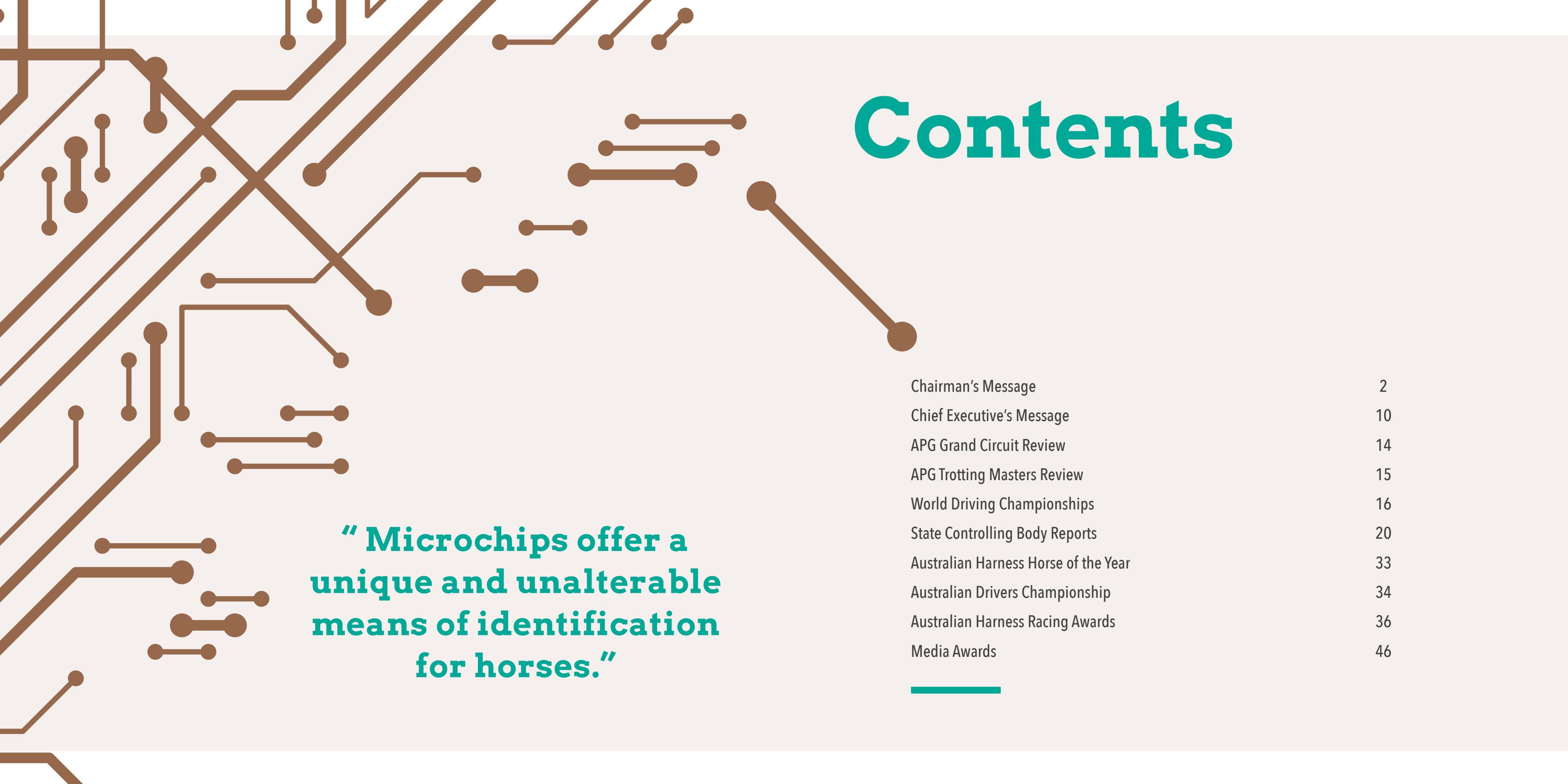


# Annual Report 2017

[www.harness.org.au](http://www.harness.org.au)  
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**“ Microchips offer a unique and unalterable means of identification for horses.”**

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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Geoff Want

There is much to celebrate about the 2016/17 season with spectacular racing at meetings throughout the country and positive signs for the future.

Unfortunately there are many in our industry who prefer to dwell on the negatives. There is no doubt there have been challenges in the past year – and there will be in the years ahead – but that is the nature of the business.

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said: “The only limit to our realisation of tomorrow will be our doubts of today”. It is easy to be a critic, but there is much to be positive about in the Australian harness racing industry.

*If racetrack performances were our only barometer of success it would be a stellar year. Smolda's stunning win in the 2016 Inter Dominion in Perth was the culmination of an outstanding carnival ... Lazarus was awesome in the 2017 Victoria Cup at Tabcorp Park Melton ... a week later Bling It On scored a tough win over a quality field in the A.G. Hunter Cup at the same venue ... Lennytheshark thrilled a bumper crowd at Tabcorp Park Menangle with a brilliant win in the Miracle Mile ... Hectorjayjay was dynamic in the Blacks A Fake at Albion Park ... and there was great racing at tracks across Australia.*

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

### WHIP BAN

Unfortunately, much of the focus away from the racetrack was on the decision taken at the 2016 HRA Annual General Meeting in Adelaide to ban the use of whips in Australian harness racing.

The reaction to the decision to ban whips was predictable. It was overwhelmingly applauded by animal welfare advocates, politicians and the broader community but polarising in the harness racing community.

Among the issues faced by our industry is administrator and stakeholder obfuscation and disinclination – some administrators who are reluctant to drive change, and many participants who are unwilling to accept, or adapt to, change.

The ban decision taken at the Adelaide AGM had the unanimous support of Members. Indeed, I canvassed every delegate at the meeting and there was not one dissenting voice. Furthermore, I cautioned that we should spend more time preparing the industry for the change, but this was rejected.

I had stated in my annual report that it was inevitable whips would be banned in Australian harness racing in the coming seasons, but I did not expect the decision to be taken at the AGM. Nonetheless, I applauded the initiative of Members and, with chief executive Andrew Kelly, was committed to ensuring the ban became reality.

Neither Andrew nor I expected the abuse we received from sections of the industry and it is disappointing some people find it impossible to dissent without using threats and intemperate language.

Robust debate opposing something is fine and fair criticism is acceptable, but the strident invective of a few people on social media was way beyond what could be deemed reasonable.

It was even more disappointing however when some delegates to the AGM attempted to distance themselves from the whips ban decision when they faced their stakeholders, despite their advocacy for it in Adelaide.

Despite the fallout from the Adelaide decision, there is no doubt the industry has taken a significant step forward in bringing about whip use reform. The start of the new racing season to implement a ban was probably never a realistic target and it was abandoned mid-year, but there did seem to be a general acceptance among participants of the need for further whip use reform.

At the time of writing this report it appeared there would be a new rule restricting whip use to a wrist only action, although the final wording and implementation date had still to be agreed by Members.

*“Most participants now seem to understand what animal welfare advocates and politicians alike are stating – that racing codes must not breach their “social license to operate”.*

Of all the regulations under which we operate there is no formal or defined “social license”, but it is indicative of changing community standards and attitudes that we need to be extremely mindful of public expectations.

This is not just an Australian issue. At the World Trotting Conference in Canada in August there was a session – “Is it time for whip free racing?” – at which it was apparent most international jurisdictions have grave concerns about whip use.

Sweden has banned the importation of American harness racing telecasts because of what is deemed to be excessive whip use and other countries are closely monitoring developments.

Hopefully, rational debate will continue in Australia on the issue, which is as much about the image of our racing product as it is about animal welfare.

Personally, I believe social pressures will eventually encourage the racing industry to ban the use of whips – or will force governments to legislate to impose a ban.

### A SALUTE TO CHAMPIONS

I've often lamented the fact we don't do enough to recognise and promote our heroes, both human and equine, although Harness Racing Victoria endeavoured to challenge this view when champion reinsman Chris Alford became the first person to drive 6,000 winners in mid-May.

There was plenty of publicity both before and after the milestone achievement, with Chris deservedly getting many accolades.

The 49 year old, an eleven time champion Australian driver of the year, clocked up 6,000 wins behind Diamond Grace at Tabcorp Park Melton on May 15. At season's end he had accumulated 6,121 career wins.

In the 2016-17 season he drove 332 winners – an astonishing 118 more than any other driver – to again secure the JD Watts Award as Australia's champion driver. He also had an impressive strike rate, with 25% of his drives winning and 53% being placed.

Chris Alford is a modest, unassuming man – a champion reinsman and a champion person – and an absolute credit to our industry. We are fortunate to have him!

The same can be said of another legend and fellow Victorian, Gavin Lang, who also achieved the magical 6,000 winners when he drove Tell Me Tales to victory at Melton on July 8.

It was another milestone in a truly remarkable career for the 58 year old who is renowned for his ice cool driving tactics. At the end of the season Gavin had progressed to 6,021 career wins.

Another master reinsman, Chris Lewis from Western Australia, also celebrated a significant achievement when he became the third driver in Australia to reach 5,000 wins. The 62 year old drove four winners at Bunbury on New Year's Eve with one of them, Im The Best, taking him to the 5,000 mark.

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Chris, a former JD Watts Award winner, finished second on the national table this year with 214 wins in the season, taking his career tally to 5,150.

The world's best female driver, Victorian Kerryn Manning, grabbed her own slice of history two days before the end of the season when she became the most successful horsewoman in any code of racing around the globe.

Driving Mr Mojito to victory at Terang took her career record to 3,706 wins, one clear of American jockey Julie Krone.

Kerryn Manning is a five time Australian champion driver and has a career littered with honours and accolades. Despite an injury interrupted season she drove 75 winners from 396 drives, with an admirable strike rate – 19% wins and 49% placed.

Wayne Hill of South Australia won the Australian

Driving Championship conducted at Globe Derby Park in Adelaide while Todd McCarthy of NSW triumphed in the Australasian Young Drivers series held in Western Australia.

Whilst saluting our champions it is appropriate to recognise the achievement of Queenslander Grant Dixon, who was Australia's leading trainer for the sixth successive year with 286 wins. Grant surpassed 4,000 winners during the year, finishing the season with 4,134 career victories.

Emma Stewart from Victoria was second on the national table with 216 winners and was one of six females in the top ten trainers in Australia, the others being Skye Bond, Amanda Turnbull, KerryAnn Turner, Chantal Turpin and Vicki Rasmussen.

There were two females among the top ten drivers, Amanda Turnbull of New South Wales and Danielle Hill from South Australia.

## EQUINE STARS

Some of the outstanding racetrack performances were mentioned at the beginning of this report including Smolda's stirring success in the 2016 TAB Touch Inter Dominion Final at Gloucester Park in Perth. Trained in New Zealand by Mark Purdon and Natalie Rasmussen, and usually driven by Mark, Smolda also took out the South Australian and Ballarat cups and was named Australian Harness Horse of the Year.

*The Victorian two year old Woblee was named Australian Trotter of the Year after a stunning season in which the gelding won 10 of 12 starts for driver Chris Alford and his trainer wife, Alison.*

Smolda's stablemate Lazarus took out the Australian Pacing Gold Grand Circuit after stunning wins in two of the features, the New Zealand Cup and the Victoria Cup. The brilliant entire was one of seven individual winners of the eight legs of the APG Grand Circuit.

All five legs of the APG Trotting Masters were won by different trotters, with the New Zealand mare Habibti Ivy, trained by Paul Nairn, taking the series on the strength of victory in the Anzac Cup at Alexandra Park in Auckland and a second in the Rowe Cup at the same venue.



## TEAM TEAL

Regardless of issues which can cause angst or concern at times, harness racing remains a wonderfully inclusive and generous industry. When disaster strikes or someone is down on their luck, the industry rallies with emotional and financial support.

The Team Teal initiative, which raises funds for the Women's Cancer Foundation and specifically research into how ovarian cancer mortality can be reduced, is a fabulous example of how harness racing participants answer the rallying call to assist others.

The driving force behind Team Teal is Victorian industry stalwart Duncan McPherson, who sadly lost his wife Lyn to ovarian cancer, with support from his family and a group of supporters such as Michael Taranto.

Launched in Victoria in 2014, it has grown to encompass mini trots and clerks of the course and went national in the 2016/17 season. Some 253 female drivers wore teal pants in a six week window in February/March 2017, attracting sponsorship dollars for every win, while 130 mini trots participants also promoted the cause.

The female drivers also made generous donations, promoted the fundraising and organised special appeals. Other drivers and trainers contributed, along with wagering organisations and HRA Members, including a special night at Tabcorp Park Melton.

In all more than \$240,000 was raised, almost half of it by the Team Teal reinswomen through driving some 290 winners and undertaking other fund raising activities.

*To quote the Women's Cancer Foundation:*

*"As ovarian cancer impacts mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, wives and friends, Team Teal provides the harness racing industry with a unique opportunity to collaborate with a cause that appeals directly to its community and networks".*

Congratulations to all involved in what is a truly positive undertaking by our industry and there is no doubt the fund raiser should be a permanent fixture in Australian harness racing.



## INDUSTRY STATISTICS

Analysing statistics does not always lead to an accurate portrayal of the health of an industry and there is no doubt there are some disturbing signs when comparing various harness racing indicators with a decade earlier.

This is particularly so with breeding numbers. In the 2016 breeding season there were 3,603 live foals, down by 1,484 on 10 years ago. There were some 5,157 mares served at the same time, just over 300 down on the prior year and 2,637 fewer than 10 years earlier.

Declining foal crops are disappointing, but there also have been some positive steps taken to improve fertility rates and to get a greater percentage of foals to the racetrack.

During the season we raced at 92 tracks around Australia, one more than 10 years ago, but there has been a vast improvement in the quality of tracks – and a number of new or renovated venues – in that time.

Over the decade there has been a gradual decline in the number of race meetings programmed (1,737 in the past season, down almost 200 in the period) and the number of races conducted (14,085 or more than 1,500 fewer than 10 years ago).

Total stakes money – excluding bonuses, trophies and other incentives – in the past season was more than \$116.6-million, an increase of \$26-million over the decade. It was however down more than \$1.5-million on the prior year. There were heartening increases in NSW, Tasmania and South Australia but Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia all recorded falls in stakes money of about \$800,000.

Associated with these figures has been a significant fall in the fan base, both on and off course, in the past two decades which has resulted in a loss of relevance. Disturbingly, harness racing has now clearly become the third code of racing, based on wagering turnover figures, behind thoroughbreds and greyhounds.

The most concerning fact however is the changing wagering landscape which has resulted in erosion of industry funding.



## INDUSTRY FUNDING

Betting turnover for the past financial year grew a further 6% which builds on a similar increase last year, but analysis of the figures for the past five years shows just how dramatic the change in the wagering landscape has been.

Harness racing turnover from all licensed wagering operators now exceeds \$2.68-billion, which is an increase of \$385-million over the five years, or almost 17%. Whilst this is extremely pleasing there is cause for grave concern with the seismic shift in betting preferences, particularly the move by punters away from the traditional pari-mutuel totalisator wagering to fixed odds.

Pari-mutuel wagering has been the primary revenue source for the industry for many years and the returns are far better than the commission from fixed odds betting. This accounted for some 88% of turnover on the nation's TABs five years ago but it has since plummeted.

*There has been a drop of almost 40%, or \$580-million, in the past five years.*

This has had a serious impact on industry funding. Gone are the days of the industry being reliant on strong returns from dependable pari-mutuel operations and administrators must find ways of overcoming the downturn in this traditional revenue source.

It really is the era of fixed odds betting, both with the TABs and with corporate bookmakers. Interestingly, the significant rise of fixed odds betting within the totalisator companies has resulted in total TAB turnover being flat over the five year period. The corporate bookmakers, through aggressive marketing and exceptional customer service, have out-performed the TABs over the last five years, with turnover on harness racing doubling.

Given the harness racing industry's partnership with the TABs and our reliance on their wagering turnover, it will be interesting to see how they respond to the corporates in the next few years.



## WAGERING REFORM

After a decade of campaigning by HRA and other racing bodies for wagering reform in Australia, it was pleasing to finally see amendments to the Interactive Gaming Act passed by the federal parliament in August 2017. These amendments are designed to combat illegal offshore gambling and to provide greater consumer protection, including a ban on online credit betting and measures to assist problem gamblers.

During the past nine years HRA undertook extensive lobbying of state and federal politicians for wagering reform and lodged eight submissions to parliamentary inquiries, including the O'Farrell review of illegal offshore wagering in 2016 which prompted the reforms.

Under the reforms it is illegal for companies or individuals to provide gambling services to Australians unless they hold a licence issued by an Australian state or territory. The measures are largely in line with the recommendations made by HRA, although we would have preferred a more stringent regulatory regime which included a ban on banks processing payments for illegal operators.

*Nonetheless, the amendments contain heavy penalties for breaches of the Act and it is a welcome step in the right direction.*

Under the amended Act the Australian Communications and Media Authority is charged with responsibility for enforcing the provisions and with maintaining a register of licensed interactive wagering services, to provide clarity on which companies can operate legally. Currently, there are 38 companies on the register.

Estimates vary on how many companies are – or have been – operating illegally in Australia and it is difficult to determine the quantum of wagering revenue lost to these operators each year. It is interesting to note however that Sweden estimated at the World Trotting Conference that there are as many as 83 illegal betting companies operating in Scandinavia.

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

### INTEGRITY

Integrity matters remain a major focus for all jurisdictions in order to provide industry participants, owners and the public with the confidence that there is a level playing field in Australian harness racing.

For its part, given the dynamic nature of the industry, HRA coordinates two Integrity Conferences each year where rules and practices are formally reviewed. Any suggested amendments are then considered via the HRA governance structure which includes the National Rules Committee, Executive and the Members before being communicated and adopted.

These conferences provide value in that they bring stewards, integrity staff and regulatory veterinarians together to discuss issues and ultimately improve the framework which underpins the industry.

The importance of integrity systems and processes is also illustrated in increased funding and resourcing that most States either have, or are undertaking. An increase in out of competition testing, stable inspections and raceday target testing have been combined with investigative, intelligence and veterinarian services to ensure no stone is left unturned in the pursuit and eradication of cheats from our sport.

### MICROCHIPPING

During the season much work was undertaken to prepare for the introduction of microchipping from 1 September. The necessary Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) and Stud Book Regulations (SBR) were amended, while the HaRVey system was updated to automatically populate fields which will also be visible in HarnessWeb. Further, most forms within the industry were reviewed and reprinted to include a space for microchip numbers.

As previously reported, microchipping will be undertaken in parallel with freezebranding for at least the first three years, when there will be a comprehensive review. This will allow the hardware, software, processes and chain of custody to be fully tested and revised if needed.

*Microchips provide a lifetime permanent identification number for horses. This number is unique in the world, cannot be altered, and eliminates doubt. Horse owners use it for many different reasons, such as proof of ownership, theft protection and recovery, disaster recovery, health certificates, medical records, farm management, event entries, travel, Registry ID, and sales documents.*

Much of this is the same for harness racing, with the addition of integrity based functionality built in to a bespoke database which will provide time and place stamps for raceday and stable visits, as well as real-time updates for activities such as trials.



*As previously reported, microchipping will be undertaken in parallel with freezebranding for at least the first three years, when there will be a comprehensive review. This will allow the hardware, software, processes and chain of custody to be fully tested and revised if needed.*

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



### BIO-SECURITY

HRA undertakes many and varied tasks on behalf of the industry, some of which are not understood by stakeholders. One of these tasks which fly under the radar is ensuring there is constant vigilance by Australian authorities on bio-security.

The damage which can be caused by lapses in bio-security protocols was starkly demonstrated when equine influenza brought the harness and thoroughbred racing industries and other equestrian sports to a halt in New South Wales and Queensland in 2007. Equine influenza – those weeks of turmoil which devastated equine activities in both states and caused a serious drop in wagering turnover nationally, and the aftermath – was the biggest challenge encountered during my tenure of more than eleven years as chairman of HRA.

During the crisis HRA was the conduit for dealings with commonwealth authorities and in the months following there was a critical battle to avoid the approval of vaccination of horses against EI, either compulsory or voluntary. Vaccination, an agenda being pursued with vigour by powerful thoroughbred breeding interests, would have been extremely costly for harness racing and would also have seriously jeopardised the free movement of horses across the Tasman.

Also in the aftermath there were prolonged negotiations leading to HRA becoming a signatory to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA), on terms extremely beneficial to our industry. The benefits will only ever be fully understood in the event of another equine disease outbreak. Hopefully, this will never occur!

Stringent bio-security protocols and vigilance in observing them will be the best protection in ensuring the EADRA provisions remain a mystery to most of our stakeholders.

### HANDICAPPING REVIEW

There seems to be widespread acceptance in the Australian harness racing industry that handicapping is in need of an overhaul and numerous suggestions have been made as to what system should be adopted.

Many believe a ratings based handicapping system would best serve the industry and there has been a great deal of work in the past year analysing and evaluating different models. It is a critical task and there will be no changes to the current system until Members are confident they have a model that will provide the best outcomes for the industry in the coming years.

There has also been considerable discussion and analysis of a proposal to change the racing season to a calendar year, and there are undoubtedly many benefits, as well as some disadvantages. This remains a work in progress.

### INTER DOMINION

Congratulations to the Gloucester Park Harness Racing Club and Racing and Wagering Western Australia for staging another excellent Inter Dominion Pacing Championship series in December 2016. Both the race meetings and the social events were first class and well patronised.

Western Australia's three year tender for the Inter Dominion ends in December 2017 and there is every reason to believe the third carnival will be another great success.

The Inter Dominion Event Committee sought expressions of interest mid-year from clubs interested in staging the series from 2018 and seems likely to accept a tender which will secure the future of the event for at least the next six years. It is likely the Inter Dominion will be staged in New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand during this time.

### WORLD TROTTING CONFERENCE

A strong Australian contingent attended the 2017 World Trotting Conference hosted by Standardbred Canada in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in August.

All were active participants in the proceedings. Andrew Kelly chaired the Equine Health and Integrity Committee (for the third occasion) and I chaired the Racing and Wagering Committee (for the second time), while we both also appeared on panels at a racing symposium held as part of the conference.

It was a privilege to again lead the Australian delegation to what was my 6th world conference, all of which have been extremely informative, as well as providing an opportunity to meet like-minded administrators to discuss common issues and problems.

*There is no doubt all members of the International Trotting Association face similar issues, despite the obvious differences brought about by different cultures or the size of the industry in our various jurisdictions.*

The Conference was capped with Australian success in two of the eight International Media Awards categories, where Paul Courts and Scott Hamilton were both recognised on the world stage for their outstanding media contributions.

Paul won Best News Article for 'Desperate attempt to save promising pacer', which documented the battle Lance Justice and his staff endured to save the life of promising pacer Love Ina Chevy from a snake bite.

Scott Hamilton's success came via the Best Social Media category for his coverage of the 2016 Inter Dominion, where he provided regular updates, interviews and news to different social media platforms helping to promote the race to a younger demographic.

The World Driving Championship was staged in conjunction with the conference, with the 20 race series being won by the Canadian representative, James McDonald.

Queenslander Shane Graham finished sixth wearing Australia's colours and was a great ambassador for our industry, both on and off the track. He won a race and was competitive in most of them, despite drawing some poor horses.

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are fortunate indeed to have a committed and professional team at Harness Racing Australia. This small but dedicated group gets through a mountain of work without fuss and all Members should be grateful for their endeavours.

Chief Executive Andrew Kelly is an outstanding administrator who is equally adept at discussing rules with participants, negotiating international telecasts or dealing with federal bureaucrats on bio-security issues – and a plethora of other tasks.

*He is a genuine asset to our industry and highly regarded in the broader sporting community.*

I cannot heap enough praise on Dean Cooper for his excellent work as HRA's legal counsel. He is always available to provide considered advice, and also serves on the HRA Executive where his wise counsel is valued.

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

HRA has an excellent working relationship with Harness Racing New Zealand, and thanks go to Chairman Ken Spicer and Chief Executive Edward Rennell for their continuing co-operation.

I should also take this opportunity to record my appreciation for the assistance and co-operation I have received from so many people in the industry during my tenure as chairman of HRA. There is much to be admired in Australian harness racing, and I wish the industry every success in the years ahead.

### MUSINGS

It is not for me to determine whether HRA has been a successful organisation during my tenure, which comes to an end at the annual general meeting in December 2017. In more than 11 years I have endeavoured to fulfil my role in a professional manner and I believe, with

the assistance of some very talented and committed people, we have achieved some significant progress on a range of issues.

There will always be issues in an industry such as ours as there are so many competing priorities. Stakeholders, understandably, want greater financial returns in the form of either better prizemoney or breeding bonuses, while administrators have to balance the demands of integrity, track maintenance, insurance, financial management and a myriad other tasks.

Unfortunately – as I have lamented on many occasions – marketing misses out. In my opinion we are poor marketers, despite the efforts of a small band of dedicated people. Several years ago I pointed out that the major football clubs all had more people in their marketing divisions than we had in our entire industry, and they are major competitors for the leisure dollar. It is a mystery to me why we don't do something about this situation.

Furthermore, I'm bemused by our approach to programming, where our major clubs seem reluctant to schedule major meetings in opposition to football matches (ie. AFL and NRL). This results in a truncated season of major races, all crammed into a window away from the big football codes.

I'm not sure why administrators fear competition so much as there are ways of working event clashes to advantage. It is not as if our crowds have been so great that we should have a fear factor, and I refuse to believe we share the same market to the extent a clash would have a debilitating effect upon our fan base or wagering returns. Administrators need to have confidence in the product and their ability to promote it.

Many people in harness racing lament the lack of mainstream media coverage of our sport/industry. The world has changed and we will never again see the sort of coverage we enjoyed 40 or more years ago.

Instead of moaning, look to the opportunities presented by the digital age. I still believe a national media centre could achieve great exposure for the industry, but unfortunately parochial administrators have prevented this happening.

Indeed, parochialism is a major factor in hindering the growth of harness racing in Australia. In the past two decades, every sport which has taken a national approach has thrived, but harness racing administrators persist with focusing on their own state. Our competitors are other sports, cinemas, theatres, concerts, lotteries, hotels, clubs and so on, not the harness racing clubs across the state border.

Which brings me to my greatest lament. Harness racing is a fabulous spectacle, for those who understand it or who have been exposed to it over a period of time. Unfortunately, it is a tired product that has not changed in decades, regardless of other advances in sport, leisure and entertainment.

We have to adapt, to win back the fans and show them this is a fun sport. But to do that we need the co-operation of everyone in the industry. We've virtually lost a generation of fans, which not only impacts on attendances at race meetings but also on wagering turnover and in attracting new participants from outside our core support base.

*Otherwise in the years ahead we will be racing for ribbons rather than reasonable prizemoney and be consigned to the history books as one of the dinosaurs of Australian sport.*

It is a challenge, but we need to find a way to broaden the appeal of harness racing, to demonstrate to a new legion of fans what our administrators, participants and supporters already know – this is a great sport, it is entertaining, and it is fun.

Helen Keller, the American educator and humanitarian, who rose to the challenge of overcoming blindness and deafness, once said: "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement... Nothing can be done without hope and confidence".

**Geoff Want**  
Chairman

# CEO's MESSAGE



ANDREW KELLY

In 2015 I said in this report that:

*“Equine welfare has no finish line and Harness Racing Australia (HRA) is committed to the improvement of welfare outcomes and safety for harness racing horses and participants via continuous policy and rule review and benchmarking exercises”.*

## CEO's Message

*This report provides an opportunity to reflect on this statement and how we, as an industry, have addressed common community concerns.*

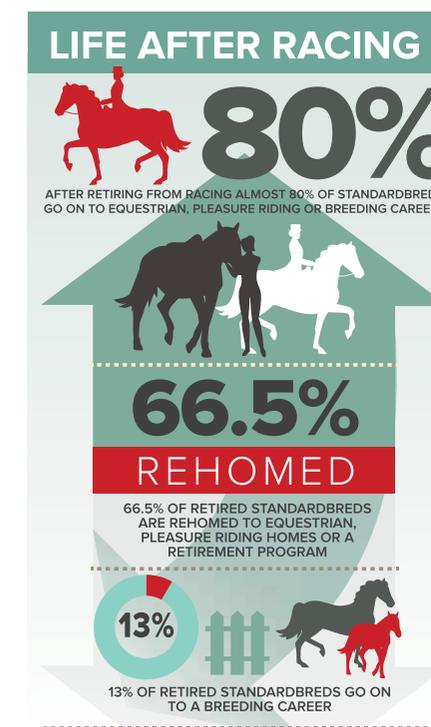
Critical to the work being done in this area has been the recruitment of Ms Kathleen Mullan to the position of Equine Health & Welfare Coordinator. Kathleen has been instrumental in the management, delivery and continuous improvement of our many projects.

High on the agenda has been the tracking and traceability of Standardbreds throughout and beyond their racing a breeding careers. Renewed focus on promoting the rules of racing regulating the deregistration and notification of death of Standardbreds was

complemented with an auto cleansing of older horses from the HaRVey database and a survey of all horses aged between 4yo and 10yo who had not been active in recent times.

The results have been overwhelming, with an incredible survey response matched with a marked increase in the notification of a horses changed circumstances by connections. This has provided the opportunity to report for the first time on baseline statistics relating to Standardbreds life after racing.

*These statistics reflect that almost 80% of Standardbreds are rehomed after retirement from racing – 66.5% of these find equestrian pursuits, pleasure riding or other retirement programs, while 13% enter the breeding barn.*



*While currently 13% of Standardbreds who retire from racing enter the breeding barn, this number has traditionally been higher. In fact, the decline in breeding numbers has been significant, with a 15% decline between 2009/10 and 2012/13. While the number has steadied more recently, it is continuing to decline – with the knock-on effect requiring initiatives to have more of the foals born actually get to the racetrack. Such initiatives may include changes to the handicapping system or financial incentives. Whatever the answer, the industry needs to work on ways to become more efficient and effective with the available foal crop.*



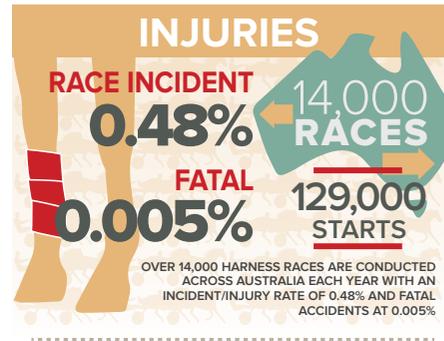
*Concerns over fatigue, injuries and longevity of horses racing as 2yo's has also been in the spotlight. It is pleasing to note that a study has found that Standardbred's who race at 2-years of age have longer careers than those who start later in life.*

*It may seem counter intuitive, but the 2011 peer reviewed study of over 1000 Standardbreds showed that not only do horses that have their first start as 2yo's have longer careers, they are also more successful. It is intended that this study be reviewed and updated in 2018.*



## CEO'S MESSAGE

The regulation and discipline of reporting and recording injuries and incidents at racetracks since 2009 has been extremely valuable. The statistics are remarkable and illustrate an extremely safe racing environment with less than half a percent of incidents across the 14,000 races and 129,000 race starts each year. Fatalities are extremely rare, with less than 0.005% per season.



Drug control is another common concern raised about the racing industry. While not naïve enough to think the industry doesn't have ongoing integrity related challenges, the facts don't support the widely held misconceptions often raised in the community.



The commitment to fund and resource integrity is an ongoing one, but it is pleasing to report that of the variously sourced (raceday and out of competition) 26,000 samples, less than half a percent returned a positive result for a banned substance.

Further, HRA launched a new website [www.thereisnofinishline.com.au](http://www.thereisnofinishline.com.au) in an effort to transparently promote these statistics while highlighting the many rules, policies, positive stories and commitment our entire industry has to welfare.

It is hoped that this resource will assist in the education of the wider community as well as providing a conduit by which people can engage with HRA on these and other important issues, including progress on whip moderation and horse identification.

With regard to horse identification, I have discussed the introduction of microchipping in this report the past two years running, so it was good to finalise the implementation plans prior to the 1 September 2017 start date.

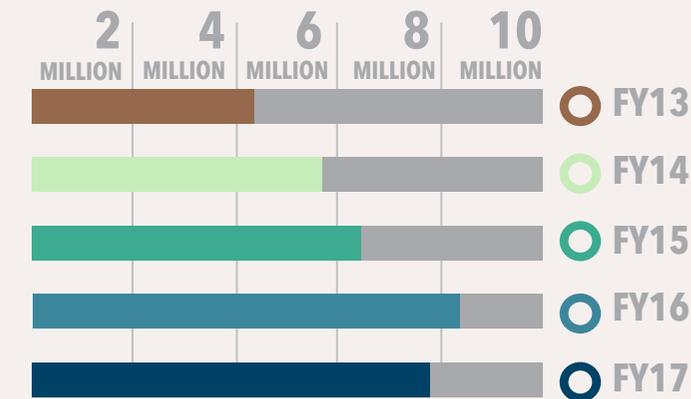
*For now, both freeze-branding and microchipping will be used, with branding reviewed in the 2020/21 season (at the latest). Interestingly, more international jurisdictions and racing codes continue to announce a move toward mandatory microchipping, while closer to home, microchipping has become part and parcel of most breed societies and their events.*



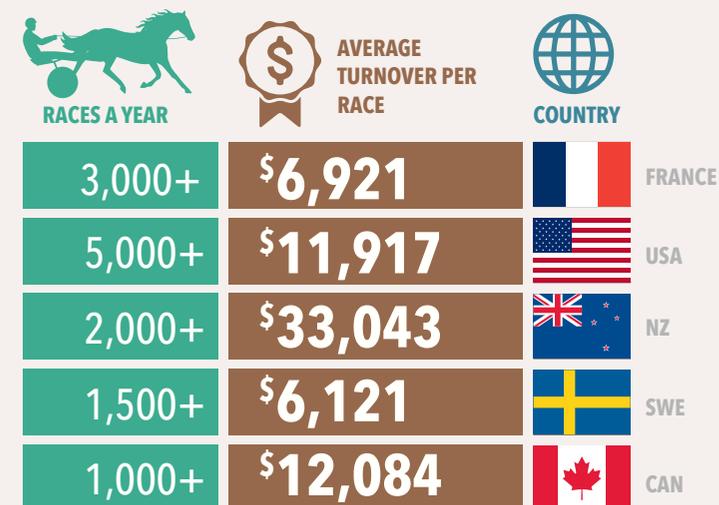
## CEO'S MESSAGE

The import and export of harness racing product continues to perform well. Gross revenue from exports in FY17 was \$7,432,340. While this was a 13% drop on FY16 (after a number of UK bookmakers dropped harness racing from their early morning product feed), it continues an upward trend which looks set to continue in FY18 with Sweden set to take more product from 1 January 2018 and Norway coming on board as well.

### EXPORTS - GROSS REVENUE LAST 5 YEARS



Imported product also continues to grow with almost 14,000 harness races from 5 different international jurisdictions regularly broadcast live in Australia.



\* Figures are FY17 combined NSW & VIC pools and include Pari-mutuel & Fixed odds

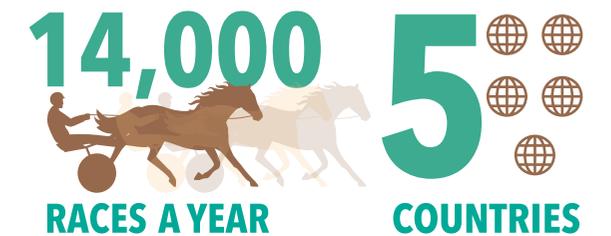
The international influence was felt in another way during the year with the announcement of Australia's inaugural winner of a "Trotteur Français International Award" from LeTrot in France. This award is provided to the best performed French Trotter in each jurisdiction that has a Breeding Agreement with the SECF.

The Australian winner was Destinee Jenilou FR, owned by Mr Pat Driscoll and Yabby Dam Farms, who had 3 starts for 2 wins during the period. The award will be presented during International Week festivities in December and it is hoped it will be first of many as international imports and breeding, particularly trotting, continues to be popular for many.

*In closing, I also wish to pay tribute to the many people who work so hard to ensure that HRA continues to function in such an effective manner.*

Sponsorship wise I again thank Peter Bourke and David Boydell from Australian Pacing Gold (APG) and Chris Burke from International Racehorse Transport (IRT) for their wonderful support of industry activities.

HRA is fortunate to have such a strong committee structure, ably led by their respective Chairmen in Dean Cooper (Chairmen of Stewards & National Rules), Dr Patricia Ellis (Standardbred Welfare Advisory Group) and Peter Bourke (Equine Breeding & Registration) for their participation, significant contributions and patience.



The relationship with our Members is also vital, and I thank each of the Boards, Chief Executives and senior management for their continued support, guidance and confidence given the day-to-day challenges of their own organisations.

The business of harness racing rarely stops, making the dedication and continued commitment of the HRA Executive even more remarkable. My thanks to you all, and in particular to my Chairman for the entire time I have been at HRA, Mr Geoff Want, who is retiring in December 2017. Geoff has given so much of himself to the industry, and to me. He has been available day and night for wise counsel and clarity over the journey - and I cannot thank him enough for the wonderful role he has played both personally and professionally for me, my family and the industry at large.

And finally, a massive thank you to Cameron, Julie, Kathy, Laraine, Kathleen and Kerry for all of your enthusiasm and effort. So many roles within our organisation require commitment over and above what is possible to describe in a job description. Your dedication cannot be questioned and it is greatly appreciated.

# APG Grand Circuit Review



***The accolades and superlatives keep coming for New Zealand superstar Lazarus.***

***Feature race triumphs, massive margins and unbelievable times are quickly becoming the norm for the freakishly gifted pacer.***

Another title he picked up during his outstanding four-year-old term was the Australian Pacing Gold Grand Circuit Champion for the 2016/17 season.

The stylish looking stallion proved dominant with victories in the New Zealand and Victoria Cups while being placed third in the Miracle Mile in Sydney throughout the season.

Lazarus amassed 240 points for the term.

The eight leg series which commenced back in 1977 is now worth more than \$4.4 million and starts in November at Christchurch with the New Zealand Cup followed by the Inter Dominion in Perth, Auckland Cup, WA Pacing Cup, Victoria & Hunter Cups, Miracle Mile before concluding with the Blacks A Fake Queensland Championship.

The Mark Purdon and Natalie Rasmussen trained entire becomes the first pacer since the freakish Christian Cullen (1998/99) to be crowned Grand Circuit champion as a four-year-old.

It was a seamless transition for the son of Bettors Delight from age group racing to open class racing and thrilled fans throughout the season, his combined winning margin from his New Zealand and Victoria Cup triumphs was unbelievable.

He won the New Zealand Cup by 10 lengths while the Victoria Cup was almost a mirror image with a winning margin of 12 metres.

Driven throughout the season by Purdon, Lazarus only contested the three races on the Grand Circuit throughout the year.

Overall, he won 12 of his 15 starts while amassing more than \$1.2 million in prizemoney.

Lazarus joins Smolda and Young Rufus as Grand Circuit champions from the All Stars stable.

Amazingly, Lazarus becomes the first outright champion for the stable after both Smolda (Lennytheshark) and Young Rufus (Double Identity) deadheaded.

And if wasn't Lazarus winning the majors, aging warrior Smolda chimed in to win the \$1.1 million Inter Dominion Grand Final at Gloucester Park in Perth while Dream About Me proved to be a dominant winner of the Auckland Cup at Alexandra Park.

***Both are stablemates of Lazarus in the All Stars barn.***

Smolda proved victorious in the Inter Dominion downing race favourite Hectorjayjay in an epic home straight battle while Dream About Me scored convincingly in the 3200m stand-start North Island feature defeating Hug The Wind and Arden's Choice.

Four of the eight legs of the Grand Circuit went to the powerhouse Christchurch stables of Purdon/Rasmussen.

Outstanding prospect Chicago Bull announced his arrival on the biggest stage with his commanding victory in his home town feature, the \$450,000 WA Pacing Cup at Gloucester Park.

From the leading stables of Gary Hall Snr and driven by Hall Jnr, Chicago Bull enjoyed a stellar summer period with Gr.1 victories in the Fremantle Cup and the McInerney Classic.

The \$500,000 Hunter Cup was staged under mobile conditions, switching from the 3280m stand-start to a mobile start 2760m event and millionaire pacer Bling It On proved victorious.

Handled perfectly by ace reinsman Luke McCarthy, the American Ideal entire defeated Yayas Hot Spot and Lennytheshark rating 1:55.1.

The David Aiken stable snared the final two legs of the season with Lennytheshark taking the Miracle Mile in Sydney while Hectorjayjay thundered to victory in the Blacks A Fake Queensland Championship in Brisbane.

Both victories were sublime.

Lennytheshark sat without cover to claim Australasia's premier sprint race defeating Smolda and Lazarus in a time of 1:49.2 and provided champion reinsman Chris Alford with his maiden success in the great race.

The winning performance of Hectorjayjay in the Sunshine State feature had to be seen to be believed, stretched across the track, Hectorjayjay finished best to beat My Field Marshal and Tiger Tara in the 2680m mobile start event.

In the end, Lazarus finished with 240 points, 55 points clear of stablemate and defending champion Smolda (185) while Hectorjayjay (175) filled third.

The APG Grand Circuit season was a huge success, a perfect blend of experience and explosive youth throughout the year.

# APG Trotting Masters Review



***Some things never grow old.***

***And the domination of the elite New Zealand trained trotters is no exception given that our friends from across the ditch have claimed yet another title.***

For the sixth straight season, a New Zealand trained trotter was crowned the Australian Pacing Gold Trotting Master for the 2016/17 season.

Canterbury based trotter Habibti Ivy, prepared by master horseman Paul Nairn snatched a last stride victory to be crowned Trotting Master following her determined efforts in the last two legs of the five leg series, the ANZAC Cup and the Rowe Cup.

The former Oaks winner has returned from the racing wilderness – sidelined by injury for nearly 22 months to win five of her six races last season including the Gr.1 Anzac Cup before finishing a narrow second in the Gr.1 Rowe Cup behind Temporale at Alexandra Park, Auckland.

***Her two efforts in Auckland were enough to snatch victory and complete a remarkable comeback.***

Nairn, once considered an unorthodox trainer of the trotter is now regarded the most forward thinker with his unusual and advanced techniques plus altering styles of training the straight out trotter which have helped many of his star performers over the years.

Names like Call Me Now, Above The Stars, Stig, Dr Hook, Red, Inspire, One Over Da Moon, Conon Bridge, Kahdon, Waterloo Sunset and Wilma's Mate are just some the names the Nairn has put a bridle on during his decorated harness racing career to date.

The title to be crowned the Trotting Master was going right down to the wire but Habibti Ivy was in a position to snatch the title from the Australian trained On Thunder Road with connections elections to bypass the final two legs of the series.

***And the chestnut Love You five-year-old mare pounced owing to her Auckland heroics.***

In her seven starts during the season, Habibti Ivy has amassed more than \$113,000 while taking her overall earnings past \$180,000.

The efforts of the Auckland based Temporale shouldn't go unnoticed either, the Monarchy four-year-old proving the trotting ranks are full of outstanding depth and youth.

Habibti Ivy ended the series with 160 points, 40 points clear of Temporale while On Thunder Road finished with 101 points.

The five leg Australian Pacing Gold Trotting Masters starts in November at Christchurch with the Dominion before heading to Melbourne for the Great Southern Star and the Australian Grand Prix while the series concludes in Auckland with the ANZAC Cup and the Rowe Cup.

Monbet set a new record when proving triumphant in the Dominion; the Love You gelding ran 4:00.7 for the 3200m stand-start feature.

Prepared by Greg and Nina Hope, Monbet was handled by champion reinsman Ricky May.

The Great Southern Star stayed local with the Andy and Kate Gath prepared Glenferrie Typhoon proving successful defeating New Zealand performers Speeding Spur and Sunny Ruby in the 2760m mobile start event staged at TABCORP Park, Melton.

On Thunder Road and trainer/driver Darren Hancock bounced from his unplaced effort in the Great Southern Star to claim the Australian Trotting Grand Prix defeating Clover Mac and Daryl Boko in the 2240m at Melton before the action headed to Auckland where Habibti Ivy and Temporale proved successful in the ANZAC Cup and Rowe Cup respectively.

***The last Australian trained trotter to claim the Trotting Masters title was Sundons Gift who recorded back to back triumphs back in 2010/11.***

To put the New Zealand dominance into perspective, the only Australian trained Trotting Masters are La Coocharacha (2002), A Touch Of Flair (2007 – joint winner) and Sundons Gift (2010/11).

Written by Chris Barsby

# WORLD DRIVING CHAMPIONSHIP



Queensland's Shane Graham (pictured top left) was Australia's representative at the 2017 World Driving Championships in Canada and despite finishing 8th overall behind local reinsman James MacDonald (pictured top right), celebrated one of the highlights of his career when winning a WDC heat.

The Championships were conducted across five tracks – Century Downs, Mohawk, Georgian Downs, Hippodrome 3R and Charlottetown with Graham's winner Hettie's Honey coming in the final heat at Georgian Downs on night three.



## WORLD DRIVING CHAMPS



Australian World Driving Championship representative, Shane Graham was victorious on Hetties Honey, a 7-year old mare in the final heat of night three at Georgian Downs, Ontario.

*"The connections told me she was down in grade on what she had been racing in recently and they told me I could drive her any way that I wanted," Graham said after the victory.*

"I tried to cross early but couldn't get across (USA rep) Marcus (Miller) but when Mika (Forss) steamed to the chair I got a very nice trip for the rest of the race."

"It is a very interesting track because if you don't get to the leaders by the turn then it is very hard to win, the leaders seem to find a length on the turn and are very hard to run down so that's why I made sure I was up in front coming to the turn. The mare was tired but she held on pretty well in the straight."

The WDC began at Century Downs with five heats conducted. Graham began well and finished second in two heats and third in another to be placed third overall after the first day of competition. Marcus Miller (USA) led James MacDonald by 7 points with Graham another 2 points behind.

Night two at Mohawk was tough going for Graham and he failed to run a place in the four heats conducted. It was a night that belonged to Finland's Mika Forss who drove three winners with James MacDonald picking up the other heat. Graham dropped back to 5th overall after two rounds of heats 33 points behind new leader Mika Forss.

While the victory at Georgian Downs was memorable for Graham, the less said about the remainder of the night the better. A string of bad barrier draws meant the Australian representative found it tough to accumulate the points needed to climb the overall ladder. Despite the victory, Graham moved up only one placing and headed to Montreal in fourth position chasing MacDonald.

Trios Rivieres hosted the fourth night of competition and the smaller track made for exciting competition but again Graham failed to make up any ground on series leader James MacDonald. In four races, Graham only accumulated sixteen points and he dropped back to sixth position, 79 points off the series lead.

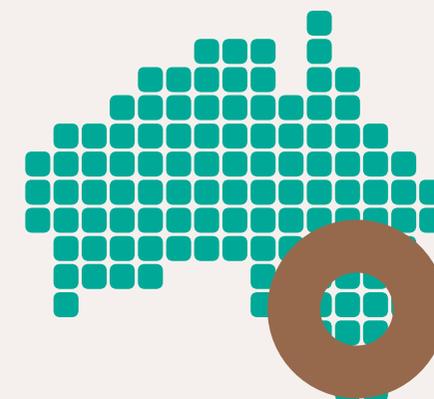
The Charlottetown Driving Park at Red Shores Racetrack and Casino on Prince Edward Island hosted the final four heats of the World Driving Championships and the large crowd on track ensured for a great atmosphere. A third placing in the first heat driving formidable looked a promising start for Graham and his drive Dilans Mustang in the second heat looked a winning chance but after being attacked in front Dilans Mustang failed to place and his next drive Quick Mad missed the placings also. The final heat was won by New Zealand representative Mark Purdon but while New Zealand was celebrating the victory, Australia was commiserating with Graham failing to beat a runner home.

Written by Greg Hayes



Overall **James MacDonald** won the WDC on 211 points, Finland's **Mika Forss** was 2nd on 193 while the USA's **Marcus Miller** was 3rd with 183.5. Reigning champion **Dexter Dunn** from New Zealand finished 4th on 166 points, **Shane Graham** was 8th on a countback with 135, New Zealand's **Mark Purdon** was 10th with 124.5.

# STATE CONTROLLING BODY REPORTS



## VICTORIA



**Dale G Monteith**  
Chairman  
Harness Racing Victoria

### HARNESS RACING VICTORIA

Harness racing in Victoria has undergone an important transition period during the past 12 months. Fundamentally there has been more organizational change in this period than in HRV's recent history.

The basis for this change was a comprehensive audit report, with eighteen (18) key recommendations, which I prepared for the Racing Minister in April 2015. As the starting point for reform, in early 2016, a new skills based HRV Board was appointed.

It was clear to the new Board that the industry was faced with a number of challenges across all areas, including management of integrity, marketing, racing product, programming, HRV's organizational structure and competencies and a need to improve collaboration and communication with the industry kindred bodies.

To meet the challenges presented by a continuing decline in HRV's financial position, caused almost entirely by reduced wagering distributions from the TABCORP Joint Venture (JV), a number of initiatives were undertaken that have not only reduced HRV and industry costs, but more importantly have halted industry decline by increasing participation and growth of industry revenue, for the first time in three years.

*These changes have focused on creating a sustainable and prosperous harness racing industry in Victoria and importantly this work has only just begun.*

In 2015 the industry called for reform and I believe the new HRV Board responded. While uncomfortable at times, changes have been widely supported and beneficial. This is evident by increased participation and revenue outcomes, not seen in more than three (3) years. This would not have been achievable without the support of many people within HRV, clubs, kindred bodies and the broader harness racing community.

I am confident that 2016/17 will prove to be a watershed year for the industry and success can be achieved, particularly if all sections of the industry work collaboratively with an 'INDUSTRY FIRST'.

## STATE REPORTS

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Consistent with trends across Australia and internationally, harness racing in Victoria has been in decline for a number of years. However, the situation for Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) was fast approaching a critical point with decreasing horse and participant numbers, declining profitability and market share, and legacy debt combining to put at risk the future of the industry in its current form.

In 2017 changes were made to race programming that enabled more horses and their connections to participate. That saw an increase in the average number of horses per race and the number of races per meeting, both of which reversed long-term trends. This also proved favourable with punters, who returned to the sport as evidenced by the year-on-year increases in wagering each month, also reversing a long-term declining trend.

Following extensive consultation with industry participants, HRV's strategic plan was updated and draft priorities widely discussed at industry forums throughout Victoria. HRV's new strategic plan will be published in the second half of 2017. A key feature will be the integration of HRV functional strategies with those of kindred bodies, which reflects the mindset that 'we're all in this together'. The strategy also acknowledges the need to honour our traditions and country origins, balanced with the need to take some bold steps so the industry can achieve its potential.

The Victorian harness community proudly supported a number of important causes in 2016-17 including the 'Team Teal' campaign for Women's Cancer Foundation which became national in 2017. HRV participants also actively supported the Prostrate Cancer Foundation and the McGrath Foundation, and HRV's annual Good Friday Appeal fundraising efforts for the Royal Children's Hospital continued with the annual Sulky Race where participants replaced horses to pull the sulky (driven by children of industry participants) up the straight to the winning post.

HRV's Melton facility also makes a strong contribution to the local community in partnership with Melton City Council via a program that commits grants to community groups and education providers within the City of Melton.

Since being appointed the new Board has prioritized Integrity spending and this will take another step forward in 2017/18, following a \$3.1 million grant from the State Government.

## STATE REPORTS

Early 2017, key changes were made to race programming, with more races being conducted at lower prizemoney levels to meet the demands of the horse population. These changes contributed to a reversal of the decline in wagering from February 2017 onwards, in every month of the second half of FY2016/17, total wagering exceeded the same months in the prior year, with May and June 2017 recording year on year growth in excess of 12%.

### INTEGRITY

In the 2016/17 period, HRV has demonstrated its commitment to combat the broader and most serious threats to the integrity of the harness racing industry. A multi-agency investigation initiated by the HRV Integrity Department and conducted by HRV in conjunction with the Victoria Police Sporting Integrity Intelligence Unit (SIU) and the Office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner (ORIC) culminated in the first criminal convictions (in connection with racing) under legislation introduced in 2013 relating to race fixing, match fixing and 'cheating at gambling'.

HRV has committed additional resources in order to continue conducting such proactive investigations, the addition of an Investigations Manager, a Senior Intelligence Analyst, a Stipendiary Steward and a part time Investigative Steward. In addition to personnel increases, HRV have also purchased and implemented a number of other investigative resource tools to enhance their protection of the integrity of the industry.

### ANIMAL WELFARE

It is important to understand that animal welfare for all three (3) racing codes has become as important as Integrity in ensuring the future of racing. For HRV the development and implementation of the HERO (Harness Education & Rehoming Opportunities) Program launched an exciting new era for Standardbred life after racing in Victoria. This ground-breaking equine welfare initiative was unveiled in July 2015 with State Government support. HERO has since attracted extraordinary support from all sectors of the trotting community.

In its first year, HERO and the industry worked co-operatively to facilitate caring and productive homes for more than 200 retired pacers and trotters, catering both to successful horses and those who either did not make the track, or had racing careers which were limited by ability or injury.

Buoyed by a robust social media presence and purpose-built website, HERO fostered a strong brand and reputation in its first year, setting the foundations for ongoing growth and expansion and cementing HRV's commitment to providing life after racing opportunities for its horse population.

### RACING OPERATIONS

In early 2017 race programming was reviewed with a focus on meeting industry needs in terms of increased participation and return on stakemoney invested. New guidelines were established that provided programmers and handicappers with greater flexibility and freedom to create races for horses at all levels, ages and abilities. Supplementary races were introduced enabling trainers to nominate their horses where no suitable race was available on a race programme on a specific date. In addition, where strong nominations were received for any \$3500 and \$5000 prizemoney level races, programmers were encouraged to split races to provide more opportunities for participants and owners to win.

*Those initiatives contributed to an increase in horse participation that reached a three year high in May 2017, and continued beyond the end of the financial year.*

As a result of the healthier financial position in past years HRV has been able to grow stakemoney from \$33.6m in 2013 to \$39.6m in 2016, an 18% increase over four years. The challenge, going forward, based upon 2016/17 wagering revenue outcomes, will be to maintain and grow existing levels.

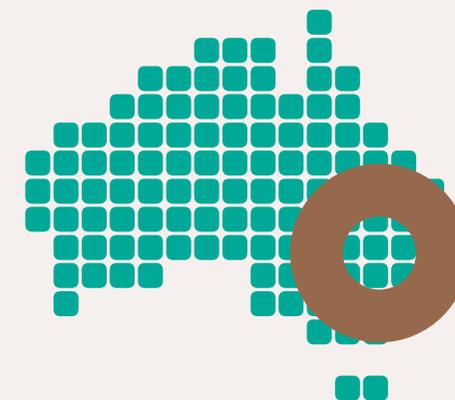
### MARKETING

HRV decided to redirect its focus to concentrate on the overarching strategic pillars of wagering, ownership and participation – which aligned the marketing effort with the overall business objectives. Increased engagement with owners via on course offers and an expansion of syndication helped deliver record levels of active ownership, whilst the "Love Summer, Love The Trots" campaign for Summer of Glory and "Trots Country" campaign for the country cups circuit helped drive on course attendance and exceeded wagering targets. Gordon Rothacker Medal night was a season highlight and showcased the industry and participants in the best possible way.

The expansion of HRV's digital media has been integral to promoting wagering and delivering other key messages, with digital video central to continued growth of HRV social channels. An investment in technology and a relaunch of the HRV website will enable HRV to deliver more content into the new season.

### TABCORP PARK

The major racing events Summer of Glory, Breeders Crown and New Year's Eve continue to attract large crowds to the venue, with New Year's Eve being our largest attended event on the calendar. In addition, events such as the State Government funded Seniors Nights continue to attract 2,000 people across 4 nights, with tribute bands in the Sports Bar appealing to a local market and boosting beverage revenue.



## NEW SOUTH WALES



Rod Smith  
HRNSW Board Member

It is pleasing to report that the financial position of HRNSW is strong and gives confidence that we will be able to continue to roll out initiatives detailed in our strategic plan into the future.

Highlights being –

**Year End Profit** \$4.984 million

This will be invested into our future fund

**Tax Parity** \$5.785 million

Second year of State Government reduced tax on TAB Turnover

**Prize Money** \$33.097 million

A record year and will increase in future years

**Breeders Challenge Series** \$2.563 million

NSW Breeders Bonuses and Certificate paid

### OPERATIONAL

- Menangle Training Centre is full, with some 200 horses housed in the complex with a strong waiting list. Consideration is now being given on expansion.
- Gold Crown Paceway Bathurst has lodged a development application to Council to build a training centre on the facility to accommodate up to 150 horses. They have a strong waiting list, particularly young participants.
- Paceway Tamworth – the Showground has been purchased by HRNSW with \$2.0 million allocated to improve Steward/Judges towers, upgrade raceday stalls area, on site trainers facilities, a new function centre above the grandstand and other essential racing facilities.
- Paceway Wagga – The Hon. Paul Toole Minister for Racing a keen harness racing enthusiast recently officiated in the commencement of the Wagga-Riverina development. Budgeted cost of development estimated at \$10.0 million.
- Within 18 months the Riverina area will have a first class facility, a 1070 metre track identical to the very successful Bathurst facility. This facility will eventually have a training component.

## STATE REPORTS

### INTEGRITY

Board and Management are committed to maintaining a very high standard of integrity within the industry. Forward budgets have allowed for an expansion in this area with respect to personnel, raceday and stable testing.

Special thanks to Graham Loch who has just retired as the Chief Steward. Congratulations to Grant Adams on his well deserved promotion to Chief Steward, who will be ably supported by Integrity Manager Michael Prentice.

### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

With the ageing of some of our participants, and the increasing number of young people wanting to participate in our sport HRNSW has employed a Youth Development Officer.

*This will ensure participants and volunteers in the Mini Trots sector are managed successfully to progress into the main game.*

It is envisaged that apprenticeship style courses and career opportunity will be developed through the Institute of Sport and in conjunction with the training centres being established throughout the state.

### MARKETING

If you do not promote your business you will eventually reduce in importance.

Therefore HRNSW engaged Isobar Australia, a very diverse and experienced Marketing Company to review HRNSW and all the Clubs marketing activities. Following this review a detailed plan has been presented to the Board and shared with the Clubs at recent industry forum in Bathurst.

Our coordinated marketing approach in concert with all the Clubs will see a professional unified cost effective marketing approach going forward to the benefit of participants, clubs and most of all promote our sport to potential new participants.

Our strategic plan and portion of the Tax Parity revenue supported by the Future Fund have been allocated to this important area.

With the ageing of some of our participants, and the increasing number of young people wanting to participate in our sport HRNSW has employed a Youth Development Officer.

**This will ensure participants and volunteers in the Mini Trots sector are managed successfully to progress into the main game.**

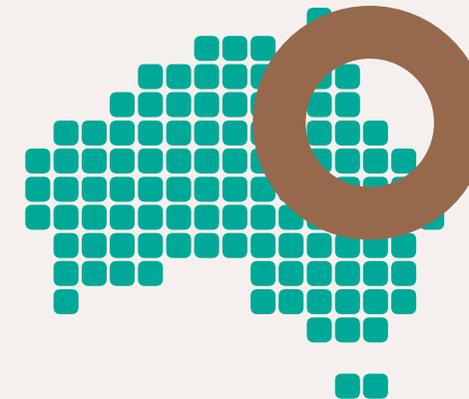
## STATE REPORTS

### SUMMARY

Harness Racing in New South Wales is in strong financial position –

- With very good cash reserves
- Owned-Managed modern venues to support participants
- Viable breeding incentives for horse growth
- Strong integrity platform
- Strategy for youth development for the future
- Marketing vision and funding to grow our sport

We look forward to being part of a positive future for Harness Racing in New South Wales.



## QUEENSLAND



**Steve Wilson AM**  
Chairman  
Racing Queensland

## STATE REPORTS

The new strategic plan and the infrastructure plan are both based on extensive research and consultation.

### KEY ROLE

Racing Queensland created a new position of Harness Development and Strategy Manager during the year to further build capacity in the code and to focus on strategies for growth.

The dedicated role has responsibility for developing many aspects of harness racing in Queensland, including formulating and implementing business development initiatives, overseeing existing harness operations, leading stakeholder engagement and the provision of code-specific advice in relation to projects, including infrastructure.

### HARNESS ADVISORY PANEL

In September last year Racing Queensland announced the establishment of a new harness industry advisory panel.

Designed to play an important role in the future of the industry in Queensland, the industry advisory panel meets quarterly to assist Racing Queensland in the process of formulating strategy and making decisions on important industry matters.

The Harness Advisory panel is chaired by Margaret Reynolds, a Racing Queensland Board member and member of Harness Racing Australia.

In 2016-2017 Racing Queensland invested substantially in ensuring that all winter carnival races were highlighted with targeted marketing campaigns including digital applications and through wagering partners. Content was generated across multiple platforms with a focus on driver profiles and educational features designed to introduce new audiences to harness racing. RQ organised and disseminated some great informative videos on harness racing featuring Brittany Graham. They were very popular on social media and on the Courier Mail and The Australian websites.

Racing Queensland has released its Annual Report which detailed a year of positive change and transformation, and demonstrates meaningful progress towards a financial and organisational turnaround.

In 2015/16 the organisation recorded a loss of \$21.8 million; however, with solid revenue growth and the full year benefit of changes to the business model, Racing Queensland recorded a loss of \$2.2 million for the current financial year, a turnaround of \$19.6 million.

In 2016/17 Racing Queensland achieved total revenue growth of 4.5% to \$239.9 million, driven by an increase in total wagering revenue of \$7.1 million. The financial turnaround enabled Racing Queensland to increase prize money for 2017/18 by \$3.2 million across all three codes.

After positive wagering growth for five consecutive years, Queensland harness racing saw a 4.5% decline in 16/17 total wagering, partly impacted by 60 fewer races being conducted. Pleasingly, wagering in the 3 months to the end of September 2017 saw a return to positive growth.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

RQ has released its Strategic Plan for the next five years with a vision to connect people through the thrill of racing.

The FY18-FY21 Strategic Plan has five key pillars and aims to make racing Queensland's favourite sport and Racing Queensland, Australia's best racing jurisdiction.

Over the next three years Racing Queensland will:

- Boost participant returns, including prize money, in a sustainable manner
- Invest in significant infrastructure projects across all three codes
- Build and deliver a customer engagement model to drive the business of racing
- Work with clubs to improve attendance and commercial returns
- Engage with the community to ensure greater understanding of the racing industry's contribution to society

## STATE REPORTS

In line with this campaign it was pleasing the QBRED scheme again proved to be a success for owners and breeders throughout the year, highlighted by the increased number of 2YO's who qualified for the \$7,500 2YO bonus, which was up by over 30% year on year. Further enhancements to the scheme, including reintroduction of the 4YO first win bonus, were also announced following consultation with the Harness Racing Advisory Panel.

The QBRED Triad series was again the jewel in the crown of the QBRED feature races. The 2YO Colts was won by Colt Thirty One and Fillies by Art Treasure. Other notable QBRED winners included 3 YO Triad winners Clintal Do and Bonnie Jujon.

### GRAND CIRCUIT

Racing Queensland was successful in securing Grand Circuit Status for the State's feature harness racing event, joining an elite group of race events from Australia and New Zealand.

The Blacks A Fake, Queensland's pinnacle event, is the feature race on the 10-race Blacks A Fake night, the final event of the Albion Park Winter Carnival.

The \$200,000 Group One race is named after Australia's highest ever stakes earner and greatest champion Blacks A Fake, the winner of three Winter Cups and two Queensland Pacing Championships and four Inter Dominions for his trainer Natalie Rasmussen.

The event was the pinnacle of a great period of harness racing in Queensland giving the state valuable national exposure. The 2017 race was won by Hectorjayjay defeating one of the best fields assembled in Queensland for some time including Lennytheshark, My Field Marshall, Tiger Tara, Major Crocker and Mr Mojito.

Harness Racing Australia CEO Andrew Kelly said the decision to award Grand Circuit Status was an easy one given the strong support and quality of event.

In other racing highlights, the Winter Carnival saw a significant increase in interstate visitors including horses from leading stables such as David Aiken, Kerry

Manning and the all-conquering All Stars team – Mark Purdon and Natalie Rasmussen.

Other notable winners included QLD Derby – The More The Bettor, Cherish The Moment in the Fleur De Lil and Leo's Best in the 4YO Championship.

### PARTICIPATION

Shane Graham proved why he was chosen as Australia's representative at the World Drivers Championship in Canada (August 2017) taking out the State Drivers premiership while Grant Dixon continued his dominance of the training ranks with a 5th consecutive Premiership which also secured him the national trainers premiership. Our Concession Drivers continue to point towards a bright future for the sport with Nathan Dawson the leading Concession Driver for the first time ahead of Narissa McMullen and Trent Moffat.

In recognition of the strength of our emerging talent, 10 of Queensland's best young drivers went head-to-head in the annual BOTRA Queensland Young Drivers Championship which was held at the Redcliffe and Albion Park Harness Racing Clubs. In a positive sign for the future of the sport, four of the 10 drivers contesting the Championship were female, including 2015 Series winner Brittany Graham and fellow young guns Isobel Ross, Dannielle McMullen and Narissa McMullen.

Seventeen year old Lachie Manzelmann, who qualified for a position in the Series by obtaining his A-Grade license in the weeks leading up to the Championship, produced a consistent display in the sulky to claim the 2017 title. Competing against Queensland's best young drivers over three nights, Manzelmann tied with Dannielle McMullen on 60 points overall, however claimed the Series on countback with Isobel Ross finishing third on 42 points.

### Female participation in Queensland harness racing continues to be a highlight, recent research identified over 25% of participants are female

Two of the top three state trainers, Chantal Turpin and Vicki Rasmussen are female, along with six of the top ten leading concession drivers including Narissa and Dannielle McMullen, Brittany Graham and Isobel Ross.

The Queensland industry threw its support behind the Women's Cancer Foundation, with Queensland's female harness drivers taking up the fight against ovarian cancer, taking part in the TEAM TEAL initiative. Ambassadors Trista Dixon, Brittany Graham, Dannielle McMullen and Isobel Ross wore Cancer Foundation silks and teal pants in each of their races through February and March to raise funds for ovarian cancer research. Each time a female river crossed the line victorious at our Albion Park or Redcliffe tracks, \$600 was donated to the Women's Cancer Foundation. This was an initiative proudly supported by Racing Queensland, UBET, Albion Park Harness Racing Club and Redcliffe Harness Racing Club. Our Queensland female drivers raised over \$38,000 – an amazing effort.

### CONCLUSION

Racing Queensland recognises that there is a lot of work to do in harness racing in Queensland but already the first signs of re-emergence are evident. With wagering up for harness and with plans for investment in infrastructure the energised team at Racing Queensland will work closely with stakeholders to ensure the code has an enduring and sustainable future.



## SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Chris Hartwig  
Chairman

The South Australian 2016/17 racing year has been my first as Chairman of HRSA. I would like to start by thanking my predecessor, Mark Carey, for his valuable contribution to the harness racing industry over many years. Mark remains active in the industry as an owner and breeder and I wish him well for the future.

The sport of Harness Racing is full of passionate people, and this year saw many highlights with Member Clubs conducting excellent events during the year including:

- The SAHRC Summer Carnival was run at Globe Derby Park in January 2017. We were extremely lucky to have the reigning Interdominion champion Smolda compete in the SA Cup, and his win was an important factor in Smolda winning the Australian Harness Horse of the Year title
- The Southern Cross series is our richest race series and again provided some exceptional racing. We continue to refine this series, with an increased focus on SA ownership and increased bonuses
- The Country Cups throughout the year were well supported with Gawler, Port Pirie, Mt Gambier, Victor Harbor, Kapunda, Strathalbyn, Whyalla and Kadina all conducting feature Cup events which were well supported and keenly contested
- The BOTRA Golden Nursery night was a great event, with some important changes to this series next season
- The SA Square Trotters Carnival was successfully run, and again we expect to see some changes to how and when we program our feature Trotters races next season

Our sport faces many challenges. In late 2016 the Board enlisted Brian Cunningham to conduct an Independent Review that was completed in March 2017, with a focus on the governance framework for our code. The report highlights many issues and made a number of recommendations that will lead to an improved governance framework, and ultimately decision making, for harness racing in this state. It has taken some time, but all Member Clubs have now provided in principle support for the recommendations and implementing these will be a major focus for this upcoming financial year.

## STATE REPORTS

*Wagering remains a major concern, as this is the primary funding source for our code. Whilst wagering overall increased, there was a significant shift away from UBET towards corporate bookmakers, which resulted in a reduced market share, and ultimately funding for the 2017/18 season.*

*During the year Tabcorp and Ubet have embarked on a plan to merge, and whilst this is yet to be completed, HRSA believes that this will be a positive outcome for our code.*

Breeding numbers continue to remain at low levels, and in an effort to increase confidence in breeding in SA, the Board announced the 2018 Allwood Stud Yearling Sale and associated \$100,000 race, The Allwood, to be run in 2019. The response was nothing short of phenomenal, with the sale closing over-subscribed. The 2018 Allwood Stud Yearling Sale will be held at the Magic Millions Complex at Morphettville in February 2018, and will prove to be a huge success. Special thanks must go to Dean Baring and Gary Crocker for their tireless efforts in making this happen.

## STATE REPORTS

A major challenge is for our code to remain relevant within the community. Over many years the introduction of Sky Channel, online wagering and sports betting has resulted in attendances being a fraction of what they were 30 years ago when I was first introduced to the sport. This presents challenges for our Member Clubs, particularly the SAHRC, who have relied on on-course wagering as a major source of income. In an effort to improve recognition and publicity for our code, the Board announced the bold decision to hold an event at Wayville Showgrounds, the former home of trotting, to be held on October 27. The response has been remarkable, with major stories run in TV, radio and print media. October 27 will likely draw the biggest crowd at a harness racing event in over a decade. As I write this, the event is less than 3 weeks away, and I cannot wait!

The relationship between HRSA and our Member Clubs has never been better, and co-operation amongst clubs is excellent, highlighted by the assistance provided by HRSA, Gawler and Pt Augusta to Mt Gambier for their lighting upgrade.

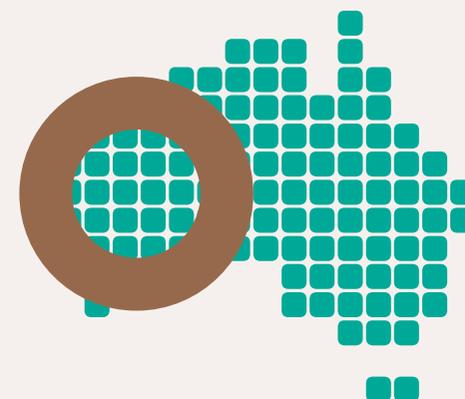
In a significant step, official trials have now been run at Gawler, a first at their new venue. The work by Peter Bain and his Committee has been exceptional, and HRSA are committed to working with Gawler to conduct an official race meeting in the near future.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following:

- Fellow Directors Luciana Larkin, Lauren Giorgio, John Levy, Roland Roccioletti and Gary Crocker. We have a professional Board who are committed to improving our code
- The Presidents, Secretaries and Committee members of our Member Clubs together with the kindred bodies who help promote and run our sport
- Our participants, who are the lifeblood of our industry
- The members of our Industry Advisory Committee (IAC)
- The Staff and Management at HRSA, led by our Chief Executive Officer, John Lewis
- Our key stakeholders including the Government of South Australia, UBET, Sky Channel, Harness Racing Australia and the numerous communities in which we conduct racing in South Australia

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention some key changes at HRSA. Our Chair of Stewards, Barbara Scott resigned to head to WA in a senior stewarding and integrity role, and we wish her well. We were very fortunate to secure the service of Ross Neal as Chairman of Stewards to replace Barbara, and he has been a great addition to the team. Sadly, I received the resignation of our Chief Executive Officer, John Lewis, in September 2017. By the time he departs, John will have spent 7 years at the helm of HRSA, and I would like to personally thank him for his effort and dedication during this time. On behalf of the whole harness racing community in SA, I would like to wish John every success in the future.



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Jeff Ovens  
Chairman

It's my pleasure to present the State Annual Report for harness racing in Western Australia.

During 2016/17 season, Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWAA) provided harness race clubs with base and feature stakes funding of \$25.1M, and a further \$1.5M in Westbred bonuses.

Stakes funding was paid out across 270 race meetings, which encompassed 2,215 individual races. This provided 21,933 racing opportunities for 1,737 individual horses, with an average number of 9.64 starters per race.

Starters were trained by 406 individual trainers, with 60 of these trainers having 100 or more starters for the year, and 21 having 200 or more starters.

During the season a total of 281 mares that raced in Western Australian received an EPONA bonus, generating \$239K in credits with five mares each earning the maximum credit amount of \$5K.

Throughout the season \$108K was paid out in claims to the owners of 54 mares.

The Australian Pacing Gold Yearling Sales recorded a sale of \$1.23M and an average sale price for fillies of \$15K and for colts \$12K. The clearance rate for this sale was 77%.

Greg and Skye Bond were named the Leading State Trainer for the 2016/17 season, with their partnership combining for 201 wins and \$2.3M in stakes, followed by Gary Hall Snr with 116 wins and \$2.2M in stakes.

Chris Lewis was the State's Leading Driver with 214 winners and \$2.4M in stakes, ahead of Ryan Warwick with 176 winners and Gary Hall Jnr 167 winners.

Two drivers, Gary Hall Jnr and Chris Lewis, passed \$2M in stakes and five drivers, including Ryan Warwick, Chris Voak, Nathan Turvey, Michael Grantham and Shannon Suvaljko, all passed \$1M in stakes earnings throughout the season.

***A total of 216 individual drivers drove in races during the season with 32 having 200 or more drives.***

Throughout the season 33 individual concession drivers took part in races, 15 of those had more than 200 drives for the season and three had 100 or more drives.

## STATE REPORTS

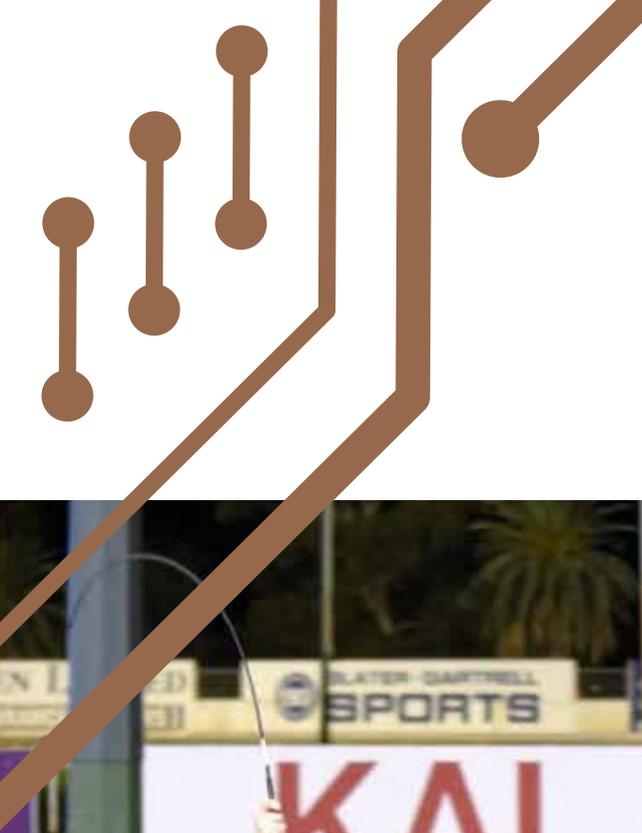
Smolda, trained by Mark Purdon from New Zealand, was the deserving winner of the 2016 TABtouch Inter Dominion Championships. The Inter Dominion Grand Final was worth \$1.1M, making it the richest pacing race in Australasia, with the overall series worth \$1.8M in prize money.

The conduct of this current event provides the foundation platform for a wider RWAA initiative to relaunch, revitalise and re-energise harness racing in Western Australia.

The \$450K Group One WA Pacing Cup was won by Chicago Bull NZ trained by Gary Hall Snr.

Other key highlights for the year include the following Western Australian feature harness racing achievements:

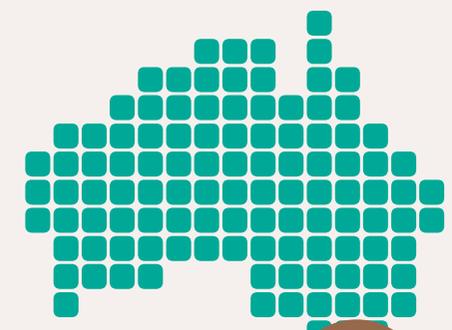
- Group One Fremantle Pacing Cup, won by Chicago Bull NZ, trained by Gary Hall Snr, and driven by Gary Hall Jnr;
- Group One Golden Nugget, won by Soho Tribeca, trained by Kim Prentice, and driven Kim Prentice;
- Group One WA Derby, won by Handsandwheels, trained by Andrew De Campo, and driven by Aiden de Campo;
- Group One WA Oaks, won by Maczaffair NZ, trained by Mike Reed, and driven by Shannon Suvaljko; Group One 4YO Classic, won by Chicago Bull NZ, trained by Gary Hall Snr, and driven by Gary Hall Jnr;
- Group One Westral Mares Classic, won by The Parade NZ, trained by Justin Prentice, and driven by Chris Alford; and
- Group One Golden Slipper, won by Jack Mac NZ, trained by Barry Howlett, and driven by Chris Lewis.



**Group One  
Fremantle  
Pacing Cup,  
won by Chicago  
Bull NZ, trained  
by Gary Hall Snr,  
and driven by  
Gary Hall Jr.**



## STATE REPORTS



### TASMANIA



**Dean Cooper**  
Chairman

Tasmanian harness racing experienced another season of strong results in 2016/17 – there were more meetings in the prime time Friday night timeslot, wagering turnover increased by more than six per cent to \$82 million compared to last year and Tasmanian-based trainer Ben Yole prepared more than 100 winners in a season for the second year in a row.

Importantly, a contributing factor to the \$82 million turnover result was the decision, in close cooperation and consultation with Sky Racing, to change Tasbred Finals' race meetings at Devonport, Launceston and Hobart to the Friday night prime timeslots on Sky 1.

Other factors in this increase included more race meetings and more races, increased starters and bigger average field sizes.

The publication of high-level form and analysis through the Tasracing and Harness Racing Australia web sites also played a critical role in this growth. This enhanced form information, funded by Tasracing on all Tasmanian harness races broadcast on Sky, also helped increase important website traffic.

*Tasracing's various social media channels were also utilised to increase form distribution.*

A 10-minute harness preview segment continued to be broadcast on RadioTAB on Sunday mornings along with a 15-minute segment in Mobile Rolling on Thursday mornings. A 30-minute harness segment was included in the weekly Tasracing Talk on RSN Carnival.

Ignatius, a 2YO gelding trained by Todd Rattray, owned by Lyrae Graham and bred by the Rattray Family Trust, delivered the best performance by a Tasmanian horse for the year winning the Group One \$125,000 New South Wales Breeders Challenge Final for 2YO colts and geldings at Menangle in record time.

After Ignatius, Pachacuti was the leading Tasmanian performer winning both the Devonport Cup (30-metre handicap) and the Easter Cup (40-metre handicap).

Three year old Scooterwillrev won 12 races in a row in Tasmania, including the \$30,000 Tasmanian Derby.

The Tasmanian feature races were dominated by local trainers Todd Rattray and Paul Hill.

Rattray's effort to win four of the 16 feature races was particularly impressive as it was his first full season as a trainer. Meanwhile, at the other end of the age spectrum, 66-year-old trainer Paul Hill won three of the \$40,000 Tasbred Finals.

Victorian trained horses won three feature races – the Tasmania Cup (Lets Elope), Tasmanian Oaks (Shartin) and City Of Launceston Cup (Five Star Anvil).

As referenced in the opening paragraph, trainer Ben Yole trained 118 winners in 2016/17 to equal the record set by Neville Webberley in 1990/91. The northern Tasmanian-based trainer trained 108 winners last season – the first time 100 winners had been achieved by one trainer in a season since 1997 (Barrie Rattray).

Shelley Barnes and Deborah Williams tied for female trainer honours with 22 wins each. While Barnes has won this award 13 times, it was Williams' first title.

Eighteen-year-old Jack Laughler won his first Leading Junior Driver title. He finished sixth in the state drivers' premiership.

*Natalee Emery was the best female driver. It was her fifth win since relocating to Tasmania in 2004.*

Another driving highlight for the year was Ricky Duggan's achievement of passing 1500 career wins and is now closing on leader Barrie Rattray's total of 1575 victories.

Tasracing worked closely with the Standardbred Pleasure and Performance Horse Association of Tasmania and the Agricultural Show Council of Tasmania to facilitate the transition from racing to retirement for harness horses.

## STATE REPORTS

Outcomes includes specific categories for showing and competing at many agricultural shows and seminars to assist owners with basic horse care and riding skills for retired Standardbreds.

The Harness Industry Forum continued to meet quarterly in 2016/17. Regular topics covered at these meetings included sustainability, safety and welfare, programming, the harness budget, policies, marketing and breeding.

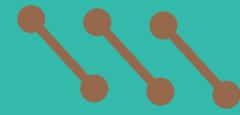
Tasracing appreciates the time and effort all forum participants commit to this important forum that provides an opportunity for direct interaction and consultation between Tasracing and industry.

Tasracing continued to support harness breeders in 2016/17 with:

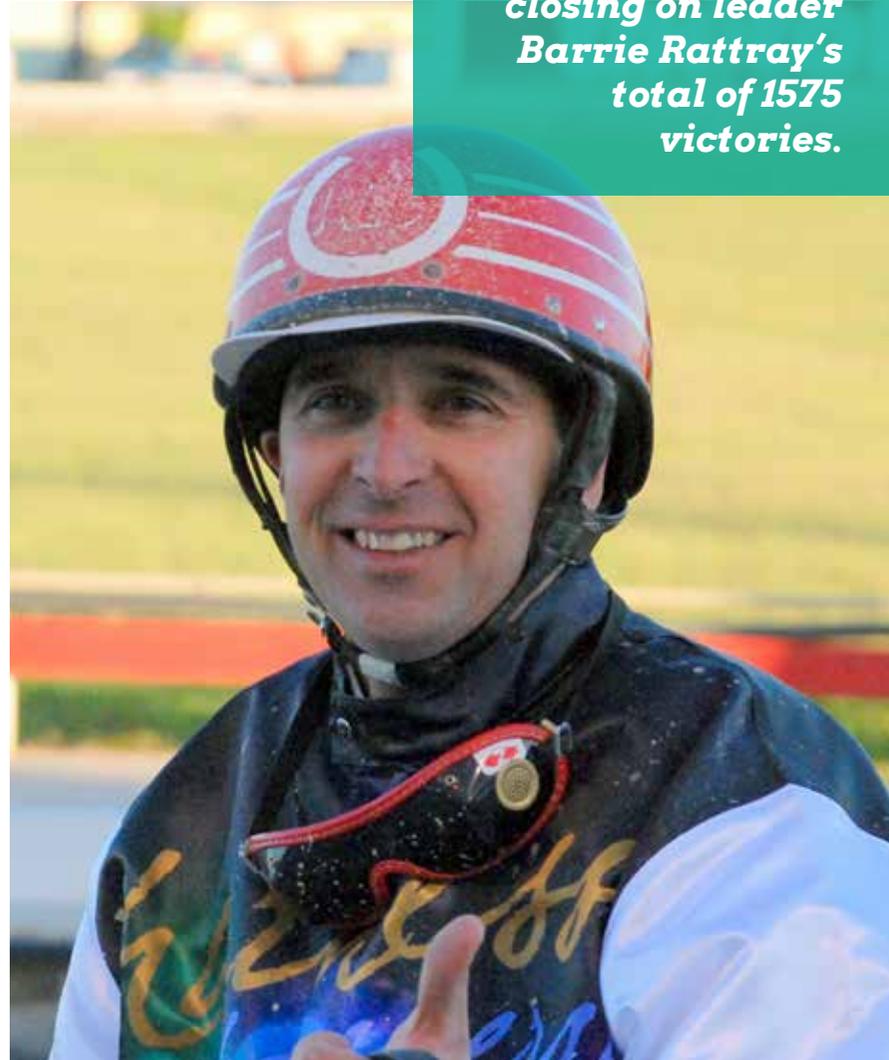
- Tasbred Finals (x 6) increasing from \$30,000 to \$40,000.
- Tasbred Heats (x 12) increasing from \$8,000 to \$10,000.
- Amended stake money distribution for Tasbred Heats and Finals featuring 50% for the winner and two per cent for horses placed sixth to last.
- Changes to 2YO racing conditions including full stake money for races with five acceptors and the inclusion of 3YO and older non-winners (conditions applied).
- A Tasbred Bonus distribution of \$174,000.
- Tasbred Breeders Coupon and Tasbred Owners Breeding Incentive payments of \$137,000
- Payment of foal notification fees on behalf of breeders saving them more than \$23,000.
- Payment of \$4,000 for yearling sale first win bonuses.

There were 16 feature races in Tasmania with stake money of \$20,000 or more.

Ben Yole (left) and younger brother Mark with Lu Way Lord after one of his wins in Hobart



**Another driving highlight for the year was Ricky Duggan's achievement of passing 1500 career wins and is now closing on leader Barrie Rattray's total of 1575 victories.**



# AUSTRALIAN HARNESSE HORSE OF THE YEAR



## SMOLDA

2017 Australian  
Harness Horse of the Year

# AUSTRALIAN DRIVERS CHAMPIONSHIP



## *Freelance South Australian reinsman Wayne Hill is the 2016 Australian Driver's Champion.*

Hill amassed 67 points during a six-race series at Globe Derby Park on Saturday night to win the title by 10 points from fellow South Australian Ryan Hryhorec to land a home-state quinella.

Adding merit to the tallies by the South Australians is that Hill had drives in only five of the six races and incredibly Hryhorec had just four meaning that for each lost drive they picked up just five points.

Hill finished with two wins, a third, fourth and fifth while Hryhorec had a win, two seconds and a last.

The popular reinsman was lucky to be driving in the series as he was the state's reserve but got a call up when his sister Danielle, one of the two selected SA drivers, was suspended and opted not to appeal or ask for a stay of sentence.

"There is no doubt it was my greatest night in harness racing," Hill said.

"It was such a great privilege to be able to drive against the best from around Australia.

"I'm not naive enough to believe that I am the best. I'm sure that I had a hometown advantage - knowing my own drives and importantly the capabilities of the opposition.

"Going into the series I thought I had some good drives and could do okay but winning the whole thing was never in my thoughts."

Hill admitted the pressure did get to him on his final drive on The Dutchman in the last race of the series.

"Gary (Hall) was close to me in the points and was driving the favourite Bee A Lassie which looked a really good chance so if it won I had to be close up in the placings.

"I was aware Bee A Lassie galloped in the score up and basically lost all chance so I decided to drive very cautiously on The Dutchman and dropped down behind the leader Hanlon Parade which in hindsight proved not the right decision.

"When Hanlon Parade started to drop back and others were going around me I knew I had to be careful trying

to get off the inside because if I received a suspension I would automatically lose my points.

"Luckily, a run came and The Dutchman trotted home well to finish fifth."

*Believers of things happening in threes and fate, Hill was always in with a chance of taking off the title.*

Hill has had an incredible last 10 months - first by driving an Australian record-equalling six winners at a meeting at Victor Harbor on Monday, December 28, then at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 season finished with 118 winners, the first time he has topped 100, now he has taken off the Australian Drivers Championship.

Danielle Hill, opted to stay home on Saturday night watching the races, but when she knew that her brother had won the title she rushed to Globe Derby Park to offer her congratulations.

"I'm so pleased for Wayne," Hill said. "He has worked really hard to establish himself as a freelance driver and deserves the title.

"One of the reasons I opted not to seek a stay of my suspension was that I knew Wayne was the reserve and would take my spot.

"I am really keen to build on my training - it is something I love - and I am now happy to basically just drive my own horses while for Wayne he wants to be keep growing as a freelance driver and this was a great opportunity and he made the most of it."

*Hill acknowledged that his career has blossomed through his sister.*

"When Danni had her terrible accident in May, 2010 and was sidelined for a long period I suddenly found I was getting more drives and that was a kick start for growing my career, and obviously tonight was a wonderful opportunity."

"We are a close family and everyone is pleased when someone has success."

**Hill acknowledged that his career has blossomed through his sister.**

WAYNE HILL  
2017 Australian Drivers Champ

Written by Graham Fischer

2017 AUSTRALIAN HARNESS RACING

# AWARDS



## WINONA AWARD 2017 AUSTRALIAN BROODMARE OF THE YEAR

### AMARILLEN

Amarillen (Fake Left - Nellirama) has been voted the 2017 Australian Broodmare of the Year.

Owned by Anthony Caruana, the progeny of Amarillen had a phenomenal year on the track, highlighted by star fillies, Miss Graceland, who won the Group 1 Nevele R Stud Victoria Oaks Final, and Nostra Beach, the winner of the Group 1 Australian Pacing Gold 2 Year Old Fillies Final.

Both of these fillies were bred by the late Rick Hinds and his wife Naomi.

Overall, Amarillen is the dam of 9 foals of racing age, of which 8 are winners. Amazingly, the only non-winner of racing age is Pixel Perfect, who was runner up in the 2017 Australian Broodmare of the Year voting.

In the 2016/2017 season, Amarillen produced three winners for a total of 13 wins, 8 placings and \$368,460 in stakemoney, as listed below:

**2016/2017 Record: 3 winners 13 wins 8 placings \$368,460**

**HIS MAKERS MARK** 1 win 1 placing \$5,040

**MISS GRACELAND** 8 wins 4 placings \$167,120

07/04/17 NEVELE R STUD VICTORIA OAKS FINAL (GROUP 1) G1 P TABCORP PARK MELTON

**NOSTRA BEACH** 4 wins 3 placings \$196,300

06/05/17 AUSTRALIAN PACING GOLD (2YO FILLIES) FINAL (GROUP 1) G1 P TABCORP PARK MELTON

### STUD BOOK RECORD

**AMARILLEN** (S7000068) bm 2000, by Fake Left USA 1:51.4MS from Nellirama by Panorama USA 1:53.4MS from Nellie Robins 2:01.3MS by Telemon Hanover USA 1:53.6MS. Breeder: P F Barker & C G Robins & B M Robins, Tas

21.09.05 brg **VILLAGEM** (S7050042) 2,2:03.8MS;3,1:57.6MS;1:52.1MS \$626,585 by Village Jasper USA, P F Barker, C G Robins, B M Robins, Tas

14.10.06 bf **PIXEL PERFECT** (S7060007) by Art Major USA

08.10.07 brf **CODIE KARALTA** (S7070022) 2,2:00.6MS;3,2:02.1MS \$31,533 by Jennas Beach Boy USA, F R Barker, P F Barker, Tas

09.10.08 bg **BIG ZEE** (S7080010) 3,1:58.7MS;1:55.1MS \$54,227 by Art Major USA

23.10.09 bf **LETTUCEGGSCAPE** (S7090035) 3,2:05.3MS \$2,520 by Art Major USA

18.10.10 bbrf **MANELLIRA** (S7100038) 2,1:56.9MS \$97,625 by Art Major USA 2011 (Slipped) by Art Major USA

05.10.12 bg **HIS MAKERS MARK** (S7120161) 2,1:58.3MS \$17,678 by Art Major USA

28.09.13 bf **MISS GRACELAND** (S7130060) 2,1:59.3MS;3,1:55.7MS \$196,643 by Rocknroll Hanover USA, R G Hinds, N J Hinds, Tas

10.10.14 bf **NOSTRA BEACH** (S7140113) 2,1:53.5MS \$196,300 by Somebeachsomewhere USA

19.10.15 bbrf (S7150036) by Sportswriter USA

2016 (Missed) by Art Major USA

## LAWN DERBY AWARDS – PACERS

### AUSTRALIAN PACER OF THE YEAR

# SMOLDA

(bg 2008 by Courage Under Fire NZ from Under The Mattress)

**Aust Performances:** 9 starts 4 wins 4 placings \$929,642 1:54.8MS

**Breeder:** Paul Blackshaw

**Owner:** Glenys Kennard, Phillip Kennard, Neil Pilcher, Marcus Kirkwood

**Driver:** Anthony Butt/Mark Purdon **Trainer:** Mark Purdon



## AWARDS

### SMOLDA

#### AGED HORSE/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

(bg 2008 by Courage Under Fire NZ from Under The Mattress)

**Aust Performances:** 9 starts 4 wins 4 placings \$929,642 1:54.8MS **Breeder:** Paul Blackshaw

**Owner:** Glenys Kennard, Phillip Kennard, Neil Pilcher, Marcus Kirkwood

**Driver:** Anthony Butt/Mark Purdon **Trainer:** Mark Purdon

### A PICCADILLY PRINCESS NZ

#### AGED MARE PACER OF THE YEAR

(brf 2012 by Bettors Delight USA from Hyde Park Royal (NZ))

**Aust Performances:** 8 starts 5 wins 2 placings \$209,390 1:50.4MS

**Breeder:** Thomas Patterson, Ken Patterson, Michael Patterson, Michael Ward

**Owner:** Patterson Bros Racing Syndicate (Thomas Patterson (Mgr)), Michael Ward, Simon Bradley, Antony Wilson, Christian Cunneen

**Driver:** Mark Purdon **Trainer:** Mark Purdon

### PETACULAR

#### 3YO FILLY PACER OF THE YEAR

(bf 2013 by Somebeachsomewhere USA from Ideal Priority USA)

**Performances:** 15 starts 11 wins 4 placings \$249,080 1:55.6MS

**Breeder:** Bruce Edward

**Owner:** PS Racing Syndicate, David Young (Mgr)

**Driver:** Michael Stanley **Trainer:** Michael Stanley

### VINCENT

#### 3YO COLT/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

(bc 2013 by Art Major USA from Kept For Pleasure)

**Performances:** 8 starts 7 wins 0 placing \$264,390 1:50.2MS **Breeder:** Sloys Company Pty Ltd (Darren Xerri (Mgr))

**Owner:** William Feiss

**Driver:** Mark Purdon **Trainer:** Mark Purdon

### NOSTRA VILLA

#### 2YO FILLY PACER OF THE YEAR

(brf 2014 by Art Major USA from Crystal Journey NZ)

**Performances:** 9 starts 8 wins 1 placing \$269,590 1:55.1MS

**Breeder:** Patrician Park, Brett Coffey, Joanne Boag **Owner:** Mervat Caruana (Mgr), Thomas Galea

**Driver:** Chris Alford **Trainer:** Emma Stewart

### LUMINEER

#### 2YO COLT/GELDING PACER OF THE YEAR

(bc 2014 by Sportswriter USA from Birds Can Sing USA)

**Performances:** 5 starts 5 wins 0 placing \$177,980 1:52.5MS

**Breeder:** Pepper Tree Farm Breeding & Racing Unit Trust (Robert Vandyke (Mgr))

**Owner:** BLG Racing Group, Brian McDowall (Mgr)

**Driver:** Jason Lee **Trainer:** Ange McDowall

# VANCLEVE AWARDS – TROTTERS

**AUSTRALIAN TROTTER OF THE YEAR  
– 2YO COLT/GELDING TROTTER OF THE YEAR**

## WOBELEE

(bg 2014 by Down Under Muscles from Tupenny Bit)

**Performances:** 12 starts 10 wins 2 placings \$180,330 TR2:00.1MS

**Breeder:** Bromfield Park Pty Ltd (Bill Pearce (Mgr))

**Owner:** Colin Murphy **Driver:** Chris Alford

**Trainer:** Alison Alford

ALICE BARAN PARK.COM

BREEDERS IN FIN

TAB



## AWARDS

### AUSTRALIAN TROTTER OF THE YEAR 2YO COLT/GELDING TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(bg 2014 by Down Under Muscles from Tupenny Bit)

**Performances:** 12 starts 10 wins 2 placings \$180,330 TR2:00.1MS

**Breeder:** Bromfield Park Pty Ltd (Bill Pearce (Mgr)) **Owner:** Colin Murphy **Driver:** Chris Alford **Trainer:** Alison Alford

## WOBELEE

### AGED HORSE/GELDING TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(bg 2009 by Bettors Delight USA from All The Way Home (NZ))

**Performances:** 15 starts 8 wins 3 placings \$146,840 TR1:55.1MS

**Breeder:** Est Richard Fleming, Joan Fleming, Anthony Fleming, Carla Fleming

**Owner:** Joan Fleming, Est Richard Fleming **Driver:** Darren Hancock **Trainer:** Darren Hancock

## ON THUNDER ROAD NZ

### AGED MARE TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(bf 2011 by Sundon USA from Bright Diedre (NZ))

**Aust Performances:** 8 starts 4 wins 2 placings \$132,400 TR1:56.1MS **Breeder:** Fred Fletcher

**Owner:** Fred Fletcher (Mgr), Sam Smolenski **Driver:** Anthony Butt **Trainer:** Sonya Smith

## SUNNY RUBY NZ

### 3YO FILLY TROTTING OF THE YEAR

(bf 2013 by Angus Hall (US) from Glenferrie Unixa FRA)

**Performances:** 11 starts 8 wins 2 placing \$162,520 TR1:56.9MS

**Breeder:** Glenferrie Farm Pty Ltd (Peter Chambers (Mgr)) **Owner:** Yabby Dam Farms Pty Ltd, Pat Driscoll (Mgr)

**Driver:** Zac Phillips **Trainer:** Anton Golino

## UNE BELLE ALLURE

### 3YO COLT/GELDING TROTTER OF THE YEAR

(brg 2013 by Tenostrump from Free Rider)

**Performances:** 8 starts 6 wins 2 placings \$75,580 TR1:57.3MS

**Breeder:** Tony Prochilo, Angelo Cammaroto, Mara Scarpino

**Owner:** Tony Prochilo (Mgr), Angelo Cammaroto, Mara Scarpino **Driver:** Matthew Craven **Trainer:** Matthew Craven

## MAGICOOL

### 2YO FILLY TROTTING OF THE YEAR

(bf 2014 by The Pres CA from City Lane)

**Aust Performances:** 3 starts 2wins 1 placing \$55,000 TR 2:02.2MS **Breeder:** Michelle Caig

**Owner:** Dave Harrington (Mgr), Maxine Green, Noel Green James Cruickshank, Lindsay Hall, Neville Smith, Patricia Bush

**Driver:** Dexter Dunn/Anthony Butt/John Caldwell **Trainer:** Jack Harrington

## OUR RENEZMAE NZ

2017 AUSTRALIAN HARNESS RACING AWARDS

2016/2017 GLOBE DERBY AWARDS

LEADING SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

**BETTORS DELIGHT USA** (for the 6th time)

LEADING JUVENILE SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

**BETTORS DELIGHT USA** (for the 3rd time)

LEADING SIRE OF TROTTERS BY STAKEMONEY

**MAJESTIC SON CA** (for the 2nd time)

LEADING SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

**BETTORS DELIGHT USA** (for the 6th time) 511 starters 370 winners 1026 wins \$10,843,324

LEADING SIRE OF 2YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

**ART MAJOR USA** (for the 6th Time) 92 starters 34 winners 66 wins \$930,065

LEADING SIRE OF 3YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

**BETTORS DELIGHT USA** (for the 5th time) 101 starters 75 winners 199 wins \$1,866,923

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

**BETTORS DELIGHT USA** (for the 3rd time) 145 starters 104 winners 250 wins \$2,474,601

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE BY STAKEMONEY

**CHRISTIAN CULLEN NZ** (for the 1st time) 294 starters 203 winners 601 wins \$5,869,396



LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 2YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

**ART MAJOR USA** (for the 1st time) 42 starters 23 winners 47 wins \$634,477

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 3YO'S BY STAKEMONEY

**CHRISTIAN CULLEN NZ** (for the 2nd time) 63 starters 44 winners 139 wins \$901,867

LEADING SIRE OF TROTTERS BY STAKEMONEY

**MAJESTIC SON CA** (for the 2nd time) 80 starters 43 winners 95 wins \$1,077,192

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF TROTTERS BY STAKEMONEY

**SUNDON USA** (for the 7th time) 153 starters 89 winners 218 wins \$2,145,529

LEADING SIRE BY WINNERS

**BETTORS DELIGHT USA** (for the 2nd time) - 370

LEADING SIRE OF 2YO'S BY WINNERS

**ART MAJOR USA** (for the 7th time) - 34

LEADING SIRE OF 3YO'S BY WINNERS

**BETTORS DELIGHT USA** (for the 4th time) - 75

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE BY WINNERS

**HOLMES HANOVER USA** (for the 10th time) - 212

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 2YO'S BY WINNERS

**ART MAJOR USA** (for the 1st time) - 23

LEADING BROODMARE SIRE OF 3YO'S BY WINNERS

**CHRISTIAN CULLEN NZ** (for the 2nd time) - 44

# STATISTICS

## TOP 20 STARTERS - BY PRIZEMONEY

Name	Age	Sex	Sire	Dam	Starts	Wins	2nds	3rds	Aus Prize \$	Mile Rate
SMOLDA	8YO	Gelding	Courage Under Fire NZ	Under The Mattress	9	4	3	1	\$929,642	1:54.8MS
LENNYTHESHARK	7YO	Colt	Four Starzz Shark CA	Botswana	16	7	2	5	\$761,695	1:49.2MS
CHICAGO BULL NZ	4YO	Gelding	Bettors Delight USA	Chicago Blues (NZ)	15	10	3	2	\$674,769	1:52.6MS
HECTORJAYJAY	6YO	Gelding	Dream Away USA	Sheer Finesse	17	12	2	0	\$635,823	1:51.5MS
BLING IT ON	6YO	Colt	American Ideal USA	Alldatglittersisgold NZ	13	4	0	4	\$503,945	1:51.4MS
LAZARUS NZ	4YO	Colt	Bettors Delight USA	Bethany (NZ)	5	3	1	1	\$501,000	1:49.0MS
SOHO TRIBECA	4YO	Colt	American Ideal USA	Pixel Perfect	10	6	1	2	\$316,370	1:55.2MS
NOSTRA VILLA	2YO	Filly	Art Major USA	Crystal Journey NZ	9	8	1	0	\$269,590	1:55.1MS
VINCENT	3YO	Colt	Art Major USA	Kept For Pleasure	8	7	0	0	\$264,390	1:50.2MS
BEAUDIENE BOAZ NZ	5YO	Colt	Badlands Hanover USA	Beaudiene Babe (NZ)	21	3	6	2	\$250,505	1:52.9MS
PETACULAR	3YO	Filly	Somebeachsomewhere USA	Ideal Priority USA	15	11	4	0	\$249,080	1:55.6MS
OUR LITTLE GENERAL	3YO	Colt	Mach Three CA	Kabbalah Karen B CA	14	5	3	3	\$245,980	1:54.0MS
OUR JIMMY JOHNSTONE NZ	8YO	Gelding	P Forty Seven USA	Sammi Franco (NZ)	20	6	2	6	\$227,970	1:54.3MS
HANDSANDWHEELS	3YO	Colt	Mach Three CA	Benjor Maddy Lombo	15	6	2	3	\$221,083	1:56.9MS
MOLLY KELLY	2YO	Filly	Four Starzz Shark CA	Jackie Kelly	11	6	2	2	\$218,100	1:54.8MS
PARTYON NZ	3YO	Filly	Bettors Delight USA	Beach Parade (NZ)	9	7	0	2	\$213,293	1:51.3MS
A PICCADILLY PRINCESS NZ	4YO	Filly	Bettors Delight USA	Hyde Park Royal (NZ)	8	5	2	0	\$209,390	1:50.4MS
MACZAFFAIR NZ	3YO	Filly	Mach Three CA	Presidential Affair (NZ)	14	7	4	0	\$206,025	1:55.4MS
NOSTRA BEACH	2YO	Filly	Somebeachsomewhere USA	Amarillen	11	4	3	0	\$196,300	1:53.5MS
WOBELEE	2YO	Gelding	Down Under Muscles	Tupenny Bit	12	10	1	1	\$180,330	TR2:00.1MS

# STATISTICS

## TOP 20 DRIVERS - BY WINS

Drivers - All	State	Starts	Wins	2nds-3rds	Total Stakes	Metro Wins	Metro Stakes	Country Wins	Country Stakes	% Wins to Starts	%W+P Starts
CHRIS ALFORD	VIC	1,329	332	201 - 167	\$4,165,487	61	\$2,832,755	271	\$1,332,732	24.98%	52.67%
CHRIS LEWIS	WA	1,175	214	152 - 142	\$2,444,095	54	\$1,382,584	160	\$1,061,511	18.21%	43.23%
GREG SUGARS	SA	1,357	209	208 - 178	\$2,013,380	32	\$961,405	177	\$1,051,975	15.40%	43.85%
AMANDATURNBULL	NSW	672	196	104 - 71	\$1,626,253	27	\$692,410	169	\$933,843	29.17%	55.21%
SHANE GRAHAM	QLD	1,091	187	164 - 133	\$1,233,922	4	\$106,531	183	\$1,127,391	17.14%	44.36%
RYAN WARWICK	WA	605	176	85 - 76	\$1,847,842	44	\$1,101,780	132	\$746,062	29.09%	55.70%
DANIELLE HILL	SA	694	174	125 - 85	\$593,375	0	\$6,320	174	\$587,055	25.07%	55.33%
GRANT DIXON	QLD	1,014	173	140 - 128	\$1,226,251	5	\$207,009	168	\$1,019,242	17.06%	43.49%
GARY HALL JNR	WA	779	167	128 - 103	\$2,760,362	55	\$2,017,965	112	\$742,397	21.44%	51.09%
GAVIN LANG	VIC	858	158	139 - 113	\$1,796,187	35	\$993,800	123	\$802,387	18.41%	47.79%
CHRIS GEARY	NSW	992	150	141 - 113	\$1,526,135	31	\$761,440	119	\$764,695	15.12%	40.73%
NATHAN JACK	VIC	696	146	110 - 90	\$1,323,468	27	\$659,230	119	\$664,238	20.98%	49.71%
MATHEW NEILSON	QLD	852	140	136 - 100	\$804,949	1	\$39,946	139	\$765,003	16.43%	44.13%
PETER MCMULLEN	QLD	906	138	107 - 109	\$896,594	4	\$132,161	134	\$764,433	15.23%	39.07%
RYAN HRYHOREC	SA	587	137	98 - 105	\$497,853	0	\$0	137	\$497,853	23.34%	57.92%
WAYNE HILL	SA	863	133	141 - 129	\$507,328	0	\$600	133	\$506,728	15.41%	46.70%
ROBERT MORRIS	NSW	915	126	116 - 107	\$1,153,117	25	\$514,725	101	\$638,392	13.77%	38.14%
NATHAN DAWSON	QLD	1,067	125	118 - 120	\$557,764	0	\$12,700	125	\$545,064	11.72%	34.02%
CHRISTOPHER VOAK	WA	1,099	120	150 - 119	\$1,176,487	23	\$565,635	97	\$610,852	10.92%	35.40%
KATE GATH	VIC	486	120	83 - 63	\$1,196,873	31	\$721,140	89	\$475,733	24.69%	54.73%

\* W + P denotes Wins and Places.

\* Dead Heat wins are recorded as a win for each Driver.

# 2017 JOSEPH COULTER MEDIA AWARDS

## BEST NEWS STORY

*"Back in harness: Glory days return to Wayville"*

Written by Lincoln Moore and published in the Adelaide Advertiser on June 14, 2017 - and featured prominently in News Corporation web sites - the story covered the pending return of harness racing to the Wayville Showground after a 44 year absence.

## BEST FEATURE OF THE YEAR

*"Turning tragedy into triumph"*

Paul Courts documents the background to the hugely successful Teal Pants fund raising campaign and the motivation that drives the primary organiser, Duncan McPherson. Published February 7, 2017 on the website www.harnessnews.com.au

## BEST REGIONAL FEATURE

*"Meet Scruffy"*

A touching feature on 40 year old stallion Oregon Park - known as Scruffy - written by Lucy McCormick and published in the August/September 2017 edition of the Harness Racer and also in the Geelong Advertiser.

## BEST HISTORICAL FEATURE

*"The Speedway - Real Horse Power at Albert Park"*

Researched and written by John Peck and published on the Classic Families website www.classicfamilies.net just prior to the 2017 Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park, the interesting feature chronicles the rich history of the Speedway.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

*"The real story of Globe Derby"*

A three part series by Max Agnew on the remarkable horse published in three editions of Track Bred during the season.

## BEST PHOTOGRAPH

An extremely difficult award to judge with so many excellent entries, indicative of the fine photographers currently focusing on harness racing....

*"Suspended"*

An outstanding action shot by Jenny Pollard, published in the Buloke Times in Donald, Victoria, on February 28, 2017. The photograph shows an amazing scene as Glenn Douglas - after being catapulted from his sulky onto the gig of a competitor - holds the reins of his horse while sharing a seat with Michael Bellman in a support race at the Charlton Cup meeting.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

*"Albion Park Lightning" - Ashlea Brennan*

*"That's it - I'm taking a short cut home" - Jodie Hallows*

## BEST RADIO FEATURE

*"Interview with Chris Alford following his 6000th career victory"*

Chris Barsby conducted the engaging interview with Chris Alford on his Mobile Rolling program on Thursday May 18, 2017

## BEST TV/VIDEO FEATURE

*"Michelle Treacy interview - In The Gig"*

This touching feature on the challenges faced by emerging trainer/driver Michelle Treacy aired on Sky Racing's In The Gig program on May 23, 2017. The reporter was Greg Hayes, who co-produced the segment with Alice Lindeman.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

*"Love Ina Chevy comeback" - Harness Racing Victoria*

*"50 Miracle Miles" - Harness Racing NSW/NSW Harness Racing Club*

## AWARD OF MERIT - BEST PROMOTION

*"JC Caffyn Indigenous Drivers Series"*

The NSW Harness Racing Club first staged this series in 2011 and has since built it into an event that attracts considerable attention and which has bolstered the profile of indigenous participation in harness racing. The heavily promoted series held in October 2016 comprised races staged at tracks throughout NSW and a final at Club Menangle.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

*"Alabar HERO Series" - Tanya McDermott, HRV*

*"Final episode of Harness Review after 24 years" - Len Baker*

## AWARD OF MERIT - BEST SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE & INNOVATION

*"Ashlea Brennan"*

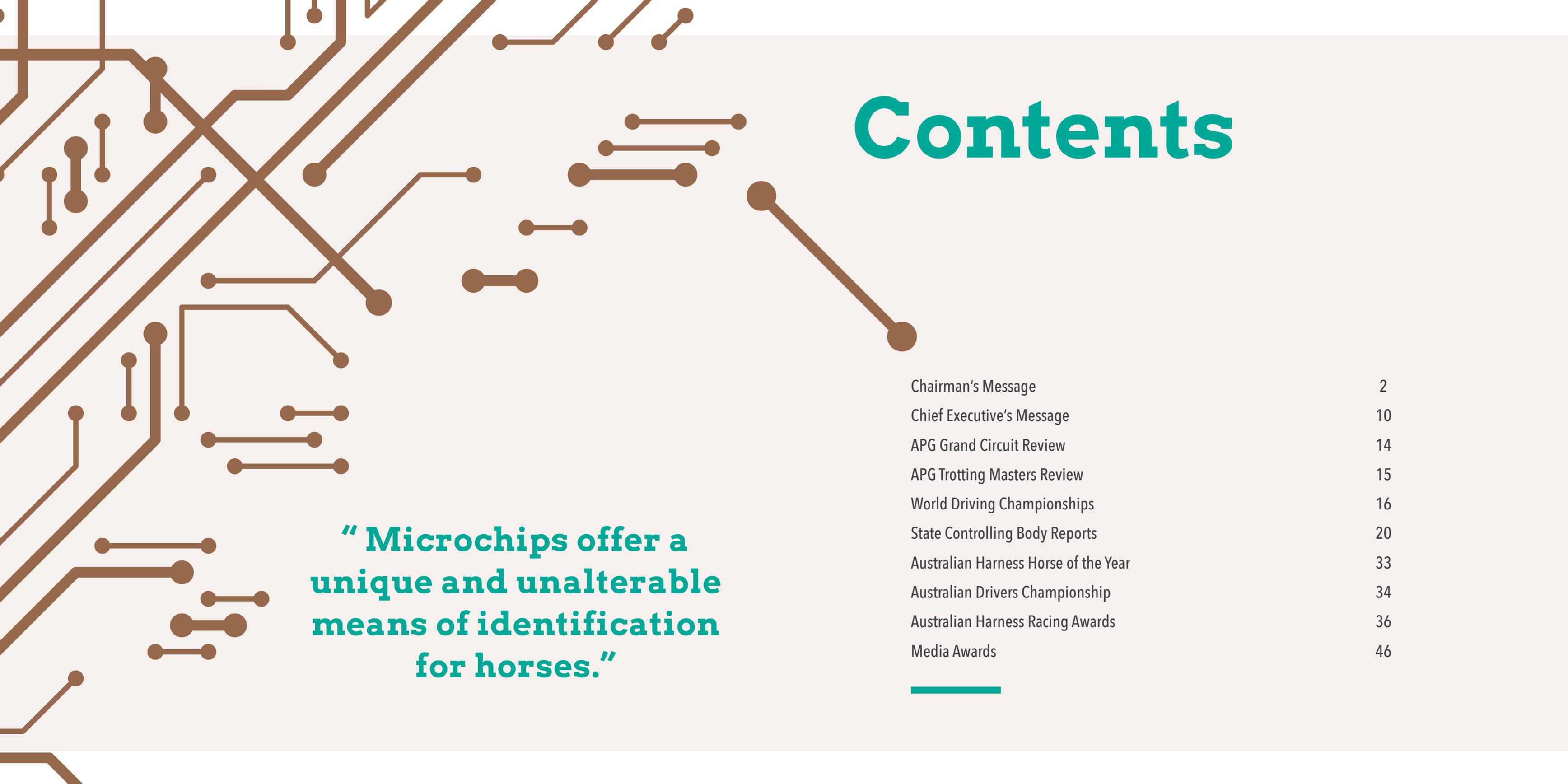
Ashlea Brennan is a prolific and highly effective user of social media both through her own company, Ashlea Brennan Photography, and by managing Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram accounts for Lennytheshark, Australian Pacing Gold, Brennan Racing and Tritton Racing.

## BEST PHOTOGRAPH

*"Suspended"*

Action shot by Jenny Pollard





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