

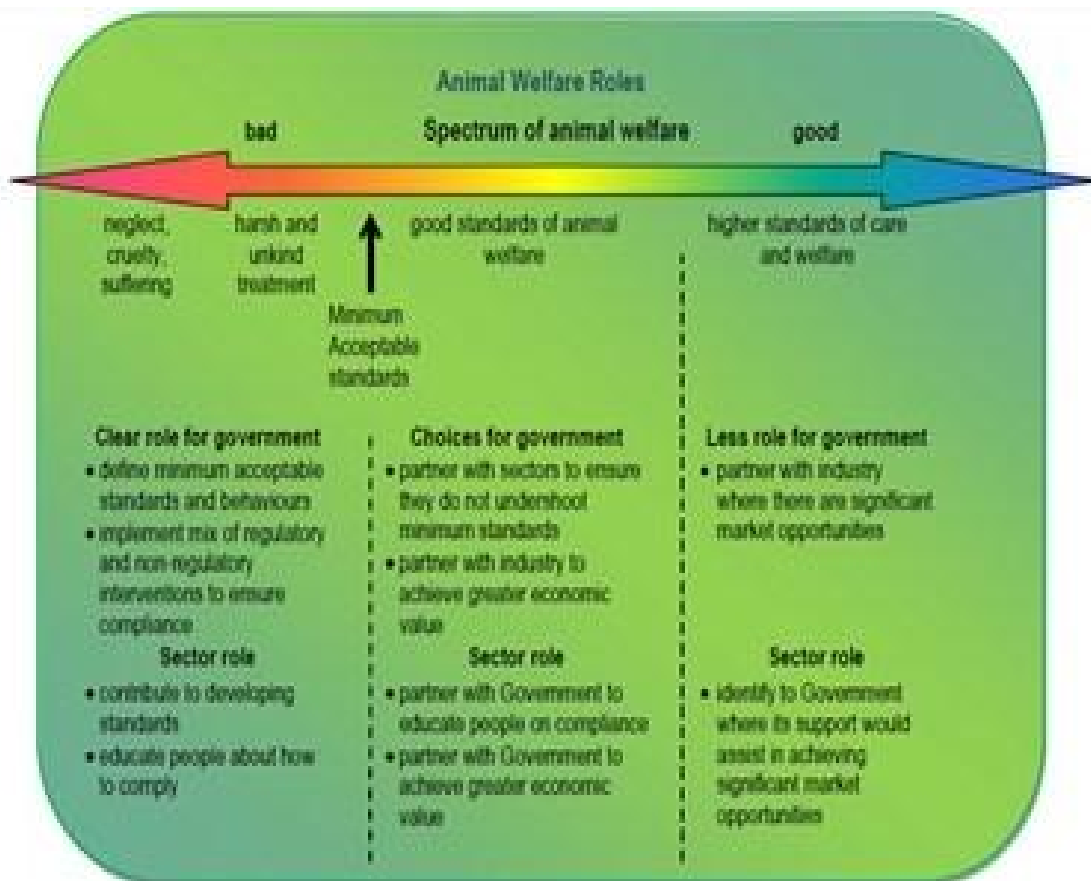
Report from the Chairman of the Health and Welfare Committee

This report is part of and is additional to the major part of the review which requested that a report from the Health and Welfare Committee be included in the GRNZ response to the review.

Jim Edwards, ONZM, B.V.Sc., Dip. Bus. Studs.

I am now a semi-retired veterinarian. I am a Past President of both the New Zealand and World Veterinarian Associations. I was appointed the Independent Chair of the GRNZ Welfare committee in 2015. Prior to that I had no involvement at all with greyhound racing. My canine experience was with working dogs in rural veterinary practise.

The Government has an animal welfare strategy¹ whose approach is to work collaboratively with sectors. In the case of the racing industry being treated as a sector, this approach is not apparent. The greyhound population maintains higher standards of care than the general dog population and in fact other species as well. However, the official approach to greyhound racing appears to be continually driven in response to minority pressures.



History of the Committee

The committee was given Terms of Reference, also known as the Charter which has been reviewed periodically. The Welfare Committee is sanctioned by Greyhound Racing NZ to collaboratively exchange information to encourage consistent national application to greyhound welfare and breed development including welfare risk management and lifecycle tracking protocols adoptions and associated welfare management related matters.

The Welfare Committee is to work collaboratively with Greyhounds New Zealand, to advise and recommend control procedures in respect of animal welfare. Assist and recommend in the development of national policies as well and protocols for reviewing and overseeing the implementation of compliance regarding welfare related matters.

The GRNZ-WC will also undertake other such welfare related matters as deemed appropriate and delegated to them by the GRNZ Board.

The Committee has involved the Chair, the GRNZ Chief Veterinarian, an RIU Steward, a veterinarian from the NZVA, a science advisor from the SPCA, and an Observer from NAWAC. GRNZ has provided their Animal Welfare Manager, the committee meeting secretary and other staff as required.

Committee meeting dates were:

2015: 9 July, 15 September and 4 November

2016: 5 May, 11 August, 13 October and 8 December

2017: 28 February, 18 May, 10 August and 2 November

2018: 1 March, 3 May, 28 June, 9 August, 25 October and 13 December. The committee was renamed the Health and Welfare Committee to reflect the similarly named standards¹ which the committee had developed and that were adopted by GRNZ from the 1st August 2018.

2019: 25 February, 10 April, 25 June, 5 September, 31 October and 17 December

2020: 20 February, 20 April, 24 July, 29 September and 30 November

2021: the committee has not formally met during 2021. Plans for an early meeting were thwarted by Covid lockdowns and the planned 30 April physical meeting was cancelled when participants were unavailable.

¹ Health and Welfare Standards

<https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Documents/GRNZ%20Welfare%20Standards%20updated%2029%20Sep%202020%20FINAL.pdf>

The majority of meetings were physical meetings until the advent of COVID19 when teleconferences were used. As we tried to rekindle the physical meetings the planning was hampered by continuing outbreaks.

Since the beginning of the COVID19 lockdowns, the CEO (Glenda Hughes) has met weekly via teleconference with the Health and Welfare Committee Chairman (Jim Edwards) and the GRNZ Chief Veterinarian (Malcolm Jansen). This enabled the CEO to have confidence that the highest animal welfare standards were continuing to be upheld and supported with strong advice.

This change from policy development to operational modus operandi has proven to be very successful. It signals a new direction for GRNZ who can still consult on any issues as and when needed.

List of committee achievements

GRNZ has implemented a significant number of measures including:

Completed
Improvements to facilities to improve racing welfare.
Continuous improvements in welfare management eg. consecutive day racing of individual dogs is no longer permitted.
Traceability of all dogs entering and exiting the industry.
Limits on importation and breeding.
All facilities are audited by the RIU at least once a year.
The independent review by Rodney Hansen was responded to publicly. The review response continued on a voluntary basis with quarterly reports which were sent to the Minister until May 2020. These reports were made public and uploaded on GRNZ website to ensure transparency. As the majority of recommendations had been achieved a decision was made to cease the voluntary reporting regime. With the change of Minister and the request for the reports to continue, GRNZ has delivered an updated report to the Minister in April this year.
GRNZ has made further developments in its monitoring to provide further information about race injuries.
The development of a specific code of welfare which was built on the NAWAC code for dogs. This was implemented in August 2018 as the Code of Health and Welfare Standards. These new standards were subject to audit from February 2019.
GRNZ uses RIU stewards to monitor and ensure that no barking muzzles are used.
GRNZ has established a Vaccination Policy to cover all greyhounds within their jurisdiction. These are best practise and based on veterinary advice.

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GRNZ has implemented an educational programme for the new Health and Welfare Standards so that Licensed Persons have been actively informed. This included an interactive session at the 2018 annual conference in Hamilton.

GRNZ has implemented the use of topical anaesthetic to reduce the pain associated with ear tattooing.

Rehoming of retired greyhounds continues to be of the highest priority for GRNZ who continue to support rehoming partners GAP, NightraveMay Hounds and KiwiKiwi and GRNZ continue to run the Great Mates programme which covers all costs, including dentistry, deregistering, desexing and socialisation training in order to prepare these retired Greyhounds for adoption. GRNZ took over this part of the programme to ensure that the more difficult dogs got the socialisation training they need to become pets. Over the past year no dogs from the rehoming programme have been euthanised because they couldn't be rehomed.

Following the loss of greyhounds crossing the Cook Strait, the committee worked with GRNZ and MPI and GRNZ produced stickers for vehicles carrying greyhounds. This initiative led to similar management of animals being ferried across Cook Strait.

Ongoing

Focus on compliance with RIU audits.

GRNZ continues to review and consider all possible developments and initiatives to reduce track injuries.

GRNZ has set kennel requirements which are aligned to Australia in the Code of Health and Welfare Standards. It was agreed to accept the NAWAC requirements in the Code of Welfare for Dogs 2010 as our minimum standard for Code of Health and Welfare Standards for existing kennels, however, new builds must adhere to the new and higher GRNZ Standards.

Introduction of an injury support scheme. GRNZ funds the costs for any injuries suffered by their racing dogs. This ensures that the dogs are treated, rehabbed and can continue to live a happy and sentient life.

GRNZ has commissioned research projects at Massey University to investigate firstly the effects of racing on greyhounds and secondly parasitism and blindness in greyhounds.

Information

Veterinarians at race meetings are employed by the RIU and not the individual code.

3127 drug swabs were taken in 2020 resulting in no positives. 2021 numbers up to April 2521 swabs and to date we have had 3 positives 2 for "p" 1 for caffeine. This is from a racing

population of 1800 starter dogs.

The new GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards specified the socialisation of greyhounds to prepare them for rehoming, once they retire from racing. There is no time limit placed on the time it takes to socialise a greyhound for adoption.

The Committee made a submission to MPI during the public consultation on significant surgical procedures.

Health and Welfare Standards

The GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards² specify the duty of care required to meet the physical, health and behavioural needs of greyhounds under the jurisdiction of GRNZ. They supplement the Animal Welfare (Dogs) Code of Welfare, which is applicable to ALL dogs in New Zealand and must be read and adhered to in conjunction with these GRNZ specific standards.

These were formally adopted by GRNZ on 1 August 2018 and have been updated with one minor amendment since then. The latest version is dated September 2020.

This policy document was the major output of the committee and reflected a significant amount of discussion and consultation. The standards started life as a result of the WHK review in 2013.

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In addition to the animal welfare concepts of the “Five Freedoms” and the more recent “Five Domains”, GRNZ recognizes that dogs are sentient, which means they can feel pain and distress; and experience other emotions, both positive and negative. All those experiences are important to the dogs and it matters to us as a society how animals are treated. GRNZ is working to ensure that all greyhounds do have a good life.

² Health and Welfare Standards

<https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Documents/GRNZ%20Welfare%20Standards%20updated%2029%20Sep%202020%20FINAL.pdf>

³ Animal Welfare (Dogs) Code of Welfare

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1428-Dogs-Animal-Welfare-Codes-of-Welfare>

⁴ Animal Welfare Act 1999

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1999/0142/latest/DLM49664.html>

These Standards apply to all persons licensed by GRNZ, according to the Rules of Racing, who are responsible for the welfare of GRNZ registered greyhounds through to, but not including, the rehomed greyhounds after their retirement from all GRNZ activities.

The Standards apply to all greyhounds registered according to the Rules of Racing and/or kept by persons licensed by GRNZ. This includes puppies and young greyhounds not yet registered as racing greyhounds and those kept for breeding.

Failure to meet these Standards may be used as evidence to support a charge for an offence under the GRNZ Rules of Racing and possibly the Animal Welfare Act and associated regulations.

Other documents linked to these Health and Welfare Standards that must be adhered to include:

- Animal Welfare Act 1999 ⁴
- Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018 issued under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 ⁵
- Code of Welfare for Dogs ⁶
- Code of Welfare for Transport within New Zealand ⁷
- Dog Control Act 1996 ⁸

These documents can be found on the Ministry for Primary Industries website at www.mpi.govt.nz and the New Zealand Legislation website at www.legislation.govt.nz

For convenience, Appendix 1 of the GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards provides a quick reference to Animal Welfare Regulations related to dogs.

Previous Reviews

The standards developed prior to 2015 resulted from the WHK review in 2013. These provided a framework to develop further into the current GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards.

The Hansen review commenced in 2016 and the current Chair of the Health and Welfare Committee was interviewed during that review. GRNZ reported progress with the

⁵ Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018

https://legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2018/0050/latest/LMS22789.html?search=ta_act%40regulation_A_ac%40rc%40ainf%40anif%40rinf%40rnif_an%40bn%40rn_25_a&p=4

⁶ Code of Welfare for Dogs

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1428-Dogs-Animal-Welfare-Codes-of-Welfare>

⁷ Code of Welfare for Transport within New Zealand

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1407-Transport-within-New-Zealand-Animal-Welfare-Code-of-Welfare>

⁸ Dog Control Act 1996

https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1996/0013/latest/DLM374410.html?search=ta_act_D_ac%40ainf%40anif_an%40bn%40rn_25_a&p=2

implementation of the recommendations of the Hansen report, both to the Minister of Animal Welfare and also the Health and Welfare Committee.

The reports to the Minister have been shared with the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) but there has been some need for clarity to meet NAWAC expectations. The Chair of the Health and Welfare Committee received a call from the Chair of NAWAC. During that call the former invited the NAWAC chair to reach an agreement with the GRNZ CEO on the information required so that there was a clear understanding of the information flow following the conclusion of the reporting in response to the Hansen report. There has been no follow up from NAWAC, despite prompting from GRNZ via the Minister.

GRNZ Activities

While there are numerous activities undertaken under the GRNZ umbrella, the following sections illustrate some of the contributions made by the Health and Welfare Committee to support GRNZ objectives.

Socialisation and rehoming

Appropriate socialisation and environmental adaptation are essential for good dog welfare. The acceptance of novel stimuli without fear, known as habituation, is most easily achieved in dogs prior to 8 weeks of age. To enable the number of greyhounds that transition from racing through the rehoming programmes, it is essential that they are reared in a manner that promotes emotional stability and resilience.

Historically, fear and anxiety due to insufficient or inappropriate socialisation of greyhounds has been common and impacted both on racing ability and suitability for rehoming. Consequences included increased numbers of “non-chasers”, poor race day performance, kennel distress, hyper-excitability and prolonged post-race recovery. Fearful dogs required protracted periods of “rehabilitation” prior to rehoming, creating bottlenecks within the adoption programme. Poorly socialised dogs are generally not desired as domestic pets.

This led to significant work by the committee to develop the Greyhound Socialisation Policy⁹ which was implemented to improve socialisation and rehoming success. GRNZ has invested very significant resources and is continuing to improve the success of the rehoming of dogs that exit the industry. This success is evidenced by the numbers of dogs being rehomed and the waiting list of people waiting to adopt greyhounds.

⁹ Greyhound Socialisation Policy

[https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Greyhound_Socialisation_Policy_12%20March19%20-%20KO%20PORTRAIT%20\(1\).docx.pdf](https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Greyhound_Socialisation_Policy_12%20March19%20-%20KO%20PORTRAIT%20(1).docx.pdf)

Euthanasia

All greyhounds that die under any circumstances must be presented to a veterinarian for examination as soon as practically possible. This applies to all greyhounds from 12 weeks of age until such time as they are de-registered from racing and breeding.

Section A of the Veterinary Certificate of Death Form must be completed by the applicant and signed by the veterinarian. GRNZ has the right to request an autopsy to confirm cause of death (under Rule 108.4). Section B of the Veterinary Certificate of Death Form must be completed by a veterinarian in those cases where the greyhound has been euthanased.

This GRNZ Veterinary Certificate of Death Policy ¹⁰ enables GRNZ to record all cases of death and take corrective action if required to ensure that euthanasia is used appropriately.

Disease management

During 2020, GRNZ successfully managed three disease outbreaks and took the following actions to control the outbreaks and to protect other greyhounds from disease spread.

GRNZ responded by working to ensure that not only were effective control measures implemented as described above, but that support was given to ensure that the welfare of dogs in the affected kennels was well managed and that human welfare was catered for and financial support was also provided.

1. Canine Enteric Corona Virus which, while belonging to the same class of viruses, is otherwise totally unrelated to the human COVID-19 virus. This canine virus required the development of a specific importation and management policy to minimise the risk of further importation into the closed greyhound population that is controlled by GRNZ.
2. Canine Parvovirus which is a highly contagious disease of young dogs especially. Fortunately there is an effective vaccine and all greyhounds are expected to be vaccinated according to the GRNZ vaccination policy (see below). The outbreak caused the cancellation of a meeting in Wanganui when dogs arrived from an infected property. The property was quarantined and measures imposed under the supervision of a veterinarian and an RIU Steward.
3. A respiratory disease (“Kennel Cough”) caused by *Mycoplasma cynos* was circulating in domestic dogs in late 2020 and this entered the closed greyhound population. GRNZ arranged the expensive offshore testing to initially confirm the presence of this disease. There was no vaccine for this species, so affected kennels were quarantined for a period 1.5 times greater than the incubation period and treated with antibiotic as necessary.

¹⁰ Veterinary Certificate of Death Policy

<https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/GRNZ%20Veterinary%20Certificate%20of%20Death%20Policy.pdf>

The Health and Welfare Standards require compulsory vaccination. The intent of GRNZ vaccination policy¹¹ is to ensure firstly the health and therefore the welfare of all the greyhounds in the closed population managed by GRNZ and secondly to minimise the risk of a disease outbreak preventing a kennel or a region from participating in race meetings.

Medicines

The use of alternative or complementary medicines policy¹² is designed to ensure that greyhounds should only be administered Veterinary Medicines that have been assessed for safety and effectiveness and that are either: authorised for use in the greyhound by a veterinarian; and/or registered for dogs for that specific use by the Ministry for Primary Industries under the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997.

If there is no registered product available for use in dogs in New Zealand, then a veterinarian may prescribe another medicine including human medicines 'off label'. If no such medicine is available, then alternative treatments should be discussed with a veterinarian.

This does not prevent the use of alternative or complementary medicines, but they should always be used with caution to ensure that they are safe, will not adversely affect a greyhound's welfare and in the case of competing dogs, will not cause a positive swab.

Track management

During 2020 there were problems detected at both the Wanganui and Palmerston North track surfaces. These were related to the quality of preparation which required corrective management actions by GRNZ. The resultant actions taken by the GRNZ CEO, in consultation with the Chair and Chief Veterinarian, to correct these problems was decisive and included the cancellation of meetings when necessary.

Injury Support Scheme

GRNZ has introduced a scheme to help support the treatment of an injured dog following an initial assessment by a race day veterinarian. This is to ensure that dogs receive the appropriate surgical management of serious injuries, rather than be euthanased when that would not be necessary. GRNZ has actively reduced the numbers of dogs being euthanased because of the affordability of veterinary treatment and this is described in more detail in the report from the CEO. GRNZ recognises that some veterinary procedures are expensive and may be beyond the affordability of some trainers. While some of these dogs may return to racing, it is likely that many would be retired from racing and enter the rehoming programme.

¹¹ GRNZ vaccination policy

<https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Downloads/Rules%20and%20Documents/GRNZ%20Vaccination%20Policy%202018.pdf>

¹² The use of alternative or complementary medicines policy

[https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Downloads/Rules%20and%20Documents/Use%20of%20Alternative%20or%20Complementary%20Medicines%20Policy%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Downloads/Rules%20and%20Documents/Use%20of%20Alternative%20or%20Complementary%20Medicines%20Policy%20(1).pdf)

Breeding management

Female breeding greyhounds are restricted to three litters to limit the population of greyhounds in New Zealand. Only the very best high performing bitches are permitted to have an additional 4th and final litter.

The GRNZ Health and Welfare Standards section 7.8 limits breeding and approvals are required to protect the welfare of older breeding bitches. The Breeding Female Policy¹³ requires the specific approval of the Chair, the Chief Veterinarian and one other veterinarian in clinical practise who is closely associated with greyhound racing.

Approvals last year (2020) totalled 22 of which one had to be reapproved in 2021 because she didn't come on heat before our approval expired.

The total for 2021 to date is 3 which includes the re-approval mentioned above.

Three applications were declined during 2020, none so far in 2021.

Transportation

The Health and Welfare Standards, section 6, cover the management of transportation of greyhounds within New Zealand in the Transportation of Greyhounds Policy¹⁴. These were put into focus following the deaths of a group of greyhounds being transported across the Cook Strait. The committee discussed this during its February 2019 meeting and this was followed by consultation with the MPI and ferry operators. Specific advice was given to ensure that licenced persons were made fully aware of their supervisory obligations. GRNZ produced bumper / window stickers that made it very clear that there were dogs in their vehicle.

Research

The Health and Welfare Committee has worked to lead GRNZ towards World's best practise for the management and welfare of greyhounds. It recognises that further research continues to be needed.

There is significant information sharing across the Tasman, especially among the veterinarians involved with greyhound racing. However, some questions require ground breaking research. GRNZ has actively engaged in three research projects, all in collaboration with the veterinary school at Massey University.

¹³ Breeding Female Policy

<https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Documents/GRNZ%20Registering%20a%20Breeding%20Female%20Policy-March%202019.pdf>

¹⁴ Transportation of Greyhounds Policy

[https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Policy/D.7a%20Transportation-of-Greyhounds-Policy%20FINAL%20\(1\).docx.pdf](https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Policy/D.7a%20Transportation-of-Greyhounds-Policy%20FINAL%20(1).docx.pdf)

The largest project involves a PhD study by Anna Palmer at Massey University, who is studying training, racing and career longevity of racing greyhounds. To guide the policies around the frequency of racing and its effect on greyhound welfare. Anna has published several papers so far and there will be at least one more before her PhD is completed this year. The publications are:

- Patterns of Racing and Career Duration of Racing Greyhounds in New Zealand (Animals 2020, 10, 796, 5 May 2020)
- Cross-Sectional Survey of the Training Practices of Racing Greyhounds in New Zealand (Animals 2020, 10, 2032, 4 November 2020)
- A retrospective descriptive analysis of race-day injuries of greyhounds in New Zealand (Australian Veterinary Journal, 16 February 2021)
- Her current paper: Risk-factors for Soft-tissue Injuries, Lacerations and Fractures during Racing in Greyhounds in New Zealand, is in preparation.
- The PhD is expected to be published during 2021.

GRNZ engaged the parasitology department in the veterinary school to undertake a survey of dogs in the Central Districts and Wanganui region. The findings led to specific advice to some trainers and a general presentation to trainers just prior to a race meeting at Palmerston North.

GRNZ engaged a veterinary ophthalmologist to examine the eyes of dogs in the Central Districts and Wanganui region. This followed the detection of eye lesions and impaired vision in retired dogs being prepared for rehoming at the conclusion of their careers. The aetiology of these lesions has not yet been fully investigated and may be followed by continued further World leading research.

Emergency Management

In 2018, GRNZ prepared a guidance document for GRNZ members to help them to make their own contingency plans for emergency situations. This was published in the On Track magazine and can be found on the GRNZ website ¹⁵.

This emphasised that their animals are their responsibility and need to be included in planning and preparation in the event of an emergency. It gave extensive advice based on best practise whether emergency services or evacuation were required. Members were advised to make sure emergency services have quick and easy access to buildings containing dogs and a water source, should they need it ; and to plan alternative escape routes from their property in the event that the main access is blocked. In the case of evacuation they will need to have an appropriate vehicle to transport their dogs to a safe place.

¹⁵ Emergency Management guidance document

https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/June%202021/Emergency_Management_GRNZ.pdf

Members were advised to make a plan and document it, then ensure that all staff are familiar and know what they have to do in an emergency.

The future

The Racing Act 2020 provides for the establishment of a Racing Industry Board.

Racing Industry Act 2020 specifically requires:

s15 Functions of racing codes

(1) The functions of each racing code are—

(d) to develop and implement animal welfare policies in respect of racing conducted by the code:

s37 Racing rules

(1) Each racing code must make, and maintain in force, rules regulating the conduct of racing by the code.

(5) Without limiting subsection (1), racing rules may provide for—

(a) the functions, duties, and powers of stipendiary stewards and racing investigators; and

(b) matters relating to the breeding, care, and welfare of horses and greyhounds;

s43 Objectives of Board

The objectives of the Board are to promote, and ensure compliance with, high standards of animal welfare, integrity, and professionalism by participants in the racing industry for the benefit of the public, participants, and the racing industry as a whole.

s44 Functions and powers of Board

(1) The functions of the Board are—

Compliance

(a) to employ and train stipendiary stewards and racing investigators to perform and exercise the functions, duties, and powers in each code's racing Rules:

(d) to support and monitor the operation and effectiveness of each racing code's animal welfare policies and initiatives:

The Chair of the GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee has participated in a meeting of the RIB Animal Welfare Working Group as part of the Racing Integrity Board Establishment process.

The participants at this meeting of the RIB Animal Welfare Working Group noted that greyhound racing appears to be leading the other racing codes in the development of standards and procedures. Compliance and inspections are needed for all three codes, but this will be best developed under the new racing industry structure where the RIB has a role to manage animal welfare.

The proposal for the RIB hire its own "animal welfare inspectors" under the Animal Welfare Act was tabled at this meeting of the RIB Animal Welfare Working Group. The meeting concluded that at least five "inspectors" will be required to serve all three codes throughout the country.

Conclusion

A very significant amount of work has been achieved by GRNZ and the Health and Welfare Committee. New Zealand greyhounds are probably the most regulated and protected animals in the country throughout their racing lives until they are rehomed at the end of their careers. The extensive controls on greyhound management that have been described above and the rules of racing and the GRNZ provide an oversight that probably exceeds every other animal enterprise in New Zealand.

At no stage has there been a comparison between the standards used by GRNZ with other sector organisations such as Territorial Land Authorities that are involved in canine management. Such a comparison would be welcomed to ensure a balanced approach.