

# Messara leaves NSW in excellent position

**JOHN MESSARA HAS NOTIFIED THE BOARD OF RACING NSW OF HIS INTENTION TO STEP DOWN FROM THE CHAIRMANSHIP AT THE END OF 2016 – IT BRINGS AN END TO ONE OF AUSTRALIAN RACING'S FINEST ADMINISTRATIVE TERMS** COMPILED: MARK BRASSEL

**F**ew will ever leave a legacy on a sport in a relatively short five-year term that rivals Mr John Messara AM.

In his handful of years as Chairman of Racing NSW, John has taken racing in NSW to heights that only he could envision.

Mr Messara is well-known in the breeding arena but in the past five years his passion for each and every facet of the racehorse has shone through.

When he commenced at Racing NSW in December 2011, he was widely criticised as having conflicts of interests most notably as a 'breeding baron'.

But fast forward to November 2016 and his achievements to have NSW racing free-rolling and way out in front of other States in terms of prizemoney, integrity and as a destination event, speak for themselves.

Mr Messara leaves NSW in a prosperous long-term position with many of the 2011 naysayers against his appointment now deafeningly quiet.

One of his 'babies' is The Championships that is now into its fourth year, with the concept placing NSW racing onto the world stage.

"It's been a privilege to serve the racing industry in such an outstanding team including the Board and the executive of Racing NSW. All of our original objectives have been achieved during my five years," said Mr Messara.

"I wish to give special thanks to the Chief Executive, Peter V'landys [AM] who has been a tower of strength during what has been an often challenging scenario.

"I also wish to thank the Deputy Premier and Minister for Racing, The Hon Troy Grant MP and his predecessor



*Departing Racing NSW Chairman,  
Mr John Messara AM*

The Hon George Souris for their guidance and support during my term in office," Mr Messara added.

**Speaking on behalf of the Board, the Deputy Chairman, Russell Balding [AO] acknowledged the significant contribution that Mr Messara has made to the thoroughbred racing industry in NSW and Australia over his five-year chairmanship.**

"John is the longest serving Chairman of Racing NSW and is an icon in the Australian Thoroughbred Racing

Industry; he will be greatly missed," Mr Balding said.

"Under his leadership the NSW Thoroughbred Racing Industry has regained its mantle as the leading jurisdiction in the Southern hemisphere. Annual prizemoney has all but doubled from \$118 million to \$203 million during his term with particular focus on Country and Provincial racing.

"Importantly, NSW now has a flagship carnival in The Championships.

"In addition to driving substantial commercial growth and financial sustainability in the NSW racing industry, John also deserves recognition for the measures introduced to secure the integrity of the sport, including the establishment of the Investigation and Surveillance Unit, the establishment of a world class forensic laboratory and the licensing of veterinarians, just to name a few of his initiatives."

Racing NSW Chief Executive, Peter V'landys, said: "This is a very sad day for the NSW Thoroughbred Racing Industry. People won't realise or fully appreciate the magnitude of John's enormous contribution.

"John has been an inspirational leader with his drive, passion and commitment to the sport without peer with the achievements above speaking for themselves.

"On a personal note, John's mentoring and guidance has been invaluable to me and I have learnt a considerable amount under his chairmanship. John was also extremely popular with all the staff at Racing NSW and his loyalty to all of us is immeasurable," Mr V'landys added. **RNSW**

# MESSARA'S REPORT CARD

## Chairman, Racing NSW

(Dec 2011-Dec 2016)

## Chairman, Racing Australia

(Jan 2014-Dec 2016)

- NSW Prizemoney increased from \$118 million to a sustainable \$203m per annum
- Creation of The Championships, a destination event to reinvigorate Sydney Autumn Carnival, with \$10m prizemoney on each of the two days
- Significant enhancements to integrity and governance
- Substantial investment in industry modernisation and infrastructure projects
- Establishment of the Racing NSW Investigation and Surveillance Unit
- Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with Australian Crime Commission to allow for information sharing
- \$4m re-fit of Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory, significantly enhancing the identification and detection of new drugs
- Establishment of an Equine Biological Passport as a proactive measure to detect future performance enhancing drugs and gene doping
- Introduction of the licensing of veterinarians under Rules of Racing
- High court dismissal of race fields litigation appeal. Race fields fees increased on premium race meetings and derivative bets
- Successful negotiation with NSW Government for wagering tax parity with Victoria, resulting in a graduated increase in industry revenue of \$66m per annum by 2021
- Negotiation of agreement with NSW race clubs in respect to media rights arbitration following the cessation of TVN operations, allowing negotiation of several agreements with SKY Channel on behalf of all race clubs to secure tens of millions of dollars in additional annual industry funding
- Sale of NSW Racing's digital broadcast rights on exclusive terms worth tens of millions of dollars to the NSW industry
- Cost effective industry management: Racing NSW operates at 38% of the cost of Victoria despite running approx. 20% more race meetings
- Significant increases in prizemoney – minimum Country prizemoney per race has increased 100%, minimum Provincial prizemoney per race has increased 50% and minimum Metropolitan prizemoney has increased 43% per race on a Saturday and 28% per race midweek
- Broadening the distribution of prizemoney to pay back to 10th and include licensed stablehands, the

- lowest paid workers in racing, with an allocation of 1.5% of prizemoney
- Country & Provincial Championships, totalling \$2.65m in stakes
- Highway races on non-Carnival ATC Saturday meetings of \$60K prizemoney
- Forty Country Showcase meetings annually with \$30K per race and 30 featuring a \$40K Country restricted maiden race
- Introduction of 'The Racing NSW and Corrective Services NSW Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Program' responsible for rehoming almost 300 horses to date
- Establishment of Horse Welfare Fund financed by 1% levy on prizemoney paid in NSW (approx. \$2m per annum). Fund provides resources for care, retraining and eventual re-homing of all NSW thoroughbred horses
- Introduction of traceability measures to ensure location and ownership of all thoroughbreds are known
- Increased restrictions on the use of the whip introduced
- Jockey's Benefit Scheme introduced to provide financial assistance and other forms of support to NSW and ACT jockeys in need or preparing for a new career
- Regeneration of the Racing NSW Workers Compensation Fund. Fund inherited from Australian Jockey Club with a \$9.2m deficit, and now has a surplus of \$0.6m
- New improved jockey helmets being introduced
- Investment of over \$250m in Racing NSW managed capital infrastructure projects across 23 NSW racetracks
- Investment in six Outside Broadcast vans fitted with the latest HD technology for on-course broadcast and

delivery of broadcast production to SKY Racing and stewards

- Introduction of HawkEye ORS technology for stewards to view races from multiple angles
- Implementation of a new governance structure with a minimum quota of independent directors for Country and Provincial race clubs receiving capital funding
- Upgrade of Racing NSW website, introduction of video form and immediate race replays
- Installation of a sectional time tracking system (Longines Positioning System) at Randwick and Rosehill. Portable version for use at NSW Country and Provincial tracks has been developed
- Strategy developed for the exploitation of the tracking system including broadcast graphics, database of raw tracking system data and mobile application
- Purchase of Australian Stud Book by Racing Information Services Australia
- Merger of the Australian Racing Board, Racing Information Services Australia and the Australian Stud Book to create Racing Australia
- New track ratings scale introduced
- Successful lobbying of the Federal Government to introduce legislation to counter the threat of illegal Asian Bookmakers
- Conclusion of Federal and High Court appeals in the Artificial Insemination case
- Successful review and initiation of ASIC's Syndication Class Order to encourage industry investment through larger ownership groups (from 20 to 50) and increased maximum investment per horse (from \$250K to \$500K)



John Messara at his beloved Arrowfield Stud with a statue of Redoute's Choice