

EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

April 5, 2023

Dear Members,

With Easter fast approaching it is time to provide the first quarterly update of 2023. This is an update to members of club performance and recent initiatives undertaken by your Darwin Turf Club Board and Management. These initiatives will undoubtedly enhance the member experience, elevate our race day product, and support a strong racing community into the future.

Darwin Double and Ladbrokes Territory Treble

As has been announced in recent months, there are now two major bonuses for horse ownership. For three-year-olds who win both the Darwin Guineas and NT Derby, there will be a \$50,000 Darwin Double bonus. Since 1981, the Guineas/Derby double has been won some 14 times and includes winners in more recent years such as Host of the Party (2013), Finke (2016) and Poets Landing (2019).

The second initiative is the Ladbrokes Territory Treble, formally the Ladbrokes Triple Crown. For the first time in over 40 years, the Ladbrokes Territory Treble will open up to all-aged gallopers, with the \$100,000 bonus on offer to the connections of the horse that wins the Ladbrokes Alice Springs Cup, AUFS Chief Minister's Cup and the Great Northern Darwin Cup.

In further good news for the racing industry, both these initiatives follow prizemoney increases of 5% on 1 September 2022 and 5% 1 April 2023 granted by TRNT.

Raceday Attendance

Raceday attendance so far in 2023 is in line with 2022, with 3804 and 3852 attendees respectively over nine race meetings.

JANUARY - MARCH			
YEAR	MEETINGS	ATTENDANCE	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE
2023	9	3804	422.6
2022	9	3852	428
2021	9	3300	366.6
2020	9	1896	210.6
2019	8	2244	280.5

Early indications are that the club is well-positioned going into the Dry Season.

Race Starters at DTC

Horse numbers in the Top End appear stronger than ever, with data for the number of race starters in the first quarter of 2023 the highest (7.50 horses per race) since 2019.

JANUARY - MARCH				
YEAR	STARTERS	RACES	MEETINGS	STARTERS PER RACE
2023	360	48	9	7.50
2022	326	48	9	6.79
2021	303	48	9	6.31
2020	343	48	9	7.15
2019	318	42	8	7.57
2018	296	34	6	8.71
2017	295	36	7	8.16

2023 CARNIVAL PLANNING

Club management is undertaking planning for the upcoming Great Northern Darwin Cup Carnival, with a focus on improving customer experience and satisfaction. Centrefield will be opened to General Admission ticket holders on Darwin Cup day, in a decision that will allow sustainable growth and reduced congestion at Darwin's premier sporting and social event. This will result in greater access to shade, bars, food trucks and stage infrastructure that will host Silk Laser Clinics Fashions on the Field as well as headline entertainment (to be announced) for the afterparty.

Strategic Plan Development

The DTC Board, with consultant Wholsen Consulting, have now approved the DTC Strategic Plan that will help shape the future of the Club. Industry, Members and Stakeholders input was considered and led to the creation of the Mission Statement to “deliver quality experiences within a uniquely Darwin thoroughbred setting”. Our Values and Culture include Integrity, Innovation, Excellence and Openness.

Please see the plan on a page that forms part of a wider strategic plan:



Stable Development

A Stable St Development committee has been formed to oversee maintenance works and upgrades to many of our Stables. Management has been working with Building Advisory Services to close out a large number of expired building permits as well as working toward full compliance of existing stables. While a future capital works program is in development to look at options to replace old with new stables, works have commenced on individual stables.

Trackwork Protocol and Maintenance

New Track Maintenance Protocols have been approved by the Board and specifically identify new measures regarding rolling the track and maintenance protocols during the Wet Season - the track will now be rolled before every race day in the Wet Season.

The DTC will again undertake our bi-annual upgrade to the track surface later this month. The EPA has been informed of our planned application of 20,000 litres of waste oil to take place straight after our Anzac Day races on the 26th of April. Additional monitoring programs will be implemented for the first time this April, including Surface Water and Soil monitoring programs.

Code of Conduct

The Board has approved a revised Code of Conduct for Board Members and a revised Code of Conduct for Club members. The new Code for members will be made available as part of the Annual Report kit for members in advance of the AGM on Monday 29 May 2023.

AGM (Monday 29 May) and Nominations for Board Vacancies

All Members are urged to attend the Darwin Turf Club AGM on Monday, 29 May at 6pm, Level 1 of the Public Grandstand. The Board and club management will report on last year's trading position, and present audited accounts for Silks and the Darwin Turf Club Inc. This is your opportunity to be appraised of the Club's financial position and to ask questions over performance and direction.

The Annual report will be made available a week before the AGM.

Advertisements will soon be placed seeking nominations for vacant Board positions. Members with relevant skill sets and an interest in contributing to the future of their Club are urged to nominate. More details on the number of Board vacancies and the nomination and election processes will be provided in the coming weeks.

Silks Darwin

Silks remains the third-ranked club in the Northern Territory for gaming revenue despite the effects of economic headwinds including rising inflation, cost of living pressures and potential further interest rate rises. These headwinds have had an effect on discretionary spending and Darwin's premier licensed club and gaming venue has not been immune from feeling the impact of lower revenue returns. The club has responded to these challenges by implementing a revised and streamlined operational structure which is now more integrated with the Darwin Turf Club.

Silks gaming revenues in the first quarter of 2023 grew 2% on the same quarter last year with food and beverage revenue, in the first quarter, exceeding the prior year. Management is focusing on cost control and staffing to ensure Silks is well placed as we head into the dry season which is typically the busiest time of the year for not only Silks but again for hospitality right across the Top End.

Chairman Standing Down After AGM

I advise that following the conclusion of the AGM I will be standing down as Chairman of the Darwin Turf Club and as a member of the Board.

I came onto the Board during a very turbulent time with the intention of assisting where I could in resolving matters confronting the Club and Board. These included a dispute over ICAC findings, a Government attempt to claw back the \$12 million grandstand grant, a number of legal disputes and the need to address Environment Protection Authority (EPA) threats over the Club track license.

These matters are now largely resolved.

I hope you all have an enjoyable Easter break and I look forward to seeing you at the races.

Richard O'Sullivan