



**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Greyhound Racing NZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee
Held via Videoconferencing on Tuesday, 24 March 2022**

Present: Jim Edwards, Independent Chair
Malcolm Jansen, Vet
Kat Littlewood, Vet and Massey Lecturer
Philip Morrison, Vet
Dave Matheson, Vet
Michelle Ledger, Vet, GRNZ Welfare Manager
Mairi Stewart, on secondment to RIB from MPI
Gwyneth Verkerk, NAWAC Observer

In Attendance: Glenda Hughes, CEO GRNZ
Michael Dore, Racing Operations Manager, GRNZ
Nick Ydgren, Chief Stipendiary Steward, on secondment to work with Mairi Stewart
Karen Waterreus, Minutes Secretary

Apologies: No apologies were received.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed there was a quorum present. While this was the Committee's second meeting of the year, the Committee will be meeting every six weeks in future and the next meeting would be face to face.

In response to the Chair, Mairi asked that the outcome from the Rule Change and the work plan be added to General Business.

Committee members introduced themselves.

Gwyneth stated she was the Chair of NAWAC. She trained as a vet in the 1970s and had early greyhound experience at Awapuni and Claudelands. Her work had focused on animal stress. As well she promoted animal welfare at Dairy NZ. Gwyneth continued that NAWAC is required to provide views on greyhound racing and the greyhound industry. NAWAC has some concerns. The overriding principles are the 3Es; encounter, entertainment and exhibitions and how animals should be provided for in this context. Increasingly the emphasis is on positive welfare outcomes for animals. Looking at animals as athletes, must look at the lifetime of the animal from puppy to final retirement home.

2. Declarations of Interest Committee

Members declared the following related interests:

Jim Edwards	● Retired vet
Malcolm Jansen	● Soon-to-be retired vet ● Involvement with greyhounds since early 1980s ● Owns and breed greyhounds, but not part of any syndicate racing those dogs

Philip Morrison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full-time vet working mostly with large animals ● On-track veterinarian most Thursdays at Cambridge, and occasionally at Auckland ● Has clients who are greyhound owners and trainers, but does not own greyhounds personally
Mairi Stewart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On secondment to RIB from MPI for 6 months ● MPI Principal Adviser in Animal Welfare Team
Michelle Ledger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employed by GRNZ on contract as Animal Welfare Manager
Kat Littlewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Veterinarian ● 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
Gwyneth Verkerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NAWAC Chair ● Retired vet
Glenda Hughes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GRNZ Chief Executive

3. Confirmation of Pre-Meeting Notes of 25 January 2022

Committee confirmed the minutes of the 25 January 2022 meeting as a true and correct record.

4. Chair's Report

Jim stated that the agenda would follow the Committee's Terms of Reference. A lot of work had been done since the January meeting and he thanked everyone for their contribution. He added that it was pleasing that there have been substantive audits of greyhound premises. The findings from these audits will guide us towards any required changes in the GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards.

5. GRNZ Chief Executive Report

Glenda reported that key matters would be covered later in the agenda. She stated that topics/priorities would be aligned with the review programme and additions to this as requested by the RIB would be discussed with the AHCW. As matters arise they are assessed in line with existing other work.

In response to Mairi's request Glenda explained that the Committee minutes would be placed on the website in future.

Action Item: Committee minutes on website

6.1 Population Management including registrations, statistics and management of breeding

Michael Dore joined the meeting and provided an oral report. Michael briefed on the injuries in January at Addington noting these do not appear to be problems with the track. He gave a brief outline of some of the factors that were evident across the spike in injuries seen in January. He added that the formation of the Serious Injury Review Committee (SIRC) will provide a forum for formal evaluation of not only these but, as the name suggests, all serious injuries.

Action Item: Glenda liaising with Dr Ledger and Michael Dore to develop a format in line with Australia to provide Serious Injury Review Committee information to this committee.

6.2 Injuries and deaths

Michelle briefed the Committee in detail and noted that the AHCW paper on Euthanasia policy settings had been circulated prior to the meeting. She stated that she did not require a response today on questions in the policy paper but would like feedback by mid April so that the draft policy can be completed by the end of April. She added the draft policy links to the Victorian Local Rule and NSW rehoming policies. Michelle stated that private vets were being asked to be the gatekeepers for euthanasia and would require significant engagement on the policy, however all those working in the industry and with industry participants must understand the scrutiny the industry is under.

There was discussion on how to engage other veterinarians not directly connected to Greyhound racing who may become involved in euthanasia decision-making to ensure they understand the relevant GRNZ rules and policies, as greyhounds are the most regulated dog population in New Zealand.

Glenda reported that the draft policy principles had gone before the Board and been approved in order to get things going. Any changes proposed by the Committee would be taken back to the Board as part of the draft Policy.

She asked the Committee to consider whether other interventions might be necessary, in particular asking vets to go beyond what they would usually do. Dave, Philip, Mairi, Kat and Jim provided feedback.

Action Item: Agreed email feedback to Michelle by the middle of April.

6.3 Euthanasia of “red dogs” and “ill-dogs”

Michelle requested that a sub-committee be formed to consider her paper and further develop a euthanasia decision matrix from ‘red’ and ‘ill’ greyhounds admitted into the Great Mates re-homing program. Kat, David and Malcolm volunteered to make up the special panel at the Committee’s 25 January meeting to make decisions on euthanasia and would progress that work.

Action Item: Panel would finalise the decision-making tree and report back to the Committee.

6.4 Rehoming

Glenda reported that Candice was off work with Covid19 and unable to speak to the paper.

Action Item: Rehoming Agenda item for May meeting.

6.5 Kennel Standards and Audits

Nick Ydgren joined the meeting and spoke to his report giving an overview of kennel audits. In summary Nick stated that treatment books were not being kept, there were some problems with medications, some dogs were still unvaccinated and emergency plans need to be addressed. There was also an increase in dental issues and numbers of dogs on premises equating with GRNZ records. 20 out of 132 audits had been completed. Phil commented on his involvement in the South Auckland audit. Nick’s full report is attached to the minutes.

In response to Mairi, Glenda asked for a definition of off- label product. Jim explained that vets’ use of off label products is managed through the Code of Professional Conduct. Committee discussed this matter at some length and agreed it needed on-going investigation.

Glenda noted that to date the audits had assessed all dogs as having an ideal body weight and reported that she would arrange for the studies on blindness and worming to be provided to the Committee.

Action Item: Off Label Products to be agenda item May meeting. Michelle to provide an excel sheet in relation to the current state data and look into the ACVM Act and education needed. Mairi said the RIB would provide the committee with the measures being used during audits for feedback at the May meeting. The RIB has some current state data regarding kennel sizes.

Michelle spoke to her paper “Housing Standards discussion: AHCW meeting March 2022” that had been circulated prior to the meeting. She stated that feedback to date raised further questions which would benefit from the Committee’s input. The biggest issue being that the current standards have been in place since 2018 with no date set for implementation of a minimum kennel size and it is now accepted that it is a matter of other enrichments, which contribute to positive welfare not just kennel size. She added she was seeking input from an outside expert.

The Committee discussed this matter at length expressing a range of views.

Jim concluded that there is a programme of robust audits over a 12 month period at which time we should have a good idea of what the issues are and what needs to be addressed.

Additional Item: Committee Induction and Resources

In response to a question from Kat, Michelle stated that Nick had already provided information about animal based measures in conducting audits that included a dental chart.

Action Item: Michelle undertook to gather key information for the May meeting.

Action Item: Glenda to provide the Committee with a copy of the last annual report. In addition a list of key documents and reports would be assembled for Committee members.

6.6 Track Standards

Michelle reported that the first draft of Track Standards had gone out for consultation. Documents will be provided to the Committee when they are further developed. Changes will be made as new safety research emerges.

6.7 Industry Education Sheets

Michelle reported that this information is on the website.

In response to a query from Mairi, Glenda explained that this year is the opportunity to get information out to the industry not just on the website but through other means. Information must be accessible and repeated. A multiplicity of situations need to be put in place such as a roadshow and possibly running videos in kennels while waiting for races. Once factsheets are finalised they will be brought back to the Committee.

6.8 Breeding Policy

No update from the January meeting.

Malcolm stated it was important to get the information recorded. This may require a rule change.

Action Item: NZVA breeding policy advice be circulated to the Committee.

6.9 Oestrus and eye treatments

The Committee discussed the recommendations for adoption into the Greyhound Racing NZ rules that GRNZ approve and adopt specified drugs into the list of exempted substances, viz Cyclosporine and Tacrolimus; and Ethinyloestradiol, Norethisterone and Levonorgestrel.

Noted issues arising out of recommending these exemptions and ways to address these including trainers being in a precarious position because the only exempted product is currently not available; race samples being analysed to identify the appropriate levels if oestrogen was given orally; the need for ethics approval before any research is undertaken; doing the work necessary to ensure trainers are not unwittingly breaking the Rules.

Action Item: Agree to investigate feasibility of taking ten urine samples, having them analysed at the laboratory and report back to the May meeting. At the same time reassuring trainers they will not be prosecuted when the oestrogens are detected in the samples.

Kat Littlewood the meeting at 4.45pm.

General Business: Research Priorities

Glenda explained that as issues arising that require attention and/or research they are brought to the attention of the Board.

Action Item: Research Priorities to be included on the agenda for the May meeting so that an approach can be made to the Board.

General Business: Rule Change

Mairi raised that the committee should be informed of the outcome from the Board regarding the proposal to change the 5-day stand down for a fall as this rule change was proposed by the committee at the last meeting. The RIB was concerned that the rule change did not apply after the finish line. Even if it was difficult due to the rules of racing, how did the committee feel from an animal welfare perspective? - a discussion around that occurred. Michelle and Phil thought the risk of a fall at that point is reduced and stewards/vets can still apply a stand down. It was a "loop hole in the rules of racing that we have to live with." The committee agreed this was not a problem.

Next Meeting: 3rd week in May (date to be confirmed)

Closure

At Jim's invitation, Gwyneth thanked Greyhounds Racing NZ for hearing her input and stated she was looking forward to attending the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.20pm.

Minutes approved:

Signed:

Date:

Attachments

1. Population Management including registrations, statistics and management of breeding – Michael Dore
2. Kennel standards and audits – Nick Ydgren

Action List

Item	Date	Action	Who	Review Date/Due	Status
4	24 Mar 22	Committee minutes to be on website	Glenda	3 weeks	Completed
6.1	24 Mar 22	Serious Injury Review Committee information to the committee	Glenda	WIP	WIP
6.2	24 Mar 22	Committee to provide email feedback to Michelle on AHWC sub-committee Great Mates euthanasia decision panel paper by the middle of April	All	Mid April	
6.3	24 Mar 22	Panel would finalise the euthanasia decision-making tree and report back to the Committee	Kat, David, Malcolm	May	
6.4	24 Mar 22	Rehoming Agenda item for May meeting	Jim	May	
6.5	24 Mar 22	Off Label Products to be agenda item May meeting	Jim	May	
6.5	24 Mar 22	Key information on housing standards for the May meeting	Michelle	May	
6.5	24 Mar 22	Feedback due to Michelle on housing standards. Michelle to provide an excel sheet with kennel sizes	Michelle	1 week	WIP
6.8	24 Mar 22	NZVA breeding policy advice be circulated to the Committee.	Glenda	ASAP	Completed
6.9	24 Mar 22	Agree to consider taking ten urine samples, have them analysed and report back to the May meeting. At the same time reassuring trainers they will not be prosecuted if the oestrogens are found in the samples	Malcolm	May	WIP
Gen Bus	24 Mar 22	Research Priorities to be included on the agenda for the May meeting so that an approach can be made to the Board	Jim / Glenda	May	
Gen Bus	24 Mar 22	Committee to receive a copy of last annual report as well as a list of key documents and reports	Glenda	ASAP	Completed