

MR ANTHONY VARGA – INQUIRY CONDUCTED

25 August 2026

Harness Racing NSW (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry today into a report from Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL) that benzoylecgonine, a cocaine metabolite, was detected in a urine sample obtained from Mr Anthony Varga at the Tamworth harness meeting on Thursday 9 July 2026.

The reserve portion was confirmed by the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL).

Mr Varga pleaded guilty to two (2) charges issued by HRNSW Stewards pursuant to the Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) as follow:

Charge 1 Issued pursuant to AHRR 250(1)(a):

AHRR 250. (1) A driver commits an offence if:-

(a) A sample taken from him is found upon analysis to contain a substance banned by Rule 251,

AHRR 251. The following substances and/or their metabolites, artifacts, and isomers are declared as banned substances in drivers when present in a urine sample (unless otherwise stated) at a concentration above the applicable cut-off level:-

(d) All stimulants – substances in this group include, but are not restricted to,

....Cocaine (100µg/L).

Charge 2 Issued pursuant to AHRR 250A(1)(a):

AHRR 250A. (1) A person carrying on or purporting to carry on an activity regulated by licence at any time or carrying on official duties at a meeting commits an offence if:

(a) a sample taken from him or her is found upon analysis to contain a substance banned by Rule 251A

AHRR 251A. The following substances and/or their metabolites, artifacts, and isomers are declared as banned substances when present in a sample (unless otherwise stated) at a concentration above the applicable cut-off level in persons carrying on or purporting to carry on an activity regulated by licence at any time or carrying on official duties at a race meeting:-

(d) All stimulants – substances in this group include, but are not restricted to,

....Cocaine (100µg/L).

In relation to each of the charges, Stewards imposed a 6 month suspension of Mr Varga's Trainer and Driver licences, to commence from 22 July 2026, the date upon which he was stood down.

Stewards ordered that the penalties be served concurrently.

Pursuant to AHRR 252A, Mr Varga was informed that upon completion of a drug counselling program approved by HRNSW, a period of 1 month suspension would be stayed.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following:

- Mr Varga's 1st offence of this nature;
- Extreme seriousness of the offence considering the subject Rules are designed and exist to ensure the safety of human and equine participants in the harness racing industry;
- Mr Varga's guilty pleas, licence history, personal/financial subjective factors, together with Mr Varga's training and driving records.

Mr Varga was advised of his right to appeal these decisions of HRNSW Stewards.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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