

DECISION

Delivered on: 24 November 2025

Dates of hearing: 14 October 2025

Panel: Mr Michael Fernholz (Chairperson)
Mr James Philp
Mr Ryan Jackson

Appearances: Mr Ricky Hassall

Rule: Queensland Local Rules of Racing – Greyhound

LR 11B(3) Euthanasia of a greyhound

A temperament assessment conducted for the purposes of LR11B must not occur within 28 days of the greyhound's last start in a race, and the owner or person responsible for the greyhound at the relevant time must ensure that the greyhound has not engaged in any racing related activities, including but not limited to trialling, racing education or training, during the 28-day period

Charge: That Mr Ricky Hassall was at all relevant times the person responsible for Aston Zeppelin and did take the greyhound Aston Zeppelin to be euthanised and Mr Hassall neglected to wait the required 28-day period from the greyhounds last race.

Plea: Not Guilty

Plea Submissions

1. Mr Hassall made the following submissions regarding the circumstances of the euthanasia of the greyhound Aston Zeppelin:

- that he was acting on behalf of the owner of the greyhound Aston Zeppelin when he permitted the euthanasia of the greyhound on 14 August 2025;
 - that the greyhound was aggressive and had previously attacked another greyhound;
 - that the euthanasia of the greyhound was not an intentional breach of the rules of racing;
- and
- that Mr Hassall, as the trainer of the greyhound, had the best understanding of the greyhounds behaviours, mannerism and traits.

Stewards' Findings on Charge

2. In determining whether Mr Hassall's conduct amounted to a breach of the rules of racing, the Stewards considered the Certificate of Euthanasia, which confirmed that the greyhound was euthanised on 14 August 2025 following a temperament assessment being undertaken on the greyhound, together with the performance history of the greyhound which demonstrated that the greyhound had last competed in a race on 1 August 2025.
3. The Stewards found that the temperament assessment undertaken on Aston Zeppelin, which ultimately led to the euthanasia of the greyhound, was conducted within twenty-eight (28) days of the greyhound's last race. Applying the *Briginshaw* standard, the Stewards were comfortably satisfied that Queensland Local Rule of Racing 11B(3) had been proven and found Mr Hassall guilty of the charge.

Penalty Submissions:

4. Mr Hassall addressed the Stewards regarding penalty and submitted the following:
 - that he had provided forthright evidence and demonstrated his cooperation throughout the inquiry; and
 - that he has an exemplary penalty record, having no similar charges over a forty (40) year period.

Stewards Findings on Penalty

5. The Stewards have considered the nature and seriousness of the offence, together with the mitigating circumstances of the offence.
6. As to the mitigating circumstances, the Stewards considered Mr Hassall's extensive experience in the greyhound racing industry, spanning over some forty (40) years,

underscoring his long-standing commitment to the greyhound racing code. The Stewards further considered Mr Hassall's forthright evidence and full cooperation throughout the inquiry, and his disciplinary history which indicates no prior breaches of a similar nature.

7. Whilst Stewards considered Mr Hassall's explanation that he believed that by contacting the owner of Aston Zeppelin he effectively relinquished any responsibility for the euthanasia of the greyhound, Stewards did not accept that such explanation negated Mr Hassall's liability under the rules of racing as Mr Hassall was quite clearly the person responsible for the greyhound at the relevant time.
8. Further, the Stewards considered Mr Hassall's submission as to his own personal circumstances, which he advised during the inquiry resulted in his struggle to read emails. The Stewards, whilst sympathetic to Mr Hassall's circumstances, afforded little weight to such mitigating factors as the Stewards did not believe that it had any material affect upon Mr Hassall's offending conduct. The Stewards further invited Mr Hassall to at all times contact the Stewards directly by whatever means suitable for any clarification in the future.
9. LR 11B(3) has been in force for over twelve (12) months. Whilst the Stewards acknowledge that Mr Hassall did not intentionally breach the subject rule, with the offending instead arising out of ignorance, and that the euthanasia itself was carried out by a veterinarian in a humane manner, it is the responsibility of each trainer to be familiar with the rules of racing.
10. As LR 11B(3) is a local rule in Queensland which was introduced in late 2024, there were no parity cases in existence at the time of this determination. The Stewards have considered a similar case in nature of *Phillip Worthington v Racing and Wagering Western Australia* (Unreported, Racing Penalties Appeal Tribunal, 28 February 2017). In this case, a one (1) year disqualification was imposed upon Mr Worthington for his improper conduct regarding the euthanasia of greyhounds, although Stewards acknowledge that Mr Worthington's conduct was in breach of a different rule and was significantly more serious in nature.
11. The Stewards considered the importance of deterrence, both specific and general, in the imposition of any penalty. Specific deterrence in respect of Mr Hassall as to his strict compliance with the rules of racing and general deterrence in respect of the racing community to dissuade others from making a similar error in efforts to uphold integrity and welfare within the industry.
12. The Stewards are also required to uphold the rules of racing in a way that is both fair and meets community expectations for animal welfare. The purpose of the imposition of a

penalty in this matter is to ensure that the future euthanasia of any greyhounds will be undertaken following the correct requirements of the rules of racing in order to safeguard the industry and meet the community's expectations of the way greyhounds should be treated, especially in the gravest of matters such as euthanasia.

13. In considering this matter, proper consideration was required of Mr Hassall's human rights, and the necessity to act compatibly with human rights in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld). The Stewards acknowledge that any penalty imposed upon Mr Hassall may limit or prevent him from earning a living from the racing industry and subsequently that the imposition of such a penalty may limit Mr Hassall's human rights to own property (namely a licence), as well as the human right of privacy and reputation. The Stewards are satisfied that the limitation upon Mr Hassall's rights by the imposition of any penalty safeguards the integrity of the industry by ensuring that industry participants also have proper regard for integrity with any such limitation being considered as necessary, justifiable and proportionate.

Penalty Decision

14. In determining the appropriate penalty, the Stewards have considered the seriousness of the offence, the need for both specific and general deterrence, the personal circumstances of Mr Hassall, and all relevant mitigating factors.
15. Having regard to the penalties available to be imposed by the Stewards, it is considered that a reprimand is the most appropriate disciplinary action in the circumstances, as it sufficiently enforces compliance. A higher penalty, such as a monetary sanction or licence suspension, would be excessive and disproportionate, given the strong mitigating factors present.
16. Therefore, the Stewards imposed a formal reprimand upon Mr Hassall.

Appeal Rights

17. Mr Hassall was advised of his right to appeal this decision to the Queensland Racing Appeals Panel within three (3) business days pursuant to section 252AB(2) of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* (Qld).