

18th May 2011

Hon. Ruth Forrest MLC
Committee Chair – Inquiry Chair
Legislative Council

Re: Submission in relation to Tasracing Inquiry

I refer to your correspondence dated 3rd May 2011 with regard to the above.

Terms of reference, item 3 “factors impacting on the ongoing profitability and sustainability of Tasracing” is the item which we would prefer to address.

The Tasmanian Turf Club has extreme concerns regarding the ongoing profitability and sustainability of Tasracing

Our first concern was the decision by Tasracing Directors to accept funding of \$27 million per annum when we believe the amount required was more like \$35 million (this is supported by the statement in the last inquiry that without the input of funds from TOTE Tasmania Tasracing would be insolvent).

We believe that under the new legislation Tasracing can only increase funding from two areas, those being -

- 1 Product fees –our understanding is that, even if the budgeted amount is received, these revenues will only equal the amount currently being gifted from TOTE Tasmania and therefore will not add to the bottom line.
- 2 Commissions from overseas sales – originally Tasmanian Turf Club understood that opening night for lighting at the TOTE Racing Centre was being beamed into several overseas jurisdictions. Following advice since opening night it would appear that this did not occur.

The Tasmanian Turf Club also believe there are a number of impediments to the success of night racing including –

- 1 Inconsistent scheduling of race dates. While Tasracing have attempted to provide night racing on a consistent fortnightly basis (and have to consider other clubs and codes) this process has been frustratingly slow for the club who are concerned that inconsistent race dates would make it more difficult to actually sell our product overseas.
- 2 Another major problem confronting Tasracing in their endeavours to sell our product overseas is the militant position taken by our local jockeys who have decided that they will not ride of an evening during the months of June, July and August and further they refuse to ride after 7pm in the months of May and September. Tasracing are undertaking vigorous investigation of all the issues raised by the Jockey’s Association to support their position but this is proving extremely difficult. This stance severely depletes the product and would, in our opinion, be a serious impediment to attempts to sell our product overseas.
- 3 Sky Channel – given their best endeavours Tasracing are also finding it extremely difficult to obtain a satisfactory agreement with Sky Channel regarding a long term commitment to Tasmanian Thoroughbred Racing by allocating a suitable time slot and the screening of our product on Sky 1.

Ideally Tasmanian Thoroughbred racing would be shown on Thursday evenings on Sky 1 to maximise state and national turnover and also Sky World for international coverage.

Tasracing have acknowledged the importance of funding from night racing and it is our view that, unless the above matters are satisfactorily concluded, the future viability and sustainability of Tasmanian Racing is under extreme pressure.

Kind regards

Robert Biffin
Chief Executive Officer
Tasmanian Turf Club