

MR SAM HEWITT - INQUIRY CONDUCTED

20 March 2026

On Wednesday 18 March 2026, Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry into a report received from the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) that Synephrine was detected in the urine sample taken from ARK SEA following its win in race 6, the NUTRIEN EQUINE NSW BREEDERS CHALLENGE 2YO FILLIES FINAL (GROUP 1) (1609 metres) conducted at Tabcorp Park Menangle on Saturday 25 October 2025.

The reserve portion and control sample have been confirmed by Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL) in Victoria.

The horse ARK SEA was presented to the HRNSW Retention Facility on 23 October 2025 at which time an out of competition blood sample was obtained. In addition, a feed sample was obtained on Saturday 25 October 2025.

Licensed Trainer Mr Sam Hewitt attended the Inquiry, assisted by Mr Rick Jones. Owners Mr Edward Abbey and Mr Carl Ryman were also in attendance.

HRNSW Regulatory Veterinarian Dr Martin Wainscott attended and provided evidence to the Inquiry. The certificates of analysis issued by ARFL and RASL in relation to the post-race urine sample were entered into evidence.

In addition, ARFL results of analysis were entered into evidence in relation to the out of competition blood sample and the feed sample, both of which returned negative results.

Further, the ARFL results of analysis for plant samples collected from the retention yards and surrounds were presented into evidence with synephrine being confirmed in some of those samples.

Mr Hewitt was found guilty of a charge issued by HRNSW Stewards pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule (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, pursuant to AHRR 256(6) Stewards did not record a conviction and no penalty was imposed.

Stewards considered submissions provided by the owners of ARK SEA in relation to AHRR 195 as follows:

AHRR 195. *A horse which has been presented for a race shall be disqualified from it if blood, urine, saliva, or other matter or sample or specimen taken from the horse is found to contain a prohibited substance.*

Acting under the provisions of AHRR 195, ARK SEA was disqualified from the subject race.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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