

10 February 2017

# Submissions - Dates Calendar 2017/18

(NZ Dates Committee)

The Wanganui Jockey Club would like to make the following submissions to the NZ Dates Committee regarding the draft 2017/18 racing calendar:

**1) Guineas & Fillies feature raceday - September Saturday has proposed move to Sunday 10 September**

The WJC strongly opposes this move and change of day.

Our major sponsors, members and stakeholders that are aware of this change are fuming and requested their opposition to this course of action be also recorded.

Our long time sponsor of the Wanganui Guineas, the Dyke family & Wanganui Motors, vehemently opposes this move. They are committed to increasing the stakes \$10k to \$60k for this race over the next 2 years and seeking to gain Group status for this race which could now be severely affected by this change with northern horses unlikely to travel down for a Sunday meeting.

This would affect the quality of the fields and 'devalue' the prestige and stakes of the races on the card which features 2 listed races and the first 2YO race of the year in the Central Districts.

There will be significant losses to the club from reduced intertrack betting from the other meetings (especially Ellerslie), and has the potential for the loss of other raceday sponsors which usually totals \$19 000 in sponsorship income. There is also expected to be major losses on bar & catering income from private functions, public, and support from out of town owners.

Last year it had been indicated that Wanganui may receive an additional Saturday meeting but we have in fact lost one!

Wanganui received an upgrade to a 'significant' venue but under this draft will be left with only 2 Saturday feature meetings which seems ludicrous and compares most unfavorably with neighbouring clubs/venues with 'supporting' clubs totaling 5 Saturdays .

The WJC is concerned at some of the inconsistency in NZTR's policy guidelines and double standards which over the last few years was to reduce if not remove the amount of feature meetings at 'supporting' clubs. There would appear to not only be inconsistency involved with this scheduling but also some favoritism to these clubs and their host venue with these allocations.

To follow are the recent turnover details for our Guineas/Fillies raceday feature meeting.

**Wanganui Guineas/Fillies raceday turnover history:**

**NB:** Over the last 10 years, last year had the second highest on-course turnover. This is also the Saturday meeting that we have targeted as the most suitable to revive the Wanganui Punter of The Year competition, which obviously worked, and a Sunday is unlikely to be a preferred option.

Day	Date	On course turnover	Offcourse turnover	Races	No. of horses
Sat	<b>3/9/16</b>	120 736	948 621	8	94
Sat	<b>5/9/15</b>	109 331	948 621	9	80
Sat	<b>6/9/14</b>	104 544	1 209 876	9	107
Sat	<b>7/9/13</b>	104 544	1 050 414	10	113
Sat	<b>8/9/12</b>	105 119	1 236 312	9	102
Sat	<b>3/9/11</b>	102 319	1 358 836	10	108
Sat	<b>4/9/10</b>	114 028	1 206 534	10	92
Sat	<b>5/9/09</b>	144 081	1 603 530	10	125
Sat	<b>6/9/08</b>	97 826	1 862 574	10	116
Sat	<b>8/9/07</b>	99 956	1 650 532	10	110

**Three meeting annual comparisons – Ellerslie/Wanganui/Canterbury:**

Date	Club	On-Course (Tote & FOB combined)		Totalisator (Off & on-course combined)		Fixed Odds (Off & on-course)		Races		Starters	
		15-16	14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16	14-15
3-Sep 16	Canterbury Racing	48,421	65,009	777,203	654,522	390,597	292,944	9	9	90	79
3-Sep 16	Auckland RC	190,184	207,466	1,123,150	1,255,513	405,204	499,874	8	10	85	97
3-Sep 16	Wanganui JC	121,490	111,143	1,099,454	1,044,356	600,768	521,068	8	9	94	89

5-Sep 15	Auckland	207,466	291,708	1,255,513	1,750,709	499,874	519,623	10	11	97	121
5-Sep 15	Wanganui	111,143	103,557	1,044,356	1,304,965	521,068	529,539	9	9	89	107
5-Sep 15	Canterbury	65,009	77,979	654,522	704,159	292,944	265,073	9	9	79	91

6-Sep 14	Auckland RC	291,708	270,229	1,750,709	1,519,951	519,623	393,251	11	10	121	101
6-Sep 14	Wanganui JC	103,557	103,917	1,304,965	1,149,504	529,539	289,109	9	10	107	113
6-Sep 14	Canterbury Racing	77,979	48,778	704,159	568,093	265,073	148,567	9	9	91	70

7-Sep 13	Auckland	270,229	289,865	1,519,951	1,896,596	393,251	407,809	10	10		
7-Sep 13	Wanganui	103,917	106,335	1,149,504	1,316,366	289,109	292,573	10	9		
7-Sep 13	Canterbury	48,778		568,093		148,567		9			

2012 – no comparison available

2/9/11	South Canterbury	23,502	19.5%	774,162	14.2%	127,345	36.8%	112	15.5%
3/9/11	Wanganui	97,211	12.7%	1,358,837	12.6%	245,005	7.8%	108	17.4%
3/9/11	Auckland	310,768	4.8%	1,493,129	2.4%	267,972	0.7%	110	4.8%

4/9/10	Wanganui	111,350	19.3%	1,206,534	24.8%	265,866	7.9%	92	26.4%
4/9/10	Auckland	296,558	23.3%	1,529,257	9.3%	269,782	13.4%	105	2.8%
12/9/10	South Canterbury	48,609	36.5%	484,339	38.6%	92,206	5.7%	73	17.0%

**NB** – Obviously Canterbury is significantly the lowest performing venue regarding turnover on this date, both On & Off-course, and appears to be the newest fixture added to this race date too.

It is our submission that the Canterbury meeting is the most suitable to be moved to the Sunday as obviously Ellerslie & Wanganui combine well together for top punting options (as we do at Queen's Birthday weekend - which creates some consistency with punters too). On the Sunday there are only meetings scheduled at Winton HRC & Auckland GRC so intertrack betting will be poor from those meetings so again the club would miss out.

Why move something that is successful, works well and benefits both the club and the industry??

The argument of reducing overall Saturday meetings and making more jockeys available for racing does not stack up against a successful formula. The old adage applies here - *'If it ain't broke don't fix it'*

The club would also like to highlight the following 2017/18 NZRB Dates committee guidelines which appear to be contrary to the proposed change & directly conflict with these guidelines:

## **2. Maximising Off-Course Gross Profit Contribution On Domestic**

- *Placing meetings on those dates where they have an opportunity to maximise their gross profit contribution.*
- *Giving priority to those meetings likely to produce the best gross profit contribution on our highest profile dates – Saturdays and Public Holidays.*

Saturday is the main raceday for punters, stakeholders and attracting new racing supporters so to reduce Saturday meetings goes against the fundamental objectives of racing and does not support grass roots clubs and regions which are essential to the life blood & sustainability of the industry.

The figures above **clearly show** the best gross profit is on both the Wanganui and Ellerslie meetings.

## **3. Maximising On-course Participation and Sponsorship Opportunities Club and / or venue**

- *Taking into account the popularity of particular days, dates and venues for on-course attendance and the subsequent placement of race meetings*
- *Taking into account racing clubs' ability to attract more sponsorship on particular dates and days of the week in the placement of race meetings.*
- *Placing race meetings close to the centres of human population so race meetings are accessible to the maximum number of people.*

Obviously this fixture has become a very successful raceday with strong turnover and attendance compared to previous years and the added inclusion of the Wanganui Punter of the Year competition last year only strengthened this and is an initiative to be further developed by the club.

This change directly affects the club's ability to offer our sponsors the best race day option and receive the benefits of more exposure & promotions, while affecting the ability of the public to attend (which is crucial in our community that supports Saturday meetings extremely well).

**It is these sorts of changes that are killing our sport and these historic community pastimes.**

## **6. Maximising Returns to Owners – Club**

- *Measuring individual club performance in returning CPP to owners as stakes.*

Is having poorer quality fields part of this objective?

## **7. Lifting Profile of Racing Industry**

- *Ability to generate Industry-wide sponsorships*
- *Raise attractiveness of racing as an entertainment option for general public*

As in previous comments the proposed change of day and removing Saturday meetings is without doubt in complete opposition to these objectives!

One of the functions of the NZRB are set out in section 9 of the Racing Act 2003 includes:

- developing policies that are conducive to the economic development of the racing industry, and the economic well-being of people who, and organisations which, derive their livelihoods from racing.

### **2) Trotting Club – Thursday 15 February / WJC racing Friday 16 February**

This proposed rescheduling highlights the naivety and lack of understanding of Health & Safety requirements for the Harness code and practical requirements in preparing a track for inter-code racing at the same venue in a short space of time. This year, a 5 day turnaround between meetings (12 & 17 Feb 2017) was going to place a lot of duress on track staff to manage inter-code arrangements & requirements and stretch preparations, but racing on successive days is nigh **impossible**.

This year is the first running of this fixture in February when it is usually in the December prior.

Our track manager has indicated that this back to back inter-code racing can not be done for the fact that there will be no time to move the rail if pylons are in place and no time to irrigate either between the meetings.

Harness requires the use of pylons for Health & Safety reasons and their racing will undoubtedly 'burn off' the track at this time of year. Pylons will need to be removed and holes filled, and there will be no time allowed to move the rail and provide a better racing surface for the thoroughbreds. The thoroughbred trainers will have a riot if they have to race the next day! Most local trainers do not want harness using our venue anyway so to create these back to back fixtures will cause a real upheaval and also risks the likelihood of poor thoroughbred nominations and fields, and effectively impacting turnover significantly.

If anything we would prefer to see this fixture returned to mid-December as in previous years.

### **3) 21 September raceday -vs - October flat meeting**

Based on last year's submissions the club **received an undertaking** from the Dates Committee on 27 May 2016 (letter from Peter Lane) that we would receive a return of our flat meeting in early October 2017 instead of this mid-September date which we accepted in 2015 to assist the jumps schedule that year.

As our Cup day has now been pushed back into December it is imperative that we have a raceday income in October please as the proposed draft would have an unproductive gap in racing from 21 September to 2 December 2017.

Wanganui Jockey Club