



**Greyhound Owners Trainers & Breeders
Association of Victoria, Inc.**

Reg No: A0017661V

ABN 67 306 599 068

E: gotbav@gmail.com

P: 0423 357 620

www.gotbav.org.au

President's Report – GOTBA Victoria – August 2020

The Greyhound Owners Trainers and Breeders Association of Victoria Inc is a volunteer organisation that represents participants across the Victorian greyhound racing industry. In any given week, members are associated with around 50% of the greyhounds in the race program.

Much has happened in greyhound racing since my last report in April 2020. One small thing: GRV no longer publishes these reports in the Greyhound Monthly. It says for reasons of space. You can form your own views on this: but we call out inconvenient issues from time to time where it is in the interests of members and/or their greyhounds to do so. We will publish elsewhere.

CONTINUING RACING DURING STAGE 4 – A HUGE EFFORT BY ALL

We are still racing, even in Stage 4 restrictions. That is a great effort that reflects well on everyone in the sport – from administrators and staff at clubs and GRV, the Office of Racing and most of all to the participants working hard under even more difficult conditions than normal.

Well done to everyone.

TRACK SAFETY, PRIZEMONEY AND THE RACING PROGRAM

The last 3 months have however brought to the forefront again some big, longstanding issues in Victorian greyhound racing. They are not going and will not go away.

Track safety

GOTBA Vic has been actively liaising with GRV and the Office of Racing for some time on the need for detailed track base and drainage scoping and work to be completed industry-wide, consistently with advice. **This is NOT a single track or club issue, nor is it any reflection on track staff who work very hard**, often absent assistance that would come through targeted drainage and base works.

In early August, before recent meeting abandonments, the issue came to a head. **GOTBA Vic and a group of major trainers, in frustration, highlighted serious concerns** to GRV on major injuries and organised meetings with GRV management on the issue. We are keeping close track of this – we want action.

GOTBA Vic is calling on the GRV Board to re-examine its data, TALK to us and to trainers and act on these valid concerns, for the benefit of participants and their greyhounds.

Costs of participation and prizemoney

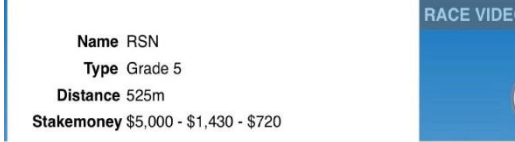


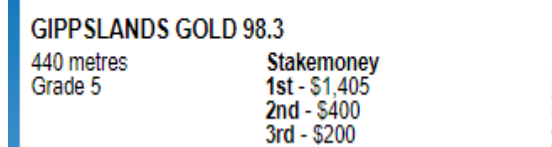
COVID has exacerbated the issue of increasing costs in greyhound racing. It costs enormously more to bring a dog to racing, and keep it racing, than ever before. Perhaps surprisingly, racing authorities across the nation have seen huge **increases** in wagering revenue, particularly from corporate bookmakers, in times of COVID.

It's way, way past time in Victoria for a fair share for participants. That requires not incremental change, but a step change.

No-one looking objectively at GRV annual reports pre-COVID could fail to notice that participant per race/meeting returns have barely moved in seven years while GRV's income and other expenses have continued to skyrocket.

Victoria now lags behind jurisdictions which continue – even in the last few days (SA and NSW) - to increase participant returns on a per race basis. SA has put a percentage revenue share in place.

This is not about greed, but basic equity. The issue existed well **before** COVID - see below, for example, Grade 5 prizemoney at Lvl 1 (city) and 2 (country) almost eight years apart in Victoria (many underlying costs have almost DOUBLED in this time):

Level 1 – 2012 and 2020	Level 2 – 2013 and 2020
<p>THE MEADOWS - SATURDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2012</p>  <p>Name RSN Type Grade 5 Distance 525m Stakemoney \$5,000 - \$1,430 - \$720</p>	<p>SALE - SUNDAY, 6 JANUARY 2013</p>  <p>Name MORELLI FURNITURE + BEDTIME Type Grade 5 Distance 440m Stakemoney \$1,325 - \$375 - \$190</p>
<p>THE MEADOWS - SATURDAY, 15 AUGUST 2020</p>  <p>Name FEIKUAI GREYHOUNDS Type Grade 5 Distance 525m Stakemoney \$5,280 - \$1,510 - \$760</p>	<p>SALE - SUNDAY, 23 AUGUST 2020</p>  <p>GIPPSLANDS GOLD 98.3 440 metres Grade 5 Stakemoney 1st - \$1,405 2nd - \$400 3rd - \$200</p>

The above is context. GOTBA Vic survey results – out formally soon – show that 88% of participants are dissatisfied with prizemoney, with more than half saying that their participation is being endangered. Third party greyhound ownership is not viable for Lvl 3 prizemoney. It is tenuous at Lvl 2 prizemoney. More than 70% of recently polled participants demanded prizemoney increases in priority to other subsidies/amounts.

Rumours of prizemoney increases in Victoria abound, but we are now at a tipping point.

Be aware of GRV marketing announcements on 'record prizemoney' or 'top-ups' – often tiny overall increases paid purely because of expansion of the racing calendar (ie more races) at Level 3, or even simply ensuring that *already allocated / previously committed* prizemoney is actually paid out. Call it out. It matters in the long run.

GOTBA Vic wants real per race prizemoney increases in Victoria and a stated, guaranteed minimum % total GRV revenue return to participants of not less than 53% into the medium term, with open data on GRV revenue circulated publicly monthly by GRV to participants to ensure that this is occurring.

We will have more to say on this. GOTBA Vic awaits keenly GRV's annual report for 2019/20. We will be analysing it very closely.

Racing calendar

GRV is currently expanding its racing calendar from 23 meetings per week to as many as 26-27 per week over the next year or so.

GOTBA Vic is not satisfied there *is* a proper, medium-term considered case for an increased Victorian racing program, and certainly not a more Lvl 3 *prizemoney* (as opposed to grade) focused program. There are no 66% cost greyhounds. More meetings has medium and long-term costs (including after racing) borne by participants. It alters where Victorian greyhound racing sits compared to other States. It is not justified purely by being able to fill additional meetings during current COVID restrictions.

The focus should be on making the existing calendar as efficient as possible within the existing program, and increasing per race returns.

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Crises do end. Sometimes they have silver linings. One effect of them is to give perspective on what is important, and what is not. The present crisis shows just how important people are, and how ongoing participation by those who provide the product can be tenuous. The time will come for a re-examination, with that perspective, of how the sport best runs, and whether and how the sport and its various stakeholders can and should do better than the old status quo into the future.

Lynton Hogan, President GOTBA Vic

24 August 2020