

# **DECISION**

## **Of**

### **Queensland Racing Integrity Commission Stewards**

### **Regarding**

### **Ms Heather Warland**

**Delivered on:** 2 December 2025

**Panel:** Mr N. Torpey (Chair), Mr. W. Barr

**Appearances:** Heather Warland

**Charge:** Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHR) 241 states:

*A person shall not in connection with any part of the harness racing industry do anything which is fraudulent or corrupt.*

**Charge Particulars:** Ms Heather Warland a licensed C Grade driver with the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission in contravention of AHR rule 241 engaged in fraudulent behaviour connection with harness racing.

1. Ms Warland was at all relevant times a licensed C grade driver with the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission.
2. As a requirement with Ms Warland's C grade driver application Ms Warland submitted a fraudulent Health Assessment Results Form for the 2024/2025 season by altering the date on the Health Assessment Results Form completed by his general practitioner from 2023/2024 season
3. Ms Warland's conduct in submitting an altered health assessment form was fraudulent and accordingly in breach of AHR R 241

Plea:

Not Guilty

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**Findings:**

Careful consideration was given to the merits and context of the arguments by Ms Warland in response to the allegation.

On the balance of probabilities and applying the requisite standard of proof as articulated in **Brigginshaw V Brigginshaw** the Stewards were satisfied that the evidence established the contravention of AHR 241 having considered all material facts, submissions and circumstances relevant to the specifics of the charge and found Ms Warland guilty

**Stewards Findings on Penalty:**

The Stewards acknowledge Ms Warland's personal circumstances and her previous record in relation to similar matters. These genuine mitigating factors have been properly considered in determining penalty.

However, the Stewards acknowledge the seriousness of the offence

In the Racing Appeal Panel decision in Thorburn (RAP – 178 decision 8 October 2025) the Panel stated:

*[12] The penalty guidelines identify the purpose of a penalty as being to maintain public confidence in the racing industry, to maintain standards of integrity and animal care in the thoroughbred code, to provide general deterrence to the industry by ensuring that the penalties imposed on an individual for a rule breach is sufficiently serious to discourage other participants from breaching the rule, and it provides specific deterrence to the individual by the imposition of a penalty sufficiently serious to discourage the individual from further engaging in similar conduct.*

*[13] Against this background, each case must be assessed according to its own merits, with the penalty determination involving a balance between the severity of the offence, the need for deterrence both general and specific, and any mitigating factors. Circumstances of relevance set out in the Guidelines for a case such as this can include the circumstances of the offence itself, the degree of culpability or moral blameworthiness involved, the entry of an early plea of guilty or other demonstrations of remorse, and of course, the disciplinary record of the offender.*

*[14] By its very nature the charge here is a serious one, as the Respondent has rightly submitted. The provision of a current HARF*

*is a vital component of any licence renewal application. It is a requirement that exists to ensure that the safety of all licenced participants and the welfare of horses are protected and maintained. In that way it is important to the integrity of the racing industry and to the maintenance of public confidence in the industry*

Stewards form the view that a breach of this nature is unquestionably serious. The requirement for annual medical certification forms a fundamental part of the licence renewal process. This obligation exists to safeguard the health and fitness of licensed participants and, by extension, to protect the welfare and safety of the horses. Compliance with this requirement is therefore integral to maintaining the integrity of the racing industry and upholding public confidence in its operations. Failing to adhere to this obligation undermines these critical objectives and cannot be regarded lightly.

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**Penalty**

Stewards determined that the driver's license of Heather Warland be suspended for period of six (6) months from midnight 3 December 2025.

Against this Stewards decision, Ms Warland was advised of her rights to appeal this decision to the Racing Appeal Panel.