

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Animal Health and Welfare Committee
TAB Building 106-110 Jackson Street, Petone
10am Tuesday 15 August 2023**

Present: Peter Mason, NAWAC (Peter M) (Chair - August meeting only)
Allen Bryce, Chair (AB)

Kat Littlewood, Vet and Massey Lecturer (KL) (via videoconferencing)
Philip Morrison, Vet (PM) (video conferencing)
Dave Matheson, Vet (DM)

In Attendance: Edward Rennell, CE GRNZ
Michael Dore, Racing Operations and Welfare Manager, GRNZ (MD)
Nick Ydgren RIB, Observer (NY) (via videoconferencing)
Paula Lemow, MPI (PL) (via video conferencing)
Bill Wilson, GRNZ (BW) (via video conferencing)
Candice Robbins-Goodman, GRNZ (CRG)
Darrin Williams, GRNZ (DW)

Chantelle Askew, AHCW Secretary (CA)

Apologies: Sally Cory, NZVA (SC)

Declarations of Interest

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

Allen Bryce	Retired government veterinarian undertaking occasional consultancy work. Councillor/Director and Honorary Secretary of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists.
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	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
Kat Littlewood	Veterinarian + FANZCVS Animal Welfare Science 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 EFAB Committee of NZVA
Dave Matheson	Retired vet (greyhounds – exams, treatments, surgery and reproduction) Involvement with greyhounds for 45 years Worked on greyhound tracks in Australia, England and America

Paula Lemow	Senior Advisor Animal Welfare Science MPI Vet Nurse
Peter Mason	NAWAC, observer
Sally Cory	Head of NZVA Veterinary Services Companion Animals Emergency Vet and Manager of Emergency Vet Clinic in Wellington Currently involved with GAP
Edward Rennell	GRNZ Chief Executive Former CE Harness Racing New Zealand Former TAB Broadcasting and Operations
Michelle Ledger	GRNZ Welfare Manager

Welcome

The full meeting commenced at 10.04am with the Chair welcoming everyone. Peter Mason introduced himself as the temporary Chair while AB is away, Peter M is a NAWAC observer usually.

Minutes of Previous AHC Meeting

The minutes of the AHC Meeting held on 14 June were taken as read and confirmed as a **true and correct** record of the meeting.

Action Register

The Committee **noted** the Action Register, with the status of actions to be discussed under their relevant agenda item.

1. Chair's report

NAWAC was asked by their Minister (J Luxon) to comment on the RIB Report. NAWAC did so and their Chair covered this off in his meeting with the Minister. NAWAC basically endorsed the RIB Report.

2. GRNZ Chief Executive Report

Response to Minister

GRNZ submitted a Response to RIB Ministerial Review in July 2023. GRNZ's focus with this response was to constructively address the progress which had been made on the five key areas where we were marked as *slow*; we are now in alignment with the RIB. CE explained that Rehoming has slowed but is consistent with all dog breeds with the current economics, we are looking at paying a lot more attention to Rehoming with the employment of Darrin Williams as our Welfare Strategy and Operations Manager, his role will focus on life after racing, lift standards and performance in the rehoming space.

Welfare Review - Work Plan

The Welfare Work Plan was noted and has been updated taking us to January.

RIB Report recommendations - GRNZ response and actions

There were 77 recommendations where we have put a response into what has been done in the past 6 months and what we are progressing with going forward. Key areas going forward are Rehoming and Injury. CE, Chair and Simon Stout from GA met with the Minister 2 weeks ago, encouraged to know the progress we had made.

Starting to see benefits of track work coming through, with injuries down 14% since January. GRNZ will continue to work with the RIB and do everything to reduce injuries. PBD racing is now on all sprint races other than Group Races, with Central Districts commencing 1st July Canterbury 1st August. Hoping PBD will have further positive results.

Education programme update

There was a positive response to the Education Programme, largely due to being free if completed by 31 July. No excuse now for LP's to not know their requirements with euthanasia policy etc. This will be a condition of their licence every year. Focus will be on welfare and reminding them of their requirements.

Darrin Williams joined the meeting and gave a brief introduction into his background.

In July we had more injuries than we would have liked and are currently looking into if it is more weather related or not warming up. Will look to do a small video with a canine physiotherapist regarding warming up and try to reduce injuries where possible.

CE advised GRNZ increased stakes by \$400 per race through the TAB/Entain deal. Felt important to get as wide a distribution as possible as all participants have had their costs increase, not just feature races spread across the board. Have been low key in our advertisement about this other than to LP's obviously.

GWIC Etrac system

There was discussion around Etrac which is a system GWIC uses to monitor and record the whereabouts of every greyhound registered in NSW, in real time, at any stage of its life. Will make GRNZ's job and the RIB's job easier in terms of processes. NY agrees that it was a good initiative to be exploring.

Review of KPI's for future seasons

The committee **noted** the updated KPIs.

Welfare standards - Kennel handbook

The Kennel Handbooks arrived last week and will be sent out to LP's and each member of the AHWC.

3. GRNZ Welfare Manager - joined the meeting at 10am

Injury Reduction strategy update

ML explained in terms of reducing racing incidents, the expansion of PBD racing continues to deliver encouraging results in reducing contact in races and the number of serious injuries. Up to 30 June 32.7% of races have been PBD races. In July PBD racing was extended to all sprint races at Palmerston North and Cambridge and all sprint races (excluding features) at Addington and Ascot Park from 1st August. GRNZ are continually monitoring results and looking at greyhound racing traits.

The implementation of the new GRNZ Rules on 1 February 2023 took into account injury risk factors and sought to minimise these. Key areas here were:

- Increased restriction on the frequency a greyhound can race, and
- Unacceptable (4%) weight variations between starts

GRNZ continues to implement its track management programme across all venues.

There was discussion around injuries, minor injuries especially. ML explained that there is no specific warm up regime with greyhounds and looking into what could be recommended, there was discussion around other codes, horses do get a workout beforehand in both gallops and trots.

Return to Racing Fitness Policy

The draft GRNZ Return to Racing Fitness Policy was noted and discussed. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that greyhounds returning to race following a rest period due to injury, illness or other reason are fit to do so, and that racing them does not pose an unnecessary risk of injury to themselves or others. Comment on the draft policy can be sent directly to ML.

Consultation on Draft COW-SPCA

The draft Code of Welfare for Dogs from the SPCA was discussed and noted. GRNZ has put in a submission during the consultation.

Report back from sub-committee deliberations - RtR greyhounds

ML outlined we were forming an RtR subcommittee on cases where approval for further treatment, euthanasia or amputation has been required. One greyhound approved for euthanasia and captured as a race day euthanasia as a direct result of a race day injury. ML provided the sub-committee decision register .

Draft guidelines regarding eye conditions

On Track Vets meeting at the end of this month. There is the need for more approved vets with special interests in ophthalmology. A draft guideline has been drawn up with GRNZ and RIB in regards to Guidelines for OTVs in Applying Rule 42(4): Impaired Vision. This aims to draw attention to actions required if a greyhound is suspected of having impaired vision.

Vaccination of older pet greyhounds

NY says regardless of age they expect all Greyhounds to be vaccinated. AB says to look at the World Small Animal Veterinary Association vaccination guidelines <https://wsava.org/global-guidelines/vaccination-guidelines>.

The only reason to not vaccinate older dogs is if they are under some sort of treatment and the vet has suggested vaccinations might not be helpful. This was agreed by PM and DM. ML suggests to stick to the applicable welfare standard unless they have a veterinary certificate stating otherwise, the greyhound needs to be vaccinated.

4. Update on Track Management Programme

BW joined the meeting and gave an overview and update. Serious injuries remain a key focus. Whanganui straight track still proceeding. GRNZ track management have taken over, considerable work getting this ready for trials and racing commencing. Ongoing focus is progressing.

There is focus on a second straight track in the South Island and upgrading Chertsey track. Both projects come with considerable investment and process, suspect towards October in terms of recommendation and progression.

Safe chase lure installed and operating in Cambridge. Manuawatu to be installed in November. Starting boxes ensure we are replacing and upgrading. Looking at quotes for safety rails in Auckland, most tracks have partial safety rails.

Diagnostic benchmarking at all tracks. Looking at kicking off Phase III through the months of October/November. Phase II successfully rolled out as an industry as a whole.

Monthly track reports - happy to share with committee before next meeting - Action injury analysis for the month and comparison to the same time last year. This will become a more formalised process at the beginning of each month.

Second track curator workshop in late September. Draft presented to track staff throughout the country to contribute.

Diagnostic Programme, water management. Variations in the North and South Islands. 20.4% race meetings since March has had low water content = 38% injuries. Discussion over low water content.

NY asked if BW could pass on results from Going Sticks.

5. Racing Update + KPI Report - latest version 31 July 2023

Michael explained that the Season's end saw us hanging "one injury over" at -9.8%, however we have sought the support of the RIB to amend an anomalous "22 day" stand down to "21 days", which will see the KPI achieved.

PBD continues to reduce the rates of Falls, Fractures and Fatalities by 43%, 49% and 83% respectively over Random Box Draw sprints. However PBD does not appear to reduce the incidence of muscle injuries (tears) which typically attract 28 or 42 day stand downs. GRNZ are now contemplating what specific mitigations may be introduced for muscle injuries with early consideration focussing on 'warming up.' NY asked was this what we were after MD noted they were put in place to reduce collisions.

Low confidence hits breeding numbers. GRNZ will work with breeders. GRNZ litters bred fell 39% last season. NY noticed a lot of people while auditing were saying this was going to be their last litter, not necessarily due to money but tended to be older trainers looking to move on.

Peter Mason asked about PBD for longer races. Michael explained that it will be something we will look at.

CE noted how we were looking at how we are reporting on KPI's especially on the rehoming and to tweak these measures.

6. Rehoming and RtR numbers / outcomes update

Last season 471 adoptions - 19% less than last season which we did expect. Focus on the new season around marketing and resources. Currently in RtR there are 60 recorded Greyhounds in the database however may not be completely accurate, trying to get this more accurate with RtR form that will automatically come through to us, hoping to collect overall data on these dogs. This will go into a master spreadsheet. Trackabeast that has just been implemented will contain photos, x rays and vet notes.

CRG noted the three papers that were put to the Board this month, Auckland Rehoming Base, American Adoption Programme and Canterbury Great Mates Adoption Coordinator. The Board agreed in principle for both the Auckland Rehoming Base and American Adoption Programme but there is more work to be done. The Board approved the recruitment of the Great Mates Adoption Coordinator without the digital marketing function.

7. RIB Update

67 audit reports were issued with 228 improvement notices issued.

1076 Greyhounds were Scanned and assessed over 67 sites. There have been 5 identified as having an injury requiring treatment There have been 5/1,376 (0.4%) greyhounds that were identified by the veterinarian as having an injury or illness that required further treatment. 98.5% we assessed

as being an ideal weight and 3 were underweight, of these all were retired as pet and all over 11 years of age.

Looking at vaccinations on site, there will be a discrepancy: 987 of the 1300 had had their vaccinations. 4.7% of dogs they saw were confirmed as not vaccinated. Just under 15% unable to verify.

Focus now turns to full audits now that the welfare standards are out. There were some issues with the knowledge of the standards.

Peter Mason asked about the unvaccinated dogs, last year retired greyhounds were excluded from the Welfare Standards, this year they are not. Provision in the standards that if it is not counteractive to vaccinate, if that is the case there is provision. GRNZ will subsidise vaccinations for pets at home.

NY spoke about the importance of dental and to look into what the dogs are fed. PM noted that the dogs that are fed bones generally have very good teeth. NY said they were coming across young dogs with bad teeth, will pay more attention to those trainers with improvement notices.

8. Research Projects - Sandrine Korver Research Presentation

Sandrine presented a powerpoint presentation of her research: In the role Greyhound people play in the lives of racing Greyhounds in NZ. CE suggested KL and Sandrine to present to the Board at some stage virtually. Aiming to have this complete by end of the year. Sandrine's PowerPoint to be circulated to committee members.

9. General Business

There was no general business to discuss.

Close of meeting at 2.01pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 17 October 2023

Minutes approved:

Signed:

Date: