

MR DARREN HANCOCK- INQUIRY CONDUCTED

23 July 2026

Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry today into a report received from the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) that Tapentadol was detected in the post-race urine sample taken from FASTING following its win in race 6, the WELCOME WAGGA DIRECTIONAL DRILLING PACE (1740 metres) conducted at Wagga on Friday 19 December 2025.

The reserve portion and control solution were confirmed by Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL) in Victoria.

Trainer Mr Darren Hancock attended the Inquiry and presented evidence in relation to the horse FASTING and his registered training establishment, including the existence of a septic sewer system.

Licensed Stablehand Mr Brian Hancock attended the Inquiry on behalf of the horse's owners.

A number of documents were entered into evidence at the Inquiry including the Certificates of Analysis in relation to the post-race urine sample and samples obtained from Mr Hancock's registered training establishment.

HRNSW Regulatory Veterinarian, Dr Martin Wainscott, was also present and provided evidence to the Inquiry in relation to the septic sewer system on the property and Tapentadol having been detected in a sample of treated water from the septic sewer system and a soil sample from the property.

Dr Wainscott provided evidence that it was extremely likely that the source of the Tapentadol was the septic sewer system

Mr Hancock was found guilty of a charge issued against him pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) 190 (1), (2) & (4) as follows:

AHRR 190. (1) *A horse shall be presented for a race free of prohibited substances.*

(2) *If a horse is presented for a race otherwise than in accordance with sub rule (1) the trainer of the horse is guilty of an offence.*

(3) *If a person is left in charge of a horse and the horse is presented for a race otherwise than in accordance with sub rule (1), the trainer of the horse and the person left in charge is each guilty of an offence.*

(4) *An offence under sub rule (2) or sub rule (3) is committed regardless of the circumstances in which the prohibited substance came to be present in or on the horse.*

HRNSW Stewards imposed a fine of \$2000 upon Mr Hancock.

In consideration of an appropriate penalty, HRNSW Stewards were mindful of the following:

- The circumstances of this matter including evidence of Dr Wainscott;
- Mr Hancock's licence history, harness racing offence record, training and driving records since first being licensed as a Trainer and Driver in the 1985/86 season;
- Mr Hancock's personal subjective facts;
- Class 1 Prohibited Substance;
- Steps taken by Mr Hancock in an attempt to prevent the water from the septic sewer system entering the horse's environment;
- Mr Hancock's not guilty plea;

Mr Hancock was informed of his right to appeal the decision of the HRNSW Stewards.

Acting under the provisions of AHRR 195, FASTING was disqualified from the abovementioned race.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Name: **Michael Prentice**
Position: Chief Integrity Officer
Phone: (02) 9722 6600
Email: mprentice@hrnsw.com.au

Clint Bentley
Chairman of Stewards
(02) 9722 6628
cbentley@hrnsw.com.au