



By  
**Mark Sleeman**

## O'Hara looking forward to northern exposure

Mackay's riding ranks have received another boost with former Sydney jockey Tracy O'Hara relocating here from New South Wales.

O'Hara, 24, is the younger sister of 2004/05 Sydney champion apprentice Kathy O'Hara.

She completed her own apprenticeship in Sydney a couple of years ago with trainer Kevin Moses and has ridden "around 200 winners" in her career.

"I finished my apprenticeship and then came out of it and went pretty well in the country," she said.

Most of her recent riding has been in country New South Wales.

On the weekend before she moved north to Mackay she rode at Armidale on the Saturday, Quirindi on the Sunday and Coonabarabran on the Monday.

O'Hara recently finished her primary school teaching university degree and has decided to make the move north to Mackay, where her parents are living, for a lifestyle change.

"I'd like to keep riding but it (teaching) is something to fall back on later on."

O'Hara visited Mackay briefly last year.

"I came for a holiday. I was going to stay for a week but stayed for about three weeks," O'Hara said.

"I went to the racetrack on the Thursday (Newmarket Day) meeting before Mackay Cup day."

She moved to Mackay in the last week of October and made her Mackay riding debut at Ooralea's Melbourne Cup Day meeting.

Although she didn't ride a winner at her first outing here she did pick up a second and two thirds from five rides.

O'Hara will also be riding on the Rockhampton-Mackay-Townsville TAB circuit.

She said she was used to traveling in country New South Wales.

O'Hara's move north comes not long after former Rockhampton apprentice Ashley Butler decided to relocate to Mackay.

Butler, featured in last month's Queensland Racing calendar, has been in red-hot form since linking up with Mackay's leading trainer of the past two years Stuart Kendrick.



**Ashley Butler winning aboard Reve D'or forming part of his Melbourne Cup Day winning treble** Daily Mercury photos



**Tracy O'Hara, a welcome addition to Mackay's riding ranks**

He rode a treble in Mackay on Melbourne Cup Day.

It was his second treble in four days after three wins and a second from four rides on the Gold Coast for the powerful Gillian Heinrich stable on the Saturday.

He'd also ridden a treble at Mackay's Caulfield Cup Day meeting in October.

Butler has fast become a crowd favourite in Mackay and had plenty of support on Melbourne Cup Day, which attracted a bumper crowd of about 6000 to Ooralea.

Support for Butler will only grow as his apprentice weight claim dropped from two kilograms to 1.5 kilograms after his treble at the Gold Coast brought up his 50th career win. His claim in Mackay on Cup Day was advertised as two kilograms, however, as a course announcement made racegoers aware, he could only claim 1.5 kilograms.

At the time of going to print, Butler was still awaiting word on his application to ride in Brisbane, but planned to keep riding at the Gold Coast on most Saturdays in the meantime. ●