



Level 1, 230 Howick Street
Bathurst NSW 2795
PO Box 718
Bathurst NSW 2795

30 March 2021

Hon Robert Borsak MLC
Committee Chair
Legislative Council Select Committee on The Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission
Copy by email to only:

Dear Mr Borsak MLC

RE: RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS FROM INQUIRY INTO THE GREYHOUND WELFARE & INTEGRITY COMMISSION

I refer to your letter dated 25 March 2021 inviting me to provide a response to certain comments identified in red text in submissions 69 and 71.

Please find attached a schedule of my responses to those parts identified in red only.

Further, I have referred both submissions to my employer, who will provide a more fulsome response to the submissions.

I request an opportunity to provide further response to any other matters raised in these submissions at a later date, should I consider that necessary.

I request that if you are going to publicly release submissions 69 and 71, that you please also release the schedule below, responding to those submissions.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Michelle Ledger

Director Animal Welfare

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSION 71

No.	Ms Thorsby submission	Dr Ledger response
1	<i>From the point of my engagement with GWIC, then CEO Judy Lind made it perfectly clear that I was to be answerable to both her and the Chief Vet Michelle Ledger. I recall a comment to me from Mrs Lind early on, "You will do what we (Michelle Ledger) want you to do". She was referring to them deciding on what my role involved instead of what industry best practice were.</i>	<p>I say in response as follows, at no point did I, as the Chief Veterinary Officer, make any comment or infer by my conduct that Ms Thorsby as Acting Chief Steward would be answerable to me as Chief Veterinary Officer and/or CEO Ms Lind.</p> <p>This allegation is denied.</p>
2	<i>For a period of approximately 18 months I experienced a combination of belittling and demeaning comments, segregation and aggressive unfair email correspondence from both Judy and Michelle. I also experienced bullying in relation to the continual day to day authority of the management of my Stewards.</i>	<p>I deny that I have belittled or demeaned Ms Thorsby in any way. Any allegations, including allegations of email misuse, was the subject of a fact-finding investigation by Commissioner Wheeler.</p> <p>On the contrary, Ms Thorsby remains the only Commission member of staff to have enjoyed afternoon tea at my dining room table, when I drove her to the Bathurst airport for her return flight to Sydney.</p> <p>I understand Commissioner Wheeler (former Deputy NSW Ombudsman) assessed whether there was any evidence in relation to allegations of bullying against Ms Thorsby and provided a report to the Commission.</p>
3	<i>The next day I sent an email to CEO, Chief Vet and Chief Legal Advisor informing them of the extent and seriousness of the incident</i>	<p>I understand that the email exchange referred to in this allegation was the subject of a fact-finding investigation by Commissioner Wheeler.</p>

	<i>and potential implications. I received an aggressive reply email from Judy Lind implying that I was undermining other GWIC staff. I replied explaining that my correspondence had good intentions in the form of a heads up in the case other parties contacted her about the matter.</i>	
4	<i>Around June 2020, Chief Vet Michelle Ledger circulated email correspondence to Senior Legal Advisor proposing changes to policy and practices relating to the role of Stewards under my management. The email was later forwarded to me as an afterthought. This was typical of the overarching segregating bullying treatment I had suffered for over 2 years. These two more recent examples of the bullying and harassment I had received led to me submitting my resignation.</i>	As stated above, I understand that any issues or allegations that I engaged in any bullying treatment was the subject of a fact-finding investigation by Commissioner Wheeler, including the reasons for Ms Thorsby's resignation from the Commission.
5	<i>Steve Griffin informed me that there would be a formal investigation into my bullying & harassment allegations.</i>	I am unable to provide a response to this, but I understand that Commissioner Wheeler's investigation and report made findings in relation to certain allegations.
6	<i>I personally had been bullied & harassed on numerous occasions. I also sent Mr Brown examples of email correspondence which demonstrated examples of bullying & harassment.</i>	I understand that Commissioner Wheeler's report addresses these matters.
7	<i>To this day I am unaware of any investigation conducted regarding my allegations of bullying & harassment.</i>	As above, I understand that a fact-finding investigation was conducted by Commissioner Wheeler. I cannot comment as to whether Ms Thorsby was made aware of this investigation. I

		understand that the investigation occurred after Ms Thorsby's resignation.
8	<i>Upon reflection I would have reported the many instances of mistreatment, bullying & harassment, however I really did not believe that I had the support or avenues to lodge such a complaint.</i>	I cannot respond to this submission but note that the Commission has a defined process for the lodgement of complaints, which is available to all staff. Staff also have access to free counselling services via a government contracted service provider.
9	<i>My initial replacement lasted a month of the dictatorship and resigned.</i>	As I understand, Ms Thorsby's replacement resigned due to personal reasons.

Overall, in relation to Ms Thorsby's submission and allegations contained in red text that she was the subject of bullying and harassment by me, I am not able to provide a response in relation to any of these matters as they are matters that do not contain any particulars, or where particulars are provided, I understand they were the subject of an investigation and report by Commissioner Wheeler.

I refute all such allegations made by Ms Thorsby.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSION 69

There are four paragraphs from the AWU submission that are identified in red text for which a response is sought from me. For completeness, these paragraphs are outlined below.

I refute, deny and reject all of the allegations made by the AWU and refer to above.

I repeat and rely upon my comments above, that Commissioner Wheeler undertook a fact-finding investigation into allegations of bullying and harassment in relation to Ms Thorsby and the report provided by Commissioner Wheeler found that there was no evidence of bullying or harassment against Ms Thorsby.

No.	AWU submission	Dr Ledger response
1	<i>The AWU have received numerous accounts from Stewards and specifically, the former Chief Steward Gail Thorsby in relation to negative verbal and email interactions between both Former CEO GWIC (Ex CEO) & Chief Veterinary Officer (Chief Vet) with Ms Thorsby.</i>	I am unable to provide a response to this submission, as this is not information that is known to me.
2	<i>The resignation of Gail Thorsby was explained by GWIC and the NSW Government as being amicable and predominately due to her retirement. However, this was not the case. Her resignation occurred due to bullying. Ms Thorsby did not wish to retire at that point. It needs to be properly assessed and dealt with.</i>	<p>I am aware that in August 2020 Commissioner Chris Wheeler conducted a review of the evidence relating to allegations of bullying of the Commission's former Acting Chief Steward. I understand that the review by Commissioner Wheeler examined all the evidence available at the time in relation to the allegations.</p> <p>In relation to the submission that the AWU have received numerous accounts from stewards, I am not aware of such accounts.</p> <p>In relation to allegations of bullying,</p>

		I understand that this is referred to in Commissioner Wheeler's report.
3	<i>Every steward that the AWU has spoken to has made representations that Ms Thorsby had conveyed to them that she had been treated terribly by both Former CEO GWIC and Chief Veterinary Officer. In effect they looked down upon her and been excluded from areas of work which was under her auspices. Gail had also reported her concerns to Chief Commissioner Chief Commissioner GWIC.</i>	I do not know who the AWU are referring to but deny that I have treated Ms Thorsby terribly. I have never looked down upon Ms Thorsby and do not know what this submission relates to, as I understand that no such reports have been made to the Commission.
4	<i>Unfair treatment of Gail Thorsby resulting her submitting her resignation. Every steward the AWU has spoken to has made representations that Gail had conveyed to them that she had been treated terribly by both Former CEO GWIC and Chief Veterinary Officer. In effect they looked down upon her and been excluded from areas of work which was under her auspices. Gail had also reported her concerns to Chief Commissioner.</i>	As referred to above, this is rejected by me and I understand was the subject of a report by Commissioner Wheeler.