



# NEWSLETTER

September, 2007

## AUSTRALIAN RACECOURSE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION INC.

Website: [www.racecoursemanagers.org.au](http://www.racecoursemanagers.org.au)

**Your Committee:** Warren Williams - Qld (Chairman), Martin Synan – Vic (Deputy Chairman), Lindsay Murphy - NSW (Treasurer), Geoff Murphy - WA, Murray Pyke – Tas, John Tonani - SA  
*Secretary* – Arthur Stubbs

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Welcome to the 15<sup>th</sup> issue of the Newsletter for Racecourse Managers. Next issue will accompany the Conference Proceedings by December, 2007.

### 2007 Flemington Conference

The weather was perfect for Melbourne in August but the clouds of Equine Influenza blew up and hovered over our conference this year. Disruptions to the planned program were many and constant as the crisis developed day by day, even threatening the start at one stage. Nevertheless, after some anxious moments, the eventual outcome was voted very successful and rewarding by delegates and sponsors alike who understood exactly how difficult a situation it was. 164 people booked in to the 2007 Australian Racecourse Managers Conference at Flemington Racecourse but the ranks thinned a little through the week as some had to cancel or return home urgently. All told, 61 Racecourses and Training Centres in Australia and New Zealand were represented and there was a record attendance by 10 of our Kiwi colleagues.

The international flavour of the conference was boosted by the presence of the three invited speakers from overseas, Bill Blackman from the USA, Chris Stickels from the UK and John Ridley from Hong Kong, each of whom generously shared their experiences and knowledge with us. This was complemented by world traveller John Fargher's fascinating account of practices in some of the less well known countries of the racing world. The links forged with Bill and Chris are a step forward in ARMA's connections with racecourse management people and organisations around the globe. John Ridley's presence was again most welcome, particularly in view of the hospitality he afforded the tour group to Asia in '06. Another welcome return visitor from overseas was Mike Maher of Going Stick fame who came down under all the way from the UK.

Activities were intended to start at the Moonee Valley Races on Saturday but these had to be postponed mid-morning. However, although he had problems enough, John Cameron, MVRC CEO, entertained racegoer delegates at lunch in the Committee room and later, and well into the afternoon, at his home. Forced cancellation of the visits to Wadham Park and Living Legends on the Sunday were then offset by Bill Casimaty inviting tourists to his Strathayr turf farm at Tallarook, via the Tallarook pub, followed by an excellent scheduled lunch at Holgate Brewhouse. At last one planned event on the Sunday, the Welcoming Reception, went off without a hitch at the Crowne Plaza.

Monday saw the start of the conference sessions which went more or less to program with the notable exception of the new Flemington track and facilities inspections which several delegates had come for especially on the first day. Fortunately, a limited tour of the course proper and a look at the new birdcage and tunnel was allowed on the Wednesday so all was not lost. Despite the limited examination of Flemington, Terry Watson and company gave a splendid series of papers on the reconstruction from the concept to the finished product. At least these efforts were somewhat rewarded by the successful return to racing at the course a week after the conference.

All the remaining scheduled presentations were delivered very professionally by our speakers, some out of order, but everybody was most obliging and understanding in view of the circumstances. These will be reproduced in the Conference Proceedings which are now being compiled. [A CD of the Powerpoint presentations can be provided to delegates on request]

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Tuesday's program was also disrupted when the visit to the GSA Bloodstock Training Centre at Mt Eliza had to be cancelled and inspections of tracks and facilities at Mornington Racecourse and the Cranbourne Training Complex were curtailed. Bruce Stephens of Anco was able to quickly organise a tour of the MCG as compensation (what a bonus) prior to the visit and lunch at Mornington, a call at the Anco Turf Farm, and a visit to Cranbourne to complete a good day.

Apart from the disappointments of delegates not being able to inspect tracks, facilities and premises at the cancelled visit destinations and at Flemington, it was of great regret that a lot of work put into preparing for the visits by the various hosts was to no avail. At least it was possible to get some information to conference participants through many well documented sets of notes about the venues.

The Conference Dinner in the magnificent Peak Room at Flemington was again a highlight. Greg Hall entertained those present with some fascinating anecdotes about his big-time racing experiences. He was superbly interviewed by our incomparable MC, Marty Synan (his future calling ?). The annual Racecourse Managers Awards, sponsored by Turfcraft International, were presented. The 2007 Racecourse Manager of the Year Award went to Michael Suey from the Mornington Racing Club. Marty Synan, Moonee Valley Racing Club, was recognised for an Outstanding Achievement, Metropolitan Racecourse, and Shannon Caddy, Warrnambool Racing Club, for an Outstanding Achievement, Provincial Racecourse.

The conference was supported by our host, the Victoria Racing Club. Horticulture Australia Limited gave invaluable assistance with funding derived from the turf research levy. Generous backing was also again given by our trade sponsors:

<i>Advanced Seed</i>	<i>Anco Seed &amp; Turf</i>	<i>Aspac Golf &amp; Turf</i>	<i>Bayer Environmental Science</i>
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As this issue goes to print EI clouds still hang over the Australian racing industry, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland where many racecourse managers wait to prepare for that next meeting. It is to be hoped that 2008 brings control of the situation and a resumption of the racing calendar.

### **2008 Conference**

Arrangements for next year's conference, scheduled for Eagle Farm in Brisbane, are to be discussed shortly. It is expected that more details regarding dates and a broad outline of the planned program may be available for printing in the next newsletter.

### **ARMA Environmental Policy**

The ARMA Environmental Policy Statement was introduced by Terry Muir at the conference and later unanimously adopted by members present with the aim of being "better environmental managers". The next steps will be to implement the policy through application of an Environmental Management System, to be called *e-par Racetrack*, at individual racecourses. Procedures and costs are now being formulated and will be circulated as soon as possible. Economies of scale will be possible dependent upon the number of Race Clubs that subscribe to the system.

### **ARMA News**

- The ARMA Website is getting busier. Have a browse around the Traders Page, Jobs & General, etc. To lodge adverts. or jobs and/or engage in Members chat you need to join the Association – see under "Membership" - Application.
- Sponsor links are increasing on the ARMA Website enabling quick access by Racecourse Managers to the information and services provided by our valuable sponsors. Check under "Links"
- Membership renewal notices for current members are enclosed with this newsletter. The Committee decided on a small increase in subscription fees to \$90 to cope with the inevitable rise in costs.
- A Study Tour is being considered for the early part of 2008 for ARMA members. It is hoped that more details can be provided to members before the end of the year.