

MR MICHAEL HAWKE - INQUIRY CONCLUDED

1 September 2025

On Friday 29 August 2025, Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry into a report from the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) that naproxen was detected in the post-race blood sample taken from WORTH EVERY CENT following its win in race 8, the MGA INSURANCE BROKERS MAIDEN PACE (1770 metres) conducted at Canberra on Monday 5 May 2025.

In addition, the Inquiry was conducted into a report from the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) that naproxen was also detected in the pre-race blood sample taken from WORTH EVERY CENT prior to it running in that race.

The 'B' samples were confirmed by Racing Analytical Service Limited (RASL) in Victoria.

Licensed Trainer Mr Michael Hawke, together with Licensed Trainer/Driver Ms Melissa Hawke, attended the Inquiry via Zoom and presented evidence in relation to the horse WORTH EVERY CENT and the registered training establishment.

A number of documents were entered into evidence at the Inquiry including the Certificates of Analysis in relation to the blood samples, together with results of analytical tests conducted upon samples obtained from Mr Hawke's registered training establishment by HRNSW Investigator, Ms Suzanne Campbell.

In addition, Mr Hawke's medical records were entered into evidence.

HRNSW Regulatory Veterinarian, Dr Martin Wainscott, was also present and provided evidence to the Inquiry that it was entirely plausible that the detection of naproxen had resulted from environmental contamination within the stable environment.

Mr Hawke pleaded guilty to 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.*

In respect of that charge, Stewards imposed a fine of \$4000.

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

- The circumstances of this matter including the evidence of Dr Wainscott;
- Mr Hawke's involvement in the harness racing industry as a licensed person for approximately 45 years;
- Mr Hawke's offence record, together with his training and driving record;
- Mr Hawke's personal subjective facts including administrative contribution to the harness racing industry and community involvement;
- Class 3 Prohibited substance;
- Mr Hawke's first prohibited substance matter;
- Risk management steps taken since being notified of the sample irregularity;
- Mr Hawke's guilty plea.

Pursuant to AHRR 195, HRNSW Stewards disqualified WORTH EVERY CENT from the abovementioned race.

Mr Hawke was informed of his rights to appeal against these decisions of the HRNSW Stewards.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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