

# Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

## Media Release

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015

# Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

Date of Hearing: Friday, 19 June 2015.  
Panel: Mr. John Wardle (Chairman) and Mr. Terry O'Connor (Deputy Chairman).  
Name of Person Charged: Mr. Eric Sykes.  
Suburb: Tooradin.  
Track: Tooradin Trial Track.  
Breaches of rules: LR 18.5, GAR86 (af)

### Offence Charged:

- (1) Eric Sykes did, on the 23 December 2014 at Tooradin, use or cause to be used a live animal (namely, a live rabbit) for the exciting of a black greyhound with a white spot on its chest whilst Lawrence Cunningham had the live rabbit on a leash, on a greyhound trial track, namely, the Tooradin Trial Track located at 175 Harewood-Mains Road, Tooradin, Victoria.
- (2) Eric Sykes did, on 23 December 2014 at Tooradin use an animal (namely, a live rabbit) for a purpose connected with greyhound racing in a manner which was improper, namely, he used a live rabbit for the exciting of a greyhound (namely, a black greyhound with a white spot on its chest) whilst Lawrence Cunningham had the live rabbit on a leash, on a greyhound trial track, namely, the Tooradin Trial Track located at 175 Harewood-Mains Road, Tooradin.

### REPORT:

Under Rule 47.1 of the Greyhound Racing Victoria Local Rules breaches of LR 18.5 and GAR 86 (af) each constitutes a Serious Offence. As a result, on Friday, 19 June 2015 this matter was heard before the Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Board in the first instance under Greyhound Local Racing Rule 47.3 and Sections 83C(b) and 83M(1) of the Racing Act.

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Mr. Eric Sykes was represented by Mr. Damien Sheales instructed by Ms. Anastasia Smietanka of Lander & Rogers.

Mr. Paul Holdenson QC, instructed by Corrs Chambers Westgarth represented the Stewards Panel. Mr. Glenn Fish (GRV Chief Steward) attended and appeared as a witness.

Mr. Eric Sykes pleaded guilty to Charge 1. Charge 2 was withdrawn. The RADB noted that at the Directions Hearing held on 26 May 2015 Mr. Sykes by his Counsel had entered a plea of guilty to charge 1 and that the Stewards had agreed to withdraw charge 2.

After hearing all the evidence tendered including viewing video footage and hearing submissions from Counsel, the RADB found Mr. Eric Sykes guilty of the charge and disqualified him for 10 years with 5 years of this penalty suspended pending no further breaches of LR18.5 GAR 86 (af) and any other rule relating to live baiting or animal welfare generally, effective from Thursday, 19 February 2015.

In making this determination on penalty the RADB expressly repeated what it had said in the recent matter of Christopher Connolly as to the reprehensible nature of live baiting and that it had no place within the Greyhound Industry. In the particular case of Mr. Sykes regard was given to his early guilty plea, undoubted remorse, a blameless industry involvement over forty years and supportive references.

.....End.....

**For More Information:**

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