

# Message from the Chairman

**December 2, 2022**

Dear Members,

As yet another racing year comes to a close, 2022 has continued to provide several key moments which will undoubtedly provide the opportunity to evaluate our race day product and services, enhance the member experience and assist in the advancement of your club whilst progressing a pro-active and strong racing community.

As in previous years, the highlight of the year was the **Great Northern Darwin Cup Carnival** culminating in the Darwin Cup which remains the club's feature event of the year. More recently, the board and management have conducted an extensive de-brief across the 8 days of racing and associated events. The report has identified areas of success and items to improve upon, with management now working hard in preparation for implementing several key learnings taken onboard from extensive stakeholder feedback ahead of the 2023 Carnival.

I'd also like to announce the appointment of two new board members who have filled casual vacancies and will stand for election at the next AGM.

Phil Grice, is a born and bred Territorian with diverse business experience in shipping, manufacturing and real estate. Managing his family investment portfolio, his skills include finance, marketing, HR, and property investment/development. He brings enthusiasm to help strengthen and build the racing industry in the NT.

Leanne Evans, is a passionate racing industry participant, horse owner and member of Women in Thoroughbred Racing NT. A long-term Territorian, she holds an MBA and has extensive experience with budget management, business and strategic planning through a career with the NTG. Now retired, she is committed to supporting the growth and continuous improvement of the Darwin Turf Club.

On behalf of the Board, may I also take this opportunity to provide a summary of just some of the important work that has been completed and give an update on the more notable projects progressed by your Darwin Turf Club Board and Management.

## **Track Maintenance**

The track management team has successfully completed its annual maintenance of the Fannie Bay surface ready for the rigours of a busy racing schedule. This latest work was achieved with minimal disruption and track work continued as normal.

## **Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)**

The EPA license has been issued for a further 2 years. The Board would like to acknowledge the work of management that was undertaken to ensure a new license and the adherence to protocols and conditions placed against this renewal.

## **Legal Matters**

The Board is pleased to inform members that all legal matters dealt with during 2022 have now been finalised and settled.

## **Strategic Plan**

The Board will meet in December for a two-day Strategic Planning session that will deliver a plan for the future of Darwin Turf Club and Silks. Following this, a Master Plan will be developed that will identify potential future works across the entire 43-hectare site.

## **Capital Works**

Funds have been allocated to carry out works in Stable Street. We have engaged a certifier to assist with the review of our Building Advisory Services building file to prioritise works across the site, with a focus on safety and compliance. A capital works program will begin in 2023 with a phased program at Stable St to ensure all Stables are upgraded accordingly.

## **Membership**

We are excited to advise that we have achieved a record number of over 700 members in 2022. The biggest increase is being seen in our young members totalling 155 in 2022. We thank all members for your continued support and look forward to continuing this growth into 2023.

## **Key feature race days - Oktoberfest & Melbourne Cup Day**

Darwin's biggest and best Oktoberfest was held on Everest/Caulfield Cup Day with a strong ticket uptake. A restructuring of ticket pricing, to include a new VIP ticket, increased revenue by over 100% on the event in 2021. Thirteen VIP tables experienced exclusive benefits in a reserved VIP area making this event well-positioned to grow in 2023 as part of an enhanced member and guest experience.

Despite an extremely hot and humid day, Melbourne Cup was again a success with 670 patrons enjoying hospitality packages across DTC and Silks Darwin, as well as additional patrons across the venue. The Board were also delighted to host both sides of Government with the Chief Minister, the Hon Natasha Fyles and Local Fannie Bay member Brent Potter and the Leader of the Opposition, Lia Finocchiaro, on course.

## **Silks Darwin**

Gaming Turnover for 2022 is down on the year prior, despite this trend Silks still remains the number 3 gaming venue in the NT. To help combat this decline we have replaced the poorer performing machines, 3 being installed in November with a further 3 to be replaced in December.

Bistro covers remain strong and revenue to date is in line with the year prior, however Bar revenue is down on the same period last year and to combat this, we are focusing on enhancing our day-to-day activities/promotions and overall customer experience right across the venue.

See you at the races.

Richard O'Sullivan