

MEDIA RELEASE

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Autumn Racing Carnival a winner

- *Racegoers still spending on outfits and going out*
- *Punters "not-so-technical" in choosing horses*
- *\$100-\$300 most popular budget for the day*

Despite the Global Financial Crisis punters from NSW city and country areas still see the races as a great day out, a chance to dress up socialise and have a flutter, according to an Intentions Survey released by Events NSW.

Events NSW CEO Geoff Parmenter said our fondness for a day at the races continues unabated, which is great news for the Autumn Racing Carnival in NSW and particularly with Doncaster Day and Sydney Cup Day running over the next two Saturdays.

"The independent online Survey of 500 people in NSW asked what people saw as the highlight of a visit to the races and the top responses were fittingly, seeing one's horse win, socialising, food and drink and the fashions," Mr Parmenter said.

"Last year's Carnival generated \$15.5 million for NSW and if you include the Inglis Easter Yearling Sale, total Carnival spend was \$84.4 million.

"The Intentions Survey found punters spend on average \$100 - 300 on their day out, 28 per cent nominated \$50-100 as their budget for the day, followed by 12 per cent with \$300-500.

"Retailers will be pleased to know, the 'princess factor' is alive and well. More than half of the women surveyed said they would hit the shops to buy a new outfit or update their wardrobe with new accessories before going to the races.

"Men were much more laid back, with 64 per cent saying they would cobble something together from their existing wardrobe," he said.

The economic impact report commissioned last year found during the 2008 Carnival over 6,200 fashion items were purchased by interstate and overseas visitors specifically to attend the races. This contributed \$593,000 in new money to the NSW retail industry with visitors spending around \$120 each.

Hats and fascinators were the most highly purchased item followed by dresses then ties, shoes for men and women, suits and shirts for men and jewellery.

Mr Parmenter said results from this year's survey indicate a boon for our hospitality industry with people keen to go out after a day at the track. More than half of those surveyed said they would move on to a pub, head out to dinner or see live entertainment.

"The survey shows the races really are a social occasion, with 58 per cent of people choosing to spend the day with their friends, followed by their partners (22 per cent) and family members (14 per cent).

Last year more than 43 per cent of attendees were aged below 35.

“Australians are famous for a flutter, generally though it seems we have some not-so-technical ways of selecting our horses, with some major differences between the sexes,” he said.

The most popular methods of selecting horses were:

MEN:

1. Study the form guide
2. Take tips from friends
3. Take tips from experts
4. Like the name of the horse
5. Pick a horse at random

WOMEN:

1. Like the name of the horse
2. Study the form guide
3. Take tips from friends
4. Choose by number
5. Colour of the jockey's silks

Women were far less interested in their betting skills, with 37 per cent guessing or taking mystery bets and 44 per cent labelling themselves 'eager learners'.

In contrast, 19 per cent of men considered themselves 'gifted amateurs' with 53 per cent saying they were 'eager learners'.

“Horse racing is alive and well in NSW, after a great start at the AAMI Golden Slipper Day at Rosehill Gardens we look forward to continuing the Autumn Racing Carnival at Randwick and across NSW,” Mr Parmenter said.

The revitalisation of the Autumn Racing Carnival, supported by a significant financial investment, is central to Events NSW's approach to making Sydney and NSW a leading global events destination.

The Carnival is one of five recurring anchor events to be held annually in the NSW Master Events Calendar.

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About the Autumn Racing Carnival

- Racing NSW, Australian Jockey Club, Sydney Turf Club, Tabcorp, Inglis and Events NSW are working together to revitalise and transform the Autumn Racing Carnival and make Sydney and NSW a leading turf and tourism destination.
- In 2009 the Autumn Racing Carnival is in a transitional year leading to the complete transformation of the event from 2010 and the creation of a broader equestrian festival.
- For information on the Autumn Racing Carnival visit <http://www.autumnracingcarnival.com.au>.

Summary results

What are the highlights of a day at the races? (multi response)

	M	F	TOTAL
Seeing my horse win	79.8%	72.3%	76.0%
Socialising	56.5%	56.2%	56.3%
Food and drink	44.3%	44.2%	44.2%
Fashions	19.0%	38.8%	29.0%
Entertainment	27.7%	25.0%	26.3%
Marquees	17.0%	17.3%	17.2%

Putting an outfit together

	M	F	TOTAL
Cobble an outfit together from my existing wardrobe	64.4%	39.2%	51.7%
Update with an accessory (eg, tie, fascinator)	30.0%	33.8%	32.0%
Buy a new outfit	4.3%	21.5%	13.1%
Visit an op shop	0.8%	3.5%	2.1%
Fancy dress	0.4%	1.9%	1.2%

Prefer to spend the day with

	M	F	TOTAL
Friends	61.7%	53.8%	57.7%
Partner	19.0%	24.6%	21.8%
Family	11.1%	17.3%	14.2%
By myself	4.3%	0.0%	2.1%
Don't know	2.0%	1.5%	1.8%
Work colleagues/clients	2.0%	2.7%	2.3%

Self description of preparation for the day

	M	F	TOTAL
Dress up - spend a few hours getting ready	17.4%	43.8%	56.3%
Easy going –hope for the best	71.5%	41.5%	3.9%
Last minute dash – go straight from home or work	5.5%	2.3%	30.8%
Prince/Princess – spend days planning the day	1.6%	8.5%	5.1%