

TRNT Stewards Report – Monday 10th November 2025

Panel: D Hensler (Chairman), D Westover, R Shiers (Deputy)
Venue: Darwin Turf Club Stewards' Room

Stewards today conducted an inquiry into the analyst's findings from the race day swab samples collected from the gelding WRITE YOUR NAME at the Darwin Turf Club race meeting on Saturday the 26th of July 2025. The certificates of analysis for the pre race blood sample detected the presence of cotinine and the post race urine sample detected the presence of nicotine and cotinine.

The Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) issued the first certificates for these findings and the confirmation analysis was performed and the second certificates issued by Racing Analytical Services (RASL).

Trainer Mr Dick Leech appeared in person and expert evidence was considered from ARFL General Manager Mr J Keledjian and RWWA Head of Veterinary Services Dr Judith Medd. After considering the scientific evidence relating to the substances and the low detected levels, the Stewards were satisfied that the presence of nicotine and cotinine in the samples was most likely the result of environmental contamination with the gelding being subjected to some type of inadvertent exposure to or ingestion of, tobacco or a similar product containing nicotine. A review of the CCTV footage of WRITE YOUR NAME in the race day stalls on the day including the sample collection process did not identify any such exposure or contamination once the gelding arrived on course.

Subsequently, Mr Leech was found guilty of a charge under AR240(2)

The specifics of the charge being:

- He is a thoroughbred trainer licensed by TRNT
- At the relevant time he was the licensed trainer of WRITE YOUR NAME
- On 26th of July 2025, WRITE YOUR NAME was brought to the Darwin Turf Club race meeting held at Fannie Bay racecourse for the purpose of participating in race 7, the TAB Metric Mile run over 1600m.
- Upon analysis prohibited substances were detected in the pre race blood sample and post race urine sample collected from WRITE YOUR NAME, those substances being nicotine and its metabolite cotinine.
- Nicotine and its metabolite cotinine are prohibited substances pursuant to Division 1 of Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Australian Rules of Racing (Prohibited List B)

Acting under the provisions of AR240(1), the Stewards disqualified WRITE YOUR NAME from the abovementioned race and the results will be amended accordingly.

In determining penalty Stewards took into account the following:

- The seriousness of the offence
- The low detected levels and scientific evidence supporting that environmental contamination was a plausible explanation
- The nature of the prohibited List B substance being a stimulant and potentially performance enhancing
- The fact that Mr Leech had a previous positive to these substances in 2023 and the limited steps he had put in place since that time to mitigate the risk of exposure to thoroughbreds in his stable to the environmental contamination of nicotine
- Plea, co-operation and personal circumstances
- Previous breaches of this rule in 2023, 2019 and 2008
- Previous penalty precedents relating to Prohibited List B substances
- Penalties are required to reflect a deterrent factor – both general and specific

A fine of \$7000 was imposed.

Mr Leech was advised of his rights of appeal to the NT Racing Appeals Tribunal and that the fine must be paid within 6 months.

Australian Rules of Racing referred to in this report:

Division 2 – Prohibited substance in a sample taken from a horse

AR 240 Prohibited substance in sample taken from horse at race meeting

(1) Subject to subrule (3), if a horse is brought to a racecourse and a prohibited substance on Prohibited List A and/or Prohibited List B is detected in a sample taken from the horse prior to or following its running in any race, the horse must be disqualified from any race in which it started on that day.

(2) Subject to subrule (3), if a horse is brought to a racecourse for the purpose of participating in a race and a prohibited substance on Prohibited List A and/or Prohibited List B is detected in a sample taken from the horse prior to or following its running in any race, the trainer and any other person who was in charge of the horse at any relevant time breaches these Australian Rules.