

**MINUTES OF THE
GREYHOUND REFERENCE GROUP
meeting held at
The Grange, Campbell Town
on Friday 28 June 2019**

- Attendance:** Mr Michael Gordon (Board Member – Tasracing)
Mr Paul Eriksson (CEO – Tasracing)
Mr Liam Swan (Strategic Development Manager – Tasracing)
Mr Peter Wesley (Race Programming Manager – Tasracing)
Mrs Karlene Cuthbertson (LGRC)
Mr Brennan Ryan (LGRC)
Mr Stephen Lockley (HGRC)
Mr Graeme Barber (GOTBAT & HGRC)
Mr Neville Allison (GOTBAT)
Mrs Robyn Johnson (NWGRC)
Mrs Ingrid Watkins (NWGRC)
- Guests:** Mr John King (Director of Racing – ORI)
Mr Tony Latham (Racing Integrity & Steward's Manager – ORI)
Mr Adam Richardson (Regulatory Veterinary Officer – ORI)
Mr Susan Gittus (GAP Manager)
Mr Scott Parker (Chief Executive Officer – Greyhounds Australasia)
- Observer:** Nil.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.35pm and resumed at 1.00pm
Mrs Susan Gittus left the meeting at 1.00pm.
Mr Ricky Aitken (Northern Operations Officer – Tasracing) joined the meeting at 1.00pm.
Mr Scott Parker left the meeting at 1.30pm.

1. MEETING ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Welcome

Michael Gordon opened the meeting at 10.30am and welcomed the delegates with a special welcome to Stephen Lockley, representing the HGRC for the first time, and Scott Parker from Greyhounds Australasia.

1.2 Apologies

Apologies were recorded for Ms Tania Price (Board Member – Tasracing), Mr Richard Stamford (LGRC), Mrs Katrina Gregory (HGRC), Mr Kerry Clements (HGRC) and Mr Michael Hoyle (Chairman of Stewards – Greyhounds – ORI).

1.3 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 were tabled.

Graeme Barber advised that the last paragraph of item 3.4.2 on page 4 of the minutes should read:

Robyn Johnson reported on behalf of the clubs and GOTBAT that the recommendation was to carry the funds forward to next season on the provision that it does not affect the amount the code would otherwise receive under the funding model.

Peter Wesley requested an amendment on the attendees list for Mr Hoyle to be noted as Michael, and not Marc as recorded.

It was Resolved the Minutes as amended be confirmed.

1.4 – Business Arising

Code Funding Model

Neville Allison sought an update on the scope for the Code Funding Model. Paul Eriksson advised that the current Code Funding Model runs through to the end of the 2019/20 season. He advised that papers on the new Code Funding Model would be provided in December 2019 with a decision to be made in March/April/May of 2020, therefore providing a three month period for review and submissions before the model is finalised.

GAP Return Policy

Peter Wesley advised that the changes required to the entry documents and notices to those with greyhounds already entered for the program is in the final stages of drafting and will be implemented as soon as that work has been completed.

GOTY Panel

Peter Wesley advised that the invitations to the panel members were distributed and following acceptance by all members, the membership of the panel was announced.

Sky Coverage of Combined Meetings

Peter Wesley advised that Sky has been contacted and had confirmed that race 1 at the combined meeting at Devonport on 1 February 2019 was not broadcast due to a production error, however the remaining 7 races were broadcast.

2 ANIMAL WELFARE

2.1 - GAP Statistical Report

Susan Gittus tabled the GAP Analysis Report for the third quarter for 2018/19 and gave a verbal precis of the report.

Mrs Gittus gave a precis of differing activities owners and trainers can provide to greyhounds preparing to enter GAP that will help them to adjust to their new environment and help ensure their success with the testing.

2.2 - GAP Pre-Assessment Kennels

Susan Gittus advised the meeting that two kennels had been made available for pre-testing and tabled a report and a copy of the application required for a greyhound to be entered for pre-testing.

Neville Allison asked about the let down period before a greyhound should be presented for testing or for re-homing. Susan Gittus advised that the longer the period of let down the better and suggested she would like to see a 6 week period introduced. John King advised that some draft rules around retirement had been prepared and these included a compulsory stand down period before being presented for rehoming.

Karlene Cuthbertson sought a report on the “tours” being conducted whereby adoption owners can come to the track and see the greyhounds in their racing environment. Susan Gittus advised that the tours were very successful and were producing positive feedback on the industry from persons that otherwise may not support the industry.

There was a discussion on the suggestion from Robyn Johnson of the compulsory desexing of any greyhound prior to it being rehomed. Scott Parker advised that a National Rule for this requirement was under consideration. John King advised that he wasn't sure if that requirement was in the draft rules at present. Peter Wesley advised that the requirement for desexing was in the draft welfare rules previously reviewed by the GRG. Susan Gittus supported the requirement for desexing for the retirement of any greyhound which isn't rehomed to a registered person and cited a recent case of a stag hound found on a property which was initially reported as a greyhound.

2.3 – GAP Facility Report

Paul Eriksson advised that three inquiries to the Expression of Interest advertisement had been received and encouraged the members to speak to anyone who may be interested to make a submission before they closed on 12 July 2019.

Graeme Barber asked about the operating costs of a new facility. Paul Eriksson advised that Tasracing had increased their contribution to cover the Government's grant last season, however the code will still be required to make a contribution from the Code Funding towards the costs.

Karlene Cuthbertson asked about the Prisons Program and Paul Eriksson advised that progress had stalled while the prison authorities reviewed the way the program would work within the prison environment and the facilities needed.

Scott Parker gave a verbal overview on the status of the rehoming efforts in the various States.

3 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

3.1 Speed Star Racing Program

Brennan Ryan advised the meeting of the decision of the LGRC to withdraw the proposal for the Speed Star Racing Program due to the lack of support and spoke to the paper tabled on the proposal for the conduct of The Showdown.

There was a discussion on the stakes to be paid for the race and it was noted that contribution from the Code Funding Model would be discussed and determined at the time the allocation of the code funding for 2019/20 was determined.

There was a discussion on the suggestion of a shorter time frame for the acceptance of the invitations for the race, the removal of the option for further invitations to be extended and the logistics and integrity around the appointment of the members of the Selection Panel, with one suggestion being the Group Race Selection Panel at ORI being appointed as the Selection Panel for the event. Brennan Ryan undertook to have the club review these suggestions and comments and advise of any amendments deemed appropriate in light of the discussions.

It was Resolved the introduction of the event into the Feature Calendar was supported with any further comments or suggestions on the conditions to be provided to Brennan Ryan within a week for review by the LGRC.

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 – Devonport Showgrounds Update

Paul Eriksson provided a verbal report to the members on the negotiations with the solicitors for the purchaser of the venue with Tasracing asserting their position of having a valid lease on the premises.

Paul Eriksson undertook to keep members apprised of future developments.

4.2 – Operations Update

4.2.1 – Prototype Lure

Ricky Aitken tabled a report and gave a verbal precis of his report. He advised that the catching pen gate at Launceston had been redesigned and was scheduled to be installed next week which will then allow trials at Launceston to commence.

4.2.2 – Devonport Catching Pen

Ricky Aitken spoke to a report on the issues with the catching pen gate at Devonport in respect to the introduction of the wide arm lure. Robyn Johnson spoke to the challenges being faced by Devonport and suggested that the wide arm lure be developed in Launceston and then introduced at Hobart with the introduction at Devonport being the third step. Paul Eriksson suggested that Devonport be assessed by Prof David Eager from the University of Sydney before any work be undertaken.

Graeme Barber sought advice on when work at Hobart would commence. Paul Eriksson advised the intention was for Launceston to trial followed by racing shortly after and the Hobart gate then be modified so the wide arm lure can be commenced for trials and then races. He re-iterated the intention of having Prof Egan assess the Devonport facilities before any work is undertaken at that facility.

4.3 – Greyhound Carnival

The notes of the teleconference held on 12 June between Tasracing and representative of the three clubs were tabled and Michael Gordon gave a verbal precis of the meeting.

Neville Allison asked what marketing spend would be provided if the carnival proceeded to which Paul Eriksson responded that he couldn't provide a figure, but Tasracing would market the carnival appropriately.

There was a discussion on the "bonus" suggested and it was noted that the bonus for the thoroughbred code was covered by insurance funded by Tasracing and any bonus for the greyhound carnival would be handled in the same manner.

Michael Gordon suggested that if the proposal is agreed to in principal, he would seek the attendance of the marketing team at the next meeting to further discuss the proposal and available options.

Following further discussion, it was resolved that in principal agreement be provided for the proposal and it was left with Mr Eriksson to review and discuss further with marketing.

4.4 – Industry Strategies and Development

Michael Gordon sought and was granted approval for this item to be deferred to the next meeting.

5. ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 – Wagering Turnover Summary

A report for the period ended 31 May 2019 was tabled and noted.

Paul Eriksson, at the request of Neville Allison, advised the meeting that the thoroughbred turnover was up 7% on last year and the harness was down 3%.

5.2 – Race Dates

A copy of the approved race dates for 2019/20 were tabled and noted.

5.3 – Feature Events 2019/20

A copy of the Feature Events Calendar for 2019/20 as recommended by the Programming Sub Committee together with the Feature Race Conditions were tabled and noted.

5.4 – Breeding Statistic

John King provided a verbal report on the breeding statistics, retired greyhounds including un-named greyhounds retired.

John King advised that approximately 4% of runners were swabbed and he would like to increase that percentage to around the 10% mark but is hampered by budget restrictions.

5.5 – Programming Sub Committee

The minutes of the meetings on 28 February and 30 May 2019 were tabled and noted.

5.6 – Assets & Facilities Update

The Assets and Facilities report was tabled and noted.

5.7 – Sales & Marketing Update

The Sales and Marketing Report was tabled and noted.

5.8 – GCA Update

Brennan Ryan advised that the Group Racing Calendar was not being printed by GCA and would only be available digitally. It was Resolved that copies be printed and provided trackside for clubs.

6. GREYHOUNDS AUSTRALASIA

6.1 – GA Update

Scott Parker advised of the appointment of a sub-committee to identify and define the matrix of data the industry wants to report on internally for comparison between jurisdictions with the potential for flow-on of data for the national campaign.

Michael Gordon advised of a joint meeting with GA and Greyhound Clubs Australia and arising from that meeting was a desire for Tasmania to be on the rotation for the conduct of the Nationals. He outlined the New Zealand participation in the Nationals and the possibility of New Zealand co-hosting with an Australian State as, due to quarantine requirements, it is not practical for New Zealand to host the Nationals.

Paul Eriksson advised that one proposal being considered was for each State to contribute to the stake money every year. There was a discussion on the suggestion and it was agreed that the option to host the Nationals be left open at this time on the basis that it does not impact on the code funding for the industry.

Michael Gordon advised that the idea of a symposium being held during the Nationals had been agreed to with the inaugural meeting being held this year in Perth.

Michael Gordon advised that Sandown was working through a process to make the syndication model they had developed available nationally.

There was as discussion on the selection of representatives for the Nationals and Peter Wesley advised the meeting of the recommendation of the Programming Sub Committee which had subsequently been approved by Tasracing that if there are less than 4 nominations for the State Distance, then the club would select the representative. Robyn Johnson expressed her disagreement to the decision. Peter Wesley advised that the recommendation had been submitted to the Programming Sub Committee, of which Mrs Johnson was a member, for comment before being submitted to Tasracing for approval, with no proposed amendments, comments or objections being received. Following further discussion, it was recommended that if there are less than 4 nominations then the club conduct a trial on the final night for those nominated which would then provide the basis for the club's nomination.

Michael Gordon advised that GRNSW had engaged the University of NSW to conduct an analysis of various aspects of their tracks and that analysis had been extended beyond NSW. Paul Eriksson advised that Tasracing had started work with the tracks being benchmarked and surveyed and that initial discussions had been held with Prof David Eager and it was the intention for Professor Egan to visit and assess each track. Ricky Aitken gave a verbal report on the monitoring being conducted and recorded.

Michael Gordon undertook to investigate the option of Professor Egan attending a GRG meeting.

6.2 - GA Presentation

Michael Gordon welcomed Scott Parker, CEO of Greyhounds Australasia and invited him to make a presentation to the group.

Scott Parker tabled a presentation pack which was presented as Commercial in Confidence and included:

- Australian and New Zealander views on the Greyhound Racing Industry
- Perceptions of Greyhound Racing in Victoria
- Campaign Analysis on the Florida Constitutional Amendment to end Greyhound Racing
- Greyhounds Australasia Strategic Plan

Scott Parker advised that the GA Board had adopted a 3 Year Strategic Plan and provided a verbal overview and precis of each of the documents in the pack.

Scott Parker advised that GA currently had tenders out for an organisation to develop and manage a national campaign that would be implemented State by State.

Graeme Barber spoke to the need to ensure the participants are informed of the purpose for change to gain acceptance and support from participants for any change. Scott Parker advised that a new process has been adopted by GA and is now in place which will ensure engagement with participants.

7 OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 – Next meeting

The next meeting, scheduled for 10:30am on Wednesday 18 September 2019 at The Grange, Campbell Town, was confirmed.

Point of Consumption Tax

John King introduced a discussion on the Point of Consumption tax. Paul Eriksson advised that the challenge would be for clubs to lobby for the tax to be 15% and Tasracing to lobby for as much of the funds that the 15% delivers and to be very specific as to how that funding would be applied to the industry.

Michael Gordon advised that in South Australia the Government expected to collect \$M20 from Point of Consumption tax with \$M4 going back to the racing industry.

Race Dates

Liam Swan asked that clubs review the race dates in respect to the conduct of trials and to contact Tasracing if there were any issues needed resolving. John King sought confirmation that there is only one day where 3 meetings are conducted as it created issues with staffing. It was confirmed that Good Friday was the only day where three meetings are scheduled.

Earbranding

Karlene Cuthbertson advised Mr King that she can only have her pups earbranded in Launceston which is about an one hour drive from her place, whereas breeders in the North West areas can utilise the services of Peter Hall at their property and asked Mr King if he could review the procedure as to why she can't utilise the service of Mr Hall who resides in reasonably close proximity to her. John King undertook to review the situation.

Short Sprint Races

Neville Allison advised he had received a number of complaints about the number of short sprint races being conducted and suggested it was time for the industry to have a discussion as to the level of races conducted. Following a discussion, it was resolved Graeme Barber, Neville Allison and Robyn Johnson form a sub-committee to review the number of short print races and provide a recommendation to the next meeting.

On-Line Nominations

John King sought comment on it being compulsory for nominations to be lodged either on-line or by fax only. He was advised that on occasions the results hadn't been processed which doesn't allow greyhounds to be nominated for their correct grade which required a call to the office to take the nomination.

There was a discussion on having all forms for completion on-line and Mr King agreed that this was a position he would like to see OzChase develop to.

Michael Gordon deferred further discussion to the next meeting.

Acknowledgement

It was Resolved a vote of thanks be recorded for the contribution Denise Fysh provided the industry, not just locally and through the Greyhound Reference Group, but on a national basis.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting at 2.40pm.

ACTION LIST

Code Funding Model - Provide details on the new Code Funding Model by December	CEO
Compulsory desexing of rehomed greyhounds – Review draft Rules	ORI
The Showdown – Comments to Brennan Ryan	Clubs & GOTBAT
The Showdown – LGRC to review GRG and any further comments and advise of final conditions	LGRC
Group Racing Calendar – Print copies for participants to collect trackside	RPM
National Distance – If less than 4 nominations are received, the LGRC to arrange a trial for selection of representative	LGRC
Track Development – investigate options for Prof David Eager attending a GRG meeting	M Gordon
Greyhound Carnival – Consult marketing manager/department and further develop proposal for a Carnival to commence in 2020/21	CEO
Greyhound Carnival – Invite Marketing Manager to next GRG to discuss the proposal for a Greyhound Carnival	CEO
Earbranding – Review option of utilising Peter Hall for earbranding in Launceston	ORI
Short Sprint Races – Sub Committee to provide report to next meeting	Sub Committee
On-line nominations – List as Agenda item for next meeting	SDM