

STEWARDS INQUIRY INTO INCIDENT AT NEWCASTLE RACECOURSE ON SATURDAY 9 AUGUST 2025

Newcastle Jockey Club Board Room 27 August 2025

Stewards: D R Hadley (Chair)

J B Marshall

Background

On Saturday 9 August 2025, licensed trainer Mr Andrew MacDonald attended the Newcastle Racecourse for the scheduled race meeting. Mr MacDonald arrived prior to race 4 with thoroughbred horse *Push Through* and a companion horse hereinafter referred to as *Otis*.

About 3:03pm, following race 4, Mr MacDonald led *Otis* out of the tie up stalls towards the transport car park. Mr MacDonald stopped and engaged in conversation with Newcastle Jockey Club employee and licensed stable hand Ms Anne McTaggart. Mr MacDonald offered Ms McTaggart to ride the horse before legging her onto the back of *Otis*. *Otis* was not saddled and Ms McTaggart was not wearing any protective riding gear as she was performing administrative duties for the Newcastle Jockey Club.

Mr MacDonald extended the lead to allow Ms McTaggart to use the lead as reins. Ms McTaggart rode *Otis* through the car park for approximately 100 metres. Ms McTaggart rode the horse into the float owned by Mr MacDonald. Ms McTaggart does not hold an approved rider's licence.

Racing NSW Integrity commenced an investigation and obtained statements from witnesses including Mr MacDonald and Ms McTaggart. Closed Circuit Television Footage (CCTV) which clearly depicts the incident was seized.

Racing NSW Stewards today conducted an inquiry into the incident. A brief of evidence compiled by Racing NSW Investigator Ash Tucker was tendered and oral evidence was taken from Mr MacDonald and Ms McTaggart.

Stewards issued a charge under AR229(a) against Mr MacDonald and Ms McTaggart as detailed below;

Charge issued against Mr Andrew MacDonald

Charge 1: AR229(a)

The details of the charge being that he did commit and improper action in connection with racing due to the following matters. At 3:03pm on 9 August 2025, without any protective riding gear, he assisted her in mounting and allowed her to ride companion horse *Otis* who was not saddled into the float car park at Newcastle Racecourse. The float car park is a high traffic area used by heavy vehicles, transport trucks/floats, motor vehicles, pedestrians and horses. His conduct in assisting and allowing Ms McTaggart to mount and ride *Otis* who was not saddled in the float car park area posed a significant risk to himself, Ms McTaggart, *Otis*, other participants and horses.

Plea: Guilty Finding: Guilty

Penalty

The following penalty considerations were taken into account -

- Guilty plea was entered at the earliest opportunity
- Objective seriousness of the breaches
- Conduct occurred on a race day in an area viewed by members of the public
- Personal and professional circumstances
- Principles of specific and general deterrence and what message is sent to the industry in respect to such conduct
- The purpose of issuing penalties as a protective measure for the image, interests and welfare of the thoroughbred racing industry

Charge 1: AR229(a) - 3-month suspension of licence

Stewards ruled the total period of suspension be 3 months. Having regard to his guilty plea and other relevant considerations, Stewards varied the penalty to 2 months.

Under the powers afforded by AR283(7), Stewards ordered the commencement of the penalty be deferred for a period of seven (7) days, however, during this period Mr MacDonald is not to start a horse in a race.

The suspension will commence on 3 September 2025 and will expire on 3 November 2025.

Mr MacDonald was advised of his appeal rights.

THIS MATTER IS SUBJECT TO AN APPEAL

Charge issued against Ms Anne McTaggart

Charge 1: AR229(a)

The details of the charge being that she did commit and improper action in connection with racing due to the following matters. At 3:03pm on 9 August 2025, without wearing any protective riding gear, she mounted and rode companion horse *Otis* who was not saddled into the float car park at Newcastle Racecourse. The float car park is a high traffic area used by heavy vehicles, transport trucks/floats, motor vehicles, pedestrians and horses. Her conduct in mounting and riding *Otis* who was not saddled in the float car park area posed a significant risk to herself, Mr MacDonald, *Otis*, other participants and horses.

Plea: Guilty Finding: Guilty

Penalty

The following penalty considerations were taken into account -

- Guilty plea was entered at the earliest opportunity
- Objective seriousness of the breaches
- Conduct occurred on a race day in an area viewed by members of the public
- Personal and professional circumstances including 30 year tenure in the industry
- Principles of specific and general deterrence and what message is sent to the industry in respect to such conduct
- The purpose of issuing penalties as a protective measure for the image, interests and welfare of the thoroughbred racing industry

Charge 1: AR229(a) - 6-week suspension of licence

Stewards ruled the total period of suspension be 6 weeks. Having regard to her guilty plea and other relevant considerations, Stewards varied the penalty to 4 weeks. Additionally, Stewards acting under AR283(5) ordered that 2 weeks of this penalty be suspended for a period of 12 months, on the basis that she is not found to be in breach of a conduct rule during this time period. The suspension is to commence on 27 August 2025 and to expire on 10 September 2025.

Ms McTaggart was advised of her appeal rights.

Relevant Rules:

Division 4 - Corruption, dishonesty and misleading behaviour

AR229 Corruption, dishonesty and misleading behaviour

- (1) A person must not:
- (a) engage in any dishonest, corrupt, fraudulent, improper or dishonourable action or practice in connection with racing;

D R Hadley General Manager – Investigations Racing NSW