

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Date of issue 15 September 2017

Panel – A Crowther, D Farquharson & R Brown

JAMES AUSTIN INQUIRY – 13 SEPTEMBER 2017

Office of Racing Integrity Stewards today inquired into a report from the analyst that *d* amphetamine and *d* Methamphetamine had been detected in a urine sample provided by licenced driver James Austin at the Tasmanian Pacing Club race meeting on 21 July 2017.

Evidence was tendered today from Mr James Austin who explained the circumstances leading up to the positive finding. Evidence was also taken from Mr Paul Zahra (Racing Analytical Services Ltd), who explained the method and results of analysis.

After consideration, Stewards charged Mr Austin pursuant to AHRR 250(1)(a) which states; '*A driver commits an offence if a sample taken from him is found upon analysis to contain a substance banned by AHRR 251*'.

Mr Austin pleaded not guilty to the charge, however, after consideration of all the available evidence, Stewards found Mr Austin guilty of the charge.

In assessing the matter of penalty, Stewards took into account Mr Austin's current circumstances, both personal and financial, the nature of the substances detected, the fact this was Mr Austin's second offence for this substance within a short timeframe. Stewards were also mindful of the importance for participants to be free of prohibited substances to ensure the safety and welfare of drivers and horses and the need for any penalty to act as an appropriate deterrent both specific and general.

Mr Austin was disqualified for a period of 12 months backdated to commence from 3 August 2017, the day on which he was stood down from driving.

Mr Austin was advised of his rights to appeal.

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Adrian Crowther
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