

Submission  
No 414

## INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

**Name:** Ms Carly Absalom

**Date received:** 5/11/2013

---

Partially Confidential

## **Executive Summary**

I am a greyhound owner/trainer who has been involved in the industry all my life. I am currently the secretary of the Auburn-Lidcombe branch of the NSW GBOTA. My mother is a director of the NSW GBOTA.

The greyhound industry is in major need of reform. GRNSW has proven itself to be inefficient in relation to integrity, financial and animal welfare issues.

GRNSW has implemented changes in relation to swabbing and stewarding that have negatively affected the integrity of the sport. They have left the sport vulnerable to corruption with changes to the swabbing system. These same measures have cost the industry financially.

GRNSW has also proven themselves to be poor financial managers, with many decisions costing the industry a fortune for little or no benefit.

There is no oversight over GRNSW as the role of the Integrity Auditor is not, and in its current state cannot be, independent. It is appointed by and funded by the same organisation it is meant to oversee. The second Integrity Auditor resigned due to the lack of independence, yet no changes were made to the Act to alter this fact. The appointment and performance of the current Integrity Auditor demonstrates that GRNSW and the Integrity Auditor are not even attempting to appear to be independent of each other.

The inter-code agreement must be reviewed as the greyhound industry cannot afford to keep paying welfare to the other two racing codes.

Though the industry is generally doing well in relation to animal welfare concerns there are areas that need improvement. Changes also need to occur outside of the industry to ensure that greyhounds are able to find homes as pets after their racing careers are over.

## **The Role of the Integrity Auditor and Autonomy of GRNSW.**

The position of the Integrity Auditor has been fraught with problems since its inception. It has been made clear that the position is not, and cannot be independent as long as GRNSW wishes to remain free of oversight. The simple fact is that GRNSW appoints and funds the position which means that it can only be as independent as GRNSW allows it to be.

### **History**

I sent a complaint to the first Integrity Auditor, relating specifically to what I believed to be unfair treatment of me by the stewards, and more generally the decision to move from a random system of swabbing, to a system of only stewards discretion. This complaint was sent back to me postmarked "uncollected:return to sender." I sent a complaint to my local member about this as I believed that to not be able to reach the Integrity Auditor was likely to be a breach of the Act.

I sent my complaint to the next Integrity Auditor who was dealing with the matter.<sup>1</sup>

When I met him I was impressed with his qualifications and professionalism. He had a clear understanding of the integrity concerns. He had studied the ICAC recommendations and had also attended a race meeting to witness the swabbing procedures first hand. On the dogs website he also published a detailed account of

---

<sup>1</sup> See attachment 1. My complaint to the Integrity Auditor. I have also included my correspondence with the Integrity Officer at GRNSW. My dissatisfaction with its handling led me to take my concerns to the Integrity Auditor.

the Functions of the Integrity Auditor.<sup>2</sup> (These were promptly removed by the next Integrity Auditor.) After our meeting, I believed that an inquiry into the swabbing procedures in general was going to be conducted. However, this did not occur as this Integrity Auditor had to resign for reasons that were stated on the ABC 4 Corners program.<sup>3</sup>

DAVID LANDA, FORMER NSW INTEGRITY AUDITOR: I felt that apart from the role being ineffective and not capable of performing what I felt the legislators may have intended. It was a fiction and it was a fraud really on the public.

NICK MCKENZIE: A fraud on the public?

DAVID LANDA: Yes because they were led to believe that there was an integrity auditor capable of dealing with issues that ought to be dealt with, matters of integrity, matters of honesty, matters of fair dealing and that those powers were not able to be performed.

Despite the resignation GRNSW and the NSW Government made no changes. The Board simply appointed someone whose only qualifications appear to be that he was a lawyer who had worked at TABcorp. The Chairperson of the Board was also a former employee of TABcorp.<sup>4</sup>

### **Lack of Independence**

It is quite clear that the position of Integrity Auditor is not independent. It is appointed and funded by the same body it is meant to oversee. The current Integrity Auditor also seems to have no desire to even attempt to have the appearance of

---

<sup>2</sup> See attachment 2.

<sup>3</sup> "Inside Mail", reported by Nick McKenzie and presented by Kerry O'Brien, goes to air on Monday 6th August at 8.30pm on ABC1.

<sup>4</sup> See attachment 3. GRNSW press release 'GRNSW makes Gorrie appointment'

independence. When I sent a complaint to him regarding a stewards decision to not swab greyhounds that her daughter was handling, he asked the CEO of GRNSW for comments before he produced his final version.<sup>56</sup> I assume he did not want to upset the organisation that was funding him. I was unaware of this correspondence at the time but gained the emails through a freedom of information request.

Another point to come out of my complaint relating to the steward was his decision relating to my complaint about her Facebook comments. He told me that he had "concerns as to the propriety and intent of airing private comment elsewhere as a means to raise an issue without the author's consent."

Without getting into the fact that Facebook comments are not, by their very nature, private, GRNSW has repeatedly penalised people for their Facebook comments. It seems GRNSW are so confident that they are accountable to no one that they do not even attempt to hide these double standards.<sup>7</sup>

## **Autonomy**

Outside of the Integrity Auditor, who is clearly not independent, there is nowhere to take complaints against the peak body. This has led to unacceptable levels of autonomy for GRNSW. It has meant that participants are afraid to speak out as they,

---

<sup>5</sup> See attachment 4. Copy of email correspondence between the CEO and the Integrity Auditor

<sup>6</sup> See attachment 5. My complaint and the Integrity Auditor's findings

<sup>7</sup> See attachment 6 email correspondence with the CEO.

with good reason, fear retribution from the peak body. Many who speak out have been targeted by can only be seen as unfair treatment.

In the case of my mother, she was penalised for allegedly calling the grader corrupt in a private conversation, yet a steward was able to, in writing in an email, direct the Integrity Officer of GRNSW to tell her to |            | without any penalty.<sup>8</sup>

Members of the Greyhound Action Group who have been outspoken have been targeted.<sup>9</sup>

More recently we have seen Dr Ted Humphries, who is not even a participant, being targeted for airing allegations in a public forum.<sup>10</sup>

It is no wonder that participants are afraid to speak out.

### Missing Swabs

The issues of the 'missing swabs' also highlights the autonomy of GRNSW. After the newspaper article "Going to the Dogs"<sup>11</sup> which deals in part with the 'missing swabs' (these will be discussed later when looking at integrity concerns of GRNSW), GRNSW claimed that they had ordered the Integrity Auditor to write a report into the matter. I corresponded with the Integrity Auditor on this. This correspondence led me to believe that very little time and effort had been allocated to what I believed was a

---

<sup>8</sup> See attachment 7

<sup>9</sup> See attachment 8. Press releases on inquiries to be held into two members of the Greyhound Action Group.

<sup>10</sup> See attachment 9. Press release on GRNSW attended Mr Humphries to attend a hearing.

<sup>11</sup> NSW Sun-Herald August 12, 2012, 'Going to the Dogs'.

serious matter. It was clearly serious enough for the Fairfax media to run a story on. I then sent a complaint to the Minister.<sup>12</sup> His reply showed he had little concern for the integrity issues it raised.

In desperation of the lack of oversight I even took my complaint to Victoria. Though they did not have the jurisdiction to deal with the issue their reply suggested they had considered my complaint more than any organisation in NSW had done.<sup>13</sup>

## **Recommendations**

**The role of the Integrity Auditor, be appointed and funded, independently of the same organisation it is meant to oversee.**

**GRNSW come under ICAC, the NSW ombudsman and any other relevant bodies that could ensure there is independent oversight.**

---

<sup>12</sup> See attachment 10. My correspondence with the Minister on this issue.

<sup>13</sup> See attachment 11. My correspondence with the Victorian Integrity Commission on the issue.



## **Animal Welfare**

I am an owner/trainer. I have put 2 greyhounds through the Greyhound Adoption Program. I have kept as pets my other retired greyhounds, which includes greyhounds that are not used for breeding and that have never raced. I know many others in the industry who do the same. I would also point out that unlike domestic breeds, which are often bred for looks, greyhounds are bred to be professional athletes, which means health is primary concern when breeding. This cannot be said of some domestic breeds.

I am not going to deal with the outlandish and highly offensive statements that have been made by some groups who claim to care about animal welfare as this would validate, what are clearly absurd statements. An example is the suggestion we starve our dogs. Our greyhounds are professional athletes. How out of touch with reality do you need to be to think that someone would starve a professional athlete and then expect it to perform at its best?

There are some areas of animal welfare concern in the industry that do need to be addressed, both during and after racing, and by organisations both within and outside of the industry.

## **Racing**

Greyhounds love to run and love to race. Though they cannot speak it is clear from their behaviour that the animal enjoys this. It must also be pointed out that if a greyhound doesn't chase, so doesn't race, this greyhound will not be bred with so over time this trait would be bred out. I have been in the industry all my life and can say from my experience that I have never had a greyhound who did not want to chase. However, it is important to ensure that the track they race on is as safe as possible in order to prevent injuries.

### Track Safety.

Track managers need to ensure that they maintain the tracks so there is enough give in the track. Tracks that are too hard can cause injuries, even without any interference in a race. Wentworth Park is an example of this. Every year during the Easter Carnival the track is too hard, presumably so that fast times are recorded, and preventable injuries occur. I will point out that the track is not maintained by a greyhound organisation but by the Wentworth Park Trust. This may in part explain why there seems to be little concern at times for the welfare of the racing greyhound.

### Therapeutic Drugs

The other concern of trainer is the fact that there is absolute liability on any positive swabs, even if they are of a therapeutic nature. This has left people feeling paranoid

about how to treat their greyhounds. When my greyhound grazed herself before a group final, I rang the head vet just to check what antiseptic I could use on the greyhound as I have become so paranoid about any treatment I use.

### **After racing**

Greyhounds make wonderful pets. They usually spend time with other greyhounds throughout rearing and racing. This means that they cope well in multiple dog households. They are usually very docile. As fighters cannot race, greyhounds are actually bred to be docile and less aggressive than some other breeds. This makes them the perfect pet for families and the elderly.

As stated before I either keep my retired greyhounds or put them through the Greyhound Adoption Program. I have been unable to place greyhounds with friends and/or family despite the fact that many want to be able to own a retired greyhound. The major problem is restrictions placed by landlords on rental properties. Many young people cannot afford to buy a house because of the exorbitant prices so are forced to rent. When renting, they are often restricted from owning a greyhound. This prevents many greyhounds from being adopted after racing. Council restrictions on the amount of animals allowed on a property also prevents not only people adopting greyhounds after racing, but owners and trainers from being able to keep all their retired animals.

## **Recommendations**

**There should be available a list of therapeutic drugs that trainers are able to use in order to ensure that trainers can, easily and quickly, treat greyhounds in their care.**

**Any greyhound that has passed through the Greenhounds program be exempt from any restrictions placed on rental properties by landlords and council restrictions on the numbers of greyhounds on a property.**

**Any greyhound that is kept by their owner or trainer after racing should not be included in the number of animals on that property by Councils.**

## **The economic viability of the Greyhound racing industry in NSW**

For the Greyhound Industry to remain viable they need to receive their fair share of the TAB distribution based on the money that is wagered on our product. The Inter-Code Agreement should be declared invalid. It was signed by a government appointee, on behalf of the greyhound industry, yet the terms that they negotiated clearly demonstrate that they had no regard for the industry and its future.

If this document is not to be revoked then the Cameron report should be adopted in full so that the greyhounds are no longer subsidising the other two codes. The industry simply does not have enough money to pay welfare to the thoroughbreds and the harness industries.

The industry also needs a regulatory body that are effective economic managers. GRNSW at present have proven to be poor financial managers of industry funds.

## **GRNSW**

### **Economic Mismanagement**

GRNSW has consistently proven itself to be poor financial managers of industry funds. In some cases they seem to have simply thrown money at projects that were always a risk (The Gardens). In other cases they have spent large amounts of money on 'boys toys' that have provided little or no benefit to the industry and so have not been value for money.

#### The Gardens

I am not going to discuss what happened with the Gardens as I am sure it has been dealt with in other submissions. I simply have listed it here as another example of how GRNSW has wasted industry funds.

#### Stewards control room

GRNSW has consistently promoted the new control room as being a great innovation; however, in reality, it has caused many problems for the efficient dealing

of stewarding related matters on race nights. Many decisions are now being made after race nights as there is not time to deal with the issues on track.<sup>14</sup>

The control room has also meant that some stewards are rarely on racetracks so can lose touch with what happens on race nights. On the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at Richmond racetrack the steward [redacted] told us that he had not been on a racetrack for over two years

There has been no improvement in stewarding since the introduction of this room. Participants would have expected with access to the technology stewards would be able to access recent form of greyhounds before making decisions. This clearly was not the case when they chose to swab Folksinger at Richmond on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2012. I asked to speak to the steward as I wanted to know the reasoning for why she was chosen to be swabbed. I was told that it was for an 'improved performance' as she was last 2 weeks before at Richmond. I pointed out that she had gone from last in a top grade to 1<sup>st</sup> in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade. A simple check of the computer also showed that she in fact ran slower to win the 5<sup>th</sup> grade than she had to come last in a top grade. During our interview the steward changed the reasoning from an 'improved performance' to a 'slightly improved performance.' With all the expensive equipment available to them, why weren't they using it to make informed decisions?

---

<sup>14</sup> Attachment 12. email regarding a racenight issue when the steward could not be found on track.

### OzChase

The new Ozchase system has come at an exorbitant cost without providing any actual benefit to participants. I regularly used the old system to nominate and can see no benefits to the new system in this area. In fact because the new system does not include a section for participants to write anything, they can only select options, it has in fact created more work as I have had to send emails to the graders to clarify my nomination. It is also not a very user friendly system for the many participants who are new to online nominations.

Regulatory changes to points allocated for finals, that will be discussed later, occurred at the same time as the new computer system. Management seemed unaware of the changes and could not provide adequate reasons or information about all variables. Because of this it appears that the changes were made, not to benefit the industry, but to fit in with how a computer system was set-up to allocate points. The changes appear to have been kept so that GRNSW could avoid having to admit a mistake was made.

### Swabbing

Swabbing will be discussed in detail as an integrity concern; however, it is another example of GRNSW wasting money. GRNSW moved from a random, cost-effective system, known as the red marble, with additional automatic and stewards discretion



swabs, to an easily corruptible, highly expensive system of swabbing that has no greater effect as a deterrent.

### Staff

GRNSW has a top heavy staff structure. They seem to have increased staff dramatically over the past few years in various departments including grading.

The industry simply cannot afford the cost of an over-staffed, underperforming regulatory body that bleeds money from much needed areas, such as prizemoney and welfare initiatives, that will actually improve the welfare of the racing and retired greyhound.

### **Regulatory Matters**

Since taking over the regulatory functions, GRNSW have made many decisions that have had no benefit to the industry, but have often come at a burden to the participant. Changes are usually made without any consultation with participants.

GRNSW has consistently failed to adequately, if at all, communicate these changes to participants.

## Performance Trials

In 2009 the GRNSW Board, without any industry consultation, decided that they would introduce performance trials for all greyhounds starting in their first maiden race at a TAB meeting. This was an extra burden on participants in that they have to perform at a race meeting, with no hope of prizemoney, and no travel money provided.

The main argument provided by GRNSW, appeared to be that it would provide form for punters. However, performance trials have never been, and are still not listed in a greyhounds form that appears in a TAB. Since introducing the trials many changes have had to be made including, time limit on first race start( changed to 28 days then to 42 days), distance qualifications and introduction of time standards, and changes to the weight system.

The time limit changes were brought in without any consultation with participants. They had to be changed to 42 days because many greyhounds were being nominated within the 28 days but were unable to gain a start. Participants raised this as a concern as soon as the changes were introduced. If GRNSW had consulted with participants before the initial limit of 28 days was chosen, they would have realised it was impractical and decided on 42 days in the first place. Instead many participants missed out on prizemoney as they were unable to race their greyhounds because of the failure of GRNSW to consult with the very people who their changes impact on.

In relation to the time standards, GRNSW have never communicated this change to participants and they still refuse to release the time standards they use. The first I realised they were doing this was when I saw in a stewards reports that a greyhound had failed for not meeting the time standards. The problem with not having a transparent system by releasing time standards is that the use of stewards discretion to pass some greyhounds for seemingly slow times yet fail others can lead to a perception of bias.

The changes to the weight allowance for first start maiden greyhounds, is a perfect example of GRNSW deliberately misleading participants. A press release was issued stating that there had been changes made to the grading policy.<sup>15</sup> There was no mention that this included changes to the weight rules for greyhounds starting in a maiden after a performance trial. There was no mention that the weight rules had been changed. For other racing greyhounds, if a greyhound has not started for 28 days it is allowed a weight difference of 1 kgs. For first start maiden after their performance trial, they are not allowed this 1 kg allowance even if it is 28 days from their performance trial. I had not heard of this change until I noticed people were being fined in stewards reports. In speaking to other participants they were in the same situation. GRNSW had simply made changes that would affect participants financially, as they were fined for being in breach of the rules, without consulting with participants or even communicating the changes. Even worse they had issued a press release on changes to performance trials and had left it out which led me and

---

<sup>15</sup> See attachment 13. Press release and the rule change in the grading policy.

many others to believe that the changes listed in the press release were the only changes made.

### TAB C racing

TAB C racing benefits the TAB, and the thoroughbreds and harness who receive welfare from the greyhounds due to the inter-code agreement, but provides only half the usual TAB prizemoney to participants. If we are supplying more product than we are getting paid for, it seems illogical to provide even more product, with little benefit in prizemoney to the participant. An increase in Metropolitan and TAB B prizemoney would have been a more beneficial and cost-effective way of providing extra money for participants

### Points System

When the new Ozchase system came in changes were also made to the way points were allocated for finals. Previously points were allocated according to the highest graded greyhound in the race. (E.g A mixed final with maidens and 5<sup>th</sup> grade would attract 5<sup>th</sup> grade points). This system had worked well for years.

Without any consultation with participants, the system was changed so that a final of a series would be awarded points the same grade as the heats. This is despite the fact a greyhound may have gone up in grade from the heats. In some cases every

greyhound in the final may have gone up a grade. E.g 8 maiden heats into a final, all 8 greyhounds will be 5<sup>th</sup> graders but the race will only attract maiden points.

There was not only no consultation with participants prior to the change, but there was also no notification of the changes, despite it directly affecting which race meetings trainers will target. I nominated my greyhound Folk Tails for a Saturday metropolitan meeting, believing that she had enough points to gain a start. Under the old system she did; however, the points allocation had been changed. I had trialled her at Wentworth Park in anticipation that she would be starting there. I was then left in a situation of either having to wait a couple of weeks to race her, as I would have to trial at another track, or race for inferior prizemoney at a Wentworth Park TAB C meeting. If the changes had been communicated to trainers I would've known in advance that she would not have enough points to gain a start. There has still been no announcement made by GRNSW regarding these changes despite the General Manager Integrity saying that there would be.<sup>16</sup>

I will also point out that there have been no responses to the many questions this new system raises, such as; are final wins penalty free? This is despite the new system being around since July. It appears that they will wait and see how the computer system grades a greyhound in this situation and then declare that that is their new policy.

---

<sup>16</sup> See attachment 14 email correspondence with the General Manager Integrity

## Policy of Full Fields

GRNSW has decided that full fields (8 starters) are required for many races. This has led to greyhounds missing out on starts in races. This is of a concern when the race is a special event or is a middle or staying distance.

In the case of a special event, it may be that the greyhound gets only 1 chance to compete in that race. The 2013 Vic Peters Group 1 is one such event. It is age restricted so greyhounds, on the whole, only get 1 chance to compete in it. This year there were 55 nominations. The logical thing seemed to be to have 7 heats with 6 heats of 8 greyhounds and 1 heat of 7. Instead there were only 6 heats with 7 greyhounds as reserves.

In the case of distance races, there is a smaller pool of greyhounds, so it can sometimes be difficult to have 8 starters. In some cases this means that there is no race in a particular week for distance greyhounds to go in. In the case of maidens this is worse. There are no 700m+ maiden events for greyhounds. A few tracks such as Gosford and Richmond program 1 600m maiden a month. 300m-500m maidens are programmed weekly at most tracks. There have been occasions where GRNSW has refused to put on a 600m maiden with 6 starters. For a greyhound needing 600m this refusal to put on a race can mean a whole months delay in racing. Unlike the thoroughbreds, in greyhound racing you must win a maiden to be able to compete in other grades. It makes keeping a distance greyhound an expensive prospect for

most trainers. These greyhounds requiring a 600m maiden to win can often be quite successful over the distance.<sup>17</sup>

## **Recommendations**

**The full fields policy not be used for special events and middle and staying distances.**

**Maidens be eligible for graded races over the middle and staying distances.**

## **Integrity Concerns**

### Swabbing

There used to be a random and transparent system of swabbing known as the red marble. All winners, that were not subject to an automatic swab, had to spin an open cage with 5 marbles, 1 being red. If the red marble dropped the greyhound was swabbed. In addition to this there was automatic swabbing of feature event winners and some placegetters plus the stewards also had discretionary powers to swab greyhounds for improved or poor performances.

---

<sup>17</sup> Pure Menace took 13 starts to win a maiden, competing in unsuitable shorter distances till winning a 618m maiden at Richmond. She retired winning 5 of 26 starts including over the 720m at a metropolitan meeting at Wentworth Park. I am sure other trainers of distance greyhounds have similar examples.)

Not long after Mr Fanning was appointed General Manager Integrity, he chose to abolish the red marble system in favour of a stewards discretion system. In correspondence with me he argued that it was *"a hangover from the Potter regime and it was time to move on from that perception of improper behaviour within the ranks."*<sup>18</sup> He also argued that it was not a deterrent writing that *"the use of the red marble in most cases provided comfort for the participant with an eighty percent chance that in most cases they would not be swabbed. In my mind, that provided an incentive for those of a mind for inappropriate behaviour."*

My concern with this new system was, and still is, that it was open to corruption. There is no random element, outside of human control, meaning that this system, unlike the random red marble system, would give a corrupt steward free reign to not swab greyhounds. The recent green light scandal in the harness industry highlights the need to always guard against corrupt officials. The General Manager Integrity's statement of 'improper behaviour', suggests that he was aware that this system was open to corruption when he introduced it. Instead of being a concern to him though he argued that we should just implicitly trust the stewards. This is very difficult given our recent history.

Since the discretionary only system has been in place, there have been many integrity issues, which have given rise to the concerns that favouritism is being shown to some participants. Examples include:

---

<sup>18</sup> see attachment 1 response to pure menace complaint



Bulli/Maitland race. There were qualifiers from heats at Maitland and at Bulli to a final at Bulli. All qualifiers from the Bulli heats, including those greyhounds who would be reserves, were swabbed. No greyhounds from the Maitland heats were swabbed.<sup>19</sup>

Dapto Oaks. 4 heats winners ran similar time. 3 heats winners were swabbed. The greyhound not swabbed was trained by the employer of the daughter of the steward on track that night. The greyhound had also returned a positive the last time it was swabbed.<sup>20</sup>

These are not the only cases. It is also clear from the [redacted] email that GRNSW does not appreciate participants questioning decisions they make.<sup>21</sup> When this happens they routinely abuse, patronise and bully. This has led to many participants being too afraid to openly question any decisions that GRNSW make.

The fact that GRNSW has had to change its swabbing policy to swab all winners at Wentworth Park suggests that the discretionary method was not successful. As usual though, instead of admitting its mistake and reverting back to the cost-effective random red marble system, they have instead implemented a highly expensive system. This leaves less money for prizemoney. This means that once again participants are paying the cost of GRNSW's failures.

### Swab clearances

---

<sup>19</sup> See attachment 15

<sup>20</sup> See attachment 5

<sup>21</sup> See attachment 7

Another major integrity concern relates to the swab clearances that appear online. When a swab is taken it is meant to appear in the stewards report. Once cleared it should appear in the swab clearances. This can often be up to 8 weeks after the swab was taken. In 2012 there were many swabs taken during the Easter period that appeared to be 'missing'. That is, the swabs were taken, did not appear in the clearance list, but there was also no penalty or pending inquiry. As many of these swabs were taken during the lucrative Easter Carnival, where there are multiple Group races, they were widely talked about and discussed on online forums. These swabs were also mentioned in the Sun-Herald article 'Going to the Dogs'.

After these 'missing swabs' were in the public sphere, the swab clearance list was altered by GRNSW to include the 'missing swabs'.<sup>22</sup> There was no press release to say these had been cleared, despite the publicity they had gained. There was also nothing on the PDF file to state it had been updated. I understand that GRNSW blamed a computer error for the problem. If that was the case, then surely they should have publicly declared the swabs were cleared, in order to clear the names of the participants involved. I also believe it is a major integrity concern that files relating to swabs are altered, without any indication this has been done.

---

<sup>22</sup> See attachment 16 The PDF files before they were altered. The altered files can be found on the dogs website.

The 2013 Easter Carnival appears to have the same problems, as there are many swabs that appear as taken, do not appear in the clearance list, but there is no notification of penalties or pending inquiries.<sup>23</sup>

### Grading

The grading department of recent times, can only be called incompetent at best. There are constant redraws due to mistakes being made. Recently the Industry newspaper, The Greyhound Recorder, printed the wrong fields for Saturday night. This occurred because the fields were published on the website, The Recorder used these fields for their publication, after the publication went to print a redraw was conducted. This type of situation occurred because the grading department of GRNSW are appalling at their jobs.

The new order of choice report shows how inefficient the grader are. The order of choice is used by participants to plan their greyhounds racing program by being able to see how many points would be required to gain a start etc. The graders use the order of choice in order to place greyhounds in the correct grade of race and in the order they will gain a start according to the grading policy. It would seem logical to only list greyhounds under a grade or special event they are eligible to compete in. This would ensure greyhounds aren't placed in the incorrect grades and would also avoid multiple duplications of work. However, the order of choice report currently

---

<sup>23</sup> I have not had time to find all the greyhounds no cleared but Cracker Jack Lil and Fancy Liza are two examples from this period.

used routinely lists greyhounds ineligible for certain grades and races under those grades and races.

Examples:

- In the Laurie Healion Memorial Maiden Semi-Finals, where greyhounds had to qualify from heats, the order of choice listed greyhounds that had not competed in the Heats so could not possibly gain a start in the race.
- At the Coonamble carnival this year, greyhounds that were competing in finals were listed in the order of choice under other races and drawn in those races. Most of the meeting had to be redrawn after fields had already been published.<sup>24</sup>

When I questioned GRNSW about this, the CEO sent the usual reply of being disrespectful and patronising. His replies demonstrated clearly that he did not understand the order of choice report his organisation was generating.<sup>25</sup>

Part of the problem is that there is no penalty for GRNSW when they get things wrong. If a trainer makes a mistake, such as bringing the wrong registration papers, they are fined. If GRNSW makes a mistake, such as leaving a greyhound out of the draw, there is not punishment for them. Again it would be the participant who is punished in the form of lost prizemoney opportunities. Recently a grader who

---

<sup>24</sup> See attachment 17 press release 'Coonamble fields now finalised'

<sup>25</sup> See attachment 18

received the universal contempt from the industry because of his inability to do the job, was not fired, but instead moved to another department, where it is presumed management thought he would do less harm.

### Mates Races

Another integrity concern is the rise of invitation races and discretionary powers to elevate greyhounds into group races. Invitation races are where a committee of people invites greyhounds to compete in a race rather than the grading system being used to decide the top greyhounds.

The Group 1 Golden Easter Egg is the richest greyhound race in NSW. To qualify there are preludes, conducted in the weeks prior to the race, where winners gain automatic entry. There is also automatic entry for winners of select group races. The grading and points system is then used to make up the best 100 (80 + 20 reserves). This open and transparent system is then tampered with by a handful of people in order to elevate dogs that did not make it into the top 100. This of course means that some greyhounds that did make it into the top 100 have to be demoted and therefore denied an opportunity to race in the richest race in NSW, not because there greyhound did not meet the conditions, but because a few people decided another greyhound was more 'worthy'. I will point out that in the Cox Plate for thoroughbred this year many argued that the maiden Shamus Award did not deserve to be included, even as an emergency, based on its performances. After gaining a

start Shamus Award won this race clearly proving that Racing Victoria made the correct decision to not use its powers to deny the horse a start.

I am concerned that the process of elevating greyhounds is open to corruption as people can be bribed, objective transparent criteria cannot.

There is also an issue of races being changed from the advertised grade after nominations have been received. At Richmond on 2 November 2013 there was a blue paws 5<sup>th</sup> grade advertised. 7 eligible greyhounds nominated for this event. 2 4<sup>th</sup> grade greyhounds, ineligible, also nominated for the meeting. GRNSW chose to put on a 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade race instead of the advertised 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This meant that 1 greyhound, who was eligible for the advertised 5<sup>th</sup> grade, could not compete as it was ineligible for a 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade. It also meant that the other 6 greyhounds who had nominated for a low grade event had to compete against higher graded dogs.<sup>26</sup>

## **Recommendations**

**Races be run as advertised, even if this means smaller fields.**

**Transparent criteria be used when selecting fields for Group and Feature races.**

---

<sup>26</sup> See attachment 19. The fields, order of choice and advertising for the race

## **Staff**

Aside from there being too many staff, it is clear from their performance that many of the staff do not have the necessary qualifications and skills required to perform their job efficiently.

### Chief Executive Officer

The CEO of GRNSW does not have the educational qualifications and previous work experience expected of someone in such an important position. It appears he was appointed in the position because he was 'in the right place at the right time' when GRNSW took over the regulatory functions and now the industry is stuck with a CEO in a job that is clearly beyond him.

It is also a major concern to have a CEO of greyhound racing who has a clear preference for the thoroughbreds. He is regularly at the races. It is also widely rumoured that he left Tasmania, after attending an AGRA meeting, but before the Group 1 Nationals for greyhounds was conducted, in order to be back in Sydney for a non-carnival metropolitan thoroughbred meeting.

Many decisions made by GRNSW have benefitted the thoroughbreds. These include the decision to not continue with the our fair share campaign, which, if successful, would've resulted in an increase of funds for greyhounds but a decrease for the

thoroughbreds. The increase in swabbing is also another example as it is the thoroughbreds forensic laboratory that conducts the testing.

His personality, including his refusal to admit mistakes and his inability to accept criticism, make him unsuitable for the position as CEO. His correspondence with myself, other individuals and participant organisations shows his complete contempt for the industry. He has 3 standard replies. 1. To insult the individual( not their complaint, but the individual themselves), 2. To simply say noted or 3. Ignore.

### **Recommendations**

**If GRNSW is to remain a new CEO must be appointed and the current CEO must hold no position within the organisation.**

**If a new body is to be set-up the current CEO not be allowed to hold any position within that organisation.**

### General Manager Integrity

The General Manager Integrity has made many decisions since being in the job that have led me to seriously question whether he has any concerns for the integrity of the industry. He has strengthened the powers of the stewards at the same time as removing barriers to corruption, such as the random red marble swabbing system discussed earlier.



The email correspondence with [redacted] regarding my mother<sup>27</sup> also raises concerns. It is worrying that there appears to be a culture at GRNSW, where it is acceptable for a senior steward to abuse a participant to senior management in this way. One has to question what else has been said about participants in order for a steward to feel comfortable enough to encourage the Integrity Officer to abuse a participant in this manner.

### Stewards

Greyhound Racing has had a troubled history in relation to its stewards. The ICAC inquiry is well-known. Because of this history it would seem obvious that GRNSW needs to be very careful in their selection of personnel to avoid any perception of corruption. It would also seem obvious that in addition to careful selection a certain amount of checks and balances on stewards powers need to be in place. This is a major reason why the abolition of the random red marble system was so controversial.

At the same time that GRNSW have increased stewards discretionary powers they have made some questionable appointments as stewards.

One steward who was moved from part-time to full time I have already mentioned as I made a complaint to the Integrity Auditor regarding decisions she had made.

This steward seemed to have few qualifications and skills and had boasted on

---

<sup>27</sup> See attachment 7

facebook of having a vindictive personality 'Get on the wrong side of me and I will be your worst nightmare'.<sup>28</sup> This is not the quality to look for when hiring someone to be in a position of power. Relationships with participants in the industry also mean that there were many potential conflicts of interest that might arise.

Another steward appointed had worked as a steward previously under Rodney Potter. This appointment demonstrated clearly that GRNSW were not even concerned about the appearance of integrity.

Then there is the steward who wrote an email where he directed the Integrity Officer to tell my mother to [redacted].<sup>29</sup> His email showed a preference to another participant when he referred to him affectionately by an abbreviated first name. My mother was referred to as an untitled surname. Because of the position of power that stewards are in there should be no tolerance of stewards showing different attitudes towards different participants. This steward is still employed and is still able to make decisions that affect my greyhounds.

## **Recommendations**

**Checks and balances on stewards powers be reinstated and strengthened.**

**Higher qualifications be required for stewards.**

---

<sup>28</sup> See attachment 5

<sup>29</sup> See attachment 7.

## **Conclusion**

The industry will struggle to survive in its current state. A more cost-effective regulatory body, that will takes integrity matters seriously, is needed. Greyhounds need their fair share of the TAB distribution.