

**Submission
No 21**

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND WELFARE AND INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Organisation: Stop Dog Racing Australia

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SUBMISSION TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GREYHOUND WELFARE INTEGRITY COMMISSION; FROM STOP DOG RACING AUSTRALIA

Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members

Executive Summary

About our Organisation: We are a 'grass roots' organisation, our main presence is on social media platforms Facebook and Twitter.

Our Purpose: Our group is concerned by the number of otherwise healthy greyhounds killed by the greyhound racing industry. We aim to provide comprehensive coverage of media relating to any issue which affects the health, happiness and longevity of these gentle dogs.

Since our inception 5 years ago we have been following developments in the greyhound welfare space, we have followed the industry's welfare governance from Greyhound Racing New South Wales (GRNSW) being responsible, to the transfer of this function to the Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission (GWIC)

On The Committee's Terms of Reference: In our view the Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission has both improved integrity outcomes and overall confidence in Greyhound Racing within New South Wales.

The INDEPENDENT REGULATION MODEL of GWIC has proven to be a superior model to the SELF REGULATION MODEL that Greyhound Racing New South Wales represented.

Investigative powers of The Commission are adequate as set out in the Legislation however penalties handed to Industry Participants, particularly after a number of breaches are too lenient. Avenues for legal appeal need to be reduced as the validity of the charge is often secondary and they are used by participants mainly to further reduce their sentence.

Funding requirements for The Commissions should be set out by the Commission each year, they should be reviewed by a private accounting firm to verify them as reasonable expenses based on previous expenditure and funds should be deducted by government from GRNSW. The cost of the commission should not fall to the NSW Government via any addition monies to GWIC or GRNSW then onto GWIC in the form of, grants, economic relief packages, one off payments etc.

CASE STUDY 1

In February 2020, Chad GARRARD a registered owner/trainer in NSW had a greyhound die in his care (alleged snake bite). GARRARD took this greyhound's body to the dump, not telling the authorities. In March he tried passing off another dog as the dead dog to GWIC. In a second incident in April GARRAD found a dead greyhound in his kennels (alleged twisted bowl), authorities requested a vet inspect the dead greyhound but GARRARD had already taken the greyhound to a nearby dump.

GARRARD was handed a 9 month suspension from GWIC, which is better than the \$225 fine given in 2016 by GRNSW on a charge of 'possession of prohibited racing drugs'.

COMMENT: This case study provides an example of when GRNSW were in charge of integrity, the offender was given a paltry \$225 fine, but when caught lying to investigators four years later was given a far more appropriate sentence by an independent regulator GWIC.

CASE STUDY 2

In October 2020 in The Penrith District Court, Greyhound Trainers Zeki KADIR was found guilty by jury of animal cruelty charges.

The charges stem from footage taken in 2015 and featured on 4 Corners of live rabbits being used to train greyhounds

Last year The High Court ruled the filmed footage of live rabbits being used as bait was inadmissible but a recorded admission and subsequent search warrant were admissible and sent the matter back to the District Court, leading to his conviction.

COMMENT: This case study helps show how a participant can take a matter all the way to The High Court of Australia and still eventually be found guilty of a charge after 5 years of legal process.

CASE STUDY 3

2018 and 2020 multiple winner of The Million Dollar Chase Dog Race in Sydney, Trainer Peter LAGOIANE:

LAGOGIANE's kennels were temporarily shut down in November 2013 after an outbreak of Salmonella poisoning that killed three dogs. This is usually the result of feeding poor quality food and/or poor handling & refrigeration.

Peter Lagogiane was disqualified for 16 weeks starting September 24, 2015 after a greyhound failed a test for Ranitidine. The stewards' decision noted that Lagogiane had been before them three times previously on doping charges, in 2004, 2006, and 2008. They evidently overlooked his \$500 fine in 2010, imposed after a positive test for Procaine. In May 2018, when Lagogiane and two other men were charged with facilitating the export of a greyhound named "Wandering Mija" to Dubai, without a greyhound passport.

COMMENT: This case study illustrates a number of issues. First GRNSW issued a number of inadequate penalties over years and the offender and offending simply carried on. Second in 2018 \$500,000 of direct government funding was given to the Million Dollar Chase and found its way to a repeat offender as prize money. Finally it shows a reluctance by both GRNSW and GWIC to permanently 'warn off' people involved in repeat offences. A point at which a person is no longer a desirable person to have in the sport should be made more clear. There are people when GRNSW handled integrity who would use stimulants and depressants to make dogs run faster or slower every single week and a small fine issued time and time and time again.

CASE STUDY 4

In October 2020, former Dubbo greyhound owner/ trainer Shane POLSON has had his appeal against animal cruelty charges refused by The Dubbo District Court. POLSON was convicted in 2019 of intimidating a senior investigator and failing to provide veterinary treatment to a total of three former race dogs he owned.

POLSON who wanted to return to training acquired the dogs from a woman in Singleton but soon after changed his mind.

According to evidence from his ex-girlfriend, POLSON then resolved to starve the dogs to death, one dog was found dead another was found near death. The matter was first investigated by GWIC and then Police.

COMMENT: This case study provides an example to agencies namely GWIC and the NSW Police working together.

CASE STUDY 5

In July 2020, Adam OLIVER, President of Wagga Wagga Dog Racing Club was banned on a doping charge. OLIVER's dog 'Queenie Jean' ran at Wagga Wagga on February 23 and produced a positive swab for a prohibited substance. OLIVER was banned for 16 months for deliberate doping.

COMMENT: This shows that people involved in the industry can wear more than 'one hat'. This person was a club president and trainer, you often get owner and/or trainer and/or committee member plus all manner of combinations. In the interest of maintaining the 'gold standard' for investigations, those investigating and prosecuting should be at arms length from the industry as is the case with GWIC but not GRNSW.

NB: Anything reported here in these case studies has either been reported by GRNSW or GWIC, all matters have been finalised. All have appeared in various news papers. All care has been taken to collate these case studies based on reported facts in official documents and media reports. All matters are on the public record.

IN CLOSING:

1. The independent regulation model of GWIC has proven to be a superior model to the self regulation model of GRNSW

2. The accumulation of offences even minor over time should eventually reach a point where a participant can be banned for life.

3. Avenues for legal appeal need to be reduced.

3. GRNSW should fund GWIC from existing revenue streams. Without addition government funds.

We thank the Committee for their time