



MEDIA RELEASE

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New laboratory boss for New Zealand racing

Rob Howitt has been appointed the New Zealand racing industry's top scientist, replacing the long-serving Geoff Beresford as Official Racing Analyst and General Manager of New Zealand Racing Laboratory Services (NZRLS).

Mr Howitt, previously NZRLS Quality Manager and Racing Analyst since May 2003, assumed his new role at the start of April.

NZRLS was established to conduct canine and equine drug and substance testing. Agreements were originally established with NZ Thoroughbred Racing, Harness Racing NZ and Greyhound Racing NZ, though these have been superseded by a contracted relationship with the NZ Racing Board on behalf of the Racing Codes.

Dr Beresford will remain with NZRLS as Technical Manager until March 2015 to ensure a smooth transition.

"Geoff has more than 28 years' experience in the industry and I'm delighted he will stay on in a mentoring role until his retirement," said Mr Howitt.

"He has made a huge contribution to protecting and enhancing the integrity of racing in New Zealand."

Dr Beresford said Mr Howitt was an exceptional chemist committed to leading the ongoing development of NZRLS.

"For example, Rob has played a leading role in introducing high-resolution accurate mass spectrometry into the lab and extending the scope of testing dramatically."

NZRLS tests around 14,000 samples per annum, primarily on behalf of the three Racing Codes, but also for equestrian sports (showjumping and eventing), and in support of bloodstock sales.

"There have been huge changes in the technology and methodology used in testing over the last three decades," said Mr Howitt.

"Under Geoff's stewardship NZRLS has become a world-class laboratory with the ability to test for a huge range of prohibited substances."

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