



HEARING AND DETERMINATION OF CHARGES ISSUED AGAINST LICENSED TRAINER MR DAVID BLUNDELL

**Murrumbidgee Turf Club
Stewards Room**

19 November 2024

**Stewards: D R Hadley (Chair)
L J Martin
M W Cleaver
B D Beasley**

On 29 October 2024, Racing NSW Officials attended the premises of licensed trainer Mr David Blundell at Gundagai Racecourse in relation to a stable inspection. Upon arrival at the location, Officials observed the stabling and paddocks at the property to be in a state that did not comply with the 'Minimum Standards & Guidelines of Equine Welfare'. Additionally, Officials inspected thoroughbred horses *Eyre Square/Evenaz 2018*, *Sooboog/Miss Hellraiser 2021*, *Zabellsareringing*, *Brave Captain* and *Eyre Square/Lovelife 2018*, all of which were in the charge of Mr Blundell. All five (5) horses had observably poor body condition.

Racing NSW commenced investigations into the matter and conducted interviews with Mr David Blundell and other industry participants. Officials conducted subsequent inspections and compiled welfare and property inspection reports.

As a result of the investigation, on 30 October 2024 Stewards issued two charges under LR114(2)(a) and LR114(2)(c) against Mr Blundell and suspended his license under AR23 pending the hearing and determination of the charge. He was also placed on the Racing NSW Excluded List on an interim basis.

Racing NSW Stewards today conducted a hearing to determine the charges issued against licensed trainer Mr David Blundell. A brief of evidence compiled by Racing NSW Investigator Anna Tabet was tendered with oral evidence being taken from Mr Blundell, Racing NSW Veterinarian Dr Ellie Merritt as well as current industry participants.

Charges issued against Mr David Blundell

Charge 1: LR114(2)(a)

The details of the charge being that, as at 29 October 2024, he was the registered trainer and/or person in charge of, or in possession, control or custody of thoroughbred horses *Eyre Square/Evenaz 2018, Sooboog/Miss Hellraiser 2021, Zabellsareringing, Brave Captain and Eyre Square/Lovelife 2018*. Racing NSW Officials and a Veterinarian assessed the health and welfare of horses at this time and found them to have body conditions scores ranging between 0 and 1.5. The poor body condition of the horses was due to insufficient nutrition, either entirely or in part.

Plea: Not Guilty

Finding: Guilty

Charge 2: LR114(2)(c)

The details of the charge being that, as 29 October 2024, the stabling and paddocks in which thoroughbred horses *Eyre Square/Evenaz 2018, Sooboog/Miss Hellraiser 2021, Zabellsareringing, Brave Captain and Eyre Square/Lovelife 2018* were located was littered with general and stable waste, including but not limited to, rubbish, scrap metal, debris, boats (x2), kayak, lawnmowers (x3) and tyres. Additionally, stables and yards contained severe faeces and urinary contamination including soiled bedding. The condition of the stabling and 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: Not Guilty

Finding: Guilty

Penalty

The following penalty considerations were taken into account –

- Not Guilty plea
- Objective seriousness of the conduct
- Precedent penalties
- Mr Blundell's personal and professional circumstances including current illness
- Principle of specific and general deterrence and what message is sent to the industry in respect to such conduct
- Purpose of issuing penalties as a protective measure for the image, interests and welfare of the thoroughbred racing industry.

Charge 1: LR114(2)(a) – 9 months disqualification of licence reduced to 8 months

Charge 2: LR114(2)(c) – 6 months suspension of licence (to be served wholly concurrent with Charge 1)

The Stewards have determined that, given the nature of the breaches, charge 2 will be served wholly concurrently with charge 1. Having regard to mitigating factors, the total period of disqualification will be 8 months, commencing on 31 October 2024, being the date Mr Blundell's licence was suspended under the provisions of AR23. The disqualification will expire on 31 June 2025.

Mr Blundell was advised of his appeal rights.

Relevant Rules:

LR114(2)(a)

(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:

(b) proper and sufficient nutrition and water.

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.

AR23 Suspension pending the hearing and determination of a charge

Without limiting any other rules or Stewards' powers, if a person has been charged with a breach of the Rules or with the commission of an indictable criminal offence, and if the Stewards are of the opinion that the continued participation of that person in racing might pose an unacceptable risk of prejudicing the image, interests, integrity or welfare of racing, the Stewards may pending the hearing and determination of the charge:

(a) suspend any license, registration, right or privilege, granted to that person under these Australian Rules.

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