



Dr. Kate Meiring B.V.S.c
Dr Lauren Brewis B.V.S.c
Dr Lee Baragwanath B.V.S.c Hons
Sr Philippa Martyn

Cape Veterinary Equine Practice
13 Howard Drive, Meadowridge
Shopping Centre, 7945

capevet@telkomsa.net
www.capevet.net
Tel 021 7122290

Company Reg: 2013/155992/07

VETERINARY LEGAL REPORT: SUSPECTED NEGLECT AND ABUSE OF EQUINE

To whom it may concern: This report is prepared for the purpose of recording the veterinary examination, clinical findings and professional opinion relating to a young underweight gelding presented following confiscation. The contents are based on my examination of the animal and the information available to me at the time of assessment.

1. Date and Circumstances of Examination

On Tuesday, 1 July 2026, at approximately 01h30, I was presented with a gelding confiscated the previous day by the SPCA. The horse was presented for veterinary assessment due to concerns regarding his body condition, injuries, and general welfare.

2. Animal Identification

SPCA admission number	A102803
Species	Equine
Breed	Hackney pony
Sex	Gelding
Colour	Bay
Age	7 years
Name	Unnammed
Height	15 hands

3. Clinical Examination and Welfare Findings

On examination, the gelding had a body condition score of 1.5/5, indicating severe underweight condition and poor nutritional status. He was observed to be food guarding, hungry, reluctant to engage with people, and distrustful of humans, although he responded positively to food encouragement. His basic clinical parameters were within normal limits at the time of examination.

The gelding had numerous grazes and deep abrasions consistent with injury caused by ill-fitting equipment. These wounds were located in areas compatible with pressure, friction and/or repeated rubbing from tack or harnessing equipment. Photographs were taken and should be retained with this report as supporting evidence.

The right hind toe was markedly worn down and painful. The gelding was seen to rest the limb and displayed a shortened stride on the right hindlimb. It was not possible to assess him at the trot because he was too weak to trot safely at the time of examination.

4. Veterinary Opinion

In my professional opinion, the gelding's poor body condition, hunger, behavioural presentation, painful abrasions and worn painful hoof are consistent with neglect and/or inappropriate management over a period of time. The injuries associated with ill-fitting equipment would have caused pain, distress and unnecessary suffering.

The clinical findings are relevant to the welfare concerns addressed by the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962, which includes protection against neglect, unnecessary under-feeding or starvation, failure to provide treatment to an animal in need, and the use of equipment that causes injury or suffering.

5. Conclusion

In my opinion, this gelding has experienced undue and unnecessary suffering. His condition and injuries are not consistent with adequate care, appropriate feeding, safe equipment use, or timely intervention. He should not be returned to circumstances where further neglect or harm may occur.

I recommend continued veterinary care, nutritional rehabilitation, appropriate pain management, hoof assessment and treatment, and the prevention of further use of any ill-fitting tack, harness or equipment. Photographic evidence should be kept with this report for evidentiary purposes.

Please feel free to contact me should any further clarification or veterinary evidence be required.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Meiring', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Kate Meiring

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