

DECISION

INQUIRY NUMBER: 16S099
PERSON: Chad Achurch (**Achurch**)
DATE OF DECISION: 8 June 2018

CHARGE

1. The Stewards charged Achurch under rule 86B(1)(g) of the GRNSW Greyhound Racing Rules (**Rules**):

That you, Chad Achurch, a registered trainer, was convicted in a Court of an offence in relation to the use of, or having in your possession, any live animal, animal carcass or part of an animal in connection with greyhound training, education or preparation to race, or racing (**Charge**).

BACKGROUND AND PARTICULARS

2. On 10 October 2016 the Stewards notified Achurch that:
 - (a) The Stewards had commenced an inquiry in relation to allegations that Achurch had breached Rule 86B(1) of the GRNSW Greyhound Racing Rules (**Rules**); and
 - (b) The Stewards were considering an interim suspension of Achurch's licence.
3. On 12 October 2016 the Stewards issued an interim suspension of Achurch's licence.
4. On 7 April 2017 Achurch was convicted of the following offences in Liverpool Local Court:
 - (a) Use animal for training greyhounds / coursing dog under section 21 of the *Protection of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (NSW) (**Act**); and
 - (b) Commit an act of aggravated cruelty upon an animal under section 6 of the Act (**Criminal Conviction**).
5. Achurch was sentenced to eight months and 15 days imprisonment and a life ban was imposed from having possession or custody of any greyhound.
6. On 7 April 2017 the Stewards issued the Charge against Achurch in which the Charge was further particularised as being Greyhound Rule 86B(1)(g). Achurch denied the charge.
7. Achurch appealed his Criminal Conviction and sentence and, given the Charge relied on the Criminal Conviction, the Stewards stayed their determination of the Charge until such time as the appeal was heard. Achurch's appeal was dismissed by Judge J Bennett at Parramatta on 19 February 2018.
8. On 12 April 2018 the Stewards received the certificate of conviction in the case of R v Chad Joseph Achurch detailing the orders made by Judge J Bennett at Parramatta on 19 February 2018 (**Conviction Certificate**).

9. On 24 April 2018 the Stewards sent a letter to Achurch (by email and registered mail) requiring Achurch to make any submissions in relation to the Charge by 5pm on 10 May 2018. Achurch did not respond.

DENIAL

10. Achurch denied the Charge.

FINDINGS

11. The Stewards have reviewed the Conviction Certificate. The Stewards are satisfied that the Conviction Certificate is conclusive evidence that:
 - (a) Achurch was convicted of offences under section 6 and 21 of the Act;
 - (b) The nature of the offences committed by Achurch were:
 - (i) using a rabbit in connection with greyhound training, education and/or preparation to race; and
 - (ii) aggravated animal cruelty in relation to the use of a rabbit in connection with greyhound training, education and/or preparation to race; and
 - (c) As a result of the conviction, Achurch was sentenced to a term of imprisonment and banned for life from having possession or custody of any greyhound.
12. As a result, the Stewards find that Achurch breached the Rules as charged.

PENALTY

13. The Stewards are of the opinion that this offence is of the highest level of seriousness. It involves serious criminal acts of animal cruelty in connection with the training, education and/or preparation of greyhounds. The Stewards consider that their decision on penalty must reflect this seriousness and the fact that greyhound racing in NSW has zero tolerance for such barbaric, vile and abhorrent acts involving animal cruelty.
14. There is no place in any aspect of greyhound racing for persons that commit such horrific acts of animal cruelty. This includes licensed persons, spectators and visitors to any property where greyhounds are kept.
15. Accordingly, the Stewards disqualify Achurch for life. As a result of the disqualification (among other things):
 - (a) All licences and registrations of Achurch are cancelled by GRNSW;
 - (b) Achurch is not permitted to conduct any business affecting the registration of greyhounds or participants with GRNSW;
 - (c) Achurch is not entitled to hold any registration, licence, certificate or permit issued by GRNSW;
 - (d) Achurch must not enter a racecourse or place under the control of any greyhound racing club; and
 - (e) Achurch must not enter a place where greyhound are trained, kept or raced.

**Stewards
GREYHOUND RACING NSW**