

Challenges for the Industry Post Equine Influenza

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Harness Racing Australia Inc.

Post Equine Influenza – a few observations

- * General public associated EI with thoroughbred industry
- * Racing public hoped the Spring Carnival would proceed unaffected
- * Informed public knew of the spread and the dangers
- * Media concentrated on the most immediate aspects of the disease

Did the Harness Racing industry follow the 7 rules of engagement with the media ?

- * Find out the maximum information about the issue
- * Direct all information through one source
- * Formulate something you can tell the media
- * Keep the media updated
- * Control (where possible) the flow of information
- * Tell public what you are doing
- * Generate positive coverage ASAP



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What did the wider Industry learn ?

- * How well did we cope with the crisis?
- * Effects were devastating once we knew of the depth of the spread
- * Industry is not self supporting
- * Immediate loss of profile and coverage
- * Are we well placed to deal with a future outbreak?

What were the major revenue impacts ?

- * Flow of revenue to other codes due to the reduction in product
- * Associations, Clubs and businesses had to cut costs or seek alternative revenues
- * The impact was unforeseen so a degree of reforecasting had to be undertaken
- * Financial implications will stretch over future financial years



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ABC News Flash : August 8th 2023

“Traces of a new strain of Equine Influenza has now been detected in Tasmania, after having been contained in the two States affected thus far being Western Australia and South Australia. Government officials have ordered a three month lockdown on horse movements effective immediately”

Action Plan :

- *Regulators and Industry swing into protocol procedures as detailed in the code of conduct
- *Media seek answers as to how this strain was detected and spread
- *State Associations and Principal Clubs establish procedures to deal with owners, breeders and trainers effected by this latest outbreak.

Biggest Questions in my mind ??

- 1)Who will be our State administrators in 15 years time ?**
- 2)Who will manage our Clubs in 2023 ?**
- 3)Who will make up the peak Industry body – HRA ?**



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6 Biggest Marketing questions in the next 15 years.

- **Did we as an Industry change the basic on-course product to suit new event goers?**
 - **Are crowds important to us any more?**
 - **Do we have a critical mass of young people interested in breeding and training?**
- **Have we appealed to a generation to become involved in horse ownership?**
- **Have we kept pace with new technologies and new media opportunities?**
 - **Do we still race at the same number of venues and times?**

•One Answer (amongst many others)

- **The Industry must address the critical shortage of young and talented people involved at every level of our sport. There is no single organisation, group or committee that has a greater responsibility than the Industry itself to address the fact that by 2023 the sport must look, feel and present to an entirely different market than it does today.**

•RECRUIT, TRAIN, EMPOWER, TRUST YOUNG PEOPLE TO BECOME TOMORROW'S HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY.



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