

# Media Release

## Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

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10 August 2017

### **HRV RAD Board Hearing – Ross Graham**

The Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Racing Appeals and Disciplinary (RAD) Board today considered a charge issued against licensed trainer-driver Ross Graham under Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHRR) 190(1), that states:

*A horse shall be presented for a race free of prohibited substances*

The charge related to a post-race urine sample collected from the horse 'Sonetto' after it won Race 2, the 'Elite Horse Transport Trot', at Shepparton on 27 July 2016. Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL) reported that analysis of the urine sample revealed the sample to contain a prohibited substance, namely cobalt, at a level of 298 micrograms per litre (µg/L), which is above the allowable threshold (at the time) of 200 µg/L in urine.

Mr Graham pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The HRV RAD board considered statements from Investigative Steward Neal Conder, RASL Scientific Manager Paul Zahra and Veterinary Pharmacologist Professor Paul Mills, along with evidence from Veterinarians Dr Jim Vasey, Dr Richard Cust, Dr Greg Hargreaves and Swabbing Assistant Gordon Warner.

After considering all the evidence tendered at the hearing and submissions from both parties, Mr Graham was found guilty of the charge.

The HRV RAD Board considered further penalty submissions from the HRV Stewards that included the seriousness of the charge; that the integrity of racing is protected; and comparable prohibited substance cases. Ross Graham's penalty submissions were also considered, including his personal circumstances and a 25-year involvement in the industry with an excellent record.

In considering all of these circumstances, in addition to both specific and general deterrence and consistency of penalty, the HRV RAD Board imposed a 15-month suspension of Mr Graham's trainers licence. The HRV RAD Board ordered the suspension to commence at midnight on Sunday 13 August 2017.

The HRV RAD Board also ordered that 'Sonetto' be disqualified from Race 2 at Shepparton on 27 July 2016 and that the placings be amended accordingly.