

READING STANDARD BRED BRANDS

If this looks more like hieroglyphics from Ancient Egypt than a brand, do not worry, you are not alone! In this factsheet we will help you learn the language of both Australian and New Zealand Standardbred brands. Once you know how to read these symbols you will be able to find out a lot more about your retired Standardbred.

In both countries Standardbreds are freeze branded on the off side (right side) of their neck but that is where the similarity ends.

AUSTRALIA

In Australia we use a system known as the “alpha angle” symbol system. The brand is always two rows of symbols and each row has four symbols. When reading the brand, you always read from left to right, starting at the top line. The brand will always commence with an “S” to denote that the horse is a Standardbred, followed by the alpha angle symbols as shown below.

Australian Alpha Angle Symbol System



The first symbol represents the state ID number -

2	New South Wales
3	Victoria
4	Queensland
5	South Australia
6	Western Australia
7	Tasmania

The second two symbols represent the last two digits of the horse's year of foaling, while the remaining four symbols denotes the horse's four digit registration number.



An Australian Standardbred Brand

So now that we know what the symbols mean, let's have a go at reading the Australian Standardbred brand in the photo.

By using the alpha angle system, we know that the brand on this horse's neck represents the following - S4160177.

S	Standardbred
7	4 (state postcode for Queensland)
16	16 (last two digits of year of foaling)
0177	0177 (horse's registration number)

Now that you are an expert in reading Australian Standardbred brands, let's have a crack at learning about New Zealand Standardbred brands!



A New Zealand Standardbred Brand

NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand they still brand over two rows, but the top row only has three symbols. The first two denote the horse's year of birth and they are always followed by a "Z" for New Zealand. The bottom row shows the registration number of the horse. New Zealand uses the "TVI" symbol system as shown below.



With this information, let's decipher this brand.



By using the "TVI" symbol system, we know that the brand on this horse's neck represents the following - 09Z7282. We can interpret this as meaning that the horse's year of birth is 2009, the horse's country of birth is New Zealand and the horse's registration number is 7282.

Now that you understand the "language" of Standardbred brands, you can search your horse's details on the Australian Harness Racing Website www.harness.org.au/ausbreed/reports/search

While freeze branding has been used by both countries for several decades, the use of microchips and DNA genotyping are also a vital component in uniquely identifying horses. Registered Standardbreds have historically been identified via the freeze brand on their neck, however, this is slowly changing with the introduction of microchips for foals born in Australia post 1 September 2017. All registered Standardbreds are also identified via DNA genotyping utilising hair samples to provide parental verification.

As of 1 September 2021, Harness Racing Australia no longer requires freeze branding of foals born in Australia, with microchipping to become the main form of identification for all Standardbred horses. New Zealand also followed suit for foals born from the 2021/2022 racing season onwards, with microchipping the way of the future for the industry.

In the future we will see fewer Standardbred horses branded as the world embraces technology and transitions to microchips, which are a unique and unalterable means of horse identification.