

Greyhound Racing New Zealand Report for the Minister for Racing Q3 2021/22

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Minister for Racing for the third quarter (Q3) of the 2021/22 racing season, with particular reference to comparisons between the first nine months of the 2021/22 racing season (1 August 2021-30 April 2022) and the first nine months of the 2020/21 racing season (1 August 2020-30 April 2021).

Background

2. GRNZ submitted its first quarterly report to the Minister for Racing in December 2021 following the Robertson Review.
3. GRNZ submitted its second quarterly report to the Minister for Racing in April 2022.
4. GRNZ's first and second quarterly reports have been published on the GRNZ website.
5. This third quarterly report will contain injury and rehoming data up to and including 30 April 2022 and will contain information around additional activities which have taken place up to and including 31 May 2022.

Raceday Euthanasias

6. In the first nine months of the 2021/22 racing season, five greyhounds were euthanised at a racetrack after competing in a race. This equates to 0.2 per 1000 starts. It should be noted that we have not included euthanasias following trials on raceday in these numbers (as the variables within a race are often different to those within a trial); however, two greyhounds were euthanised at a racetrack following trials in the same period. In the first nine months of the 2020/21 racing season, 22 greyhounds were euthanised at a racetrack after competing in a race and there was one raceday death, which equates to 0.7 per 1000 starts.
7. The GRNZ Rehabilitation to Rehoming Programme remains a strong contributing factor in our low raceday euthanasia rates. 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.
8. Figure 1 below shows the number of raceday euthanasias/deaths following a race, per 1000 starts per quarter from Q1 2016.

Racetrack euthanasias/deaths, following a race, per 1000 starts since Q1 2016

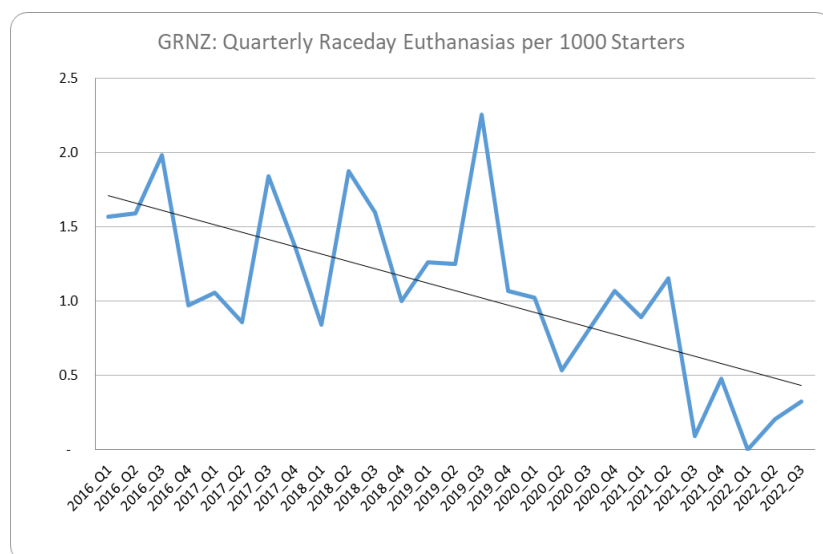


Figure 1

Non-Racing Deaths

9. In the first nine months of the 2021/22 season, 102 greyhounds (both racing and unraced dogs) were euthanised by veterinarians for a medical reason, compared to 79 in the first nine months of the 2020/21 season. This is an increase of 23. Of these, 47 greyhounds were euthanised due to illness, and 55 were euthanised due to accident or injury. GRNZ is working closely with the RIB to audit death certificates and ensure that reasons provided for euthanasias are accurate, and a further update on this will be provided in the next quarterly report.
10. There were 10 behavioural euthanasias due to aggression in the first nine months of the 2021/22 season, and there were 12 behavioural euthanasias due to aggression in the first nine months of the 2020/21 season.
11. In the first nine months of the 2021/22 season, there were 66 reported deaths. Of these, five were due to accident or injury, and 61 were due to illness, age or natural causes.
12. Work is being done to examine non-raceday deaths, including whether they have a causal connection to raceday injuries. Options currently being considered include organising for autopsies to be performed. A further update on this will be provided in the next quarterly report.
13. GRNZ is working with the RIB to develop further insights into euthanasias outside raceday. Insights so far have identified some practices that lack alignment with GRNZ's intent when it comes to euthanasia, which has been a catalyst for GRNZ drafting a Euthanasia Policy. This policy is further detailed below.

Euthanasia Policy

14. A Draft Euthanasia Policy was put forward for the GRNZ Board's consideration at their May board meeting, and GRNZ anticipates it will implement this policy early in the new season, following an extensive consultation process.
15. A euthanasia policy is a specific recommendation in both the Hansen Report and the Robertson Review and brings the industry in line with community expectations for eliminating unnecessary euthanasia of healthy greyhounds and ensuring that all greyhounds have an opportunity to be rehomed.
16. The draft policy sets out the expectations which GRNZ has for all custodial greyhound racing participants in ensuring that all greyhounds bred in New Zealand or imported into New Zealand have an opportunity to live the remainder of their lives as pets, once they retire from racing or breeding.
17. The draft policy tightens rules around when euthanasias are allowed, and it also includes details on preparing greyhounds for rehoming, with new prescribed processes being introduced in this area.
18. The next steps involve industry consultation and an update on the Euthanasia Policy will be provided in the Q4 Quarterly Report.

Raceday Injuries

19. The reported raceday injury or euthanasia rate for the first nine months of the 2021/22 season is 21.2 per 1000 starts.
20. The GRNZ Rehabilitation to Rehoming Programme ensures that greyhounds who suffer major injuries are rehabilitated at GRNZ's expense, before they are entered into a rehoming programme.

Injury Category and Stand Down 2021/22 Q1,Q2 and Q3 and Injury Category & Stand Down 2020/21 Q1, Q2 and Q3

Injury Category & Stand Down 2021/22 Q1 to Q3		Injuries per		Cumulative
Count	from 27,693 starts	1000 starts	Proportion	Proportion
245	Minor 1-10 days	8.8	41.8%	41.8%
153	Medium 11-21 days	5.5	26.1%	67.9%
127	Major I 22-42 days	4.6	21.7%	89.6%
56	Major II more than 42 days	2.0	9.6%	99.1%
5	Euthanised by vet on track or sudden death	0.2	0.9%	100.0%
586	Total Veterinary Exams detecting Injury	21.2		
Injury Category & Stand Down 2020/21 Q1 to Q3		Injuries per		Cumulative
Count	from 31,254 starts	1000 starts	Proportion	Proportion
276	Minor 1-10 days	8.8	39.1%	39.1%
211	Medium 11-21 days	6.8	29.9%	69.0%
154	Major I 22-42 days	4.9	21.8%	90.8%
43	Major II more than 42 days	1.4	6.1%	96.9%
22	Euthanised by vet on track or sudden death	0.7	3.1%	100.0%
706	Total Veterinary Exams detecting Injury	22.6		

Figure 2

Measures to Investigate, Review and Reduce Raceday Injuries

Preferred Box Draw Races

21. GRNZ has introduced a Preferred Box Draw (PBD) pilot, which commenced at Addington Raceway on Monday 25 April 2022.
22. The purpose of the pilot is to reduce collisions between greyhounds during the initial stages of a race, and therefore to reduce injury rates.
23. The pilot was initially restricted to C1 sprinters at Addington. This is because C1 sprinters are the largest dog population in New Zealand, and it was initially contained to the Canterbury region so that its success could be easily measured. C1 sprinters are low-grade sprinters, and the class is ranked one grade above maidens (maidens being greyhounds who have not won a race).
24. Greyhounds nominated for a PBD race are each designated with an official Early Racing Trait (ERT) and the box draw for these races is strongly influenced by the distribution of ERTs in the field.
25. There are seven possible ERTs that a greyhound can be designated, namely:
 - Determined Railer (DR)
 - Railer (R)
 - Straight Railer (SR)
 - Straight (ST)
 - Straight Wide (SW)
 - Wide (W)
 - Extra Wide (XW)

26. Any greyhounds designated “DR” will be drawn into inside boxes, next outside them will be those designated “R”, and so on, with the outside boxes going to those designated “W” and “XW”.
27. After PBD races are run, a committee made up of GRNZ racing experts analyses the races and reassigns ERTs where appropriate.
28. Since the pilot was implemented, 46 PBD races took place at Addington between 25 April 2022 and 31 May 2022. The pilot was extended to C1 sprinters at Manukau Stadium in late May.
29. GRNZ has been measuring the success of the PBD pilot in a number of ways, including monitoring rates of collisions and racing injuries, collating feedback from trainers, monitoring betting turnover and assessing whether PBD races create any kind of box draw bias. A thorough update will be provided in the next quarterly report.

Track Safety

30. As outlined in the previous Quarterly Report, Hatrick Raceway has been closed since 23 September 2021, amid track safety concerns. Following independent reports and consultation with participants, the decision was made to rebuild Hatrick Raceway.
31. In May 2022, Australian track experts Professor David Eager and Scott Robins visited Hatrick Raceway to provide their assessments of the track and provide recommendations around components of the track rebuild.
32. In May 2022, Australian track experts Professor David Eager and Scott Robins also visited Manawatu Raceway and Manukau Stadium. During this visit, they met with regional track curators and club officials.
33. They are scheduled to visit Addington Raceway and Cambridge Raceway in early June, and revisit Hatrick Raceway and Manukau Stadium.
34. Their report on New Zealand tracks is expected in June and an update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
35. GRNZ has been liaising closely with Professor David Eager (the Professor of Risk Management and Injury Prevention at University of Technology Sydney) around how the parties can work together, specifically in the area of racing injury analysis. An update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
36. Dr. Michelle Ledger continues to develop a set of track minimum standards for the preparation, maintenance and monitoring of safe tracks. This progress is tied into baseline readings of new Cleggs and moisture readings currently, and will also be guided by Professor David Eager and Scott Robins’ reports.
37. Dr. Michelle Ledger continues to develop an overarching Animal Welfare Strategy for the industry 2022-25. The Greyhound Board of Greyhound Britain has recently released its Welfare Strategy, which will be reviewed and considered in GRNZ’s draft equivalent.

Manawatu Raceway

38. There were some concerns several years ago that the 375m starting position at Manawatu Raceway caused field compression going into the first bend.
39. Adam Bailey (track maintenance specialist from Australia) conducted a report at the time, which recommended that the lure needs to lead the field by 10 metres at the start (over 375m at Manawatu Raceway) in order to minimise field compression at the first turn.
40. This report also noted that the alignment of the boxes on the track was not ideal at the time.
41. Following the report, in the 2018/19 racing season, the Palmerston North Greyhound Racing Club elected to investigate a new 410m start position. The new 410m position was tested in the 2018/19 season and fully replaced the 375m starting position in the following season.

42. Following the closure of Hatrick Raceway, GRNZ investigated whether it would be possible to reinstate the 375m starting position at Manawatu Raceway, to give more racing opportunities to sprinters.
43. In making its decision to reinstate the 375m start, GRNZ has taken on board the report of Adam Bailey. The 375m boxes have been repositioned, which has assisted the greyhounds in wider boxes to take a straighter line to the first corner.
44. Additionally, a rule change, approved by the RIB, was implemented in April 2022, which requires the lure to lead the field by 10 metres at the start over 375m at Manawatu Raceway.
45. These safety initiatives were both implemented prior to the re-introduction of racing over 375m at Manawatu Raceway. In addition, a number of trials over the distance were held prior to racing recommencing.
46. Following satisfactory trials, racing re-commenced over 375m at Manawatu Raceway on Wednesday 6 April 2022. Since then, 375m races have been run regularly on Wednesdays and Fridays at Manawatu Raceway.
47. Since racing over 375m re-commenced at Manawatu Raceway (until 30 April 2022), there were only two injuries over 28 days. Both were muscle tears involving interference (one 28-day stand down and one 42-day stand down).
48. While this quarterly report primarily contains injury and euthanasia data up to 30 April 2022, in the interests of transparency it should be noted that one raceday euthanasia occurred following a 375m race at Manawatu Raceway on 17 June 2022.
49. GRNZ will continue to monitor the effect of this change.

Serious Injury Review Committee Update

50. Following a Terms of Reference for a GRNZ Serious Injury Review Committee (SIRC) being drafted, the SIRC held its first meeting on 26 May 2022.
51. At its first meeting, matters discussed included:
 - Greyhounds aged over four years old indicate a higher risk for serious injury.
 - Greyhounds having rested for more than 21 days prior to racing is a high-risk factor.
 - A loss of weight approaching 1kg since a previous start is a risk factor for serious injury.
 - Potential maximum racing frequencies.
 - The possibility of re-vetting a greyhound who performs below par should no injury be detected on initial examination.
52. In order to ensure there are no unintended negative impacts which may result from implementing SIRC recommendations, the University of Technology Sydney will be reviewing the SIRC's findings and recommendations.
53. The SIRC will continue to convene regularly and a comprehensive update on this committee will be provided in the next quarterly report.

GRNZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee Update

54. The GRNZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee (AHWC) continues to meet approximately every six weeks. The AHWC met online on 24 March 2022 and again in person on 19 May 2022.
55. Two observers continue to join the AHWC meetings; namely Dr. Mairi Stewart (Animal Health and Welfare Consultant and contracted to the RIB) and Dr. Gwyneth Verkerk (Chair of NAWAC).
56. The agenda for each committee meeting follows the Committee's Terms of Reference so that all relevant matters are expected to be reported to the Committee for discussion.
57. AHWC Chair, Dr. Jim Edwards, has reported that a lot of work has been done between meetings and has acknowledged the contribution from committee members.
58. Items discussed at the most recent committee meetings include:

- Kennel audits: The Chair noted the substantive audits of greyhound premises. The findings from these audits will aid in guiding the AHC towards required changes in the GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards.
 - Population management: 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.
 - Blindness: The Committee recognised that more research is needed on eye conditions causing blindness.
 - Track standards: These will be finalised once all data is gathered. New track monitoring equipment was being rolled out by GRNZ, including Clegg hammers and water percentage readers.
 - Minimum standards for transporting greyhounds: The Committee will look at these.
 - Euthanasia Policy: There has been significant work done on the Euthanasia Policy and the pathways to follow during decision-making.
59. Additionally, the AHC receives reports on a range of matters, and discusses all of them at its meetings, such as injuries and deaths, rehoming, industry education fact sheets and audit reports from the RIB.
60. The Committee has discussed a number of proposals and is currently considering two research proposals that involve the veterinary school at Massey University and will likely recommend their support to the GRNZ Board when further information is received.
61. The minutes from each AHC meeting are posted on the GRNZ website as they become available.

Vaccinations

62. The vaccination mandate came into effect on 1 March 2022, following extensive communication with Licensed Persons (LPs) via a variety of mediums.
63. Since 1 March 2022, greyhounds in New Zealand must be fully vaccinated in order to race in New Zealand.
64. The online nomination form displays the vaccination status for a greyhound. If a greyhound's vaccinations are not current or within the 21-day grace period, their nomination will be "blocked" in the system until they are up to date.
65. Additionally, the "My Greyhounds" menu has a section that displays the vaccination status for each greyhound. This is specific to each trainer, but GRNZ staff and RIB can perform a search of all greyhounds and trainers.
66. Email reminders are sent to trainers of greyhounds whose vaccinations are due.
67. Racing greyhounds are the only breed of dog in New Zealand required to have current vaccination status.
68. 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.
69. GRNZ is currently working through the challenges of mandating vaccinations for non-racing greyhounds, including retired pets adopted by trainers. An update on this, including a target implementation date, will be included in the next quarterly report.

Population Model

70. As mentioned in our previous quarterly report, 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.
71. The population model prototype build is underway to track the lifecycle of the greyhound, including breeding, pre-racing population, racing population, racing demand and rehoming. This includes looking back over the last three to four seasons as well as the current season, with a projected regional forecast over the next five seasons.
72. Data insights work undertaken since August 2021 provides key input to the supply and demand factors within the population model. The target is to have this model in operation for the next racing season.
73. GRNZ will own this model and the use of it in the new racing season.
74. A further update on the population model will be provided in the next quarter.

Kennel Audits

75. The RIB has continued to undertake regular kennel audits.
76. The RIB has acknowledged that the kennel audits which have been undertaken this season have been much more thorough and rigorous in nature than had previously been conducted over the years by the Racing Integrity Unit. This is a contributing factor to the number of improvement notices that have been issued so far; previously, improvement notices had not been issued during kennel audits.
77. As at 30 April 2022, 52 kennel audits had been conducted in the first nine months of the 2021/22 racing season. In total, 470 improvement notices were issued across this period.
78. The top five areas of non-compliance found in the kennel audits as at 30 April 2022 were:
 - Facility standards (a number of these improvements are advisory only for facilities built prior to February 2019 and therefore not currently subject to the GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards. These Standards are currently under review as a matter of urgency, with further details provided below)
 - Vaccinations (noting that this was more prevalent in earlier audits, given greyhounds are now required to be fully vaccinated in order to race)
 - Treatment records
 - Medications (including storage and expired medication)
 - Emergency plans
79. A RIB-contracted vet attends each audit and performs an assessment of the body score and teeth. While this is not a full vet assessment of the health of the animal, if there are any significant issues, these would be raised.
80. The kennel audits have identified some dental issues among greyhounds, with a number of greyhounds presenting with Grade 3 and Grade 4 teeth. Greyhounds are genetically predisposed to dental conditions, but there are steps that can be taken to prevent and mitigate dental issues and GRNZ has been working hard to educate its participants in this area, such as via a GRNZ Dental Fact Sheet.
81. The RIB has been noticing some instances of greyhounds not being registered with the local council. Registrations are generally being completed post-audit but it is a requirement to have these records correct at all times.

Custodian Software

82. GRNZ recognises the importance of knowing where all registered greyhounds are at all times, as they need to be in the care of an appropriately licensed person at all times.
83. This is generally not an issue for racing greyhounds as they are usually located with their trainers. However, kennel audits have revealed that the location of breeding stock and

unnamed puppies is not always as clear. Unnamed puppies may often change location, with GRNZ sometimes not being informed until naming time.

84. As a result, GRNZ has come up with the “custodian” concept, which refers to someone who has greyhounds in their care.
85. The custodian software launched on Monday 2 May 2022. This software allows for trainers to advise GRNZ when greyhounds are moving to or from their care.
86. In practice, the trainer uses an online form to advise that a greyhound is moving to or from their care. The trainer can:
 - Advise when a greyhound or unnamed puppy is transferring to a custodian and who that custodian is;
 - Advise if they are receiving a greyhound or puppies from a trainer into their care as a custodian; and
 - Advise when they are receiving back a greyhound which has been with a custodian.
87. To assist with the process, GRNZ produced a set of Q and As for trainers, and also produced a series of educational videos explaining how to action a custodian transfer in the system.
88. The custodian software assists GRNZ with knowing where registered greyhounds and puppies are at all times, and the more it is used by LPs, the more useful it becomes.
89. GRNZ continues to actively encourage the use of the custodian software, and has been including reminders in its regular communications with LPs.

Health and Welfare Standards

90. As mentioned in the previous quarterly report, the GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards are currently under review.
91. The Housing Standards were recently referred to the AHCW, and their suggestions have been incorporated into the amended draft. Further consultation will take place in coming months, with a further update to come in the next quarterly report, including a planned implementation date.
92. Following consultation with the AHCW, a hot weather racing policy and a travelling policy are currently being developed. The next quarterly report will contain a further update.

Education

93. GRNZ recognises the importance of its participants understanding and complying with its rules and policies. GRNZ has conducted an assessment of the competencies required for LPs, and LPs have been informed that education and completing an assessment will be a mandatory requirement for maintaining particular licence types in the new season. A further update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
94. GRNZ is also working closely with Racing New Zealand (RNZ) to ascertain the educational needs and desires of participants. In May 2022, a RNZ survey regarding education was sent to all LPs and survey results are currently being worked through. An update will be provided in the next quarterly report.

Rehoming

95. Between 1 August 2021 and 30 April 2022, 376 greyhounds were rehomed through the GRNZ Great Mates Rehoming Programme.
96. Between 1 August 2021 and 30 April 2022, 49 greyhounds were privately rehomed, or the owner kept the greyhound as a pet processed through the GRNZ Great Mates Rehoming Programme. GRNZ is currently drafting processes which will improve the oversight of where greyhounds go after they retire from racing.
97. The number of greyhounds rehomed during the same nine-month period last season was 488.

98. The Great Mates waiting list has been steadily increasing in recent months, and GRNZ has been looking at ways to increase capacity and reduce the waiting list. The Levin Great Mates kennels have employed a full-time vet nurse to work in the rehoming programme. This addition means that they are able to increase capacity there by approximately 10 kennels. Additionally, GRNZ has been visiting potential properties to purchase, with the aim of adding another Great Mates kennel to the four already in operation around the country.
99. 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. Between 1 August 2021 and 30 April 2022, 33 greyhounds were adopted after their rehabilitation was complete.
100. GRNZ is developing new rehoming software enhancements, which will provide GRNZ with better data insights on the shorter term impacts of the RTR programme on greyhounds, such as how long rehabilitation takes and how long adoption takes once a greyhound is cleared. It will also demonstrate differences and correlations in rehabilitation in greyhounds with reference to regions, different trainers, injuries, RTR teams and vets. An update will be provided in the next quarterly report.
101. GRNZ is recruiting orthopaedic specialists and physiotherapists to treat the RTR greyhounds and develop better treatment plans, and therefore long-term results.
102. A Great Mates Specialist Person or Team (for RTR adoptions and any greyhound with special needs) has been approved. The job description and advertisement for the role will commence in the next quarter.
103. GRNZ is working with adoption agencies and a media company to formulate a survey which will be distributed to owners who have adopted a greyhound from the industry. This will allow GRNZ to gain a better insight into the long-term effects of both rehoming and rehabilitation. An update will be provided in the next quarterly report.

Media Coverage

104. GRNZ continues to post regular industry stories on its website, and the NZ Herald also posts one greyhound story weekly on its website, through GRNZ's partnership with NZME.
105. GRNZ continues to release one video per fortnight on industry personalities through its social media and on its Lovegreyhounds.org.nz website.
106. A positive greyhound story appeared on Seven Sharp in May which was extremely well-received based on LP feedback and social media feedback as evidenced below.
107. Following the Seven Sharp television piece, the segment was posted on the Seven Sharp Facebook page. While we don't have access to Seven Sharp's digital analytics, we can see that as at 31 May 2022, 36,000 people had viewed the video on the Facebook platform, it had 405 reactions on the main post (including 238 "likes", 135 "loves" and eight "care" emojis), 359 shares and 612 comments.
108. GRNZ has also been working hard to correct misinformation circulated about the industry.
109. By way of example, a story appeared on the Stuff website in May 2022, which claimed that GRNZ had edited race footage, and also claimed that GRNZ had been contacted for comment. However, this was untrue - no member of GRNZ staff had been directly contacted by Stuff, and GRNZ had not edited race footage. In this instance, GRNZ was quick to contact Stuff, which resulted in a correction and updated article being posted on their website.
110. As a result of the original Stuff article, other mainstream media news outlets also re-circulated misinformation. GRNZ contacted these news outlets to correct the misinformation, which resulted in Newstalk ZB interviewing GRNZ CEO Glenda Hughes, and that radio station and Mediaworks radio stations amending their news bulletins to correct the misinformation they had been disseminating.

111. GRNZ has extended its partnership with sport and racing radio station SENZ until 31 December 2022. This has been a valuable platform for GRNZ - for example, following some negative television media coverage, SENZ provided balance by interviewing the GRNZ CEO and COO on the matters. It has also been a key tool for normalising greyhound racing for a wider audience.
112. SENZ's total monthly cumulative radio audience is 39,600 listeners. Its website had 24,000 users in April 2022 and there were 10,000 radio streams via the website in April 2022.

—ENDS—