



11 September 2025

## CIRCULAR 2505

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

#### Proposed 2025 Rule and Constitution Amendments

The proposed amendments to the New Zealand Rules of Harness Racing and to the Constitution of Harness Racing New Zealand Incorporated, to be considered at the 2025 Annual General Meeting of Harness Racing New Zealand Incorporated on 11 October 2025 at Christchurch are outlined below.

The proposed amendments to the Rules will come into force as set out in the remits.

1. **Rule 105(1) Arrears** (by the NZ Standardbred Breeders' Association)

**Remit:** Amend the definition of Arrears in rule 105 to state:

***ARREARS** means any money payable by any person or body under these rules or payable to HRNZ, a Club, or Kindred Body, in connection with any of their activities or operations and which remains unpaid for more than 28 days after becoming due for payment, and includes any money specifically declared by any of these rules to be arrears.*

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

The NZ Standardbred Breeders' Association (NZSBA) seeks for Clubs and Kindred Bodies to have access to the Unpaid Forfeit List as a debt collecting tool for their commercial operations. Clubs and the NZSBA have had difficulties in collecting debts that arise from the ordinary course of their business. Neither have had the available income to pursue remedies through the courts which are inefficient and expensive. These are primarily sponsorships and advertising debts. Clubs and Kindred Bodies are members of HRNZ. The benefit of being a member could be access to this mechanism.

The required amendment is a change to the definition of ARREARS to add after the abbreviation 'HRNZ' the words "a Club, or Kindred Body" and replace the word "its" with "their".

2. **Rule 105(1) Definition of Participant** (by the Board)

**Remit:** Amend the rules by inserting in rule 105(1) the following definition of participant and delete the definition of participant in rule 1701:

**PARTICIPANT** means:

- (a) a person licensed or registered with HRNZ; and
- (b) includes (without limitation):
  - (i) a trainer, driver, stablehand, or a person working at harness training premises;
  - (ii) a breeder of standardbred horses;
  - (iii) an owner (or part-owner), leasor (or part-leasor) of a standardbred horse, or leased with the intention of entering a race;
  - (iv) any member of a syndicate;
  - (v) a person who otherwise deals with animals used for harness racing;
  - (vi) a member of a club; and
  - (vii) any other person to whom these rules apply.

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

To enable the term “participant” to be used in the rules. The term is currently used in Rule 1701 and it is proposed to use this term in other rules including the next remit, rule 117.

**3. Rule 117 Providing Information to HRNZ (by the Board)**

**Remit:** Insert after rule 116 the following heading and new rule 117, and re-number the current Rule 117 Online Applications to rule 118:

*Provision of Information to HRNZ*

- 117 (1) *In this rule, to furnish information includes to answer any question, supply any information, produce any document, and provide any explanation.*
- (2) *The chief executive may require any participant to furnish any information within their knowledge or control touching on any matter being considered by HRNZ, the Board, any Board committee, or body appointed by the Board or HRNZ under the Racing Industry Act 2020, the Constitution, or these rules.*
- (3) *No person shall be excused from answering any question, supplying any information, producing any document, or providing any explanation under sub-rule (2) on the grounds that to do so would or might incriminate or tend to incriminate that person in a breach of the rules.*
- (4) *A self-incriminating statement made orally by a person (whether or not the statement is recorded in writing) in the course of answering any question or supplying any information under sub-rule (2), may only be used in evidence against that person in a proceeding relating to a breach of the rules where the person gives evidence inconsistent with the statement or in a proceeding relating to a serious racing offence under rule 1001(1)(i) or (k).*

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

HRNZ periodically needs to obtain information from participants to carry out its functions under the Racing Industry Act 2020, the Constitution, or the rules of harness racing, as was the case during the review of the 2YO Young Guns Trot Series.

While HRNZ can request information from participants currently, there is no general power in the rules requiring participants to provide information to HRNZ when exercising its functions. These inquiries will generally be of a governance or administrative nature.

The proposed rule allows the Chief Executive to require participants to supply information to HRNZ when performing its functions.

Investigations into rule breaches remain the responsibility of the stipendiary stewards and racing investigators. This proposed rule does not alter that.

If a participant who is required to answer questions or provide information to HRNZ makes a statement that could incriminate them in a rule breach, that statement can only be used in proceedings for a breach of the rules if the person gives evidence that contradicts the statement or in a proceeding concerning a serious racing offence of refusing to supply information or supplying false or misleading information under rule 1001(1)(i) or (k).

**4. Rule 213(1)(i) Nasal Bleeding (by the Board on behalf of the RIB)**

Rule 213(1)(i) currently states:

213(1) A Stipendiary Steward at any time may scratch from a race or declare ineligible to start in a race until a specific condition is met any horse on all or any of the following grounds:-

- (i) that the horse has suffered an attack of nasal bleeding from one or both nostrils. The period the horse is ineligible to start shall be a period of 30 days following the first nasal bleed, 90 days following the second nasal bleed and for life following the third nasal bleed. The period of ineligibility may be extended following a Stipendiary Steward receiving a report from a veterinary surgeon.

**Remit:** Amend paragraph (i) to state:

- (i) *that the horse has suffered an episode of epistaxis, which is the appearance of an attack of nasal bleeding from one or both nostrils. The period the horse is ineligible to start shall be a period of 30 days following the first episode of epistaxis, 90 days following the second episode of epistaxis, and for life following the third episode of epistaxis. The period of ineligibility may be extended following a Stipendiary Steward receiving a report from a veterinary surgeon.*

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

The RIB recommends an update to the language of the rule to present-day terminology.

5. **Rule 234 Testing Participants in Safety-Sensitive Activities** (by the Board on behalf of the RIB)

**Remit:** Insert a new rule 234 that states:

*234 (1) In this rule a safety-sensitive activity includes but is not limited to:*

- (a) Driving a horse at a workout, trial, or race.*
  - (b) Handling, loading, leading, or transporting horses at a racecourse at which a workout, trial, or race is to take place.*
  - (c) Operating equipment or machinery in a workout, trial, or race environment.*
  - (d) Serving in an official capacity during a workout, trial, or race meeting.*
  - (e) Any other activity as determined by the Board, that if performed under the influence of drugs or alcohol, may pose a risk to participant or animal safety.*
- (2) A Stipendiary Steward or Racing Investigator may stop any person from being involved in a safety-sensitive activity who they have reasonable grounds to believe is impaired by alcohol or drugs.*
- (3) Any person who is carrying out, or is about to carry out, a safety-sensitive activity may be required to provide a sample for a drug test, alcohol test, or both as directed by a Stipendiary Steward or Racing Investigator.*
- (4) A refusal to undergo a drug or alcohol test or supply a sample when required under this rule, or any attempt to obstruct the process, shall be deemed a breach of these rules and in addition to any other penalty that may be imposed under the rules:*
- (a) in the case of a driver must be immediately suspended pending further investigation or disciplinary action; and*
  - (b) in the case of a person other than a driver may result in immediate suspension pending further investigation or disciplinary action.*
- (5) The Board may make Safety-Sensitive Activities Regulations that may include (without limitation) procedures for taking samples, testing procedures, testing devices, and thresholds for alcohol and drugs below which there is no breach of the rules.*

This remit comes into force on a date approved by the Board.

**Reason**

Current rules do not explicitly authorise drug and alcohol testing for persons performing safety-sensitive activities. This contrasts with practices in other racing authorities.

Driving, handling horses, operating equipment, and carrying out official duties may involve significant safety risks. Any impairment due to drugs or alcohol increases the likelihood of injury to both people and horses.

Amending the rules to explicitly permit such testing aligns it with established safety and integrity standards adopted across other racing codes in New Zealand and internationally.

Formalising this authority ensures due process and provides clarity for licence holders.

**6. Rule 306 Person in Charge (by the Board on behalf of the RIB)**

**Remit:** Amend rule 306 to state:

*A trainer of a horse entered to start in a race who is not present at the race meeting with the horse must notify the Secretary of the Club conducting the race-meeting, or in the Secretary's absence the Stipendiary Steward, at least one hour prior to the first race of that meeting the licensed person who shall be in control of the horse and present at the race-meeting. Nothing in this rule shall affect any other rule so far as it relates to a person in apparent control of a horse.*

This remit comes into force on 1 December 2025.

**Reason**

This remit requires the person who will be in control of the horse in person at the race meeting, in the absence of the trainer, to be a licenced person. This remit is to ensure that the individual responsible for the horse meets the standards required to fulfil the obligations placed upon a trainer at the race meeting.

**7. Rule 502 Enhanced Traceability (by the Board on behalf of the RIB)**

**Remit:** Amend rule 502 by amending sub-rule (1) to state and inserting a new sub-rule (1A) as follows, and re-number the current rule 502(1A) to rule 502(1B):

*502 (1) A trainer shall notify HRNZ that they are the trainer of a horse within 72 hours after that horse has come into their care or control by notification to HRNZ, either electronically or sending a Trainer Notification Form. The notification shall include:*

- (a) the horse's name;*
- (b) its breeding;*
- (c) its age, colour, and sex;*
- (d) the owner's names;*
- (e) the trainer's name and address;*
- (f) whether horse is to race in owner's or trainer's colours; and*
- (g) the horse's freeze brand and microchip number (if applicable).*

*(1A) If HRNZ has not been notified, either electronically or by sending a Trainer Notification Form within the required 72 hour period, the horse may be declared ineligible to start in a race.*

This remit comes into force on 1 December 2025.

**Reason**

The remit is to enhance the traceability of horses. However, there are different times for notification in the rules and in the regulations relating to notification of a horse moving location. This remit and the amendments to the Horse Care Regulations require notification to HRNZ within 72 hours of a horse moving location.

8. **Rule 859(3) Horse Starting from Incorrect Position** (by the Board on behalf of the RIB)

**Remit:** Amend rule 859(3) to state:

(3) *In addition to any other penalty that may be imposed under these rules, a horse shall be disqualified and deemed to be scratched from a race if it:*

(a) *Starts in advance of its mark.*

(b) *Starts from an incorrect barrier position and gains an advantage.*

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

The proposed amendment addresses the situation where a horse starts from the incorrect position but not in advance, gains an advantage, and is subsequently disqualified. In such cases the horse would be treated as a late scratching for betting purposes, ensuring that bettors are refunded under the same situation as horses starting in advance of the correct mark or barrier position.

9. **Rule 865(1) Notifiable Gear** (by the Board)

**Remit:** Amend rule 865(1) to state:

(1) *The trainer or person in control of a horse shall notify any notifiable gear, devices, or appliances a horse may race in or with in a betting race. This notification must be completed in accordance with the timeframes and procedures outlined in the Approved Gear Regulations.*

The remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

The proposed amendment clarifies the notification of gear to be within the defined timeframes.

10. **Rule 1001B Offensive Communications** (by the Board)

**Remit:** Insert a new rule 1001B that states:

1001B (1) *In this rule:  
**offensive communication** includes:*

(a) *any comment, statement, written material (including in electronic form or social media message), image, or media file on any medium available to the general public or a section of the general public (including electronic or social media forums, whether available to the general public or only to members of the forum), that could reasonably be considered:*

(i) *harassing, offensive, abusive, or insulting to a recipient; or*

(ii) *harmful to the reputation of harness racing in New Zealand.*

- (b) *Any comment, statement, written material (including in electronic form or social media message), image, or media file that could reasonably be considered harassing, offensive, abusive, or insulting:*
  - (i) *sent to, given to, or left for a recipient; or*
  - (ii) *sent, given, or left where it is likely it will be found by, given to, or brought to the attention of a recipient.*
- (c) *To avoid doubt a communication is not considered an offensive communication if:*
  - (i) *sub-rule (1)(a) or (b) do not apply and it was intended to be private; or*
  - (ii) *it was made in good faith and without intent to harass, offend, abuse, or insult a recipient.*

**recipient means:**

- (a) *Any participant.*
  - (b) *HRNZ, any HRNZ Board member, or any person employed or engaged by HRNZ.*
  - (c) *A club, any committee or Board member of any club, or any person employed or engaged by a club.*
  - (d) *The Racing Integrity Board, or any person employed or engaged by the Racing Integrity Board.*
  - (e) *TAB NZ or any person employed or engaged by TAB NZ.*
- (2) *A person commits a breach of the rules who makes, publishes, or engages in an offensive communication.*
  - (3) *An offensive communication may arise from a single act or a pattern of behaviour directed against a recipient on at least two separate occasions within a period of 12 months.*
  - (4) *To avoid any doubt the acts required for the purposes of sub-rule (3) may be the same type of act on each separate occasion, or different types of acts.*
  - (5) *A breach of sub-rule (2) is declared to be a serious racing offence.*
  - (6) *In any proceeding for a breach of sub-rule (2) a person's name, part name, or their pseudonym shall be sufficient evidence of that person's identity provided that this sub-rule does not prevent that person establishing that the name, part name, or pseudonym is a different person.*

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

This remit is required to protect the integrity, safety, and reputation of New Zealand's harness racing industry by clearly addressing offensive communications, including those made online or in private. It ensures accountability, closes gaps in existing rules, and aligns HRNZ with modern governance and wellbeing standards.

**11. Rule 1004H Bisphosphonates (by the Board on behalf of the RIB)**

**Remit:** Amend rule 1004H to state:

- (1) *In these rules bisphosphonate means a bisphosphonate other than a radiolabelled bisphosphonate which is approved for use in diagnostic nuclear imaging in a horse and was administered for the purpose of diagnostic imaging only.*
- (2) *A horse under the age of four years must not be administered any bisphosphonate.*
- (3) *A horse must not be administered bisphosphonate (including radiolabelled bisphosphonate) in the period 30 clear days prior to racing.*
- (4) *A trainer and the person in charge of the horse at the time of the administration prohibited by sub-rule (2) or (3) commits a serious racing offence.*
- (5) *A horse that races having had administered to it bisphosphonate in contravention of sub-rule (2) or (3) must be disqualified from the race and rule 1004E shall apply with any necessary modification.*

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

This remit updates the rules in relation to the use of bisphosphonates and permits the use of bisphosphonate approved for use in diagnostic nuclear imaging.

**12. Rule 1106(2) Determination of Proceeding (by the Board on behalf of the RIB)**

**Remit:** Amend rule 1106(2) to state:

- (2) *A Stipendiary Steward may file an information in respect of a race on the grounds that:
  - (a) any of the horses started off wrong handicaps;
  - (b) the race was run over the wrong distance; or
  - (c) the race was started before the appointed time.On determining the proceeding under this sub-rule the Adjudicative Committee may declare the race to be void and may direct that it be run again. Any decision of the Adjudicative Committee under this sub-rule is declared to be final.*

This remit comes into force on 1 November 2025.

**Reason**

To remove duplicated wording.

**13. Clause 2(2) of the Second Schedule of the Constitution of HRNZ and clause 2.2 of the Third Schedule of the Rules of Harness Racing (Voting) (by the Central Otago Trotting Club)**

**Remit:** Amend clause 2(2) of the Second Schedule of the Constitution of HRNZ and clause 2.2 of the Third Schedule of the Rules of Harness Racing to state (together with any consequential amendment to the table):

- (2) *after the first three such betting licences issued in the preceding racing year, and one vote for each of the next three betting licences issued up to a maximum of 10 votes as provided in the table set out below.*

This remit comes into force on the date of registration under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022.

**Reason provided Central Otago Trotting Club**

With significant increases in betting licenses issued in recent years to our largest clubs, a significant increase in voting power has also been given to many of those clubs.

The Central Otago Trotting Club note a requirement was added at last year's conference that any remit in the future not only requires a minimum of 2/3 of the votes, but must also have the support of 1/3 of the members. This was an attempt to ensure that any voting wasn't becoming distorted by a minority of clubs receiving boosted voting power.

The Central Otago Trotting Club's concern is that the current 16 vote maximum gives too much power to the largest clubs, and needs to be reduced to a maximum of 10 votes.

There are 2 aspects to our current voting system, where clubs can either vote for any remit, or against it. The later, is our club's greatest concern. The current 16 vote maximum requires a minimum of 14 members out of 40 to achieve the 2/3 of the total votes available to pass any remit. That is 35% of members so ticks the 1/3 members support also needed to pass the remit.

However, at 16 votes as few as 4 clubs can get enough votes to fail any remit by voting against it - so 10%. That means 36 out of 40 members can vote for a remit, and it can still fail. We mean no disrespect to our largest clubs, but we believe this is too much power in too few clubs' hands.

By reducing the maximum vote from 16 to 10 would require just one more club than under the 16 maximum, to achieve the 2/3 minimum votes needed to pass a remit - that would become 15 members out of 40. But it raises the number of clubs needed to fail any remit from 4 to a minimum of 6 out of 40. That is the greatest reason behind why we are putting this proposal forward.

This remit is intended to encourage greater support either for, or against any decisions requiring voting using the Second Schedule of the Constitution, and/or the Third Schedule of the Rules.



## Correspondence Items

### 1. **Voting** **by Central Otago Trotting Club**

The Central Otago Trotting Club has submitted a correspondence item in addition to their remit. It is intended that the correspondence item will be kept if the remit does not pass.

#### **Additional Voting requirements**

At last year's Conference, a requirement was passed that if any remit voted on using the Second Schedule of the Constitution, or the Third Schedule of the rules gained the minimum 2/3 requirement of the votes cast to pass, it now also needs the support of a minimum of 1/3 of the members before it can succeed.

However there was no minimum requirement placed on the number of clubs needed to support the blocking of any remit. As it stands, the only requirement is for more than 1/3 of the votes be cast against any remit and it will fail.

For the purposes of discussion, and consistency within how the voting rules are applied, the Central Otago Trotting Club believe that if our rules require a minimum number of clubs must also vote for any remit as well as the necessary 2/3 of votes, then the same system must apply to the failing of a remit.

Our suggestion is that if 2/3 of the votes must also be supported by 1/3 of the members to pass any remit, then based on proportionality if more than 1/3 of the votes are cast against any remit then it must also have the support of at least 1/6 of the members before it can fail.

The Central Otago Trotting Club put up very similar points as a Correspondence item last year. Representatives "supported HRNZ progressing this matter further " and it was carried. This did not happen so we have resubmitted it as a correspondence item this year.