

ACT ELECTION – 17 OCTOBER 2020

The Canberra Racing Club has sought on behalf of the ACT Racing Community Policies of the three main Parties specific to the ACT Racing Industry for the next term of Government in the ACT. To achieve this the Canberra Racing Club posed five key questions to all Parties. The responses received are detailed below:

QUESTION



The ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia who has a Point of Consumption (POC) Tax with no provision of revenue returned to the Racing Industry. Will the Canberra Racing Club receive a share of POC Tax in the next term of Government in the ACT, if so when and what is the proposed amount?

Since the introduction of the POC tax until the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government considers the Budget funding provided through the MOU, and POC revenues, were roughly equivalent – while the MOU provided the Clubs with greater funding certainty. If re-elected, an ACT Labor Government would maintain an MOU budget-funding model for the racing industry.

A Canberra Liberals Government will increase funding to the Race Club from the Point of Consumption (POC) Tax, broadly in line with NSW. On current estimates this would contribute an additional \$2.5 million. This funding will generate jobs and economic activity from a growing ACT racing industry, and support Canberra Racing Club's commitment to participant and equine welfare.

We understand 56% of the Club's revenue (\$6.3 million) came from ACT Government distributions in the financial year to 30 June 2018. In addition, the Club receives around \$3.6 million of Race Fields Legislation revenue, according to the Club's September 2019 Funding Submission to the ACT Government.

Given the ongoing public health emergency and the impact on the ACT Budget, tax reform is likely to be part of a wider conversation regarding the Territory's finances. If changes to the POC Tax are proposed by the incoming Government we will consult with all relevant stakeholders.



QUESTION



The existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Australian Capital Territory, the Canberra Racing Club and Canberra Harness Racing Club expires on 30 June 2022. Will this MOU be renewed?

Yes. ACT Labor recognises the economic and social benefits that arise from a well-managed, sustainable and well-regulated horse racing industry. An MOU provides certainty for the sector, and sets out the Government's expectations regarding industry management in exchange for government support, especially the ongoing welfare of racing horses and the workplace rights of those employed in the sector.

The Canberra Liberals are committed to making Canberra the best place to live, work and raise a family. The Canberra Liberals have long supported our club sector and will continue to do so in Government.

A Canberra Liberals Government will renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Australian Capital Territory, the Canberra Racing Club and Canberra Harness Racing Club.

If the ACT Greens are in a position to comment on a new MOU in the next Assembly term, we will do so in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the club signatories and the incoming Government. We note the work of the Joint Racing Industry and Government Committee on the development and sustainability of racing in the ACT.



QUESTION



The Canberra Racing Club has requested 10 years for the renewal of the MOU, do you support this proposal? If not what is the proposed term for the renewal?

If re-elected, an ACT Labor Government would be open to discussions with the Canberra Racing Club and Canberra Harness Racing Club to extend the term of the next MOU to longer than 5 years, up to 10 years. ACT Labor understands that this will assist the Clubs' certainty and sustainability, and provides greater security for any external loan arrangements as the Canberra Racing Club looks to diversify its revenue streams.

The Canberra Liberals believe in a fair go for the racing codes. A Canberra Liberals Government will renew the MOU for 10 years. We recognise the vital role the Canberra Racing Club plays in our community and its importance to many Canberrans.

If the ACT Greens are in a position to comment on a new MOU in the next Assembly term, we will do so in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the club signatories and the incoming Government. We note the work of the Joint Racing Industry and Government Committee on the development and sustainability of racing in the ACT.



QUESTION



Will the Canberra Racing Club receive an increase to Government Funding under the current or renewed MOU as requested in the September 2019 Funding Submission? If so when and what is the proposed amount?

If re-elected an ACT Labor Government will enter future MOU discussions with the Clubs in good faith and a recognition that costs may have risen for the Clubs to maintain the necessary health, welfare and promotion of Club activities. Over the past six months of the pandemic and necessary venue closures, the ACT government has provided a wide range of support for the club sector, including distributing \$3.3 million from the Diversification and Sustainability Support Fund to fund workers' wages; payroll tax waivers; six-month rebate of fixed water and sewerage charges; and allowed clubs to claim staff wages and COVID-19 related community aid as community contributions.

The Attorney-General has also invited all clubs to contact him directly if they are in severe financial distress or at risk of closure.

The Canberra Liberals will ensure current funding base will be indexed at CPI for the duration of the agreement. The increase in funding will come from the POC injection below.

If the ACT Greens are in a position to comment on a new MOU in the next Assembly term, we will do so in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the club signatories and the incoming Government. We note the work of the Joint Racing Industry and Government Committee on the development and sustainability of racing in the ACT.



QUESTION



Do you support the continued development of the Thoroughbred Park Precinct Master Plan which will deliver \$1 billion in Gross Value Added Economic Activity and 2,039 jobs to the Canberra economy?

ACT Labor recognises and supports the Clubs' examination of ways to diversify revenue streams to keep local racing economically sustainable, safe and humane. This includes the development of the Master Plan, approved or modified through current approvals processes (which properly take local community views into account). In the current economic context of a global pandemic and recession, the ACT Labor Government has released a \$4.9 billion Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan, \$4 billion of which is allocated capital and infrastructure works to improve the city and keep people in jobs. In that context we would welcome complementary projects such as those outlined in the Master Plan, which would create additional high-quality residential housing along a key transport corridor, with minimal impact on surrounds.

A Canberra Liberals Government will fully investigate proposals which would further utilise the Canberra Racing Club's assets to the benefit of the Club, the community and sport.

The Greens support high quality infill development as an alternative to urban sprawl, since urban sprawl can lead to loss of biodiversity and farming land. The Greens may support a club development proposal if it is high-quality, has community support, and has a low environmental impact.

