



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL WORKING EQUITATION LTD

ACN 610 777 583
www.anweltd.com.au

PRESS RELEASE

CAMDEN WORKING EQUITATION COMPETITION 22 OCTOBER 2017

The unfortunate events at or following the working equitation competition on the weekend of 22 October 2017 have unnecessarily damaged our sport.

The sad fact is that as a result of these events ANWE will lose the services of two significant contributors to our sport.

FACEBOOK POST

On Sunday 22 October 2017 a director of ANWEL, Margaret Withnall, placed a post on her private Facebook page. The post was not done with the support, knowledge or approval of ANWEL or any of its Board members and it was taken down the next day after another ANWEL director intervened.

The post and its contents are not something that is or can be supported by ANWEL and involves conduct that cannot be condoned of someone holding a senior official position in ANWEL. The post was critical of a working equitation competitor and a member of the ANWEL Subcommittee and was factually incorrect.

The facts are that the State Championships in April 2017 were conducted under a prior version of the Rulebook which required Preliminary and Debutante W *“to be ridden using two hands on the reins”*. The Rulebook was modified in July 2017 to require Preliminary and Debutante W *“to be predominantly ridden with two hands on the reins”*.

Accordingly, there is nothing in the current version of the Rulebook to prevent the competitor referred to in Margaret Withnall’s post from riding “the jump in the speed phase with one hand on the reins” as long as the speed phase was “predominantly ridden with two hands on the reins”.

As a consequence of the Facebook post Margaret Withnall has resigned from all official positions within ANWEL and her resignation has been accepted. We thank Margaret for all her tireless voluntary work for ANWEL, ANWE NSW and Camden Equitation Inc however her comments on Facebook, even though they were taken down within 24 hours, cannot and will not be condoned.



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Any similar posts on social media which are critical of competitors or officials will not be condoned and will be dealt with, so hopefully the sport can continue to grow in harmony and with minimal negative comments or publicity. We all need to consider our comments and actions and reflect on how they might damage our wonderful sport.

COMPLAINT RE COMPETITOR CONDUCT

The Board has received a complaint from the Gear Steward concerning the conduct of Kim Peterson at the Competition on 22 October 2017.

The Gear Steward is an EA Accredited Official and she has lodged a complaint against Kim Peterson's attempts to use a whip in excess of 1.2 metres in the warm up area and her attitude when she was told by the Gear Steward that she could not use the whip in the warm up area. Mrs Peterson responded that she could and argued with the Gear Steward.

The Gear Steward was correct. The ANWEL Rulebook (7.2.2) specifies that the maximum length of whips is 1.2 metres and specifically refers to the EA Rulebook which at Section 2.6 provides that only whips up to 1.2 metres in length "*may be carried and used in the exercise and warm up areas*".

The Gear Steward's complaint alleges that Mrs Peterson was confrontational and defensive and her responses were hostile.

Kim Peterson has apologised in writing to the Gear Steward for "any disrespect shown towards the gear steward at the time of my gear check" and Mrs Peterson stated she was "sorry if she felt I was hostile towards her as that truly wasn't my intention". In her apology she acknowledged that she had an oversize whip but stated that she did not proceed to the warm up area with it.

Following the above incidents Kim Peterson has resigned from the ANWEL Subcommittee. That resignation has been accepted and Kim no longer holds any official position with ANWEL. The Board thanks Kim for her work on the Subcommittee and her input into the 2017 Rulebook.

REMINDER TO ALL COMPETITORS

The above incident acts as a timely reminder for all competitors to treat all officials with respect particularly having regard to the fact that all ANWE officials are generous volunteers. Competitors should be aware that Equestrian Australia has the power under its Disciplinary By-Laws to fine or suspend any person who behaves incorrectly towards an event official. Competitors are directed to Equestrian Australia Disciplinary Bylaws and, in particular, Bylaws 17(e) and 36 and Article 169 of the FEI General Regulations.



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SOCIAL MEDIA

The fallout from the above Competition and the social media posts should serve as a timely reminder that social media should not be used as a forum to air grievances – it only exacerbates the grievances. If anyone has grievances about anything to do with working equitation they should be addressed in writing to the relevant ANWE State organisation who will either address them directly or refer them onto ANWEL.

In the near future, the Board will be working on a Social Media Protocol which will be applicable to all registered working equitation competitors.

FURTHER VOLUNTEERS

We have now lost two significant contributors. Anyone who wishes to volunteer to be on the Board of Directors or the ANWEL Subcommittee should send their resumes to the Board. Additionally, we also need a new treasurer for ANWEL if anyone is willing to volunteer.

At the Board Meeting held on 31 October 2017 further complaints were received concerning events which occurred at the Camden competition. The Board will investigate these further complaints.

The Board will endeavour to respond to all complainants in respect of written complaints it has received concerning the above Competition and the subsequent conduct of its members.

The Board of Directors
ANWEL

1 November 2017.



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