



GRNZ

Animal Welfare

Progress Report

31 July 2023

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Executive Summary

This report details ongoing progress to improve animal welfare standards within the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand.

Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ) provided an official response to the Racing Integrity Board (RIB) December report on 19 July 2023. This response contained a detailed overview of progress which the industry has made since December 2022 up to and including 30 June 2023.

Notably, our July response also included both GRNZ and RIB assessments of the 15 focus areas, as at 30 June 2023, with the RIB now assessing seven of these areas as “Good”, eight of them as “Adequate” and none as “Slow”. This demonstrated marked improvement, as in the RIB December Report, they assessed five areas as “Good”, five as “Adequate” and five as “Slow”.

This report addresses progress and developments up to and including 31 July 2023. Significant developments and achievements over the last quarter include:

- Ongoing reduction in Major 1 and above injuries
- Approval and introduction of new and enhanced Greyhound Welfare Standards
- Ongoing implementation of GRNZ’s track programme
- Introduction of education programme as a condition of 2023/24 relicensing
- Further expansion of Preferred Box Draw Racing

Animal welfare is fundamental to all GRNZ activities, and we continue to make commendable improvements in this area. An ambitious workplan has been developed in consultation with the RIB which will further consolidate this progress over the next year.

Additional industry income derived from the TAB NZ/Entain strategic partnering will also greatly assist with increasing GRNZ’s capability to accelerate this progress.

Injuries

KPI INJURIES

2022/23		KPI INJURY COUNT & RATE	2021/22	
Count	per 1000	Season to 31 July	per 1000	Count
151	4.1	Major I 22-42 days	4.5	169
73	2.0	Major II more than 42 days	2.0	73
7	0.2	Euthanised by track vet or sudden death	0.2	7
231	6.33	KPI Injury Totals	6.67	249

GRNZ's injury KPI for the 2022/23 season was to reduce the rate of Major I and above injuries (those incurring stand downs of 22 days or more or euthanasia) by 10% on the Benchmark rate of 7.02 per 1000 starts.

On 31 July 2023, the rate was 6.33 per 1000 starts, down 9.83% on Benchmark. In practical terms, this means that there was one more Major I and above injury across the entire 2022/23 season than our KPI target.

While GRNZ is disappointed that this target was missed by such a narrow margin, we were still pleased with the downward trend in Major I and above injuries in 2022/23, and we will continue to strive for continuous improvement in this area going forward.

Initiatives applied in 2022/23, such as rule changes and the implementation of our track programme, will provide a solid platform for further positive improvement in future years.

MINOR INJURIES

2022/23		MINOR INJURY COUNT & RATE	2021/22	
Count	per 1000	Season to 31 July	per 1000	Count
33	0.9	Superficial 1-3 days	0.0	1
423	11.6	Minor 4-10 days	9.7	364
198	5.4	Medium 11-21 days	5.5	205
654	17.9	Minor Injury Totals	15.3	570
2013		Examinations Cleared of Injury		1336
2898	79.4	Total Post Race Examinations	57.7	2155

The RIB has significantly increased their rate of post-race veterinary examinations in the 2022/23 racing season, with 79.4 greyhounds being examined per 1000 starters, compared to 57.7 last season. This equates to a 37.6% increase.

This increase in post-race examinations has resulted in an increase in minor injuries being detected. GRNZ is supportive of this approach, as it leads to appropriate treatment and rest, thus preventing the injuries from potentially developing into something more serious.

PREFERRED BOX DRAW RACING

Preferred Box Draw (PBD) Racing continues to expand since it was initially introduced as a pilot in April 2022.

PBD Racing has had a meaningful impact on reducing lateral collisions, and by corollary, the incidence of dogs falling and fracture injuries. For the season ended 31 July 2023, the rate of dogs falling in a race was 2.4 per 1000 starters in PBD sprints versus 4.3 in random box draw sprints. For the same period, the rate of fracture injuries was 1.3 per 1000 starters in PBD sprints versus 2.6 in random box draw sprints.

Owing to the positive results so far, PBD Racing has now been expanded to all sprint races nationwide from 1 August 2023, excepting recognised (feature) races. We will continue to closely monitor the outcomes of PBD racing, and consider the merit of expanding the concept to other distance ranges in the future.

Whilst effective at reducing fractures, PBD Racing has not reduced the incidence of muscle injuries. GRNZ is now developing specific measures to try and mitigate these.

PBD / RANDOM – RACE INJURY COMPARISON TO MONDAY 31 JULY 2023
01 Aug 22 to 31 July 23

INJURIES PER 1000 STARTS										
	Starters	1-10 days	11-21 days	22-42 days	43-90 days	Euth/ Died	Total	Fracture	>21 days	Falls
PBD	12834	12.0	5.4	5.3	1.6	0.1	24.4	1.3	7.0	2.4
Random	13137	12.2	5.6	3.7	2.4	0.5	24.4	2.6	6.5	4.3

NON-RACEDAY INJURIES

While GRNZ already reports non-raceday injuries for greyhounds that are scratched from the races they are nominated for, we are interested in finding out more about serious injuries that are not captured through scratchings.

Further work is scheduled to begin in October, when the criteria for reporting and parameters for data capture will be evaluated. The ultimate outcome is to use the information to improve welfare outcomes for the industry's greyhound population. It is envisaged that a system like eTrac, which has the capacity to scan greyhounds and enter relevant health information about them directly into a cloud-based system, will achieve what we envisage as best practice.

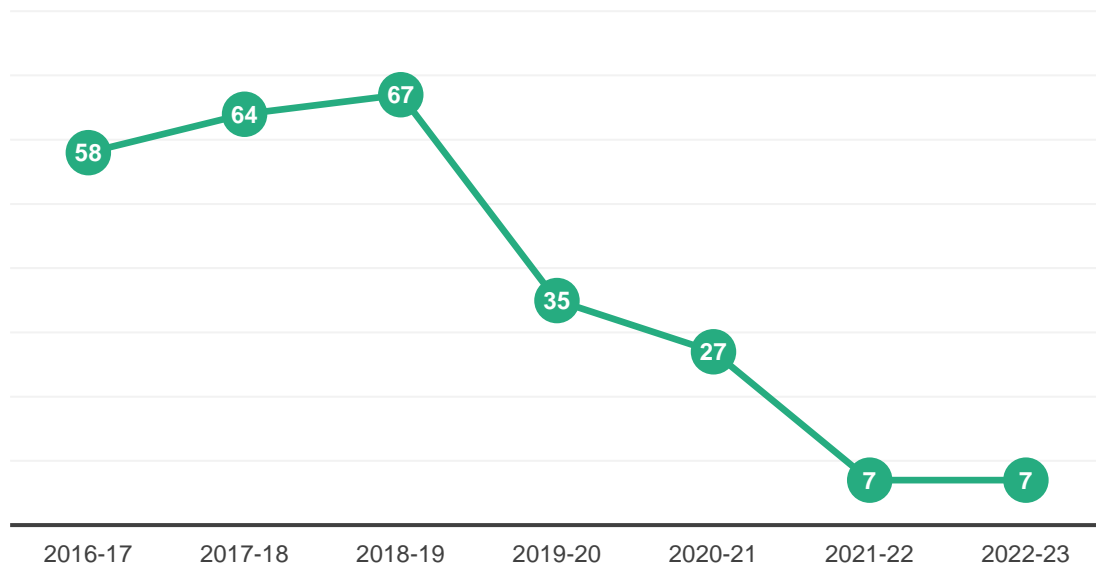
Euthanasia and Deaths

2022/23 MORTALITY DATA FULL SEASON

2022/23		Mortality Type & Cause	2021/22	
Count	%	Euthanasia	%	Count
7	9.5%	Due to an Injury in a Race	5.0%	7
7	9.5%	Behavioural Euthanasia – Aggression	7.9%	11
32	43.2%	Medical Euthanasia – Illness	42.9%	60
28	37.8%	Medical Euthanasia – Accident/Injury	44.3%	62
0	0.0%	Non-Medical (Trainer/Owner choice)	0.0%	0
74	100.0%	Total	100.0%	140
		Death		
11	15.5%	Accident/Injury	6.4%	6
60	84.5%	Age (includes Aged Euthanised) or Illness	93.6%	88
71	100.0%	Total	100.0%	94
145		Total Mortality		234

There were seven euthanasias due to injury in a race in the 2022/23 racing season, with two of these occurring in the second half of the season. There was one further euthanasia following an injury in an official trial. Away from the racetrack, there were seven behavioural euthanasias (aggression) reported, 32 medical euthanasias (illness) reported, 28 medical euthanasias (accident/injury) reported and 0 non-medical/non-behavioural euthanasias reported.

GRNZ: Raceday Euthanasia due to Race Injury



As mentioned in previous Ministerial updates, the consistently low raceday euthanasia rate in recent years is attributable to the GRNZ Great Mates Rehoming Programme and the Rehabilitation to Rehoming Programme, where GRNZ pays for the rehabilitation of greyhounds who are seriously injured at the racetrack before they are rehomed. Where euthanasia is the most humane option, greyhounds who incur serious raceday injuries are still euthanised, so as to minimise any unnecessary suffering.

It should be noted that the mortality statistics include greyhounds who were retired as pets and kept within the industry. Out of the total mortality of 145 greyhounds for the season, 25 were industry pets aged between 8.9 and 14.6 years old.

The GRNZ Greyhound Euthanasia Policy came into effect in November 2022. It prescribes in what circumstances euthanasia is and isn't appropriate, and solidifies that euthanasia of healthy greyhounds (for no reason other than them being uncompetitive at the racetrack) is unacceptable and constitutes a breach of the Policy, which is enforceable under the GRNZ Rules of Racing.

The effectiveness of this Policy can be seen in the significantly improved euthanasia data above, and is further addressed in Appendix: KPIs.

Track Management

GRNZ continues to make significant progress in the area of track safety, under the expert guidance of our National Racing Safety & Infrastructure Manager.

GRNZ's Racing Safety Strategic Action Plan is an all-inclusive programme that documents processes, standards and the respective responsibilities for achieving and maintaining track consistency and improved greyhound safety and welfare outcomes relative to racetrack conditions.

Implementation of this programme allows clubs to meet and deliver improved stakeholder expectations, whilst improving compliance, accountability and efficiencies.

The cornerstones of this track management programme are monitoring, evaluation, feedback and support, and ongoing improvement decisions being evidence-based.

1. SOUTH ISLAND STRAIGHT TRACK

It is intended to investigate the construction of a straight track located on the South Island. There are three potential locations to be appraised and considered prior to the final recommendation being made.

The appraisal phase will commence in late August/September, with recommendations being presented for consideration in October 2023. There are a number of factors to be considered as part of the initial scoping process.

2. REMEDIATION AND UPGRADING OF EXISTING TRACKS

Comprehensive work has been carried out at Manukau, Hatrick, Addington and Cambridge, and remains ongoing with the construction of the Wanganui straight track. Much of the completed work at Manukau and Hatrick was as a result of both independent recommendations and also from an obvious and apparent need to improve conditions from both a welfare and performance perspective.

The introduction of a scheduled track renovation window to perform necessary maintenance and potentially more major remediation works at Addington was established in April 2023. This is now built into the racing calendar and provides track staff with an opportunity to manage the track in the knowledge that there is now a quarterly expectation and opportunity to address routinely, as well as unexpected issues when required.

The construction of the Wanganui straight track continues to proceed under external supervision and management. GRNZ Track Maintenance has assumed management and responsibility for the actual track surface since early July 2023. GRNZ has employed a track curator who will be responsible for the straight track once it is officially handed over as a completed venue. As a grass surface, there are a number of management strategies and procedures that will vary from sand tracks, and this current period of time provides the opportunity to train, educate and develop the necessary skills. It is currently proposed that racing will commence on the straight track in late 2023.

Potential upgrading of the Chertsey trial track is currently being investigated as a way of relieving Addington of some of their trial and usage pressure. An initial inspection took place in May 2023. A detailed report and assessment will be completed through September, with final recommendations being presented for consideration in October 2023.

3. ESTABLISH A TRACK INFRASTRUCTURE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

The condition and age of much of the track-related infrastructure required attention and, in some cases, was contributing to compromised animal welfare outcomes and race meeting or race losses. Lure failure at Cambridge in February 2023 led to a six-month closure of the track.

As part of the Infrastructure Replacement Programme and the need to look at standardising infrastructure across all New Zealand tracks, a decision was made to introduce SafeChase lures into New Zealand greyhound racing. This is an Australian manufactured and utilised lure that is battery operated and runs on a standard lure rail. It significantly reduces the risk of injury to both greyhound and human, when compared to a cable/wire system. The first of these lures was introduced at Cambridge in August, with the second lure due for delivery and commissioning at Manawatu in September 2023. GRNZ will continue to monitor performance of the remaining lure systems at tracks, and will implement upgrades progressively over the next 12 to 18 months.

Safety rails to minimise the risk of dogs being pushed over the lure rail fall within the current Infrastructure Programme. While most tracks have partial safety rail or internal fences installed, it is the intention to have all tracks fully enclosed with either a safety rail, fence or combination of both over the next 12 months.

Manukau has been identified as the highest priority at this time, with initial assessments currently underway, and an expectation that a final design will be received in September, with installation completed by late November 2023. The installation of the safety rail will not impact the trial or racing schedule at Auckland during the installation phase.

Starting boxes remain the final major infrastructure requiring progressive upgrade. Clubs have previously sourced starting boxes, with Steriline being the preferred supplier. A replacement programme is currently being established, with the highest usage original boxes being prioritised for replacement. Infrastructure around improved drive on/drive off is also under consideration.

While there have been some improvements in irrigation systems across most tracks, the Cambridge system provides minimal flexibility or consistency to the track curator when looking for consistency in water application. Initial quotations have been sought with regards to a total upgrade, which will provide a more functional and versatile system. It is intended that this upgrade will commence as soon as practicable and will be fully operational prior to summer. It is intended that the specified works will not impact on trials or racing, despite the restrictions in access to the greyhound track.

4. DEVELOP DIAGNOSTIC BENCHMARKING FOR ALL TRACKS

As of 1 August 2023, all New Zealand tracks have been benchmarked with regards to specific diagnostic parameters and Key Performance Indicators - water content, firmness, shear, surface grade and sand composition.

These current benchmarks form the basis for the introduction and ongoing implementation of Phase II of the diagnostic programme across all tracks. Introduction of new and improved diagnostic tools including the Going Stick, as well as maximising the data available through water content monitoring, has formed the basis for the current Phase II programme, which is a streamlined bluetooth/GPS-based programme.

The Phase II programme has been introduced into the track network progressively, whilst waiting on delivery of the necessary tools. While they have now been distributed and are being used at all tracks, ongoing revision and assessment of the current benchmark data will take place in the first instance in late November 2023.

With the successful and staged uptake and implementation of Phase II of the diagnostic programme, Phase III which has been presented previously will be introduced earlier than initially planned.

As part of Phase III, GRNZ will provide and install state-of-the-art capability to provide additional track-related data at all tracks in assisting with managing water application and sustainability with lower water usage rates through independent weather stations. This will provide real time data on the standard weather considerations, but specifically ET evaporation loss rates, which have a direct impact on track conditions, particularly during summer, as well as in strong wind environments. These satellite weather stations will provide data back to a central location and will be installed and operational at all tracks by late November 2023.

5. PROVISION OF REGULAR MONTHLY TRACK PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Monthly performance reports are available for all clubs/tracks at the beginning of each month and are presented in person or virtually as required. The contents of these monthly reports include:

- Monthly Summary (Diagnostic and Injury)
- Comparative Injury Analysis (Total, Major and Serious)
- Going Stick Analysis (Individual Track and National)
- Track Performance Index (Individual Performance versus. All Track Performance)
- Water Management Summary
- Serious Injury Analysis (if applicable - in line with SIRC reports)
- Miscellaneous Injury and Performance Data

These reports are compiled and presented from a track condition perspective. Additionally, they look at any potential contribution track condition may have made relevant to major and serious injury occurrence.

6. INTRODUCE TRACK MINIMUM STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The Track and Infrastructure Minimum Standards and Guidelines will provide all track staff with a clear understanding of the required outcomes when performing all management, maintenance and monitoring procedures.

This document is descriptive in providing expected outcomes and not designed to be prescriptive. Ultimate responsibility for the condition of all tracks on all occasions remains the total responsibility of track staff. It is the responsibility of GRNZ to ensure all necessary training, support, equipment and resources are available to deliver the necessary outcomes.

The draft form of this document will be presented to track staff at the September workshop for discussion, with the intention of implementing the Track Minimum Standards and Guidelines in October 2023.

Contents within this document include:

- Track Preparation Policy
- Track Inspection and Rating Procedure
- Track Issue and Escalation Procedure
- Track and Infrastructure Minimum Standards and Guidelines
 - Track Surface
 - Track Preparation
 - Track Maintenance
 - Track Monitoring
 - Trial Sessions
 - Harrowing and Scarification
 - Irrigation Management
 - Scheduled Track Renovation
 - Lure Systems
 - Starting Boxes
 - Synthetic Grass Matting
 - Perimeter Fencing and Gates
 - Machinery and Track Implements
 - Maintenance of Machinery and Racing Infrastructure
 - Track Lighting
 - Photo Finish and Semaphore Boards

7. TRACK CURATOR AND STAFF EDUCATION

The first New Zealand Track Staff workshop was convened in April 2023. All tracks were represented at the initial workshop and subsequent feedback supported the ongoing arrangement of these types of forums. There is a second workshop scheduled for mid/late September. These workshops, whilst structured around an agenda, provide and rely on input and contribution from all attendees and this input is strongly encouraged.

Two new track curators have been employed directly by GRNZ to manage both Hatrick Raceway as well as the new Wanganui straight track. The straight track curator is enrolled in a turf management course in conjunction with New Zealand Sports Turf Institute (NZSTI). Track staff are also provided with the opportunity to attend one-day short courses that will assist them in their day-to-day duties, including management and self-development.

Discussions with NZSTI commenced back in April 2023 with regards to establishing a bespoke accreditation course for all current and future track curators and staff, specific to the greyhound racing industry. The structure and course contents have been confirmed, and GRNZ is currently awaiting a cost structure and timeline.

It is expected that the cost projections will be received in September 2023, with a formal recommendation being made in September/October, and with a projected commencement of this industry accreditation in early 2024, if approved. Once implemented, it will be expected that all current track staff, irrespective of their experience and employment classification, obtain this industry accreditation. Due to the small numbers relative to the course structure, there may be merit in opening access to either this or an abbreviated version of this course to other industry stakeholders in the future.

GRNZ has commenced the restructuring and realignment of track curators and staff across New Zealand. Direct employment of all track staff by GRNZ provides greater opportunities for improved management and performance outcomes, whilst driving improved welfare and fewer serious injuries.

GRNZ is currently in discussion with clubs and a HR consultant to ensure that the structure and process in achieving the desired outcome is done with minimal impact and disruption to both the racing schedule and staff personally.

8. STANDARDISATION OF TRACK MACHINERY AND IMPLEMENTS

Whilst all tracks possess an acceptable range of plant and equipment, it does vary, and some of what is currently being utilised is either of an age or condition which is likely to create future issues.

Minor modifications such as the width of rubber mats, designated wet weather drags, blades for maintaining track grades and ensuring tines and blades on the various harrowing and scarification implements are in good condition are the primary focus at this time. However, those tracks that still use water trucks are also being looked at with regards to fitting single wider tyres that are more conducive to use on sand tracks and create less compaction and surface inconsistency.

Improved availability and application of track machinery and implements is an ongoing focus.

9. CONVENE INDUSTRY WORKSHOPS RELATING TO TRACK MANAGEMENT TOPICS

As with track staff, education and improved communication with industry stakeholders is vital moving forward. Whilst persons within this industry will always have their own opinions on what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, GRNZ is focused on ensuring that information that will be useful or beneficial in advising or educating the majority of the industry, or specific sectors within, is at least available.

This includes the scheduled Licensed Person (LP) roadshows and engagement forums, as well as providing information to the RIB and the Stewards panel as required or requested.

Documents such as the recent GRNZ Track Management Overview can form the basis for the type of detail in information that is potentially beneficial to the greater industry, which can lead to them having a better understanding of why certain actions and strategies are carried out.

Regular quarterly meetings with the RIB form part of this strategy, as do track-based interactions with club committees, staff and LPs as deemed necessary.

10. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RACING SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

This industry advisory group will provide GRNZ and industry stakeholders with the opportunity to gain a better understanding of racing safety related matters. This forum will provide the opportunity for GRNZ to have ongoing and regular dialogue with stakeholders, including LPs, whilst providing an effective channel to raise matters of importance and significance.

Any recommendations coming from within this group will be assessed and, where appropriate, implemented as part of the ongoing working strategy on racing safety. This group will not have any decision-making powers; however, it can, and is expected to assist in providing considered and constructive input on proposals and matters relevant to the Racing Safety Strategy.

The role of the Racing Safety Advisory Group will include providing strategic level advice and guidance on racing safety related track, infrastructure and welfare matters that may be referred to the group by the GRNZ Board or senior management, industry sub-committees, independent consultants, industry representative bodies or individual LPs or stakeholders. The Racing Safety Advisory Group's role will involve:

- Monitoring of the Racing Safety Strategic Plan and providing input for review
- Researching initiatives to support evidence-based improvements, interventions and initiatives
- Education, support and communication with stakeholders and LPs in relation to improved technologies and racing safety outcomes
- Representing their stakeholder groups
- Contributing ideas with potential to enhance the racing safety programme
- Raising and discussing topical issues or concerns that may impact racing

It is proposed that the Racing Safety Advisory Group will include representation from the following:

- Chairperson (GRNZ Appointment)
- Up to three LP Representatives (North, Central and South)
- A nominated Club Manager
- Up to two Track Curators or Regional Track Manager
- GRNZ Welfare Manager
- GRNZ Racing Manager
- GRNZ Racing Safety & Infrastructure Manager
- RIB Chief or Deputy Chief Greyhound Steward

The Racing Safety Advisory Group will be introduced in the first quarter of the 2023/24 racing season.

Rehoming

In the 2022/23 season (1 August 2022 – 31 July 2023), 417 greyhounds were adopted through the GRNZ Great Mates Rehoming Programme (Great Mates). An additional 53 greyhounds were privately rehomed.

This is a 18.54% reduction on last season, when 521 greyhounds were adopted through Great Mates, and 56 through private adoptions.

While on face value, this reduction is disappointing, the percentage reduction is significantly smaller than what other rehoming organisations are reporting around New Zealand (and the world) in the post-Covid economic climate.

In January 2023, GRNZ engaged an independent consultant to undertake a review of all of GRNZ's rehoming and post-racing activities. Included within this was a review of GRNZ's Rehabilitation to Rehoming Programme (RTR), Great Mates and adoption activities.

In response to that review, GRNZ employed a Welfare Strategy & Operations Manager in August 2023 to assist the GRNZ Rehoming Manager, and with a view to enhancing our overall focus and strategy in the rehoming space.

GRNZ recognises the challenges in the rehoming area given the current economic climate, hence the application of additional resources to improve performance in the 2023/24 season.

In recognition of increasing waiting list times to get into Great Mates, in March 2023, the GRNZ Board supported in principle, that greyhounds on the waiting list be able to continue racing, with a view that this will extend the racing life of healthy greyhounds, provide exercise and enrichment and increase visibility of greyhounds awaiting rehoming. This is being carefully considered by the Racing Committee before it undergoes industry consultation at the September regional workshops.

INCREASED CAPACITY

Two new Great Mates bases have been added in the 2022/23 season, based at Te Kuiti and Kirwee. These two new rehoming centres provide a more even spread to ease some pressure for both LPs and the rehoming teams. These bases also ensure a more efficient process, with increased capacity and resources for Great Mates. GRNZ's current Great Mates kennel capacity is 208.

SPECIAL ADOPTIONS TEAM

A Special Adoptions team was established to provide resources for those greyhounds with special needs (such as physiotherapy appointments, training sessions, vet visits etc) that the standard Great Mates rehoming kennels are unable to provide. This has prevented "special needs" greyhounds from increasing waitlist times or from taking up space in the RTR Programme, and has also reduced the risk of returns by mis-matching such a dog with the wrong family. It also exemplifies that GRNZ is committed to providing every greyhound with the best opportunity to live out the remainder of its life as a pet.

GREYHOUND ADOPTION SURVEY

GRNZ engaged an independent third party to conduct a greyhound adoption survey in late 2022. 569 people completed the surveys, and there was overwhelmingly positive feedback towards Great Mates and greyhounds as pets. This survey also provided some constructive feedback and potential areas for improvement. In answer to the question, “Would you recommend a greyhound as a pet?”, 99.12% of respondents (564 out of 569) said “Yes”.

PATHWAY FOSTERING

Pathway Fostering was developed in the 2022/23 season as a greyhound foster network, working in conjunction with our rehoming programme. Pathway Fostering is currently taking greyhounds from the Upper North Island Great Mates and RTR bases, and provides these greyhounds with additional exposure/training/experience to ensure they are ready for pet life.

INCREASED BEHAVIOURAL RESOURCES

We have engaged an experienced and qualified trainer to supplement our training programmes at our South Island bases. She visits each base weekly for a two-hour session to improve training outcomes and greyhound adoptability.

EDUCATION

The Great Mates and rehoming agency staff undertook customised training courses in April/May 2023. The objective of the courses was to enhance the skills of those involved in adapting greyhounds to pet life, making them suitable for a broader range of potential homes. This course comprised nine modules:

- Breed: Nature versus Nurture
- Anxiety
- Resource Guarding
- Enrichment
- Body Language
- Impulse Control
- Lead Handling
- Recall
- Rewards

The next step will be to convert this content into a digital education platform for continuous professional development (CPD) for rehoming staff, as well as altered versions for LP education, foster carers and adopters. The possibility of creating consistent adoption packs for adopters across all agencies is currently being explored for a more cohesive, professional and effective programme.

EVENTS

The Greyhound Adoption Market Day held in Christchurch in early 2023 was a resounding success, yielding over 30 adoptions from the day. As a result, GRNZ is scheduling several other events throughout the year in different locations across New Zealand in conjunction with our adoption partners.

Systems and Traceability

2022/23 SEASON SUMMARY

System changes were made to support the removal of ear brands. This included changes to the forms and data entry in relation to microchipping being done by vets, and reporting.

System changes to support the new Rules of Racing were implemented. These include:

- New judicial rules used by the Stewards, and improved management of these in the system
- Changes to the information about deregistration of greyhounds that are retired as pets. This includes identification of greyhounds retired inside or outside of the industry. This improves tracking and ensures greyhounds retired as pets within the industry are subject to rules
- Workflow processes to improve compliance, including email reminders on whelping notices due, and restrictions on breeding
- Frequency of racing nomination prevention in accordance with the new GRNZ Rules of Racing, and preventing nomination if a greyhound has been stood down for six months and has not had a satisfactory trial within the last three weeks
- Registered addresses as described in the new GRNZ Rules of Racing are in the system and LPs' registered addresses recorded
- Provision of 4% weight tolerances information to the RIB in a report that shows last start weight of the greyhound and its lowest and highest weight permissible

Improvements have been made to vaccination information provided to LPs and the RIB, which facilitates easier vaccination compliance for LPs.

Significant changes have been made to the capture and reporting of injuries and stand downs. This includes the addition of comments and veterinary examination details, improvements to stand down entry and the ability for trainers and other interested parties to be automatically emailed the details of the stand down, injury information and veterinary examination within 15 minutes of the stand down being entered.

Changes have also been made to reports to include more information in relation to stand downs.

RTR and veterinary forms have been digitised, which allows for these forms to be completed online and automatically made available to rehoming and RTR staff. Similarly, a vet portal for information about breeding females, vaccinations and forms has been created online, and this is available to FSI and on-track veterinarians.

Online learning platform Chameleon was implemented, which became the platform on which GRNZ's CPD Programme is based.

The data cleanse project of approximately 35,000 greyhound records in the GRNZ database was completed, giving GRNZ confidence in the accuracy of the status of these dogs.

GRNZ acknowledges past criticisms around the tracking of greyhounds who go through the RTR Programme. However, in the past season, we have implemented an online off-the-shelf animal tracking system called Trackabeast, specifically for the tracking of these greyhounds. This allows for medical and rehabilitation information to be recorded and reported on.

Additionally, various business-as-usual changes were made throughout the year, which included improved reporting, creating new Great Mates bases in the system, and improving trial entry information.

GRNZ created two new reports for the RIB to use for kennel audits. These reports are based on their requirements that they refined during the season's audits.

ETRAC

GRNZ is conducting due diligence on the opportunity to integrate components of NSW's Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission (GWIC) eTrac system. Due diligence includes assessment of the integration required into our system, as this does not replace our existing system.

At present, the eTrac system is designed to:

- Account for every NSW registered greyhound, using scanning technology and recording of "check-in" activities
- Provide a better customer experience for participants through a participant portal for registration and greyhound updates
- Provide a single operating system for the GWIC staff

A key feature of the eTrac system is the traceability of greyhounds through being scanned at a racetrack or other location, and through a "check-in" activity such as lodgement of a whelping notice, a change of ownership or being named.

A racing greyhound is required to check-in at least every six months, and a pre-racing or retired greyhound every 12 months. When a greyhound has had a check-in, the time restarts from the date of that contact.

The eTrac system collates and manages these check-ins and scanning, so it is easy to see at a glance against the greyhound's profile a history of the various check-ins. If a greyhound has not been checked-in within the required timeframe, an email or SMS is sent to the LP.

The eTrac system is broken down into a number of core components. These are the components that we are assessing:

- eTracking: This is the scanning of greyhounds' microchips through a purpose-built scanner and associated iPhone app. The system is updated with a record of where and when the greyhound was scanned. GWIC has a number of locations around NSW where greyhounds can be scanned.
- Registration administration: This manages all of the registration activities and is used by the registration team. Each of these activities are recorded against the greyhound as a check-in, which, together with the scanning, forms a history of the greyhound's interactions with GWIC.
- Customer (participant) portal: This is where an LP can view and apply for registrations/licences and complete online forms for notifications or applications for breeding, whelping, litters, death and retirements etc. They are also able to view detailed information about each greyhound they own or train.

Governance

GRNZ RULES OF RACING

Since the new GRNZ Rules of Racing were implemented on 1 February 2023, work on Tranche 2 of the Rules has been ongoing, in conjunction with the RIB. The focus of Tranche 2 is largely administrative, given Tranche 1 addressed all significant animal welfare rule requirements which were jointly identified as priorities by GRNZ and the RIB.

Any proposed changes to the GRNZ Rules of Racing must follow the procedures outlined in the GRNZ Constitution and the Racing Industry Act 2020.

Since 1 February 2023, changes have been made to the Rules as follows:

Rule 102(1A)

As detailed in our April 2023 Quarterly Report, Rule 102(1A) was removed in February, pursuant to the emergency provisions in the GRNZ Constitution. This consequently removed the requirement for a greyhound to perform a satisfactory trial if it had been more than 28 days since it last competed in an event.

Since its removal, GRNZ has drafted a Return to Racing Fitness Policy and Return to Racing Best Practice Guidelines (with both currently in the draft stage) to introduce new criteria around greyhounds returning to racing following a six-month break and/or a 42-day injury stand down. These documents will also serve to educate trainers on best practice for:

- Ensuring their greyhounds are at optimum fitness for returning to the track following a break; and
- Ensuring greyhounds who fall into an “at-risk” category have any risks mitigated through taking appropriate recommended actions.

The draft Return to Racing Fitness Policy and Return to Racing Best Practice Guidelines will be considered by the GRNZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee, before they are distributed for wider consultation among key stakeholders and the GRNZ Board. This is a priority for the first quarter of the 2023/24 season.

LR29A(4)

The full LR29A rule stated:

LR29A Improvement notice

(1) The Racing Integrity Board may issue an improvement notice to a registered person if satisfied that the registered person has failed to comply with the Greyhound Welfare Standards.

(2) An improvement notice is a notice requiring the person to whom it is given to take any steps specified in the notice to—

(a) remedy the non-compliance; or

(b) ensure that the non-compliance is not continued or repeated.

(3) The notice must—

(a) be in writing; and

(b) specify a reasonable period within which the required steps must be taken.

(4) The time period in subrule (3)(b) commences only after:

(a) the registered person has been provided with the proposed improvement notice;

(b) the registered person has been given an opportunity to comment on the proposed improvement notice; and

(c) the Racing Integrity Board has considered any comments from the registered person and confirmed, amended or withdrawn the proposed improvement notice.

Following a series of discussions held between GRNZ and the RIB, both parties were in agreement that a clause similar to Rule 29A(4) would be better placed in the RIB Standard Operating Procedure Greyhound Kennel Audits and Inspections (SOP).

GRNZ subsequently received the RIB SOP and felt comfortable that it ensures that no improvement notices will come as a surprise to LPs, while also ensuring that the improvement notice process is not unnecessarily delayed or complicated by Rule 29A(4).

LR29A(4) was removed at the GRNZ Board meeting on 9 August, following industry consultation.

GRNZ GREYHOUND WELFARE STANDARDS

The GRNZ Greyhound Welfare Standards were implemented on 1 May 2023, following an extensive period of stakeholder and industry consultation. These Standards are a contemporary Welfare Standard for greyhounds based on the Five Domains Model, which provides opportunities for greyhounds to experience positive states in their lives.

To have good welfare, greyhounds must have the opportunity to have positive experiences. To enable this, those responsible for the care of our greyhounds must provide them with environments that encourage them to express natural behaviours that they find rewarding. These Standards exceed the minimum expectations in the MPI Code of Welfare: Dogs, and require that all negative experiences are immediately addressed. Additionally, they require that our people identify and provide opportunities for positive experiences, and that they remove barriers to positive experiences, wherever possible.

GRNZ also developed additional resources to support the introduction of and compliance with these Standards. These include:

- Fact sheets
- Templates, including the Exercise, Socialisation and Enrichment Plan template and supporting resources
- Updates and industry reminders

During this period, GRNZ has liaised with the RIB on the new audit procedures and process. The RIB agreed to pause full audits while the new Standards undergo a period of embedding, with all LPs encouraged to understand the requirements for the new Standards and get “audit ready”.

To aid with education and compliance, GRNZ has created (with RIB endorsement) and distributed a GRNZ Kennel Handbook to all trainers and littermasters. This handbook contains the full set of GRNZ Greyhound Welfare Standards, health and welfare fact sheets, and templates which must be completed as part of the kennel audit requirements.

Key aspects of the GRNZ Greyhound Welfare Standards were also incorporated into the GRNZ Continuous Professional Development Education Programme which launched in June (see comments below), and they will be further covered at upcoming regional roadshows, as detailed in the Stakeholder Engagement section.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE AND SERIOUS INJURY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The GRNZ Animal Health and Welfare Committee (AHWC) convenes bi-monthly, with minutes for every meeting published on the GRNZ website once they become ratified.

The Serious Injury Review Committee (SIRC) held its seventh meeting in June 2023. The SIRC has recorded 24 action items and seven recommendations up until June 2023, and a further four actions were recorded at the June meeting. Out of these, all recommendations have been fully implemented, and 22 of the 24 actions have been implemented.

Some of the more significant contributions of the SIRC include:

- Recommendations regarding racing frequency limits in the GRNZ Rules of Racing and weight variation limits
- Recommendations regarding further expansion of PBD in sprint racing
- Defining and monitoring risk factors, including older greyhounds, layoffs from racing, and previous injury history
- Prioritisation of the injury mitigation strategy and move to a more preventative model
- Recommendations relating to further fitness to race policy development for higher risk greyhounds returning to racing
- Intersection with track maintenance monitoring and data gathering to support risk factor analysis
- Liaison with Stewards to refine raceday procedures as they relate to risk factor mitigation

Education

GRNZ has a series of regional roadshows planned for late September 2023 nationwide. Additionally, GRNZ has recently distributed a kennel handbook to all trainers and littermasters, to aid with education and also preparedness for kennel audits.

In June 2023, GRNZ introduced a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme as a condition of relicensing for trainers and breeders. It comprises online modules based on animal welfare rules, standards and policies, and it will be expanded to other licence categories in future seasons.

Prior to launching the CPD Programme, GRNZ consulted with a range of stakeholders, including a focus group of LPs, the Animal Health and Welfare Committee, the RIB and the GRNZ Board, which helped with fine-tuning the structure and content of the education modules.

GRNZ's CPD Programme is the first of its kind for existing licence holders across all Australasian racing jurisdictions. Since implementing our CPD Programme, the New Zealand thoroughbred and harness codes have both expressed interest in adopting a similar education programme, as have some Australian greyhound jurisdictions.

GRNZ was delighted by the support of LPs for this programme and their willingness to undertake this training as a condition of their relicensing for 2023/24. Formal feedback will be sought from LPs in September 2023, which will help to inform future content. All new breeder and trainer licence applicants are now required to undertake this CPD Programme.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations have been mandatory for the racing population since March 2022.

Vaccinations are now also mandatory for puppies and pets retired within the industry, with this requirement being inscribed in the new Rules of Racing which came into effect on 1 February 2023.

Below is the report on vaccination figures, as at 31 July 2023. GRNZ's Racing and Population Analyst regularly follows up on outstanding vaccinations, while GRNZ's Registrar and Racing Department ensure that greyhounds cannot be named or be nominated to race without current vaccinations.

The below table shows a pleasing overall increase in vaccinations, with greyhounds retired in the industry also showing a marked increase on having up-to-date vaccinations (57.7% versus 13.9% as at 28 February 2023). The actual percentage will be higher, as this includes greyhounds within the Great Mates programme who are routinely vaccinated upon entry into the Great Mates kennels. Current issues in updating the database with this information are under review. Provision of dogs' formal identification by veterinarians rather than nicknames is a key issue currently under review in this area.

REGISTRATION STATUS

Registration Type	Current		Expired		No Vacs History		Total
Pre-racing <small>Whelped between 1Jan21-5Jun23; >8 weeks old In NZ & no De-reg Dates</small>	912	(95.2%)	41	(4.3%)	3	(0.3%)	956
Racing <small>Whelped since 1Jan18, In NZ, Has Racing Reg Date</small>	1271	(99.3%)	9	(0.7%)	0	(0.0%)	1280
Retired for Breeding (B) <small>Whelped since 1Jan10, In NZ, Has Status "Retired for Breeding", Females</small>	117	(95.9%)	4	(4.1%)	0	(0.0%)	122
Retired for Breeding (D) <small>Whelped since 1Jan10, In NZ, Has Status "Retired for Breeding", Males</small>	10	(100.0%)	0	(0.0%)	0	(0.0%)	10
Retired In Industry (Not Breeding) <small>Whelped since 1Jan10, In NZ, Retired In Industry</small>	547	(57.7%)	353	(37.2%)	48	(5.1%)	948

Population

Breeding numbers dropped significantly in the 2022/23 season, which is largely attributable to the uncertainty created by the Government Review for our participants.

471 greyhound puppies were born in the 2022/23 season. The average number of puppies born across the previous six seasons was 791, and exact numbers per season varied between a low of 712 in 2019/20 and a high of 893 in 2020/21.

In July, GRNZ proactively contacted a number of breeders to ascertain their future breeding intentions. The vast majority of feedback received was positive, with most expressing an intention to breed in the next 6-12 months.

The GRNZ Board is currently considering potential breeding initiatives to aid with revitalising breeding numbers.

Prohibited Substances

At the direction of the RIB, 3,815 greyhounds were routinely tested for prohibited substances in the 2022/23 season, which equates to 10.5% of starters. RIB charges were laid in relation to two greyhounds who returned positive results for prohibited substances. One of these (arsenic) was regarded by the RIB Adjudicative Committee as non-deliberate administration, while the adjudicative process is ongoing for the second positive.

GRNZ fully supports all investigations and resulting penalties relating to positives for prohibited substances. There is no place in our sport for people who compromise the health and safety of greyhounds. Further, the integrity of our sport must not be compromised, for both our participants and punters.

Stakeholder Engagement

GRNZ continues to engage with all key stakeholders regularly, via a range of mediums, including newsletters, advisories, social media and phone calls.

As previously outlined, GRNZ has committed to bi-annual regional roadshows around the country. The next series of roadshows is scheduled for September 2023 and will include meetings in Auckland, Wanganui, Christchurch and Invercargill. Topics which will be covered include track safety and infrastructure, Rules and Welfare Standards, racing and rehoming.

GRNZ continues to liaise closely with the RIB, with regular meetings held between the two organisations.

Appendix: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

As flagged in recent Ministerial reports, our animal welfare-focused KPIs are currently in the process of being reviewed and refined.

However, for full transparency and reporting purposes for the 2022/23 season, following is an update report up to and including 31 July 2023.

GRNZ KPIS - ANIMAL WELFARE

Category	Description	2022/23 YTD to 31 July 2023	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
1 Euthanasia	No (zero) euthanasias outside of GRNZ's Euthanasia Policy	3	0	0	0

Commentary on status of welfare KPI 1: Two euthanasias for aggressive dogs, and one 12.8yo pet. Reasons were legitimate (emergency / elderly LP) in both aggression cases; however, were outside the policy in that GRNZ approval was not obtained prior to euthanasia. Investigated and LPs reminded of their obligations. Three other cases that may fall outside the Policy are currently under investigation.

Background: Reducing raceday injuries will be an ongoing focus for GRNZ through providing a world class racing environment. This will be enhanced through a number of new initiatives, including track management, increased preferred box draw races, possible introduction of GPS technology to monitor racing incidents and introduction of straight track racing.

2 Injuries	Reduce the number of injuries in races incurring stand downs of 22+ days. Measured as rate per 1,000 starters against a 2020/21 Benchmark of 7.02	6.33 per 1,000 starters = 9.8% reduction	10% reduction	15% reduction	20% reduction
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Commentary on status of welfare KPI 2: Remedial work at Manukau, Addington and Wanganui post-December improved this KPI as the season progressed. This helped the second half of the season to beat KPI by 12.3%, compared to 6.5% for the first half. Also our lowest injury track Forbury Park raced during the KPI Benchmark Season - without Forbury, the 2020/21 Benchmark would have been 7.25.

3 Injuries	Number of sprint races on straight tracks	0	96	390	702
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Commentary on status of welfare KPI 3: With the expected opening of the Wanganui straight track being deferred to October due to construction delays, the 2022/23 target was not met. Conservative approach being adopted to get this project right before introduction. Contractor delays with Cyclone Gabrielle impacted on construction in Autumn. Encouraging performance of Hatrick oval track following its reintroduction in April has enabled time with construction of straight track at Wanganui to be taken to ensure this is fit for purpose and not rushed.

4 Injuries	Percent of total races conducted as Preferred Box Draws	34.6%	25%	35%	40%
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Category	Description	2022/23 YTD to 31 July 2023	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
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Commentary on status of welfare KPI 4: 1701 PBD races out of 4911 in total. All sprints are PBD from 1 August 2023 (except features).

Background: GRNZ is to increase education of its trainers in relation to their obligations and best practice with animal welfare. Education will focus on increasing trainers' awareness and professionalism, with training being mandatory as a condition of licensing.

5 Education	Registered persons participate in GRNZ continuous professional development and animal welfare training as a condition of their licence renewal	100%	100%	100%	100%
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Commentary on status of welfare KPI 5: Education programme launched on 14 June as a mandatory requirement for 23/24 relicensing. Very good response by LPs, with only 3 individuals out of 210 not completing this programme by 31 July and not being relicensed.

Background: An increased focus will be placed on GRNZ systems on knowing the status and location of registered greyhounds (up to adoption).

6 Traceability	GRNZ knows where all registered greyhounds are domiciled	Racing Dogs 92% Non-Racing 71%	Racing dogs 100%	Racing dogs 100%	Racing dogs 100%
			Non racing 85%	Non racing 95%	Non racing 100%

Commentary on status of welfare KPI 6: Results to date based on 73 RIB kennel audits. These provide an indicative measure of performance, noting that they reflect details at the time of the kennel visit and not overall industry compliance at a single point in time. With the potential adoption of the eTrac check-in principles in 2023/24, GRNZ will ensure traceability of all racing and non-racing dogs in future periods.

Background: Ensuring dogs have a life after racing will be an ongoing focus with GRNZ rehoming schemes along with having effective working relationships with adoption agencies.

7 Rehoming	All retired greyhounds have access to enter the Great Mates rehoming programme in a timely fashion	76% within 90 days	85% within 90 days	90% within 60 days	95% within 60 days
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Commentary on status of welfare KPI 7: GRNZ has calculated this KPI based on the actual percentage of dogs who spent less than 90 days on the waiting list, which includes dogs that were privately rehomed, kept by owner and RTR dogs. Waiting list times are increasing, and GRNZ is applying additional focus to this area with the appointment of a Welfare Strategy & Operations Manager, and is also considering logistics around allowing dogs to race while on the Great Mates waiting list.

Category	Description	2022/23 YTD to 31 July 2023	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
8	Rehoming Increase GRNZ supported rehoming kennel capacity to a total of	208	150	175	200

Commentary on status of welfare KPI 8: 2022/23 target met with the current capacity of GRNZ kennels. This does not include temporary and emergency facilities used from time to time.