



STEWARDS INQUIRY INTO THE WELFARE OF HORSES IN THE CARE OF LICENSED STABLE HAND MR TONY ZORZANELLO

**Murrumbidgee Turf Club
Stewards Room
Via teleconference**

2 March 2026

**Stewards: D R Hadley (Chairman)
B J Clark**

In December 2025, Racing NSW Officials attended the premises of licensed stablehand Mr Tony Zorzanello at Dalton Park Racecourse, Griffith. Upon arrival, Officials observed that the paddock in which five (5) Thoroughbred horses were housed was not maintained in accordance with the *Minimum Standards & Guidelines of Equine Welfare*.

On 17 December 2025 and again on 13 February 2026, Officials conducted follow-up inspections at properties in Griffith. During the inspection on 13 February 2026, Officials examined the Thoroughbred gelding *Reviews*. The gelding was observed lying on its side and experienced difficulty rising to its feet. Upon standing, *Reviews* was assessed as 4/5 lame in the off foreleg and displayed obvious signs of discomfort when in motion. Noticeable swelling was present throughout the off forelimb, extending from the fetlock through the cannon bone and into the lower region of the knee. When stationary, the gelding was reluctant to bear weight on the affected limb.

It was established that the gelding had been displaying signs of lameness for approximately one week prior to the inspection conducted on 13 February 2026.

Officials issued Mr Zorzanello with directions to obtain a veterinary assessment of *Reviews*. A subsequent veterinary examination revealed the gelding to be 3/5 lame in the left foreleg, with an obvious draining hoof abscess present in the sole of the left forelimb hoof.

Racing NSW Stewards today opened an inquiry into the matter. A brief of evidence compiled by Racing NSW Investigator Anna Tabet was tendered with oral evidence being taken from Mr Zorzanello, Racing NSW Investigator Anna Tabet, Veterinarian Dr Jessica Dalton and Racing NSW Veterinarian Dr Claire Moore.

Stewards considered the evidence and issued two charges against Mr Zorzanello as detailed below;

Charges issued against Mr Tony Zorzanello

Charge 1: LR114(2)(c)

The details of the charge being that, as at 9 December 2025, the paddocks in which thoroughbred horses *West's Tigers*, *Hard Sell*, *Reviews*, *Minergie Belle* and *Bullseye Bobby* were located was littered with general and stable waste, including but not limited to, wooden pallets, furniture, tin sheets, plain wire, barbed wire, rubbish, machinery and debris. The condition of the paddocks did not comply with the standard approved by Racing NSW, nor do they meet the requirements of being adequately maintained or in a clean condition

Plea: Guilty

Finding: Guilty

Charge 2: AR231(1)(b)(iii)

The details of the charge being that between approximately 8 February 2026 and 15 February 2026, he was aware that *Reviews* was lame in the off foreleg and did fail to obtain veterinary treatment and provide veterinary treatment to *Reviews* where such treatment was necessary.

Plea: Guilty

Finding: Guilty

Penalty

The following penalty considerations were taken into account –

- Pleas entered
- Objective seriousness of the conduct
- The contrition and remorse shown by Mr Zorzanello and his willingness to accept responsibility for her conduct
- Precedent penalties
- Ms Zorzanello's personal and professional circumstances including illness
- Principle of specific and general deterrence and what message is sent to the industry in respect to such conduct
- The importance of equine welfare for the thoroughbred racing industry prior to, during racing and on retirement
- Purpose of issuing penalties as a protective measure for the image, interests and welfare of the thoroughbred racing industry.

Charge 1: LR114(2)(c) – 3-month suspension of licence reduced to 2 months

Charge 4: AR231(1)(b)(iii) – 6-month suspension of licence reduced to 4 months

The Stewards have determined that, having regard to the nature of the breaches, Charges 1 and 2 will be served cumulatively. Taking into account the relevant mitigating factors, a total period of suspension of six (6) months has been imposed. The suspension will commence on 2 March 2026 and expire on 2 September 2026.

Mr Zorzanello was advised of his appeal rights.

Relevant Rules:

LR114(2)(c)

(2) A registered owner, trainer or any person that is in charge of or has in his or her possession, control or custody of any horses (Eligible Horses, Unnamed Horses and Named Horses) must ensure that any such horses are provided at all times with:

(c) stabling and paddocks of a standard approved by Racing NSW, which are adequate in size, which are adequately maintained and kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

AR 231 Care and welfare of horses

(1) A person must not:

(b) if the person is in charge of a horse – fail at any time:

(iii) to provide veterinary treatment to the horse where such treatment is necessary for the horse;

**D R Hadley
General Manager – Investigations
Racing NSW**