QROA October E-Newsletter 2015

QROA Report

Stakeholder Meetings

QROA was the first stakeholder group to approach Ian Hall CEO RQ to hold joint stakeholder meetings.

RQ has held two stakeholder meeting days both of which have been attended by representatives of QROA. The first meeting was a day long session held at Eagle Farm 4 August 2015. In summary, this meeting involved RQ officials clearly explaining the current financial position of the racing industry in Queensland and calling for ideas from stakeholders on how to promote a more sustainable future for the industry. Prizemoney reductions were proposed by RQ. QROA argued strongly that provincial prizemoney should not be cut as it was the bread and butter income for owners.

The second meeting was held 6 October 2015 for half a day and important topics included discussion on the options of upgrading a third tier track to take extra TAB meetings and a new weight system for apprentices.

Owner/Trainer Contract

QROA has lobbied extensively to promote benefits for owners and improve owners’ rights as part of the contract for the mandatory training fees payment system to be introduced by Racing Australia in 2016. A meeting held in Brisbane between QROA executive committee members and Racing Australia CEO Peter McGuaran and the author of the mandatory fees payment system, solicitor Paul Fabretto resulted in QROA successfully negotiating for enhanced benefits and rights for owners to be a part of a trainers’ obligations under the mandatory training fees payment system. The mandatory payment system was scheduled to be introduced on 1 December 2015 but is now postponed to February/March 2016. The change which QROA was instrumental in having included in the standard mandatory contract is an obligation by trainers to keep owners informed of ongoing manner of important relevant events concerning the horses in their care.

2015 Thoroughbred Awards

QROA worked with Racing Queensland and the BRC to reinvigorate the racing awards night which had been cancelled by RQ due to heavy financial losses from the night the previous year.

An Awards Night committee was called for by Ian Hall CEO RQ at the August 4 2015 Stakeholders Meeting after stakeholders expressed their disappointment that the night had been cancelled.

Kerrina King and Dave Whimpey volunteered and worked with Vince Pennisi, Brett Culow, Doug Cross and Melissa Patterson to relaunch the night.

Industry stakeholders were contacted for donations towards the night and the TBQA, Magic Millions, Sky and Aon joined QROA in financial support of the night.

The 2015 Thoroughbred Awards night 12 October 2015 proved to be a wonderful evening and congratulations must go to all involved particularly Brett Culow, Melissa Patterson and Dave Whimpey. Raymond Crowe the “Unusualist” provided an entertaining magic act. The evening was cost neutral.

On the night, Ian Hall RQ CEO drew attention to the pivotal role QROA and Kerrina King had played in relaunching the event.

Brazen Beau

Imagine owning the likes of Black Caviar, Lankan Rupee or Brazen Beau. It’s what dreams are made of.

But for a couple of lucky QROA members, it’s not a dream. Not only do they own Brazen Beau, but he was their FIRST horse!

In 2013, Andrew Richmond’s friend asked him to get involved in racehorse ownership and after being involved with trotters in the 90s, Andrew ‘jumped at the chance’ to take a share in a thoroughbred.

“There were syndication opportunities on the internet and we took shares in one – it was Brazen Beau.”

Andrew said even when Brazen Beau won his first race by five lengths, they didn’t realise what they had. (He beat Hampton Court, who also went on to be a Group 1 winner)

“With each race he just got to a higher and high level and kept winning or running second in the big races, it was an amazing experience,” said Andrew.

Brazen Beau had twelve starts for five wins and four seconds, including winning the G1 Newmarket Hcp, the G1 Coolmore Stud Stakes, G2 Roman Consul, G2 Champagne Stakes and seconds in the G1 Lightning Stakes, the G1 JJ Atkins and the G2 BRC Sires Produce.

He has beaten the likes of Lankan Rupee, Chautauqua and Terravista – rated the top three sprinters in the World at that time.

He also took his connections to the prestigious Royal Ascot, where he thrilled them with a second in the G1 Diamond Jubilee.

“It’s been absolutely fantastic,” said Andrew.

“Travelling to Royal Ascot, two Group One wins, people only ever dream about it, but to experience it is another thing, it’s impossible to describe the feeling.

“It was pure luck buying into such a good horse. It’s big odds to do that, especially as a first timer or small owner.”

Brazen Beau has now been sold to Darley Stud, where he is standing his first season and Andrew and his mates have retained some breeding rights and will be watching the foals with interest.

In the meantime, they have shares in six other runners to keep them busy - Tremezzina, Invincible Heart, Helsingor have raced so far, with two of them already winners.

But they’re big hope is Brazen Beau’s full brother, who they purchased from the breeder earlier this year and will hit the track as a two year old in 2016.

They can only hope he will take them to the dizzying heights of his brother.

“It’s going to be tough to match Brazen Beau, but we’re hopeful,” said Andrew.

And his word of advice for those of us still trying to reach our dreams -

“Buy small shares in a few horses to spread the risk and increase the enjoyment,” Andrew advised.

“It doesn’t matter how small a percentage you own you still get the same enjoyment!”

QROA Interviews Dave Whimpey CEO BRC and he Shares his Ideas for Growing Racing

You have been in the role as BRC CEO for 16 months now, how are you enjoying it?

I can honestly say that I have enjoyed every minute of it. Clearly, the racing side of the

business has been a big learning curve, however, I take great comfort in the sense that I

have a very strong racing department headed by Bart Sinclair.

We have delivered a strong Strategic Plan for the future, reshuffled the management team

through organisational alignment, deployed capital in to earnings accretive assets, and most

importantly driven a culture of a ‘feeling of winningness’.

I am most proud of the fact that against a backdrop of 42% less race meets (given Eagle

Farm is closed) we have not let go of one single tracks and grounds staff – and I have 53!

This at a time when other States are outsourcing this function. We have kept every person

employed through project capital works and non-racing income such as Future Music.

The track ahead is bright and we are at a point whereby we can make history by positioning

this great Club into the future for its members. I am very proud to be heading up the

business at this point in time.

How has your previous role as National Manager of Strategic Finance and Gaming for Coles

Hotels helped in this position?

Working for a public company such as Coles (Wesfarmers owned) and controlling a budget

of $350m and over $100m in capex has placed me in a great position when it comes to

deriving prudent commercial returns. We have adopted many similar processes here at the

BRC and all projects now get a feasibility and post implementation review to ensure our

capital is wisely spent and monitored.

Gaming is something that has been in my blood for a long time, in fact since my Casino

days. This seamlessly transferred to wagering and mathematics is something of a hobby to

me, so this part of the business sits very comfortable with me.

The rigour behind public companies is a great model to follow for any business – they are

good at what they do for a reason and we have introduced many elements here at the BRC.

This year’s Winter Carnival was a huge success. It gets bigger and better every year, how

can you keep growing it?

Firstly, there were many moving parts to make it a success and the BRC is but one part. I

have determined that racing at Group 1 level is successful only if it is gentrified by the

following:

 The best thoroughbreds racing on the best surfaces for the greatest prize money the

industry can muster; together with

 The optimum distribution of its product on wagering & media platforms; together with

 The best customer experience tailored to suit their varied needs and wants; and

finally;

 Great weather!

I believe the Winter Racing Carnival scored an 8/10 across these dimensions. It’s therefore

natural that to continue to improve, all stakeholders need to assess the criteria we are

managed on and improve in our areas of influence. We at the BRC for example are already

planning for next years Carnival to be bigger and better than this year.

For us, the experience starts when you first hear about the carnival or get an invite – the

style is important and we must deliver on this promise.

What does the BRC plan to do to make owners feel more significant on raceday (in general,

not just during Carnival) and make it a grander experience for them?

It’s a great question. To answer it we must start from the premise that the definition of

‘owner’ is changing. We now have syndicates with upward of 80 owners so it’s a bit

complicated.

The Board is very close to this issue given most of them are also owners. We commenced

with an owners and trainers bar at Doomben and then quickly worked out it was a bit small,

but we did what we could at that time.

The Board is resolute on the matter, we must accommodate owners (both winning and

losing connections) better into the future as they are of vital importance to the future of the

Club and Racing. I have been to the VRC, MRC venues, ATC and Hong Kong and they each

do it differently. We are presently working with architects and owners and stakeholders with

respect to the Eagle Farm capital works programme to crystallise the Boards vision for

owners so watch this space.

How do you plan to cater to younger generations to ensure the passion and love for racing

continues into the future.

One very real example that is working is our Champions Bar at Doomben. This was a tired

bar that needed a lot of TLC to get right. We introduced Craft Beer and Cocktails, a great

food offer, refurbished facilities and Sports Vision that you simply cannot afford at home. The

bar also trades until 9pm on a Saturday. The younger generation, particularly the ladies, feel

very safe, welcome and appreciated in that space. Sales have lifted by more than 400%

also. We have lifted visitation of the back of this and other elements by 6% this year

(average Saturday attendance) as the younger generation spreads the word.

Rather than thinking of age demographics however, I have challenged the notion of zones.

You see, I could have a 20 year old and a 65 year old whom want a purist punting

experience and no entertainment. If you carry this notion forward the BRC needs to

accommodate experiential zones across categories such as gaming, wagering, the

entertainment seeker, the member, the guest member, the owner, the trainer, a chairman’s

club experience, a sports bar / public bar seeker, the cocktail bar and so on. Once we zone

the club then we can engineer or tailor the experience.

When I think of the younger or emerging market however there are some non-negotiables.

They must have access to the latest and greatest technology (including wi-fi), be safe, be

able to share in a herd mentality experience (great with friends), be able to spend their

money on what they want when they want it. Anything less that these and they will defect.

How is the Eagle Farm redevelopment progressing – what exactly is being done and when

can we expect it to reopen?

The Oakridge strain (grown in Queensland) has taken on the course proper and growing

very well. In fact, my team is now looking after this as it has been handed over by the Racing

Queensland Project Team. It is growing on the course proper with the exception of the two

tunnels and culverts.

Recent events suggest the programme can get back on track by the end of July as the

Board, Racing Queensland and the Government are committed to being back in early 2016

so that the Winter Carnival and in particular the Stradbroke is back at Eagle Farm.

It is imperative that we protect the trainers during this time and our team are working with the

trainers and keeping them as informed as we can through the process.

Neville Morgan, Prominent Queensland Owner Shares his Views on the Current State of the Racing Industry in Queensland

I was very buoyed by the positive attitude of prominent Queensland owner, Neville Morgan, who has shared his thoughts with us on the current state of the racing industry.

Neville, who is an extremely successful technology businessman, has had racehorses since the early 90’s and has had a tremendous run of luck. Some of his recent runners include Kermadec, who won the Group 1 Doncaster Mile and was third in the George Ryder Stakes, third in the G2 Hobartville Stakes and won the Group 3 Carbine Club Stakes and Rangirangdoo who won the George Ryder Stakes in 2011.

Neville has horses stabled with some of the country’s leading trainers, based in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, so with his business acumen and racing success, he is well qualified to compare the industries in the three states.

The Tatts Deal was long overdue for the industry and they finally brought the Sunshine State on par with our southern counterparts.

“The current prizemoney levels in Queensland are fantastic, especially when you add the QTIS bonus,” Neville said.

“We now compare with Sydney, and we should all be very happy about that.”

What Neville is concerned about is how we keep this sustainable.

 “But whatever the outcome, maintaining prizemoney levels is paramount. If prizemoney is cut, many people won’t be able to afford to race here – it’s an economic fact of life that owners need a return for their investment.”

Neville believes we need a robust funding model so that we can grow the top line and ensure that infrastructure, prizemoney and compliance is all sustainable. In ideal world, he would like to see a greater financial contribution from the State Government.

“The NSW and Victorian Governments pour millions into their racing industries every year,” he said

“Sadly, NO Queensland Government has ever acknowledged the important of racing to the wider economy.”

He said the challenge now is for the industry to be able to move forward and keep going.

“We all just need to hang in there,” Neville advised.

“This is a time when we all need to work together, and ride out the uncertainty.”

In the meantime, Neville plans to continue to invest and race in the Queensland industry.

“I’m keen to find out where the industry is headed, I’m positive it will all be sorted out and we will enjoy a bright future.”

Peter Breen Shares the Joys of Racehorse Ownership with QROA

Owning a racehorse is about more than the thrill of watching it on the track, and the excitement of a win. It’s about the ‘connections’ we make. How many lifelong friendships have been made this way? Forging memories as we share the rollercoaster ride of racing.

The partnership between owners, Peter and Brenda Breen, and jockey Gary Doughty and his trainer-wife Kelly are a perfect example of this special racing bond.

The Breens started racing in Victoria thirty five years ago and were lucky from the start. Their first horse, Salminet won four races. Their next, The Prize Fighter won his first start by six lengths at Werribee and went on to win six races and give the couple their biggest thrill – a Group One start.

“He was the best horse we had,” said Peter.

“He ran in the Group One Oakley Plate. He was unplaced, but it was an absolute thrill to get to that level.”

The Brenda picked Century Rising at a yearling sale. He struggled to win a race until jockey Gary Doughty took the ride and suggested they put blinkers on him. They put Doughty on next start (and the blinkers) – and the rest is history. Gary won ten races on Century Rising and placed in the Group 3 Standish Handicap.

The Doughtys moved to Queensland, but kept in touch with the Breens, and when they also eventually relocated to the Sunshine State, it was only natural for the racing partnership to resume.

Gary bought Port Call and the Breens couldn’t help but get involved. Trained by Kelly, Port Call won eleven races.

Then the men decided to dabble in some breeding, and so their luck continued. Their first broodmare, Tiercette has had eight runners for eight winners – the best being Tierqualo, who won nine races and over $450,000 in prizemoney.

The group are currently racing another of her foals, Choitier (by Choisir), who was a last start winner on the Gold Coast and showing plenty of potential. They also have a three quarter sister to Tierqualo who is currently at the breakers and will start this season.

One of Tiercette's foals, Zedatier was injured and didn't get to race, so the Breens and Doughtys decided to put her to Clang. Flamboyer was the result – a very consistent gelding with that has so far collected over $250,000 in prizemoney.

“It’s great that Zedatier is carrying on the dynasty,” said Peter proudly.

“We’ve also got a 3 year old by Jet Spur and a weanling colt by Snitzel, so we’re looking forward to the next few racing seasons.”

Between Gary riding for the Breens and Kelly training for them, they’ve enjoyed fifty winners as a partnership.

“We love the horses, the excitement of racing and winning,” said Peter.

“But more than that, we've had a great association with Gary and Kelly, we’ve had so much luck together.

“It's fantastic to have a partnership and friendship develop like that, it's been great, that's been one really special thing to come from racing for us.”

Maxine Whitington and John Walsh

Maxine Whitington and John Walsh have been long-time supporters of the QROA and the Queensland racing industry.

Every Saturday you’ll find them at the Brisbane race meeting. They’re there from the time the gates open, so that they don’t miss ‘their table’, and they stay until the last race.

The only days their seats are empty are when they are watching one of their horses race at another venue.

Racing plays a huge role their lives, it’s their passion and it’s been that way since they purchased their first racehorse, Parasong, in 1980. John was finally seeing his childhood dream come to fruition.

A few months later, when Maxine was on holidays, John decided to surprise her by buying a second racehorse ‘for her’, because it was a grey and greys were always her favourite.

She laughs as she remembers the occasion.

“I was very surprised to return home and find Majestic Missile. But he was a beautiful animal.”

They were living in Sydney at the time, with Jim O’Connor their trainer, and even then they would make the trek to Queensland for suitable races. In fact, Majestic Missile won his first race at the Gold Coast. After all these years, and all their success, Majestic Missile still holds a special place in Maxine’s heart and remains her favourite.

It was only twelve months later that John and Maxine had a real taste of success when their horse, Brianne ran third to November Rain in the Queensland Oaks.

That success then encouraged the couple to dabble in some breeding, with Buffalo Bill, Maxi Bid and Royal Arena, some of their more successful horses.

Maxine has a little chuckle a she reminisces the time, and she states “we stopped because we didn’t do much good there.”

The couple moved to Brisbane in 1992 and continued their racing here, enjoying plenty of wins and the social side of racing.

It wasn’t until 2008 that John’s favourite horse, The Sixties, hit the scene. He was named ‘The Sixties’ by Maxine because was out of Grand Era, and she thought the 60’s was just that! Maxine said the horse was extremely popular because of his name and she’d often hear people comment about it as they were placing a bet.

“He was a real bulldog, he would always keep trying and fight to the line,” said Maxine.

“He was also very consistent; you'd give your right arm for one like him all the time.”

John and Maxine won the most races with The Sixties, he recorded 11 wins, 9 seconds and 9 thirds before retirement in 2014 to a family at Mudgeeraba for pony club.

“I love my horses,” she states proudly.

“They all have different personalities and I know them all, so we always find them good homes and I keep in touch with their new owners and follow their post-race careers. In fact, Royal Arena even went on to represent Australia at the Junior Pony Club titles.”

The Sixties was trained, and part owned, by Tracy Green and she has continued that association with John and Maxine in their latest galloper, Substation, a 5 year old by Not A Single Doubt. He’s won five races so far and they hope more are to come.

They’re also in the process of rehabilitating, Mischievous Missile, who had showed them potential before breaking a sesamoid.

“We thought we may have to put him down, but we really didn’t want to,” said Maxine.

“We’ve given him 18 months and he’s doing really well, so Tracy may bring him back slowly. We’ll just take it day by day and see what happens.”

As for buying more horses…

“Well, you can never say never,” Maxine laughs.

One thing is for certain, whether they’re there to cheer on their own, or someone else’s, they’ll always enjoy their day out at the Brisbane races.

**Col Richards**

I, along with thousands of other racing stakeholders, was very saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Col Richards last month.

Col was a stalwart of the Queensland racing and breeding industry which he was involved with for over fifty years. He was a long-time member of the QROA and a true supporter of the game. He was always prepared to put his money where his mouth was by investing in the industry in many ways.

Col actually started the transformation of the prestigious Magic Millions Sales, as a founding partner from 1987-89 and was the instigator of the first Million Dollar Race.

He also managed the Brisbane Bloodstock Sale for eleven years, until he closed it last year to concentrate on his breeding interests.

BBS was a really important part of the industry. It was a bread and butter sale that provided breeders and owners with a dispersal avenue for their stock that couldn’t make the grade for Magic Millions.

His understandably proud daughter, Melinda, could not speak highly enough of her father and his achievements.

“Dad was a risk taker, when other people wouldn’t give it a go he’d just go for it,” said Melinda.

“He was about the see the future potential in things, he was a real visionary.”

In his breeding endeavours, Col started started with Rosemount Farms in Beaudesert where he stood Australian Cup winner Crewman and Call Report.

He was one of the very first breeders to import horses and shuttle stallions and he paved the way for future investors and stud owners.

“He was always developing new strategies for the industry, opening doors and setting trends, especially with importing horses and with syndication businesses,” Melinda stated.

“He could really see the big picture and the value of the racing industry, it’s job creation prospects and how great it could be for the economy.

“He was a strategic thinker and a brilliant businessman.”

But to so many people, Col was much more than just a businessman. He played a huge role in many people’s lives and gave them the kick start they needed to achieve their own dreams.

“Dad could see talent, he’d nurture it and he invested in so many people in the industry and gave them a start,” said Melinda.

“He played a big part in so many people’s lives.”

In 1991 Col moved to Gainsborough Lodge, Toowoomba where he stood consistent sire, Immovable Option. Gainsborough was his retreat from ‘office life’.

Christine Frohloff manages Gainsborough and has worked for Col for over a decade. She said you couldn’t ask for a better boss.

“Col was like a father figure to me, a true gentleman and down to earth person who loved people and liked to mingle with everyone,” Christine said.

“He was a rock to a lot of people and helped a lot of people. He changed a lot of people’s lives.”

Col was very hands on, and just the week before he died he went to the sales and purchased eleven new weanlings and broodmares. He had fifteen horses in work and a number of new runners that are yet to hit the track.

Col had hundreds of winners during his time, but his top most successful were Mackinnon Stakes winner, Oliver Twist and top racemare, Hooplahannah.

“He just loved the thrill of watching, particularly the horses that he bred, win races,” Christine said.

The 84 year old’s passing was a massive shock to everyone. He wasn’t sick and had been continuing day to day life as normal in good spirits and good health.

Hundreds of people attended Col’s funeral last month. It was fittingly held in the winner’s circle at the Gold Coast Turf Club so that Col could be at one of his favourite tracks ‘one last time.’

Racing has lost a true friend and a great supporter of the industry. We are certainly better for having him here.

CONNECTIONS - THE OTHER SIDE OF OWNERSHIP

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**John & Gaye Harvey – 2015 Owners’ Premiership Award Winners for Toowoomba Turf Club**

You meet a lot of interesting and amazing people in this industry, and John and Gaye Harvey are certainly among them.

This incredible couple give you a completely different perspective on racehorse ownership. Their opinions are certainly refreshing.

In an industry where it’s all about the prizemoney and reaching the pinnacle Group One races, the Harvey’s defy the odds.

“We just love racing,” said John.

“But the bread and butter races, we’re not aiming for the big time. We have plenty of horses that we probably should have sold, but instead we race them in the bush because that’s where we came from.”

Plenty of horses is probably an understatement. John and Gaye actually have two hundred horses on their thousand acre property (appropriately named ‘Horse Heaven’) at Cottonvale, near Stanthorpe on the Darling Downs.

Half of them are retired, and just enjoy the grass and the love and care that the Harveys’ lavish upon them. There’s broodmares, foals and yearlings, and over fifty of their current racehorses are spelling there.

The Harvey’s have about eighteen horses in work at anytime, and they have no other partners in the ‘little hobby’, it’s something they enjoy doing together and bear the financial burden themselves.

“Yes, it’s madness,” laughs John.

“But it’s great; it’s our passion and our hobby. We love the races, but more than that we love our horses.”

Gaye quips in, “They never leave us. They’re our babies and are special to us because they have an unconditional love.”

The Harvey’s venture began just before John’s 50th birthday in the late 90’s when a horse they had shares in won. Unfortunately it then suffered an injury and came out to the Harvey’s property to spell – and the Harvey’s fell under its spell!

They went looking for other horses and became regular buyers at the Magic Millions, coming away with three or four yearlings from each sale. The ones that were no good on the track, they kept as either ‘hay burners’ or broodmares. And their stock kept growing.

In keeping with their ‘bread and butter’ theme, the Harvey’s only like home-breds and give their one hundred percent support to Queensland Studs.

“So many Queensland stallions are under-rated,” said John.