



President's Annual Report 2023

It's a pleasure to offer this as my Annual Report in another year that has seen substantial change at the top of the Racing Industry. ENTAIN coming on board in offering stake and funding changes for the next five years; NZTR introducing a Statement of Intent and Plan to complement the injection of this new funding; and thoroughbreds performing well above expectation both in NZ and Australia have been the highlight in the season just past. May these results continue in the coming months! Enough has been said about ENTAIN and it is now time for the industry to lead and manage the racing operation professionally for the betterment of all participants and especially 'OWNERS'.

My role as your President has had its up and downs with cyclone Gabrielle and then health issues with a burst appendix and then pneumonia. I hope this is all behind me now and I can look back and say, "what has been achieved"! This is the hard question as everything I have attempted to start and finish for the benefit of owners has hit a brick wall or is in the 'too hard basket' as it involves changing the way we do business with leadership and clubs.

It has always been my prime objective to ensure our racing industry values owners and acknowledges them on race day. Your Federation Executive, consisting of Delegates from Regional Associations, came together for a workshop in June this year to discuss a way forward and develop a pathway collaborating with our other recognised partners and NZTR that would build and recognise ownership within the thoroughbred racing industry.

What was developed was a proposal that would:

1. Recognise the Sector Members of racing as members of NZTR. Currently only Clubs are members of NZTR. From my perspective this could be regarded as failing to meet 'natural justice' in terms of the intent of the Racing Industry Act 2020.
2. Enable NZTROF to work collaboratively with NZTR / LOVERACING to promote and increase racehorse ownership within New Zealand.
3. Enable NZTROF to work collaboratively with NZTR / LOVERACING to promote and increase raceday attendance of Owners within New Zealand, including specific 'Owner Raceday' initiatives.

The proposal was presented to the Board of NZTR on 19th September 2023 and, although it was not fully endorsed by the Members Council, it now sits with NZTR to consider as part of its governance review of its Constitution. A full copy of the Proposal and Strategic Direction can be found on the NZ Owners Federation website for your information and read.

Going forward the Federation will now talk and work with the other Sector Members – Breeders, Trainers and Jockeys Associations – to get support for NZTR to recognise these bodies and the Owners Federation as full members of NZTR. Further, being a member or

subscribing to our Federation should be an entitlement which all registered Owners with NZTR have a choice to do.

‘GIVING BACK TO OWNERS’ and **‘OWNERS INTRODUCE OWNERS’**, along with special **‘OWNER RACEDAYS’**, are all initiatives of focus to promote and support thoroughbred racehorse ownership. The aim would be to not just increase ownership but also to promote attendance at thoroughbred racing meetings by ensuring they are appealing community events that will in turn support local Race Clubs.

The Raceday Ownership experience is something that Clubs need to work on. There have been occasions brought to my attention where food and beverage facilities have not been operative or optimum when attending a raceday and this is not acceptable when Owners have travelled some distance to watch their thoroughbred. Do keep me informed around these matters as I will take up any concerns with the relevant Club and NZTR.

I do ask Owners to support your Regional Association’s activities and local Committees. Some associations are finding it hard to fill their Committees and may have one or two activities a year. The time involved is not onerous, and it is a good opportunity to meet other Owners within your region and have input into the industry.

With the back end of COVID now beyond us, your Federation had a good year financially, with travel kept to a minimum due to the increased use of digital platforms for our meetings.

With a change in government, no doubt we may have a new Minister of Racing, or an old foe known to us all who initiated the racing review we know of today. Whatever, our industry is in a buoyant mode which is a real positive. Long may it last!

To my Executive and team, I thank you for your support during the last year and may we continue to be the voice and advocate for our members and all other Owners in the industry.

Lastly, to you the Owners and racing industry staff nationwide who have worked tirelessly this year, may I wish you a joyful Merry Christmas and a safe New Year. If you are racing over the festive period, Good Luck!

It is a pleasure to offer this as my 2023 Annual Report.

Bernard Hickey
NZTROF President