

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Animal Health and Welfare Committee at
TAB Building, 106-110 Jackson Street, Petone from 10am on Wednesday, 22 June 2022**

Present: Jim Edwards, Chair
Malcolm Jansen, Vet
Dave Matheson, Vet
Michelle Ledger, Vet, GRNZ Welfare Manager
Mairi Stewart, Animal Welfare Consultant, RIB (observer)
Gwyneth Verkerk, NAWAC Observer (via videoconferencing)

In Attendance: Glenda Hughes, CEO GRNZ
Michael Dore, Racing Manager, GRNZ
Karen Waterreus, Minutes Secretary

Apologies: Kat Littlewood, Vet and Massey Lecturer
Philip Morrison, Vet

1. Welcome and Chair's Report

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that technically there were only three Committee members present. Four are required for a quorum. However, both Kat and Philip have provided input into the papers provided for the meeting. Philip said, "All papers read and agreed with" and Kat has also provided her comments via email.

The Chair stated that he has therefore determined that this meeting does have a quorum of input and will proceed on that basis. If there are any significant decisions required, that may not have the quorum support and if that is the case we should consider consulting the absent members out of session should an action need to be expedited before the next meeting in July.

The Chair concluded by acknowledging the relevant work that committee members have done since the last meeting that enables us to proceed our deliberations at a good pace.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

Jim Edwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Retired vet
Malcolm Jansen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has clients who are greyhound owners and trainers, but does not own greyhounds personally
Mairi Stewart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Animal Welfare Consultant, RIB
Michelle Ledger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employed by GRNZ on contract
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
Dave Matheson (DM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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

3. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting 19 May 2022

Noted minutes had been circulated and were on the website. Committee confirmed the minutes of the 19 May 2022 meeting as a true and correct record.

4. Matters Arising

24 March 2022 Item 6.9: Note the work on urine samples had been transferred to Australia VAC. MJ will ensure it stays on the radar.

Noted a number of items on the Matters Arising Schedule had been completed. Work is on-going on some matters and other matters were taken care of in the agenda.

6. GRNZ Chief Executive Report

CE stated CR-G was undertaking site visits in the South Island for rehoming options and would not attend today's meeting.

Noted NY was doing kennel audits and was not available for the meeting. MS will brief the Committee on kennel audits. CE added that audits have found three dogs housed in a trailer. These dogs have been taken by GRNZ and are currently being rehomed. Committee needed to think about what is needed to prevent this happening in the future. CE suggested looking at licensing the property so that whatever goes on on the property is covered.

ML stated dogs that are waiting to be rehomed need to be top of mind during this time. As this can be a difficult time for both the trainer and the dog. GRNZ needs to look at providing incentives while we are creating additional capacity in the system. ML continued that unfortunately, welfare standards do not apply to non-racing dogs so there is no penalty for non-compliance with the welfare standards. Is this sending a message to the industry that we only have to care for dogs that are commercially viable?

Action Item: Check if there was anything in the Animal Welfare Act that could be used or the minimum standards for the dog code.

MS stated that GRNZ adopting the GA rule would address the issue and cover de-registered greyhounds under the care of a L.P. MD looking at how to resolve the situation so that it fits. Can GRNZ put a restriction on the kennels? Committee discussed a situation where there are kennels for 32 dogs but there are actually more dogs than kennels at a property. Maybe authorise properties for a certain number of dogs and monitor this. Committee cannot condone having more dogs than there is suitable kennel space for. Noted that kennel capacity also requires a consideration of staffing ratios to care for greyhounds at properties and handle greyhounds at the races. NSW has a Rule limiting the number of greyhounds permitted to be handled by a single person at the races.

Noted new housing standards have a requirement for property compliance inspections before new licences are allocated. Chair summarised the need for a welfare outcome for the animals and being able to manage this on raceday or at the kennels including co-living impact. Committee discussed a rule change to cover all dogs on a property and for newsletters to cover this. Noted NSW maximum 4 dogs per handler and guide dogs 1:10 ratio. CE stated changes must be phased in, e.g. addressing matters such as adequately cooling dogs down and why trainers are not putting dogs in air conditioned kennels.

Action Item: ML to circulate Adelaide University study on heat stress.

Action Item: Feedback on new housing standards

Action Item: Feedback to RHM on the completed flowchart.

CE reported on her discussions with High Performance Sport regarding fractures. Dr Bruce Hamilton is investigating the use of vitamin D on fractures. MJ stated that the average racing dog diet seems to be lacking in vitamin D and this may need to be looked at.

Action Item: Committee agreed to do a more in-depth study with High Performance Sport.

CE reported that we have reached a stage where specific issues are being worked on. For example all rehoming kennels have agreed to audits. Both Christchurch audits are very good. GRNZ is very aware of the spending increase in rehoming and adoptions. GRNZ may need to introduce a rehoming subsidy to maintain welfare for greyhounds on the waiting list for rehoming centre access.

7.1 Population Management including registrations, statistics and management of breeding

MD joined the meeting and spoke to his Welfare Committee Update covering Breeding Numbers to June 20 2022, Quarterly Injury Rates this season, New 375m Start at Manawatu Raceway, Preferred box Draw Pilot at Addington and injuries without Day One.

MD stated a measure could be drawn once we have over 1000 starts. The decrease from 5 to 3.2 per thousand starts is statistically significant.

CE stated the focus must remain on catastrophic injury. Noted statistics showing a dog with a longer standown (21 days or more) is more likely to have a further serious injury. DM reported that equine broken legs were being sent to Massey to study causation

7.2 Injuries and deaths

ML tabled the Minutes and Action Log from the first Serious Injury Review Committee meeting on 26 May. CE stated UTS would be involved in this work in future.

Committee agreed future meeting data analysis would use the SIRC meeting report format based on ML spreadsheet but also incorporate further risk matrix analyses, as well as including all 42-day injuries

Noted the point of difference between Australia and New Zealand with weight variations, is that for Australia if a dog has lost more than 1kg in 28 days the greyhound must be scratched. Noted that the age of the dog and the number of lifetime starts is a risk factor. This supports a limited type of race (such as a “master class”) and can expand the racing career of greyhounds. DM stated he supported what is being proposed. MJ reiterated that weight loss is a significant factor and a stricter approach needs to be taken.

Committee agreed to following recommendations:

1. for a performance trial prior to racing for greyhounds commencing racing after more than 3 months.
2. that ‘racing availability’ as a concept be included in the population model and a tolerance level developed from data to indicate a likely risk factor.
3. a racing class (similar to master’s racing in other jurisdictions) be developed for greyhounds older than 48 months with programming for this class set at a frequency suitable for this age class of greyhound.
4. Trainers are questioned regarding reasons for a 21-day layoff and their plans for return to racing frequency in a graduated manner, starting with lower frequency and building fitness. Performance trials should be considered to assess fitness for return to racing after 21 days or at least those trainers submit a recent trial time over a compatible distance as a voluntary compliance measure. A veterinary clearance should accompany any greyhound rested 42 days or more.
5. Graduated return to high racing frequency should be considered following 21 day layoff.
6. AHWC further review NZ and Australian data and recommended a likely maximum racing frequency for regulation.
7. Alternative trial options be considered for tracks with higher racing frequency to remove the option for pre-race trials unless they are Stewards’ performance trials. GRNZ need to identify a second track so that trainers can prepare their dogs to return to the race-track. This track was previously at Chertsey but needs investigation to see if it is a viable option or whether an alternative track can be identified. Race programming should provide for the maintenance and renovation times for all tracks and allow for transfer of race meetings to alternative venues for work to be completed.
8. Injury data to include data on where in the maintenance cycle the injury occurred (week 1-4) and the associated track readings taken pre-meeting-NR.

Committee accepted the recommendation that the AHWC write to GRNZ board recommending harmonisation with Australian Rules regarding weight variations. Any greyhound 1kg or more weight

variation should be scratched. A combination of 28 days off racing and a weight variation should be viewed as being more serious a risk factor and not a mitigation for the weight variation.

Form Reversals

NY to future explore the appetite to provide official warnings to trainers for poor performances, prior to requesting a performance trial, the further scrutiny highlighting the concern that performance is likely equated to injury. The option to further review form reversals via a “3rd umpire” type system was discussed. MD suggested the review of PBD races offered a unique opportunity to monitor race performances. Ideally a system like “Isolynx” to accurately record the sectional times and race positions of all greyhounds was considered the gold standard.

Committee noted the Action (SRC) and Recommendation (REC) Log

Rule Change re Stand down

In response to CE ML quoted from the new rules relating to scratching for weight variations. She added she needed to check the actual wording and pointed out some issues. Agreed to clarify with GA what the situation is with weight variation.

GV suggested that there may be better ways to analyse the weight change statistics if some of the elements could be considered as continuous variables - this increases the power of the analysis and may provide a more useful approach to considering weight change. Need to look at trends alongside weight gain and loss taking care not to get too complicated on the day. Agreed this information needs to be shared with trainers so it is understood these are rule changes to reduce injuries.

JE stated there needs to be a rule to clarify including deciding how much variability we accept once we come to a figure. Needs to be further investigation into the data to ensure any new rule does not result in a negative unintended consequence. Need to run New Zealand data alongside UTS data and discuss with Chris Rogers Massey University.

Action Item: CE will send a letter to NAWAC re UTS contribution.

Committee agreed ML to do more work on this and bring the matter back to the Committee before any change is made to the Rules. CE stated we must be able to give the trainers the logic.

Noted ML would present at Conference about the logic for the rule change.

Intensity of Racing:

ML reported Greyhounds Australia had done some work on racing intensity. An analysis of this work will be provided to the Committee so that it can be provided to the Stewards. JE, DM and MJ to continue their discussions with Chris Rogers to get some insight and guidance. GV mentioned Anna Palmer’s PhD looking at markers. ML stated there was a paucity of statistics on issues for racing dogs. JE stated a number of things will come out of discussions with Chris Rogers which the Committee can then prioritise.

The Committee discussed a masterclass for 4 year olds racing on a circle track. CE stated CR-G is looking at what people are looking for in rehoming dogs.

Action Item: ML to circulate data showing how risk can be mitigated in master class races.

Action Item: MJ to circulate to vets current discussion of amputations as well as summarising important points to assist the Committee to confirm an amputations policy at its next meeting.

7.3 Euthanasia

ML stated while there is a final draft of the policy, feedback is still welcome. KL feedback had been incorporated. Noted the advice that vets should certify the process and not be the regulator. However need to know what to do to police the policy including the appropriateness of certifying and consultation with the vet. The vets cannot be required to do anything that breaches the VCNZ Code of Professional Conduct.

MJ stated they have not done clinical requests just raceday. CE suggested running past RtR vets who are more heavily involved. Also need to check what is ongoing practice as well as checking against the Code of Professional Conduct.

JE stated feedback had been received on clause 2.1 in the policy suggesting a word change to ensure euthanasia is certified by a vet on the prescribed form. The onus is on the owner not the vet. Noted the Vet members of the Committee to meet with VCNZ and NZVA next week to expedite before the next meeting. JE stated he would send other notes to ML and asked the Committee to read over the notes to ensure we are on the same page.

GV asked about support for rehoming where there are other conditions. CE explained that special adoptions have increased and CR-G is looking at this.

The Committee adjourned at 12.35pm and resumed at 1.05pm

7.4 Rehoming

CE explained CR-G was looking at rehoming options in Christchurch as well as meeting with another behaviourist. Research was being done approaching people who have adopted dogs and those who have returned dogs. The adoption agencies will be sending a survey to those who have adopted. It was noted that the SPCA have recently stated publicly that greyhounds cannot be rehomed and do not make good pets.

CE noted that she is looking at universality of rehoming contracts to include standard things and will bring the proposed contracts back to the Committee for input.

7.5 Kennel Standards and Audit

MS reported that 91 audits had been done with 33 left to do. The three largest kennels have been done. Now starting to look at rehoming facilities which have been good so far. Kennels have welcomed the audits and taken on the recommendations to improve facilities. On target for competing audits by the end of July to allow time to catch up on outstanding corrective actions and infringements. Audit information is being transferred into i-Leader which will make it easier to pull out data and reports. Work has begun on planning the 2023 audits. MS asked if the committee could provide any feedback on the audit measures, which were provided at the May meeting in July at the latest.

DM stated that 1.2m kennel width may need to be the kennel standard to accommodate tail wagers. ML stated she has started preparing a series of questions for consultation asking specifically about tail injuries and kennel sizes. Consultation starts next week and she will share the document with the Committee.

Action Item: Committee to provide feedback on any changes or additions for the next meeting.

JE recommended the Committee watch Liz's interview of NY.

7.6 Greyhound Review Programme

Noted MS had circulated the greyhound review programme plan. MS explained the greyhound review programme was developed based on a reconciliation back to the WHK, Hansen and Robertson Reviews. The 30 recommendations from the Hansen and Robertson Review formed 15 focus areas, which align with the Minister's expectations and the three focus areas; data, transparency and animal welfare in general. The programme is led by the RIB but GRNZ own the majority of the work. MS said it would be useful for the committee to refer to the plan when prioritising its work and research noting the December deadline for the final report to the Minister and his expectation that KPIs are developed for key animal welfare areas.

GV stated NAWAC is pleased to note the progress being made to resolve the various issues and also commends the work of the RIB. NAWAC has recently written to the Minister (Animal Welfare) to report on this progress. One area of concern is that clear welfare-performance KPIs remain to be established, for example setting a target for injury level per 1000 starts. NAWAC has a view that this is part of the continuous improvement process which it would like to see operating. This makes it more transparent as to what the industry is hoping to achieve.

JE asked whether NAWAC has done a gap analysis to identify what is missing or what could be done to fill the gaps. GV said no NAWAC is looking at progress against the review programme. MJ noted that interpretation of inquiry rates is a problem as the lower range of injury rates are not significant. GV stated that injury at the more serious end of the scale is where the focus should be.

CE noted it was important to have goals around process and strategy.

7.7 Track Standards

Noted Turf Institute have developed a database for track preparation. MS asked if the Committee will be provided with the UTS report on the review of track safety across all tracks and the recommendations said yes once they have been signed off.

7.8 Fact Sheets

ML stated she had completed a Fact Sheet on Treatment Records and is working on a Fact Sheet on Nutrition as well as a Policy to cover transport in hot and possibly cold weather. CE stated there is a need to look at travel from Christchurch to Invercargill not just for the dogs but the staff involved as well.

Agreed to separate transportation from hot and cold weather issues.

Action Item: ML to work on Fact Sheets and report back to the Committee.

Research Project Updates

MJ reported that Chris Rogers will be going to a race day. JE noted working through the options to see what happens during raceday processes. Agreed to continue the conversation following the visit.

Blindness: MJ reported HH from Massey was working with Petra on blindness. Faecal samples were \$5. MJ will confirm with Petra what numbers are achievable. This study focuses on the younger 12 – 24 month age group. DM asked about defined products that are not registered. Noted if dogs are causing

problems in a race, costs fall to the owner. ML asked what should be done from a regulatory perspective for future racing, if eye lesions are discovered in the 12-24 age cohort. Note it may also be necessary to look further at parasites in kennels.

MJ and DM to keep Committee informed consulting with ML.

Action Item: MJ to check what is happening with dilated pupils on some dogs as well as checking euthanised dogs eyes are removed and sent to Massey for evaluation

Next Meeting

Wednesday, 27 July 2022. Noted a NZVA veterinarian would attend this meeting.

Closure

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2.34pm

Minutes approved:

Signed:

Date:
