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\$400k payout is big WIN for former TV executive

STEPHANIE GARDINER

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A former WIN television executive who accused his billionaire boss of calling him the manager of "the toilet rolls and the weeds" has won a Federal Court case, with a judge ruling he is entitled to hundreds of thousands of dollars under his contract.

Rodney Hockey, a former general manager at WIN, sued the company, saying he was entitled to more than \$400,000. He relied on a letter in his contract which stated that upon giving notice of termination, which he did in February last year, he would be paid up until September 3 this year.

In court on Thursday morning, Justice Alan Robertson found the language of the contract was not ambiguous and it meant that Mr Hockey would be paid up to September 3.

The court heard a gross figure owed to him was calculated to be \$404,490.

After the judgment Mr Hockey's lawyer, John Laxon, praised his client for taking on WIN corporation.

"[They] essentially attempted to bully him into accepting less than he was entitled to. So congratulations to Rod Hockey for having the courage and fortitude to stand up to them."

Mr Hockey, who had worked his way up from a tape operator in 1985 to senior management in 2007, revealed claims of bullying, intimidation and harassment at WIN corporation in an explosive affidavit filed during the case.

Mr Hockey's affidavit alleged many instances of bullying by octogenarian media mogul Bruce Gordon, including being called a "prick", a "lump of wood" and an "idiot". Mr Hockey said it had started to affect his health.

Early in 2011, another executive told Mr Hockey that Mr Gordon had allegedly said of him: "Hockey manages the toilet rolls and the weeds."

In March 2011, when general manager roles were being disbanded, Mr Hockey raised his concerns about Mr Gordon's "intimidation" with the latter's son, WIN executive chairman Andrew Gordon, and how it would affect any new role he took on.

Mr Hockey said Andrew Gordon told him: "We agree that if you accept one of the new roles and the intimidation starts again, you can just opt out and have your contract paid in full."

Mr Hockey also said when he told Andrew Gordon he had had enough of "this treatment", he replied: "Don't worry about the contract. I have signed off on it as chairman. It's solid. If Bruce wants to fight it, I will resign . . . I am sick of seeing good people leave."

Andrew Gordon's affidavit denied he told Mr Hockey if he accepted a new position and it did not work out, he could take a redundancy after six months and be paid out to the end of his contract.

Andrew Gordon also declined to respond to the allegations relating to bullying and harassment, saying they appeared to be an attempt to embarrass the company and the Gordons.

The court heard the figure of \$404,490 had generated interest since last February, and the parties now have to discuss interest and tax to decide on the final figure.

Mr Laxon said: "He was made a promise by the executive chairman of the company. They looked each other in the eye, they shook hands . . . and then WIN reneged on that agreement.

"He will receive what he was entitled to receive to the end of his contract, as was agreed, which was not honoured by WIN."

WIN has been contacted for comment.

[Sydney Morning Herald](#)



Rodney Hockey. Picture: GREG TOTMAN