



MEDIA RELEASE

New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing undertakes review of Ellerslie jumps races

New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing is conducting a full review of the jumping races at Ellerslie at Queen's Birthday weekend. The review is being undertaken in conjunction with the Auckland Racing Club, the Racing Integrity Unit and New Zealand Jumps Inc.

This follows the fatal injuries suffered by three horses who fell in jumping races at Ellerslie on Monday.

"Any horse fatality is a tragedy, however, to have three incidents in one day, as we did at Ellerslie on Monday was most unusual," the NZTR General Manager for Racing, Matthew Hall said.

"We are looking at all safety aspects in jumping races, both at Ellerslie and on a national basis.

"Just two horses had been fatally injured in jumping races at Ellerslie in the previous six years and the deaths on Monday were the first in a jumping race there since August 2013.

"We have done a considerable amount of work to minimise potential injuries in jumping races – including an annual audit of every jumps venue - and the statistics would indicate that this is working.

"Three horses, from 881 runners (0.34 percent), suffered fatal injuries in jumping races in New Zealand last year and two horses, from 907 runners, (0.22 percent) were fatally injured in 2014.

"There is always an element of risk, to both horse and rider, in all equestrian sports but NZTR is committed to doing everything we can to mitigate those risks," Hall said.

Animal welfare is a significant part of NZTR's operations and during 2015 NZTR set up a project with Waikato University to build a detailed equine injury database on raceday incidents. This includes more detailed incident forms, completed by on-course vets, aimed at identifying the frequency, type and outcome of racing injuries.

NZTR also invested more than \$1 million in racing and training infrastructure improvements in the past financial year, to maximise equine safety and welfare, and works closely with the RNZSPCA and the NZ Equine Health Association. NZTR also supports horse welfare studies through the NZ Equine Research Foundation and the Massey University Partnership for Excellence.

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