

Executive Summary

Upper South Island Regional Forum

Date: Tuesday, 1 July 2025 | **Time:** 7:00 PM | **Location:** Christchurch

Purpose of Meeting

The Forum was held to discuss key issues affecting regional clubs, raise concerns to HRNZ leadership, receive updates on financial and operational priorities, and contribute to national strategic planning processes.

Key Matters Discussed

- **Strategy on a page** – a presentation by HRNZ and the draft Strategic Plan 2025-2028. The strategy focuses on growth, innovation, and sustainability, aiming to increase ownership, particularly among under 40s, and improve breeding. Key initiatives include better marketing, digital content, and enhanced race day experiences. Sitting behind it, an investment in IT services. Three key planks **Growth – Innovation - Built to Last**
- **Matters raised** following the presentation:
 - People on course – how to incentivise clubs to market and promote their days better
 - Rating system changes – concern recommendations made by the working group had been dismissed.
 - Future advice must come from those with experience on the subject matter.
 - It was noted that the Strategic document would be supported by a number of operational actions that would be shared once finalised.
- **Update on code funding.**
 - HRNZ reported that the status quo would remain for another season. No new incentives/funding from Entain in the upcoming season. This in part driven by the Greyhound's exit and a potential \$40m re-homing cost.
 - TAB geo-fence – no announcement regarding the one-off \$100m multi code incentive programme/package.
 - HRNZ/ENTAIN - Andrew Vouris, is Entain's interim CEO.

- **Forbury Infrastructure Fund.**
 - Applications were double subscribed, currently under-reviewed, no decisions at this point.

General feedback

- Greater transparency required.
- Improved consultation (sense check) necessary.
- Better balance required between key stakeholders – share the workload, find solutions.

Concerns and Challenges

- Retention of volunteer network is seen a crucial and must be addressed.
- Stakeholders are conscious of the money and investment going north.
- Sunday racing - simultaneous Canterbury/Southland meetings - programming essential to avoid splitting the pool of horses.
- Thoroughbreds also racing more on Sundays with two meetings, so harness focus is being diluted from what was traditionally a harness/one thoroughbred date.
- Concern that on course staffing and equipment resources for both codes will be stretched.
- Irregular race times on a Sunday challenging, consistent 25/30-minute pattern is recommended.
- Integrity concerns tabled, why are HRNZ making decisions that should sit with the JCA.
- Tote staff and collective agreement, concern raised about double dipping relating to public holidays.

Decisions and Outcomes

- Racing matters to be discussed with HRNZ (Matt Peden)
- On course staff support address with HRNZ
- Tote staff collective agreement discussion – Kaikoura and NZ Met

References

- [HRNZ Official Website](#)
- [Race Day Performance Updates](#)