

Annual Report

2021

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*There is
no finish line*

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Cover photograph by Steve Christo -
Newcastle ID21 heat - Luke McCarthy



Chairman's Message



Graeme Campbell OAM



The health and welfare of not only our horses, but also our people are front of mind, and so we continue to take steps to protect and insulate our industry from outside influences...



I'd like to thank all HRA Members for the privilege of serving with you all as Chair of Harness Racing Australia. Having been elected in absence to the position during the 2020 AGM, and due to the ongoing effects of Covid-19, I have not had the opportunity to meet my fellow members in person and I look forward to doing so in the near future.

The strength and resilience of our code continues to shine, and it is this feature that I wish to pay tribute to. Not just the HRA Membership, but all of the industry participants and allied organisations that keep our sport functioning.

During this, my first year as Chair, HRA has Reset the governance agenda, strengthening our policies, confidentiality, procedures, preparedness in an effort to set a strategic direction for the organisation that can sustain and service our industry through what continues to be turbulent times.

It has been evident to me for some years that harness racing has become increasingly less relevant to the population at large. Mainstream media coverage has dwindled and as a result the opportunity to engage with a younger demographic has not occurred. Unless we are able to reset the agenda and attract interest to the sport,

we will continue to underperform against our peer sports and competitions.

The HRA Executive and Management are acutely aware of these issues and are now well advanced in planning to stage a \$2 million prize money Everest style slot race named The Eureka, which will be the richest harness race in the world! Funded with inputs from all industry sectors, this will be scheduled to start in 2023 and provide significant marketing opportunities for the industry and a real boost for breeders at the yearling sales.

Quite rightly, our State Controlling Bodies and Clubs are concentrating on the maximization of base prize money to keep as many participants engaged and viable as possible. The promotional impetus generated from The Eureka will benefit all facets of the industry and is a first important step to restoring our relevance to the wider population.

The health and welfare of not only our horses, but also our people are front of mind, and so we continue to take steps to protect and insulate our industry from outside influences – preferring to manage and balance industry needs with contemporary community standards rather than blunt regulations from governments. To this end we continue to engage with governments at all levels in disease preparedness strategies, design traceability registers and set practical land transport standards, along with the continuous improvement of the Rules of Racing to regulate health, welfare, traceability and integrity issues.

On the people front, the HRA Executive also approved the formation of an Industry Training and Wellbeing Advisory Group (ITWAG), which was initially proposed by Harness Racing New South Wales – and I look forward to watching the progress of this group as they unify education and training activities, and benchmarks across States.

2021 has also been a period of significant change, with the monitoring and management of Stallion Limits, continuous improvement of the National Ratings System and a new Racing Season (Calendar Year) taking full effect.

Each of these important pillars continue to function well, possibly beyond expectation in some areas, as the industry enjoyed another year of record wagering from all sources (including Betfair NCW) in FY21 increasing \$113-million to a total of almost \$3.5-billion.

While 3.3% may seem modest, this was on the back of a 17% increase in FY20, so not only has the exceptional growth from the initial phase of Covid been maintained, but it has also grown again.

Chairman's Message

FY21 Import and Export Performance was also positive, with another 6% growth in Export (on the back of 17% in FY20) and turnover approaching the \$300m threshold internationally.

While this is mostly positive, revenues remain under constant pressure and as such, as I have said many times now, change is imperative for the greater good of the industry and its long-term health. To this end, HRA will continue to investigate and identify new revenue streams and opportunities to expand the industry audience and investment. But success will only be achieved if everyone is playing their part!

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 – but one stands out above all others, and it is my great pleasure to announce that the HRA Executive and Members have unanimously endorsed the awarding of the industry's highest individual merit award, the JP Stratton Award, to Mr Dean Cooper.

Dean has provided distinguished service to the Australian harness racing industry since 1993 in a myriad of roles including Honorary Legal Counsel, Executive Member, Deputy Chair, Inter Dominion Event Committee Member, Chair of the National Rules Committee, Chair of the Integrity Conferences, and a representative at the World Trotting Conference on several occasions.

I'm sure you will all join with me in acknowledging, thanking and congratulating Dean on his wonderful contribution – which continues even today!

During the year there were also several changes around the HRA Executive table. The long serving harness representative from Racing Queensland, Ms Margaret Reynolds, was replaced by Ms Jodie Jones, while Ms Emma Grigson-Gair joined the Executive following the resignation of Harness Racing South Australia Chair, Mr George Fiacchi, and Mr Joel Wallace's term expired at Tasracing, with Mr Neil Grose appointed to the position of Harness Director.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Margaret, George and the steady hand of Joel, who all provided excellent representation of the local and national industry during their time on the HRA Executive.

I'd also like to record my gratitude to all Members of the HRA Executive who have been so gracious and supportive since assuming this role, namely Mr Dale Monteith, Mr Ken Brown, and Mr Bob Fowler, as well as all 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 and passion our staff have for the industry.



Graeme Campbell OAM / Chairman



CEO's Message



Andrew Kelly

“ Results are plain to see as 2021 ended with record numbers across the board.”

The Australian harness racing industry has a challenge to compete more aggressively within not just racing, but the sports and entertainment market. As an industry, we need all sectors working together – along with our wagering partners – to make our product more attractive, to find new markets, to grow the fan base, to increase revenue and to increase returns to our participants.

This mindset has been the driver for the HRA Executive and Members to make numerous critical decisions in recent years. While not always popular, it is these decisions which are reforming and shaping our industry's future, with the results now plain to see as 2021 ended with record numbers across the board.

If we take a look at the numbers, in the first full season since changing to a calendar year cycle, there were 14720 races run – the highest since the 2013/14 season.

The number of individual starters at 9819 was the best since 2017/18 and those runners had a combined total of 130,519 starts – the most since season 2014/15. Underlining the success of the new ratings-based handicapping system in most jurisdictions, horses are racing more often, too. Remarkably, the average starts per horse is now 13.3 – the highest since records started being kept back in 1993/94.

The average prizemoney per starter of \$14,192 was also the highest in that time frame.

There were 5970 individual winners across Australia last season – the most since 2013/14.

These results come on the back of the new breeding regulations and futurity enhancements introduced in season 2020/21, which sparked a record breeding season, while another underlying success story of 2021 was the boom of Australian-bred horses.

The key metrics for Australian born horses included:

2YO PACERS

- 36 per cent starters to crop size – up nine per cent on the previous full 12 months and a jump of 11 per cent on the previous 10-year average
- 1209 starters were up five percent on the previous full 12 months and 96 more starters than the previous 10-year average (1113). It's up 177 on the previous seven-year average
- 16 per cent winners to crop – a five per cent jump than the previous full 12 months and a stunning 100 per cent increase on the previous 10-year average of eight per cent
- 545 individual winners – 140 more than the previous full 12 months and a thumping 154 jump on the previous 10-year average of 391

3YO PACERS

- 47 per cent starters to crop size – up two per cent on the previous 12 months and eight per cent on the previous 10-year average
- 29 per cent winners to crop – an eight per cent increase than the previous full 12 months and 11 per cent above the previous 10-year average (18 per cent)
- 985 individual winners – 32 more than the previous full 12 months and 76 above the previous 10-year average (909)

The Trotting gait also saw some remarkable growth in 2021 with 1613 trotting races run around Australia with total prizemoney of \$16.3 million. That's an increase of over 200 races on the previous 12 months and the most trotting races run in 20 years.

These outstanding results have not happened by accident or due to tinkering. HRA has delivered substantive industry reform in the way of National Ratings in most states and the change to a calendar season of racing, which were designed to bring about more competitive racing, enhance the racing opportunities, improve foal crop utilisation and a more even spread of returns across the industry. This spread of returns is also manifested in a higher percentage of trainers and drivers winning races than seen in prior years.

Just as important for such a successful season, which reversed so many long-term trends, has been the implementation of prizemoney returns by HRA members and the positive manner in which the industry participants have embraced the evolution of these key pillars.

Another really pleasing aspect has been the utilisation of the crop in 2021. This not only has a positive effect on the number of races which can be run and the number of horses that run in them, which is critical for wagering, but also the positive welfare outcomes with more **standardbreds fulfilling their potential and gracing a racetrack.**

Administrators have many competing priorities, but our primary objective is always to nurture and promote this great industry, despite the distractions, and I believe the clubs and controlling bodies which comprise the membership of Harness Racing Australia are doing this very well – but, at the heart of everything we do, is what happens on the racetrack!





Photograph by Brett Atkins - Field cornering in perfect symmetry

Racing Highlights - Horses

Great racing occurs when there are several outstanding horses competing for the spoils, especially in the big, high-pressure events. And this was the result in most of our feature races during the season.

Brilliant pacer King Of Swing (by Rocknroll Hanover USA out of Twist And Twirl NZ) won consecutive Australian Harness Horse of the Year awards after amassing 11 wins, including a second Ainsworth Miracle Mile and four placings from sixteen starts during the year, to bank prizemoney of \$871,870.

King Of Swing becomes the ninth horse to win the title at least twice since its inception in 1976. He joins an illustrious list of champions: Beautide (2014 & '15), Im Themightyquinn (2011, '12 & '13), Blacks A Fake (2007, '08 & 2010), Sokyola (2004 & '05), Our Sir Vancelot (1997, '98 & '99), Westburn Grant (1989, '91 & '92), Village Kid (1986 & '88) and Gammalite (1982 & '84).

Bred by Breckon Farms in New Zealand, King Of Swing is raced by B V Richardson, M A Congerton, Go Racing, G L Moore, S D McGregor, R Patriarca, F Patriarca, S E Simmonds and G J Richardson.

King Of Swing is trained by Belinda McCarthy and was driven by Luke McCarthy in 15 of his 16 runs. David Moran drove him when third in the Victoria Cup.

Champion former Kiwi mare Amazing Dream (Bettors Delight-Christian Dreamer), who beat King Of Swing in the Group 1 Blacks A Fake at Albion Park, was crowned the Aged Pacing Mare of the Year in a huge result for rookie trainer Nathan Purdon. She raced 10 times in Australia last season for four wins, two seconds and three thirds. She won three times at Group 1 (Blacks A Fake, The Rising Sun and Queen of the Pacific) and also the Group 2 Kilmore Cup.

It was another huge season for the powerful Emma Stewart and Clayton Tonkin stable, winning three Pacing Horse of the Year categories: Ladies In Red (3YO filly), Act Now (3YO colt/gelding) and Encipher (2YO filly).

Ladies In Red (Mach Three-Kabbalah Karen B) was so dominant she was in talks for the overall Horse of the Year title. She raced 10 times last season for eight wins, two seconds and earned \$306,210. Her Group 1 wins were the Victoria Oaks, Breeders Crown final and Vicbred final. She's raced by Lauriston Bloodstock.

Act Now (Somebeachsomewhere-Mollys Ideal) built on a strong two-year-old season to dominate at three, winning seven of his 14 starts, including the Victoria Derby and Breeders Crown finals for owners B C and V A Edward.

South Australian owner-breeder Tyson Linke enjoyed a huge season with his three-year-old filly Encipher (Captaintreacherous-Our Cavort), who raced 11 times for five wins, five placings and \$278,359 in earnings. Her biggest wins were the Group 1 Breeders Crown and Group 1 Allwood Final. She also finished second in the Group 1 Vicbred final.

Captaintreacherous also sired the 2YO Pacer of the Year, Andy and Kate Gath's exciting Catch A Wave (out of Coppagoodone), who is raced by Richard and Pauline Matthews. He raced just seven times for six wins, including the Breeders Crown final.

Young trotting sensation Plymouth Chubb (Majestic Son-Pocket Fantasy) was so dominant in his freshman season he won the overall Australian Trotter of the Year crown.

After galloping on debut, father-and-daughter Peter and Kerryn Manning took the exciting gelding through an undefeated 14-run streak after that, including the Redwood Classic, Breeders Crown and Vicbred finals all at Group 1 level, for owners G S Benson and S K Hegyi. Sadly, he is now sidelined with injury.

The Aged Trotter of the Year title went to classy Kiwi Majestic Man (Majestic Son-Love Hate Revenge), largely through his deeds early last year when he won the Dullard Cup, Trotting Grand Prix and Aquagait Equine Mile all at Group 1 level. He also finished third in the Great Southern Star.

Majestic Man, trained by Phil Williamson and Sonya Smith at varying times, had 11 Australian starts last season for four wins, three placings and \$189,550. He's raced by the Griffins Syndicate.

Popular mare Pink Galahs (Skyvalley-Sweetasay), who won the 3YO Trotting Filly title a year earlier, won the Aged Trotting Mare title for last season. She won five of her 22 starts, twice at Group 1 level, along with eight placings and \$141,954 in stakemoney. She is trained by Matthew Craven and raced by C G Lewis, L J Lewis and B R Healy.

The powerful Aldebaran Lodge team snared the 3YO Trotting Colt/Gelding title with Aldebaran Zeus (Muscle Hill-Zoia Boko), who raced 12 times for six wins, five

placings and \$118,840 for trainer Brent Lilley and driver Chris Alford. He won the Group 1 Breeders Crown final and finished second in the Vicbred and Victoria Trotters' Derby finals.

Lilley capped a big season by also winning the 3YO Trotting Filly award with the brilliant Queen Elida (Love You-Queen Kenny), who dominated with nine wins and four placings from her 13 starts. She's raced by G J McKenzie and R H Dixon. Her major wins were the Victoria Trotters' Oaks and Breeders Crown at Group 1 level.

Emma Stewart and Clayton Tonkin added to their three pacing titles by winning the 2YO Trotting Filly crown with Just A Bit Touchy (Father Patrick-Gypsy Flair). She won four of her nine starts, headlined by

the Breeders Crown, with another two placings and banked \$77,380 for owners Big Wookie Racing Group, L A McMillan, R D Smart, C R Tonkin and B J Prentice.

The full awards listings are provided elsewhere in this Report, and I extend my congratulations to all involved with such wonderful horses who provided so much excitement, interest, and entertainment throughout the year.



Racing Highlights – Trainers/ Drivers

The National (HRA) trainer and driver awards to honour and celebrate our sports leading trainer and driver are named in honour of the great J.D. (Jack) Watts, who trained and drove winners in all states of Australia and New Zealand in a remarkable fifty-year career which was highlighted by driving the champion pacer Caduceus.

Pete McMullen of Queensland was Australia's leading driver for the year with 315 wins in the 2021 season. Pete was the inaugural winner of the Australian Driving Championship Series at Globe Derby Park in 2015, but this is his first national title, becoming the third Queenslander to win the title after Shane Graham in 2015 and Kevin Thomas in 1976, 1977 and 1981.

Ben Yole of Tasmania was Australia's leading trainer with a remarkable 231 wins for the season. In winning the Australian Trainer of the Year, Ben became the first Tasmanian to win the national title since the commencement of the Awards in 1976.

Racing Highlights – Breeding (Sires)

The 2021 Globe Derby Awards for breeding excellence, sponsored by IRT, continue to be dominated by popular stallions Bettors Delight and Art Major, while Majestic Son CA continues to make his presence felt among the trotting gait.

Bettors Delight USA consolidated himself as one of the greatest sires in harness racing history in winning his tenth consecutive Leading Sire by Stakemoney award with his progeny earning stakemoney of \$13,180,147.

With the Globe Derby Awards established in 1976, Bettors Delight's tenth Leading Sire by Stakemoney title makes him the most prolific winner of this category, surpassing Thor Hanover USA who won from 1976 to 1984 (inclusive).

The Woodlands Stud sire continued his complete domination of the Globe Derby Awards in also taking out the Leading Sire by Winners category with 425 winners – the sixth consecutive year he has won this title and 2021 was the also the 6th time that he has won the Leading Juvenile Sire by Stakemoney.

Majestic Son CA was again the Leading Trotting Sire by Stakemoney for the 6th year running. Progeny by Majestic Son CA won a total of \$2,807,365 highlighted by the four-time Group One winning two-year-old Plymouth Chubb.

Photograph by Desiree Pettit-Keating





The Maori Miss Award, for Trotting Broodmare of the Year was inaugurated in 2020 and was first won by La Coocaracha. The 2021 winner is Tough Tussle NZ 2000 Wrestle NZ – Tough Whiz NZ who was bred by J W Farrell.

Owned by Alex Kay, Peter Gadsby, Charlie Montebello, Ryan Kay, Mark Congerton, Vincent McDonald and the Estate of M Van Rens, Tough Tussle NZ was imported to Australia from New Zealand in 2005 and had a successful career on the track winning at three metropolitan tracks – Moonee Valley, Globe Derby and Harold Park, amassing \$105,135 in career earnings highlighted by the 2006 Group 3 Lightfoot Laurels.

Her second foal is the now three-time Group 1 victor Tough Monarch, a winner of \$541,094 to date, who won two Group 1 races – the QLD Trotting Cup and the Knight Pistol, earning \$174,875 for the season.

With Tough Tussle's third foal winning one race, her next foal, Tough Love had a great two-year-old year for trainer Rickie Alchin winning five races and never out of the placings from 11 starts - earning \$51,075 with a last start third in the Group 1 Breeders Crown Final for two year old trotting fillies.

In season 2021, Tough Monarch and Tough Love won a combined 14 races from 31 starts and \$225,950 in prizemoney.

Acknowledgements

2021 was another year of considerable change on the HRA Executive Committee, and I add my thanks to that from the HRA Chair in his earlier report to Mr George Fiacchi, Ms Margaret Reynolds and Mr Joel Wallace who all performed their National and State roles with distinction.

Many thanks to HRA Chair, Graeme Campbell OAM and all of the Executive who have provided excellent support, strong resolve and sound guidance throughout the year, as well as all who have served on our committees and working parties.

But my biggest thanks is reserved for the small, but totally committed and exceptionally focussed staff in the HRA office. Most of the work you do is unsung and undervalued until such time as people need it!

Having confidence in the integrity of our systems and data is paramount, and the basis upon which the industry operates – and we have that, so thank you.



Andrew Kelly
Chief Executive

King Of Swing Crowned APG Grand Circuit Champion



Hulking pacer King Of Swing has successfully defended his title as the Australian Pacing Gold Grand Circuit champion with another outstanding season.

Fresh off his brilliant term in 2020, King Of Swing elevated his game even further this year with another commanding season highlighted by back-to-back titles of the Miracle Mile at TABCORP Park, Menangle.

The six-leg series was again severely disrupted by the effects of the global pandemic, Covid-19, but King Of Swing contested five of the six features staged throughout the term.

The series started in February with the running of the Del-Re National A.G Hunter Cup at TABCORP Park, Melton with the David Moran trained and driven Lochinvar Art proving triumphant over Alta Orlando and King Of Swing in the 2760m mobile start feature.

Lochinvar Art rated 1:54.8.

Kevin Gordon races the Modern Art entire.

Unfortunately, Lochinvar Art succumbed to injury and never raced again this year.

In March, the Garrards Miracle Mile at TABCORP Park, Menangle was up next and King Of Swing scored a decisive victory over his stablemate Expensive Ego and Wolf Stride.

The Belinda and Luke McCarthy prepared entire rated 1:49.2.

In July, the Blacks A Fake Queensland Championship was held at Albion Park, and millionaire mare Amazing Dream caused an upset by downing Rockin Marty, King Of Swing and Copy That in a gripping finish.

Prepared by Nathan Purdon and handled by Blair Orange, Amazing Dream rated 1:55.3 for the 2680m mobile start event.

The Pryde's Easifeed Victoria Cup at Bendigo took place in October and the classy performer Max Delight scored over Triple Eight and King Of Swing in the 2150m mobile start feature.

Trained by David Aiken and driven by Chris Alford, Max Delight rated 1:53.2.



King Of Swing elevated his game even further this year with another commanding season

The only APG Grand Circuit event staged in the Shaky Isles this year was the New Zealand Cup at Addington, Christchurch and the Ray Green trained Copy That scored a clinical victory defeating Self Assured and South Coast Arden.

Copy That rated 2:00.0 for the 3200m stand start feature.

The series was completed with the TAB Inter Dominion Pacing Championship Grand Final at Menangle and ended in the most dramatic of circumstances.

Expensive Ego was first past the post in the 3009m mobile start feature but lost the race on protest when Boncel Benjamin successfully objected.

Boncel Benjamin is prepared by Jason Grimson and was driven by Josh Gallagher.

The winning mile rate was 1:55.7.

With a tally of 230 points, King Of Swing scooped the award from Expensive Ego (124), Amazing Dream, Copy That, Max Delight (all on 120), Alta Orlando (110) and Boncel Benjamin & Lochinvar Art (100).

Amazingly, the Cobbitty Equine team of Belinda and Luke McCarthy prepared three of the leading scorers – King Of Swing, Expensive Ego and Alta Orlando.

King Of Swing is raced by Beth Richardson, Mark Congerton, Go Racing – Mick Harvey, Glen Moore, Sylvie MacGregor, Rob & Frank Patriarca, Sue Simmonds and Greg Richardson.

Congratulations to all involved with the mighty pacer.

King of Swing becomes the first pacer to claim back-to-back titles since the might Lazarus who claimed the titles in 2017/18.

Other back-to-back champions include Christen Me (2014/15), Blacks A Fake (2008/09) and Our Sir Vancelot (1997/98).

Dual winners include Im Themightyquinn, Village Kid and Pure Steel.

Only two pacers have claimed triple Grand Circuit champion honours – Westburn Grant (1990/91 & 92) and Gammalite (1982/83 & 84).

The Australian Pacers Grand Circuit began in 1977 and was designed to be the showpiece of the Australian Harness Racing Industry with horses competing from every State within Australia.

In 1992, New Zealand was admitted, and the Circuit was later renamed the Australasian Grand Circuit.





Grand Circuit Champion King of Swing

Sundees Son Takes APG Trotting Masters Title



Sundees Son is the 2021 Australian Pacing Gold Trotting Master.

The brilliant Kiwi trotter dominated in his homeland claiming all three 'majors' throughout the term, crushing his rivals in the ANZAC and Rowe Cups in the north at Alexandra Park, Auckland before his performance of the year effort in winning the Dominion during Cup week at Addington, Christchurch.

Prepared by Robert and Jenna Dunn and driven by John Dunn, the Majestic Son gelding has rightfully claimed the mantra of 'best' trotter in the southern hemisphere.

Again.

Back in 2019, Sundees Son claimed his first Trotting Masters crown.

And it means the Trotting Masters title is headed back across the ditch after Tornado Valley landed the big prize last year.

New Zealand trained trotters have dominated the APG Trotting Masters winning 15 of the 21 Trotting Masters series.

The six-leg series starts in Australia with the running of the What The Hill Great Southern Star at Tabcorp Park, Melton and Tornado Valley proved triumphant defeating Magicool and Majestic Man in the heat/final 1720m mobile start feature.

Raced by Norm Jenkin, Andy and Kate Gath prepare Tornado Valley.

The Hygain Australian Trotting Grand Prix, again staged at Melton, was taken out by Kiwi raider Majestic Man who scored comfortably over Pink Galahs and Monaro Mia in the 2240m mobile start feature.

Prepared by astute horseman Phil Williamson, Phil's son Brad drove the Majestic Son gelding.

The next three legs were staged in New Zealand and Sundees Son produced his magic by claiming the ANZAC Cup downing Bolt For Brilliance and Oscar Bonavena.

Sundees Son rated 1:57.9 for the 2200m mobile start feature.

The following week, Sundees Son again proved successful when defeating Bolt For Brilliance and Temporale in the 3200m stand start feature.

In November, Sundees Son produced his best effort with a head spinning romp over Mataderos and Bolt For Brilliance in the Dominion, the biggest event of the New Zealand trotting calendar.

Sundees Son obliterated the record with his powerful frontrunning display in a time of 3:56.6 – a mile rate of 1:58.9 for the 3200m stand start feature.

The series ended with the Inter Dominion Trotting Grand Final, staged at Tabcorp Park, Menangle and Maori Law led throughout in the 3009m mobile start feature defeating Majestic Man and Just Believe.

Prepared by father/son combination of Richard and Emmett Brosnan, the Lawman gelding was handled by Greg Sugars.

Maori Law is raced by his breeder, Fred Crews.

With a tally of 300 points, Sundees Son denied Majestic Man (241), Bolt For Brilliance (160), Tornado Valley (103) and Maori Law (100).

Interestingly, Majestic Man was the only trotter that contested all six-legs of the APG Trotting Masters.

Congratulations to Team Dunn plus owner/breeders Colin and Nancy Hair.



State Controlling Body Reports





Victoria



Dale Monteith

Chairman
Harness Racing Victoria

The challenges faced with COVID-19 continued to evolve throughout 2021 and the HRV Business Continuity Team (BCT) and Executive Management Team (EMT), with the full support of HRV's kindred bodies, continued to guide the industry through the crisis.

The imperative of continuing to race was achieved by adhering to Government health directions, which saw the implementation of strict biosecurity protocols, supported by clear messaging to industry participants, staff, clubs and stakeholders.

The hard work and commitment of our industry participants, staff and clubs, ensured that harness racing was able to continue safely. Our ability as an industry to be flexible as required saw only five race meetings lost due to COVID-19 precautions during FY21.

HRV recorded a \$2.9m net operating profit for FY21, attributed largely to COVID-19 Emergency Funding Assistance from the Victorian State Government, which enabled funding levels for country clubs to be maintained at a time when their revenue was severely impacted through a lack of hospitality income due to COVID-19.

The Government assistance importantly allowed HRV to pay a record of \$46.9m in stake money in 2021, an increase of more than \$5m on the previous year.

HRV-held land at Melton was revalued which has resulted in a \$47m increase in land value. This now positions HRV to positively capitalise on land surplus to racing needs in the future.

Importantly Victorian harness racing experienced a significant 22.9% growth in National turnover in FY21 and surpassed \$1.1 billion compared with \$897 million in FY20 and the previous highest on record of \$921 million in FY19. Significantly average turnover per race increased by 17 per cent, and international turnover grew by 12 per cent.

However as expected, revenue from Victoria's wagering partner Tabcorp fell by 4.8%, largely due to the COVID-19 forced closure of retail TAB venues, or \$1.7m. This result could have been far worse if not for the significant increase in digital wagering through the Tabcorp Joint Venture.

HRV's media and digital strategies saw the continued expansion of Victorian harness racing's footprint, with website visits up 33 per cent year-on-year with 4.1m pageviews and social media impressions increased by 65 per cent to over 20million. TrotsVision played a key role in taking the sport to a new audience with innovative content to support harness racing throughout Victoria. In future HRV will strategically use the TrotsVision coverage to grow interest and wagering on Victorian harness racing, both nationally and internationally.

The 2021 results from these strategies provide HRV with the confidence that Victorian harness racing is attracting a new and bigger audience by engaging more fans, more often. Maintaining growth and finding new ways to excite and attract punters, owners and participants will be crucial in attracting the next generation of fans to our sport.

Importantly in 2021 HRV unveiled its new three-year strategic plan, TROTS24, which was the product of extensive collaboration with industry stakeholder groups. A shared vision will set the path for growth across several key strategic industry areas, and this framework will form part of our new, exciting long-term vision to deliver revenue growth, financial sustainability, and returns to the industry through an unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation.

Victoria's TROTS24 strategic framework consists of 11 key targeted outcomes.

Within each of those outcomes are several strategic priorities, including:

- Increasing stake money
- Increasing wagering turnover on Victorian harness racing
- Growing the number of owners involved in Victorian harness racing and improving the ownership experience
- Increasing Victorian harness racing's international footprint and media coverage
- Positioning Victoria as the desired location for trainers and owners to race their horses
- Growing confidence through a world-class approach to integrity
- Driving world-class welfare initiatives and re-homing more retired racehorses through the HRV HERO program
- Bolstering the breeding industry
- Building regional training hubs

- Providing clear, professional development pathways for all in the industry
- Developing club infrastructure
- Developing TrotsVision as the go-to destination for harness racing content
- Growing raceday attendances

In the coming years, HRV will focus on building an industry based on high performance, accountability, and, most importantly, genuine collaboration; underpinned by a fresh Harness Racing in Victoria approach.

Importantly progress on the strategic priorities has already commenced, with several milestones already reached in 2021.

In line with the need to significantly reduce barriers to entry for trainers with accessible, professional and affordable training infrastructure, Charlton and Cranbourne training centres were upgraded to accommodate more horses.

The HRV HERO program was enhanced with a significant increase in the number of approved re-trainers reducing the waiting time for horses to enter the program by 83 per cent.

With the changes to the Australian Harness racing season, HRV's decision to move The 2020 Vicbred Super Series Finals meeting to new year's eve saw it register turnover such that it was the second most wagered-on Victorian harness racing meeting ever apart from ID18. This followed a similar result for the re-positioned Breeders Crown Finals night in November, which became the third-highest wagering night on record for Victorian harness.

The Vicbred program was expanded in consultation with Harness Breeders Victoria by introducing a Vicbred Pure component, to bolster the Victorian breeding industry by providing incentive for breeders to invest locally.

Initial industry feedback has been most positive, and the number of mares served in Victoria grew by 13.5% from 1817 to 2063 in FY21, compared to the national figure of 11.8 per cent for FY21.

Another key metric saw the number of active owners in the 2021 racing season reach 4306, up from 3817 the previous year, an increase of 12.8 per cent.

The New Year's Eve broadcast of Vicbred Super Series finals night on the Seven Network was a taste of things to come as harness racing re-emerges into the broader sporting landscape.

HRV looks to the future with great optimism and a steadfast commitment to seeing harness racing flourish Nationally for all involved and it looks forward to working together with a whole of industry approach on that journey.

HRV looks to the future with great optimism and a steadfast commitment



New South Wales



Ken Brown AM

Chairman
Harness Racing NSW

The year 2020/21 has been one of significant challenge versus a year of dedicated commitment to the task at hand culminating in a year of achievement.

The highest priority of the Board of HRNSW was again focused on the need of the industry to continue racing, and continue racing it did.

During the year 30 NSW Harness Racing Clubs conducted 486 race meetings and a total of 3,901 races providing in turn a record \$36.452m in prizemoney for distribution to Industry participants.

That outcome was only possible as a result of the concerted and diligent efforts of HRNSW's Covid Management Group (CMG) consisting of its Chief Executive Mr John Dumesny, Chief Operating Officer Mr Peter Carney, Manager Integrity Mr Michael Prentice, Chairmen of Stewards Mr Grant Adams and Mr Clint Bentley, Manager Industry Development Mr Shaun Snudden, Chief Regulatory Veterinarian Dr Martin Wainscott and Manager Education and Welfare Mr Maurice Logue.

The CMG has been at the forefront in the interpretation, adoption and implementation of Government Covid-19 protocols and the development and initiation of Industry specific measures all designed to support a continuation of racing in a safe environment for participants, employees and the public alike.

As advised in HRNSW's 2019/2020 Annual Report, buoyed by an upward trend in wagering revenue streams, coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic austerity measures introduced in the latter part of that year, the Board of HRNSW as at 30 September, 2020 conducted a full review of its financial year 2020/21 budget with the aim of improving returns to Industry participants.

An outcome of that extensive review was an overall increase in base prizemoney of 10% effective from 1 January 2021.

In addition, further increases of 5% effective from 1 January 2022 and 2023 were budgeted for in the forward estimates of HRNSW. In all a total increase in base prizemoney of \$8.5 million over the period 2021-2023.

From 1 January 2021 base prizemoney A Category Meeting Races increased from \$6,500 to \$8,000.

At the same time trainer's prizemoney commissions (1st to 5th) were increased from 7.5% to 10% across every race conducted in NSW, except for NSW Breeders Challenge events.

In December 2020, in accordance with the requirements of the Harness Racing Act 2000, HRNSW in consultation with the Harness Racing Industry Consultation Group (HRICG) and other Industry stakeholders released a new 3-year (2021-2023) Industry Strategic Plan "Harness the Passion".

In the Foreword of the Plan it was made clear that guaranteed annual increases in prizemoney by HRNSW were a cornerstone of its Three Year Prizemoney Strategy and that base prizemoney on offer would be the subject of regular review.

In that context in June 2021 on behalf of the Board I was pleased to announce that from 1 July 2021 prizemoney for A and B Category Meeting races would be increased to \$8,568 and \$6,528 representing increases of 7.1% and 8.8% respectively on the then current prizemoney levels.

Very importantly because of HRNSW's endeavours at the National level, the National Ratings Point Matrix had been changed and base prizemoney races conducted at B Category Meetings would still only attract 3 rating points.

These improved measures of increased prizemoney, the retention of a reasonable prizemoney differential between the categories of meetings and the status quo in the ratings points are all wins for NSW participants.

In lifting the prizemoney, HRNSW also recognised the anomaly in the distribution of same and restored the winner's share of prizemoney to 54%.

The 54% return to the connections of the winner was accomplished using the "10th horse" fund as HRNSW distributes 102% of the prizemoney. No other controlling body distributes prizemoney above 100%.

HRNSW also boosted the prizemoney for the NSW Breeders Challenge Finals to \$150,000 each, which as with base prizemoney, is the highest provided for a State based futurity series in Australia.

The most important measure of the viability and sustainability of the NSW Harness Racing Industry is the extent to which returns to participants compare with the costs incurred to have their horses compete. Reducing the gap between returns and costs is a significant goal of the Strategic Plan.

Prizemoney at the grass roots level provides a vital platform for Industry sustainability and increasing base prizemoney permits a broad spread of returns to all participants including owners, trainers, drivers and breeders alike.

The significant increases in prizemoney were to a large extent off the back of exceptional wagering revenue outcomes for the NSW Racing Industry with increases across all revenue streams and the highest ever total wagering turnover generated by the NSW Harness Racing Industry.

Wagering revenue for the year was \$74,937,158 against a revised budget (October 2020) of \$63,848,325 and \$15,873,464 above that received in 2019/20 (\$59,063,693).

Overall, for the year ended 2020/21 HRNSW posted a surplus of \$15,716,924 restoring the deficits \$6,011,969 and \$34,527 incurred for years ending 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Programmed infrastructure works received the go ahead on 13 July 2021 with the welcome announcement of the Hon Kevin Anderson MP Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and Minister responsible for Racing of the provision by the NSW Government of:

\$2.9 million for the construction of a new harness racing training centre in Bathurst, and

\$1.3 million in assistance for facilities associated with the rehoming of retired pacers and trotters across regional NSW

An additional \$6.7 million was included in the State Budget to complete the business case for the Venues NSW Hunter Park Project which, if successful, will require the relocation of the Newcastle International Paceway to a new site where a centre of excellence costed at \$25 million will be developed with Government support.

The Bathurst Training Centre and Rehoming Program projects together with further scheduled works in the order of \$1 million at the Tamworth Paceway will commence forthwith.

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

A photograph of a woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, petting a brown horse in a stable. The horse has a white halter and a white blaze on its face. The background shows the interior of a stable with wooden beams and a corrugated metal roof. The image is overlaid with a large green circular graphic on the right side.

*The Government is
committed to seeing the
NSW Harness Racing
Industry grow and prosper*



It is very much of comfort to know that the Government is committed to seeing the NSW Harness Racing Industry grow and prosper.

Appreciation is also extended to Mr Robert Marshall Chairman of Club Menangle and his Board of Directors, Mr Bruce Christinson CEO Club Menangle, Mr Mark Croatto the immediate past Chair and Ms Julie Maughn the newly appointed Chair 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, on behalf of us all, it gives me great pleasure to commend the Chief Executive of HRNSW, Mr John Dumesny, his senior management team, stewards and staff for their committed efforts in the stewardship of the Industry through an extremely difficult year.

Unfortunately, as with the community at large, the harness racing fraternity of NSW continues to live and operate in a Covid environment. However, if 2020/21 is anything to go by, there is every reason to suggest that the Industry will meet the challenges ahead and continue to conduct its activities in a safe and successful manner.

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
Racing Queensland

The building blocks for a bright and prosperous future for the Queensland racing industry continue to be laid.

For a sixth year, I have enjoyed the honour of leading this enormous industry, which plays such an important role in the fabric of our state.

During 2020/21 normalised revenue across the three codes grew to a record \$336 million, an increase of 19.2%, while returns to participants reached \$271 million up 22%, which was well above our targeted \$250 million.

From a wagering perspective, the Queensland harness racing industry continued its upward trend in growth, amassing record-high of \$0.7 billion in turnover, representing a 29.1% increase on 2019/20.

Revenue also set a new benchmark of \$20 million, a 14.4% increase on FY20 figures.

Over the course of the year, Racing Queensland conducted 299 TAB meetings – a 3.1% increase on FY20 – and featured 2,742 races.

For a second successive year, TAB starters grew, with 24,094 starters representing a pleasing 9.0% increase on FY20.

Racing highlights and premierships

FY21 marked a new beginning for harness racing across the nation, as the season officially shifted to run on a calendar year basis.

The 18-month season came to a close in December 2020, with Pete McMullen the standout driver, notching up 205 wins in the sulky.

Unsurprisingly, Grant Dixon dominated the premiership standings with 273 wins in the Sunshine State, 153 clear of his nearest rival.

He also finished atop the national standings, with 380 wins nation-wide across the extended season.

There were also a number of career milestones achieved, with both Nathan Dawson and Narissa McMullen notching up their 1,000th career winning drive in 2020/21.

Meanwhile, Lola Weidemann became Queensland's first female driver – and just the second in Australia behind Kerryn Manning – to net 3,000 career wins.

Having been postponed earlier in the year, the 2020 TAB Blacks A Fake was temporarily shifted to headline a new-look Summer Carnival, alongside the Group 2 Queensland Cup and the Group 3 The Be Good Johnny Sprint.

The Blacks A Fake meeting enjoyed national coverage on the Seven network, marking the first time harness racing had been seen on free-to-air television in Australia.

In the 2020 edition of the Blacks A Fake, one of Australia's most dominant pacers of recent times, King Of Swing, proved far too classy for his rivals, scoring a dominant 12-metre win over Queensland champ, Colt Thirty One.

In the lead-up events, Colt Thirty One secured The Be Good Johnny Sprint in a thrilling finish, while Cruz edged him out in the Queensland Cup.

Throughout March and April, Queensland's reinswomen set the tone nation-wide, with 76 winning drives resulting in more than \$15,000 being donated to WomenCan Team Teal, raising funds for ovarian cancer research.

This improved on their efforts from 12 months ago.

Innovation once again came to the fore, with a number of initiatives introduced to the code.

In late March, the drivers' colours initiative was officially launched, with a handful of the state's highest profile drivers turning out in new and exciting colours aimed at attracting new fans to the code.

Similarly, the TAB Trot Rods series continues to go from strength-to-strength with record-breaking wagering throughout the 2021 edition and broadcast enhancements including drone vision.

Having quickly established its position on the Queensland harness racing calendar, turnover on the Final grew by \$1.6 million (+117%), with Trot Rods heats averaging \$270,000 per race across the series.

The Group 1 winners throughout the year were:

- Blacks A Fake: King Of Swing;
- QBRED Triad 2YO Fillies: Jasper;
- QBRED Triad 2YO Colts & Geldings: Big Wheels;
- APG Brisbane Yearling Sale Final: Hes Sweet;
- QBRED Triad 3YO Fillies: Talent To Spare; and
- QBRED Triad 3YO Colts and Geldings: Manila Playboy.

The inaugural TAB Queensland Constellations was a resounding success on and off the track with an electrifying build-up to the new Winter Carnival.

With the superstars of pacing from both sides of the Tasman in attendance, the Constellations included two new Group 1 races – The Rising Sun and The Golden Girl – and the return of Queensland's only Grand Circuit event, TAB Blacks A Fake, to its traditional winter timeslot.

With social media abuzz in the lead-up to the major meetings, Amazing Dream, for Nathan Purdon, lived up to the hype with not one, but two incredible victories.

The Group 1 winners at the TAB Queensland Constellations were:

- Redcliffe Yearling Sale Final: Teddy Disco;
- The Rising Sun: Amazing Dream NZ;
- DJA Trotting Championship: Pink Galahs;
- Sunshine Sprint: Copy That NZ;
- The Golden Girl: Jaradas Delight;
- Blacks A Fake: Amazing Dream NZ;
- Queensland Derby: American Dealer NZ;
- Queensland Oaks: Momentslikethese;
- QBRED 2YO Fillies: Cat King Cole;
- QBRED 2YO Colts and Geldings: Awaywego; and
- Queensland Trotters Cup: Tough Monarch.

2020 TAB Queensland Harness Awards

In February, RQ staged the 2020 TAB Queensland Harness Awards in Brisbane.

Colt Thirty One confirmed his standing as one of the Sunshine State's greatest ever standardbreds after securing the top accolade.

The Grant Dixon-trained pacer was crowned the TAB Queensland Harness Horse of the Year for a third straight occasion, edging out fellow finalists Governor Jujon and Majestic Simon following another remarkably consistent campaign.

The son of Mach Three joined Blacks A Fake and Avonova as a three-time Horse-of-the-Year winner.

Not surprisingly, Dixon, who trained a nation-high 380 winners, was named both Australian and Queensland Trainer of the Year, among a raft of other accolades.

The award winners were:

- Queensland Harness Horse of the Year – Colt Thirty One;
- Queensland Trotter of the Year – Majestic Simon;
- Queensland Trainer of the Year – Grant Dixon;
- Queensland Driver of the Year – Pete McMullen;
- Queensland Concession Driver of the Year – Angus Garrard;
- Queensland Filly or Mare of the Year – Pelosi and Justalittle Torque;
- Queensland Aged Pacer of the Year – Colt Thirty One;
- Queensland Breeder of the Year – Burwood Stud; and
- Queensland Owner of the Year – Solid Earth P/L and Dr John Mammino.

QBRED highlights

QBRED enhancements continue to be rolled out with a range of initiatives during FY21.

The 3YO QBRED Triads returned to Group 1 level in May with Talent To Spare winning the Fillies' Final and Manila Playboy doing likewise in the Colts and Geldings.

Not to be outshone, Jasper landed the 2YO Fillies' Final and Big Wheels took out the Colts and Geldings.

To start the calendar year, the QBRED first-win bonus rose from \$10,000 to \$12,000, with the Shannon Price trained Catch Phrase collecting the first cheque of the year courtesy of a victory at Redcliffe.

A number of other initiatives were rolled out including the introduction of the 'QBRED For Life' Group 3 features which are expected to form part of future Summer Carnivals.

Finally, on the breeding front, Transitional QBRED eligibility was introduced to allow Queensland breeders – and owners – the opportunity to bring in-foal mares to Queensland from interstate or New Zealand, with the resultant foal being eligible for the QBRED scheme.





Photograph by Andrew Taylor - A Cold Night in Bathurst



South Australia



Emma Grigson-Gair

Chair
Harness Racing SA

On behalf of the HRSA Board, I present this report on the current activities, initiatives and direction of our industry in South Australia.

During the first half of 2021, the industry was faced with a raft of flow-on effects due to the ongoing global pandemic – many of which we had remained insulated from in 2020. Financial performance of the organisation was sluggish and declining due to poor participation, restricted access and impacted horse population issues. Our clubs in the South-East of the state were especially hard hit, with ongoing VIC and NSW border closures and lockdowns creating extra barriers to progress. In the face of these hardships, I believe that it has been the tenacity and strength of our people that has enabled us to achieve positive industry outcomes in such dire circumstances.

Financially we recorded an –\$500,000 difference between our total revenue in 2020 and 2021, whilst retaining our investment into the industry, through stake money and various initiatives, within \$150,000. This significant achievement allowed us to post a modest profit for the year and begin investment programs for welfare, integrity and breeding. I am excited to announce that South Australia has a number of new initiatives that represent our desire to give back to the industry, protect our animals and support our participants.

The financial results for our industry demonstrate the hard work, innovation and creativity of our executive staff – particularly our outgoing CEO, Ross Neal, who renegotiated terms with major partners resulting in higher returns for the industry as a whole in South Australia. Increased offerings on sport, provided by all bookmakers, is challenging racing's hold on the wagering spend, with sports once unheralded, now attracting significant interest from those once loyal to harness racing. This change in the wagering dynamic has been in addition to the expanding dominance of corporate partners at the expense of the TAB and pari-mutual wagering.

**Moving forward, this complex
and dynamic environment
provides just as many
opportunities as pitfalls and we
will need to negotiate our way
with vision and confidence.**

An achievement of FY21 was our ability to return in excess of 70% of net wagering back into the industry – far above the returns seen in our state counterparts.

Such generosity has come at a cost, however, and the rationalisation of stake money across South Australian Racing, implemented on November 1st 2021, has enabled HRSA to more equitably divide prize money and start to invest in initiatives for the benefit of the state. Ongoing financial discipline will be key as we move to expand our strategic plan from 2022 onwards – with a focus on education, community and growth.

The biggest change in the racing sector, felt nationally, has been the alignment of the racing season to the calendar year. This resulted in many changes to our racing schedules and the development of new initiatives such as the ‘SA Cup’ and an increased focus on ‘SA-first’ growth. However, from a South Australian point of view, the national change has been positive, assisting in conducting feature races at times more conducive to public exposure and interest. South Australia looks forward to continuing this work and aligning state growth with national growth.

Over the past year, in addition to financial achievements, harness racing in South Australia has addressed several welfare, organisational and strategic challenges – reinstating the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) chaired by Director Scott Barclay, and the development of strong, supportive committees to support action in risk, governance, welfare, integrity and communications. An initiative implemented during the year which was an ‘Australian first’ was the combination of racing into a dual ‘Mount Gambier/Port Pirie’ meeting. While the initiative created sceptics, it has proven to be successful in providing much needed opportunities for both clubs and participants. Port Pirie, in particular, has progressed the initiative further in securing sponsorships and private funding – further evidence of the rejuvenation of our sport, slowly but surely.

Mention must also be made of the race meetings held at Gawler under the umbrella of ‘Carnival of Cups’, a tri-racing SA initiative to raise interest, collaboration and advocacy for our industry. The success of this series, already programmed for three years, is thanks to the tireless efforts of the volunteers at club level, without whom our industry would struggle. Thanks also to Kapunda and Victor Harbor for the standard and quality of their meetings during the year.

Overall, South Australian Harness Racing owes gratitude to our resilient and committed industry participants for a positive year when the odds were against us.

The biggest change in the racing sector, felt nationally, has been the alignment of the racing season to the calendar year.

Our major feature event, the Southern Cross Series, was deferred from its usual time slot in May to December due to the ongoing effects of COVID and uncertain travel regulations. The year saw an increase in the number of competitors for the race, a positive sign of things to come. The series was dominated by driver, Mark Billinger who drove three of the six winning races. Saturday May 15th saw the third running of 'The Allwood', a Group 1 event for 2yo horses auctioned for sale at the 2020 Allwood Stud Farm SA Yearling Sale. The final was won by 'Encipher' in a mile rate of 1:54:9, the fastest ever recorded mile for a 2yo in South Australia.

Other achievements of note have been the racing win tallies and individual results for our female drivers, lead by State Leading Driver, Danielle Hill.

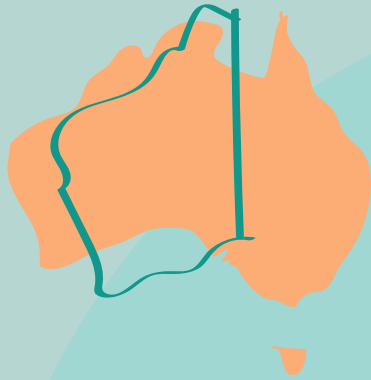
Away from the racing, four new Directors were appointed to the Board during the course of the year. John Levy was reappointed in a caretaker role for a period of four months, and we welcomed Sharon Cimarosti, Heath Pocock and Carlo D'Ortenzio as full time members in November 2021. As we welcomed new members, we farewelled those leaving. George Fiacchi, our former Chair, left the board in July 2021 and we thanked him for his service and efforts during his tenure. James Black and Nicolle Rantanen-Reynolds, having just joined the Board in November 2020, also left in early 2021. Perhaps most significantly, the industry farewelled outgoing CEO, Ross Neal, after many years of dedicated service and relentless advocacy for the sport. His replacement, Dean Elliott, has already been hard at work reviewing all aspects of our industry with a view to rejuvenate and grow interest in the sport.

HRSA is committed to developing a strong strategic outlook and plan for action to secure the sustainability of racing in the state moving forwards. We are in the most positive position we have been in for the last ten years, with a united industry, clear vision and defined roles to play.

On behalf of the Board, I thank everyone for the contributions and say that we can all look forward to a positive 2022.







Western Australia



Jeff Ovens

Chairman

Racing and Wagering
Western Australia

Strategic Direction

During FY2021, RWWA's strategic focus for the harness code to improve the commercial competitiveness saw an increase in breeding bonuses being paid, totalling \$3.5 million, and the further optimisation of race programs.

The key priorities were to:

- Improve the commercial competitiveness of Western Australian harness racing by delivering improvements for the wagering customer through the delivery of competitive race fields and value betting opportunities.
- Provide an environment that will sustain the racehorse population.
- Maintain its 'right to exist' by proactively meeting community expectations in animal welfare and integrity.
- Increase the relevance of WA harness racing.

COVID-19

While racing in Western Australia continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, the public health response by the State and Federal Government affected the racing season during 2021.

On 31 January 2021, racing across all three codes ceased for a five-day lockdown, however RWWA was able to reprogram races and meetings to minimise the loss of racing opportunities to participants.

While there were two additional snap lockdowns implemented by the States Government – in April and June respectively – racing, trialling and trackwork were able to continue during these periods under a range of strict bio-security measures to protect both the health and livelihood of the industry's workforce and, as a result, the wellbeing of the state's racing animals.

Throughout the 2021 racing season, RWWA continually worked with the State Government to ensure the racing industry maintained a high standard of compliance with bio security protocols.

As part of the FY2021 distribution announcement, RWWA committed to conducting a mid-year review for race clubs to ascertain the impact of COVID-19. As a result, one-off payments were provided to all Western Australian race clubs, which acknowledged both the inability for some clubs to race and the on-course revenue losses due to attendance restrictions during the COVID-19-impacted periods.

In total, \$332,891 was distributed, with all Western Australian harness race clubs receiving a minimum payment of \$10,000, irrespective of their COVID-19 impact.

Racing

Western Australia hosted 251 race meetings throughout FY2021, encompassing 2,092 individual races, which provided racing opportunities for 1,621 individual horses.

In total, RWWA provided funding and subsidies to clubs and participants to the value of \$36.6 million.

During FY2021, 329 Western Australian trained mares earned \$305,485 in EPONA credits as a result of winning 638 races. Four mares each earned the maximum credit amount of \$5,000, and a total of \$116,636 was paid in subsidies to the owners of 52 mares.

The Australian Pacing Gold Yearling Sales recorded a sale aggregate of \$2.45 million (\$1.99 million in FY2020) and average sale prices of \$21,000 for fillies and \$24,800 for colts. The median sale price was \$20,000, up from \$15,000 in 2020.

There was an increase in the number of races run at Provincial 1 and Metropolitan Midweek race meetings to further optimise programs and generate additional turnover and revenue to the code.

An important part of summarising racing's key achievements for the year is to also recognise the winners of Western Australia's Group 1 races, as follows:

- The Golden Nugget won by MINSTREL NZ Greg and Skye Bond (trainers); Colin Brown (driver); and Team Bond Pty Ltd, Birchbrook Breeding Pty Ltd, R D Butt, J R Butt, A J Hickman, P M Hickman and The Running Camel Pty Ltd (owners).
- WA Derby won by MIGHTY RONALDO; Justin Prentice (trainer/driver); and G A Mortimer, R Fitzgerald, R V Brennan, S Brennan, T Florio, J Florio, J R Brennan, K Brennan, A D Vallis, J K Prentice, B L Jones, Hillbillies Syndicate, G S Thorn and B Thorn (owners).
- WA Oaks won by BENESARI LANE; Ron Huston (trainer); Kim Prentice (driver); and R J Huston and V A Lea (owners).

Animal Welfare

RWWA's commitment to ensuring the best levels of care are provided to racing animals during all stages of their lives, saw increased investment in equine welfare initiatives in FY2021.

Following the announcement of the Western Australian Racehorse Welfare Plan in 2019 significant investment in retraining and rehoming in the equine codes was realised with the Off the Track WA (OTTWA) Estate and Retraining Program, which launched in September 2020.

In 2021, there were 34 standardbred horses accepted into the OTTWA Retraining Program and 16 successfully rehomed.

With the initiatives in the Western Australian Racehorse Welfare Plan implemented, an extension of a broader equine welfare strategy was introduced, which will see an even greater investment in FY2022.

Marketing & Events

Through RWWA's Owners Only initiative a number of events were held to recognise and reward current and prospective Standardbred owners. Events included hosting current owners on selected race days, as well as supporting Gloucester Park Harness Racing with barrier draw events and the Winners Bar and running an ownership experience competition to attract new owners to the industry.

RWWA held the annual Ladies of Pacing Awards on Wednesday, 16 June 2021. The event celebrated the diverse role of women in the industry with award categories including dedication to harness racing, leadership, welfare and administration.

The Harness Horse of the Year Awards were held on Wednesday, 17 March 2021 and saw CHICAGO BULL (NZ) win the title as well as a series of accolades for a tremendous performance throughout the season.

Future Outlook

As we enter the new year, RWWA looks forward to 2022 with great optimism with the primary focus to remain competitive and to deliver on our funding commitments that will ensure the sustainability and integrity of the Western Australian racing industry.

RWWA announced prior to the end of FY2021, that it would allocate \$460,000 towards marketing initiatives and reallocate total stakes to increase prizemoney at the regional and country tracks.

However, stronger than anticipated results for FY2021, encouraged RWWA to further accelerate funding initiatives to benefit Western Australian racing participants.

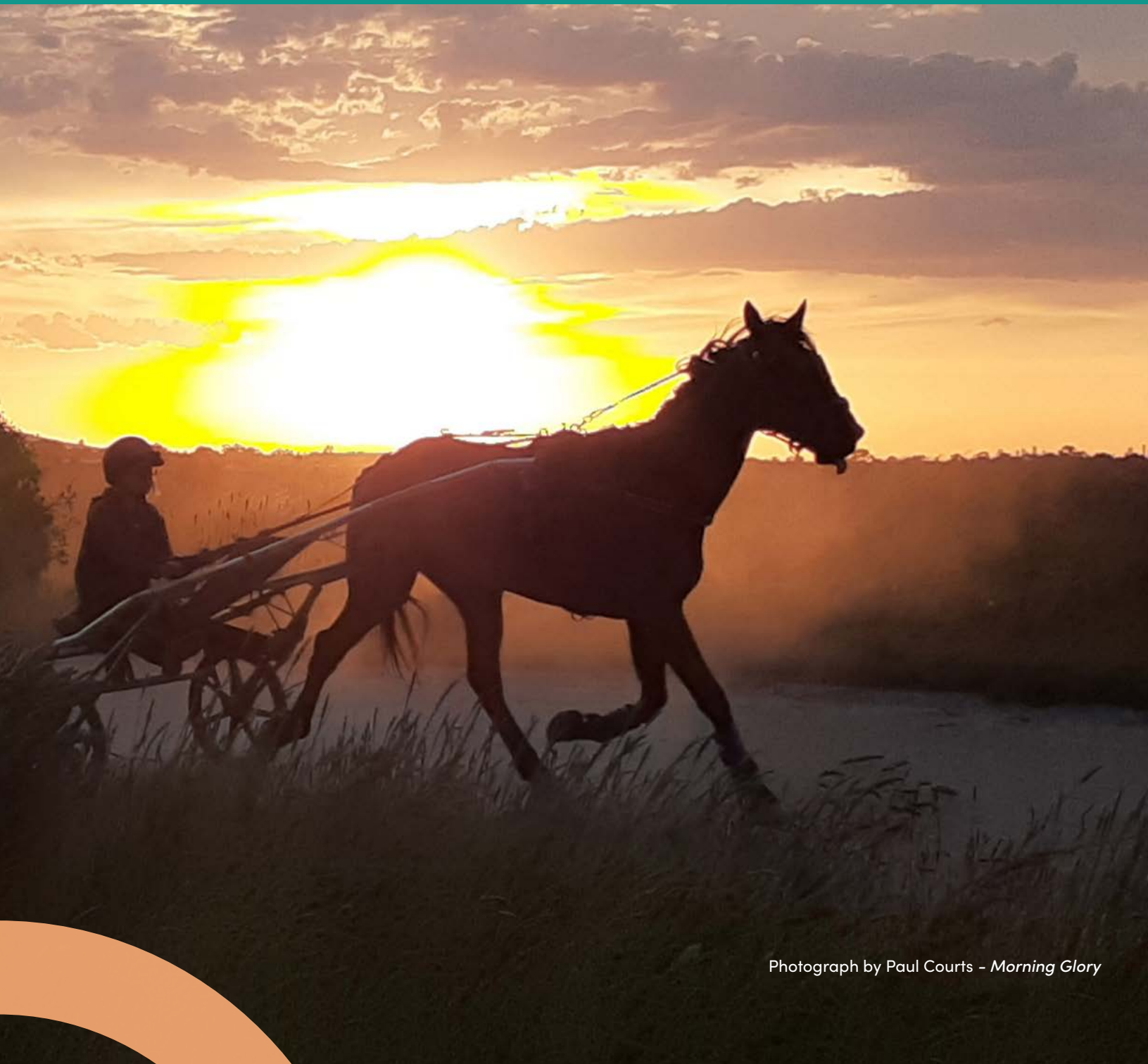
From 1 February 2022, RWWA will increase the average metropolitan prime stakes for harness racing by \$2,965 (from \$19,138 to \$22,104) and reinstate funding to allow both 10 races at Gloucester Park on a Friday night and 9 races on a Tuesday.

A three-year funding commitment will also be finalised and announced mid-2022 with 'locked-in' minimum baseline annual stakes increases commencing from 1 August 2022.

On behalf of RWWA, I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the hard work of the Western Australian racing community in enabling us to be among the few sports that kept operating throughout the worst of the pandemic period.

With a new year comes new exciting opportunities and RWWA looks forward to delivering on its commitments for 2022, including providing greater certainty about future stakes increases for racing participants.





Photograph by Paul Courts - *Morning Glory*



Tasmania



Gene Phair

Chairman
Tasracing

Harness racing in Tasmania received two funding increases in 2020/21. After industry consultation, the initial increase was allocated to additional races while the second increase was allocated directly to base stakes.

This base stakes increase placed Tasmanian harness racing stakes third nationally when comparing country prize money levels.

There were 16 feature races held in Tasmania during the reporting period with stake money of \$20,000 or more. Prize money across these races totaling \$655,000.

The Shallows, trained by Heath Woods, won the \$30,000 Tassie Golden Apple Final, and after disqualification of the interstate runner Bully's Delight, also took out the \$75,000 Tasmania Cup Final. Wivenhoe trainer Craig Hayes won the \$75,000 Easter Cup Final with his 6YO gelding Scooterwillrev.

The permanent change of the harness racing calendar commenced 1 January 2021. This has had a major impact on the programming of Feature Events, specifically for two and three-year-olds, as well as delivering positive welfare outcomes for the industry. The Tasbred Sires Stakes races now scheduled later in the year are expected to achieve positive results in both field sizes and wagering.

The National Ratings Handicapping System introduced on 1 July 2019 has continued to deliver positives within the code across Australia. Increased wagering, field sizes and more competitive racing are the specific outcomes. A Ratings Review Team with representatives from each state meet on a regular basis to discuss feedback from the industry. Work around programming guidelines with Tasmania commenced in late 2020 and were introduced on 1 January 2021. These guidelines have created races to combat low rated high win horses racing against low win horses. These guidelines have received positive feedback from the industry.

Launceston was scheduled to host the annual Female Driver's Championship in March 2020 which was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19. Tasmania was subsequently offered the 2021 series which was held in Launceston in March 2021. In conjunction with the Team Teal initiative, representatives from each of the states competed for the title. The final points tally was:

- Dannielle Veivers (QLD) – 71
- Narissa McMullen (QLD) – 56
- Emily Suvaljko (WA) – 50
- Dani Hill (SA) – 49
- Kate Gath (VIC) / Sam Gangell (TAS) – 42
- Lisa Ryan (SA) – 40
- Kerryn Manning (VIC) – 39
- Ashley Hart (NSW) – 39
- Hannah Vandongen (TAS) – 36
- Jocelyn Young (WA) – 34
- Stephanie Lippiatt (NSW) – 29

King Island Racing was again held over the December/January period with seven combined Harness / Thoroughbred meetings. There was an increase in Standardbreds racing on the island, with two harness races held per meeting attracting an average of nine starters per race. This was an increase from the previous financial year.

Leading our state premierships tables for 2021 was

- Leading Trainer Ben Yole
- Leading Driver Conor Crook
- Leading Junior Driver Jordan Chibnall
- Leading Female Trainer Tammy Langley
- Leading Female Driver Jordan Chibnall

The remainder of the annual awards, which are yet to be finalised, will be presented at the dinner on 9 April 2022.

In the infrastructure investment space, planning works has commenced on the development of a new greyhound and harness racing facility on the North-West Coast after securing an agreement between Tasracing, Devonport Agricultural & Pastoral Society and the Devonport Showground project to vacate the Devonport Showgrounds. Tasracing has appointed Dalton Consulting Engineers (DCE) to provide design and engineering services for the proposed facility, engaging track design expert Wayne Edgeloe for the harness track.

Tasracing announced a new Maternity Assistance Program (MAP) for female jockeys and harness drivers in the state.

Tasracing's MAP will bridge the gap from when a jockey or driver ceases riding or driving at the end of their first trimester until they are eligible for the Federal Governments Paid Parental Leave Scheme at the birth of the child.

Code Director Joel Wallace retired from his board position in November 2021. Tasracing and Industry are very thankful for the time and effort Joel placed into the code during his tenure.



Hurley



2021 Australian Harness Racing Awards



Lawn Derby Awards - Pacers

KING OF SWING NZ

AUSTRALIAN HARNESS HORSE OF THE YEAR

AUSTRALIAN PACER OF THE YEAR

AGED HORSE/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

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

Performances: 16 starts 11 wins 4 placings \$871,870 1:49.2MS

Breeder: Breckon Farms Ltd

Owners: B V Richardson, M A Congerton, Go Racing, G L Moore, S D McGregor, R Patriarca, F Patriarca, S E Simmonds, G J Richardson

Drivers: Luke McCarthy, David Moran

Trainer: Belinda McCarthy

AMAZING DREAM NZ

AGED MARE PACER OF THE YEAR

(bm 2016 by BETTORS DELIGHT USA from CHRISTIAN DREAMER (NZ))

Performances: 10 starts 4 wins 5 placings \$447,350 1:54.9MS

Breeder: V & D Devery

Owners: M J Hanover, G L Banks, R S Gutnick, T J Pontone, J A Lotizo Jr

Drivers: Anthony Butt, Blair Orange

Trainer: Nathan Purdon

LADIES IN RED

3YO FILLY PACER OF THE YEAR

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

Performances: 10 starts 8 wins 2 placings \$306,210 1:53.1MS

Breeder: Lauriston Bloodstock Pty Ltd

Owner: Lauriston Bloodstock Pty Ltd

Drivers: David Moran

Trainer: Emma Stewart

ACT NOW

3YO COLT/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

(bc 2017 by SOMEBEACHSOMEWHERE USA from MOLLYS IDEAL)

Performances: 14 starts 7 wins 4 placings \$342,755 1:54.8MS

Breeder: B C & V A Edward

Owner: B C & V A Edward

Driver: Jodi Quinlan

Trainer: Emma Stewart

ENCIPHER

2YO FILLY PACER OF THE YEAR

(bf 2018 by CAPTAINTREACHEROUS (US) from OUR CAVORT NZ)

Performances: 11 starts 5 wins 5 placings \$278,358 1:54.9MS

Breeder: Tyson Linke

Owners: Tyson Linke

Drivers: Kate Gath, Mark Billinger

Trainer: Emma Stewart

CATCH A WAVE

2YO COLT/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

(bg 2018 by CAPTAINTREACHEROUS (US) from COPPAGOODONE NZ)

Performances: 7 starts 6 wins \$199,990 1:53.8MS

Breeder: Benstud Standardbreds, P M O'Shea, Z D O'Shea

Owners: R J Matthews, P Matthews

Driver: Kate Gath

Trainer: Andy Gath

Photograph - Andy Pearson - ID21
Bathurst Early Evening Sunset





Vancleve Awards – Trotters

PLYMOUTH CHUBB

AUSTRALIAN TROTTER OF THE YEAR

2YO TROTTING COLT/GELDING OF THE YEAR

(bgr 2018 by MAJESTIC SON CA from POCKET FANTASY))

Performances: 15 starts 14 wins \$223,930 TR1:56.6MS

Breeders: G S Benson, S K Hegyi

Owner: G S Benson, S K Hegyi

Drivers: Kerry Manning, Jason Ainsworth

Trainer: Peter Manning

MAJESTIC MAN NZ

AGED TROTTING HORSE/GELDING OF THE YEAR

(bg 2014 by MAJESTIC SON CA from LOVE HATE REVENGE (NZ))

Performances: 11 starts 4 wins 3 placings \$189,550 TR1:53.5MS

Breeder: N T Bennett, LHR Syndicate

Owner: Griffins Syndicate

Drivers: Anthony Butt, Brad Williamson

Trainer: Phil Williamson

PINK GALAHS

AGED TROTTING MARE OF THE YEAR

(brm 2016 by SKYVALLEY NZ from SWEETASAY)

Performances: 22 starts 5 wins 8 placings \$141,954 TR1:54.2MS

Breeder: L J Lewis

Owners: C G Lewis, L J Lewis, B R Healy

Drivers: Mattie Craven, Glen Craven

Trainer: Mattie Craven



Photograph by Stacey Lear - *Gearing up for the future*

ALDEBARAN ZEUS

3YO TROTTING COLT/GELDING OF THE YEAR

(bc 2017 by MUSCLE HILL (US) from ZOIA BOKO SWE)

Performances: 12 starts 6 wins 5 placings \$118,840 TR1:58.7MS

Breeder: Aldebaran Lodge Pty Ltd

Owner: Aldebaran Lodge Pty Ltd

Lessees: Aldebaran Lodge Pty Ltd, T Cullen, D Thackeray, M J Thackeray

Driver: Chris Alford

Trainer: Brent Lilley

QUEEN ELIDA NZ

3YO TROTTING FILLY OF THE YEAR

(bf 2017 by LOVE YOU (FRA) from QUEEN KENNY (NZ))

Performances: 13 starts 9 wins 4 placings \$151,110 TR1:56.8MS

Breeder: G J McKenzie, R H Dixon

Owner: G J McKenzie, G J McKenzie, B A McKenzie, B E McKenzie, T R Barron, C L Barron

Drivers: Chris Alford, Greg Sugars

Trainer: Brent Lilley

JUST A BIT TOUCHY

2YO TROTTING FILLY OF THE YEAR

(bf 2018 by FATHER PATRICK (US) from GYPSY FLAIR)

Aust Performances: 9 starts 4 wins 2 placings \$77,380 TR1:59.3MS

Breeder: D J Poole, S B Poole

Owners: Big Wookie Racing Group, L A McMillan, R D Smart, C R Tonkin, B J Prentice

Drivers: Kate Gath, Kerryn Manning

Trainer: Emma Stewart

2021 Globe Derby Awards

BETTORS DELIGHT USA (for the 10th time) Leading Sire by Stake money

BETTORS DELIGHT USA (for the 6th time) Leading Juvenile Sire by Stake money

MAJESTIC SON CA (for the 6th time) Leading Sire of Trotters by Stake money

2021 Statistics

LEADING SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

592 starters 425 winners 1,144 wins \$13,180,147

LEADING SIRE OF 2YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

CAPTAIN TREACHEROUS USA

39 starters 24 winners 59 wins \$1,075,952

LEADING SIRE OF 3YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

125 starters 101 winners 300 wins \$3,018,193

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

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

174 starters 129 winners 359 wins \$3,924,923

LEADING SIRE OF TROTTERS BY STAKEMONEY

MAJESTIC SON CA

178 starters 107 winners 267 wins \$2,797,155

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF TROTTERS BY STAKEMONEY

SUNDON USA

194 starters 114 winners 295 wins \$3,022,204

LEADING SIRE BY WINNERS

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

425 winners

LEADING SIRE OF 2YO'S BY WINNERS

BETTORS DELIGHT USA & BETTING LINE USA

28 winners

LEADING SIRE OF 3YO'S BY WINNERS

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

101 winners

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

CHRISTIAN CULLEN NZ

400 starters 265 winners 753 wins \$8,417,492

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 2YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

ART MAJOR USA

97 starters 51 winners 117 wins \$1,454,268

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 3YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

BETTORS DELIGHT USA

99 starters 72 winners 213 wins \$2,013,612

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE BY WINNERS

ART MAJOR USA

281 winners

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 2YO'S BY WINNERS

ART MAJOR USA

51 winners

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 3YO'S BY WINNERS

ART MAJOR USA

76 winners

Media Awards



Winner of Best Photograph - *Greg Porteous - ID21 Grand Final*

Harness Racing Australia (HRA)
are thrilled to announce the
2021 Joseph Coulter Media
Award winners.

Joseph Coulter Best News Story of the Year

**HARNESS RACING'S VISION TO
RESURRECT SHOWGROUNDS**

Written by Adam Hamilton and published
on Racenet on 27 July 2021.

Graham Goffin Memorial Award

- **Best Feature Article**

**GROUP RACE JOY FOR FRENCH SPECIAL
ON MANY FRONTS**

Written by Kieran Iles and published in the
Bendigo Advertiser on 4 M

Special Commendation

HERE'S TO 1500 "OLD BOY"

Written by Kieran Iles and published in the
Bendigo Advertiser on 4 March 2021.

Graham Goffin Memorial Award

- **Best Regional Story**

**STANDING GROUND: MARONG LIGHT
HARNESS CLUB FIGHTS TO RETAIN
TROTting TRACK**

Written by Kieran Iles and published in the
Bendigo Advertiser on 17 November 2021

Graham Goffin Memorial Award

- **Best Historical Feature**

**HARNESS HISTORY: HOW THE ALLEN'S
FROM GLENLOTH RESHAPED THE TROTS**

Written by Noel Ridge and published on
thetrots.com.au on 24 November 2021.

Best Book or Publication

**THE SIX AMERICAN STALLIONS OF
ADELAIDE HILL STUD**

Written by Noel Ridge and published on the
Harness Breeders Victoria website on 10
September 2021.

Best Published Action or Still Photograph

**INTER DOMINION UNDER LIGHTS
(PICTURED)**

Taken by Greg Porteous at Menangle on 11
December 2021.

Best Feature Television/Video Film to Air

**BLACKS A FAKE – THRIVING IN
RETIREMENT**

By Andy Pfammatter and Jordan Gerrans.
Published on 19 July 2021.

Best Radio Feature to Air

**INTERVIEW WITH LUKE MCCARTHY AND
MATTIE CRAVEN IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE
2021 PACING & TROTting GRAND FINALS**

By Chris Barsby and aired on Radio TAB
QLD on 8 December 2021.


**Award of Merit For Demonstrated
Excellence in Promotion**

**REDCLIFFE HARNESS RACING CLUB
– TROT RODS**

Award of Merit For Demonstrated
Excellence in Social Media Usage &
Innovation

PSP

The Queensland Harness Racing outside
broadcaster, PSP enhanced the broadcast
coverage of harness racing to incorporate
drone coverage and driver cam telemetry.



By Chris Barsby

Pete McMullen – Australian Driver of the Year

315.

That is the magical number in Queensland harness racing following the unbelievably successful season just completed by leading reinsman Pete McMullen, aka 'Leader Peter.'

The third-generation horseman steered home a record number of winners for the 2021 season, easily eclipsing the previous best mark held by Shane Graham at 259 set during the 2014/15 season.

As a result, he becomes the first driver in the State's history to drive more than three hundred winners in a single season.

Breaking down his record haul, his first century took 4 months & 8 days while his double century took 7 months & 28 days and his triple century came in the final month of the season, 12 months & 10 days.

And now he joins the exclusive club of Victorian drivers Chris Alford, Daryl Douglas and Kerryn Manning to drive over three hundred winners or more in a single season.

McMullen becomes the 13th driver to achieve the feat given that Alford has done it five times (2011/12, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19), Douglas four times (2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2010/11) and Manning three times (2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05).

Manning was the first triple century driver, achieving the feat of 371 winners in the 2002/03 season.

Only Alford has driven more than four hundred winners in a single season, and he has done it twice previously (2017/18 & 2018/19).

The record for most wins in a single season sits at 456 – staggering!

And Alford has the record for most successive centuries of winners, his tally now sits at 29 and still active.

From a local perspective, only five drivers have driven two hundred winners or more in a single season.

And all five drivers are still competing: McMullen, Grant Dixon, Shane Graham, Mathew Neilson and Nathan Dawson.

Neilson was the first Queensland based driver to register a double century, back in the 2002/03 season while Andrew Peace was the first driver to register a double century back in the 1988/89 season.

For those wondering, legendary horseman Vic Frost was the first driver to register a century of wins in a single season when landing 106 winners back in 1969/70 season.

McMullen joins the likes of fellow Queenslanders Shane Graham, Bill Dixon, Kevin Thomas (x 4), Brian Pelling (x 2) and Keith Wanless as the National Driver of the Year.

Interestingly, McMullen defeated his cousin Nathan Dawson to claim the 2021 Driver of the Year award, the first time Queensland has produced a one/two result since the

1970/71 season when Queensland had the top three drivers in the country – Keith Wanless (104), Noel Croghan (94) & Brian Pelling (84).

"It hasn't really sunk in just yet, in time to come, I'll sit down and reflect on my achievement properly, but it's really been a bit of a blur, in particular, the last six months or so," McMullen said.

"It's not something you set out to do, I didn't say back in January last year I was going to drive over 300 winners, it just happens, and things get rolling really quickly and the momentum is powerful." He added.

McMullen scored his first win of the 2021 season with an easy victory behind the ill-fated Boomchuckalucka (trained by his wife Chantal Turpin) at Albion Park on January 12, he did not drive in the first seven meetings staged in the year.

Remarkably, his next 299 winners coming one day short of 11 months.

His 300th winner came at Albion Park on December 10 when he combined with the Graham Dwyer prepared Williewa Lightning.

Combined, the stables of Turpin and Dwyer provided the bulk of his winners, around two hundred winners coming from those in-form stables.

And those two stables combined for records during the 2021 term, Turpin trained a personal best 153 winners while Dwyer registered his maiden century with a haul of 105 winners.

“Chantal and Graham certainly provided the bulk of my victories, both have had excellent seasons and should be celebrated also because without their support, I’m not in the position I find myself in.

“I had feature race success for both as well, it’s very satisfying and rewarding to get those features because ultimately, that’s what we’re all striving for in this game.

“There’s plenty of other trainers that have played a huge role with support and opportunities while the owners have been fantastic, it’s a really lengthy list of people I have to thank which will take me plenty of time.”

But as we know, McMullen was born to drive.

The first-born child of John and Jennette and grandson of the Queensland Hall of Famer J.C (Hollywood), McMullen graduated through the mini-trotting ranks competing against his three sisters (Narissa, Dannielle & Taleah) regularly.

He made his debut late in the 2006/07 Equine Influenza ravaged season as a 16-year-old but had to wait until the following term for his maiden victory when successful aboard Melton Royal Bonny at the now defunct Rocklea Showgrounds, the winner prepared by his father came on January 12, 2008.

And the floodgates opened soon after.

McMullen has had century seasons since the 2009/10 term with doubles coming via the 2019/20 and the recently completed 2021 season.

The record for most century of wins sits with the late Gavin Lang at 35.

Only Grant Dixon (23) and Shane Graham (14) have more centuries than McMullen in Queensland history.

During that stretch, he became the youngest driver to reach 1000 wins when he eclipsed Amanda Turnbull as a 23-year-old, Turnbull was 24 years and four months.

He was also the youngest driver to reach 2000 career wins.

McMullen was crowned the state’s leading Concession (Junior) driver with wins in 2008/9, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14.

It should be noted when winning the titles in 2008/09 and 2009/10 – he beat his now wife, Chantal.

As a 17-year-old, he competed during the 2009 Inter Dominion series at the now defunct Parkland’s complex on the Gold Coast when driving Riverboat Star for his father and grandfather.

Riverboat Star finished 7th behind Our Awesome Armbro in the Consolation.

The following year, on his 18th birthday, his father took him to North America, and he drove at the famed Meadowlands Racetrack in New Jersey where he finished third behind his heroes Ron Pierce and Brian Sears.

He claimed the record for the youngest driver to register a century when 18 years and 8 months during the 2009/10 season, the record now sits with Angus Garrard who set the new mark during the 2019/20 season as a 17-year-old.

McMullen was crowned the leading driver in Queensland during the 2019/20 season while he has twice been crowned the Queensland Metro Driver of the year – 2017/18 and 2021.

He represented Queensland during the 2010 Australasian Young Drivers Championship in Sydney finishing fifth behind Tasmanian Gareth Rattray.



In 2015, he was listed as the reserve for the World Drivers Championship in New South Wales with the line-up including New Zealand ace Dexter Dunn (winner), Tim Tetrick (USA), Jody Jamieson (Canada), Chris Alford (Australia), Tony Le Beller (France), Guillermo Adrover (Spain), Mika Forss (Finland), Vidar Hop (Norway), Knud Monster (Denmark) and Pierre Vercruysse (France).

The Australian Driver's Championship was first staged in 2014, staged in Adelaide at Globe Derby, McMullen claimed the inaugural series while he has competed in the 2016 (Globe Derby), 2018 (Globe Derby) and 2019 (Hobart) editions.

With close to 2500 career wins, McMullen has driven three Gr.1 winners – Big Wheels & Awaywego plus the trotter My Valerie but is hungry for more.

During the 2021 record haul, McMullen twice landed five wins hauls at a single meeting – Albion Park and Redcliffe (Xmas Cup meeting).

He is one of only seven drivers to achieve the feat at Albion Park joining the likes of Grant and Trista Dixon, Alan Donohoe, Peter Greig, Luke McCarthy and Shane Graham.

The best horse McMullen has driven is Im Themightyquinn, the second richest pacer of all-time in Australasia behind the incomparable Blacks A Fake.

Trained by Gary Hall Snr, Im Themightyquinn won 58 races from 111 starts and banked \$4,457,456.

It's a glittering career for McMullen with the promise of plenty more to come.

And all this achieved by the age of thirty.

"I've still got a few things to tick off the list including driving at Gloucester Park in Perth while I'm yet to drive in New Zealand.

"Also, if I drive at Canberra, that will have me competing at every state and territory in Australia.

"In time, I'll look forward to sitting down with Chantal and our daughters, Rylee and Olivia and reflecting on my career."

As Graham Dwyer's son Layne famously coined, 'Leader Peter' is a force to be reckoned with and his spot in the Queensland Harness Hall of Fame awaits.

Pete McMullen – we salute you!



By Chris Barsby

The Inter Dominion

Photograph by Greg Porteous - ID21 Win for Driver Josh Gallagher

In many ways, the Inter Dominion Grand Finals were opposites.

The pacing series was dominated by one stable – Cobbitty Equine, the partnership of Luke and Belinda McCarthy who claimed seven of the nine staged heats.

7 from 9!

And that included a clean sweep of the three heats staged at Bathurst, the middle night of the series.

Both King Of Swing and Expensive Ego went unbeaten throughout the heat action.

Naturally, they dominated all pre-race discussions leading into the 3009m mobile start Grand Final at Tabcorp Park, Menangle on December 11.

Rising star Expensive Ego faired best, landing the inside gate for stand-in driver David Moran while King Of Swing needed to overcome a second line draw with regular reinsman Luke McCarthy sticking solid.

As the race unfolded, speedy beginner Boncel Benjamin raced across to lead before handing over the lead to Expensive Ego and moves were very limited thereafter.

In fact, the first 1200m metres was pedestrian like with Expensive Ego clearly dictating terms in the lead role while the first move came via Spirit Of St Louis taking off as the field passed the 1800m mark.

With Spirit Of St Louis in motion, King Of Swing caught his cover and tracked up behind him before finding the position on the outside of the leader as the field worked inside the 1600m.

With the two favourites at the head of affairs, the race developed into a sprint home.

At the top of the straight, Expensive Ego shook off the challenge from King Of Swing who had no answers while Boncel Benjamin, tucked away on the leaders back loomed as the potential threat.

This is where things got interesting.

Over the final 150m, Expensive Ego drifted up and down the track causing Boncel Benjamin and young driver Josh Gallagher to check before charging hard at the line.

In the end, Expensive Ego scored by a head margin over Boncel Benjamin with Alta Orlando some distance away in third after taking inside runs.

But there was more to come.

Connections of Boncel Benjamin immediately lodged a protest against the winner.

The drama that followed was remarkable and historic.

After a 35-minute inquiry, televised live on TV, the result was overturned and Boncel Benjamin was declared the winner. It's the first time in history of our greatest race (which started in 1936 at Gloucester Park) the result has been overturned by a protest.

The result handed trainer Jason Grimson and driver Josh Gallagher their biggest victories, in fact, it was Gallagher's maiden Gr.1 victory!

It also marked the first occasion that Grand Circuit champion King Of Swing has missed a placed since being under the care of Cobbitty Equine since transferring from Gary Hall.

Meanwhile, in the Inter Dominion Trotting Grand Final, the first ever staged at Tabcorp Park, Menangle saw Maori Law lead throughout in the 3009m mobile start feature defeating Majestic Man and Just Believe.

Prepared by Richard Brosnan, in partnership with his son Emmett, the injury plagued trotter was handled by Victorian reinsman Greg Sugars.

Brosnan, once a giant of the sport in New Zealand, trained No Response to record one of the most stunning wins in Inter Dominion history at Addington in 1979, weaving his way between horses in the home straight.

The victory of Maori Law was more sedate, he quickly took the lead away from Kiwi raider Majestic Man and Just Believe while the heavily favoured Pink Galahs made an early error.

Perfectly rated in front by Sugars, Maori Law trotted comfortably and smoothly throughout and always held a margin over his rivals.

At the line, Sugars simply urged Maori Law over the concluding stages and the richly talented trotter responded positively and safely held Majestic Man and Just Believe.

The final split was 27.9 seconds while the winning mile rate was 1:59.4.

The victory provided Sugars with his maiden Inter Dominion triumph, but it was the star reinsman's 47th Gr.1 success.

Perfectly managed throughout the three rounds of heats, Maori Law was expertly prepared by the father/son training combination.

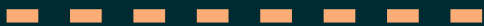
Since being under the care of Team Brosnan, the eight-year-old gelding has won five of his 14 starts including the Gr.1 \$50,000 Australasian Trotting Championship at Bendigo on September 11, last year.

Maori Law is raced by his breeder, Fred Crews and ranks as a half-brother to Maori Time (24 wins - \$421k).

Both Grand Finals were vastly different but equally epic.

The 2022 Inter Dominion Series will be staged in Melbourne later this year.

*There is
no finish line*



www.harness.org.au

www.thereisnofinishline.com.au

