

National Jockey Safety Review

Racing NSW was a key driver behind the formation of a National Jockey Safety Review Committee (now a sub-committee of the Australian Racing Board). \$50,000 each was contributed by Racing NSW, Racing Victoria and Racing & Wagering WA to fund the initial project.

A research project commenced which was the most comprehensive study of jockey safety ever conducted by the Australian Racing Industry. The review involved participation of leading jockeys Darren Beadman, John Grisedale, Greg Childs, and Stephen Baster; the Australian Jockeys' Association; and a host of expert medical and technical experts

The review team made a series of separate recommendations for each State Principal Racing Authority to implement including:

- The adoption of new standards for jockey vests and helmets on the basis of detailed specifications developed by the review team, which provide greater protection and comfort
- Changes to minimum riding weights for feature races and the adoption of suitable minimum topweights for all races
- The development of competencies and associated assessments to ensure proper training and capability assessment for all track riders
- A fundamental overhaul of all aspects of apprentice training and employment conditions aimed at improving the safety of apprentices during the course of their apprenticeship
- The development of a standardised national treatment of careless riding infringements aimed at achieving stronger action against repeat offenders
- Distribution of new nutritional guidelines for jockeys on raceday with a focus on health and weight control
- Commissioning of further resources in the areas of jockey hydration and bone density
- the development of national database of horse and human injury which can be used to support further research
- the promotion of the benefits of plastic running rails as a safety initiative

Other recommendations address policies on field sizes, medical attendants, management of jockey riding styles and stirrup lengths, the availability of cooling vests, mouthguards, riding footwear and components of general jockey training.

Since the recommendations were released, Racing NSW successfully sourced additional funding from the Australian Government Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC).

The project, known as Health and Safety in Australian Racing, was successful in securing \$150,000 in funding to contribute toward a research and development project. The RIRDC funding is allocated under three distinct research definitions -

- 1) Retrospective analysis of horse and jockey injuries; to help formulate future equipment and racetrack design
- 2) A national Thoroughbred web based incident database based; to more accurately record data for future analysis - ARID
- 3) Development of new standards for a jockey helmet providing better protection against severe injury, relevant to Australian conditions; it is envisaged that a new design will be developed and manufactured for use by Australian jockeys arising out of this work.

Those involved in the review are committed to seeing actions implemented and with the support of our jockeys, can make a real difference to the life of jockeys now and in the future.