

**Submission
No 343**

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Ms Merle Clarke

Date received: 5/11/2013

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SELECT COMMITTEE

To

Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW

SUBMISSION

on

Greyhound Racing in New South Wales

Introduction : Merle Clarke,

Phone

Fax

Email

Email

Current involvement with Greyhound Racing:

Registered Owner/Trainer 1976-2013

Registered Public Trainer 1978-2013

Secretary/Treasurer of Coonabarabran Greyhound Club 2000-2013

Boarding, breeding and rearing kennels 1993-2013

23rd October, 2013.

To: Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW.

Submission Agenda:

- Appointment of GRNSW Board and Election of Officers
- Duty of care
- Registrations
- Closure of racing clubs
- Bad Media
- Future

Appointment of Board & Election of Officers for GRNSW.

It has never been transparent to the majority of owners/trainers how these people are appointed and by whom. 99% are unknown to greyhound participants, they have no known grounding of our sport and yet they become our controllers.

As registered members of GRNSW, why don't we get **voting** rights to select those that we would know to perform with the best interest of greyhound racing. If you are a member in any other business eg. NRMA or clubs you get voting entitlements.

Duty of Care

The peer body do not exercise any duty of care We have had tracks closing continually, country tracks have been under threat of constant closure and loss of meetings, starving off of finances, since the inception of GRNSW. To be told it is because we do not contribute to the TAB wagering.

Thirteen years I have been secretary/treasurer for our country club and **NOT ONE BOARD MEMBER OR EXECUTIVE** has ever visited or attended our club. No interest or care given. Clubs are not supported by our current administrators.

The grading policy is unworkable. It is strangling the industry. Our peer body will not listen, there is no care here for the greyhounds when many cannot get runs due to the grading policy point system they of course have to be put down without the opportunity to reach their potential and have a longer life. This concerns many.

Money is being used mindfully for administration instead of maintaining tracks and meetings. The actual sport is taking second position to administration costs.

Registrations

Anyone applying to register with the GRNSW have to go to the expense of a police probity check. One lady had a conviction of drink driving on her record so was knocked back by GRNSW. I wrote an appeal for the lady and she had to travel from Tamworth (taking time off work, cost of travel and inconvenience) to attend an appeal enquiry at GRNSW offices.

Stewards attend residences to check on greyhounds and kennelling arrangements, but does this entitle them to inspect your treatment cupboards, animal food fridges etc. The behaviour is getting similar to federal police inspections!! This is bordering on an invasion of privacy surely. What other sport would subject you to this, when you have done nothing wrong. How far do these stewards power take them.

Registrations have decreased, new people are not coming into the sport with all the bad media this Board is creating. The cost the Board has incurred for people to do so and prizemoney return does not compensate.

Closure of Tracks

Since GRNSW these closures have happened Singleton, Wyong, Cessnock, Forbes, Appin and Orange to name some. Beyond belief.

Cancelling Race Dates

Race dates have been taken from our country clubs continually, after the last attempt of permanent closure, we were given the option of how many meetings we wanted and that we would have to manage prizemoney, wages, and all other running expenses on \$78700.00 annually. Most country clubs will not be able to survive.

Attached is a letter that was sent to GRNSW Racing Manager Mr. Darren Simpson and Mr. Brent Hogan.

Bad Media

Our Administrators just continually get damaging media. You cannot get them to address the issues of discontent so in frustration people go public. The sport is being desiccated by our current administrators. All this is so damaging to an image.

They let an employee defraud our industry for a sizeable amount of money and took no legal action. This instigated much bad media again.

Future

If our sport is to survive and flourish our administration and finances need to be overhauled and governed more sensibly and responsibly.

Yours sincerely,

Merle Clarke.

COONABARABRAN & DISTRICT GREYHOUND RACING CLUB

8th April, 2013.

Mr. B. Hogan,
GRNSW,
P.O. Box 170,
Concord West. 2138

Dear Brent,

I am enclosing a copy of letter I sent to Darren Simpson of my concerns for our club losing another 2 race meetings.

Coonabarabran originally had 20 meetings, gradually it has been diminished to 14, now a promise of only 12 race meetings annually. Where and when is this going to finish?

Are we to become a desiccated sport. If it happens Brent it will be your legacy to greyhound racing.

Yours sincerely,

Merle Clarke,
Secretary.

COONABARABRAN & DISTRICT GREYHOUND RACING CLUB

8TH April, 2013.

Mr. D. Simpson,
Chief Operating Officer,
GRNSW,

Dear Darren,

Nothing surprises me with your actions to country racing and the tracks. All we have heard for month upon month on television in the newspapers, Recorder etc., the threats about closure of country tracks.

This has undermined owners & trainers confidence in the sport as well as sponsors. Registrations of owners/trainers would be at an all time low now, wouldn't they?

You are planning to give Coonabarabran 12 meetings annually, you know we cannot remain viable with such. It is impossible, there is not enough secondary income to pay ones creditors with only 12 meetings. Heats and finals cannot be programmed to help with finances. I realize this is done to starve us out of existence. You have almost done that with your previous policies creating our current drought that has started some time back with the following:-

1. We lost a meeting so you could use that finance to give us \$400.00 towards a compulsory veterinarian, this costs us \$720.00 per meeting for such, a \$320.00 shortfall for the club to pay and a lost meeting as well.
2. You request that we have the following staff at each meeting:-
 - Club Steward
 - Finish Lynx Operator
 - 2 Lure Drivers
 - First Aid Officer
 - Canine First Aide Officer
 - Grader
 - Computer Operator
 - Identification Steward
 - 2 Kennel Officials
 - Race Caller
 - 2 Scales Attendants
 - RSA Bar Attendant
 - Race Starter
 - Bull Pen Operator
 - Run Back Gate Attendant
 - Office Staff
 - Canteen staff
 - Cleaning staff
 - Groundsman

To engage all these persons you give us \$900.00 to pay the administration costs, knowing there is now an Award Wage for greyhound employees at tracks.

3. We are locked in to the cost of an Auditor.
4. Insurances.
5. Power & lighting costing.
6. Many repairs and replacements are needed that are not covered by GRNSW.
7. Finish Lynx rental fee.

Where do you expect us to get the shortfall of finance when we don't have enough racing dates to raise such? Without volunteers we could never have managed to keep our track operating even this length of time. How many volunteers work and help at "The Rhodes" for no payment I ask?

None of your management have ever visited our track, I cannot understand that form of business acumen or the lack of it from a peer body not to visit a branch. How negligent of our sports administrators, showing no interest, it is an insult to a club and their Committee. Adam Wallish even in his short term made the effort to show interest and visit the clubs he was managing.

You are looking out for the TAB tracks but, be warned, once you starve out the country tracks and that will happen if you proceed with these further closures, where will the greyhounds come from to keep up the supply, the drought will happen. Without racing interest country people will not just go on breeding. Dubbo will be greatly affected in the distant future.

The sport received a media announcement from your Chairperson Ms Mc Gregor about the 3% prizemoney increase in July 2012, well our \$200 per meeting was disgraceful when you read of the expenditures elsewhere. Taking these two meetings from Coonabarabran are disastrous in many and various ways Darren. As we see it we must be poorly managed when this has to happen, you wouldn't accept badly managed finances from clubs, well most clubs that is, but we have to accept it from home base and suffer the consequences.

You suggested that we could run more meetings at half or lowered prizemoney. Trainers cannot buy petrol or dog food at half price. Would you work at GRNSW for half salary to keep your job. I don't think so.

So much of this sport has been damaged, it is unforgivable. The joy and enthusiasm has been drained away by threats and current administration. This last take of meetings is too much to accept with any grace, it is disastrous, disappointing and damaging, outweighing belief.

Thanking for reading this feedback.

Merle Clarke,
Secretary.
Phone :

C.C.. Mr. B. Hoggan
C.C. Mr. George Souris. M.P.