



# NEWSLETTER

June, 2008

## 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 18<sup>th</sup> issue of the Racecourse Managers Newsletter. Next issue due in September, 2008.

### 2008 Conference – Eagle Farm

Preparations are close to final for another great conference, courtesy of the Queensland Turf Club, Stephen Ferguson, CEO, and Bill Shuck, Racecourse Manager. Early arrivals will be entertained by Warren at the Doomben races on Saturday and then hosted by Mick Sullivan and Murray Weeding at the Sunshine Coast Turf Club on Sunday before back to Doomben for the Welcoming Reception on Sunday evening.

Main change to the program involves substituting the proposed report on the Track Standards Project (see below) with a forum on Track Rating Procedures in Australia & New Zealand. This is a very topical matter at the moment with several cases of dissatisfaction with procedures followed, ratings issued and changed, and instruments used (particularly the Penetrometer in NZ) in recent times. Track measurement methods, devices used and release of ratings will be compared and debated.

The line up to discuss the pros and cons of various Synthetic Track options is a cross section of experienced Racecourse Managers from around Australia. A vigorous argument is guaranteed as we hear why certain types were chosen and whether the claims made have been realised.

See updated program details and speakers on the ARMA website under “Conference”.

### Track Standards Project

This project, a direct result of the Track Standards Workshops in 2006/7, was due to commence in July at three metropolitan racecourses in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, comparing the effectiveness of surface measurement instruments such as the Penetrometer, Clegg Hammer, Going Stick, etc, to objectively determine track ratings.

At the last furlong it has been pulled up due to decisions resulting from the review at RVL. Charlie Stebbing, who was to be the project leader, has had his job re-defined and funding for the project by the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation was withdrawn due to cuts in their funding from RVL.

All may not be lost however as the NZ Sports Turf Institute is planning similar research and a trans Tasman approach to this work may be possible. This would not only be sensible but more effective by improving current systems and producing uniform results of widespread benefit to the racing industries in Australia and New Zealand.

### e-par Racing

Slow but steady progress in the take up of this Environmental Management System by racecourses as awareness of the ecological, personal and financial implications spreads. In a recent case a General Manager was found personally liable for environmental breaches caused by his staff. It cost him \$18K plus EPA costs of \$30K plus his own legal fees.

A leading insurance provider to Golf Clubs offers an insurance policy for environmental incident clean up, legal costs, etc, for directors and managers. It can be made available to Race Clubs with a premium reduction of 60% for e-par Racing users.

It has been calculated that to engage a private consultant to deliver the system that e-par Racing provides would cost in the region of \$30,000.

### **Steriline Racing/ARMA Racecourse Management Scholarship**

A strong field has entered for the inaugural Racecourse Management Scholarship, sponsored by Steriline Racing and supported by ARMA. Close to the closing date there have been five applications from four different States for the scholarship. The selection panel will review these applications during July and the winner will be announced at the conference in August.

The successful applicant will be hosted and mentored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club for two weeks later this year. John Fargher, Managing Director of Steriline Racing, said "We know how important it is to be ahead of the pack in all aspects of the racing industry so we wanted to help future Australian managers benefit from an insight into the operations of the HKJC, one of the most professional and prestigious in the world."

### **"Turfcraft International" Racecourse Managers Awards**

Nominations have been called for Racecourse Managers who have made a significant contribution to the racecourse management profession through consistent presentation of tracks conducive to optimum user performance, by developing co-operative liaison with track users, acting in the best interests of the racing industry, and for developing fellowship amongst racecourse managers.

This year, nominations will be made by Australian stewards. It was considered that the close and frequent contact that stewards throughout Australia have with racecourse managers is an ideal situation for them to identify and nominate managers worthy of recognition for their dedicated work.

The awards, sponsored by "Turfcraft International", will be presented for Significant Contributions at a Metropolitan and Regional Racecourse and for an Australian Racecourse Manager of the Year, 2008.

### **Around the Tracks**

#### **QLD**

- Jeff Haynes has made it back to the racing game with his appointment as Racecourse Manager at the Gold Coast Turf Club. Jeff will be at the Eagle Farm conference to catch up with old colleagues.
- Sean Bridges left Wangaratta to take up the post of Assistant Racecourse Manager to Bill Shuck at Eagle Farm in June.

#### **NSW**

- Racecourse Manager changes in NSW include: Drew Cookson at Clarence River Jockey Club, Grafton; Jody Rodgers to Goulburn from Cessnock; Max Walker at Mudgee; Bill Bruce at the Sapphire Coast; Ted Hobson at Shoalhaven City; Anthony Cavanagh at Taree/Wingham; and Tom Wilson at Queanbeyan.

#### **TAS**

- Murray Pyke has had a lot on his plate this year with the reconstruction of Mowbray to a Strathayr profile. The christening of the new track is just two months away.

#### **VIC**

- The Review at Racing Victoria cost several stalwart ARMA supporters their jobs. They include Pat McEvoy, Scott Jarvis, Steve Torney, Lisa Hocking, David Hawke and Dr John McCaffrey. We wish all of them the very best for their future endeavours.
- Terry Watson has retired at Flemington after 43 very successful years in the racecourse management business. His efforts have been recognised with life membership of the VRC. Mick Goodie, Terry's right hand man for many years, has taken over full command of tracks and facilities management.
- At the time of going to press the RM positions at Benalla, Warrnambool and Wangaratta are yet to be filled. Fred Herman is helping out on his old patch of turf at Wangaratta.

#### **NZ**

News from Michael Douglas, Secretary of the NZ Racecourse Managers Association

- Very successful conference held over three days in late May at Invercargill, bottom of the South Island (not far from Antarctica !). John Fargher gave two presentations. Notice of next year's conference to be given to ARMA members.
- Reconstruction of the course proper at Rotorua went according to plan although a thermal area 60 metres past the post presented some unusual problems. Solved with field tiles plus a heat and gas resistant membrane deep in the profile.

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

- The following new members are welcomed to ARMA: Coffs Harbour Racing Club (Wade Hickey – RM); York Racing (Barry Mahood – RM); Craig Isaacs (Trainee Tracks Manager - Victoria Racing Club); Peter Bunyan (RM - Atherton Turf Club)