

# Stewards' Report

## Stewards Report: Darren Hooper

**Date: 16 September 2020**

**Panel: P Chadwick, L Wilson, A Kitching and A Turner**

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) Stewards today concluded an inquiry into an incident that occurred in the Stewards Room at the Redcliffe Harness Racing Club on the evening of 5 August 2020.

After considering all the evidence, the Stewards issued a charge to Mr Hooper pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 231(1)(c), which states:

*A person shall not:*

*(c) intimidate;*

*anyone employed, engaged or participating in the harness racing industry or otherwise having a connection with it.*

The specifics of the charge being as follows:

Mr Darren Hooper, on 5 August 2020, entered the Stewards Room at the Redcliffe Harness Racing Club and acted in an intimidatory manner towards Mr David Farquharson, being the Chief Steward of Harness Racing, through his physical and verbal conduct towards Mr Farquharson.

Mr Hooper entered a plea of not guilty to the charge and did not provide any further evidence in defence of the charge.

In the absence of any further evidence from Mr Hooper, the Stewards were satisfied that Mr Hooper did intimidate Mr Farquharson, being a person employed and engaged in the harness racing industry, through his physical and verbal conduct towards Mr Farquharson as specified in the charge.

Subsequently, the Stewards felt the charge was sustained and formally found Mr Hooper guilty of the charge.

In determining penalty in relation to the charge, the Stewards considered the following:

1. the nature, circumstances and seriousness of the offending conduct, which the Stewards deemed to be at the high-end of the range of offending due to Mr Hooper's intimidatory behaviour directed towards Mr Farquharson, being the Chief Steward of Harness Racing, and further in the presence of QRIC Stewards Mr Gould and Ms McCrae;
2. Mr Hooper's personal circumstances, noting Mr Hooper has been involved in the harness racing industry for an approximate period of seventeen (17) years.

3. Mr Hooper's disciplinary history.
4. Mr Hooper's cooperation throughout the inquiry.
5. Mr Hooper's plea of not guilty.
6. the penalty precedents for an offence pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 231(1)(c) (noting the absence of any precedents for the subject rule in Queensland);  
and
7. the need for the penalty to act as both a specific deterrent to Mr Hooper to reduce the risk of further offending and a general deterrent to the wider racing industry for the integrity of the racing industry to remain paramount.

The Stewards, having considered the above factors, have determined the appropriate penalty was for Mr Hooper to be warned-off pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 256(2)(d) for a period of twelve (12) months effective from today's date, together with a fine in the sum of \$2,000.00 pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 256(2)(a) with \$1,000.00 to be wholly suspended for a period of twenty-four (24) months on the condition that Mr Hooper not breach a similar rule during this relevant period.

Mr Hooper was made aware of his right to an internal review against this decision.

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