



CHRISTCHURCH CASINO INTER DOMINIONS TRANSFERRED TO AUCKLAND

2 March 2011

The devastating Christchurch earthquake has forced the transfer of the 2011 Christchurch Casino Inter Dominion Pacing and Trotting Championships from Addington Raceway to Alexandra Park in Auckland.

The New Zealand Metropolitan Trotting Club has reluctantly decided to move the iconic event following close consultation with Harness Racing New Zealand (HRNZ) and the Auckland Trotting Club (ATC). The decision was ratified by the Inter Dominion Event Committee, comprising representatives of HRNZ and Harness Racing Australia (HRA), in a telephone conference last night.

“Everyone involved in the decision making was aware of the difficulties in moving the series, which commences on March 25, at this late stage,” HRNZ Chief Executive Edward Rennell said.

“The Met has done a great deal of planning and everyone was looking forward to an outstanding Inter Dominion series in Christchurch,” he said.

“Obviously however the earthquake has changed all that. We are acutely aware of the human suffering and the impact this tragedy has had on all New Zealanders. While every endeavour has been made to retain the series in Christchurch, unfortunately with the state of the city and the repairs required to Addington Raceway, this is not feasible”.

“We were also mindful of the need to make a prompt decision to assist the connections of horses engaged in the series in making plans, as well as other parties such as tour operators and individuals who had been planning to attend the series,” Mr Rennell said. “It really is a “no-win” situation and we appreciate this decision will affect a number of people”.

The series will still be hosted by the NZMTC who will race at Alexandra Park as a tenant club of the ATC. In a change to the conditions of the series, the stakes for the Pacers final has been reduced to \$800,000 with all other races maintained at their programmed level. The reduction with the Pacers final has been necessary to ensure the viability of the event with the late transfer and associated additional costs facing The Met following the earthquake.

“The easy option for The Met would have been to abandon the series given the circumstances it finds itself in”, Mr Rennell said. “HRNZ applauds the club for its courage and commitment in continuing to stage this event for the benefit of the industry despite the current difficulties”.

Revised conditions for the series will be determined and released to the industry on 3 March. Other feature races such as the New Zealand Derby will be retained in Christchurch and raced on alternative dates that will be determined over the next week.

HRNZ Chairman Pat O'Brien congratulated the Auckland Trotting Club for offering to make the Alexandra Park facility available to the Met to conduct the championships.

"It is another sign of the co-operative spirit of all New Zealanders in the wake of this terrible tragedy," he said.

ATC President Mr Rod Croon said his club was only too pleased to be able to assist The Met and Christchurch in any shape or form. Details are currently being considered but attempts will be made to contribute to the Christchurch Earthquake Relief Fund in some shape or form during the course of the series.

HRA Chief Executive, Andrew Kelly, said various alternatives had been canvassed with New Zealand officials when it became apparent the event could not be held in Christchurch and the decision to move ID11 was the most sensible in the circumstances.

The conduct of the Inter Dominions in 2013 to 2015 is currently the subject of a competitive tender process amongst harness racing bodies in Australasia. In light of the transfer of this year's series from Christchurch, NZMTC Chairman, Mr David Rankin confirmed that The Met will express an interest in hosting the series again in Christchurch in 2013.

"Our immediate focus is on making the current series in Auckland the best racing event of the season", Mr Rankin said.

"In light of the circumstances however over the last week The Met is committed to securing hosting rights for a future series in Christchurch for the benefit of the Canterbury region and racing public. The Inter Dominions will not be lost to Christchurch", he said.

Mr Rankin also wishes to acknowledge The Met's appreciation for the loyalty and understanding of its sponsors in making this transfer. "We are very tremendously fortunate to have such great sponsors as the Christchurch Casino (Pacers Final) and Dream With Me Stables (Trotters Final) who have pledged their ongoing support for the event", he said.

The final of the Inter Dominion pacers and trotters events will be decided at Alexandra Park in Auckland on Friday April 8. The Inter Dominion Championships are an annual event and were last held in New Zealand in Auckland in 2005.

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