



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **NZTR MAKES IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE HANDICAPPING POLICY**

New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR) has today announced a number of important changes to the Handicapping Policy.

The minimum top weight for most handicap races in New Zealand is to rise by 1kg, to 60kg.

The change, which will take effect from December 1, will apply to all handicap flat races below Group 2 level. There will be no changes to the minimum weights.

NZTR is also amending the balloting conditions for weight-for-age and set-weight & penalty open age black type races.

The changes follow a meeting of the Handicapping Review Panel, comprising representatives of the New Zealand Trainers' Association (NZTA), racing clubs, NZTR and independent handicap liaison officers, and have been endorsed by the NZTA.

It was felt that the current spread of weights had made it difficult for the horses near the bottom of the weights to be competitive. "We expect that increasing the weight spread to at least 6kg will make those horses more competitive," said Matthew Hall, the General Manager of Racing for NZTR. "This will also aid the progression through the grades, particularly in rating 65 and rating 75 bands."

The decision to increase the minimum top weight follows similar moves in Australia. Victoria has had a minimum top weight of 60kg since 2012 and Racing NSW recently announced a 2kg increase in the minimum top weight, to 61kg.

The balloting conditions for weight-for-age and set-weight black type races will give preference to horses who have won or been placed at black type level in the preceding 18 months.

First preference will be given to Group I winners, with second preference going to Group II winners and Group-I placegetters, followed by Group II placegetters and Group III and Listed race winners, with some exceptions for two-year-old races.

Under the previous criteria, horses who had been Group One-placed could be further down the order than Listed winners and early season four-year-olds could also be disadvantaged if their three-year-old racing had been largely against their own age group.

The Handicapping Review Panel also recommended a 1kg adjustment to the two-year-old allowance for maiden races for two-year-olds and up, which will become more common in the South Island. The two-year-olds will now carry 3kg less than three-year-olds, compared to 2kg previously.

NZTR and the Handicapping Review Panel have also endorsed a recommendation from New Zealand Jumps Inc to increase the maximum top weight for all Prestige Jumping Races to 72kg, allowing for a 7kg spread, though there would be no requirement for the top-weighted horse to have 72kg. There is no minimum top weight in jumping races in New Zealand.

All the changes will apply from December 1, and are explained in more detail at [HERE](#)

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