

President's Report 22/23 season

Where did that year go!

I am pleased to be writing my final report as President.

I came into the job not knowing what was going to unfold over the next 5 years and to say it has been character building would be an understatement. Even to this point we are still unsure as to what the status of our all-weather track is with regards to being reinstated as a racing surface, hopefully this will be something that we will be able to clarify by the AGM.

I must thank my committee for the effort that they have put in during my term as President. Your support and never say die attitude has been so encouraging and I cannot thank you enough for this!

This year once again we had 4 race days - two at Wyndham and two on the grass at Gore. Thanks must go to Bathan Muir and his team at Wyndham for their hospitality and the way the course was presented on race day. Also to Cameron Grant and the Gore Racing Club and in particular John McKay for their assistance at our grass track meetings, I say thank you.

Gore's major race day on the 27th of December 2022 produced another great result. The three major races are all growing in stature and this year coming they can expect another stakes increase. The support both our days get from the community is unbelievable and highlights the decision that saw the attempted closure of the course as total stupidity by the Board and Management of HRNZ.

The three major races on the day, the MLT Gore Pacing Cup won by 'Franco Norton', the Kim McDowall Gore Trotting Cup won by 'Hurricane Hill', and The Cardrona Distillery 2 & 3 year old Stakes won by the 3yo 'Sandwave' were all exceptional races and congratulations must go out to the connections of these horses.

The meeting on the 27th of December this year will not be run on the grass as there is a clash with the Tapanui Gallops on the 24th. This raises concerns and uncertainty that the grass track will be fit for purpose by the 27th so we have applied to the HRNZ Board to have our all-weather surface reinstated as a racing surface. To their credit, they have given us the green light to do this subject to it passing inspection.

Our race day on the 20th of February was a great success and is firmly entrenched in the Southern calendar. Grass track racing continues to return good results for the TAB and harness racing. A big congratulations to the Wilson family with the popular win of 'Brookies Player' who won the second instalment of the Gore T & C Summer Cup.

To all our Sponsors, once again thank you! I encourage all members to support these businesses whenever you can! Our sponsorship base is unique and is the envy of other clubs. To Pam Norman our Sponsorship and Promotions Officer, you have again once again done a fantastic job. Thank you! We are the envy of all clubs and I can't thank you enough for the work you have and continue to do for the club.

To Julie McEwan-Franks our Secretary, Jason and Nicole at Southern Harness, thank you for the work you have done for the Gore Club throughout the year.

With the reinstatement of our all-weather surface at Gore in the pipeline we have put the formation of Eastern Southland Harness on hold for the time being. The work that has been done on this I believe will benefit us in the future as in Gore we are totally at the mercy of the galloping code and their future venue plans. One thing that it has done is bring the Wyndham & Gore harness clubs closer together and I am confident both clubs will work together in the future to strengthen harness racing in Eastern Southland.

In moving the adoption of the Clubs annual report, you will see we have come through the year with a slight loss. This can be attributed to money spent on stakes approx \$20,000, drainage on the farm and track maintenance. I am confident we are in a position now that will see us continue to lead the way in the future and we are in a good place to continue being a proactive club.

In closing I came into this job to do my mandatory term of 2 years term as President, it has morphed into 5 years. Time flies when you are having fun! I wish the incoming President, Vice President and Junior Vice President all the best and know you will do a great job.

I must also make mention of the support and effort of Penny Baynes who is standing down as Vice President. You have been a rock and I can honestly say I would not have been here for 5 years if it was not for your support and voice of reason. Things could have gone pear shaped if you were not a sounding board for me. I always got you to tone things down on any letters written, of which there been numerous, before I pressed send. Penny has stood down to further her role as Southern Harness Racing Board Chairperson and is doing a fantastic job in that role.

The Gore club has voiced our opinion to the Board and Management of HRNZ numerous times especially in the past couple of years. I thank other clubs for the support we have received.

Once again thank you for your support and I look forward to being the Immediate Past President for a few years.

Ross Cleland

Gore Harness Racing Club