



20 July 2026

OFFICIAL NOTICE

AMENDMENT TO HARNESS RACING NEW ZEALAND REGULATIONS - QUALIFYING REGULATIONS

On 14 July 2026, the HRNZ Board considered and approved an amendment to the Qualifying Regulations, effective from 1 August 2026. The background and details are as follows.

As horse numbers have declined, the Qualifying Regulations have been progressively realigned to ensure they continue to deliver their intended outcomes in a changing operating environment. The evolution of our racing has seen fewer horses trial, in general, and we have recently witnessed limitations which have prevented optimal outcomes being achieved.

HRNZ recognised this issue and following consultation recommended a change to Qualifying Regulation clause 6.3 to allow an unrestricted mix of unqualified and non-win horses of the same gait to trial together. The removal of the words “up to three” from this clause provides trials clubs with additional flexibility when compiling their fields, without eroding the essence of the qualifying process. This change will create greater flexibility and effectiveness in the shaping and running of trials, while creating a better trialing environment for horses.

Accordingly, clause 6.3 of the Qualifying Regulations will read as follows:

6.3 *If unqualified horses are in a trial with Non-Win (MR) horses of the same gait, they shall qualify if they satisfy the qualifying times in clauses 6.1 and 6.2 (and the trial shall be deemed a qualifying race for the purpose of this regulation). Should any such horse win its barrier trial, it shall also become a second preference Non-Win (MR) for field selection purposes.*

This change was unanimously endorsed by the HRNZ Racing Bureau and RIB Head Harness Steward, Nigel McIntyre, along with Trial Club Secretaries.

This change will take effect from 1 August 2026.



Anna Flynn
Interim Commercial Director