

Media Release

Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

17 August 2017

HRV RAD Board Hearing – Paul Grech

The Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Racing Appeals and Disciplinary (RAD) Board today considered charges issued against licensed trainer-driver Paul Grech under Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) 190(1) and 190B(1).

Charge 1 – AHRR 190(1) reads as follows:

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

This charge related to a post-race urine sample collected from the horse 'Mister Oz' after it placed 2nd in Race 1, the 'Hargreaves Hill Trotters Handicap', at Yarra Valley on 17 February 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 237 micrograms per litre (µg/L), which is above the allowable threshold (at the time) of 200 µg/L in urine.

Charge 2 - AHRR 190B(1) reads as follows:

A trainer shall at all times keep and maintain a log book

The particulars of this charge related to the stable inspection conducted on 18 March 2016 by HRV Stewards, when Mr Grech was found not to keep and maintain a logbook as required.

Mr Grech pleaded guilty to both charges

The HRV RAD board heard evidence from Investigative Steward Stephen Svanosio, RASL Scientific Manager Paul Zahra and Veterinary Pharmacologist Professor Paul Mills. Each of those witnesses was cross-examined.

The HRV RAD Board also heard submissions from Ms Wood (for the HRV Stewards), Mr Grech and Mr Grech's representative, Brian Lyngcoln.

In determining penalty, the HRV RAD Board considered Mr Grech's 35-year involvement in the industry, his record which had two prior prohibited substance offences, the impact of any penalty on Mr Grech both specific and general deterrence and consistency of penalties in relation to cobalt cases. Taking all of these matters into account the HRV RAD Board imposed a 15-month suspension of Mr Grech's trainers and drivers licences. The HRV RAD Board ordered the suspension to commence at midnight on Saturday 19 August 2017. On the second charge (relating to the log book) the HRV RAD Board imposed a \$250 fine.

The HRV RAD Board also ordered that 'Mister Oz' be disqualified from Race 1 at Yarra Valley on 17 February 2016 and that the placings be amended accordingly.