Greyhound Racing New Zealand Report for the Minister for Racing Q2 2021/22

Purpose

 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Minister for Racing for the second quarter (Q2) of the 2021/22 racing season, with particular reference to comparisons between the first half of the 2021/22 racing season (1 August 2021-31 January 2022) and the first half of the 2020/21 racing season (1 August 2020-31 January 2021).

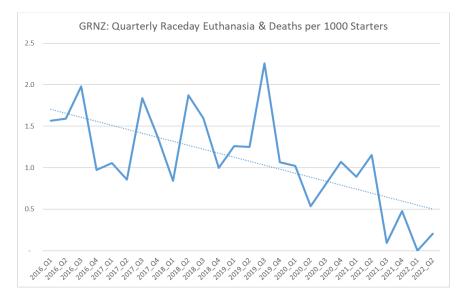
Background

- 2. GRNZ submitted its first quarterly report to the Minister for Racing in December 2021 following the Robertson Review.
- 3. GRNZ's first quarterly report has been published on the GRNZ website.
- 4. This second quarterly report will contain injury and rehoming data up to and including 31 January 2022 and will contain information around additional activities which have taken place up to and including 28 February 2022.

Raceday Euthanasias

- 5. Two greyhounds were euthanised on raceday in the first half of the 2021/22 racing season. This equates to 0.1 per 1000 starts. In the first half of the 2020/21 racing season, there were 19 raceday euthanasias and one raceday death, which equates to 1.0 per 1000 starts.
- 6. The GRNZ Rehabilitation to Rehoming Programme remains a strong contributing factor in our low raceday euthanasia rates and also mitigates the occurrence of serious injuries. In this programme, GRNZ provides financial assistance for the treatment and rehabilitation of greyhounds who suffer from major raceday injuries that otherwise may have resulted in euthanasia.
- 7. Figure 1 below shows the number of raceday euthanasias/deaths per 1000 starts per quarter from Q1 2016.

Raceday euthanasias/deaths per 1000 starts since Q1 2016





Non-Raceday Deaths

- 8. In the first half of the 2021/22 season, 45 greyhounds (including puppies, racing dogs and pets which have been kept by trainers) were euthanised by veterinarians for a medical reason, compared to 56 in the first half of the 2020/21 season. This is 11 less than reported in the first half of the 2020/21 season. Of these, 21 greyhounds were euthanised due to illness, and 24 were euthanised due to accident or injury.
- 9. There were 10 behavioural euthanasias due to aggression in the first half of the 2021/22 season, and there were also 10 behavioural euthanasias due to aggression in the first half of the 2020/21 season.
- 10. In the first half of the 2021/22 season, there were 40 reported deaths. Of these, four were due to accident or injury, and 36 were due to illness, age or natural causes.
- 11. Figure 2 below shows the combined Q1 and Q2 mortality data for the 2021/22 season.
- 12. Figure 3 below shows the combined Q1 and Q2 mortality data for the 2020/21 season.

2021_22 Q1 & Q2 Mortality Data (Pre-Audit)

Count	%	Mortality Type & Cause		
Euthanasia				
10	18.2%	Behavioural Euthanasia-Aggression		
21	38.2%	Medical Euthanasia-IIIness		
24	43.6%	Medical Euthanasia-Accident/Injury		
0	0.0%	Non-Medical (Trainer/Owner choice)		
55	100.0%	Total		
Death				
4	10.0%	Accident / Injury		
36	90.0%	Illness, Age or Natural Causes		
40	100.0%	Total		

Figure 2

Count	%	Mortality Type & Cause			
Euthanasia					
10	13.2%	Behavioural Euthanasia-Aggression			
27	35.5%	Medical Euthanasia-IIIness			
29	38.2%	Medical Euthanasia-Accident/Injury			
10	13.2%	Non-Medical (Trainer/Owner choice)			
76	100.0%	Total			
Death					
3	8.6%	Accident / Injury			
32	91.4%	IIIness, Age or Natural Causes			
35	100.0%	Total			

2020_21 Q1 & Q2 Mortality Data

Figure 3

Euthanasia Policy

- 13. Data analysis undertaken by the RIB Data Insights Lead has suggested that although unnecessary euthanasia is at its lowest level since 2016, there may still be instances of it occurring under the banner of behavioural issues or medical euthanasia for illness/injury.
- 14. This analysis has also found a potential causal link between poor performance and euthanasia. It is therefore necessary to tighten regulation, particularly on the behavioural euthanasia of greyhounds.
- 15. GRNZ will submit a paper to the GRNZ Board for their March board meeting, outlining the recommended policy settings for the creation of a GRNZ euthanasia policy which aims to tighten restrictions on unnecessary euthanasia and create an obligation for industry participants to plan to rehome all greyhounds which they breed or import. An update on this proposed policy will be provided in the next quarterly report. This is in line with recommendations in the Robertson Review.

Raceday Injuries

- 16. The ability to enter a stand down and injury information for greyhounds injured at an official trial went online on 1 February 2022. This information will flow through to the relevant reports and will provide GRNZ and the RIB with more comprehensive injury data.
- 17. The change also includes requiring the stewards to enter the injury information for a Rule 56.1 stand down.
- 18. Rule 56.1 states that, "Where a Greyhound is withdrawn from, or injured during a Race the officiating Veterinarian or Authorised Person or, in their absence, the Steward(s), may at his/her/their discretion issue a Certificate of Incapacitation imposing the period of incapacitation commencing on the day on which the Greyhound is withdrawn from, or is injured in, any Race conducted by a Club."

- 19. The data insights work being done by RIB and GRNZ identified that there were instances where stewards had not been entering injury information accurately for greyhounds injured in a race. Remediation is underway.
- 20. The reported raceday injury or euthanasia rate for the first half of the 2021/22 season is 22.3 per 1000 starts.
- 21. Figure 4 below shows that 67.5% of injuries in the first half of the season are likely to be fully recoverable, with greyhounds returning to racing after no more than 21 days' stand down from racing.
- 22. The GRNZ Rehabilitation to Rehoming Scheme ensures that greyhounds who suffer major injuries are rehabilitated back to full health at GRNZ's expense, before they are entered into a rehoming programme.

Injury Category and Stand Down 2021/22 Q1 & Q2 and Injury Category & Stand Down 2020/21 Q1 & Q2

Injury Category & Stand Down 2021/22 Q1 & Q2		Injuries per		Cumulative
Count	Count from 18,503 starts		Proportion	Proportion
166	Minor 1-10 days	9.0	40.3%	40.3%
112	Medium 11-21 days	6.1	27.2%	67.5%
87	Major I 22-42 days	4.7	21.1%	88.6%
45	Major II more than 42 days	2.4	10.9%	99.5%
2	Euthanised by vet on track or sudden death	0.1	0.5%	100.0%
412	Total Veterinary Exams detecting Injury	22.3		

Injury Category & Stand Down 2020/21 Q1 & Q2		Injuries per		Cumulative
Count	from 20,753 starts	1000 starts	Proportion	Proportion
185	85 Minor 1-10 days		39.9%	39.9%
140	Medium 11-21 days	6.7	30.2%	70.0%
99	Major I 22-42 days	4.8	21.3%	91.4%
19	Major II more than 42 days	0.9	4.1%	95.5%
21	Euthanised by vet on track or sudden death	1.0	4.5%	100.0%
464	Total Veterinary Exams detecting Injury	22.4		

Figure 4

Investigation into Raceday Injuries

- 23. With a particular focus on January 2022, further investigation into the month's statistics found that:
 - Seven (50%) of all injured greyhounds were older than 3.75 years. Data analysis shows that the older the greyhound, the higher the incidence of raceday injury per 1,000 races
 see Figures 5 and 6 below. GRNZ will continue to monitor racing careers and programming of races for senior greyhounds.
 - Five (36%) were having their first or second start back after a break from racing of 21 days or more. A break in preparation likely indicates an underlying injury issue and further questioning of trainers as to the reasons for a 'spell' may be useful.

- Two (14%) were having their sixth or more starts in 28 days, indicative of a high racing frequency. Research (Palmer) has previously linked racing frequency and repetitive loading to increased likelihood of injury.
- Nine (64%) were involved in interference during the race in question (collision or dragged down). The reasons for repeated interference or collisions at the same location on a track require further analysis.

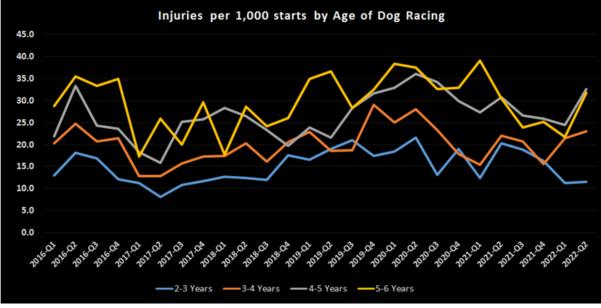


Figure 5

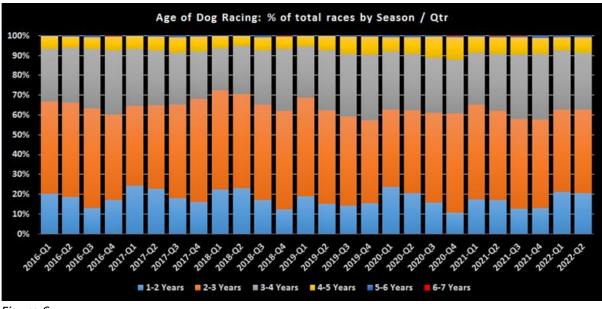


Figure 6

24. GRNZ and RIB staff met to discuss these injuries and consider solutions. The introduction of preferential box draws, as a means of reducing interference at the first turn, was considered the most effective action to take. Preferential box draws means that greyhounds will be allocated starting boxes according to their racing style, ie if they head towards the rail, straight or towards the outside when they jump from the boxes, they will be allocated a starting box accordingly.

- 25. A preferential box draw trial will commence in April at Addington Raceway. GRNZ will provide an update on this trial in the next quarterly report.
- 26. Other factors discussed at the meeting between GRNZ and RIB staff included:
 - Environmental factors: The summer heatwave may affect the surface of private training tracks, making them firmer and potentially contributing to concussive forces which may lead to underlying injury. These subclinical injuries are often indiscernible during pre-race veterinary examinations.
 - Frequency of racing: Dr. Michelle Ledger had suggested that the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) Race Injury Review Panel considered that the most at-risk greyhounds for serious injury were those that had one or less starts in 30 days (rested/break in preparation) and those racing more than six times in 30 days. Further analysis of racing frequency will be of interest to the Animal Health and Welfare Committee and Serious Injury Review Committee - see Points 33 and 39 for further information on these committees.
 - Field sizes: Previous NZ and Australian trials of six-dog races had not improved injury rates and trial injuries were occurring in one-dog trials. The GWIC Race Injury Review Panel had found no correlation between field sizes and serious injuries.
 - Straight tracks: Potential sites are being considered along with design and cost analysis of development.
- 27. Other track interventions currently being progressed include longer lure arms, lure positioning and starting box positions.
- 28. While the start of February has delivered a decrease in injuries, it is important that GRNZ continues to investigate the contributing factors of all serious injuries to ascertain likely trends and enable interventions where potential causes are identified to ensure that safety in racing remains paramount. GRNZ will continue to focus on the maintenance of the tracks, and will also ensure that non-track contributing factors are equally addressed.
- 29. Further possible actions which could mitigate the issues that may contribute to injuries include:
 - Track surface preparation: Clubs have been spoken to about the importance of adequate moisture content in safe surface preparation. Regular checks are being made to ensure the maintenance of the tracks is consistent. GRNZ is investing in new equipment to monitor track water percentages.
 - Oversight: The GRNZ national curator has been working with the regional track curators to ensure that they are preparing the tracks according to their maintenance and preparation plans and are considering the changing environmental conditions.
 - Upskilling: The GRNZ national curator is consulting with Bill Wilson, renowned Australian track expert.
 - Investment in track maintenance equipment: GRNZ has ordered new sand profilers and Clegg hammers to assist in more sensitive monitoring of the track surface preparation.
 - Participant education: Trainers briefed regarding the potential implications of climate change and the impact and importance of maintaining moisture levels on private training facilities.
 - Curator training: The GRNZ national curator will be training curators and has recently been onsite at Manawatu and Christchurch to oversee the current track preparation procedures and monitor performance. Arrangements are being made to bring Australian track expert, Bill Wilson, to New Zealand to work and advise New Zealand curators.

- **30.** Dr. Michelle Ledger is currently developing an overarching Animal Welfare Strategy for the industry 2022-25. An update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
- 31. Dr. Michelle Ledger is also currently developing a set of track standards for the preparation, maintenance and monitoring of safe tracks. An update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
- 32. The introduction of a Serious Injury Review Committee will facilitate regular analysis and investigation of contributing factors to injuries, allowing a more considered response to injury spikes and regular consistent monitoring of all contributing factors to injuries. There is scope to combine all racing codes in the development of a mortality review process.

Serious Injury Review Committee

- 33. A Terms of Reference for a GRNZ Serious Injury Review Committee (SIRC) has been drafted.
- 34. The fundamental purpose of the SIRC is to gather data to better understand the underlying causes of racing injuries and to recommend measures that aim to reduce the risk, rate and severity of serious and catastrophic injuries in racing greyhounds and then oversee implementation of these recommendations.
- 35. All catastrophic injuries that result in the euthanasia of a greyhound at the track, any sudden deaths occurring during race meetings and all serious injuries which are treated under the Rehabilitation to Rehoming Programme will be subject to a detailed case review by the Committee.
- 36. The SIRC will convene regularly and review all circumstances and data relating to these injuries and attempt to identify primary contributing factors. These factors are broadly race-related, track-related, greyhound-related or other miscellaneous factors.
- 37. At the conclusion of each review, the SIRC will develop and release findings as to the likely contributing factors to the injury and identify and make recommendations on prevention strategies or other actions aimed at reducing the occurrence of these injuries.
- 38. The SIRC will report these findings to the GRNZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee for its consideration and expert recommendations for further actions, including but not limited to, further analysis, investigation, research or any other action the Committee deems appropriate to ensure the continued safety and welfare of all greyhounds racing in New Zealand.

GRNZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee

- 39. While there had previously been a GRNZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee (AHWC), there had been some concerns expressed by the RIB and other parties around the effectiveness of this committee.
- 40. A revised AHWC has now been formed and comprises a group of expert advisers in greyhound health and welfare, injuries and behaviour, including:
 - Dr. Jim Edwards (retired vet; Honorary Life Member NZVA and WVA; Former President of World Veterinary Association)
 - Dr. Malcolm Jansen (soon-to-be retired vet; involvement with greyhounds since early 1980s; greyhound owner and breeder)
 - Dr. Philip Morrison (full-time vet working mostly with large animals; on-track vet most Thursdays at Cambridge and occasionally at Auckland; has clients who are greyhound owners and trainers)
 - Dr. Mairi Stewart (observer status but with full speaking rights; on secondment to RIB from MPI for six months; MPI Principal Adviser in Animal Welfare Team)

- Dr. Michelle Ledger (contracted by GRNZ as Head of Welfare; veterinarian; former Chief Veterinary Officer for the Australian Government's Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission; has an MSC in International Animal Welfare Ethics and Law; as well as her other previous welfare and ethics roles, she previously worked as a locum vet for the RSPCA in Australia)
- Dr. Kat Littlewood (vet; lecturer at Massey University in undergraduate and postgraduate animal welfare, behaviour ethics and law; employs the Five Domains Model as a framework for animal welfare assessment and training)
- Dr. Dave Matheson (retired greyhound vet)
- 41. Chair of NAWAC, Dr. Gwyneth Verkerk, has confirmed her future attendance at the meetings as an observer with full speaking rights.
- 42. The purpose and the revised Terms of Reference of the re-formed AHWC is to focus on veterinary skills and the latest developments in this area to ensure that our trainers have the latest information needed and the skills to do the job to ensure the optimum health and welfare of racing greyhounds.
- 43. The re-formed AHWC has a technical and scientific focus, rather than an advocacy focus. The Committee comprises independent qualified and recognised experts to provide factual advice and guidance to the industry to ensure its progress.
- 44. The purpose and function of the current committee is therefore not the appropriate forum for a permanent SPCA representative. However, an offer has been made to SPCA representatives to receive full briefings following meetings, and an SPCA representative was fully briefed by Dr. Michelle Ledger following the last committee meeting. The Terms of Reference also allow for the SPCA and other specialists to attend the committee meetings when appropriate.
- 45. The advice from the AHWC will feed into rule changes to ensure that racing greyhounds are treated in the best way possible. It is also involved in developing supporting educational resources for all involved in the racing of greyhounds. The GRNZ Board fully supports this committee and looks forward to receiving its recommendations.
- 46. The first full meeting of the revised AHWC was held via video-conferencing on Tuesday 25 January 2022, and the Committee has agreed to meet approximately every six weeks.
- 47. At its first meeting, the Committee discussed:
 - Setting up a sub-panel for deciding on 'red dog' euthanasias for greyhounds with refractory behavioural issues;
 - The level of detail required to be submitted to new owners when a greyhound is rehomed;
 - A paper provided by the Housing Standards Working Group on the development of new greyhound housing standards;
 - Minimum stand down times for greyhounds which fall during a race;
 - The age limits for breeding exemptions and an enhanced process for approving breeding exemptions for greyhounds aged seven years or over or for three litters;
 - Draft industry education fact sheets; and
 - The containment of an outbreak of parvo virus within the industry and learnings from that, including the importance of vaccination mandates.

Hatrick Raceway

- 48. Hatrick Raceway has been closed since 23 September 2021, amid track safety concerns.
- 49. Following the track's closure, Dr. Michelle Ledger conducted an independent review of the track, which found that a rebuild of Hatrick Raceway was possible.
- 50. GRNZ subsequently contracted Sapere to report on the economic viability of rebuilding the track. Sapere consulted with a wide range of interested stakeholders and concluded that rebuilding the track was economically viable.
- 51. GRNZ then met with participants from the wider Central Districts region to update them on the findings of these two reports. It was decided at this meeting that Hatrick Raceway will be rebuilt, with construction work to commence in the near future.
- 52. A further update on Hatrick Raceway will be provided in the next quarterly report.

Vaccinations

- 53. One of the recommendations in the Hansen Report was that steps should be taken to ensure that the vaccinations of greyhounds remain current by requiring proof of vaccinations on registration for naming and thereafter annually and/or as a condition of permission to race.
- 54. It was noted in GRNZ's first quarterly report that GRNZ had had a vaccination policy in place since 1 February 2019, but this policy had not always been enforced. The RIB had also noted non-compliances with this policy.
- 55. During the second quarter, GRNZ adapted the vaccination framework that was developed and tested in 2019 which provides for:
 - Vaccinations entered into the database by GRNZ staff;
 - Vaccinations must be up to date for a greyhound to be nominated;
 - Online nomination form displays vaccination status for the greyhound;
 - My Greyhounds menu has a section that displays vaccination status for each greyhound.
 This is specific to each trainer, but GRNZ staff and RIB will be able to search on all greyhounds/trainers; and
 - Email reminders to trainers of vaccinations that are due.
- 56. Software developer Sandfield made the relevant changes, and advised that GRNZ would be able to bulk upload a spreadsheet of the vaccination information into the system prior to 28 February 2022. GRNZ completed this step effectively.
- 57. Licensed Persons (LPs) were informed that their greyhounds would need to have current vaccination status by 28 February 2022 in order to continue to be able to be nominated for races. This will officially come into effect on 1 March 2022.
- 58. Leading up to 1 March 2022, vaccinations were administered and recorded for the majority of registered racing greyhounds. A 30-day grace period was extended for those who were not able to make the 28 February 2022 deadline, prior to nominations being declined for unvaccinated greyhounds.
- 59. Vaccinations for puppies, unraced greyhounds and breeding greyhounds are still a work in progress and an update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
- 60. GRNZ did experience some issues building up to the go-live date of 1 March 2022; in particular:
 - Some vets had been incorrectly advising LPs what vaccinations were required in order to comply, meaning that some trainers mistakenly thought that their greyhounds were up to date with their vaccinations, when in fact, they were missing a component of the kennel cough vaccination.

- The mandate of vaccinating all of their greyhounds at once presented a large financial imposition for some LPs. In recognition of this, GRNZ informed LPs that they would be entitled to a \$50 vaccination subsidy from GRNZ for every greyhound (including puppies born before 1 December 2020) vaccinated prior to 28 February 2022, including for those greyhounds who already held current status prior to this vaccine mandate being introduced.
- There were some communication challenges, as some LPs live rurally with limited internet reception, meaning that they didn't all receive GRNZ email and website updates. GRNZ adapted their communication methods, and rang all trainers who had not yet provided their vaccination information and assisted them with the process prior to the 1 March 2022 go-live date.
- 61. LPs were kept updated throughout the process, and thanks to system changes, they are able to view the vaccination status of all of their greyhounds on the My Greyhounds webpage. For those LPs who are less 'tech-savvy', GRNZ staff have been providing LPs with the vaccination status of their greyhounds when they ring up to nominate their greyhounds for races.
- 62. GRNZ is now ahead of all Australian jurisdictions in the issue of 'current' vaccinations, vaccination recording and the capacity to block nominations as a compliance lever. This demonstrates the industry's commitment to achieving high animal welfare standards.
- 63. Additionally, racing greyhounds are the only breed of dog in New Zealand required to have current vaccination status.

Population Model

64. In Q2 of the 2021/22 racing season, the concept design for the RIB-developed greyhound population model has been endorsed, and the concept has been supported by key stakeholders, including NAWAC.

Kennel Audits

- 65. The RIB has been undertaking kennel audits more frequently in Q2 of the 2021/22 racing season.
- 66. GRNZ continues to strive for a balanced approach to audits and reporting which accurately assesses the welfare outcomes for greyhounds on properties.
- 67. These audits have proven useful in gathering data on compliance rates and issues within the industry.
- 68. The RIB is currently looking at a technology to assist in audits and is developing software to assist in achieving a consistent kennel audit process.
- 69. The collection and storage of data is steadily improving, allowing subsequent analysis to inform more accurate assessments.
- 70. GRNZ welcomes the introduction of vets attending these kennel audits and are pleased that feedback from the RIB has been largely positive as to the health and welfare status of the dogs at the kennels audited to date. While the body scores have been ideal, dental health has arisen as an issue in some instances. GRNZ is working to educate trainers and owners on how they can improve and maintain their greyhounds' dental health.
- 71. GRNZ has requested that the veterinary assessments of the health and welfare of the greyhounds be added to the audit reports.

Health and Welfare Standards

- 72. The GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards are currently under review, with the AHWC currently considering the work of the RIB and GRNZ joint Housing Standards Working Group in the development of new housing standards for greyhounds.
- 73. While the current health and welfare standards for greyhounds have been in place since 2018, the size requirements pertained to new kennel facilities built. There was no date set for the implementation of the housing standards, particularly kennel size and facility measurements contained within those standards, for existing greyhound facilities. GRNZ is collecting further data on the sizes of current facilities and working with the RIB on measurements coming out of kennel audits to ascertain the likely industry regulatory impact of changes to any housing size requirements for existing facilities, and whether a grandfather clause is required for their implementation.
- 74. The AHWC will be consulted on any changes or recommendations for housing standards.

Rehoming

- 75. 232 greyhounds were rehomed through the GRNZ Great Mates Rehoming Programme in the first half of the 2021/22 racing season.
- 76. The Rehabilitation to Rehoming Programme (RTR) is a GRNZ funded programme, where all greyhounds who suffer serious injuries at the track are rehabilitated back to health before they enter the rehoming programme. In the first half of the 2021/22 racing season, 14 greyhounds were adopted after their rehabilitation was complete.
- 77. Understanding the medium to longer term outcomes for the RTR greyhounds and the impact on their new owners is something that GRNZ is currently researching. An update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
- 78. Various canine behaviour training courses are being researched for their suitability for all GRNZ Great Mates staff. The intention is to provide training and qualifications to everyone involved in making assessments and completing training.
- 79. Capacity has been increased at both the Rangiora and Christchurch properties to reduce the South Island waiting lists.
- **80.** To accommodate this future increase and the pressure already on current vet clinics, GRNZ is also in discussions with various new vet clinics about bringing them on board to assist with rehoming requirements.
- 81. Some greyhounds enter the Rehoming Programme with injuries or issues that need fixing prior to adoption. Some of these can be fixed with veterinary care and time, while others may need additional care such as crate rest, closer monitoring and physiotherapy etc (similar to the RTR dogs). On a case-by-case basis, some of these dogs will go into specialist care similar to RTR.

Media Coverage

- 82. Critics are an important audience and through transparency and comprehensive stories, GRNZ aims to move them to a more balanced and current commentary.
- 83. Closing the gap between perception and reality has become a key focus for GRNZ in Q2, which means making a concerted effort to demonstrate the care and attention that LPs tender to their greyhounds. GRNZ now posts regular industry stories on its website.
- 84. Since the start of 2022, GRNZ has launched a new website, Lovegreyhounds.org.nz, which has a strong focus on the range of people in the industry (including trainers, vets, owners and breeders, to name a few) and their love for greyhounds.

- 85. One video per week is being released on GRNZ social media on each of these personalities. These videos serve to educate a wider audience via social media channels. These videos are also now appearing as 'fillers' on TAB Trackside television channels.
- 86. GRNZ has been more effectively utilising its partnership with NZME. As part of this, one greyhound related story is published under the racing section on the NZ Herald website every week. GRNZ has utilised this platform to showcase a number of racing related stories, but also other aspects of the industry, such as rehoming stories and articles on younger members of our industry. GRNZ has then been further promoting these NZ Herald stories on its social media channels.
- 87. GRNZ commenced a partnership with sport and racing radio station SENZ in February 2022, which comprises a one-hour dedicated greyhound show on Sunday mornings, numerous greyhound interviews during the week on mainstream sports shows, greyhound news updates on hourly news bulletins two days per week, and regular advertising. We will be able to provide audience figures and other data in our next quarterly report.

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