

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Animal Health and Welfare Committee  
TAB Building, Jackson Street Petone from 10am on Thursday, 19 May 2022**

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

**In Attendance:** Glenda Hughes, CEO GRNZ  
Michael Dore (MD), Racing Operations and Welfare Manager, GRNZ (from 10.15am)  
Nick Ydgren (NY) on secondment to RIB  
Candice Robbins-Goodman (CR), Rehoming Manager  
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

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Noted no changes to the members declarations of interest as set out below:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Jim Edwards (Chair)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Retired vet</li></ul>   |
| Malcolm Jansen (MJ)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Soon-to-be retired vet</li><li>● Involvement with greyhounds since early 1980s</li><li>● Owns and breed greyhounds, but not part of any syndicate racing those dogs</li></ul>   |
| Philip Morrison (PM) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Full-time vet working mostly with large animals</li><li>● On-track veterinarian most Thursdays at Cambridge, and occasionally at Auckland</li><li>● Has clients who are greyhound owners and trainers, but does not own greyhounds personally</li></ul> |
| Mairi Stewart (MS)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● On secondment to RIB from MPI for 6 months</li><li>● MPI Principal Adviser in Animal Welfare Team</li></ul>   |
| Michelle Ledger (ML) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Employed by GRNZ on contract</li></ul>  |
| Kat Littlewood (KL)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Veterinarian</li><li>● Lecturer at Massey University in undergraduate and postgraduate animal welfare, behaviour, ethics, and law</li><li>● Employs the Five Domains Model as a framework for animal welfare assessment and training</li></ul>          |

- Gwyneth Verkerk (GV) ● NAWAC Chair  
● Retired vet
- Dave Matheson (DM) ● Retired vet (worked with greyhounds - exams, treatments, surgery and reproduction)  
● Involvement with greyhounds for 45 years  
● Worked on greyhound tracks in Australia, England and America
- Glenda Hughes (CE) ● GRNZ Chief Executive

### **3. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting 24 March 2022**

Noted minutes had been circulated and were on the website. Committee confirmed the minutes of the 25 January 2022 meeting as a true and correct record.

### **4. Matters Arising**

Noted Matters Arising Schedule and that these matters were taken care of in the agenda.

### **6. Chair's Report**

The Chair stated it was the first time many of the Committee had met in person. Noted agenda order changed to enable Kat to speak to her items before lunch.

The Chair continued he was pleased to see the GRNZ advisory to LPs about Off Label use of treatments and emergency measures which had emerged as issues from the RIB audit reports discussed at the March meeting. It was pleasing to see the positive coverage of greyhounds on Seven Sharp on Tuesday evening.

The Chair said that at the conclusion of the meeting, meeting dates would be set for the rest of the year.

### **7. GRNZ Chief Executive Report**

#### **Visit of Australian Track Safety Experts**

The CE reported that the track experts had visited five tracks last week. They were experts in injuries and track surface. For Whanganui they have been asked to give particular focus on minimising injuries so this can be at the forefront of track design. They visited Palmerston North and were reasonably comfortable with the track. They have visited Manakau and Cambridge and will be coming back to look at Addington and Invercargill. They would provide a report shortly on what needs to be looked at.

**Action Item:** CE to circulate report.

#### **Rehabilitation program**

The CE stated that data is being kept on how long greyhounds are staying in rehabilitation facilities, whether this is in line with Vet advice or whether the rehabilitation process is too long. Animal physios are being brought in to provide expert input through their rehabilitation – one in Christchurch and one in Levin. This is a pilot at this stage but will give us trends. Rehoming manager would provide more detail.

In response to GV, the CE explained that rehab included funding the physio, nursing as well as visits to the Vet.

The Committee noted that there is a raceday euthanasia guideline which covered decisions regarding raceday catastrophic injuries, including the fact that the final decision is to be made by the attending on-track veterinarian and based on the priority of pain control. GV stated the policy would be useful for NAWAC.

MD explained that there were different tiers for decisions about pathways for injured greyhounds, e.g. the majority of greyhounds with fractures will go to the R+R Scheme.

**Action Item:** CE to circulate rehab policy to Committee

### **Methamphetamine Use**

The CE reported because of use in the wider community that an advisory was being prepared regarding Meth. She added the codes are putting in an education and counselling programme this year.

**Action Item:** CE to circulate Meth Use Advisory to Committee

### **Late Submissions on Petition**

CE stated SAFE and Aaron Cross have made late submissions to get the Petitions Select Committee to hear GRNZ. GRNZ have responded and asked that the Chair and Chief Executive have an oral hearing. She added that incorrect allegations had been made about editing Trackside footage. It is standard media practice not to put distressing footage into the public domain. She added Aaron Cross had made a number of Official Information Act requests.

GV reported that NAWAC had been asked for information on these submissions and would get their report to the Minister within the next week or two. Copies of the NAWAC submission would be provided to the Committee.

**Action Item:** GV to provide NAWAC submission to Committee

ML stated that criticism from animal activists does provide an opportunity for the industry to deal with issues. At the moment the priority is injuries which was being proactively dealt with alongside euthanasia.

The CE added that the injury management system based on preferred boxes (PBD) i.e. trainers identifying whether their dogs like to run is a world leader. After 20 C1 races in Christchurch there has been a positive change with less interference between greyhounds that were now running their preferred lines. MD explained the categories for the preferential box draw system being railer, straight runner and wide runner. This trial has to date involved 120 dogs; and shows promise after 4 weeks and it has removed extreme collisions. The PBD trial is being expanded. GRNZ Board have approved a roll out around the country.

## **7.1 Population Management including registrations, statistics and management of breeding**

MD spoke to the GRNZ Data report.

ML commented that there appears to be a greyhound racing population shortage currently, following the COVID-19 lockdowns and movement restrictions, but it appears from the data that current litters will address this in future years. Six additional litter applications had been approved since January.

MJ and MD stated that on-track vets are finding dogs are fitter when they race. This is up to the trainers.

GV suggested it may be useful to check retrospectively where injuries have occurred from a research perspective.

**Action Item:** MD to collect information on retrospective injuries for Committee

MD explained that Greyhound Racing Victoria had gone to the expense of putting GPS chips in dogs' collars. This was standard in the UK.

MD concluded he would be meeting with RIB next week.

PM raised the issue of greyhounds with dilated pupils that must be referred to an ophthalmologist. This may be an issue with dogs who run off the racing line as they lose sight of the lure and it would be useful to review where these 'wayward' dogs are starting. Noted that GRNZ does help with this.

Agreed veterinary team to discuss issues with dilated pupils and report back to the Committee.

**Action Item:** Veterinary team to report to June meeting on dilated pupils.

## **7.2 Injuries and deaths**

ML spoke to the Raceday Injury Rates to April 30 2022 in the Data Snapshot. There is careful interpretation of racing frequency and major injuries with a focus on weights. The Committee was interested in weight restrictions for certain races. MD explained that this has been investigated over the last 6 weeks, but as it is not happening anywhere else in the world, there is potential to consider weight restricted races. The CE stated that in-depth investigation is needed so that Rules are not made without full knowledge of the circumstances.

### **7.3 Euthanasia**

ML advised that there were 2 parts to euthanasia decisions and regulation, which were the GRNZ euthanasia policy being developed; and the euthanasia decision trees special panel.

KL spoke to her paper and said her understanding was that the role of the Committee is to look at those greyhounds who come through the decision trees and make a decision from a welfare as well as an ethical position.

In response to MS queries, KL explained that it is not just about the greyhound but the welfare of the owners too. This is addressed in the proposed ethical matrix.

The Committee discussed what is reasonable vs what is possible for treatment options and the implications this may have on welfare, as well as the burden of looking after ill dogs i.e. diabetics. KL stated there may need to be another row for stakeholders responsible to cover the situation for greyhounds who are diabetic when the treatment can become a burden for the owners. KL stated the 5 Domains framework would be used and there was more to do.

The CE stated GRNZ needed something like this to refer to and would spend the money necessary so that we can be sure to make the right decisions.

The Committee discussed the particular situation of adoptions and the importance of social licence.

**Action Item:** Panel to report back to June meeting on euthanasia.

Noted DM, KL and MJ were involved in the establishment of a panel.

### **8.1 Research Priorities**

#### **8.1.1 Values**

KL outlined her research proposal to look at the values and beliefs systems behind people involved in the greyhound industry and understanding how they make decisions relating to the greyhounds looking at behaviours. She had a master's student who was keen to be involved. KL explained that an understanding of the industry and the people involved would go a long way to improve perceptions about the industry. Will ask people what they think are the barriers to improving animal welfare. The research must involve people so that the intervention strategies are more likely to work. KL stated the timeline was a July start and completed within the calendar year. She will push to get results out sooner. Publication of the research is one of the KPIs.

Noted that trainers want to tell their story and will cooperate with the research. The research will involve focus groups and in person discussions. Also noted that definitions were important, i.e. what does social licence mean?

The CE reported that the Board was happy to fund this research.

Agreed that KL would forward the detailed proposal to the Committee for email feedback by the end of May. Then the CE would take it to the Board for approval of finance in June.

**Action Item:** KL to circulate detailed research proposal for feedback by 30 May. CE to seek approval of finance at GRNZ 15 June meeting.

### **8.1.2 Blindness**

The Committee recognised that more research is needed on eye conditions causing blindness. MJ reported that eyes were removed and sent to Massey for histology and this should be expanded. Noted that a proposal has been received from Massey University for \$12k research funding. Noted that the research would cover dogs from 6 months to 4 years, noting that 12 months to 2.5 years seems to be when dogs develop lesions.

MJ stated parasite work would be a different proposal.

PM stated that this should be followed through to fund trainers to get the eyes to Massey.

ML asked whether this was a pilot or more comprehensive research project.

GV stated there needs to be a way to understand aetiology of blindness, prefer before leading to need for euthanasia. How do we know where the insult occurred, can we test the immune system rather than relying on egg counts? She added that it should be possible to get DNA for more information than just lineage.

MJ stated that the proposal is that we also DNA swab. He added that Petra's study had shown old lesions, not active ones and there were no indications of parasites causing retinal damage.

MJ stated he will contact the researcher to ask what the costs are and expand the proposal through discussions with researchers and the committee. Agreed to ask the researchers to come back with a proposal.

**Action Item:** MJ to contact researcher. Researchers to come back to the Committee with a proposal.

CE stated that if \$12k does not cover the research, GRNZ could assist.

CE reported that an advisory had already been sent out stating that off label meds may not be used with the approval of the Vet. She added that GRNZ needed more information from GV and ML regarding further investigations that might be done by research.

**Action Item:** GV and ML to identify what further work is needed.

MS asked what the committee thought about the high prevalence of parasites and the findings/conclusions from the Massey parasite study and what action GRNZ was taking regarding the concerns raised in the studies. It was apparent not all members had received a copy of the research reports on the parasite and blindness studies to provide comment. She pointed out the RIB are still seeing a lot of off label drugs being used for parasite control during audits.

### **8.1.3 Fractures**

DM suggested there is lack of research on whether bone density and diet influenced the prevalence of fractures. He suggested that Stipendiary Stewards could ask for bloods to be taken as well as x-rays of injured greyhounds. Research could show whether diet is a predisposing cause and provide education for trainers.

GV stated it was necessary to look at bone density and standardisation of measurement.

ML stated that Thoroughbreds had done bone research which may be useful. Scans can measure bone density.

Chair suggested checking with the Thoroughbred codes to see with equine on this.

**Action Item:** The Chair to contact NZTR person re equine research on broken legs.

CE stated High Performance Sport NZ may have useful research on bone density.

**Action Item:** CE to contact High Performance Sport NZ about their research on bone density.

Agreed to initiate initial investigation to see how to come up with a collection of measurements. Need to do some more homework and discuss it again.

**Action Item:** CE to initial investigation for a possible collection of measurements and report back to Committee.

Chair concluded that of the three research areas suggested getting the first 2 into the system and there be more work on the third proposal.

***Meeting adjourned at 12.26pm and resumed at 1pm***

## **7.6 Track Standards**

ML stated the CE had already covered track standards in her report. She added she was preparing a document to guide curators in preparing the track to best standard. New track monitoring equipment was being rolled out by GRNZ including clegg hammers and water percentage readers. One set of equipment was in the North Island and the other in the South Island to get some baseline data to give the curators some meaningful parameters. This will include track management between races and preparation time. GRNZ has also commissioned a specific database which will assist with scheduling work on the ground according to what the data is telling us. It will also identify how the track is influencing injuries. Track standards will be finalised once all the data is gathered. Curators need education, upskilling and support to attain the standards. Additional training is planned from the Australian track specialists. This is imminent.

ML continued that Greyhound Australia is looking at a national framework. She concluded that more work is happening with lures.

## **7.7 Industry Education Sheets**

ML reported on the various fact sheets and asked the Committee for their feedback. Earlier fact sheets are on the website. She added the kennel audits are identifying what other fact sheets are needed e.g. lack of treatment records from trainers.

CE suggested GRNZ could create a book for trainers to use to record treatments. Noted that a booklet could include the timetable on the website and could be kept by the drugs cabinet.

NY joined the meeting at 1.20pm and stated there were very few complaints about treatment recording requirements. Trainers are addressing any issues once they receive the audit report.

**Action Item:** Committee to provide ML with suggestions for other fact sheets. MJ suggested a fact sheet on what is a balanced diet

## **7.5 Kennel Standards and Audits**

NY reported that 59 audits had been completed included 2 to 3 super sized kennels. This was 50 percent. Encouraging response from LPs to getting improvement notice issues resolved. An issue is LPs not knowing what is required for treatment records until after the audit. Further issues are registering dogs, teeth and facility standards. He was sympathetic to the trainers because local government body requirements for registration vary greatly around the country and it is often a significant cost.

CE stated that papers have been presented proposing a uniform cost for greyhounds without success.

**Action Item:** Committee to suggest solution re issues with dog registration for discussion with Local Government New Zealand.

NY continued that 450 improvement notices had been issued. Currently not possible to identify whether the notices each relate to individual dogs or a number of dogs. This analysis will be easier once the new

i-Leader system is in place. Categories will help the Committee to focus on priorities for improvement and education.

NY confirmed that no Vet attention has been required for issues flagged in the audits. Some notices require a re-visit to the property but most can be followed up by trainers providing the RIB with evidence of compliance without a re-visit and some are an advisory without follow up for example the kennels don't meet the standards because they are older facilities. It was important to look at the number of times dogs are out of their kennels. This could be a question for KL's research. Vets agreed that most dogs had breaks from the racing kennels several times a day for exercise and were given water. MS mentioned that LPs are being asked during audits how often greyhounds are let out for exercise and the time requirements do not always meet the standards, and also that sometimes the area they are using for time out of the kennel is not sufficient e.g. toileting areas.

GV stated it was pleasing to hear issues relating to the actual welfare of the dogs being addressed and encouraging compliance in the first instance. One issue of concern remains housing standards. At some stage we need to figure out how to address housing standards.

ML spoke to her Housing and Facilities paper (including transporting dogs) which had been circulated for consultation. She asked the Committee to look at the size of kennels specifically for single greyhounds and groups of greyhounds. She noted there was a proposed 5 year period to improve current facilities to the current standards and the data showed not many facilities meet this standard. A plan needs to be implemented about how this will be managed and whether there will be a 'margin for error' allowed for existing kennels. There must be consensus on this.

The Committee discussed housing at some length and noted that it was just not a matter of size. Greyhounds can lie down and stretch out in one metre width and it may be that 1 metre by 3 metres is sufficient, proportionality is the issue. It is also a matter of deciding whether 5 years is reasonable for the significant cost of upgrading existing kennels

It was important to look at the number of times dogs are out of their kennels. This could be a question for KL's research. Vets agreed that most dogs had breaks from the racing kennels several times a day for exercise and were given water.

ML referred to recent research about how much water dogs drank before and after racing. Another issue was the number of people assigned to care for the dogs at the track and also while travelling.

The committee noted they must look at minimum standards for transporting greyhounds, e.g. how long dogs need for respite before getting back into transport, toileting and walk breaks as well as what to do if there are no respite kennels. There may be a need for facilities for overnight stays. A further issue was the size of transport kennels to prevent dogs sliding around.

ML stated once she received feedback from the committee members, she would finalise the draft for consultation within the industry and with others concerned with the welfare of the industry.

**Action Item:** Committee to provide feedback to ML to enable it to be finalised and sent out for consultation.

#### **7.4 Rehoming**

CR joined the meeting and stated GRNZ had been providing rehab for over a year. The specialist orthopaedic clinic in Christchurch was working to help dog recovery. There has been a significant reduction in rehab time. Central Districts is doing very well. Rehoming enhancements will give better data. There is a special rehab clinic in Central Districts. A dedicated person has been appointed for special adoptions and looking at a separate facility. There is a full time Vet nurse in Levin which will enable Levin to become a hub. There is increased capacity in Christchurch and Rangiora.

CR continued that the red dog training programme has been changed to have 2 assessments. She added she had prepared a draft flow chart which will be circulated for feedback.

**Action Item:** Committee to provide feedback to CR on draft flow chart.

CE reported that a new internet site has been set up called "Love Greyhounds". This is separate from the racing site. The new site is being regularly updated to tell our stories. Noted that the Greyhounds Racing New Zealand site should be linked to the Love Greyhounds site.

**Action Item:** CE to link Love Greyhounds with GRNZ website.

*DM, PM and GV left the meeting at 2.40pm.*

## **8.2 Rule Changes**

CE reported that the Rule changes were progressing well and with the lawyers at the moment.

### **General Business**

#### **Vols**

MS asked what the Committee's position was about the use of Vols.

Chair, MJ and ML discussed this matter. Noted that the VOI of concern was expiring at the end of the year.

Agreed that the first step was to go to the Vet Council for their advice on the management of VOIs. MS stated she would share what she hears back from the Vet Council.

#### **Work Plan**

MS stated she would circulate the one-page joint project work plan for the Committee to include in its forward work plan consideration.

### **2022 Meeting Dates**

The committee discussed possible meeting dates for the remainder of the year.

### **Closure**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3pm.

### **Minutes approved:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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