

TRNT Stewards Report – Tuesday 13th January 2026

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

Stewards today conducted an inquiry into the analyst's findings of the blood sample collected from SIMPLY JUST before competing in and finishing seventh at the Darwin Turf Club race meeting on 4 November 2025. The certificates of analysis for the blood sample detected the presence of cotinine, the metabolite of nicotine.

The Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) issued the first certificate for this finding and the confirmation analysis was performed and the second certificate issued by Racing Analytical Services (RASL).

Evidence was tendered by trainer Mr Chris Pollard, ARFL General Manager Mr J Keledjian and RWWA Industry Veterinarian Dr Judith Medd. After considering the scientific evidence relating to the low detected level, the Stewards were satisfied that the presence of cotinine in the sample was most likely the result of 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 in the race day stalls on the day did not identify any such exposure once the gelding arrived on course.

Subsequently, Mr Pollard pleaded guilty to 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 trainer of SIMPLY JUST
- On 4 November 2025, SIMPLY JUST was brought to the Darwin Turf Club race meeting held at Fannie Bay racecourse for the purpose of participating in race 4, the Chris Williams Jewellers Handicap run over 1100m
- Upon analysis the prohibited substance cotinine was detected in the pre race blood sample collected from the gelding
- Cotinine is a metabolite of nicotine and listed as a prohibited list B substance, pursuant to the Australian Rules of Racing

Acting under the provisions of AR240(1), the Stewards disqualified SIMPLY JUST 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 level and the expert scientific and veterinary evidence indicating inadvertent exposure to, or ingestion of nicotine was a plausible explanation
- The nature of the prohibited List B substance being a stimulant and potentially performance enhancing
- Guilty plea, co-operation and personal circumstances
- Disciplinary history over 20 years as a licensed trainer
- Previous penalty precedents relating to Prohibited List B substances
- Penalties are required to reflect a deterrent factor – both general and specific

A fine of \$4000 was imposed.

The fine must be paid within 6 months and Mr Pollard was advised of his right of appeal to the TRNT Racing Appeals Committee.

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.