

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Animal Health and Welfare Committee  
TAB Building 106-110 Jackson Street, Petone  
Wednesday 13 December 2023 10.30am**

**Present:** Allen Bryce, Chair (AB)  
Kat Littlewood, Vet and Massey Lecturer (KL) (via videoconferencing)  
Dave Matheson, Vet (DM)  
Philip Morrison, Vet (PM)  
Sally Cory, NZVA (SC) (via videoconferencing)

**In Attendance:** Edward Rennell, (ER) CE GRNZ  
Michelle Ledger (ML) Welfare Manager GRNZ (via video conferencing)  
Michael Dore, Racing Manager GRNZ (MD)  
Anna Palmer RIB, Observer (AP) (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)

**Apologies:**

**Minutes:** Chantelle Askew, AHWC Secretary (CA)

**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.
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
Anna Palmer	Racing Integrity Board Head of Animal Welfare Operations Former PhD candidate at Massey University; research was funded by GRNZ.
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 10.30 am with the Chair welcoming everyone.

## **Minutes of Previous AHC Meeting**

The minutes of the AHC Meeting held on 17 October 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**

Injury rates were very good in the quarter ending October, it was great to see how well the injury rates responded in that first quarter. AB and ER met with Todd Westwood (new CEO of SPCA), Arnja Dale (Chief Scientific Officer) and Alison Vaughan (Scientific Officer) to discuss SPCA's position on greyhound racing. The meeting went well with Todd receptive and wanting to create a relationship between SPCA and GRNZ.

Addington was discussed and the possibility for an alternative second track at Ashburton with the intention of a straight track and a one turn track. From 1 November 2023 GRNZ has taken over the responsibility for track staff where previously employed by the club. Discussion around employing further track staff. Expectations are the track will be managed by the track management program that Bill Wilson has implemented.

Peter M stated that Arnja (SPCA) is a member of NAWAC and of their Greyhound subcommittee, so she already has an observer relationship through Peter M.

AB will go with the RIB on some of the audits. Peter M is also interested. If any of the observers or other committee members are interested let AB know with the intention of one or two people at a time. Let AB know and he will continue to liaise with Nick Ydgren. PM stated that he has been on audit visits and thinks it is definitely worth it.

There was discussion around the possibility of the February AHC meeting being held in Palmerston North over a 2-day period including possible visits to training premises and to one or two of the rehoming organisations. Proposal leave Wellington morning on 20th February with the AHC meeting taking place in Palmerston North on the 21 February.

**Action: CA to make arrangements when numbers confirmed**

### **2. GRNZ Chief Executive Report**

#### **KPI's to 31 October 2023**

First 3 months (August-October) were good from an injury perspective. November has not been so good, still better than the benchmark but not as positive as the rates for the first quarter. In terms

of traceability, every dog will have a check in, racing dogs twice a year, non-racing dogs once a year to ensure every dog in our database is alive and its location known. Confident by 31 July that this will be 100%. Rehoming is an ongoing challenge, the SPCA had acknowledged rehoming was down for all dog breeds. The more events we have the more positive results we have in terms of adoption levels. Working closely with adoption agencies.

### **Quarterly Report update**

ER discussed the RIB Focus Area Assessments for the quarter with 7 adequate, 8 good (upgraded one). Two key areas in next 2 months, confirming Return to Racing guidelines and focus on non-race day injuries by monitoring injury trends for dogs that haven't raced for 60 days. ML explained this came out of a SIRC meeting. This will go to the Board in February and be implemented later in 2024.

Discussion around our Briefing paper to the minister, this will be circulated when we get clearance from the Minister's Office to do so.

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

#### **Guidelines for the welfare of greyhounds exported from NZ**

Guidelines for the welfare of Greyhounds exported from NZ have been drafted. Sending retired dogs to the USA would take advantage of the demand for greyhounds as pets in the USA, and provide an opportunity for New Zealand to rehome greyhounds into suitable pet homes. Other international destinations might also be considered.

ER and DW are going to the USA in January 2024 to look at rehoming options through Greyhounds as Pets in America. The Board is supportive and needs to ensure all welfare issues are in place and take our time and get it right, currently working through criteria and all options.

AHWC is supportive provided that greyhound welfare is ensured during all stages of the process.

**ACTION:** AB suggested getting members and observers comments BEFORE the USA trip in January. Feedback should be sent through after reading through this paper carefully, comments to ML by the end of the first week in January. DM thought it was a very good draft paper. PL asked if someone had looked into export from MPI - ML explained we would use a recognised company such as Jet Pets to arrange all MPI requirements.

#### **Draft Breeding Exemption Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for considering breeding exemption applications. It explains the process and the decision-making process used by the panel/subcommittee, and what they base their decisions on. There are changes to the application form, but not to the policy.

AB questioned number 8 of the Decision Making part and whether this last paragraph needs to be here or to possibly reword?

**Action:** ML to amend draft policy.

**Action:** CA/ML to relook at subcommittee membership: currently Malcolm, Jim and Phil.

#### **Draft Safe Return to Racing Policy**

ER provided an update that was presented to the Racing Committee yesterday.

### **GRNZ/Massey Research Proposal Faecal egg counts in GreatMates Greyhounds pre-and-post treatment**

Discussion around this, almost definitely going ahead but waiting on funding. Discussion around where this funding is coming from.

Discussion around other research and circulated today a paper on RIB advice re AHWC Workplan for consideration. AB asked the committee to prioritise research projects and to nominate new areas for health and welfare research. ML explained GA research on epidemiology, timeline is August 2024.

**Action:** ML to circulate this paper - led by Sarah Resonowski

### **RIB audits and implications for GRNZ Welfare Standards paper**

Discussion around this paper on the Standards and issues raised on impervious surfaces and hospital grade disinfectants.

AB asked ML to suggest recommended changes to the standards. SC asked about ammonia levels. AP explained that odour is in standards. There was discussion on non-toxic paint. Several members volunteered to request info from paint manufacturers (*after the meeting: AB did this and emailed responses to AHWC members/observers*).

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

Bill joined the meeting at 1.47pm to provide a summary. Planning for Canterbury's second track has been proceeding. Ashburton is a preferred site logistically and there is available land inside harness and thoroughbred tracks. Will be looking at a straight track and one turn oval track.

Wanganui straight track is still progressing. Comprehensive trial period in January and hopefully racing commences in February/March. Open day arranged this Sunday for interested LP's, media etc, there will be no dogs at the track.

Tracks have been reasonably consistent. Significant work ongoing in both Auckland and Addington, management challenge to maintain consistency.

Track staff - in process recruiting new staff working under GRNZ which has been challenging. GRNZ has gone from having no direct track staff to having a number on the books.

Was to be a third curator Workshop in December but unfortunately this has not happened due to Addington track staff availability and will revisit this in the middle of January. Curator workshop to be scheduled for mid February 2024 - Track Minimum Standards & Guidelines to be introduced in February 2024.

Satisfied with the track management over the past 12 months.

### **5. Racing Update**

MD's paper was discussed and noted was able to create a population snapshot.

AB asked why injuries in November are worse than September and October. MD explained possibilities. Manawatu and Cambridge continue to lead the pack in terms of low rates of injury. Nothing had clearly changed in November.

MD explained the value of leaving box 5 vacant when there is a vacant box. Process for implementing this vacant box 5 policy has begun.

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

The RtR Policy review was discussed, there has been increased GRNZ involvement in adoptions.

A unique adoption venue was decided against whilst an adoption day for GAP was held in Takanini. This was very successful. Adoption days with GAP will be reviewed and it would seem however that adoption days are more successful than the expense of dedicated venues and staff.

DM spoke about dogs given bones to chew, their teeth definitely improved. Greyhound trainers should provide a predominantly meat diet and high quality commercial kibble, if they only have a meat diet this is too much phosphorus. AB asked if there was any nutrition guidance that could help LPs. ML explained that England is currently looking into nutrition.

## **7. RIB Update**

### **Audit outcomes**

As of 20 November 2023 there have been 124 audits conducted:

- 67 partial audits (greyhound section only)
- 33 partial audits (facilities section)
- 24 full audits

As of 20 November 99 audit reports have been issued and 435 improvement notices raised, an average of 4.4 improvement notices raised per audit report.

- 90 of the 99 audit reports have covered greyhound-related questions
- 57 of the 99 audit reports have covered facility-related questions

During the 124 audits a total of 1869 greyhounds were scanned and/or sighted on the properties.

AB asked what we can take away from the audit data to improve welfare of greyhounds. AP says dental has improved a lot in 12 months and vaccinations have improved with the GRNZ policy. AP encourages to give bones at least weekly. ML said we are still in the process of implementing a mandatory annual greyhound vet health check.

ER asked if AP's gut feel was that things have improved overall in comparison to where we were last year. AP said definitely, LP's are more aware of the requirements and the welfare standards are more robust.

## **8. General Business**

### **2024 AHC Meeting Dates**

Members and observers to get back to Chantelle before Christmas (next week) so that accommodation can be booked in Palmerston North for the February AHC meeting. Road Trip on the 20th, stay the night, possibly visit some kennels, rehoming facilities and races. All 2024 Dates were confirmed for the AHC meetings.

General business: AP wanted to discuss ML's paper in regards to disinfectant hospital or vet grade disinfectants - from RIB perspective whatever is being used must be effective against Parvo - AB confirmed under second part in the RIB audits implications paper. Peter M suggested talking to the SPCA re best disinfectants. PM said SPCA would be with a lot more dogs that were not vaccinated as all greyhounds should or will be. Peter M suggested this would be a good entry topic for a discussion with SPCA.

The chair thanked everyone for their time.

Close of meeting at 2.54pm.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday 21 February - Palmerston North

**Minutes approved:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**