

**Submission  
No 80**

**INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND WELFARE AND  
INTEGRITY COMMISSION**

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## SUBMISSION

It's my belief that many issues regarding the performance of GWIC were tainted by the pall of gloom foisted by the Baird Government's decision to ban greyhound racing in 2106.

The Commission, without any doubt, was hurriedly conceived, improperly funded and the decision (whether it be by legislation or view) to not employ staff with greyhound racing 'smarts' or knowledge was a significant error of judgement.

In fact, the horror of the ban soon evolved into complete mistrust of GWIC – it was a Government department – and that anything which GWIC did or changed was a conduit to closing greyhound racing down 'by stealth'.

There were many miss steps but all were borne of ignorance of greyhound racing 'culture'.

Compliance was tainted by McHugh's focus and a reform agenda was fast tracked to the extent that the people inducted into roles (inspectors, stewards and office staff) had no time for proper induction.

It was not the staff's fault, the processes were rushed and funding was seemingly decided up on by notes on a napkin over a cup of coffee.

Funding must, in my view, be independent of GRNSW and the separation of powers – integrity/welfare and commercialism – is an absolute necessity.

The Select Committee has heard from participants state wide yet many have merely vented and not offered any concepts to make GWIC the best it can be.

The welfare of greyhounds is a clear top priority yet GWIC and GRNSW also need to advocate for participants.

And it was an industry management meeting at Orange which brought this closer together earlier this year.

Sadly, GWIC Chief Executive was tainted at the Select Committee's hearing at Bathurst for attending this meeting in Orange when up to another nine club and GRNSW officials also attended.

Mr Griffin has GWIC on the right course. He has engaged greyhound participants in an industry advisory capacity and that function is having meaningful impact.

GWIC is building community respect and confidence but there are people from within the sport which seek to return to the lawless past and greyhound racing must resist that noise.

Concepts, in my advisory role with GWIC, I have proposed include:

- A mobile veterinary clinic for regional participants
- Introduction of a Customer Liaison Service (to deal directly with operational matters)
- The inclusion of a Commissioner who has direct greyhound racing experience.
- An industry learning program (e.g. first aid [non veterinary practices], exercise, nutrition)
- Hands on induction for new staff to include visits to rearing facilities and race tracks.
- Bursaries and scholarships for University graduates in Veterinary Science.

Late last year, I contacted both Sydney University and Charles Sturt University regarding bursaries and scholarships but calls (and messages) over a number of weeks were never returned.

The committee has heard that vets find greyhound racing an unappealing job outcome and my experience is that few want to become involved once graduated.

Greyhound racing in NSW is on an upward trajectory. Funding has been inadequate for 25 years and every year – by means of the flawed Inter-Code agreement, up to \$26m of greyhound racing's rightful income is lost.

Welfare, integrity and commercial outcomes were harmed in the past by that leakage and it must be addressed.

Unfortunately National Racing Rules which are decided upon by a representative board - which has no direct oversight from the rank-and-file - are a significant concern to myself and others in the industry.

Only this week, a NSW trainer was made subject of an inquiry in Queensland (and his four greyhounds scratched from features races at Albion Park) due to his administration of over-the-counter and non performance enhancing products on race day. One was a mere electrolyte additive which assists in the stress of training, racing and travelling. It's available at all produce stores and has no banned substances in it.

His naivete of the rules is not surprising ... His breach was a complete shock to me and many, many others. After a long trek from Sydney to Brisbane by car, his race day hydration of his dogs is a welfare positive yet the rules of racing seem prohibit it.

In fact, even if this trainer had not treated his dogs whatsoever, having the products in his car (for use on his return home) would have also been considered a breach of rules.

The trainer's actions were honorable and the right thing to do for the dogs. The rules are just plain wrong and that's the nub of what Greyhound Australasia and GWIC, by extension, must attend to.

In NSW, the use of a leather soccer ball, an old boot or a disused sheepskin car seat cover cannot be given to pups to play with - that's considered live baiting!

The rules of racing must be rigid and firmly meted yet commonsense needs to be at the core and GWIC can deliver genuine change.

GWIC seeks to be agile, forward looking and consultative.

There is ongoing discontent yet negativity is promoted by those with an axe to grind and or those who want less diligent integrity oversight.

As I stated at Goulburn, greyhound racing in NSW has the potential to be the best in the world ... proper funding and time to grow will see that.

Ultimately, the community wants an assurance that can only be provided by having an independent, well funded and pro-active government regulator.