

Presidents Report – October 2023

It is with much pleasure that I present my 1st President report summarising the clubs 2022-2023 Racing Season. As you will see from the attached financial statements the Club has had another good year – operating well with a **profit** of \$16,291. This was from us holding 13 Race meetings. You may recall we did lose 2 meetings at the start of the season (due to low numbers) but with compensation received from HRNZ covering our core costs, this had zero financial effect.

You will notice the change of location for this meeting – this is a consequence of the Dining room now being operated as a commercial venture. I'm proud to say that the Invercargill Club was the main instigator of this change – and going forward this area will be developed and brought into the 21st century.

I wish to make special mention of the great assistance our club has received from: Jason and the Southern Harness team, Warren Broad and his grounds staff, Lindsay Beer – who continues to work tirelessly in securing race sponsorship, our Secretary – Julie McEwan-Franks and lastly Noeline O'Connor – who after 25 years has hung up her apron from operating the Drivers room canteen.

As a racing venue we are fortunate to race on one of the best all weather surfaces in New Zealand, and that has been further confirmed by HRNZ's recent track inspection. I'm sure you will have spotted that the new barn is finally completed and being used - it's a big thanks to the Ascot Park Consortium who have completed this complex and will continue to make other changes around the course - advantaging not only our club, but our local trainers who operate from the facility.

Plenty of highlights on the track to mention. The obvious being Cup day and the Dalgety trained *Krug's* outstanding win in the provinces 1st (but not the last) Group ONE Invercargill Cup; Alister Black's *Wai Key Wee's* Group 3 win in the David Moss Stakes, watched by the biggest crowd at an Ascot Harness meeting since the 1980's. Diamonds day saw another massive crowd view great racing with the locally owned, Regan Todd trained -*Treacherous Gall* taking out the Southern Oaks in atrocious conditions. The unbeaten *Ohoka Connor* continued his march to the top - winning the Supremacy Stakes, whilst *Vessem's* win in the Diamond Creek continued Mark Purdon's domination of this race. If you ask Gail Paisley, the best event was her winning our Coats and Schuck Jewellers created diamond ring – this promotion was hugely popular.

Your club appreciates the fact we are an integral part of the Southland landscape - and will continue to ensure we play our part in supporting racing initiatives: Team Teal campaign (raising funds for Ovarian Cancer research) and Blue September (Prostate Cancer) are the ones we are most proud of.

Plans for this season..... The Group One Invercargill cup goes up to \$110,000, and will form the base of our huge pre-Christmas twilight event on Friday 22 December, with a minimum \$25,000 stake for all supporting races. You will also be aware that we've put in place the "Iron Horse" bonus scheme looking to reward horses that focus on racing at our meetings. Big stakes will also be on offer on Diamonds day, and it is the plan of your Committee to keep stakes as high as absolutely possible.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank: my committee, all the owners, trainers and drivers that support our meetings and really look forward to seeing you all again this season.

Craig Heyrick

PRESIDENT Invercargill Harness Racing Club