

## Gore Harness Racing Club - Presidents Report 2024

In my first report from my second term as President for the club, what a different feeling it is this time! It feels like normal service has resumed after the previous three years battling to keep our rightful place as a venue in the Southern region, it finally feels like things are settling down again. We have our Spring and Christmas meetings on the all-weather track and our hugely successful February grass meeting all running along like well-oiled machines now.

Firstly, I must thank the previous president Ross Cleland for his help during the year getting me back up to speed and I must also thank the really tight committee we have at the Gore Harness Racing Club. Thank you must also go to the Gore Racing Club and to the groundsman John McKay for the way the course looks over the spring and summer months and the way we can pick up the phone and work out any issues with each other constructively.

Our major race day is on the 27<sup>th</sup> of December and although we had to move it to the all-weather track due to scheduling clashes with the galloping meetings, we still had a hugely success and profitable day. The MLT Gore Cup was taken out by *Sandwave*, just getting up over local cult hero *Hazer*! The Cardrona Distillery Stakes was taken out by the Craig Ferguson trained *Da Vinci* and the Jaccka Lodge Gore Trotting Cup was taken out by locally owned trotter *Andy Hall*. Even though we had to change to the grit we still managed to turnover \$1,265,000 which was a great result for the club and the TAB on the day.

Our other feature meeting on February the 18<sup>th</sup> saw the continuation of the rise of *Da Vinci*. He took out the Gore Town and Country Summer Cup coming from a big 40m handicap and giving Craig Ferguson his 100<sup>th</sup> training win in the process. The Kim McDowell Painting and Decorating Trot was taken out by *Willangus Lad* trained to perfection by Robert Wilson and winning at boilover odds.

One of the biggest features of the Gore races is that every single race has a sponsor. We really appreciate the support from the local businesses and the hard work that Pam Norman puts in to finding these sponsors and making the day enjoyable for them as well. I encourage all members to take notes of the sponsors on our race days and support their businesses in return.

To Jason, Julie, Nicole and the Southern Harness Board, thank you for your support over the last year. I feel like it is more open and transparent now and there is greater trust between the Clubs and Southern Harness due to your hard work. We also continue to have a closer working relationship with Wyndham Harness Racing Club, which has been to the benefit of both clubs. I would especially like to thank them for bringing up their start crew, mobile, and even their commentator in August to help us run a workout meeting in preparation for our first race meeting of the season.

Our biggest project of the year has undoubtedly been the resurfacing of our all-weather track. This has been very successful, and the track is now fine, firm, and fair to all runners. We were able to apply to the Racing Safety Development Fund for half of the costs for this project and we would like to thank all the committee members who helped in this project. Especially the extra work put in by our committee track manager Kenny Baynes.

In moving the adoption of the club's annual accounts, you will see we have come through the year with a healthy surplus of \$49,269. We made some money outside of racing by investing in some dairy heifers and we also have our farm ticking along very nicely with the standing grass being sold for a relatively good profit each year. We intend to re-grass the farm this year to maintain the yields we are achieving. We have also reinvested cash into a slightly higher number of heifers and hopefully we can keep putting the profits back into racing at Gore. Bruce Wallace has been fantastic in making sure the farm is running at maximum capacity.

In closing I would like to again thank my committee, I am looking forward to seeing some new faces around the meeting room table. I would like to welcome Callum Dickson and Emma Adams to the committee and thank them both for bringing the average age of the group down a by a few years! I look forward to another successful year and wish you all the best.

*Chris Wilson - President*