

Project



Life At The Track:
Country Race Clubs
And Social Capital

Partner



Year

2010

Purpose



Country Racing Victoria (CRV) commissioned La Trobe University to undertake a study into the social impact of race clubs in rural and regional communities in Victoria. The aim of the project was to identify how country race clubs contribute to the creation, development and maintenance of social capital within rural and regional communities.

Method



Face to face interviews were conducted with representatives from seven race clubs of varying sizes throughout Victoria. The clubs were selected to be broadly representative of race clubs situated in different sizes of local populations, the number of race meetings held annually at respective clubs, and annual on-course race day attendance figures. For each selected race club, between five to six interviews were conducted with board members, CEOs/GMs, other senior staff as well as key informants from the respective local community for each race club such as elected politicians (i.e. local shire President or Mayor), and leaders of community and business groups such as Apex, Lions, Rotary and local Chambers of Commerce. A total of 36 interviews were conducted.

Application



Based on the findings of the research, it was concluded that Victorian country race clubs create, maintain and utilise significant amounts of social capital, which complements the significant economic and financial benefits they have for their communities. Furthermore, the social and economic benefits communities receive are interdependent, for without the social capital created, maintained and utilised by country race clubs, the economic benefits would be reduced, or significantly more difficult to realise. In other words, the social capital that is created, maintained and utilised by race clubs in country Victoria is a form of social and commercial lubricant that makes race clubs more effective, as well as socially connected.

