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Media Release

Significant Date Change for Iconic Dominion Trot

Embargoed until 6pm, Friday 9 August 2024

Harness racing's biggest day just got bigger.

The country's most prestigious trotting race, the Renwick Farms Dominion will move from its traditional Show Day position to being part of a bumper IRT New Zealand Trotting Cup Day at Addington on Tuesday, November 12.

"IRT New Zealand Trotting Cup Day is the pinnacle day in our sport and what better way to spice it up than having our biggest races for both the trotters and pacers battling it out over 3200 metres on the same programme," says Harness Racing New Zealand Chief Executive Officer Brad Steele.

"I think it's a change that will have a lot of people pretty excited."

The decision to move the Dominion from the Friday to the Tuesday of Cup Week comes after weeks of discussion between HRNZ and the New Zealand Metropolitan Trotting Club (NZMTC) and input from a number of other industry leaders and stakeholders.

"There was a general consensus that Cup Week would benefit from a freshen up," says NZMTC Chair John Hartnell, "and to have the IRT New Zealand Cup, the Renwick Farms Dominion and four other Group 1s on the same day, will propel Cup Day to a new level."

The Dominion, which dates back to 1911, is the country's most prestigious trotting race and has been won by the best square-gaiters to ever race in this country. The great Lyell Creek won the race three times while Sundees Son's record-breaking victory in 2021 was in a scarcely believable 3:56.6.

The change will have a big impact on what will be a super-charged Show Day on Friday, November 15.

The meeting will start later than usual with the twilight programme now featuring the Airpark Canterbury New Zealand Pacing Free For All, Livamol New Zealand Trotting Free For All and the brand new two \$500,000 Slot Races for the 3YO Trotters and Pacers.

"It's clear that Show Day needed a refresh," says Steele, "and we feel like these innovations will really bring it to life and give the Show Day Twilight a real point of difference."

"With the new Slot Races we didn't want the Dominion being overshadowed on Show Day Twilight so this works on two levels," says Hartnell, "the Dominion gets to shine on our biggest day and then we can really champion the Slot Races and have them front and centre on Show Day Twilight along with other features like the Trotting Free For All and the 2YO Sires Stakes Final."

"We are determined to grow both days," says Steele, "both in terms of crowd numbers and with wagering. These are the two biggest days of the year and we will be going all out to make both big successes."

The decision to have both races on IRT New Zealand Trotting Cup Day has been supported by the day's biggest sponsor. 'We have seen firsthand the excitement, enjoyment, and exhilaration that everyone gets out of the IRT New Zealand Trotting Cup, whether that be connections of runners in the race, race goers or those that tune in via Trackside. It is exciting to think that we will now have two of the most iconic races in New Zealand Harness Racing being run on the same day.' said IRT's Managing Director Richard Cole

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