

REVIEW OF THE RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ACTS 2003

1. SUBMISSION TYPE: INDIVIDUAL - Harness Racing
2. COMMITTEE TYPE: STANDING
3. COMMITTEE PURPOSE: To review the Functions and Powers and History and Purpose of Racing and Wagering Western Australian Act 2003 by the Joint Standing Committee.
4. COMMITTEE CONTACT: Ms Dawn Dickinson Principal Research Officer.
5. ENABLING LEGISLATION OF RACING AND WAGERING WA: Racing and Wagering Western Australian Act 2003 and in consideration of the Racing and Wagering Western Australian Tax Act 2003.
6. INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION FROM: Frank Peczka

7. INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION RELATIONSHIP TO HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY;

7.1 Western Australian Country Harness Racing Association

- Committee Member 2005 to current
- Current Jnr Vice President 2009 to current

7.2 Central Wheatbelt Harness Racing Club Inc.

- President 2006 to 2008
- Committee Member 2005 to current

7.3 License Holder

- Stable Hand License 2006 to current
- Owner Horse 2006 to current

8. SUBMISSION SUMMARY:

The Western Australian Harness Racing Industry has made advances in standards, integrity, stakemoney, marketing and promotion and enhancement of Clubs since the Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA) Board was formed some five (5) years ago. However, the RWWA Board will self destruct if there is no controlling authority to consider independent views and strategies that are influenced by a "privatisation mindset" that will be detrimental to the Industry. Issues considered for review by the Joint Standing Committee includes the following;

- a) *Industry Participation* - in the WA Harness Racing Industry: currently the strategy is to increase participation into and within the Industry. Recent decisions relating to stakemoney and handicapping has made this goal somewhat difficult. All Clubs need to be supported in an equitable manner to ensure that "grass roots" participation remains high and remains a priority. There appears to be a growing trend of to "offload" smaller to medium sized Clubs to fend for themselves at the Clubs and Community costs without increased consideration towards adequate stakemoney and minor capital grants. This situation being relative to the penalty incurred by a C Class Horse racing at Central Wheatbelt or at Northam or at Gloucester Park - a huge gap in reward and incentive for our industry participants to be given a fair and equitable consideration in further development and retention of participants beyond a short time frame.
- b) *Community Clubs* - are now unfairly considered in regards to no development grants being made available for small but significant and essential projects that are identified in annual audits. The Controlling Body must accept a changing face on integrity and standards and must contribute

towards the enhancement and/or improvements to ensure that required standards are set as identified by RWWA. Generally RWWA are doing a great job with management of maintaining integrity within the industry without “favour or fear”. All Clubs are the lifeline to not only RWWA but also to the Industry and its participants.

RWWA needs to plan for the future improvement and upgrade of Harness Racing Facilities state wide and across all Clubs. Harness Racing needs to promote and foster venues of the highest calibre to attract sponsorship, attendance and customer dollars. Clubs rely on RWWA recognition and support for Industry Participants and Clubs who are “rowing” in the same direction

- c) **Volunteerism** – there is no recognition by RWWA of the huge volunteer effort that the “Non Sky Clubs” are putting into their Club and Facilities on behalf of RWWA for hosting a race program. This factor (disability factor) is huge and does contribute to the overall standing of the industry. Non Sky Clubs like Central Wheatbelt Harness Racing Club is estimated to contribute \$60,000 to \$70,000 per annum of “volunteer person hours” for facility maintenance, race day preparations, administration, meetings and presentations, 52 weeks of Track maintenance and service and repairs to required Track Machinery. Sky Clubs that are “promoted” for increased stakemoney, improved capital enhancements, equipment enhancements, full time staff and betting technology has given Sky Clubs the capacity to grow rapidly and therefore this increases “the gap” in stakemoney, in communication, in planning, in financing, etc without consideration of similar opportunities (albeit on a pro-rata scale) being offered to Non Sky Clubs in their desire and attempt to market and promote the industry as an exciting industry with an exciting product for all to enjoy.
- d) **Communication** – Racing and Wagering WA Communication and Consultation protocols with the Industry is below par and this is a disappointment towards further growth and development. “Outside influences” has dictated where Racing and Wagering WA energies and resources are allocated and this can and has provided a detrimental outlook for a majority of industry participants, the “bread and butter” to RWWA and more particularly to the harness industry related businesses. Continued and considerate consultation with all industry participants can grow the Harness Racing Industry and Product into a structure providing high satisfaction levels and participant retention and attraction.
- e) **Marketing and Promotion** – RWWA is encouraged to look at attracting and enticing younger generations into the Harness Racing Sport. Maybe the models used in other Sports around Australia be researched to allow industry growth in participation rates in Ownership, Trainer or Driver and more importantly as Spectators.

For the Harness Racing Industry to grow, all Clubs should have equal opportunity to service its product on Sky Channel T.V. Increased promotion is vital and the opportunity to have a Sky Channel Race Program at all Clubs will grow the industry and provide increased confidence in Racing and Wagering WA forward planning initiatives with greater certainty.

f) **General** – the industry deserves;

- ***Comparable and equitable stake increases across all Harness Racing Clubs.***
- ***A fairer and equitable balance between Harness racing Elite tier and Club tier Racing.***
- ***Increased harness racing stakeholder satisfaction with increased active participation and effective communication protocols.***
- ***Greater recognition towards the Harness Racing Industry participant and Clubs for support towards continued development of the harness racing Industry product.***
- ***Ensure locally based harness racing breeding incentives remain and the rewards for locally bred horses remain.***
- ***Invest in products and services that enhances the Harness Racing Industry and real opportunities for increased returns. ie “Big Screen” Vehicle investment and investment return vs increased Marketing and Promotional strategies for Clubs and Industry participants ie Country Cup series and investment return.***
- ***Maintain and achieve target Harness Racing Distribution to Stakes ratio comparable to other racing codes.***
- ***Racing and Wagering WA handicapping rules on C Class racing needs to be reviewed and introduced for a fairer racing result to affected industry participants ie win dollars in comparison to “c” class penalty.***
- ***Racing and Wagering WA need to have accountability measures introduced and be accountable to the Minister for Racing and Gaming via Annual Reporting and organisational reporting structure that is external to the Board.***

Thank you for consideration to my individual submission on review of Racing Wagering WA performance with particular emphasis on Harness Racing in comparison to other racing codes. Generally Racing and Wagering WA have done a great job in promotion of all codes, however the “equity and fairness” consideration and planning needs to remain in place rather than one code taking over another and another code being given special and/or deliberate consideration at the expense of another.

***Signed
Frank Peczka
Narembeen WA.***