

MR CHRIS BOURKE- INQUIRY CONCLUDED

13 August 2026

On Monday 10 August 2026, Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards concluded an Inquiry that commenced on 5 June 2026 in relation to the conduct of Licensed Trainer Mr Chris Bourke in the raceday stalls at the Newcastle Harness meeting on that date.

The Inquiry was adjourned to allow HRNSW Stewards to review video evidence and resumed on Wednesday 5 August 2026 via audio/visual technology.

Trainer Mr Chris Bourke appeared at the Inquiry and provided evidence. In addition, Licensed Trainer/Drivers Mr Darren Elder and Mr Brad Elder appeared at the Inquiry and provided evidence.

Evidence from HRNSW Assistant Regulatory Veterinarian Dr Edwina Lawson was also presented to the Inquiry, together with a video recording and documents.

Mr Bourke pleaded not guilty to two (2) charges issued by HRNSW Stewards pursuant to the Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) as follow:

Charge 1- Issued pursuant to AHRR 218B (1) & (2):

AHRR 218B. (1) *A person shall not mistreat a horse.*

(2) *For the purposes of this rule “mistreat” means to abuse or treat a horse badly, cruelly or unfairly.*

Charge 2- Issued pursuant to AHRR 243:

AHRR 243. *A person employed, engaged or participating in the harness racing industry shall not behave in a way which is prejudicial or detrimental to the industry.*

Mr Bourke was found guilty and was disqualified for a period of 2 years in relation to each charge, to be served concurrently, commencing from 5 August 2026 the date upon which he was stood down.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following;

- Mr Bourke's Conduct;
- Mr Bourke's involvement in the harness racing industry as a licensed person, together with his training/driving records and his offence history;
- Mr Bourke's subjective matters;
- Mr Bourke's Not Guilty pleas;

Mr Bourke has appealed these decisions of the HRNSW Stewards.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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