

# **Unregistered Proprietary Horse Racing in Sydney 1888-1942**

**by**

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**For Bryce and Emma**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

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Wayne Peake

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# **Conversions**

## **Distances and area**

One inch= 2.54 centimetres

One hand =12.7 centimetres

One foot = 30.48 centimetres

One chain = 20.177 metres

One furlong = 201.168 metres

One mile = 1.609344 kilometres

One acre = .404686 hectares

## **Weights**

One pound = 0.45359 kilograms

One stone = 6.35026 kilograms

## **Currency Equivalents**

One shilling = 10 cents

One pound (£1) = Two dollars (\$2)

One sovereign equalled one pound

One guinea equalled £1 1s



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## Abbreviations

ABA	Australian Bookmakers Association
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AJC	Australian Jockey Club
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ARC	Associated Racing Clubs
ATC	Australian Trotting Club
NJC	Newcastle Jockey Clubs
NSWTC	New South Wales Trotting Club
PGOA	Pony and Galloways Owners Association
POTA	Pony Owners and Trainers Association
QTC	Queensland Turf Club
RAS	Royal Agricultural Society
RRC	Rosehill Race Club
SDPC	Sydney Driving Park Club
SCG	Sydney Cricket Ground
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
STC	Sydney Turf Club
TAB	Totalisator Agency Board
TRB	Thoroughbred Racing Board
USA	United States of America
VRC	Victoria Race Club
VATC	Victorian Amateur Turf Club
VTAA	Victorian Trotting Association
WATC	West Australian Turf Club
WFA	weight-for-age

# Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of unregistered proprietary horse racing, or pony racing as it was popularly known, which took place weekly or more frequently in Sydney, New South Wales, between the years 1888 and 1942. It is also concerned with how unregistered proprietary horse racing has been remembered. Pony racing's principal venues in the twentieth century were the Ascot, Victoria Park, Rosebery Park and Kensington racecourses. The clubs that operated these racecourses located in the district between the city and Botany Bay formed in 1907 the Associated Racing Clubs (ARC). None of these racecourses exists today; the last, Rosebery, was dismantled during 1962, but the last race meeting there took place almost 23 years earlier. The last race meeting at any Sydney pony racecourse took place at Ascot on 22 August 1942.

This thesis is the first substantive analysis of the broad subject of pony racing in Sydney. However, a significant number of scholars, journalists and other writers have contributed commentary and judgements to a discourse that has existed since the establishment of the Sydney Turf Club (STC) in 1943. These writings have created an orthodox view of the sport that asserts that *inter alia* it was a cultural expression of a 'needy and greedy' element of the working class and that its constituency was mutually excluded from that of the racing of the Establishment, conducted by the Australian Jockey Club (AJC). The orthodoxy also holds unregistered racing was subject to endemic corruption, haphazardly conducted, inexpensive to attend, provided poor money and was in general a burlesque of AJC racing.

It is the purpose of this work to engage in this discourse and to test the tenets of the orthodoxy through examination or re-examination of relevant primary sources, including parliamentary papers, contemporary newspapers and journals, race books and other documents, administrative records, photographs, and the memoirs and transcripts of oral history provided by human participants.