

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Animal Health and Welfare Committee  
TAB Building 106-110 Jackson Street, Petone  
10am Tuesday 17 October 2023**

**Present:** Allen Bryce, Chair (AB)  
Kat Littlewood, Vet and Massey Lecturer (KL) (via videoconferencing)  
Dave Matheson, Vet (DM)

**In Attendance:** Edward Rennell, (ER) CE GRNZ  
Michelle Ledger (ML) Welfare Manager GRNZ (via video conferencing)  
Michael Dore, Racing Manager GRNZ (MD)  
Nick Ydgren RIB, Observer (NY) (via video conferencing)  
Paula Lemow, MPI (PL) (via video conferencing)  
Peter Mason, NAWAC (Peter M)  
Bill Wilson, GRNZ (BW) (via video conferencing)  
Darrin Williams, GRNZ (DW)

Chantelle Askew, AHCW Secretary (CA)

**Apologies:** Sally Cory, NZVA (SC)  
Philip Morrison, Vet (PM)

**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.
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 10.03am with the Chair welcoming everyone.

## Minutes of Previous AHC Meeting

The minutes of the AHC Meeting held on 15 August were taken as read and confirmed as a **true** and **correct** record of the meeting. The Chair explained he was semi-present at the previous meeting being in Europe. Important items from the meeting were the RIB report, rehoming and injuries. There was discussion about investigating if injury rates might be related to weather or to not warming up pre-race.

## 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

The Chair thanked Peter M for chairing the previous AHC meeting. In the Leaders Debate for the election around banning greyhound racing, both Chris Hipkins and Chris Luxon indicated they were supportive of banning the industry, although Luxon's answer mentioned a review.

While in the UK, the Chair met with Mark Bird CE of GBGB (Greyhound Board of Great Britain), looking at setting up a dialog - perhaps a 3-monthly online meeting between AB, ML and ER with people over there, in particular Mark Bird, Professor Madeleine Campbell (a Board member and Chair of their Welfare and Veterinary Standing Committee), Tiffany Blackett (vet executive and a stipendiary steward, responsible for veterinary matters) and Professor Richard Payne (also on their WVSC). AB considered their strategy document "A Good Life for Every Greyhound" (<https://www.gbgb.org.uk/welfare-care/commitment-to-care/>) informative and a useful resource. KL noted that it has weaknesses.

There has been pleasing progress with PBD implemented in all sprint races excluding group races. There have been Issues with track management at Addington. Wanting to hear how the Whanganui straight track is progressing. Track minimal standards and guidelines are to be implemented in October and the Racing Safety Advisory Group is starting up - would like an update on these matters. Roadshows went ahead in September and seemed to be very effective. The AHC Work Plan has been circulated, ML has made a few additions and minor alterations.

### 2. GRNZ Chief Executive Report

#### GRNZ Report for Quarter Ended 31 July 2023

There was discussion around the quarterly report. The 15 focus areas were assessed as 7 good and 8 adequate - RIB's report in July was consistent with those ratings, with none in the slow category. One specific area for attention is around rehoming activities.

Chair asked ER about the start date for the Whanganui straight track. Looking at this stage trials December and racing to commence in January. Working with the construction and project team to

ensure best practice. ML explained that the straight track was obviously a limited distance (sprint) track. A harder and more strenuous race for the greyhounds as their average speed is greater, more training is required and also doesn't cater for middle or distance dogs. While support for the straight track, might not have the volume of dogs primed for the straight track.

Racing Safety Advisory group - there was discussion about a group BW would like, basically a consult group to work through racing safety issues -to include stipendiary stewards, trainers, ML. Peter M asked how this racing safety group would interact with AHCW - at this stage the group hasn't been formed yet.

### **Draft Animal Health KPI's 2023/24**

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

### **3. GRNZ Welfare Manager**

#### **Return to Racing Fitness Policy update**

Outstanding policy development release, provided final draft that was sent to the racing committee last week, ML was in a meeting in Melbourne so has not heard feedback from the Racing Committee. This policy and best practice guidelines - did mention this policy to LP's at roadshows, didn't seem to be too much concern. Put it out to the committee to raise any issues with this - no comments yet.

GWIC looking to introduce local rule similar to our return to racing policy - with 90 days or more off racing requiring a veterinary clearance and satisfactory trials.

#### **GWIC Rehoming Summit Update**

Best Practice Guidelines for Greyhound Rehoming was discussed NSW rehoming counts slightly differently. Provided this paper to self-assess our own rehoming process with GreatMates to ensure best practice. Welcome any comments from this committee.

Incidents of health concerns within the GAP programme, discussion around these figures with hookworm. Massey is undertaking studies on hookworm currently. Prohibited substances are less of a concern for this committee and more RIB specific. Peter M asked if there was a recommended treatment for hookworm, no answer for that as still under research, scope for some sort of industry funded research in terms of checking for resistance in all treatments currently used. Hookworm is not just a health issue but a welfare issue too. DM suggested contacting Massey - would be useful. ML suggested starting with greyhounds at GreatMates and taking faecal samples - what happens if they tested positive? Withdraw from rehoming? ML will report back with a project proposal with DM.

#### **RWWA Greyhound Welfare Forum Update**

Purpose was to gauge stakeholders' perceptions of their performance and bring together experts to speak on welfare issues and social licence for welfare going forward. Scope for GRNZ to do this into the future although will need to get the review behind us before moving on. Summarised some of the actions that GRNZ should consider. Welcome feedback.

#### **OA Christchurch Clinical Pilot Hock Fracture Repairs**

The Animal Orthopaedics in Christchurch (OA): Greyhound Tarsal Implant Trial was discussed. Discussion around is six going to be enough? ML explained agreed on six max of ten on the interim. If this goes into larger scale no longer talking about a pilot, use this if there are any unforeseen complications.

### **SIRC Actions Update**

Next meeting is this Friday. Action log of things completed was circulated, items outstanding are some of the things raised today ie return to racing policy. Regulation of unofficial trials, ongoing piece of work for GRNZ. Discussion around this.

### **Melbourne Veterinary School on-line seminar: Ethics of using animals in sport - for interest**

Madeleine Campbell is going to be talking about the ethics of using animals in sport if anyone wants to attend. Online only option to attend. ML has the details if anyone would like to register.

Chair discussed talking to NZVA, ML giving a discussion in North and South Islands as important for not only greyhound vets to understand but for all vets to have an understanding or at least a balanced view of the changes that have happened over the last few years. They have said 2024. KL explained the NZVA position statement on greyhound racing has been circulated to EFAB committee members, but KL declared a conflict of interest due to this committee, so she has not viewed the document. DM explained that a lot of vets are uneducated about what is going on, important to make them aware that there might be a different, quite valid view than that which sometimes appears in the media.

### **4. Update on Track Management Programme**

BW joined the meeting to give a track update. Focus on three things, Track Staffing - Centralisation under GRNZ, Addington Raceway and an update in Quarterly Report.

CD has been up and running for a period of time, Addington process has commenced now at point with final interviews tomorrow, a few potential candidates have pulled out potentially due to the election due to being not convinced there was a future. Hopefully new staff structure by the end of the week.

Quarterly report more about education. Two significant milestones: in late September a Track Curator Workshop around guidelines and minimum standards was held. Pursuing board approval discussion around a national accreditation, all track staff and anyone new to the industry would be able to attain. Education space has required a lot of attention and is quite focused on this.

Addington - A number of historical issues dating back to 2011 post earthquake and to April 2021. Track staff have not been willing to engage with our strategy and view on where we need to get to in the industry ultimately led to a decision on 22 September when track staff considered they weren't comfortable with the track. In a nutshell long term findings, Addington requires significant reconstruction. There is frustration that there is no alternate venue and is detrimental to the industry. If proceeding with reconstruction then it will be done to a professional standard where good for 15-20 years. Addington reopens today, plan in place to get through to 31 December subject to performance and ongoing management of track. If it gets to an unacceptable level we will suspend racing. Logical time to do a complete renovation is January/February as harness racing is not on. Currently the nearest track is Invercargill 7.5 hours away, impacting financially, and on welfare of the dogs. Key discussion at Board next Wednesday 25 October. Track today is the most consistent it has presented since 13 June, great diagnostic perspective but gives no assurance that no injury will occur on track. BW confident as he possibly can be that the track and staff have ticked every box. BW discussed the water content and the importance of this. Engagement at Addington at Roadshow has been really positive in informing industry. Honesty and being transparent is appreciated from the industry. The Chair is encouraged by a proactive approach. BW raised the issue of the number of trials before meetings. Discussion on Addington water irrigation system.

## **5. Racing Update**

New season KPI Injuries paper was circulated and discussed.

MD reported at the last meeting just missed KPI by one but actually achieved exactly the KPI target.

New season hasn't set a KPI. The graphs in this paper were discussed, first time KPI's have been split into fractures and muscle injuries.

KPI data from box 1 vacant down, box 8 was higher - difficult to understand. Sent data to UTS Dr Eager. Working to change rules to have a vacant box 1. DM asked if the dry track could also have something to do with this and injuries. AB asked if we could reduce injury rate down to 3 - would that be a 50% reduction? Discussion around the current policy in seven dog fields vacant box 5 - easy change to 1. Will collect data. ER asked currently 1-10 day stand down injuries are increasing. ML explained sometimes it is just a torn toe nail. AB said possible increased number of inspections - only reporting for minor injuries is from the vet where they have been asked to present. Discussion around this. RIB is not under any direction to increase inspections.

## **6. Rehoming and RtR numbers / outcomes update**

### **Latest update report attached**

The Rehoming and Rehabilitation Report sent to the RIB 12 October was discussed. The paper covers the work that has taken place in the Rehoming and REhabilitation space at GRNZ and the work planned for the balance of the 2023 calendar.

There was a discussion around the merits of a GRNZ scholarship for veterinary students to encourage new vets to work with greyhounds.

The Canine Fundamentals course material videos 1 & 2 had been circulated to AHWC members. Those members who had not responded with comments were encouraged to do so.

ML asked if this committee could endorse exporting Greyhounds as Pets to the USA. AB suggested working on this out of session - AB, ML, DW, DM, KL happy to be involved, NY said happy to be involved as much as anyone wants RIB to be involved. Work on this to proceed between now and next meeting - ML to convene this group and draft a guideline for the group to agree on.

## **7. RIB Update**

### **RIB Quarterly Report 31 July 2023 and Update Report on Kennel Audits**

Due to the release of the Greyhound Welfare Standards being delayed to May 2023, the audits have been conducted either in full, or split across two different visits. The nature of the questions permitted the greyhound section of the audit to commence before the new Welfare Standards were implemented. For this reason, some partial audits assessing 'greyhound' related aspects of the audit were completed before the 'facilities' section. Since 1 January 2023, the RIB have completed:

14 full audits

64 greyhound audits

32 facility audits

There have been 67 audit reports issued with a total of 228 improvement notices (average of 3.4 improvement notices per partial audit). It is expected that there will be a large increase in the number of improvement notices with the new audit questions that reflect the new Greyhound Welfare Standards. The audit forms and questions have changed significantly. The audit forms for the 2022 kennel audits and audits earlier in 2023, had a total of 67 audit questions. This has

increased significantly to 187 audit questions (85 greyhound focussed and 102 focussed on the facilities).

67 of the 228 improvement notices (29.4%) have been closed out. 54 of 67 were closed out on or before the due date. 13 of 67 were closed out after the due date. All of the remaining 161 improvement notices are overdue (range 4 days – 186 days; median 88 days).

#### CENSUS INFORMATION

During the audits, 1,760 greyhounds have been scanned and/or sighted on the properties.

The veterinarian assessed 8 (0.45%) of greyhounds as requiring further assessment and treatment for injury or illness. Injuries included: a puppy that had a laceration on its ear that was showing signs of infection and required antibiotics; a retired greyhound with an eye issue; a retired greyhound that was lame and required veterinary attention; and puppies with wounds or lacerations that required attention.

Body condition has been assessed by a veterinarian for 1,737 greyhounds (23 greyhounds not possible to check due to age or inability to thoroughly assess).

Of the greyhounds assessed:

- 1,726 (98.1%) were assessed as being in ideal condition by the veterinarian
- 5 (0.3%) were assessed as being overweight
- 6 (0.3%) as being underweight.

All of the underweight greyhounds were retired or unraced pet greyhounds and 5/6 were older than 11 years of age.

Dental health was assessed in 1,720 greyhounds (40 greyhounds were not assessed due to age

- 1,064 (60.5%) of greyhounds were assessed to have grade 1 teeth.
- 575 (32.7%) were assessed to have grade 2 teeth.
- 65 (3.7%) grade 3 teeth
- 16 (0.9%) grade 4.

81 greyhounds (grade 3 and 4 teeth) required further veterinary attention to address dental issues.

Vaccinations: of the 1,760 greyhounds:

- 1,138 greyhounds (64.7%) were up to date with their vaccinations
- 181 (10.3%) were partially vaccinated
- 67 (3.8%) were confirmed to not be vaccinated.
- the vaccination status for 374 (21.30%) greyhounds was unable to be verified at the time of the audit as the vaccination records were not available.

Traceability: there were

- 42 (62.7%) audits where improvement notices were issued for missing greyhounds
- 35 (52.2%) audits where improvement notices were issued for greyhounds seen during an audit but not recorded with GRNZ as being at the property.

Appointment of auditor

Self-audit conceptual model nearing testing phase.

AB asked how was the relationship between RIB and GRNZ. NY thinks he is always open to a better working relationship, would welcome more involvement with audits from GRNZ. ML agreed

relationship was good, but she would like to attend an audit. AB would also be interested in attending one or two audits. NY agreed no issue at all if any GRNZ staff would like to come along.

ER asked where the RIB were at with the other codes and if their audits were the same. NY explained the difference is the difference of welfare standards - abundantly clear that greyhounds are well ahead with standards compared to equine.

#### **Research Projects - Chair**

AB wanted to discuss the research projects. KL usually updates this but had left the meeting. ML gave an update of ongoing research in Australia. ML explained how it works when going through the GA rules, to NZ Rules Committee before going to the Board.

#### **8. General Business**

There was no general business to discuss.

The chair thanked everyone for their time.

Close of meeting at 2.10pm.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday 13 December 2023

**Minutes approved:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**