



RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Wednesday, 13 June 2018

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Harness – Stewards Inquiry Social Media Comments**

On 12 June 2018 Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA) Stewards concluded an inquiry into comments that had been posted on a Facebook page concerning a senior RWWA Racing official.

In conclusion to this inquiry, harness owner Mr R Hughes pleaded guilty to a charge relating to the publication of offensive comments about a Steward and was issued with a fine of \$2,000 with \$1,000 of that fine being suspended for a period of 12 months on the condition that no further breaches to this or similar rules occur (Rule 248 RWWA Rules of Harness Racing).

In considering the penalty Stewards took into account:

- Previous penalties issued in Western Australia and South Australia in regards to comments made within the same Facebook page.
- That the inquiry was able to be completed by way of written submissions from Mr Hughes who acknowledged culpability for the breach of the rules and thus expedited the process.
- The obvious remorse and that a written apology was made for the comments.
- The need to send a clear message to Mr Hughes and the wider racing industry that Stewards performing their duties were entitled to be protected from offensive comments.

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