



Judicial Committee case 25/39 – precis

On Tuesday 2 December 2025, the Judicial Committee of the Veterinary Council of New Zealand (Judicial Committee) heard a charge laid by a Complaints Assessment Committee (CAC) against Dr Leo John Molloy, registered veterinarian of Auckland (Dr Molloy).

The Charge:

Dr Molloy had been convicted by the District Court at Auckland of one charge of knowingly publishing a name in breach of a suppression order, an offence under s 211(1) of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months.

The CAC referred the conviction to the Judicial Committee and alleged that the conviction:

- reflected adversely on Dr Molloy's fitness to practise as a veterinarian pursuant to s 50(1)(a) of the Act: and/or
- amounted to professional misconduct in that it has brought or is likely to bring discredit to the veterinarian profession pursuant to s 50(1)(c).

Dr Molloy admitted the conviction reflected adversely on his fitness to practise but denied that his conduct which led to his conviction amounted to professional misconduct.

Background

At all relevant times Dr Molloy was registered with the Veterinary Council and held a current practising certificate. While he no longer practises as a vet, he has a profile in the horse racing community, providing voluntary work and advice to the New Zealand racing industry. He has attended veterinary industry professional development conferences overseas relevant to his racing industry work. Dr Molloy has also given evidence for many years on behalf of owners and trainers and drivers as part of his involvement with the Racing Integrity Unit, and he has been a critic of some of the prosecutions carried out in that forum. His ongoing registration status as a veterinarian has been important to him, so that he could continue to have an impact in that forum.

The conviction related to the murder trial in respect of English backpacker, Grace Millane. Mr Jesse Kempson stood trial for Ms Milane's murder in 2019. He was also charged with raping two other women. Separate trials were to take place after the murder trial, to determine those charges. On 20 February 2019 the High Court in the murder charge proceedings made an interim order suppressing publication of Mr Kempson's name to preserve his fair trial rights in relation to the rape charges.



On the last day of the trial Dr Molloy deliberately breached this interim suppression order by making two social media posts on a forum called Main Street Café which was within the New Zealand Premier Racing community website, a specialist website for the racing community with over 2,483 members. The first breach was at 4.45am (“he got name suppression because he’s also up on another independent rape charge. He needs a bullet. Scooby, I put it here because this forum has the traffic and people need to know about this dog”). Following the guilty verdict Dr Molloy made his second post referring to Mr Kempson having worked for his sister and flattered with his niece before being asked to leave due to his inappropriate behaviour which Dr Molloy stated was “a fact”.

Finding

The Judicial Committee is not required to assess whether a respondent veterinarian is unfit to practise. The test for reflecting adversely on a veterinarian’s fitness to practise is simply whether the veterinarian’s conduct casts doubt on their fitness to practise. Liability is not limited to conduct in a clinical setting and extends beyond competence issues to include conduct that will have a negative impact on the trust and confidence that the public is entitled to have in a veterinarian and the profession.

The Judicial Committee found that Dr Molloy’s conduct did reflect adversely on his fitness to practise as a veterinarian. The Committee considered that the nature of Dr Molloy’s offending casts doubts on his integrity and judgement and that his actions were indicative of a failure of good judgement. Veterinarians are expected to observe the law and to conduct themselves ethically. Although the offending did not occur in the workplace, respecting confidence and not allowing emotions to cloud decision-making are essential traits of all veterinarians. Further, the offending suggests an emotionally driven short-sightedness that all professionals should avoid. The Committee reasoned that Dr Molloy’s actions had ramifications for the justice system, Mr Kempson as the defendant, the victims of Mr Kempson’s offending, and the public. Those ramifications far outweighed Dr Molloy’s philosophical grievance with the interim name suppression order.

The Committee agreed with the CAC that veterinarians are entitled to have their own opinions. However, they are expected to exercise judgement when faced with difficult situations. They will routinely encounter sensitive information, and they are expected to treat it with care and respect, regardless of their own personal views – these are fundamental and minimum standards for any professional, including veterinarians

Having found the conviction charge established, the Judicial Committee did not consider it was necessary to go on and consider whether Dr Molloy’s actions also amounted to professional misconduct.



Penalty

The Committee imposed:

- censure; and
- Payment of 45% of the total costs of and incidental to the prosecution and the Judicial Committee's hearing - \$17,721 to the CAC and \$5,314 to Judicial Committee.

The full decision can be [found on the Veterinary Council website here.](#)