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Conference

Gold Coast Turf Club

THE OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION OF THE
AUSTRALIAN RACECOURSE
MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2024



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chairmans message

Thank you to everyone who participated in our 2024 Conference on the Gold Coast. These conferences cannot work without the combined efforts of everyone taking part.

It was marvellous to see so many delegates in attendance, and from such a wide range of different Clubs and areas. Many thanks to our wonderful presenters who maintained a high standard of professionalism and covered some most interesting topics for all concerned. Many thanks to our overseas visitors, for making the effort, and adding new dimensions to our gathering.

Our aim is to keep our annual conferences as affordable as possible, we can't do this without the amazing support of our sponsors and partners who offer such great support. This support is not only financial, but in the continual improvements in the goods and services they provide to assist all Racecourse Managers improve on the great work that they are already doing.

We now look forward to the improving weather to assist in the preparation of all our facilities.

Work has already started on the planning for our next Conference in Melbourne 2025, where there is so much to see at the moment, that it will be a really bumper occasion that will be one not to be missed.



ARMA

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2024 TAB ARMA CONFERENCE



AUSTRALIAN
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Gold Coast Conference Shines Bright

The 2024 TAB ARMA Conference, held on the Gold Coast this August, drew over 200 delegates from racing clubs, principal racing authorities, industry suppliers, and sponsors from Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong.

Hosted at the Gold Coast Turf Club, the conference offered an impressive array of activities, including in-depth technical presentations, dynamic networking opportunities through a bustling Trade Show, the prestigious ARMA Awards Dinner, and the eagerly awaited TAB ARMA Conference Race Day.

ARMA Chairman Lindsay Murphy expressed his delight with the venue, noting, "The Gold Coast Turf Club was the perfect setting for our conference. The facilities, service, and hospitality were absolutely first-class. The club has made significant strides through its Master Plan, and we're excited to see racing under lights here later this year."

Murphy also acknowledged the continuous expansion of the event. "This conference grows year after year. We're often overwhelmed by the incredible support we receive from our members and sponsors, which has been instrumental in driving this growth," he said.

A record 40 sponsors supported this year's conference, a milestone that didn't go unnoticed. "The level of sponsorship this year is truly remarkable," Murphy continued. "It not only amazes us but also validates the work we've done and the direction we're heading."



Gold Coast Conference Shines Bright

Reflecting on the event's success, Murphy emphasized the importance of their partnership with Tabcorp, now in its second year as the conference's naming rights sponsor. "Their support has been sensational," he said, citing the standout presentation by Dave Beirne (Tabcorp GM – Trading), Paul Joice, and Kayla Nisbet (Sky Racing). "The insights they provided into wagering data related to track conditions and rail movements equip our racecourse managers with the knowledge to make informed, data-driven decisions."

One of the many highlights of 2024 was the transformation of the traditional Thursday Conference Dinner into the ARMA Awards Dinner. Set in the Corporate Suite with a magnificent view of a track light show, the event hosted 220 guests to celebrate outstanding industry achievements.



Another notable moment of the conference was the keynote speech by Olympic Gold and Silver Medallist Brooke Hanson. Her moving address on mental wellbeing, delivered with the powerful message "Pressure is a privilege," resonated deeply with the audience and left a lasting impact.

As the 2024 TAB ARMA Conference concluded, the attention swiftly turned to next year's event. Murphy revealed, "At our Annual General Meeting on Friday, it was decided that the 2025 conference will be held in Melbourne. We'll begin working with the Metropolitan Racing Club in Victoria after the Spring Carnival, with plans to host different events at Moonee Valley, Flemington, and Caulfield." The 2024 conference not only celebrated the achievements of the past year but also set the stage for future growth, with exciting prospects on the horizon for the industry in 2025.

Exploring the Gold Coast Turf Club during the conference and celebrating at the TAB ARMA raceday



scholarships AWARDS

The ARMA Awards Dinner, attended by 220 guests, featured a stunning trackside light show and recognised the amazing achievements of our industry's top performers and rising stars. A number of prestigious awards and amazing scholarships were presented and ARMA thanks Evergreen Turf, Steriline Racing, Toro Australia and the Victoria Racing Club for supporting and sponsoring these awards.

Congratulations to our six award winners.

Steriline Racing Award

The Steriline Racing Award was presented to Jake Carlaw of the Australian Turf Club, marking a significant milestone in his career. Sponsored by Steriline Racing and the Hong Kong Jockey Club, this award is designed to foster excellence and professionalism among aspiring Australian racetrack managers, providing a unique opportunity for passionate individuals to build their knowledge, shape their careers, and make significant contributions to the racing industry. As part of his award, Carlaw will embark on a unique journey to Hong Kong and China, where he will gain insights into racecourse management practices of the Hong Kong Jockey Club at some of the world's premier racing venues. This immersive experience is designed to further his expertise and elevate his role within the industry.



Pictured: Michael Wood (ATC) and Jake Carlaw

Evergreen Turf & VRC Spring Internships – Angus Templeton (Moe Racing Club) Thomas Howle (Illawarra Turf Club)

The Evergreen Turf & VRC Spring Internship were awarded to two rising stars: Angus Templeton from Moe Racing Club and Thomas Howle from Illawarra Turf Club. This internship provides the recipients with a unique opportunity to work alongside Victoria Racing Club Racecourse Manager Liam O'Keefe during the lead-up to Group 1 Makybe Diva Stakes Day at Flemington Racecourse.

Templeton and Howle will gain hands-on experience in race day preparations and track management, as well as exclusive insights into the operations of Moonee Valley and Melbourne Racing Clubs. The internship is a testament to the commitment of Evergreen Turf and the VRC to fostering young talent and ensuring the future success of the racing industry.

Pictured: Angus Templeton (Moe Racing Club), Peter Manning (Evergreen Turf), Liam O'Keefe (VRC) and Thomas Howle (Illawarra Turf Club)



scholarships AWARDS

Toro Australia Industry Services Award

David Anderson from Illawarra Turf Club was honoured with the prestigious Toro Australia Industry Services Award, recognizing his remarkable 40-year career dedicated to the racing industry. Anderson's leadership and expertise have shaped the Illawarra Turf Club, overseeing projects that have significantly enhanced its facilities, including the installation of Polytrack and ongoing upgrades. His commitment to maintaining the highest standards in every aspect of the club has set a benchmark for racecourses nationwide. Anderson's work ethic and innovation have earned him the respect of both colleagues and local trainers, making this award a fitting tribute to his extraordinary service.

(pic right: Sheldon Simmonds (Toro) , David Anderson, Paul Prout (Toro) Lindsay Murphy (ARMA Chairman)



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scholarships AWARDS



Metro Racecourse Manager of the Year

Greg Groves, Melbourne Racing Club (Sandown) was awarded Metro Racecourse Manager of the Year, recognizing his outstanding management of one of Australia's busiest tracks. Under Groves' leadership, Sandown has maintained top-quality racing surfaces,

particularly during challenging winter conditions, when racing continues uninterrupted. Groves' ability to lead his team and ensure the smooth operation of Group One events, even as the venue took on additional meetings due to works at Caulfield, has solidified his reputation as one of the industry's most dedicated professionals. His expertise in turf management and strategic leadership has made a lasting impact on the racing community.



Regional Racecourse Manager of the Year

Mark Hart, Murrumbidgee Turf Club received the Regional Racecourse Manager of the Year award for his exceptional leadership and management of regional racecourses. Hart oversees 25 race meetings annually, ensuring the meticulous care of both racing and training surfaces. His work in leading a major two-day carnival has been widely praised, and his efforts extend beyond his home turf, assisting stewards in managing smaller venues throughout the region. Hart's dedication to excellence and community involvement makes him a deserving recipient of this award, highlighting the importance of regional contributions to the racing industry. (pic above)

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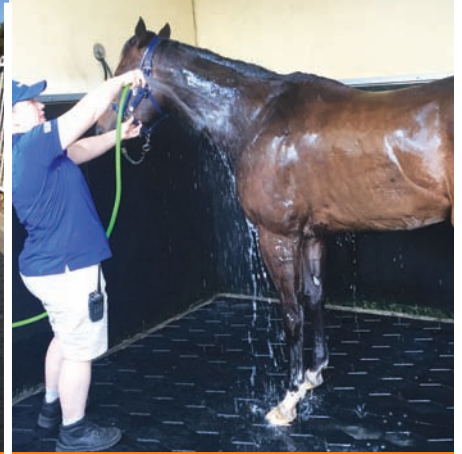
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Stables



Sandown Race Track - Ramp



Wash Bays



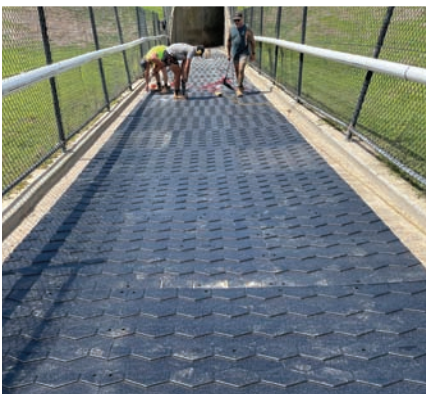
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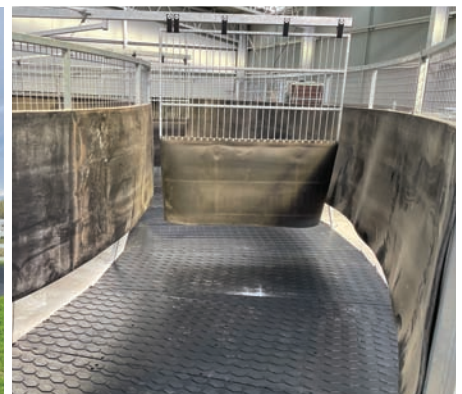
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Spreyton Raceday Amenities Building Project

Tasracing recently completed a new Raceday Amenities Building for the Devonport Racing Club at the Spreyton Racecourse. The highly successful build was due to an exceptional collaboration between all participants who train each day at Spreyton, Tasracing and the building contractor. This collaboration allowed the building to be constructed with minimal impact on training, trials and racing.

The new building is over three times larger than the previous building and plays host to the:

- Devonport Racing Club office and Committee Room,
- Stewards,
- Weigh in Clerk
- Male and Female Jockeys,
- First Aid,
- Media,
- Tasracing TV host broadcasting,
- Owners and Trainers,
- Cleaners,
- Kiosk, and
- Undercover viewing area adjacent to the mounting yard

The state-of-the-art facilities provide the best-in-class facilities of any provincial racetrack in the country. The building has been in use since early July 24 with the official opening scheduled for 29 Sep 24. The \$3M construction cost was jointly funded by Tasracing and the Tasmanian Government.

August 2023



July 2024



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Ballarat

FLEMINGTON BEFORE AND AFTER



WHAT THE JOCKEYS ARE SAYING

'I recently Rode over the new ECA crossover at Flemington, it was fantastic with a Rebound feel, not like most others that are rock hard and potentially dangerous. The horses stride approaching the green crossing just like the turf, did not alter and there was no feeling the horses were backing off towards it. 'Great job ECA! - Damian Oliver

'I recently rode on the newly installed ECA Rebound Crossover at Ballarat Turf Club. Crossovers are the most dangerous aspect on a racetrack. If tracks do have crossovers, there is always the concern for animal welfare and jockey safety. This technology/idea is ticking all the boxes, most importantly animal welfare & jockey safety. I am really looking forward to seeing how many clubs roll this out for safer work practices here in Australia.'
Craig Williams

'I rode on the new ECA Crossing that is installed at Flemington last Friday. It was the safest crossing that I have been on in Australia. The horses felt great and showed no signs of even knowing that the crossover was there. These should be installed all around Australia'.
Jye McNeil



Gold Coast Turf Club

Recent grass gallops, jump outs and barrier trials were conducted over the Gold Coast Turf Club course proper with jockey's providing feedback that the track is in very good condition.

A return to grass racing occurred on 7 September 2024 with positive results.

Regular agronomic testing has and will continue to be carried out which are showing increased root and plant sod strength, turf quality will continue to improve as the warmer weather increases.

Track Renovations

Racing Queensland has commenced the annual Tab turf track renovations at Townsville and Rockhampton, with Cairns and Mackay to occur in the coming months. RQ will continue to work with clubs to monitor track conditions

ensuring the scheduled return to racing dates are achieved with minimal change.

Townsville and Rockhampton have been completed with mowing, scarifying, aeration and topdressing occurring.

Fertiliser and pesticide applications will progress now to aid in turf recovery.



Townsville Turf Club



Rockhampton Jockey club

VICTORIAN TRACK AND CLUB MANAGER CONFERENCE @ MILDURA

This year's conference was held at Mildura Racecourse which was also the lead up to the 100th Mildura Cup. With Murray James and Jamie Lanyon as our hosts the conference was a great time for all. Topics that were covered were the 2023 Mildura floods, TAB turnover for the year in Victorian racing and the Victorian Racing Minister The Hon Anthony Carbine talking about current racing in Victoria. As well as the traditional track walk.

Track Managers awards were handed out to the following people.

- 7 or less race meetings was Gary Norris from Casterton Racing Club
- 7 or more race meetings was Michael Suey from Mornington Racing Club

Congratulations to both Track Managers and well deserved.

TRACK MANAGER UPDATES:

Track Manager Leon Maskell has started with the Swan Hill Jockey Club. Leon's background is from the Scone Racing Club and we welcome him aboard to Victorian Racing.



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Country Champions crowned at 2023-24 CRV Awards

Photography: Lucas
Dawson Photography



The annual bet365 Country Racing Victoria Awards were staged on Saturday 24th August, with ten winners crowned champions in their respective categories.

More than 650 attendees gathered to celebrate the achievements of all industry participants, finalists and winners from a huge 2023-24 Racing season on the country circuit.

Geelong Racing Club were named bet365 Country Racing Victoria Club of the Year, recognised for their excellence in meeting key strategic measures and implementing vital sustainability initiatives across a range of charity partners.

The club successfully staged their inaugural metropolitan Saturday meeting, Super Saturday on the Coast, in January with more than 5,000 in attendance. GRC continued to build on their extensive sponsorship portfolio, notably signing a new partnership with Ladbrokes, whilst community engagement was at the forefront of the club's success, with multiple events & fundraisers throughout the year raising money & awareness throughout the region consistently.

Geelong Racing Club CEO, Luke Rayner, was delighted to receive the award and full of praise for his team. "The Club has done a power of work over the previous 12 months in the areas of racing, training, stakeholders, facilities, community, fundraising, sponsorship and financial performance", said Rayner.

"The Board have been amazing in their support through governance, strategic direction and providing a framework to take the club forward. This award is terrific recognition for the staff of the GRC who come in each day driven and excited to be a part of a great team who collectively deliver outstanding results".

Burrumbeet Park & Winderemere Racing Club were a popular winner of the Racing.com Country Racing Victoria Community Club of the Year.

Staging a bumper Cup Day, Burrumbeet Park & Winderemere is also regularly used for jumpouts throughout the season, highlighting its vital role in the industry. Following a track upgrade and a newly constructed bar area, the club will build new shade sails in 2024-2025 to enhance the raceday experience.

Club Manager, Jeremy Rogers, commented on the impact of the community spirit amongst the region. "This award celebrates our collective efforts to enhance the race day experience, support local organizations and serve as a vibrant community hub", stated Rogers. "Our club is 133 years old, and we remain deeply committed to supporting the racing community and fostering a love for country racing. We love our club, and we love country racing."

Warrnambool's iconic TAB May Racing Carnival took out the Kelly Sports Country Racing Victoria Event of the Year.

The weather gods shone over the 'Bool across the three days, with more than 30,000 patrons visiting the jumps showpiece, including growth in attendance on each day of the carnival. Hospitality packages for the three-day carnival, as well as accommodation across the region were booked out in advance, whilst visits to schools and aged care facilities with the Cups ensured community engagement was as strong as ever. The time-honoured Grand Annual was one for the ages, with Count Zero prevailing for Symon Wilde & Daryl Horner in a photo finish.

Luke Cann, CEO of Warrnambool Racing Club, was proud of his team for delivering another successful renewal. "To have our iconic Carnival recognised at this level is an amazing nod to the 2024 event, which we believe to be one of the best ever", said Cann.

A terrific season saw Captain Envious awarded the bet365 Country Racing Victoria Horse of the Year honours. The Paul Preusker trained 6yo gelding claimed the Murtoa Cup, before saluting in the Listed Ballarat Cup against a high-class field in trying conditions. Placings in the Ballarat Gold Nugget and Country Cup Final at Caulfield on Thousand Guineas Day capped off a tremendous season, staving off challenges from finalists, Station One and Picaroon.

Ben, Will & JD Hayes capped off a prolific 2023-24 season by claiming the George Hanlon Trophy Country Racing Victoria Trainer of the Year title. The Lindsay Park operation greeted the judge on 119 occasions from 711 starts, amassing more than \$3.4million in prizemoney across the country racing scene, to land the award ahead of the four-time reigning champions, Ciaran Maher & David Eustace.

Thomas Stockdale won his first Red Tomato Neville Wilson Medal as Country Racing Victoria Jockey of the Year. Stockdale rode 86 winners from 512 starts, almost doubling his previous career best tally in a season to land country premiership honours, and took out the \$500,000 Country Discovery Final on Good Friday aboard Savannah Cloud.

Jaylah Kennedy was rewarded for her excellent season in the saddle, claiming the TAC Country Racing Victoria Apprentice Jockey of the Year. Kennedy won 46 of her 381 country rides throughout 2023-24, the fourth consecutive season that a female has taken out CRV Apprentice Jockey of the Year title.

Hit podcast, Ladies Who Punt, hosted by Fiona Blair and Grace Ramage, took home the SEN Jack Styring Country Racing Victoria Media Award. The pair's in-depth interview with Penny Penfold, who manages a number of the country race clubs within the Wimmera region, detailed what's required to manage country race clubs successfully, and highlighted the community spirit within each of them.

The Tony Shanahan Award, sponsored by Pan Pacific Hotels Group, recognised the contribution & services to racing of key industry participants. Bill McFarlane, life member of Geelong Racing Club, and Graeme Templeton, life member of Dunkeld Racing Club, shared the honours.

McFarlane served on the Geelong Racing Club committee for 41 years, and was vice chairman of the Port Philip Racing Association. He was also secretary of the Geelong St Pats Racing Club for 34 years.

Templeton has been involved with the Dunkeld Racing Club for decades, using his intricate knowledge of the area, track and surrounds to wonderful effect. Affectionately known as 'Grub', he is a constant at the racecourse year-round, and joined the committee in 2004.

Country Racing Victoria Chairman, Chas Armytage, was thrilled to see all industry participants gather in the room to celebrate another outstanding season. "What a wonderful evening, an occasion to celebrate the achievements of everyone involved in country racing throughout Victoria", said Armytage.

Josh Maginness@josh_maginness

Awapuni

- The major reconstruction project is continuing to progress well, with slit drains (connecting the laterals) and final works planned to commence mid-September. The Project Control Group are now looking at what the return to racing protocols will look like and the final schedule for Awapuni over those first 6 months, which are critical in the long-term success of the track.

Ellerslie

- As part of their return to racing plan, Ellerslie held successful jumpouts on Monday 2 September with around 100 horses going around. Following the jumpouts the track was inspected by Jason Fulford and Liam O'Keefe – Senior Track Manager Flemington. Both were pleased with the surface.
The track remains on schedule for a return to racing in September, after a set of trials prior to that meeting.

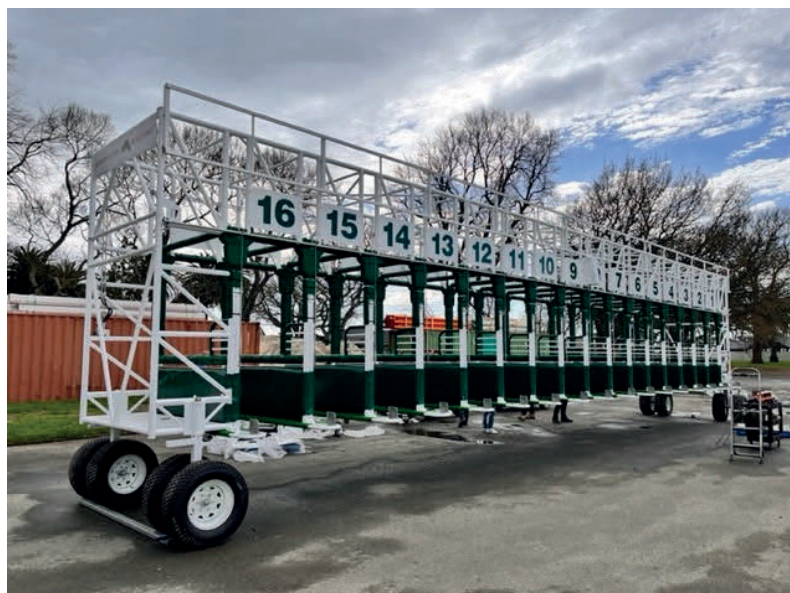


RTAs / Track Managers

- Bryce Mildon has replaced Richard Fenwick as the RTA in the Central Region. Bryce commenced his role as Hawkes Bay Racing's General Manager of Track Development and Operations in June.
- We have several trainee Track Managers on board under our HR Contestable Fund, with several more applications to review. This is pleasing as capability and capacity for track managers, as well as succession planning, is an industry wide risk.
- 10 Track Managers and NZTR's Head of Tracks and Infrastructure attended the Australian Racecourse Managers Conference mid-August.

New Starting Gates

- NZTR have purchased new Steriline Starting gates for Te Rapa, Trentham and Awapuni venues. The Awapuni gates will be completed this week and all will be operational by the end of September.





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