

**Submission
No 304**

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Organisation: Hastings River Greyhound Racing Club

Date received: 30/10/2013

SUBMISSION ON GREYHOUND RACING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

With a total of almost 50 years in the greyhound industry I wish to make the following observations on the NSW Greyhound Industry:-

- (1) When GRNSW was formed, I actually thought that this would finally fix what was seen to be the many anomalies in the greyhound industry. Although the board has brought into existence some very good things, such as the Standards, the MVIA track maintenance, Country Challenge etc. We had a board that appeared to use their own self interests, instead of acting for the industry as a whole. With the boards being selected over the years since, this situation has unfortunately not improved. The selection process of GRNSW board members has been in my opinion very instrumental in the position that the industry now finds itself in, with many decisions by the board over the years, favouring certain groups and not others. One of the most glaring board decisions as far as the industry was concerned, was to go ahead with the Gardens complex which I'm told has now cost an extra \$10,000,000 to the industry over its existence.

Comment - This in my opinion is a problem that should be addressed by the NSW Legislative Council's Select Committee.

- (2) In my opinion GRNSW has clearly failed over the past years in its duty to operate the greyhound racing industry at a reasonable cost to the participants, with the yearly amount absolutely skyrocketing from about \$2,000,000 per year when the GRA ran the industry to a figure of over \$8,000,000 in the last financial year. We are now informed that the GRNSW administration projected figure for the financial year 2016/2017 is estimated to be in advance of \$17,000,000, which on the current income estimations from the TAB distribution doesn't appear to be anywhere near enough to support the industry. Also staffing levels have increased over the last ten years at an alarming rate, with now I'm informed well over 40 employees working at GRNSW.

Comment - I would suggest that the NSW Legislative Council's Select Committee take special note of a comparison with the other states on financial performance and staffing levels.

- (3) Regarding the initiatives and assistance from Government to support the industry, my advice would be that the Government take steps to elevate the greyhound industry's share of TAB turnover or to improve the tax situation from the government for greyhound racing.

Comment – Surely this situation needs to be changed, so that the greyhound industry may receive its fair share.

- (4) On drug administration and doping in the industry, I must report that I actually attended a combined board meeting some years ago between the GHRRA and GRNSW as the Country Clubs representative, where it was divulged to the meeting by the then CEO that not all drugs were tested for in swabs for certain months. I related this fact to a person I know in the horse racing industry and to say the very least he was astounded. Another observation I have about the integrity of the industry, is why aren't all TAB and Metropolitan winners compelled to spin the swab barrel to determine which greyhounds are swabbed, as is done on all non-TAB tracks where the prize money is substantially less?

Comment - Is this failure to spin the barrel, just to make sure that certain leading trainers aren't swabbed?

- (5) I must also report that as a representative of the Greyhound Racing Clubs Association, I was invited to attend a meeting with GRNSW administration to discuss certain aspects of the greyhound industry. It was at this meeting that the projected administration costs for the next five years were disclosed. The GRNSW administration then told us that they needed to cover a \$1,000,000 shortfall this financial year; this was to be covered by the reduction of 136 non-TAB meetings plus the cancellation of the popular Country Challenge. Only weeks later our association was made aware of the fact that we had been misinformed by the GRNSW administration and that the \$1,000,000 saved from the cancelled meetings was to be given to TAB clubs as extra race meetings. Also at the meeting our President was promised that any non-TAB club that was closed or folded, that the meetings from that club would return to the non-TAB pool. This has not happened as the meetings from one particular club have been transferred to Monday nights at the Metropolitan track.

I would suggest that it appears to have been an administrative agenda of GRNSW for many years that all non-TAB country clubs should be closed, as in their words “they don’t generate any income towards the greyhound industry.”

Comment – In my opinion GRNSW is now finally in the process of strangling the non-TAB clubs till they find it impossible to continue operating.

(6) I find it very hard to comprehend how New South Wales greyhound racing has slipped from the number one state only a few years ago to now be almost on the bottom of the list. I wonder if the GRNSW administration and board have any idea how the greyhound industry is to be run as a going concern. Many of the projects started by GRNSW have blown out and almost doubled in costs to the industry, such as the Oz Chase and the stewards control room. As previously stated, GRNSW with the Gardens complex took almost ten years to decide that this wasn’t achieving what the industry had been led to believe. When GRNSW finally decided that the complex might not be a viable concern, GRNSW hired probably one of the dearest administrative consultative companies to conclude that this actually was the case. If my memory serves me correctly, a large number of greyhound participants and administrators predicted this outcome when the complex was originally on the drawing board. Regardless of this information, GRNSW still went ahead with what could only be seen as another “White Elephant” in the greyhound industry’s history.

Comment - As a final observation, I would suggest that the NSW Legislative Council’s Select Committee very seriously consider what should be done regarding the future existence of GRNSW.

Yours truly,

Rex Nairn

President - Hastings River Greyhound Racing Club.