

***Harness***

**Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board**

# Media Release

## Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

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3 May 2019

### **HRV RAD Board Hearing – Neil Preston**

On 1 May 2019, the Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Racing Appeals and Disciplinary (RAD) Board considered a charge issued by HRV Stewards under Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) 187(3) against licensed trainer Neil Preston.

AHRR 187(3) reads as follows:

*A person shall comply with an order or direction given by the Stewards.*

The charge under AHRR 187(3) related to Mr Preston being issued a written direction by HRV Stewards, in a letter dated 31 July 2018, to provide shelter to standardbred horses in his care at his registered training establishment by 1 November 2018. Mr Preston failed to take any steps to provide shelter for horses in his care by the prescribed date.

Mr Preston was represented at the hearing by Tony Crute and pleaded guilty to the charge before submissions on penalty were heard from HRV Stewards and Mr Crute on behalf of Mr Preston.

In deciding an appropriate penalty, the HRV RAD Board considered Mr Preston's guilty plea; that animal welfare should always be given a high priority in any racing industry; the unique circumstances of the matter in that the horses without shelter were assessed by a HRV Veterinarian as having a body condition score of four which is a good condition, and the horses had been in the same environment for approximately eight years and had ample access to feed and water; Mr Preston's difficult personal circumstances; the purpose of the rules; and Mr Preston's excellent record over 36 years in the industry. Mr Preston was subsequently fined \$800, of which \$300 was suspended for a period of 12 months.

*HRV RAD Board Panel: Judge Graeme Hicks (Chair), Robert Abrahams (Deputy Chair).*

The Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board (RADB) is established under section 50B of the Racing Act (1958). The RADB is an independent Board established to hear and determine appeals in relation to decisions made under the rules to impose penalties on persons and to hear and determine charges made against persons for serious offences.