



## **INQUIRY INTO THE GREYHOUND WELFARE AND INTEGRITY COMMISSION Hearing – Thursday 30 June, 2022**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**

1. *Please elaborate on the injuries Greyhounds that have been in your care have been received with, and provide evidence where possible.*

Greyhounds coming in to our care have often presented with poor body condition, skin or coat condition, fleas, worms, poor dental health, urinary tract infections, ear infections, corns, or other medical conditions - and sometimes significant treated or untreated injuries (predominantly fractured hocks and fractured/dislocated toes). Our non-profit group operates throughout Queensland and New South Wales (and formerly the ACT) with limited resources. We are reliant on volunteers (who have paid work, family and other commitments) and unfortunately do not have a centralised record-keeping system associated with Greyhound intake information, which makes it difficult for us to easily extract such data.

### **In 2021, Friends of the Hound's veterinary expenses amounted to \$175,199.44.**

Below please find a few examples of injured Greyhounds that came into our care...

In July 2018 FOTH was alerted to an online advertisement for a 'giveaway' young female Greyhound with a fractured leg. The elderly trainer said he was a pensioner and could not afford to have it repaired. The dog had been taken to a Vet in Kyogle but only treated with a back slab and strapping. FOTH took Quinn into our care and arranged surgical repair of the leg. Quinn required many Vet visits and a considerable after care. In March 2019, after being in her adoptive home for several months, Quinn required further surgery for implant removal which was covered by FOTH. She underwent intensive Physiotherapy post both surgeries and recovered quite well.

On 18th March 2019, Friends of the Hound took in Parker who had suffered multiple fractures to his left front leg the day before whilst trialling in Newcastle. His leg had been bandaged and pain relief given on the day of the incident. We arranged and paid for surgery on his compound fracture (pinned and plated) and he had a long haul to complete recovery due to wound breakdown and infection. He underwent a regime of wound flushes and bandage changes, his wound was left open to heal and eventually plate was removed. A couple of weeks after he came to us his anaemia, lethargy and loose stools were diagnosed as a hook worm burden and he was treated for this. Despite his significant injury – Parker, who was a beautiful cat-friendly Greyhound, with a wonderful disposition, recovered successfully and found a home as a loved companion.

In April 2020, a 15 month old dog, Peri, had an accident whilst trialling in Cessnock and suffered fractured bones in his right paw and lacerations to both front legs. Friends of the Hound had his injuries treated and they eventually healed successfully. Peri was adopted out as a much-loved pet.

In July 2020, a 22 month old female Greyhound, Paris, presented to a vet in Taree, having sustained a serious injury of fractured toes in her left front leg due to a trialling accident. Paris was taken in by Friends of the Hound and underwent surgery to place an external fixature on her paw to try to align the tiny fractured bones in her toes and allow them to heal. She required many bandage changes and several x-rays, but recovered quite well, and was homed locally 4-5 months later.

In March this year, Skippy was going to be euthanized by his owner in Newcastle area as he suffered GDV (Gastric Dilatation – Volvulus) – a condition commonly known as bloated or twisted stomach – requiring emergency surgery that his owner said was too expensive. Whilst at the Vet, Friends of the Hound agreed to take on Skippy's care and covered the cost of his life-saving surgery. FOTH did try to have the Vet claim this expense through GWIC, however only recently received a reply (after phone call and several emails) saying that they would not cover it as it was not diagnosed by on-track vet at the time. This cost (~\$2000) will now be added to our account for payment.

Some months ago, a young female Greyhound was taken to a vet in Singleton to be euthanised due to gastric issues (the owners claiming they did not have the time to care for her). The Vet phoned a FOTH volunteer to ask if we would take the dog into our care, to which we readily agreed. This lovely natured dog showed no visible signs of being unwell or in poor condition – she was put on a special diet of Gastro-intestinal food for a few weeks and homed to a lovely young couple a week later.

These dogs would have been euthanised if not for FOTH. Our group ensures each dog receives the necessary after-care & physiotherapy for full recovery from these injuries. Sadly there are many, many more instances of dogs being received into our care with injuries or medical conditions. Often dogs received with treated injuries have ongoing issues due to non-specialist Veterinary care and substandard after-care provided via racing proponents.

2. *Please elaborate on the process you follow to rehabilitate a former racing industry Greyhound to be pet-suitable from a psychological and behavioural perspective, including how you overcome barriers to rehabilitation that may be cited as preventing attempted rehabilitation by other organisations.*

Our adoption group uses a network of volunteer foster carers who care for our rescued Greyhounds in their homes. The Greyhounds are first taken into care by an experienced rescuer, directly from trainer, owner, pound or online classifieds. The rescuers assess each dog for physical and behavioural issues, ensure all veterinary treatment is provided where necessary, and care for the dog in their home until it is deemed ready for a foster home, in accordance with our program. The Co-ordinators then match the dog to a suitable foster home that can provide the right environment, enrichment and training, with the necessary skills and experience for the Greyhound to continue to 'let down' and become accustomed to companion life. The Greyhounds are provided with gentle exposure to being a 'pet' – living indoors with families, children, other pets, and outings in the community. The Greyhounds become familiar with seeing and interacting with other breeds of dogs and different people, and experience normal household routines and conditions (stairs, slippery floors etc).

Foster carers are aware of common issues such as resource guarding, food and bed aggression, sleep-startle, and also puppy antics such as chewing, that many ex-racing Greyhounds experience after a life of sleeping and eating in single kennels/cages where they reside for up to 22 hours a day.

We have found that patience, kindness and understanding, combined with an unlimited time-frame and widespread exposure to external stimuli allows Greyhounds to adjust to a new environment, one distinctly removed from their previous restricted and confined life as a racing dog. Once removed from the expectations and living conditions associated with racing, most Greyhounds readily adapt to companion life.

Some Greyhounds exhibit higher prey drive than others upon entering our adoption program and may require more time and rehabilitation. Racing Greyhounds are expected and trained to chase – behaviours inappropriate for life in the community. These dogs require suitable homes that are able to properly and safely manage this behavior and FOTH takes extreme care with placing such dogs. Likewise very timid dogs must be placed into the appropriate homes where their anxiety and shyness can be managed in a way that provides them with quality of life and the opportunity to grow in confidence. Some of these dogs can remain in foster care for over 12 months before being considered ready for adoption.

3. *What do you see as the solution to the poor conditions to the Greyhounds being surrendered from industry participants to your organisation directly?*

The obvious solution is to ban an industry that consists of a generational and insular group of people who view Greyhounds as products of racing and gambling, and consider welfare initiatives as a personal inconvenience. Over the decades racing participants have displayed a sense of entitlement in relation to their use, treatment and disposal of dogs. "It's just the way it is".

There is a distinct culture in Greyhound racing. The culture involves a mindset where the breeding, exploitation and disposal of dogs for racing and gambling is acceptable and considered the norm, with a general lack of compassion and empathy for the lives of the animals that are 'bred to do a job'. Many will argue that they treat their dogs well, and this may well be true for some, whilst their dogs have potential to perform and win races. This is a culture that exists by exploiting animals for commercial gain with a history of complacency in regard to the stringency of regulations and welfare initiatives.

FOTH has dealt with the 'best' of racing participants – those who actively seek a positive outcome for their dogs. Over a 20 year history of dealings with Greyhound racing individuals, even the generally considered 'welfare minded' trainers have shocked and disgusted us with their attitude and behaviour towards their dogs post racing.

4. *When you receive dogs surrendered by industry participants directly that are in poor condition, what process if any, do you follow to notify GWIC or other organisations and/or enquire further about their health and wellbeing history from their previous owner?*

All concerns about surrendered Greyhounds or other dogs in the industry are conveyed to the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission by phone. Often a message is left and a return call received within a few days to extract details. FOTH has contacted GWIC on numerous occasions relating to the health and condition of Greyhounds.

In the case of injuries or medical conditions of surrendered dogs, information or history is sought from the owner/trainer at the time of surrender, or followed up later if necessary.