



18 October 2018

Racing Review
Department of Internal Affairs
Wellington
Via Email: racingreview@dia.govt.nz

NZTROF Submission – Review of the New Zealand Racing Industry – Messara Report

The NZTR Owners Federation fully agrees that the New Zealand Racing Industry is in ‘dire straits’ and the review of John Messara is long overdue. It signifies radical and significant challenges for the industry if it is to prosper and sustain long term viability. The findings and recommendations contained in the review are not new! Both the NZRB and NZTR need to take responsibility for not working together and not having the courage or direction to enforce change to secure the viability of the industry.

Regardless of what has transpired and occurred in the past, the Industry Players need to embrace the recommendations and move forward together and united to lead transformational change. Change must be initiated by those at the top and recognise that change will reveal past failings and manage the change by accepting past failings and concentrating on future success. The Racing Industry is embedded far too much in a blame culture! Our future focus should be:

“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success”

Overview of Report

NZTR Owners Federation fully supports ‘Part One’ (Structure of the Industry) and ‘Part Two’ (Outsourcing) of the Messara Report though offers a slight deviation to recommendation five.

Amend the section 16 distribution formula of the Racing Act 2003 to a more equitable basis for fixed 10-year terms.
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The Federation considers that a fixed term of 5 years and distribution formula based upon previous three year average to codes is more equitable than recommended. Further it suggests that any review should be carried out after 8 years rather than 10 years.

'Part 3' (Future Venue Plan) is a huge body of work that requires more consideration and careful planning to ensure a 'win - win' for all parties and stakeholders concerned. There are legal ramifications and challenges ahead and huge boundaries here to break and work through. Consultation and agreement will be hard to achieve but not impossible and working with communities, clubs, codes and provinces will be pivotal to success. There will be a number of battles before the war is won but the Federation agrees in the need to reduce or combine venues, if a greenfields' approach is not considered. We say lets' tread slowly here and work through the functionality and viability of all venues over the next five years. The NZRB and the codes have done a considerable amount of work on this matter to date which should be considered thoroughly. The best mechanism is not to dictate but for all to work through together and effect a venue plan that satisfies all and benefits the industry and codes as a whole.

RITA:

The Racing Industry Transitional Agency (RITA) is an added dilemma with no mandate, purpose or intent signalled at this time. The Owners Federation can only infer that the Minister has no faith in the main industry players to implement change. If this is so, then the Owners insist on being represented or offering a nominee to be part of the Agency to ensure transparency and accountability is achieved. The other option is to consider the appointment of a Commissioner to lead or guide the transition.

Finally, owners and the ability to increase ownership or participation in the racing industry is key to future success.

Yours sincerely,



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President

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