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October 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**

Terry Ahern  
Pat Carey  
Fran Houlahan  
Peter Moody  
Tony Noonan

**Advisors**  
Robbie Griffiths  
Danny O'Brien

**State Executive**  
Roger Joseph

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## **Victorian Branch - Members Update**

### **ATA VIC BRANCH COMMITTEE**

The ATA Victorian Branch Committee welcomed Terry Ahern as a new member, replacing Colin Little who recently retired from the Committee.

Following the recent election of office bearers, I am pleased to announce that Colin Alderson has been re-elected as President of the Branch, with Robert Smerdon re-elected as Vice-President and Pat Carey re-elected as Secretary.

### **TRACK PREPARATION POLICY**

The ATA has met with RVL and reiterated the importance of the Track Preparation Policy being strictly adhered to particularly with the advent of the warmer weather, which historically has created problems with unsatisfactory racing surfaces. Concerns with inaccurate information being given by country Track Managers to trainers will be monitored by the Stewards and Chief Steward Terry Bailey has assured the ATA that his department will take a more proactive role in this area.

### **CANCELLED RACE MEETINGS**

RVL has agreed with the ATA that where adverse weather conditions jeopardised the continuation of a country race meeting, a decision on the future of the meeting would be deferred for a reasonable period of time to assess whether conditions may improve sufficiently to enable it to continue.

RVL has also agreed to post detailed information regarding the circumstances relating to the cancellation of a race meeting on its website so that trainers and interested parties can access this information.

### **ON-COURSE VETERINARY PROCEDURES**

Chief Veterinary Steward Paul O'Callaghan has agreed to review the availability of an Industry resourced independent veterinarian, initially at metropolitan racecourses, to provide on-course, post-race veterinary services on request by trainers, the cost of which would be borne by trainers.

## **NEW HORSE TRAINING INDUSTRY AWARD**

The new Horse Training Industry Award covering stablehands, is scheduled to come into operation on January 1 2010.

Under the new Award legislation, employees will only be required to work 38 hours a week at ordinary time rates instead of the 40 hours under the current Award.

It is also anticipated that the AWU will challenge the existing arrangements relating to the payment of travel time to the races for employees. Under the existing Award, a race day allowance is paid for work performed at a race meeting based on the distance travelled, and not for the travel time, if transport has been provided by the trainer.

The ATA is reviewing the current recommended race day fees and is seeking legal advice into the feasibility of incorporating both travel time and racecourse attendance into a race day duties allowance.

## **PLACEMENT OF RETIRED HORSES**

The ATA has expressed its support for a proposed Retired Racehorses Outplacement Program developed by Bill Saunders from Cyberhorse. Under the proposed program, ex-racehorses would be placed with the equestrian community and retrained by skilled equestrian professionals for a life after racing. The ATA recognised the merit of the scheme and its possible positive impact on improving the image of the racing industry in the wider community.

## **MAXSTED REPORT**

Many of the reported recommendations of the Maxsted Report commissioned by the metropolitan race clubs, relating to administration and operational cost savings, resource sharing and general efficiencies and streamlining the industry, have been strongly advocated by the ATA for some time, and will be reviewed by the RVL Board at its next meeting. The ATA supports the implementation of these recommendations.

## **ROLLOUT OF INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

RVL has advised the ATA that as part of the Infrastructure Plan, major works and maintenance programs are currently underway at country racing and training centres at Werribee, Ballarat, Mornington, Yarra Valley and Cranbourne, with work on the Geelong Thoroughtrack scheduled to commence immediately after the Geelong Cup meeting in late October.

The proposed Nar Nar Goon racing and training complex is scheduled to go ahead subject to the sale of the Pakenham racecourse.

Tenders for the new plastic running rails project are being evaluated pending a recommendation to the RVL Board.

## **2010/2011 RACEDATES, CALENDAR AND PROGRAM CHANGES**

RVL has commenced the consultation process with clubs and industry stakeholders into the proposed Race dates, calendar and program changes for the 2010/2011 racing season, seeking feedback on race dates, night racing, synthetic track racing, metro and country racing, spring and autumn carnival race dates and programs and the jumps racing program.

## **2YO PROGRAMMING PRE-DECEMBER 31**

Strong support for the retention of the existing structure of 2yo programming in Victoria, pre-December 31, from the ATA, TROA and the TBV has been received by RVL and this will be conveyed to all Race Clubs during the consultation phase for the 2010/2011 race dates and programs.

## **JUMPS RACING REVIEW**

An RVL sub-committee comprising RVL Directors and management has been established to review the jumps racing season and the impact of the changes instigated by the Jones Review and by the RVL Board during the recent jumps racing season.

The sub-committee will also consider the future of Jumps Racing and provide a status report to the Board for consideration.

## **REVIEW OF FREE NOMINATION SYSTEM**

RVL Racing Operations has again expressed their concerns over the apparent abuse of the free nominations by some trainers through multiples and excessive nominations on an apparent indiscriminate basis, of the same horse, over a given period of time.

The ATA once again reiterates that trainers refrain from this practice which could jeopardise the overwhelming benefits of a major unique cost-saving ATA initiative in racing. RVL also agreed to re-consider introducing a half-price scratching fee on the day prior to a race meeting.

## **FOOD FOR STRAPPERS**

The ATA has again raised the issue of refreshments being provided on-course for strappers with RVL and will also be consulting the AWU and Stablehands Association in this regard.

## **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, Pat Carey and Terry Ahern and Advisors Robbie Griffiths and Danny O'Brien.