

NEW ZEALAND
THOROUGHBRED **RACING**



PUREI HŌIHO NĀTI O AOTEAROA



Elite Jockey Programme

Performance
Pathway
2025-2030



Vision: To establish a distinguished Racing industry renowned for producing elite Jockeys of global acclaim, that instils a sense of pride among New Zealanders.

NZTR will provide a holistic programme for Apprentice Jockey training that enhances our industry's success and sustainability.

Key strategic issues identified

The training programme for Apprentice Jockeys in New Zealand has seen minimal evolution over the past three decades. Traditionally the process involved employers recruiting apprentices through application to the licensing body of NZTR and the employer being solely responsible for the apprentice's development. The impact is ad hoc development and has poor-quality assurance.

The staffing shortage and traditional practices in the industry has had a significant impact on recruitment and retention of Apprentice Jockeys. The shortage of staff and traditional ways of the industry has led to apprentices not being viewed as athletes on a journey to becoming elite Jockeys and limited support to

engage in raceday riding over trackwork riding and stable duties. This has impeded the physical and mental attributes a rider needs to advance their skills and succeed at the elite level.

Global research underscores the pivotal role of Jockeys as elite athletes with their career longevity substantially influenced by engagement in a robust and holistic training programme that supports growth and personal management. Those who adopt a high-performance mindset and associated habits of excellence notably excel in the saddle.

Presently the New Zealand Racing industry faces a critical juncture, characterised by a shortage of riders to meet industry demands. This scarcity results from suboptimal execution and decision making among riders, diminished apprentice retention rates, escalating international attraction and a declining allure of the industry among young participants.

Low retention rate of apprentices.

- Apprentices are not supported to achieve raceday rides and develop riding skills; therefore, they lose motivation to manage fitness and weight which leads to a lack of confidence, impaired decision making and drive to succeed.
- Apprentices do not see themselves as athletes on a journey to become elite jockeys as their day-to-day environment is no different to their trackwork rider colleagues.
- Apprentices have not had a supportive environment to develop with clear goals that align to the picture of performance that all parties (apprentice, employer and NZTR) are working towards.

Lack of senior Jockeys in the riding ranks

- Due to poor outcomes of the apprenticeship model, 38% retention rate since 2018.
- Attrition rate to Australia or other racing jurisdictions due to available stakes money, better training programmes, a more professional industry and confidence for rider safety.

Low recruitment into the industry

- Apprenticeships are not attractive in comparison to opportunities in other sports due to lack of recognition as a sport in NZ, professionalism, consistency, oversight, and outcomes.
- 4-year term of the apprenticeship is not attractive.

In summary low recruitment and retention, coupled with ad hoc development, planning and limited access to quality support, are together impacting the number of senior Jockeys and in turn limiting the performance and professionalism of our industry.



How will we fix this?

We will create a picture of performance for elite Jockeys that describes the key attributes for success, together with a clear and connected pathway for Jockeys and deliver through quality programmes, people and environments.

Supporting the identification and development of jockeys we will focus on the recruitment, retention and quality development of our Apprentice Jockeys. The programme will reflect the key pillars of elite Jockey development for sustained performance (people, support and environments).

We will work in collaboration with High Performance Sport personnel to apply our collective learning to deliver holistic and tailored development programmes specific to the needs of Apprentice Jockey training to enhance our chances of future success and industry sustainability.

We will deliver a programme that reflects who we are as New Zealanders and is underpinned by scientific research into what it takes to be an elite Jockey. We will align with subject matter experts, to support the delivery of our programme in a holistic manner that involves all parties, the apprentice, the employer and the NZTR training and development team. The development of these Apprentice Jockeys will be underpinned by a day-to-day

environment that support the critical success factors needed for high performance. We will invest in this programme with the foresight that better apprentices have an overall impact on the sustainability of our sport.

Robust Apprentice Jockey training will lead to increased winning rides for Apprentices, increased retention of riders, confidence from our senior Jockeys, reduction in raceday incidents, Apprentices performing under pressure, less race riding offences, improved social license to operate, increased stakes following confidence in punters and an attractive career path for new entrants into the industry. We will produce the best Jockeys in the world and be internationally recognised for our input to the global racing industry.

We will monitor the strategic initiatives through a steering group of subject matter experts to ensure we are reaching the targets we have set out, such as the quality of the Apprentices benchmarked against the 'picture of elite performance', achievement of individual performance development, access to quality support and environments that reflect development. Initiatives that are not working will be evaluated and changed accordingly.

OUR VALUES



ACCOUNTABILITY



EXCELLENCE



TRANSPARENCY



INCLUSION



GROWTH



COLLABORATION



RESPECT



INNOVATION

Goal 2025- 2030:

To have 80% of licensed Apprentices ride out their claim in the term of their individual apprenticeship and gain the necessary skills to make a successful transition to the senior riding ranks.

Critical success factors

- We attract riders into the role of an Apprentice Jockey
- We have a clear picture of performance that describes the fundamental performance components for success as an elite Jockey.
- We have a clear, connected pathway that demonstrates how Jockeys in the industry can progress through their career journey.
- We have the best programme in place for apprentices that is aligned to the key performance pillars of elite Jockey development.
- We have employers who are willing to provide opportunity for skill development.
- We ensure accessibility to quality development support aligned to individual plans and where possible close to home support.
- We have highly skilled employers/coaches supporting the individual Apprentice and providing environments that align with the development of elite Jockeys.
- We are all working to clear performance goals that are applicable to each stage of the apprenticeship.
- We have ongoing financial support to deliver the programme.
- We have autonomy to make changes as we go to ensure the elite Jockey programme is working.

Outcomes

- Identification of apprentices who can succeed as an elite Jockey
- Quality support networks, positive transition experiences; in, through, out (retention)
- Holistic Individual Performance Plans (IPPs) supported and monitored.
- Coaching/trainer expertise highly valued
- We retained our licensed apprentices here in New Zealand

Elite Jockey Development Programme	Apprentice Jockey Employer Development Programme	NZTR
<p>Attracting the best riders to partake in the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust rider assessment programme is in place. • Opportunities clearly conveyed. • Set up with initial support to transition from trackwork rider to HP environment. <p>Probationary licensed riders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a performance mindset from the start and following and individual performance plan that is supported by their employer. • Performance plans are aligned to the apprentice development programme to create a clear pathway. • Employer is brought on board via the 1st module for coaching and mentoring athletes, ensuring the probationer is receiving the support they need for performance progression. <p>Apprentice riders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily training regime that supports the individual performance plan and builds on improvements in the key areas. • Apprentice is afforded the minimum riding opportunities of 200 rides per 12 months of the apprenticeship. <p>Apprentice is supported by high performance personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZTR Performance management team • Athlete performance support- strength and conditioning coach, physiotherapist, a doctor, nutritionist, and mental skills coach. • Employer is their coach who is supported by the NZTR riding coach who help develop tactical skills. • Apprentice is riding winners and can execute decisions under pressure. • Apprentices are supported with any issues that arise. • Apprentices develop in an environment that supports their holistic needs, progresses performance and afforded them time to recover and prepare for riding performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer develops into an Elite Jockey Coach to the Apprentice. • Employer is supported to develop their coaching skills through the employer support for coaching and mentoring Jockeys which is based on known performance principles. • Employer knows their role in creating and providing a constructive learning environment for the apprentice Jockey. • Constructive learning environment reflects the high performing values of growth, transparency, and inclusion • Employer engages with the development team, specifically the NZTR riding coaches on the individual progress of their apprentice. The employer will become the head coach and the NZTR riding coach the tactical riding coach. • Employer is setting aside time in the week to plan and evaluate with the apprentice on their performance, to ensure improvements are being made. • Employer is engaging techniques in their daily interactions with the Apprentice that are conducive to the growth in the Apprentices' abilities and confidence to perform. • Employer is providing the rides or supporting the apprentice to engage outside rides. • The employer is aware that the apprentice is a developing elite Jockey and is not a trackwork rider. 	<p>NZTR will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership for elite Jockey training via a steering group of subject matter experts to achieve our critical success factors. • Build a recruitment programme to identify and pathway riders to become Elite Jockeys and encourage training for future success. • Consistently apply performance principles to the Elite Jockey development programme to ensure that apprentices are prepared for high performance training and competition. • Build an Apprentice employer/coaching programme in conjunction with HPSNZ to ensure apprentices are taught using methods that are consistent with the picture of performance of an elite Jockey and proven coaching principles. • Run quality programmes that are research-based to develop riding coaches. • Roll out initiatives to support the development of employers as coaches and grow the approved apprentice employers' network. • Develop a performance culture through the NZTR Elite Jockey programme - training to perform, not training to train. • Encourage and create inclusive and positive environments that enable future success. • Promote a strong performance culture, resilience and self-reliance in Apprentices to improve performance. • Provide ongoing financial support for the programmes. • Oversee progression for licensing requirements. • Ensure the quality of staff on the training and development team. • Provide access to a High Performance Sport personnel. • Provide access to participant welfare programmes. • Gather performance data of apprentices to continue to shape the programme to meet the needs of the New Zealand Racing Industry.



Strategic initiatives

Build an aligned Elite Jockey Programme that provides a solid platform for world leading performance.

NZTR has restructured our Apprentice Jockey training programme to become an Elite Jockey Programme. This programme allows a consistent, “New Zealand approach” to Jockey training, development and performance. To achieve the desired outcomes from this programme we need to:

Clarify, refine and document the NZTR Elite Jockey Programme.

NZTR is fundamentally clear on the picture of performance and the training required to perform at, or progress towards, world’s best.

The NZTR Training and Development team has, in conjunction with subject matter experts and key High-Performance staff, documented the picture of performance based on internationally known performance principles for the success of Jockeys. These principles fall under the broad headings of Technical and Tactical riding skills, Nutrition and Mental health, Communications and Media, Lifestyle and Financial management.

Rider identification

The selection/identification of riders for the Elite Jockey Programme is key. It is no secret that we operate in a weight category sport so having riders who can, with guidance, maintain their weight and apply the programme of development to their performance is key. Selection will move to biannual intakes of riders to join the development programme. Upon selection they will begin as a Probationary rider and begin their training towards raceday riding. There will be a further selection at the end of the probationary period to become a licensed apprentice.



Policies and Standard Operating Procedures

The Apprentice Agreement that underpins the relationship between the employer, the Apprentice Jockey and NZTR has been refined to provide consistency in the environments in which the Apprentices train on a day-to-day basis. The training environment forms an integral part of the ultimate success of the Apprentice and standardisation of these environments is key to the programme.

Athlete management

The employer of Apprentice Jockeys has a very important role to play in their holistic development. NZTR recognises that although these employers are excellent horse men and women, that they are not necessarily qualified in developing athletes for future elite performance. The day-to-day work environment and methods of communication are key to developing elite Jockeys and dealing with issues that may arise. NZTR has therefore extended the programme to encompass assisting the employers to develop in the coaching role they play for their apprentice.

NZTR will also invest in, and provide, an engaged team of staff who perform with professionalism and excellence to support the development of our riders in collaboration with the apprentice employer

Build an identification programme to pathway riders to become elite Jockeys and encourage training for future success

NZTR will invest in infrastructure and roll out selection identification initiatives such as gateway programmes at schools, trackwork rider training days, behind the scenes experiences, pony scurry series and sponsorship of local equestrian and international pony racing events as a pathway for potential Jockeys.

NZTR JOCKEY APPRENTICESHIP PERFORMANCE PATHWAY 2025-2030

STAGE	Interest in career as a Jockey	Identification	Jockey Talent development	Elite Jockey talent development	Elite Jockey	Industry futures
AIMING AT	Identifying potential trackwork riders as Jockeys	Identifying potential Jockeys	Developing riders	Establishing a brand	Qualified / established Riders	Industry Retention
NZTR jockey stages	Pre probationer	Probationer	Apprentice 1-2 year Acceptance on Elite Jockey Training Programme (EJP)	Senior Apprentice 3rd year	Senior Jockey	Career pathway
PATHWAY OBJECTIVE	Identify talented trackwork riders	Identify talented riders, foster new skills & expand knowledge of the programme and opportunities available	Develop skillset, routine and mental attributes for High Performance capability	Established self-management techniques for High Performance results	Qualified self-managed rider representing NZTR on an international stage	To support career development and preparation for life after racing.
SELECTION GUIDELINES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained fast work licence Expressed interest to NZTR of wanting to pursue career as jockey Has support from trainer willing to provide opportunity to engage in training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring by NZTR T&D team for suitability over 3-month period Sign up to industry training courses and engagement monitored. Pass assessment on the mechanical horse Pass initial fitness test with 60% pass rate Ability to make weight (max 56 kgs) Desire to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating talent & displaying the following characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ability to obtain max license weight of 54kg Coachable Desire to learn Self-reliance Strong work ethic Ability to work with others Embracing new learnings Suitable riding skills/ assessed as competent riding at the jumpouts. Working with approved employer Employer is willing to complete part one of the EJP Employer support for Jockey coaching programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed probationer Selection up to 2x annually Pass criteria from 3 day national licensing course Positive interview Supportive employer Passed fitness test with 70% pass rate Has ability to make weight long term (body scan) Knowledge of racing tactics Passed rules of racing test Weight <54kg Coachable Desire to learn Self-reliance Strong work ethic Ability to work with others. Embracing new learnings Competent riding skills Employer has completed part one of the EJP coaching programme for employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully completed previous years performance plan KPIs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight Fitness Riding record Continued growth in performance attributes. Top 5 finish in apprentice championship Continue to show suitability to hold licence. Engaged in and managing all aspects of personal performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to show suitability to hold licence Completed apprenticeship Annual licence review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested in a post riding career path Open to all license holders who wish to partake in industry training courses.

<p>PROGRAMME DELIVERY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x track rider training per year for talent identification • Monitor for suitability. • Expression of interest to become a probationer • Ride at 3 x jumpouts for licensing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional licensing course 2x per year (March and June) • Attend 5x regional rider clinics for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal development - Athlete health support - Access to NZTR riding coaches for skill development - Individual performance plans to follow. - Access to NZTR welfare support services • Ride at trials to required competency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum 30 satisfactory trial rides - 5x race day inductions • Enrolment in level 3 NZQA programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry knowledge - Horse husbandry • Attendance at EJP 3 day apprentice licensing course in Cambridge at the end of 5 month probationary period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 on 1 mentoring with Riding coach • Access to HPSNZ athlete development personnel • 8x 2-day national block courses p/y • Individual performance plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fitness - Nutrition - Lifestyle - Tactical skill development • Access to NZTR welfare support services • NZQA Level 4 jockey programme • 4x workplace visits p/y to support with qualification • Defensive driving course • Employer support for Jockey coaching programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 on 1 tuition with NZTR riding coaches • Athlete services support through HPSNZ upon request • Access to NZTR welfare support services • Individual performance plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4x day block courses p/y • Enrolment into future based learning courses • Access to financial & business advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Jockey Assn mentor • Access to support personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finance - Nutrition - Sports psychologist - Communication - Fitness - Injury management • Access to scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 on 1 mentoring with a careers coach on personal development • Computer courses • Coaching courses • Track management courses • Media training • Administrative courses • Bloodstock management courses
<p>PERFORMANCE TARGETS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a probationary license to ride at the trials • Trainer and Rider knowledge of pathway to becoming a jockey and the performance criteria required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riders understanding the value of a system and committed to the process of knowledge and skill development. • Rider has passed all aspect of the 3-day national apprentice licensing course. • Employer is engaged in the process and willing to complete the remaining parts of the Employer support for jockey coaching programme. • Have shown commitment to criteria that is required • Obtained race day licence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed apprentice • Supported to engage in minimum annual race day rides as set out in the apprentice agreement. • Met individual performance plans KPIs • Driven to reflect picture of elite jockey performance. • Complete NZA NZQA programme • Placing in the Top 10 of the Apprentice Jockey Premiership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed Business plan for self-employment. • Well-developed and integrated support networks • Good riding record • Represent NZ on world stage in apprentice championships • Top 10 finish in the Jockey Premiership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability of finishing in the top 5 of the premiership stage. • Represent NZ on world stage. • National recognition of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully transferred into industry roles following retirement from riding. • Support established industry participants in their career pathways



Approved Apprentice Employer		
AIMING AT	Talent ID	Athlete Development
NZTR jockey stages	Probationer	Apprentice year 1&2
PATHWAY OBJECTIVE	Principles of coaching and providing feedback. Pathway to developing an Elite Jockey	Growing connection, setting goals and knowledge on how to support and develop an apprentice to be an Elite Jockey. Contributing to and supporting the apprentice to reach the outlined KPI's of their individual performance plan.
SELECTION GUIDELINES	Class A Trainer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to develop the apprentice into an elite Jockey. • Has had at least 1 years' experience as a Class A Trainer • Holds a current working with children check. • Have satisfactorily completed a probity check. • Provide commitment to staff training and development. • Compliance with NZ Employment and Health and Safety legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have supported the probationer to gain a class B apprentice jockey license. • Continues to uphold suitability to be deemed an approved apprentice employer. • Works in with the Elite Jockey development team to support the apprentice jockey.
PERFORMANCE TARGETS	Successfully completed part one of the employer support to coaching and mentoring jockeys programme and has supported their probationer to gain an apprentice Jockey license.	Have provided suitable support for the apprentice in terms of environment, skill development and opportunity. Employer feels empowered and connected to the programme in their role of developing the apprentice having completed the employer support for coaching and mentoring jockeys has developed their skill sets, confidence and relationships with the team.

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