



Located at: 400 Epsom Road
Flemington, Victoria, 3031
Postal: P.O. Box 585
Flemington, Victoria, 3031
Phone: +61 3 9372 1688
Fax: +61 3 9372 1699
Email: ata@austrainers.com.au
Website: www.austrainers.com.au

Associated Entity:



June 2009

Victorian Branch – Members Update

Dear Member,

It is with pleasure that I enclose an update for our Victorian Branch Members.

This update informs members on the status of relevant issues.

We encourage members to provide any input on these issues.

Yours Sincerely,

JOHN ALDUCCI
Chief Executive

Victorian Branch Committee

Branch President
Colin Alderson

Vice President
Robert Smerdon

Committee Members

Pat Carey
Fran Houlahan
Colin Little
Peter Moody
Tony Noonan

State Executive
Roger Joseph

Branch Office
Level 1
400 Epsom Road
Flemington 3031

Phone
(03) 9372 1688

Fax
(03) 9372 1699

Email
ata@austrainers.com.au

Victorian Branch - Members Update

COMPULSORY TRIALS

After extensive consideration on the subject, the ATA Victorian Branch reaffirmed its strong opposition to the proposal to introduce compulsory trials for unraced horses in Victoria. It also examined in detail an RVL proposal for new requirements for unraced horses in Victoria.

The Committee resolved that the main issues of Unruly Horses and the accompanying safety concerns raised in the RVL proposal could be effectively and satisfactorily addressed within the present rules (LR 50) relating to the issuing of barrier certificates for horses prior to racing, making the changes proposed by the new requirements unnecessary. This view was not challenged by RVL at the meeting.

The ATA also pointed out that that the proposed new requirements would create another process of clearly unnecessary and avoidable administrative overload for trainers and for RVL. Further in the absence of any definitive information relating to any possible positive impact on turnover through comparisons with NSW or through any other qualitative analysis, there were no compelling reasons to support the RVL proposed changes.

Following the Committee Meeting and our formal response to RVL reaffirming our opposition to the introduction of compulsory trials for unraced horses, RVL has provided the ATA with a revised recommendation which will be presented to the RVL Board for its approval.

The revised recommendation represents a substantial shift and watering down from what was originally proposed and is a direct result of the strong arguments put forward by the ATA in opposing the across the board compulsory trialing of all unraced horses through the existing system of organised trials.

The cost factor has also been acknowledged with the role of jumpouts at all training centres elevated to accommodate the issuing of barrier certificates.

REVIEW OF FREE NOMINATIONS SYSTEM

RVL will shortly be conducting a review of the Free Nomination System, a result of an ATA proposed initiative, which has been in place since the start of the current racing season.

Feedback from ATA members has been overwhelmingly positive given the elimination of significant fees and charges (nomination fees and track fees), and a very important reduction in their administration costs.

Responding to ATA calls for earlier track ratings information on race days and a review of the scratchings fees and process, RVL proposed that from August 1, the first race day official track rating would be brought forward to 6.30am, with the scratching time brought forward to 7.30am. RVL will also reconsider the introduction of a half price scratching fee for scratchings lodged before 4.30pm the day before a race meeting.

EARLY ARRIVAL TIMES AT COUNTRY RACING CARNIVALS

RVL Integrity Services have assured the ATA that it has no plans to extend the two hour arrival times at the recent Warrnambool and Swan Hill carnivals.

The early arrival times were the subject of many complaints to the ATA and the issue was taken up with Integrity Services, who are also considering whether it would be possible to maximise the number of horses tested on course while retaining the present arrival times.

WAGERING LICENCE

The three racing codes – thoroughbreds, harness and greyhounds have finalised a partnership agreement to present to the State Government in relation to the tender for the post 2012 Wagering Licence.

It is expected that the tendering process will be completed and the successful tender announced within the first quarter of 2010.

CORPORATE BOOKMAKERS PRODUCT FEE

The ATA expressed its concerns over the future funding of the industry in light of the deregulation of corporate bookmakers and the uncertainty surrounding the basis of the product fee to be paid by corporate bookmakers and betting exchanges (turnover versus profit), which is the subject of litigation in NSW.

It was pointed out that corporate bookmakers should not be afforded any concessions or advantages in relation to their returns to the industry over the industry's wagering partner Tabcorp.

The ATA asked for the development of a fallback strategy to ensure returns to the industry and its future funding was not jeopardised by the outcome of the litigation between Racing NSW and the corporate bookmakers and Betfair.

The ATA fully supported RVL's proposed action to prevent corporate bookmaker Sportsbet from establishing a retail network in direct competition with Tabcorp.

INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

RVL is in the process of negotiating with both the VRC and the MRC in relation to training track maintenance funding for both Flemington and Caulfield.

Subject to the sale of the Pakenham racecourse, the Pakenham Racing Club has been given the go-ahead for the construction of a new racing and training facility on land that it has purchased at Nar Nar Goon.

The Club will present an overview of the project to the ATA in the near future.

2YO PROGRAMMING

ATA concerns regarding the importance of maintaining a 2yo race program prior to January 1 each racing season will be taken on board by RVL when they negotiate racing programs with the metropolitan clubs and CRV. RVL agreed that black type 2yo races should be retained in the spring and will also examine the feasibility of some 900 metres races in the early spring.

A meeting will be scheduled with the ATA, TROA and TBV shortly to seek common ground on the issue.

GRAND FINAL WEEKEND METROPOLITAN VENUE

The ATA has reiterated its view that the Grand Final weekend Sunday race meeting must be held at a metropolitan venue. The meeting is a vital link in the spring racing program for many racehorses and as such must be held at a premier racetrack.

Given that Sandown is out of consideration because of its quarantine facility at that time of the year and Moonee Valley races on Friday (Grand Final eve), the choice is between Flemington and Caulfield.

The race date is traditionally a MRC race meeting and with Flemington hosting last year's race meeting, it is fair and reasonable for the MRC to host the meeting at Caulfield in 2009.

30 MINUTE GAPS BETWEEN RACES

The trial of 30 minute gaps between races on Tuesdays will continue until the end of July, when a recommendation will be made to RVL by Fred Fox (ex MVRC Racing Manager), who is conducting a review into the subject. The ATA supports the extension of the 30 minute gaps between races, subject to streamlining some of the processes pre and post race.

STEWARDS COMMUNICATIONS

Integrity Services have acknowledged the need for better communicating important information to trainers, and to that end will revamp the Stewards Section in Inside Racing and develop an on-line Trainers Tool Kit that trainers can access, as well as ensuring that all veterinary updates are placed on the website.

The Stewards will also review the process of informing trainers when high TCO levels are recorded.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Newly appointed Industry Liaison Manager Rob Montgomery has reported that about 50 per cent of cases reported to him over the past three months have been resolved.

Members are reminded that disputes with owners and in particular those relating to the common problem of unpaid debts should be taken up with Rob Montgomery who is located within Integrity Services.

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

The ATA's Inside Racing Column will keep members informed of decisions and issues discussed at Victorian Branch Committee meetings and on progress with the resolution of outstanding issues.

Members are invited to raise issues for consideration by the Victorian Branch. The Committee consists of Colin Alderson (President), Robert Smerdon (Vice President), Tony Noonan, Peter Moody, Fran Houlahan, Colin Little and Pat Carey.