

Stewards' Report

Date:	Thursday, 10 November 2022
Panel:	Mr A Flymen (Chairperson), Mr W Hadley, Mr K Dean
Person:	Ms Rhonda Essery
Rule:	GAR 141(1)(a)
Charges:	Ms Rhonda Essery presented the greyhound Waking Smile to compete in Race 2 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on 27 August 2022 when it was not free of a prohibited substance
Substance:	Arsenic
Penalty:	Three (3) month suspension wholly suspended for twelve (12) months and a \$1,500.00 fine

On 10 November 2022, the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission Stewards concluded an inquiry into analysts' findings that the prohibited substance Arsenic was detected at a level in excess of the mass concentration limit of 800 nanograms per millilitre in a post-race urine sample collected from the greyhound Waking Smile when it competed in, and won, Race 2 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on 27 August 2022.

Submissions were made by Ms Essery as the licensed trainer of Waking Smile at the relevant time.

After considering all of the evidence, Stewards issued a charge pursuant to the Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(1)(a), which provides:

The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound, nominated to compete in an Event, must present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.

The specifics of the charge were as follows:

That Ms Rhonda Essery, as the trainer of the greyhound Waking Smile, did present that greyhound to compete in Race 2 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on 27 August 2022 with a prohibited substance in its system, namely Arsenic as detected by the Racing Science Centre and confirmed by Racing Analytical Services Limited at a level in excess of the mass concentration limit of 800 nanograms per millilitre in the post-race urine sample collected from the greyhound on 27 August 2022.

Ms Essery entered a plea of guilty to the charge and made further submissions in respect of penalty.

Stewards considered the following when determining penalty:

- Ms Essery's plea of guilty to the charge at the earliest available opportunity;
- Ms Essery's time in the greyhound racing industry as a trainer, being approximately thirty-one (31) years;
- Ms Essery's forthright evidence and cooperation throughout the inquiry;
- Ms Essery's exemplary disciplinary history with no prior breaches;
- the nature of the prohibited substance, being Arsenic;

- Ms Essery's immediate review of, and amendment to, her animal husbandry practices upon being notified of the positive swab;
- the need to maintain the integrity of greyhound racing and to ensure a level playing field for all participants;
- the need for both specific deterrence to Ms Essery and general deterrence to the wider industry; and
- relevant penalty precedents.

Accordingly, Stewards determined that the appropriate penalty was a three (3) month suspension with Stewards electing to wholly suspend the suspension pursuant to Greyhounds Australasia Rule 174(3) for a period of twelve (12) months conditional upon no further breach of a similar nature, together with a fine in the amount of \$1,500.00.

Acting under the provisions of Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(4), Stewards directed that Waking Smile be disqualified from Race 2 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on 27 August 2022 (1st place).

Stewards ordered that the placings be amended accordingly and Ms Essery was advised that all prizemoney associated with this event must be returned to Racing Queensland.

Ms Essery was advised of her right to an Internal Review.