

Notice To Industry: Strangles

March 19, 2026

Harness Racing NSW (HRNSW) has been made aware that there have been confirmed cases of Strangles in the broader Sydney region.

Strangles is a highly contagious infectious disease of the upper respiratory tract, caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus equi* subsp. *equi* (*S. equi*). Horses, ponies, and donkeys may be affected.

Infection occurs when susceptible horses come into contact with infected horses, either through direct contact or via indirect contact with contaminated materials such as feed and water buckets, tack, transport vehicles, stables, as well as in contact personnel's hands and clothing.

Strangles is usually readily recognised and is characterized by an acute fever followed by the development of swollen lymph nodes and mucopurulent nasal discharge.

Horses will usually have an elevated temperature that persists while lymph node abscesses are forming. Difficulty in swallowing, reluctance to eat and depression are common. Nasal discharge may be watery initially but rapidly becomes mucopurulent. The lymph nodes of the head and neck are commonly involved and become swollen and painful usually within a week after infection. Abscesses then form within the lymph node and eventually mature and rupture.

The most obvious source of transmission is the characteristic purulent discharge or contact with the contents from burst lymph node abscesses.

Recovering horses and subclinical cases can also transmit disease. A recovered horse may be a potential source of infection for a minimum of six weeks after resolution of its clinical signs.

Should any Trainer or person in charge of a horse/s be concerned that horses in their care may be affected, then they must seek veterinary advice immediately.

Any horses exhibiting any of the above-mentioned signs must not be brought to any racecourse.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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