

# Primitive Technology Hampers TabCorp

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Friday, 06 November 2009 17:45*



The heated outcry from racing fans caused by the VRC scratching of Melbourne Cup horse Changingoftheguard, coupled with the inability to replace it with the well fancied Vigor as an emergency runner, perfectly illustrates the endemic problem besetting the racing industry.

It is ridiculous that the field size restriction of 24 runners is dictated by computer systems developed in the 1970's. The TabCorp computers (which used to regularly crash every Melbourne Cup day) had little more processing power than a modern mobile phone.

The problem is only compounded by Tabcorp providing the public with the excuse that there is no totalisator system in the world which can handle more than 24 horses. While TabCorp claims that it cannot provide the required system, it is untrue that there is no system which can do it.

The more forward thinking New Zealand Racing Board recently licensed a state-of-art wagering system called Typhoon, designed by Australian company Media and Gaming, which can easily accommodate more than 24 horses in a race. If Typhoon had been installed by the TAB then an emergency runner would have been able to join the Cup field, or there could have been a greater number of runners.

The underlying problem is that racing has not kept pace with new technology, has not therefore been in a position to retain and attract customers with innovative products, and has been outmanoeuvred by new online competitors, with the result that the industry is declining while punters bet elsewhere.

The Victorian Government will be awarding a new wagering license post 2012 and it is to be hoped, whichever operator is chosen to partner with the RVL, that decision makers ensure innovation and up to date technology are central to the winning proposal.

Otherwise, racing will remain dependent on a wagering partner with primitive technology. Not a nice place to be when technology is increasingly going to dictate which wagering operator dominates.

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