####  **19 August 2016**

#### **Aussie spirit to go up against Irish luck**

**Racegoers will follow the rainbow to Morphettville Racecourse on Saturday, August 27 to cheer on a team of Australian jockeys as they take on the Irish for another year.**

An increasingly popular event on the Morphettville racing calendar, **Irish Race Day** is known for attracting a large contingent of Irish and Australian “super fans”.

Thoroughbred Racing SA Chief Executive Officer **Jim Watters** said the Australia v Ireland Jockey Challenge, and particularly Irish Race Day, always attracted a colourful crowd.

“Irish Race Day is a fantastic event for the state, which stirs up some friendly rivalry between two great countries. We’re encouraging everyone, no matter where they’re from, to turn out and enjoy the day,” Mr Watters said.

While the Irish have a 25-15 lead in the annual challenge, including one tie, the Aussie spirit has prevailed at the past two events.

Of course, this year’s Australian side – Martin Kelly, Paul Hamblin, Richard Cully and Shane Jackson – are hoping that winning streak will continue.

“The competition is always fierce but, with a strong Australian team that includes 2015 von Doussa Steeplechase and 2016 South Australian Grand National Steeple winning jockey Paul Hamblin, we’re looking forward to seeing what the Aussies can do to beat the luck of the Irish and keep the trophy in Australia,” Mr Watters said. “Paul also recently won the NZ Grand National Steeple in Christchurch NZ.”

Katie Walsh and team mates Luke Dempsey and Ian McCarthy will land down under on Sunday (August 21) to join Australia-based jockey Tom Ryan on the Irish team.

# The daughter of former champion rider and trainer Ted Walsh and sister to the world’s best jumps jockey Rupert ‘Ruby’ Walsh, Katie is one of the leading Irish amateur riders of recent times.

The Australia v Ireland Jockey Challenge will play out during three races held over two race days. It will kick off with a high-weight flat race at Murray Bridge on Wednesday (August 24) and finish with a hurdle and a steeplechase event on Irish Race Day at Morphettville on Saturday, August 27.

Aside from being one of the state’s biggest racing events, Irish Race Day also features some of the best hospitality packages.

For the authentic Irish experience, guests can gather in the Derby Pavilion to celebrate with the Taste of Guinness package. There, they’ll indulge in traditional Irish fare and knock back a pint of Guinness or two as they take in some spectacular live racing and enjoy live music from acclaimed bands The Borderers, Wasabi and The Timbers.

Morphettville Racecourse’s various seated hospitality areas, including The Champion's Balcony, Turf Terrace and the Winning Post, will also be open for business.

While in Australia, Katie Walsh will also seek to emulate her brother Ruby’s success in the 2015 Grand National Steeplechase in Ballarat, by taking part in the feature race on the final day of the Ballarat Jumps Racing Festival on August 21.

This will be the 41st clash between Australian and Irish teams and the 30th consecutive year that an Irish team has been invited to Australia to participate.

|  |
| --- |
| **2016 IRISH RACE DAY****When:** Saturday, August 27 **Where:** Morphettville Racecourse, Morphett Road, Morphettville **Cost:** General admission $10, Concession $5, Children FREE**Gates open:** 10.30am**Packages:** Starting from $30 per personFor more information, please visit [www.morphettville.com.au](http://www.morphettville.com.au) or call **8295 0111** |

**Media enquiries:**

Caroline Plant, Michels Warren, 8267 6888 or cplant@micwar.com.au

Annie Gant, Michels Warren, 8267 6888 or agant@micwar.com.au