



HR  
NZ

**HR**  
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HARNESS RACING  
NEW ZEALAND

**CAREERS IN THE  
HARNESS INDUSTRY**



**WELCOME TO  
HRNZ GATEWAY  
PROGRAMME**



# THE HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's harness racing industry is a powerhouse within the wider equine sector – known for producing world-class Standardbred horses and a community of highly skilled professionals.

From small rural towns to international racetracks, Kiwis involved in harness racing consistently punch above their weight on the global stage.

Our breeders, drivers, and trainers are sought after worldwide, with many competing – and winning – at the highest levels in Australia, North America, and beyond. What sets New Zealand apart is not just the quality of the horses, but the calibre of the people behind them. Kiwi horse people are known for their horsemanship, work ethic, and ability to produce sound, versatile, and high-performing horses.

Many of our top trainers and drivers begin their careers at the grassroots level – working in stables, driving at trials, or studying equine health – and build successful, long-term careers in the industry.

Harness racing isn't just about what happens on the track. It offers a huge scope of career pathways: from foaling down mares and prepping yearlings for sale, to equine nutrition, business management, farriery, and veterinary support.

There are opportunities in marketing, event coordination, race day operations, media, sponsorship, and equine education – not to mention career progression to international placements for those who want to travel.

Whether you're hands-on with horses, curious about science and technology, or drawn to media and events, the harness racing industry has a role for you. With the right attitude and a willingness to learn, it's an industry where success is not just possible – it's proven.



# OUR CAREERS

## WHERE CAN THE EQUINE CAREERS INDUSTRY TAKE YOU?

**AUCTIONEER** RACE COMMENTATOR **STABLEHAND**  
JUNIOR DRIVER **RACETRACK STAFF** VET  
**HARNESS DRIVER** **STABLE FORMAN**  
**TRAINER** FARRIER **EQUINE NUTRITIONIST**  
BODY WORKER RACETRACK MAINTENANCE  
**RACE STARTER** EQUINE DENTIST HORSE EDUCATOR  
BLOODSTOCK AGENT **RACE DAY PRESENTERS**  
**STALLION MANAGER** **BLOODSTOCK INSURANCE**  
HORSE TRANSPORT **CLERK OF THE COURSE**  
STARTERS ASSISTANT FOALING MANAGER  
TRACKSIDE CREW **STUD MANAGER**  
**RACE DAY STAFF** STIPENDIARY STEWARD  
STUD MANAGER YEARLING PREPARER **RACE STARTER**





# WHO IS THE HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY FOR?

If you love horses, there's a job waiting for you in the equine industry – no matter your background, skill level, or where you're starting from. The harness racing industry offers a huge variety of career paths – from hands-on work with horses to high-level business and event roles. There really is something for everyone – it's just a matter of getting involved!

If you've got any of the following qualities, you could be exactly what the industry is looking for:

- **Love of horses and animals** – You genuinely enjoy being around horses and care about their wellbeing. Whether you want to drive, train, or just be part of the daily routine, your passion will go a long way.
- **Enjoy racing and equine sports** – If the thrill of race day, the excitement of competition, or following your favourite horses and drivers gets your heart racing – you're in the right place.
- **Enjoy working outdoors and prefer gumboots over office shoes?** The harness racing industry gives you the chance to work outside, stay active, and avoid being stuck behind a desk.
- **Hard worker who likes to learn new skills** – This is a hands-on, practical industry. If you're keen to roll up your sleeves, learn on the job, and try new things – you'll go far.
- **Team player who enjoys celebrating success** – Behind every great horse is a whole team of people working together. Being reliable, positive, and happy to pitch in makes all the difference.
- **Good sense of humour** – Let's face it – not every day goes to plan. If you can laugh, adapt, and keep going, you'll fit right in.
- **Earnings** – One of the exciting parts of becoming a Junior Driver is that you can start earning while you build your skills and experience.

Junior Drivers are paid around **\$100** for each race day drive, plus a percentage of any prize money they win. Drivers receive 5% of the stake money, so the more success you have on the track, the more you can earn. To give you an idea of what's possible, the leading Junior Driver in 2025 drove 740 winners and earned over **\$1,074,000** in stakes – meaning a significant return from their 5% share.

From working with horses in the stables to roles in breeding, transport, sales, media, events, or equine health – the harness racing industry offers real jobs, real rewards, and real opportunities for anyone willing to give it a go.

# YOUR PATHWAY AND EDUCATION IN THE HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY

Love horses and thinking about a career working with them? The Harness Racing New Zealand Cadet Scheme is a hands-on way to get started in the industry.

This programme is designed for young people who want to learn by doing. You'll be working in a real harness racing stable while gaining nationally recognised qualifications along the way.

Through the Cadet Scheme, you can achieve:

- NZ Certificate in Equine Skills (Level 2)
- NZ Certificate in Equine Skills – Harness Racing Stable Assistant (Level 3)
- NZ Apprenticeship in the Equine Racing Industry – Trainer or Driver (Level 4)
- NZ Certificate in Equine Breeding/ Stud Groom (Level 3)
- New Zealand Apprenticeship in Equine Breeding (Level 4)

- To take part, you'll need to be working in a harness racing stable. You'll build your skills on the job, complete practical and written assessments, and attend regular (usually fortnightly) theory sessions.
- The Cadet Scheme has been running for over 50 years and has helped launch the careers of many successful trainers and drivers across New Zealand.
- If you're keen to turn your passion for horses into a career, this is a great place to start-earning, learning, and gaining real experience from day one.





# NO HORSE EXPERIENCE? NO PROBLEM.

**“I didn’t know anything about harness racing when I started – I just took a day off school for work experience and ended up loving it.”**

**Korbyn Newman**

A STABLEHAND, TRAINER, AND JUNIOR DRIVER

**“I had no experience in the industry when I started, but people were always willing to help if you worked hard and listened.”**

**Simon Smith**

OWNER OF HIS OWN FARRIER BUSINESS



# A CAREER THAT CAN TAKE YOU PLACES



*Bailey*

**"I love travelling around New Zealand and seeing different places through my job."**

**Bailey Anderson**

TRAVELLING FOREMAN & STABLEHAND

**"Don't be scared to try something new - you never know where it could take you."**

**Simon Smith**

OWNER OF HIS OWN FARRIER BUSINESS



*Simon*

# MORE THAN JUST DRIVING

**“The Cadet Scheme showed me there’s more than one pathway in the industry. Driving wasn’t for me, but I still found a career I love.”**

**Simon Smith**

OWNER OF HIS OWN FARRIER BUSINESS



*Crystal*

**“The more you put in, the more you get back. Winning races and seeing the horses succeed makes the hard work worth it.”**

**Crystal Hackett**

JUNIOR DRIVER & STABLEHAND

**“There’s always something new to learn. I watch race replays, read about the sport, and try to improve every day.”**

**“The Cadet Scheme helped me realise everyone is learning too. It gave me confidence and a great support network around me.”**

**Madison Kyle**

JUNIOR DRIVER & START CREW



*Madison*

# LEARNING ON THE JOB



**“You learn the most by being hands-on every day. You’re not going to know everything straight away, but if you keep at it, you improve fast.”**

**Korbyn Newman**

A STABLEHAND, TRAINER, AND JUNIOR DRIVER

**“Listen to the people around you and keep learning – that’s the best way to get better in this game.”**

**Bailey Anderson**

TRAVELLING FOREMAN & STABLEHAND

**“The industry is really welcoming and there’s always people willing to help you learn. You’re never doing it alone.”**

**“Harness racing is more of a lifestyle than a job. If it’s your passion, you’ll love getting up every day to do it.”**

**Madison Kyle**

JUNIOR DRIVER & START CREW

# A CAREER THAT CAN TAKE YOU PLACES

"I love travelling around New Zealand and seeing different places through my job."

**Bailey Anderson**

TRAVELLING FOREMAN & STABLEHAND

"Don't be scared to try something new – you never know where it could take you."

**Simon Smith**

OWNER OF HIS OWN FARRIER BUSINESS



# WHY THEY'D RECOMMEND IT



*Korbryn*

**“Have a go – it can be a really rewarding industry.”**

**Korbryn Newman**

A STABLEHAND, TRAINER, AND JUNIOR DRIVR

**“If you love what you do, getting out of bed every morning is easy.”**

**Crystal Hackett**

JUNIOR DRIVER & STABLEHAND

**“I came from a show jumping background, so moving into harness racing was a big change – but the opportunities and adrenaline of race night made me fall in love with the sport.”**

**Crystal Hackett**

JUNIOR DRIVER & STABLEHAND

**“Even if you didn’t grow up around horses, don’t be afraid to give it a go. If you’re passionate and willing to work hard, people in the industry will support you.”**

**“My goal was to have a job that never felt like work – and that’s exactly what this industry has given me.”**

**Madison Kyle**

JUNIOR DRIVER & START CREW





# YOUR FUTURE IN THE HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY COULD START HERE

“Whether you’ve grown up around horses or are completely new to the industry, harness racing offers the opportunity to learn, grow, and build a rewarding future doing something you genuinely enjoy.

You don’t need to have your whole future figured out to get started – just the willingness to learn, work hard, and give something new a go. From stablehands to trainers, drivers, farriers, media teams, and international careers, the harness racing industry offers more opportunities than most people realise.

Many young people in the industry go on to work and travel throughout Australia and internationally, building lifelong skills, friendships, and experiences along the way.

For many, harness racing becomes more than just a job – it becomes a lifestyle, a passion, and a community.”



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[harnessracingnz](https://www.instagram.com/harnessracingnz)



[education@hrnz.co.nz](mailto:education@hrnz.co.nz)



**HARNESS RACING NEW ZEALAND**

114 Wrights Road, Christchurch 8024

PO Box 459, Christchurch 8140

[www.hrnz.co.nz](http://www.hrnz.co.nz)