

## **NRL star Latrell Mitchell praised for reporting online racist abuse as two NSW men charged**

*NRL chief executive Andrew Abdo lauded Mitchell's leadership and said the competition would not tolerate racist trolling of players*



*Latrell Mitchell reported the alleged online abuse to the NRL integrity unit. 'Racism is absolutely abhorrent and has no place in our game or society in general,' the South Sydney chief executive, Blake Solly, said.*

*Australian Associated Press*

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The NRL says it will continue to refer racist online trolling of its players to police after two men were charged for allegedly sending abusive messages to South Sydney star Latrell Mitchell.

Mitchell earlier this week informed the NRL integrity unit he had received numerous offensive and "racially charged" social media messages.

The integrity unit forwarded those complaints to New South Wales police who on Friday arrested a 22-year-old Taree man and a 25-year-old Lake Munmorah man.

Both men were charged with using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence. They were granted bail to appear in NSW courts in May.

The arrests come after Mitchell was hit with a four-match NRL suspension for a dangerous contact charge in last weekend's match against Wests Tigers.

The NRL chief executive, Andrew Abdo, said the competition would not tolerate racist trolling of players and lauded Mitchell's leadership.

"Any fan who racially abuses or threatens our players will be referred to police," Abdo said in a statement.

"I want to commend Latrell for the leadership role he is taking. We wholeheartedly support Latrell in reporting this matter. He is a leader in the fight against racism in our community."

Mitchell has long made a point of calling out internet trolls and in 2019 became one of the game's Indigenous leaders after taking a strong stance against racism.

The game on Friday again got behind the 23-year-old who has been a victim of racial abuse from fans throughout his career.

"Racism is absolutely abhorrent and has no place in our game or society in general," South Sydney chief executive Blake Solly said.

"We fully support Latrell's decision to refer the abuse to the NSW police. Latrell has shown great courage in taking this position and I would encourage other NRL players who are subject to abuse of this nature to do the same thing."

The players' union boss, Clint Newton, said Mitchell's colleagues firmly backed the move.

"We commend any investigation regarding alleged social media abuse directed at players or anyone in the community," Newton said.

"This sends a strong message to anyone who thinks this kind of behaviour is acceptable. It is great to see these incidents being treated seriously and we fully support Latrell referring the matter to the NSW police."