

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Wednesday 15 March, 2017

### **FORMER CEO OF ARENA SPORTS CLUB AT YAGOONA BANNED FOR 3 YEARS**

The NSW Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority Board has banned the former secretary of Arena Sports Club at Yagoona for three years for dishonestly dealing with a substantial amount of the club's funds.

Robert Fletcher has been deemed not a fit or proper person to be a secretary or member of a governing body of any licensed club in NSW. ILGA has also imposed a \$13,000 fine on Arena Sports Club, which is licensed as Greyhound Social Club.

A Liquor & Gaming NSW investigation found systemic corporate governance failures and breaches of registered club legislation by the former secretary together with suspected fraud involving more than \$300,000 of club funds. The misconduct detailed in the complaint occurred prior to October 2014 during Mr Fletcher's tenure as CEO.

Since Liquor & Gaming NSW's inquiries began in June 2015, a new board of directors and a new secretary manager have taken positive steps to reposition the club and address past governance and compliance failures.

Evidence provided to ILGA showed Mr Fletcher failed to report substantial shortfalls in accounts including unreconciled deposits and cheques despite the discrepancies being repeatedly brought to his attention by the club's auditor.

Some other particulars that contributed to Mr Fletcher being found not fit and proper included:

- misrepresenting the club's true financial position to the club board.
- claiming significant and excessive amounts of overtime without approval. (The amounts of overtime effectively doubled his salary).
- improperly transferring \$40,000 of club funds to cover a Keno bet his partner made by 'credit betting' (placing a bet without having the funds to pay for it).

ILGA also found the club's former chairperson Thomas Green contributed to the regulatory failings through deficient knowledge and ability, but his actions or omissions did not compare to the misconduct of Mr Fletcher.

ILGA accepted Mr Green did not authorise or benefit from Mr Fletcher's fraud, and that he was a person of generally good character.

ILGA also had regard to Mr Green's substantial contribution to the club over many years and determined to not take disciplinary action against him.

Liquor & Gaming NSW Director of Compliance Operations Sean Goodchild said the case highlights the need for both club officials and governing bodies to ensure legal compliance and robust internal governance to protect clubs' and members' assets.

The club was also ordered to pay \$24,000 in investigation costs.

A copy of the full ILGA decision can be found at:

<https://www.liquorandgaming.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/ilga/decisions-of-interest/ilga-final-decision-letter-greyhound-social-club-pty-ltd-7-3-17.pdf>

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