

QRIC Statement – Racing Victoria Investigation

21 February 2018

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commissioner Ross Barnett says the Commission is in close contact with Victorian racing officials about their investigation of the alleged systematic doping of thoroughbred race horses.

“Since this investigation broke in Victoria, we’ve been in close contact with Racing Victoria Stewards and they have been keeping us briefed on the investigation particularly in relation to Queensland trainer Mr Liam Birchley,” Commissioner Barnett said.

Mr Birchley faces three charges in Victoria of being a party to the administration of alkalising agents and/or medications to a racehorse or racehorses on a race-day dating back to 2011.

These allegations have been raised as a result of a Racing Victoria investigation known collectively as the “Lovani Investigation”.

“In relation to the decision about whether Mr Birchley should be allowed to continue to train in Queensland, senior thoroughbred stewarding staff have reviewed the evidence and they have come to the view that Mr Birchley should be allowed to continue to train here for the time being, but it remains a fluid situation,” Commissioner Barnett said.

“That decision was based in part on the fact that there has been no offence detected in Queensland.

“Mr Birchley retains the presumption of innocence and he has declared he’ll be pleading not guilty to all charges.

“Queensland Stewards also took into account the fact that Mr Birchley’s disciplinary history in Queensland does not include any offences of a similar nature in this state,” Commissioner Barnett said.

“I’d also add that at this stage, there is no information that any races in Queensland have been compromised but for the integrity of the sport across the country, the information that is coming to light is very concerning.”

Mr Birchley is considered one of Queensland’s top trainers with more than 60 thoroughbreds stabled at Eagle Farm and Archer Park at Woodford.

ENDS