

## MR TONY BERTWISTLE- INQUIRY CONDUCTED

8 August 2025

Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry today in relation to a report from the Australian Government National Measurement Institute (NMI) that Cobalt above the threshold of 25 micrograms per litre in blood was detected in the blood sample taken from the horse HARLEEQUIN prior to it finishing 5th in race 7, the NUTRIEN SALES CLASSIC 3YO FILLIES HEAT (1609 metres) conducted at Menangle on Saturday 5 April 2025.

In addition, the Inquiry was also conducted in relation to a report from the Australian Government National Measurement Institute (NMI) that Cobalt above the threshold of 100 micrograms per litre in urine was detected in the urine sample taken from HARLEEQUIN following its win in race 2, the ODE OF REMEMBRANCE PACE (2125 metres) conducted at Penrith on Thursday 24 April 2025.

The 'B' portion for the blood sample and the reserve portion/control solution for the urine sample were confirmed by the ChemCentre in Western Australia.

Licensed Trainer Mr Tony Bertwistle was present and provided evidence to the Inquiry in relation to the horse HARLEEQUIN and his registered training establishment.

In addition, the certificates of Analysis and evidence from HRNSW Regulatory Veterinarian Dr Martin Wainscott were presented to the Inquiry.

Mr Bertwistle pleaded guilty to two (2) charges issued by HRNSW Stewards pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule (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.*

Mr Bertwistle was disqualified for a period of two and a half (2.5) years in relation to each charge to commence from 16 July 2025, the date upon which he was stood down pursuant to AHRR 183. Stewards ordered that the disqualification periods be served concurrently.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following;

- Mr Bertwistle's involvement in the harness racing industry since the 1998/1999 season;
- Mr Bertwistle's training and driving records, together with his harness racing offence record which includes a previous prohibited substance matter in 2007;
- Class 1 Prohibited Substance;
- The levels of cobalt recorded;
- The impact of a disqualification upon Mr Bertwistle from a personal and financial perspective.

Acting under the provisions of AHRR 195, HARLEEQUIN was disqualified from the abovementioned races.

Mr Bertwistle was informed of his right to appeal these decisions of the HRNSW Stewards.

**Harness Racing NSW (HRNSW) is the controlling body for harness racing in New South Wales with responsibility for commercial and regulatory management of the industry including 27 racing clubs across the State. HRNSW is headed by an industry-appointed Board of Directors and is independent of Government.**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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

**Clint Bentley**  
Chairman of Stewards  
(02) 9722 6628  
[cbentley@hrnsw.com.au](mailto:cbentley@hrnsw.com.au)