

Submission
No 20

**INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND WELFARE AND
INTEGRITY COMMISSION**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

The policies, procedures, mechanisms, and overarching principles of the Commission in relation to industry participants are, essentially, unchanged since the separation of powers from Greyhound Racing NSW.

The need for an independent regulator is clear. Many missteps (by GRNSW) in relation to integrity and animal welfare were exposed in 2015 and GWIC has significantly increased the inspection and oversight of properties, traces life-cycle of all greyhounds, has better investigative functionality, boasts accurate quantum on the greyhound population and, whatever the cost, the focus must be maintained.

Disciplinary action for participants breaching legal requirements as set out by the Commission has, on many occasions, been handled by former CEO Judy Lind.

It's incomprehensible that a CEO – without any insight into greyhound racing – would want to or be required to hand down disciplinary actions.

It's my view that GWIC should engage with the Greyhounds Australasia Rules within a process which includes proper (in house) legal opinion, the input of an independent (and expert) participant and that of the Chief Steward.

The options for appeal by industry participants who breach legal requirements set by the Commission are sound yet many decisions of have been baffling. In recent times, a 12-year disqualification for the use of a permanently banned substance (EPO) was cut to just 30 months.

Interestingly, David Armati of the Racing Appeals Tribunal, considered the proceedings had a "profound effect" on the trainer.

I suppose all who plead guilty and suffer incarceration or even a lesser sanction from court suffer a "profound effect"!

Was the initial DQ excessive or the 30 months inadequate? ... we will never know – and there was no explanation but greyhound racing participants want drug-free racing.

This decision from the RAT supported that a guilty plea (to a permanently banned substance) finds a sympathetic ear and good reward.

There is no doubt about Mr Armati's legal expertise.

He is a former private practice solicitor and Chairman of the Licensing Court and Liquor Administration Board of NSW but should he be judge, jury and executioner on appeals in greyhound racing?

Defendants have the prospect of appeal to the Supreme Court on matters RAT presides over but it should never get to that level of antagonism or cost.

The relationship of the Commission and Greyhound Racing NSW has been substantially toxic.

Public slanging matches have exacerbated the disconnect and, aside from the personal issues dividing the two Chief Executives (one former), the dispute on spend (by GRNSW on the funding of GWIC) has been hijacked by personal interest and misrepresentations in the media – a case in point is the assertion by One Nation MLC Mark Latham (see attached) that GWIC has spent just under \$600,000 on travel which includes overseas ventures.

It's understood that all travel by GWIC is by stewards (race day officiating at meetings) and integrity staff conducting inquiries and or inspections.

There has been no overseas travel.

Such inappropriate public ranting is agenda driven and damaging.

The existing funding agreement between the Commission and Greyhound Racing NSW has been a pitched battle for just over two years.

When GWIC was instituted, both the McHugh Special Commission and the lemma Report considered GRNSW had not spent enough resources on animal welfare.

GWIC addressed that and, with an increase of something like 20 per cent, GRNSW now argue that GWIC is 'loose' with budgets and needs to be reigned in on funding. The 2021 allocation from GRNSW is said to be less than it was in 2020 and maybe IPART - or the like - should oversee budgets and allocated funds.

That said, greyhound racing DOES NOT get adequate funding from Government. Not only is the Inter-Code agreement skewed, the failure to allocate the full Point of Consumption Tax refund is crippling all aspects of racing, welfare and integrity.

Full PoC Tax allocation will solve many ills.

The conduct and effectiveness of the Commission and GRNSW has seen the welfare of greyhounds improve dramatically. More can and should be done but funding is significantly limited by an outrageous and unfair Inter-Code agreement (signed in the late 90's for the privatisation of the TAB) which has no practical review mechanism for 99 years!

One important aspect which has been overlooked is advocacy for breeders in NSW. Every other state in the country supports breeding excellence yet GRNSW shows no sign of assisting breeders.

The excellence programs interstate boasts support before a litter is conceived yet GRNSW has shown no interest in supporting the folk who breed these previous dogs.