

# New service for jockeys

GRANT BRECHT AND HIS TEAM WILL BE PROVIDING AN AROUND-THE-CLOCK SERVICE TO JOCKEYS IN NEED OF HELP

WORDS: MARK BRASSEL

PICTURE: STEVE WHITE

Racing NSW and NSW Jockeys Association have appointed psychologist Grant Brecht to offer support services to NSW and ACT jockeys, apprentices and their families.

Grant is an expert in his field, and is experienced in working with professional athletes. He will be available to provide confidential assistance over the telephone and in person.

Grant is located in Sydney, but has a network of associates throughout NSW able to offer direct assistance to country respondents, if they prefer personal sessions to that of telephone contact.

He treats people with a whole range of problems from relationship breakdowns, depression and anxiety disorders, to drug and alcohol abuse.

"Jockeys suffer from a whole range of problems that the general population would and other sports people would as well," Mr Brecht explained.

<< There is a range of counselling and advice services that we provide and every now and then we use specialist services, but often it's just sitting down with the jockeys and working through what the problems or concerns are.

"At times it is working with jockeys and their partners and maybe with the family if there are children involved in the situations. It's a matter of looking for solutions and looking at what the problems are and what is causing them and then finding ways through them."

Brecht has worked with many sporting clubs: "We have worked with the NRL and I'm the psychologist for the Sydney Swans at the moment, so I am now looking forward to working with the jockeys and helping them.

"Jockeys need not feel embarrassed about contacting us – the way to view it is that it's a strength to do



Psychologist Grant Brecht at Royal Randwick

something about what's happening; if there's any sort of problems a jockey is having in life or affecting them personally or even affecting his or her riding, then they should do something about it because it may also be impacting on their family.

"Sorting through these issues will make the jockey feel better, the family should get on better and the jockey may even ride better – so it's a positive and a win-win for everyone."

And jockeys not based in Sydney are catered for: "We have a network of psychologists around NSW and in the ACT as well, so no matter where a jockey is based, they will be able to get the service. We'll find them a service as close as possible to where they're living and riding."

To speak with Grant and his team, please call **(02) 9929 8515** anytime, day or night.

"It's a 24-hour service, seven days a week and they will get to speak to me or one of the other psychologists and we'll work out some solutions and have a phone chat with them, or they can come into one of our offices.

"It's a free, confidential service that we were asked to provide by the jockeys association and is funded through Racing NSW.

"Confidence is a really useful word – if a jockey is going to ride well, is going to perform at his or her best and they are going to be the best partner they can be, the best Dad or Mum they can be, they really need to be in good health so jockeys who feel the need, should be proactive and come along sooner, rather than later, for a chat. **RNSW**