

**Submission  
No 519**

## **INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW**

**Name:** Mr Brett Lazzarini

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# Greyhound Welfare NSW

Animal welfare issues

## **\*Breeding**

- 1a) Unproven bitches criteria
- 1b) Breeding facilities & Pup rearing
- 1c) Veterinary
- 1d) Feeding
- 1e) Courses
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- 3e) Track surface
- 3f) Boxes setup
- 3g) Boxing to suit
- 3h) Lure

## **\*5 Kenneling**

Kennel inspections

Kennel hygiene

Kennel records of cleaning and maintenance

Kennel airflow

Kennel bedding

Kennel safety

Kennel

### **\*Animal Hygiene**

Courses in animal hygiene

Records kept on all relevant grooming

Records on vet checks or muscle men checking

Records on injuries

Records on treatment of injuries

### **\*AGED RACING**

Design a format for aged racing

## **Introduction**

My Name is

Brett Lazzarini I'm a metropolitan director on the GBOTA I have been involved in Greyhounds and racing my whole life with my family that is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of greyhound trainers and breeders and in the Thoroughbred Racing industry as a No1 trainer on the northern rivers for 8 years. I have in the past 10 years raced over 8 dogs and all are re-homed or lived there life out to old age with us.

Having a knowledge of both racing industries I have always had the confidence that the greyhound industry is the only industry that would have the opportunity to lead the world in animal sport where welfare and a fully sustainable rotation of product could be achieved with a small rate of attrition. This could be achieved with a combination of a government backing to set up with a crown land establishment for retired greyhounds that could be run by the industry and sustained with help from people that are involved in the industry. Older age racing and up dated tracks.

GRNSW are fighting an up hill battle compared to racing in Victoria as far as funding goes this leaves a gap for welfare, safety standards to be upgraded and prize money levels to increase to allow owners and trainers to put there money back into the industry and keeping there animals in there old age

The greyhound industry has stayed in track racing entirety almost unchanged in its on track racing protocol since 1927 when lure racing began.

The object of the summary of welfare issues is to set in place a track, Breeding and education program that sets standards that determine the rate and quality of breeding and management of the greyhound to make it a sustainable and welfare conscious industry. It will set standards that far exceed any racing code in any area of the world and will hopefully head to an industry that's rate of dissipation will be close to nil

## **BREEDING**

### **Unproven bitches criteria from non-commercial/professional breeding or training kennels.**

1a.1) Breeders of bitches that are not city winners (non TAB?) will have to submit intentions to breed with said bitch before mating or litter will not be registered.

1a.2) New breeders wishing to breed will need to meet requirements and sit a course before they can mate their bitch (a fee will be attached to the course)

1a.3) Before mating the owner of non-TAB winning bitch will have to deposit in an animal welfare holding account to ensure pups welfare.

1a.4) Animal Welfare Holding account deposit will have to be paid before mating of bitch, if not paid litter will be refused registration. This amount is to be in a separate account and held there for welfare or related issues

1a.5) Bitch can only breed one litter until progeny is proven, Litter size to be 4 or higher, if under 4 then bitch can produce two litters at the one fee, but no more litters regardless of size of second litter until progeny is proven

1a.6) If bitches progeny is TAB successful 75% of fee is refunded less 30% to be used for animal welfare

1a.7) If bitch is unsuccessful in producing a TAB winner in two litters of 4 pups or more cause has to be shown to re-breed and welfare holding account a litter after if offspring can't reach TAB standard of races of at least 400m, as this bitch hasn't shown the inherent ability to produce animals of an acceptable level that would ensure a stronger and sustainable industry

## **Breeding facilities & pup rearing**

1b.1) Breeding establishments will have to meet requirements that are set as a standard and enforced for breeding guide lines to pup breeding and rearing animal welfare.

1b.2) Breeding facilities & Pup rearing

\* Breeding kennel size to be no smaller than 1400mm wide x 2000mm deep with adequate lighting and heating or cooling if deemed necessary. Or justified equivalent

- \* Kennel area with a whelping box to a set standard. Or equivalent
- \*Whelping box Safety rails to ensure bitch can't roll on pups. Or equivalent.
- \*The box is to be elevated between 50mm and 750mm so as to stop ground cold transferring through bottom of whelping box to bitch and pup. Unless indoors egg: House/flat or lined garage
- \*Front of box should have a removable piece of plywood or other suitable materials that can be removed when pups are a certain age (4 to 5 weeks) to allow pups a chance to start to walk around and explore or in a safe room
- \*If using a whelping box a small ramp should be attached so pups are able to walk to and from whelping box
- \*Breeders wishing to breed will have to meet stringent establishment requirements regarding whelping, rearing and keeping of records.
- \*Whelping areas will be set to a standard that will need to be met before clearance will be allowed to proceed with breeding
- \*Areas such as pup runs, day yards, running paddocks and work areas will have to meet new breeding standards and set to the requirements before impregnating bitch and/or conformation by a GRNSW passed rearing establishment that pups will be reared there.

## **1d) Feeding**

1d.1) Ref Canine reproduction 1983 nutrition

## **1c) Veterinary**

1c1 Records of all pups that have been breed need to be kept and all relevant documents that pertain to welfare and veterinarian work noted in a hard copy and logged to a data base that can be accessed by GRNSW Staff/veterinarians.

### **1e) Education Courses**

1e.1) Grins to design and enable a course to educate breeders to a regulated acceptable standard and set of procedures

1e1.1) A course should be established that needs to be attended and passed by said breeder before a clearance to breed can be issued, this should be attended before intended bitch is breed with.

1e. 1.2) if not courses DVD's should be made and distributed through associations Egg: GBOTA, Country Clubs, GAG or racing clubs

### **1f) Safety**

1f1 a safety course could be held in conjunction with the breeding course to ensure that breeders are knowledgeable in their obligations towards breeding and rearing welfare as well as people ohms obligations

### **\*Breeding and Short course racing**



\*2a.1) Short course racing is a producing animal that wins races at unsuitable distances, is weak and takes no training. They are then bred with and are producing inherent weaknesses into bloodlines.

A perfect example was In the 70's, Greyhounds that were short course dogs were sold to QLD because NSW didn't cater for them and short course racing was mainly restricted to QLD or non-TAB tracks in NSW, Dogs of a low caliber and limited ability where sold to QLD and the affects were seen from the 70's to late 90's in QLD. Racing in QLD in this period had produced an era of animals that were below standards. From the 70's till the late 90's this culminated in less dogs of noted ability and less tracks as tracks had to close due to the lack of dogs that could compete at a higher level or distance and not enough product to hold meetings. This now is only starting to recover due to frozen semen and an era where traveling greyhounds isn't as hard now as it was in the past. Short course racing is a trend that will lead to inadequate breeding lines and inferior racing animals.

To add to this short course dogs systemically cause bad training habits and the usual training routine is to do nothing with dogs from week to week and just start them. This in turn doesn't help the industry and crates a mentality that this should be catered for and in general a lazy way of training that creates lazy trainers that never learn there trade.

### **\*Solution**

2b.1) To curb this there is an easy solution, drop all prize money on races under 400m to \$200 1<sup>st</sup> \$75 2<sup>nd</sup> and 40 3<sup>rd</sup> The prize money that is saved should be added onto any races that day that are longer then 400m. I realize more money was offered for stayers with little success but this will work due to the fact you are not talking about the difference between \$5000 and \$5500 that still leaves them with a good purse, you are cutting it to the bone. If the clubs object make them top up the short fall in the extra money (with no

claim to it) they still have to add the extra money to the longer races. Like most things it will take a while to filter through but as a year or so goes on you will see a big change in the short course racing

## **\*Race Track Safety**

### **3a) Track design**

3a.1) Tight two turn tracks cause congestion in running resulting in incidents or falls

3a.2) Corner Starts are the cause of major interference and falls, a short run to a corner causes congestion as dogs compete to get to the fence resulting in unavoidable incidents.

### **Solutions**

- More one turn larger tracks or straight tracks
- Corner starts to start out of a chute where possible (greyhounds are a creature of habit and would learn extremely quickly to use a chute)

### **3b) Running rail safety for greyhounds**

3b.1) Steel rails cause serious injuries that are often the cause of animals breaking down in a future start after an undetected injury or contact that causes major injury.

3b.2) Animals that have hit a rail with force will often run off in future starts as it is an inherent trait of survival to stay away from danger or injury that may impede their chance of catching the lure in the future. This will often result in a fall, as the dog running off will do so regardless of what is outside of him hence running straight into and often bringing down dogs. The dog that falls and still completes the

course/or doesn't, often ends up with the same trait as they are staying away from danger inside.

3b.3) After studying countless incidents of dogs running off on the first turn and looking into past runs of the said animal in over 90% of cases the animal had made hard contact with the rail in a past run.

### **Solution**

Bump safety rail that will enable dogs to come into contact with rail without harm or psychological damage that would leave animal without an inherent fear of the rail as the danger is taken away and impact with rail won't hurt

## **3c) Catching pen safety for greyhounds**

3c.1) Catching pens have long been a problem in greyhound racing and are the cause of many a fatal accident by either collision with or running into the pen gate or human mistakes that cause the animal to hit the gate.

\*There are also the factors of accidents when dogs run into dogs or a dog turns back when they reach the pen first.

### **Solutions**

\*Finish on lure, this has been tried and while is favoured by some is disliked by others, the fact here isn't if it is liked or dislike it is whether it is a better welfare option. NZ should be contacted about Incidents and statistics this should be gathered and compared to Australia and our pen.

\*American lure system, The lure travels like normal around the track then disappears behind a fence that is in the same

position as the catching pen in Australia leaving the dogs with nothing at all to chase and an open track. The dogs all come to a Holt at this spot and the handlers collect the animals.

### **3d) Kenneling area and safety for greyhounds**

3d.1) Covered in GNSW codes but could need a revamp in view of current situation.

3d.2) Due to the fact that trainers are 100% responsible for the animal they train. They need to be 100% in charge of and able to see the animal at all times. This at present isn't possible.

### **3e) Track surface**

3e.1) Track surfaces throughout NSW should have a standard format to track maintenance and sand mixture to ensure a uniform surface NSW wide

### **3f) Boxes setup**

3f.1) After looking into this I have been told two stories (1) the 8 box is aimed at the fence on the first turn and (2) the 5 box is aimed at the fence on the first turn, either way it's wrong. Years of doing something a certain way doesn't mean it was right in the beginning.

This would mean if the 5-boxed dog were to go straight from A-B he would touch the fence at the first turn. While this would work on some tracks turning the boxes to this position on other tracks is a fatal flaw

eg:- Wentworth Park 520m boxes. Box 1 hits fence before the rail straightens approx 12m after the start, box 2 hits fence approx. 18m after start and so on until the 5 hits it at the first turn

This can only lead to problems as the inside dogs unless are very good beginners will be tightened up and will either hit the fence or easy out of the race.

### **Solution**

Boxes should be aligned so the 1 box is lined up with the fence on the first turn. This would allow a more even run of dogs to the first turn as all dogs could keep course longer by not being cramped for room to stretch out so soon after jumping from boxes.

### **3g) Boxing to suit**

3g.1) Boxing dogs to suit would improve racing and let dogs run cleaner as wide running dogs would be boxed to suit and dogs that rail would be boxed to suit. This is a practice in the UK and races are run cleaner there.

3g.2) Dogs that run off on the first turn should be boxed wide as there is a lot of falls caused by dogs running off on

the first turn. To adopting this would in my opinion significantly reduce the amount of race day falls

\* Contrary to belief a flow on effect would be betting turn over, As a dog boxed to suit would mean that the trainer would be more likely to invest as boxes win more races than dogs.

Eg: If a dog was boxed to suit inside and one was boxed to suit outside both owners and trainers would bet and the turnover would improve as both parties would give there animal a chance. If you reverse the boxes neither of the trainers bet and the turnover is down

### **3h) Lure**

3h.1) after looking into it more closely, at the present time lures aren't standard throughout NSW and should be uniform in there design.

3h.2) Present protocol is to drive on regardless of what happens during the race, This will often result in a dog being struck by the lure causing a serious injury or fatality after a fall or jumping a rail and heading across track and colliding with the lure on the opposite side of the track after jumping the fence again.

3h.3) The Lure in Australia runs on the inside rail this courses the majority of dogs to head to the inside of the track, this in turn causes tightening and falls

### **Solutions**

\* Change lure protocol on driving

\*Change lure to outside lure like UK.

\*Use a lure with a longer arm, not a little longer in the middle of the track. This was used in the 60's at Harold Park and no one knows why this was stopped as it worked well and dogs back in the field still had a view of the lure and chased harder.

\*Design a lure that can stop quickly by applying a break system to the lure, at present the lure runs on for hundreds of meters after the power is cut off. When I asked about this Integrity was brought up as an issue to why it has never been introduced. The solution to this would be the stewards have a button that they hit when a dog falls. This turns on a red light in the lure drivers box and he's slows and stops the lure. There would be a safety system that unless the button is hit by the steward the button in the lure drives box wouldn't work, It would need the first button to be engaged by the steward before the second button was made live.

\*Design a collapsible lure to be used on all tracks

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- Covered in GNSW codes but could need a revamp in view of current situation.

### **\*Animal Hygiene**

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### **\*AGED RACING**

\*Design a format for aged racing that suits these older dogs, all the dogs in this category would be owned by people that just have them as pets and would like to see them race now and then for fun as the dogs love to run. This would in turn keep dogs racing longer and give owners no excuse to pass the animal on.

\*Due to the fact that people seem to be under the opinion that a dog can't race beyond 4 a racing system should be in place that lets people race aged dogs longer. These races shouldn't be short course and should be 400 or more as this lets the dog's spread out and race even, if the older dog hasn't raced in 2 months or more it should trial twice before it can race.

\*These races should be no more than 6 dogs preferably 4 with a vacant box between each dog and boxed to suit, This would make sure that there is little to no interference as these dogs would be run by there owners for enjoyment alone

\*These races could be run for little prize money, as owners of these dogs would just be doing it for fun. \$100 1st \$50 2nd \$25 3rd. At this cost every track could have one every



meeting and even if there was two runners it wouldn't matter.

\*Dogs 4 years or older that are still competing on tracks could start in these races if they have finished 5th or further back in there last six starts.