

TAN – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, 21st September 2023
The Grange, Campbell Town
Meeting commenced at 11:00am

Attendees:

Merv Hill	Chair
Andrew Jenkins	Tasracing CEO
David Manshanden	Tasracing COO
Liam Swan	Tasracing Operations Manager
Stewart Brown	Tasracing Racing Coordinator – Thoroughbreds
Suzie Jacobson	Tasracing Director
David Adams	Racehorse Owners Association Tasmania
Alison Archer	Tasmanian Turf Club – Chairman
Andrew Scanlon	Tasmanian Racing Club – Chairman
Karl Thomas	Tasbreeders
Bart McCulloch	Tasbreeders
Stephen Shaw	Australian Trainers Association
Andrew Nicholl	Australian Trainers Association
Bruce Free	Chairman of Stewards – Thoroughbred
Ross Neal	Racing Integrity & Stewards Manager – ORI

On Call:

Kevin Ring	Jockeys Association
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Apologies:

John McKenna	Racehorse Owners Association Tasmania
Martin Lenz	Tasracing Chief Veterinary & Animal Welfare Officer
Barry Milton	Devonport Racing Club – Chairman
Blayne Hudson	Tasracing Code Lead – Thoroughbreds

1. MEETING ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Welcome

Chair opened the meeting at 11:17am.

1.2 Minutes

Chair called for any discrepancies with the minutes of the previous meeting, to which there were none.

Minutes of the previous meeting confirmed and accepted.

1.3 Matters Arising

Action Items from the June 2023 TAN Meeting were addressed.

Equine Heat Policy – Stewart Brown stated that Martin Lenz has made his updates to the Equine Heat Policy, and it is ready to be implemented.

Trainers Workers Compensation – Covered on the Agenda.

Mounting Yard Placegetter Stalls at all Tracks – David Manshanden outlined that a meeting took place with a number of club and association representatives. The stalls at Hobart will be modified to be a similar size to those at Devonport and solution put in place for Launceston. These stalls will be ready for use by the Summer Carnival.

FormPlus Website – Additional Profile Photos for Horses – Jackie Farrelly relayed that an automated process for this is being developed and is scheduled for completion by mid-October.

Melbourne Cup Tour in Tasmania – Andrew Jenkins stated that this is no longer going ahead and instead there will be a Hobart Cup tour to promote the 150th Hobart Cup in 2024.

Training Tracks Staying Open Later After Night Meetings – David Manshanden stated that he will catch up with the Trainers Association regarding this but there is general consensus about training tracks staying open an hour later the morning after night meetings.

2. ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Thoroughbred Code Allocation FY24

Stewart Brown: Stated that there is a 4% increase in Code Allocation from FY23 to FY24 plus a carry over amount. There will be 3 additional meetings in FY24 compared with FY23. The Riding Fee will go up from \$215 per ride to \$225 per ride with the Trial Riding Fee up from \$65 to \$70 per ride. \$150,000 will be put into a Trainers Workers Compensation Fund to assist trainers with rising premiums.

Andrew Scanlon: Stated that based off analysis by Racing Clubs Tasmania (RCT) it's only an increase of 1.54% and this is essentially a decrease considering CPI is around 5.39%. Understands the income streams are less now but referenced South Australia having solid improvement along with other states. Believes Tasmania is the poor cousin in Australian racing and will remain this way whilst there are actual decreases. Referenced how

expensive it is to race horses in Tasmania and how stakes are the driver of ownership and confidence in the industry.

David Manshanden: Queried if the analysis looked into last year where stakes went up 14.8%?

Andrew Jenkins: Believes the RCT numbers are inaccurate and needs to consider the full set of numbers and not just a one-year rollover. Stated that there is not an unlimited pool of funds and stakes have increased significantly over the last 5 years.

Andrew Scanlon: Spoke about the sustainability reset and stakes cuts in the past. Believes the increases need to keep coming as the other states are still going up.

David Manshanden: Queried if Andrew wants stakes to rise by CPI, then how do Tasracing fund areas like Tasbred and Workers Compensation? It's Code Allocation, not Stakes Allocation.

Merv Hill: Summarised the discussion so far and asked the question if there any items in the Code Allocation paper that members want to change?

Andrew Scanlon: Stated that he believes the Workers Compensation issue is one that needs to be addressed.

Andrew Scanlon: Believes that Stakes should be a clear and separate from Code Allocation as that's the money used to run racing for owners, trainers, and jockeys. If you start decreasing or flatlining stakes then you will go backwards, it is the cornerstone of growth in the industry. Agrees that all the other items in code allocation need to be addressed.

David Manshanden: Outlined that stakes increases have been the main priority for Tasracing and the Government for the past 5 years. Base stakes started at \$16,000 in 2018/19 and it is now at \$25,000.

David Adams: Queried if Tasracing have looked at other options to assist trainers with workers compensation insurance?

Andrew Jenkins: Outlined that himself and David Manshanden are consulting with 7 or 8 trainers wanting to find out the full set of factors that are currently effecting profitability. A report will be put together and presented to the Tasracing board.

Karl Thomas: Stated that Tasbreeders are in agreeance with the items listed in FY24. Queried the Tasbred fund being static for FY24. Requested additional funding for Tasbred.

The TAN Group approved the FY24 Code Allocation with the exception of Andrew Scanlon who would like the Stakes Allocation reviewed.

2.2 Trainers Workers Compensation

Liam Swan: Spoke about the current issues around Trainers Workers Compensation in the industry. Outlined what Tasracing has done in the past and how they are looking for support that is more sustainable.

Merv Hill: Outlined how the TAN Group have had a prior discussion on this matter and whilst there were some concerns there wasn't a better suggestion put forward.

Andrew Scanlon: Stated that he is in favour of doing something about this issue but doesn't want it to be a handout to trainers. Believes direct payments to insurers is an option.

Andrew Jenkins: Confirmed that the admin side of any direct payments to trainers would be tightened up under this proposal.

David Manshanden: Outlined how this proposal treats trainers the same as jockeys who are already funded by Tasracing. There will be a portion coming from code allocation and a portion from prizemoney to fund the workers compensation for trainers and jockeys. Referenced the current work that is going on with Gow-Gates to hopefully lower premiums for trainers.

Bart McCulloch: Raised concerns around trainers becoming less careful given they know they are effectively getting a subsidy. Believes compensation should be linked to good management.

David Manshanden: Stated that this model is only part funded so the onus will still be on the trainer to fund some of the premium.

Andrew Nicholl: Spoke about how workers compensation is a national issue. Premiums are escalating due to the labor resources that are available. The main issue is around track riders. Outlined how rates have increased in all states bar Tasmania. Stated that he is on a working group in Victoria looking at this exact issue. The real issue is that trainers are great at training horses but terrible at the business and employment side of things. Believes money needs to be invested into services to help with pre-employment protocols, office management and return to work programs. Subsidies are a good starting point for a short-term solution but believes it can't be the only solution. Putting a program in place to address the services side is essential.

Andrew Jenkins: Agreed and outlined how this proposal is an initial approach to deal with the immediate pain so that people aren't lost to the industry. Stated that Tasracing would be very open to working with the ATA as the program progresses.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

3.1 Additional Riding Fee

Kevin Ring: Spoke about the current Additional Riding Fee where a jockey will get an additional \$100 for taking an additional ride after their initial ride is scratched. Outlined that it has been this amount since 2018/19 and requested that this be raised to \$150 due to CPI and the increase of the scratching fee over the same period.

Stewart Brown: Responded that there isn't currently an appetite to raise this given the riding fee has been going up over this period. Outlined that a jockey who receives an additional riding fee receives that on top of the riding fee they would receive for their scratched ride.

The TAN Group agree to no change to the Additional Riding Fee.

3.2 Barrier Trials – Witches Hats

David Manshanden: Stated that witches hats are used in trials at Hobart given the resources needed to move the rail after a race meeting. Running the trials on the rail where the race meeting has been creates more wear and tear on the inside part of the track. Witches hats are used nation wide and are an important part of maintaining the Hobart track.

Merv Hill: Mentioned that the TJA have suggested that riders just be told to stay out wide on the track.

Kevin Ring: Stated that some tracks in Queensland and New South Wales don't use witches hats and riders are just told to stay out wide. The Stewards have the power to do something if a rider doesn't follow instruction.

Liam Swan: Outlined how this issue has been spoken about before. If there was a national approach, then we would take that into consideration.

David Manshanden: Spoke about the Elwick Track Management Plan for this season and how trials will be on the rail if the track is able to take it. There are also pre published dates where trials will be on the rail at Elwick.

3.3 High Winds

Kevin Ring: Requested a sit down with Tasracing and ORI to implement a High Winds Policy. Referenced a document from Racing Victoria relating to strong winds and one from ORI regarding severe weather.

Bruce Free: Stated that ORI will work with Tasracing to put together a policy.

3.4 ORI – Guide to Thoroughbred Racing Penalties

Kevin Ring: Outlined that he has already spoken with Ross Neal regarding his concerns outlined in the paper he provided and is comfortable with the response he has received.

Andrew Nicholl: Stated that the ATA's preliminary position is that they don't support the current guidelines produced by ORI. Acknowledged that these are just guidelines and that guidelines have been used in other codes, in other states. Outlined that precedent is the ATA's preferred way of determining a penalty along with the national and local rules of racing. Believes penalties to trainers need to be subject to discretion as there are a million different reasons why a rule may be broken. Stated that the ATA are happy to engage with ORI on the matter.

Ross Neal: Spoke about how the document is a draft document and is there for discussion. Happy to engage with the trainers association like they have done with the jockeys. Believes it is important to set some kind of guidelines and these are just starting points. Outlined that this document won't become final until they have had discussions with all relevant parties.

3.5 Night Racing

Kevin Ring: Outlined that participants believe around 9:30-9:45pm is a good time to finish night racing.

David Manshanden: Stated that the Tasracing position hasn't changed from the last meeting. The Club has issues staffing early start times and also Sky determines what our race times are.

Stewart Brown: Mentioned that there were only two occasions last season where the last race was after 10:00pm. The first of these was on a 10 race card and the other was when the meeting was put back a race. Outlined that 10:00pm is generally aimed at to be last race and then race times work backwards from there. As a rule, any races that are before 6:00pm will be on Sky2 and this has a negative effect on betting turnover. There is about a \$300,000-\$350,000 difference in turnover between a race prior to 6:00pm race on Sky2 and a post 9:30pm race on Sky1. Announced that Tasracing will be putting on a free coffee van at all night meetings that licensed participants will have access to all night.

Stephen Shaw: Spoke about the letter that the Trainers Association received from Trinder Racing regarding night racing finishing times. He has also spoken to a number of other trainers who share the same thoughts. Mentioned with night racing going into April it can become more uncomfortable for the humans and horses given the weather.

Liam Swan: Stated that Tasracing are happy to work with the trainers on this to make life easier. Outlined how we are beholden to Sky and the schedule they have us on. Happy to hear suggestions from trainers on how Tasracing can make their life easier.

Bart McCulloch: Queried if a greater number of 30 minute race gaps are available.

Stewart Brown: Responded that earlier on the program it is harder to get them as Victoria run twilight meetings until 7:30pm through the Summer and Western Australia are still racing too. Once they are finished then we generally get 30 minute gaps for the rest of the night. Friday Night meetings are the best hope for 30 minute gaps all night if there are just two thoroughbred meetings on.

Kevin Ring: Queried if our races could be on Racing.com.

Andrew Jenkins: Responded that the Sky contract runs out at the end of 2025, and we will be exploring all options for the next contract.

3.6 Jockey Bookings

Kevin Ring: Spoke about jockeys being verbally booked on a Monday and then come acceptance time there is no jockey booked and the horse is then scratched. This means the jockey will miss out on a riding fee and can't get another ride. Referenced the rules where it outlines how a jockey must be listed by a certain time after acceptances.

Bruce Free: Stated that he hasn't been penalising any trainers who don't have a rider booked by the prescribed time and then scratch the horse.

Ross Neal: Outlined if jockeys believe they have a contract to ride a horse and that contract has been broken then they should speak to the Stewards.

4. ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 Wagering Turnover Performance

Andrew Jenkins: Outlined how turnover was down 2% YoY in FY23 which was a pleasing result considering the factors at play. Spoke about how the turnover numbers for the first two months of FY24 are concerning. Believes this is due to Queensland raising their POCT at the same time last year which led to a less of a focus on their racing from bookmakers and the current hurt from cost of living and rising interest rates. Mentioned that he met with Entain and Sportsbet and Tasmanian thoroughbreds is trending similar to other states at this stage.

Bart McCulloch: Queried where Tasracing expect turnover to land at the end of FY24.

Andrew Jenkins: Responded that it is too early to tell but the forecast for the year was for a 5% dip.

4.2 Marketing Update

Taken as read.

David Adams: Requested an update on content in the print media. Concerned by the number of articles appearing in the Mercury.

Andrew Jenkins: Responded that the volume of stories hasn't been reduced. The expectation is there will be a story per week with a focus on catering for all three codes.

Alison Archer: Commented that Colin McNiff has been writing 1 or 2 stories per week in the Examiner.

David Adams: Reiterated that he is concerned we aren't getting the amount of exposure that we used to get. Believes the amount and the quality have both dropped off.

4.3 Projects/Assets & Tracks/Facilities Update

Taken as read.

David Manshanden: Gave an update on Mowbray, Elwick, Longford and Spreyton.

4.4 Animal Welfare Update

Taken as read.

4.5 Apprentice School Update

Taken as read.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Kevin Ring: Raised concerns about overseas apprentices and the Expression of Interest that has recently gone out for two Hong Kong apprentices. Outlined how there are currently 12 apprentices and 12 senior jockeys, with possibly 3 more apprentices to come. Spoke about the lack of opportunities for seniors who may either look to give it away or move to the mainland.

Liam Swan: Outlined how Tasracing is safeguarding the industry so that we have sufficient riders to run a race meeting. Referenced a number of senior jockeys who had a limited number of rides last season and interstate jockeys who had a large number of rides. Believes there are sufficient opportunities for senior jockeys and a number of apprentices are outriding their claim quickly.

Karl Thomas: Reinforced that Tasbreeders would like additional funds to be directed to the Tasbred scheme.

Andrew Nicholl: Spoke about crossings at race tracks and a new innovation that is on the market. Mentioned in Melbourne that the ATA have been engaging with Ian Pearce who previously worked with pro ride tracks. He has manufactured a rubberised compound product that can go on to the crossing. It can take up to 20 tons in weight and compresses and then goes back to its natural form. This product has been put in at training tracks at Flemington and the course proper at Ballarat. It has been endorsed by both the jockeys' and trainers' associations.

David Manshanden: Mentioned that he is aware of it and the local track managers are excited about it.

Andrew Scanlon: Spoke about the funding deed and how he believes its an issue that shouldn't just be left to Tasracing to lobby for. Mentioned that Racing Clubs Tasmania have met with the opposition spokesperson, and they will support rolling over the funding deed. Believes that it needs to be locked in prior to the next election given there is likely to be a minority government.

Merv Hill: Mentioned that he had a meeting with the current Minister, and he didn't seem to place a huge importance on it.

Andrew Jenkins: Commented that he is fully supportive of industry stakeholders joining the cause. Updated that the Tasracing board will be receiving a paper next week recommending

an approach to both shareholder ministers that will cover an extension, alterations to the funding deed and a new POCT arrangement. This is a top priority for Tasracing. Happy to share the paper once the board has endorsed it.

Meeting closed at 12:47pm.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 13, 2023