

Project Stamina Frequently Asked Questions

New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR) and Harness Racing New Zealand (HRNZ) have compiled a list of frequently asked questions to provide further information and clarity about Project Stamina.

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1. What is the purpose of Project Stamina?

Project Stamina is about creating a racing and training venue network that is fit for the future.

Over many years, New Zealand's racing footprint has evolved while participant numbers, horse populations and industry economics have changed. The current network has more venues than can be sustainably supported, resulting in capital and operating expenditure being spread too thinly across the country.

The recommendations are intended to better align racing and training infrastructure with where horses, participants and wagering demand are now concentrated, enabling the industry to invest in fewer, higher-quality facilities that can support long-term growth.

This process has been purposely driven by an independent review of the entire venue landscape by RCP and funded by TAB NZ on behalf of the codes.

2. Who is RCP and what has been their role in Project Stamina?

RCP is a multidisciplinary consultancy firm who are the leading provider of independent project management and strategic advisory services to New Zealand's property and construction industries. They are 100% New Zealand-owned.

RCP's role in Project Stamina has been to provide an independent assessment and diagnosis of both the Thoroughbred and Harness codes' venue network resulting in the delivery of a purposeful recommendation for the future of that network to both codes.

The Terms of Reference required RCP to consolidate previous reports, venue assessments and strategic reviews, engage with industry stakeholders, and work alongside representatives from NZTR, HRNZ and TAB NZ throughout the project. They also had access to a decade of industry reports and data to inform their recommendations

That independent recommendation has been delivered in the "National Masterplan" document.

3. What has been the high-level process undertaken for Project Stamina?

RCP engaged with a broad cross-section of the industry, including thoroughbred and harness racing clubs, recognised industry organisations and participant groups.

The stakeholder list includes metropolitan, provincial and community clubs from across New Zealand, as well as industry organisations including:

- Racing Integrity Board
- NZ Thoroughbred Breeders' Association
- NZ Trainers Association
- NZ Thoroughbred Racehorse Owners Federation
- NZ Jockeys Association
- NZ Harness Racing Trainers & Drivers Association

A full list of organisations engaged is included in Appendix B of the report.

Post the independent report being delivered in the form of The National Masterplan, RCP chaired multiple sessions with representatives, including board members and executive staff, from NZTR and HRNZ, to achieve a granular, detailed review of all the Masterplan's recommendations and the resulting One Equine View response.

TAB NZ's role in the One Equine View process was to obtain an overview as opposed to being a source for any code specific recommendations.

4. What are the guiding principles of Project Stamina?

Project Stamina is guided by five key principles that are designed to create a sustainable, future-focused racing and training venue network:

- Demand is geography – Align venues with where horses, participants and demand are today.
- Full fields fill tills – Focus on field sizes and race quality to strengthen wagering performance.
- Community runs on passion, not profits – Support community venues that meet industry standards and are cost-neutral.
- No pipeline, no sport – Invest in training infrastructure to support future horse and participant numbers.
- Earn your place or free up the capital – Direct investment to venues that deliver the greatest long-term benefit for the industry, while recycling capital from venues that no longer play a strategic role.

5. How does the model RCP used work?

The analytical backbone providing the scenarios from which the masterplan is derived is a technique called P-Median optimisation – this is explained in part on Page 52 of The Masterplan document, and then in full on Pages 108-110.

In plain language: the masterplan recommends the optimised network of venues where the horses are, where the people are, and where the calendar works at the field sizes that support wagering revenue. The maths makes sure all three conditions are true at the same time.

6. What is the One Equine View and why does it differ from the Masterplan recommendations?

The One Equine View is a shared position by both NZTR and HRNZ, setting out where the codes align with the Masterplan, where they differ, and the actions they consider to be most material now and into the future.

The One Equine View does endorse, with clarifications, the Masterplan's guiding principles.

It is the combination of future meeting volume requirements, already planned investment priorities, and a dual code lens that drive the specific venue code response changes from the Masterplan's recommendations.

7. If a venue is recommended to exit does the club have a chance to give feedback or is the decision made? If so, what is the process?

Project Stamina sets out the codes' current view of a nationwide venue masterplan and the preferred future direction for the racing venue network. It does not, of itself, constitute a final statutory determination that any individual venue is surplus.

Clubs with venues identified for potential exit will be consulted as implementation planning progresses. Meetings will be arranged with affected clubs and stakeholder groups to explain the recommendation, consider local circumstances, and work through possible transition pathways and timing.

Implementation will also be supported by ongoing engagement with clubs, participants and stakeholders, together with robust business cases for any major investment or divestment decision.

Any decision under the Racing Industry Act 2020 as to whether a particular venue is surplus will be made separately, at the appropriate time and in accordance with the statutory process and natural justice. The affected club will be given a genuine opportunity to respond to the masterplan recommendation, provide relevant information, and be heard before any statutory decision is made.

8. How will capital reinvestment work? How will investment priorities be decided?

The Masterplan recommends that capital released from exited venues be reinvested into the venues and infrastructure that deliver the greatest long-term benefit for the industry.

The recommended priorities are:

1. Training centres to support the future supply of horses and trainers.
2. Metropolitan venues that drive the industry's wagering performance.
3. Priority provincial venues that strengthen regional racing networks.

Investment decisions will be guided by business cases, asset condition assessments, industry priorities and the availability of funding, rather than being made on a first-come, first-served basis.

9. Apart from specific venue decisions, what would the codes want to see as long term success connected to the outcomes of Project Stamina?

Success won't be measured simply by the number of venues that remain. Instead, it will be assessed by whether the industry becomes stronger, more sustainable and better positioned for future growth.

Measures of success will include:

- Improved quality and utilisation of racing and training infrastructure
- Stronger wagering and commercial performance
- Healthy horse and participant numbers
- Sustainable investment in priority venues
- The ability to deliver a high-quality racing programme across New Zealand
- Improved financial performance and reduced long-term infrastructure costs.

10. Is this the final long term venue plan or will it continue to be assessed and reviewed?

Project Stamina provides a long-term strategic direction, but it is not a static document. Implementation will be regularly reviewed to measure progress, assess outcomes and ensure the strategy continues to reflect changes in industry participation, horse numbers, infrastructure needs and financial conditions. This will enable the codes to adapt the implementation programme over time while remaining focused on the long-term objectives of the plan.

11. How many venues are recommended to no longer hold race meetings?

The One Equine View recommends retaining 39 venues and holding a further five pending business cases. Nineteen venues would leave the network entirely:

Seven current racing venues would no longer hold race meetings:

- Rotorua and Trentham (thoroughbred)
- Manawatū and Wyndham (harness)
- Gore, Hāwera and Ōamaru (dual-code)

Twelve are non-racing venues.

Three of the retained venues - Ōtaki, Tauherenikau and Wingatui - would stop hosting harness racing but continue to host thoroughbred meetings.

12. Has natural hazard exposure been considered in Project Stamina?

Yes. Natural hazard exposure is an important consideration, but it is not a primary driver of the Project Stamina Masterplan.

The masterplan focuses on creating a sustainable national venue network based on factors such as horse populations, participant locations, field sizes and commercial sustainability.

Natural hazard exposure will be assessed as part of future business cases for capital investment, alongside factors such as purpose, cost, mitigation options and insurance implications. This ensures investment decisions are informed by site-specific assessments rather than broad assumptions at the masterplan stage.

13. In reference to the minimum standards that community venues are required to meet, what are these?

The minimum standards framework has not yet been developed and is identified as a priority action in Section 5 of the report. NZTR and HRNZ will work together to establish clear, consistent standards for community venues as part of the implementation phase. These standards will help ensure community venues continue to provide safe, fit-for-purpose facilities that support horses, participants and racing while remaining financially sustainable.