



NEW ZEALAND
THOROUGHBRED **RACING**



PUREI HŌIHO NĀTI O AOTEAROA

JUMPS RACING

A paper for industry
consultation

5 August 2024



PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Jumps racing in New Zealand is facing a number of challenges, which are impacting on its sustainability. The participant base has continued to steadily decline which has seen the number of Jumps races reduced from 122 in FY10 to 61 in FY24.

As outlined in the 2021 NZTR Directions Paper, it was evident that changes were needed to address the decline in Jumps racing over the previous decade. What followed was an injection in prizemoney and programme changes, which included investment from Auckland Thoroughbred Racing (ATR). This led to total prizemoney returning back to levels from the FY16-FY19 seasons, and the average prizemoney per race nearly doubling. However, the key metrics have not responded to these improvements.

As an industry, we face over-arching infrastructure challenges. Jumps racing is currently conducted across 10 venues with Riccarton Park the only South Island presence. A recent audit concluded the state of the Jumps infrastructure across these venues is, at best, average.

Collectively, the participation and infrastructure challenges mean a broader discussion is required on the future of Jumps racing

NZTR recognises the overall value that Jumps racing provides. Some of our most talented horsemen have come from this sector of the industry. Jumps meetings also reach a different audience than flat racing and bring a different crowd to racing than would otherwise be the case, especially on our major Jumps race days. Jumps racing also plays a role in extending the racing career of horses, in particular geldings.

With a key focus on wagering outcomes following the Entain TAB NZ strategic partnership the statistics cannot be denied. In 2022/2023 the average flat race (including all flat races) turned over \$162k, 78% higher than the average jumps race at \$91k. On a like for like basis, comparing races run earlier in the day at Industry and Feature meetings to jumps races (across all seasons) flat race turnover is 50% higher.

This consultation document outlines the current situation and data relating to Jumps racing. NZTR requests feedback from the industry and key stakeholders on how we address these challenges. Clearly doing nothing is not an option.

Bruce Sharrock, Chief Executive, New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing

RECENT ACTION TO ADDRESS ISSUES

As outlined in the NZTR Directions Paper published in November 2021, NZTR formulated a set of focused proposals to better enable the sustainability of Jumps racing

Following discussions with ATR, representatives of the Jumps community and other key stakeholders regarding the future of Jumps racing, the following was implemented:

- A financial contribution from ATR of \$3m to NZTR to reflect and support the adjustments the jumping fraternity would have to make off the back of the redevelopment of the Ellerslie track. This saw a \$1.5m injection into prizemoney over 5 years (2022 – 2026) and \$1.5m being applied towards the reconstruction of the Te Aroha track in 2021/22.
- Except for the Grand National Festival of Racing at Riccarton Park in early August, there would be no Jumps racing in the South Island.
- There would be no more than 90 Jumps races each season (depending on horse numbers and programming requirements). This represented a reduction in race numbers roughly equal to the number of South Island Jumps races no longer held once Jumps racing in the South Island was limited to the Grand National Festival of Racing.
- NZTR would target total stakes of \$2.83m (up from \$2.25m), with Maiden races increasing to \$20,000; Restricted Open races increasing to \$30,000; Prestige races increasing to \$60,000 and all races that had stakes above \$60,000 remaining at current levels, other than the Great Northern Steeplechase and Hurdle which would increase from \$125,000 to \$150,000.
- Removal of nomination and acceptance fees for feature Jumps races

However, these actions have not resulted in any significant turnaround in key metrics for Jumps racing.



THE BROADER CONTRIBUTION

NZTR recognises the broader contribution that Jumps racing makes to our industry

- Jumps racing provides an extended racing career for horses that were not, or are no longer, competitive in racing on the flat. In particular evident for geldings.
- The Grand National Festival of Racing at Riccarton Park provides a real focus for Winter racing and is a genuine, and well-supported, racing carnival. Individual race days such as the Wellington, Hawke's Bay and Great Northern Steeplechase and Hurdles meetings also attract support and interest at a time when racing can otherwise be less attractive.
- Jumps racing has been a "breeding ground" for a number of racing participants who have gone on to become prominent trainers such as John Wheeler, Kevin Myers, Chris Wood and Ben Foote and has also been a starting point for promising young trainers like Sean Phelan, Sean Fannin and Niall Quinn. It also provides an opportunity for riders who, due to their weight, might otherwise not have a future as a jockey.
- Jumps racing reaches a different audience than flat racing and bring, especially to the major days, a different crowd to our racing than would otherwise be the case. Overall, Jumps racing helps create interest in racing at a time when, due to the weather and prevailing track conditions, our racing would otherwise lack colour and excitement.
- As a whole the number of races held each Jumps season is equivalent to around seven or eight full race meetings.



TWO OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

This document looks to consult with the industry on options for Jumps racing in New Zealand. Realistically these are reduced to only two with doing nothing is not seen as a feasible option.

Option and likely outcome	Pros	Cons
<p>Support for continuation of Jumps racing in NZ.</p> <p>Would require a dedicated strategy to rejuvenate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certainty for jumps participants, owners and breeders • Low impact on current jumps community • Potential to grow racing community, with a focus on growing jumps trainers and riders • Provides career pathway for certain types of horses and high weight jockeys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment requirements estimated between \$500k to \$1m in the first season plus ongoing costs to support resourcing of jumps participants • Aging population of jumps trainers will require succession planning to ensure sufficient training resources available • Economic factors (including lack of trainers and jockeys, and low wagering turnover) may still not be addressed
<p>Closure of Jumps racing in NZ.</p> <p>Would require a managed wind-down period and needs to consider key animal welfare issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certainty for jumps participants, owners and breeders • Investment can be re-allocated to other infrastructure, programmes, and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High impact on current jumps community, transitional period required to ensure horse and human wellbeing • Need to consider a programme for horses that would otherwise have had a career as jumpers, and high weights jockeys • Removes options for winter carnivals based around jumps



CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Participants are asked to provide feedback on the future of jumps racing in New Zealand.

Feedback is due 6 September. Please send answers to the below questions to jumpsreview@nztr.co.nz or complete consultation online [here](#)

Questions – Future of Jumps Racing

1. Do you share the view of NZTR that doing nothing is not an option?
 - If no, why?
 - If yes, which option do you recommend and why?
2. Are there other aspects of Jumps racing that have not been considered as part of the information provided in this consultation document?
3. What are the three main considerations for the industry in making a decision on the future of Jumps racing? Rank these in order of importance.
4. Are you a current jumps participant across trainer, jockey, owner or breeder?
 - If yes, based on status quo is your level of investment or participation likely to change in the next 12 – 24 months? If so, how?
 - If no, would you consider investment or participation going forward?
5. Any further comments or suggestions

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS



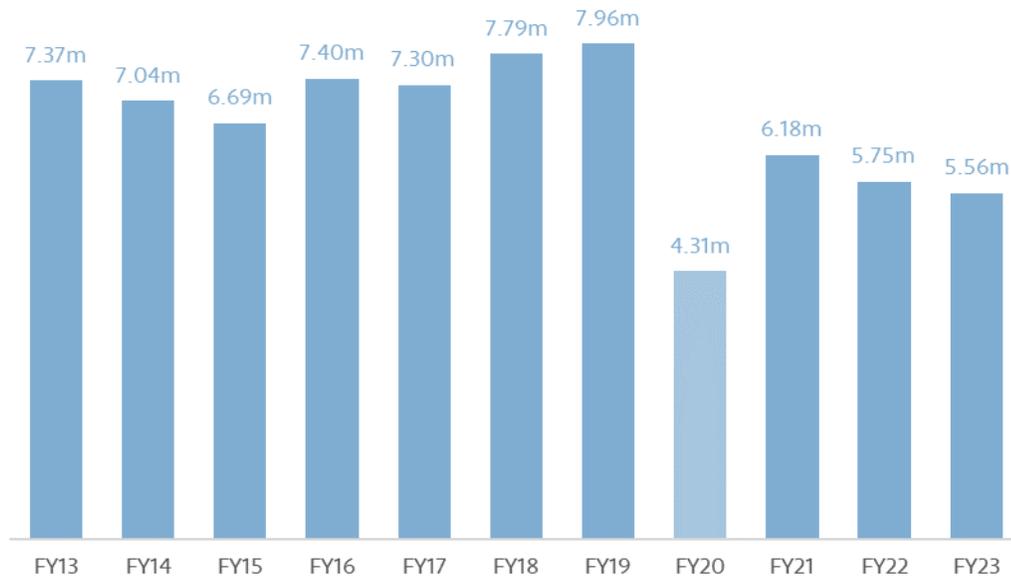
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WAGERING STATISTICS

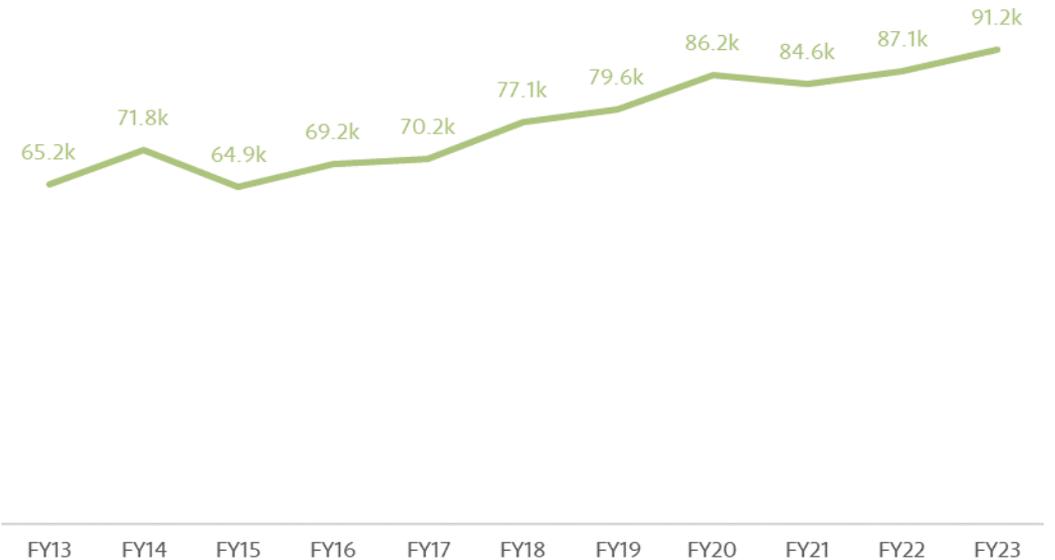
NZ jumps races - NZ turnover FY13 to FY23



Total turnover on jumps racing (measured since FY13) stayed relatively stable pre-COVID and has decreased since then.

On a like for like basis, comparing races run earlier in the day at Industry and Feature meetings to jumps races (across all seasons) flat race turnover is still 50% higher.

NZ jumps races - turnover per race FY13 to FY23



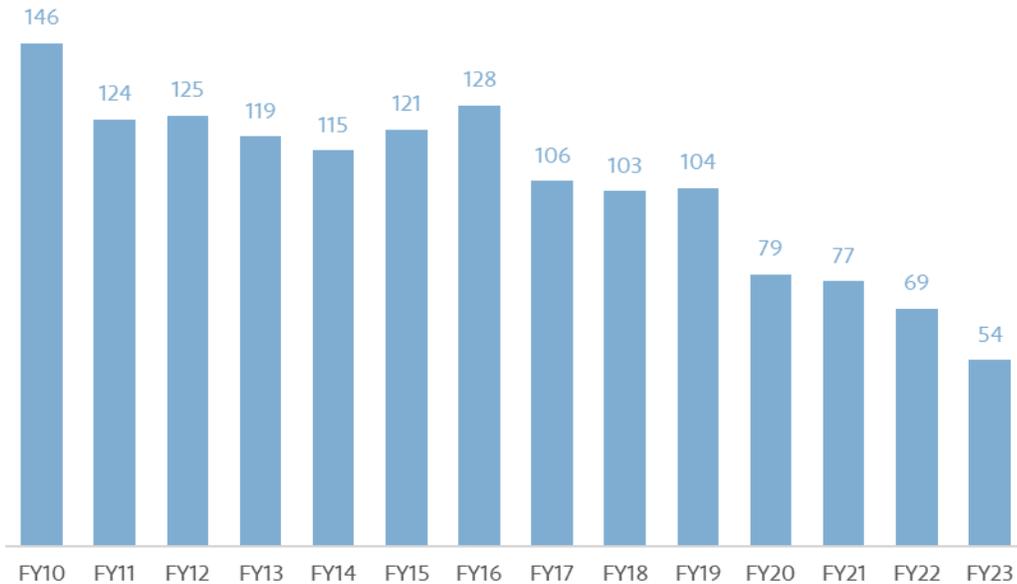
The cessation of jumps racing in the South Island outside of Grand National week and the higher proportion of Prestige Jumping Races (as overall jumps race numbers have decreased) have pulled up the overall average turnover.

In 2022/2023 the average flat race (including all flat races) turned over ^{IP}**RACING** \$162k, 78% higher than the average jumps race at \$91k.



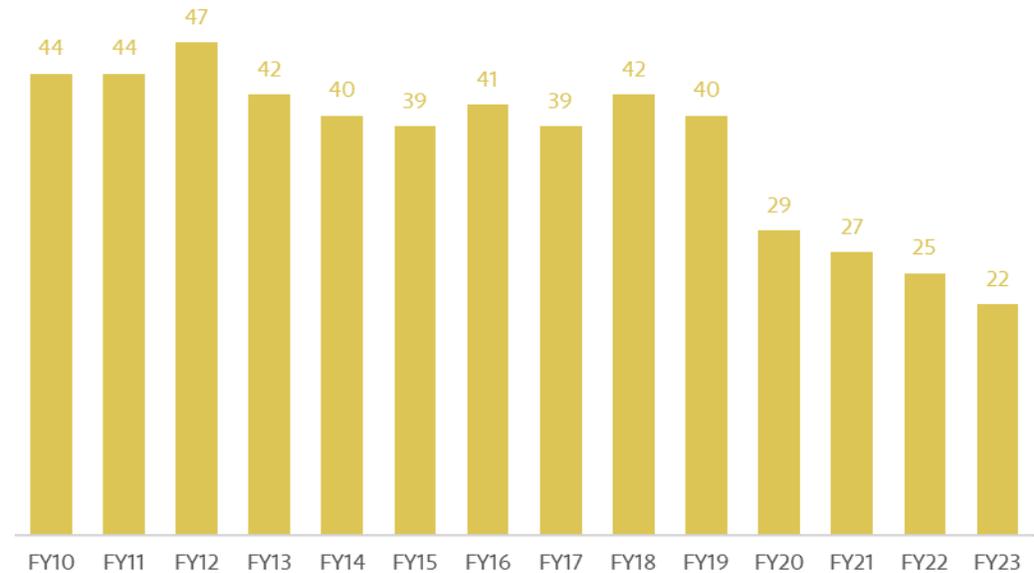
A REDUCING COMMUNITY OF PARTICIPANTS

NZ jumps races - individual trainers FY10 to FY23



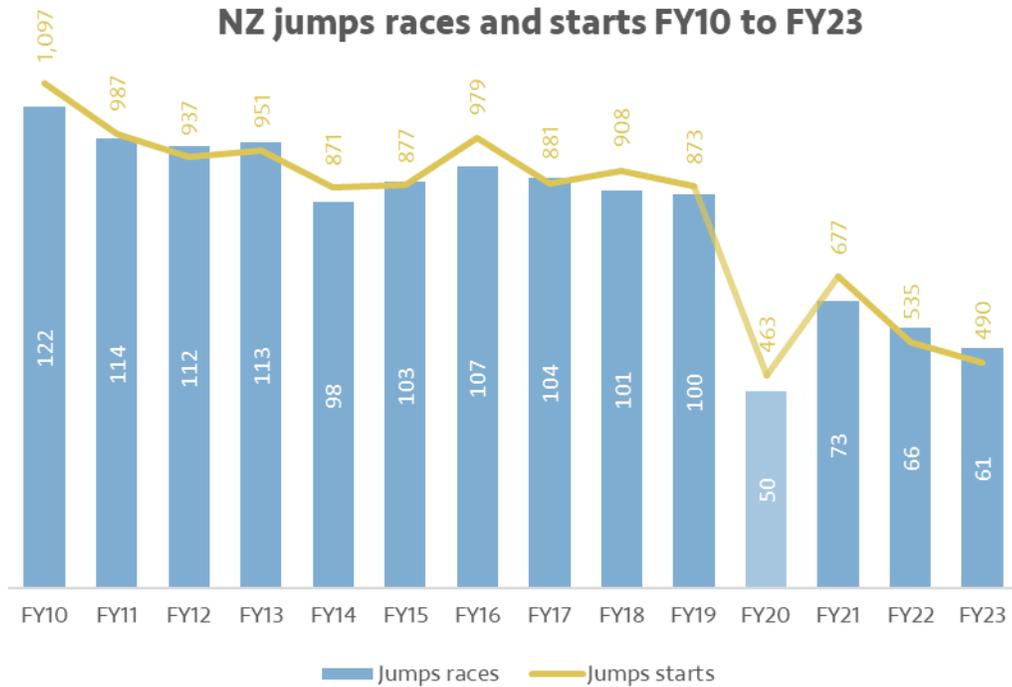
The number of trainers (or training partnerships) that started a Jumps horse in a season has declined considerably from FY10, down from 146 to just 54 in FY23.

NZ jumps races - individual riders FY10 to FY23

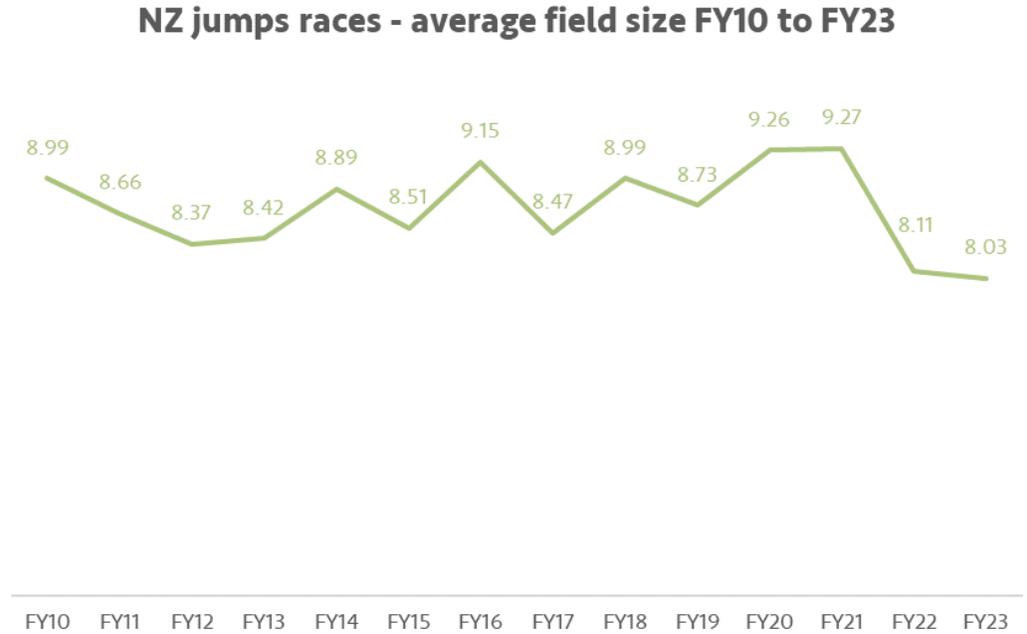


While jumps rider numbers have never been strong, there has been a noticeable decline in jockeys riding in jumps races since FY20 and the COVID outbreak. Since FY10, the number has halved from 44 to 22 in FY23.

RACES AND FIELD SIZE



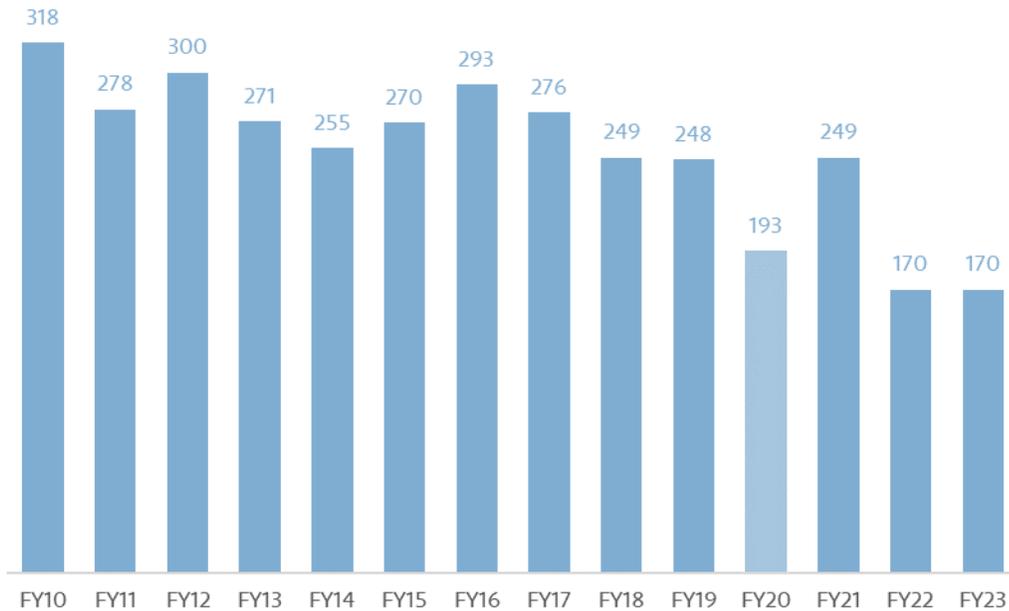
The number of jumps races held has halved over 14 years. There were only 61 jumps races in the FY23 season.



Average field size in jumps races has stayed in a range between 8 and the low 9s (compared to flat size average of 10.54).

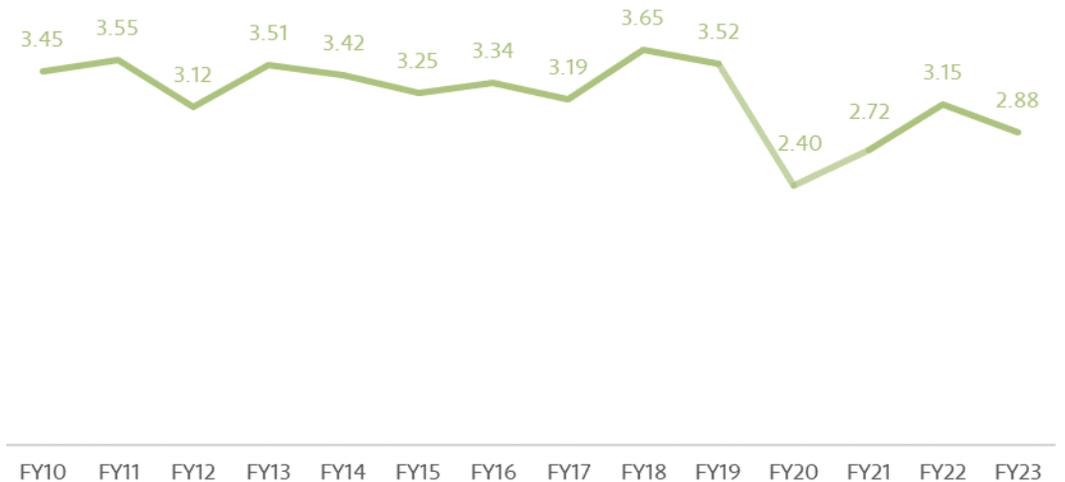
REDUCTION IN HORSE POPULATION AND STARTS

NZ jumps races - individual starters FY10 to FY23



170 individual horses started in at least one jumps race in each of the last two racing seasons. This is a significant decline from the 250 to 300 horses that had previously raced in jumps races, even as recently as FY21.

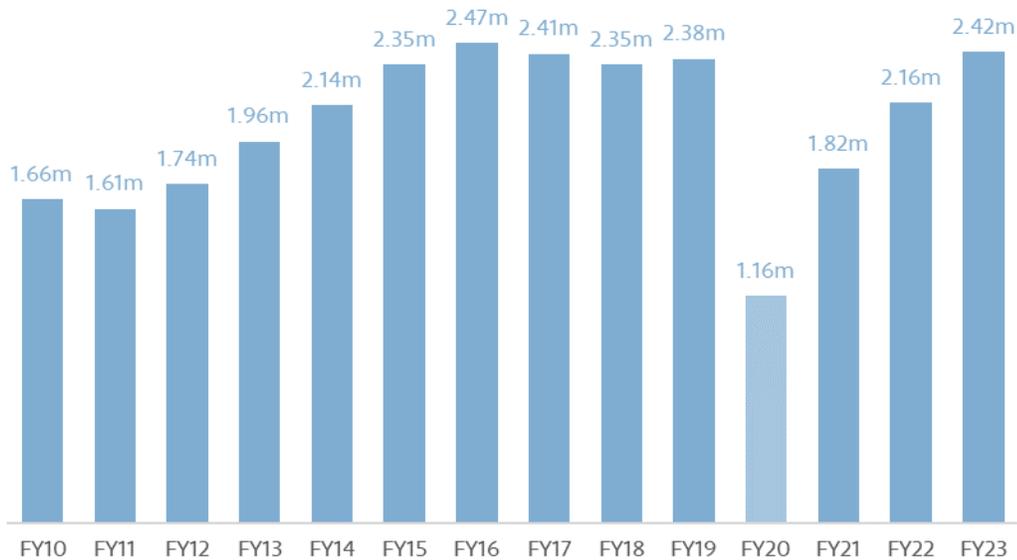
NZ jumps races - starts per starter FY10 to FY23



Since FY20, starts made by each Jumps starter have been below the previous average over the last decade.

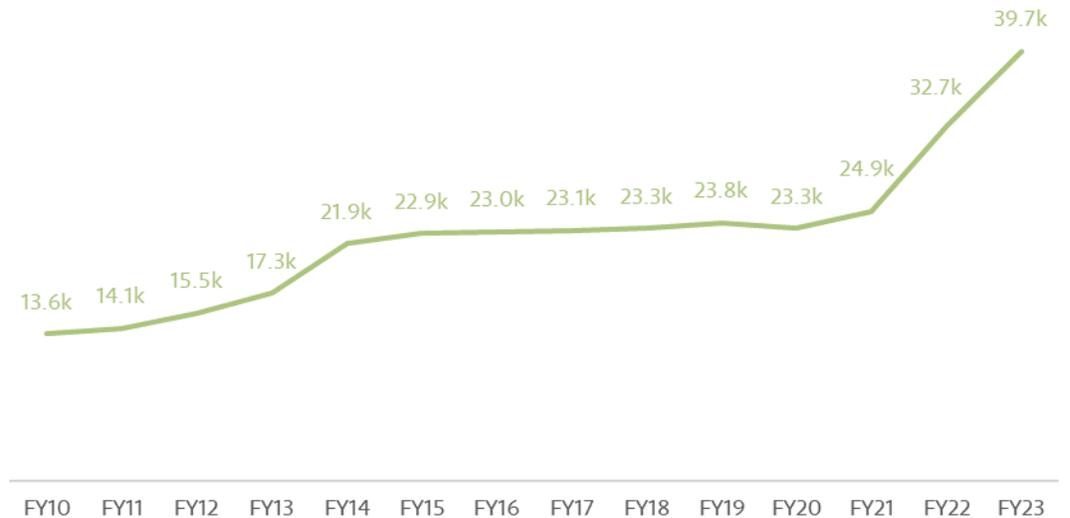
PRIZEMONEY – TOTAL AND AVERAGE PER RACE

NZ jumps races - total prizemoney FY10 to FY23



Total jumps prizemoney increased steadily over the period FY10 to FY16 and then plateaued from FY17 to FY19. FY20 was impacted by COVID.

NZ jumps races - prizemoney per race FY10 to FY23



NZTR has increased prizemoney for jumps racing over the last two seasons and the average per race has steadily increased, with a significant increase off the back of recent initiatives with the average \$39.7k in FY23.