

FROM THE WELLINGTON RACING CLUB COMMITTEE

MARCH UPDATE

THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2026

DEAR MEMBERS

As we move through March, attention now turns to the Group 2 Taylor Property Plus Wellington Guineas meeting on Saturday 21 March and our upcoming Special General Meeting and first Members' Forum on Wednesday 25 March 2026.

Hot on the heels of these two events is a dual Group One meeting on Saturday 28 March to bring the season's feature programme to an exciting close.

This meeting which features the Gr 1 Listen Live on sportnation.nz NZ Thoroughbred Breeders Stakes and the Gr1 Courtesy Ford Manawatu Sires Produce Stakes, and some great supporting races will provide a fitting finale before the track undergoes its annual revitalisation programme ahead of the winter period. Racing will then return to Trentham on June 6 when we welcome the jumpers!

The 28 March meeting carries added significance due to the well-publicised challenges with the Awapuni track, and we are pleased that Trentham has been able to step into the breach and provide a suitable venue for top-level racing. It is an opportunity for our Club to demonstrate our support of the wider New Zealand racing industry, while showcasing Trentham remains a venue capable of hosting racing at the highest level.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of the Wellington Racing Club. Your engagement, whether attending racedays, bringing guests, or providing feedback, plays an important role in the future of racing at Trentham.



CUDDLE STAKES RACEDAY – SUNDAY 1 MARCH

Our Group 3 Rydges Wellington Cuddle Stakes meeting on Sunday 1 March marked the return of racing to Trentham following our February break.

The meeting attracted strong fields across the programme and continued the momentum built during our summer racing period. It was pleasing to see members and racegoers on course, and we thank everyone who attended and contributed to an enjoyable raceday atmosphere.



UPCOMING FEATURE MEETINGS

Two important racedays remain on the Trentham calendar this month:

Saturday 21 March

- Group 2 Taylor Property Plus Wellington Guineas

Saturday 28 March

- Group 1 Listen Live on sportnation.nz NZ Thoroughbred Breeders' Stakes
- Group 1 Courtesy Ford Manawatu Sires Produce Stakes

We encourage members to attend, bring guests, and enjoy the day before the track begins its annual maintenance programme.



SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING & MEMBERS' FORUM

Wednesday 25 March – 4:00pm, Trentham,
Racecourse Road Cafe & Bar

Members will have received a separate email regarding the Special General Meeting (SGM).

The meeting has been called to consider and adopt the new WRC Incorporated Constitution, which is required to ensure the Club complies with the Incorporated Societies Act 2022.

The SGM will be held at 4:00pm and will be followed by our first Members' Forum.

The forum will provide an opportunity for members to hear directly from the Committee, ask questions, and discuss the Club's priorities and future direction in an open and constructive setting.

To assist with catering arrangements, please RSVP to Michelle Donohue if you intend to attend.

If you do not plan to attend but wish to be formally recorded as an apology for the Special General Meeting, please also advise Michelle when responding.

We encourage members to attend and take part in this opportunity for discussion and engagement.

INTRODUCING – WRC PRESIDENT SIMON BARBER

Newly elected president, Simon Barber has been a member of the WRC since 2003.

Simon is married to Belinda, who takes a keen interest in Fashion in the Field, and the couple have four adult children.

The owner of Jennian Homes Wellington Ltd, building homes in the greater Wellington area (and a regular sponsor at Trentham, Simon is also a previous New Zealand President of the Registered Master Builders Association).



His earliest racing memories, like many from the local region, are of visiting Tauherenikau and collecting and cashing in empty glass bottles. The attraction to racing was generational with his grandfather serving as treasurer at the Rotorua Racing Club, prior to being made a life member of the club.

Currently Simon owns shares in multiple horses across the racing and breeding spectrum – a broodmare based at Wentwood Grange; a jumper with Kevin Myers; and yearlings, two and three-year-olds with CD trainer John Benner.

Supported by an enthusiastic committee, Simon has the commitment and energy to take Trentham and the Wellington Racing Club forward over the next three years.

MEET THE TEAM – MICHELLE DONOHUE

How long have you been part of the team at Trentham?

I joined the Trentham team in October 2020 — so just over five years now. Safe to say I've seen a bit of everything in that time... from quiet racedays to Cup Day chaos, and everything in between!

What originally attracted you to working in racing?

Honestly, it wasn't the racing — it was the events. I was drawn to the variety, the people, and the buzz of bringing large-scale events to life. The racing side has definitely grown on me though, and now it's hard to imagine the role without it!

What does a typical raceday look like for you?

It's a full day — Lauren and I are usually the first on-site and the last to leave. Most of the areas are already set up, so the morning is about final checks and making sure everything is ready to go.

Then we hit a bit of a rush when all the staff arrive and we get everyone into place for the day. From there, it's just keeping things running as they should across the hospitality side — sorting anything that comes up and keeping things on track. The more you've done beforehand, the easier it is.

Then it's pack down at the end... and home for a well-earned wine.

What's the part of the job you enjoy the most?

Definitely seeing everything come together — whether it's a raceday, conference or wedding. There's a lot that goes on behind the scenes in the lead-up, so it's really rewarding when the doors open and you can see people enjoying themselves.

I especially love the hospitality side — good food, good drinks, and creating an atmosphere where people want to stay and make the most of it.

What makes Trentham a special racecourse in your view?

It's the mix of history and atmosphere. There's a real sense of tradition at Trentham, but it still feels relaxed and welcoming at the same time.

It's also the people — from our members and regular racegoers to the wider community who come along for events. There's a strong local feel to it, which makes it pretty special to be part of.

SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS – RYDGES

The Wellington Racing Club is fortunate to have the support of a number of valued partners who help make our racedays possible.

One of those partners is Rydges, sponsor of the Group 3 Rydges Wellington Cuddle Stakes.

Rydges has been a strong supporter of the Club and the racing community, and they also offer special accommodation deals for WRC members., scan the QR code to access 20% off the best available rate for stay between 1 March 2026 - 1 March 2027.

We encourage members to support those businesses that support the Club. Strong partnerships with organisations like Rydges play an important role in helping the Wellington Racing Club deliver successful racedays and events at Trentham.

Thank you again for your continued support of the Wellington Racing Club. We look forward to seeing many of you on course during March, and at the Special General Meeting and Members' Forum on 25 March.



**SCAN ME
TO ACCESS
THE MEMBER
OFFER**

A collage of images showcasing the Rydges Wellington hotel. The central text reads "RYDGES" in large, dark red, serif capital letters, with "WELLINGTON" in smaller, dark red, sans-serif capital letters below it. The collage includes: a modern indoor swimming pool with a glass wall; a close-up of a roasted leg of lamb on a metal platter with a small pot of sauce; a modern bathroom with a white sink and a dark wall; a view of the Rydges Wellington building at night; a hotel room with a large bed and a view of the water and hills; and a meeting room with a round table and chairs.