murdoch and Michael Pitman – *Unanimously elected*

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY/TREASURER- Wendy Cooper appointed

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR (IF APPLICABLE) – unanimous agreement this is not required

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS' COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE – Tony Pike due for reappointment 2025.

DETERMINATION OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION – To remain at zero.

REMITTS AND NOTICES OF MOTION (INCLUDING LIFE MEMBERSHIPS PROPOSED)

There were no remits from the Branches. However the following were put forward and ratified for Life Membership:

- Dennis Brothers
- Jim Burns
- Sally McKay
- Jim Didham

OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS:

- CONSTITUTION CHANGES are required due to legislation and must be made by 1 April 2026. Work has started on this but some issues need clarification:
- VOTING/ATTENDANCE AT NATIONAL/BRANCH AGM'S – agreed that attendance can be online and voting accordingly. No proxy voting will be allowed
- Pre-trainers licenced will be eligible for membership.
- Due to the ability for meetings to be attended online, there is no longer a need for a Taranaki Branch.

There being no further business, the AGM closed at 12.03pm

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE WITH GUEST SPEAKERS FROM 12.30PM. NOTES TAKEN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

GUEST SPEAKERS:

- Entain/TAB – Cameron Rodger

In the last 12 months, Entain has been busy with many innovative projects. These have included the TAB rebranding, launch of BETCHA, a refresh of retail and investments into Trackside and Racing.

- Racing Integrity Board - Dr Eliot Forbes

Dr Forbes has been with the RIB for 4 months and it has been a period of change with a new Chairman and 2 new Directors. There has been a refocus on core responsibilities, working constructively and adopting best practices. There is an ongoing review of the welfare audits and there will be further consultation with the Trainers' Association. Taking a collaborative approach as understand that it is the livelihoods of the industry stakeholders. Aiming to provide a professional, fair and consistent approach.

- NZTR - Russell Warwick, Bruce Sharrock, Darin Balcombe, Matthew Williamson

Russell Warwick advised the move to Cambridge has been successful with a first class, young and enthusiastic team of staff. Succession planning is underway and good people are being brought through. He would encourage communication with the management team. His goal in his role as chair is to give back to the industry and make improvements to venues and training facilities; programming – to maximise wagering and to ensure there is industry training of people and identification of role models.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION WITH GUEST SPEAKERS

- Sunday Racing – due to the increased number of Sunday meetings, is there a way to compensate for the substantial costs incurred and inconvenience for trainers? Suggested that many training tracks that are closed on a Sunday should reopen so that staff can be re-rostered. The reality is we have to grow the product and follow the money – people more likely to bet when they are not at work. There was the same issue with Twilights. NZTR could look at juggling stakes in a similar fashion. Suggestion also that perhaps to alleviate inconvenience, meetings on a Sunday could be programmed closer to horse populations.
- Random Blood Testing – noted that for practical reasons, these should be undertaken in normal stable operating hours
- Deregistering of horses – understand that for traceability, SR24's need to be completed. However many occasions where question is being asked, yet horses are still in work at the stables. To re-register a horse is expensive. IT Systems should make it easier to advise of where horses are located – e.g. when turned out for a couple of weeks.
- Synthetic Track – Review has been undertaken. More regular reporting and communications. Want to ensure there is maximum benefit for the cost involved.
- Social media and bringing racing into disrepute – what actions can be taken? Provide accurate information more regularly to counter “fake news” which only gains more credibility by being shared and commented on.
- Racing Industry Organisation Review status –Review is ongoing. Looking to achieve a more cohesive approach and cost minimisation.
- Jumps Racing Review status – a panel of 5 has been formed, chaired by Alan Galbraith to consider submissions and possible collaboration with Racing Victoria.
- Liaison with Minister for Racing RH Winston Peters – lobbying to take place on important issues such as geo-blocking and venues..
- Trainer of the Year - increase number of discretionary nominations from 2 to 5 discussed and agreed to be same number as Jockeys. Good to acknowledge achievements.
- Facility for Dispute Resolution – consideration to be given to provide this facility to stop issues escalating? Envisaged there would be less than one a year and would need to come through a RIO stakeholder association.
- Entain to look into possible sponsorship of Southland Thoroughbreds Facebook group.
- Consideration given to changing the timing of the 1,000 and 2,000 Guineas to ensure they attract fields that will mean they are not downgraded from Group 1 status. Perhaps more 2000m races in the Autumn could be programmed. Less early 3 year old back type races? Need to keep open mind and enhance racing in the South Island and Central Districts.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome everyone today to the AGM of the NZ Trainers' Association.

I'd like to thank the various leaders of our industry who have taken the time to attend today's meeting:

- *Cameron Rodger - Entain*
- *Dr Eliot Forbes - Racing Integrity Board*
- *Russell Warwick, Bruce Sharrock, Darin Balcombe and Matthew Williamson- NZTR*

NZ Trainers have again been very competitive in tough Australian jurisdictions with top results for NZ trained horses. Most recently Andrew Forsman having Positivity win and qualify for the forthcoming Caulfield Cup.

It has been a pleasure to head the Trainers' Association for the last 12 months with all the exciting changes happening within NZ racing currently. I would like to thank the National Vice Presidents, Moira Murdoch (North Island) and Michael Pitman (South Island) and all the various branch presidents and executives for all their tireless work put in:

- *Robert Wellwood - Northern*
- *Gary Vile - Central*
- *John Wheeler - Taranaki*
- *Kezia Murphy - Canterbury*
- *Sally McKay - Southland*
- *Jim Burns - Otago*

Also Tony Pike for his invaluable knowledge as past president.

Lastly Wendy Cooper whose dedication and passion is greatly appreciated for running the Association.

I would like to think the Trainers' Association has continued to develop positive and closer relationships with the various organisations working in NZ Racing.

My time in the Association has made me more aware of the enormity of the task this is required to run racing, so well done to everyone that contributes to this.

On behalf of the Trainers, we would like to welcome Dr Eliot Forbes to NZ, and also welcome his constructive approach to the start of his tenure with the Racing Integrity Board.

Obviously we all understand the relevance of integrity in our industry but many trainers were dismayed at the initial approach of the Stable Audits being conducted for various reasons. Hopefully the talk is that these audits are to be rationalised and become a more "fit for purpose" approach model.

Welfare is an ongoing commitment and a trainers we all need to make sure it is 100% in our personal operations and as a group making sure all trainers are heading to this level. Whilst I don't think we have a problem in this area, we do totally support the RIB monitoring this in a constructive manner and understand there is no tolerance for welfare issues.

Entain has provided us with a lifeline we needed, and we can only be positive with the initiatives that have developed over the last 12 months ie increased stake money, NZ Kiwi slot race and many new initiatives in place.

The innovative approach and attitude Entain have taken to drive the industry forward has been a breath of fresh air for trainers who had previously been suffocating under the weight of stagnant stakes and marginalised returns.

We also realise we have our part to play in this scenario be providing a product that can engage the general public and keep generating increased wagering and therefore the much needed continuation of better stake money past the 5 year guaranteed payout period.

I think the increased stake consequently have lifted standards and professionalism within the training industry, by self-monitoring each other to be competitive and therefore I believe a better product for Entain to promote.

I would also like to thank Entain, along with NZTR for the support of On Track for mental health wellbeing. This can only improve our industry.

I would like to thank NZTR for their continued support of the Trainers' Association and while we understand there is a review of our position taking place, I believe that there is a valuable link provided by the Association between the people on the ground and those who are driving our industry.

While I can understand the frustration at the lack of participation at regional forums etc, I am still sure that the trainers require a voice so they can see an avenue to raise any concerns they have, and I feel if we cut off this avenue, it will only lead to a "them and us" type of position.

Most trainers are not complacent when it comes to meetings/forums, even though it may look this way - just more than likely they are time poor.

You will find most trainers will contact Association representatives on race days and generally raise concerns or thoughts here.

We all understand the model i.e. trainers/owners provide the product - Entain use the product to make the money through wagering, and it is then dispersed to NZTR who fund and drive the industry. Therefore we are reliant on NZTR to drive our industry in the right direction through innovation, forward thinking, planning, budgeting etc

I feel one of the biggest challenges facing racing is our current infrastructure and why and how it is failing us at times. We need to come together to try and plan ahead to rectify these issues.

Trainers are doing what they can to provide a product to wager on, but at times are getting restricted because of infrastructure issues, such as abandonments, trial opportunities compromised, sub-standard training facilities etc.

Hence we need to be getting our priorities correct when we are allocating our funds to drive the industry. Making sure our expenditure grows the product and trying to avoid contracting it with poor or ill advised decisions.

Finally I would like to think that as a whole industry, participants are working together and communicating in a better manner that will lead to better decision making for our industry. The strongest position we will have is when things are done for the industry, not at a local club or regional level and we need to strive toward this.

Good luck for the remainder of the current season and lets look forward to new initiatives in place.

SHAUN CLOTWORTHY
NZTA NATIONAL PRESIDENT

