



PRIORITIES and positions on some key industry
issues
(March 2021)



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Who we are:

A volunteer association that represents greyhound owners, trainers, breeders and other participant members in all areas of the sport of greyhound racing in Victoria.

What we want and key priorities

A fair and viable sport of greyhound racing that places people and animals at the heart of all decisions.

2021 key priorities:

- ▶ **PRIZEMONEY INCREASE AND EQUITY**
- ▶ **EQUITABLE REHOMING**
- ▶ **SAFER TRACK SURFACES**

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2021 - Our priorities

We will advance these priorities through:

- *increased member awareness*
- *GRV and Government engagement and lobbying*
- *traditional and social media activities.*

▶ Prizemoney

- ▶ AT LEAST 50 PERCENT OF GRV GROSS INCOME SHOULD BE RETURNED TO PARTICIPANTS
- ▶ GRV now returns lowest percentage of income to participants in more than decade. Should be \$7m-\$10m per year higher than it is.
- ▶ Participant returns REDUCED in 19/20 despite more meetings and races being conducted (unacceptable)
- ▶ Victorian greyhound racing prizemoney must increase significantly, on a per race basis - pay fairly for product

▶ Rehoming

- ▶ Develop a proper pathway for the retirement of all racing greyhounds, that gives all dogs the same opportunity in retirement (not just those who pass the GAP assessment)
- ▶ Provide support and financial assistance to all registered volunteer rehoming groups, not just per dog funding

▶ Surfaces

- ▶ Safety - GRV to action findings of independent reports
- ▶ Clear communication to trainers of all proposed works
- ▶ Five year program of works



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Our position on common industry/sport issues in Victoria

- ▶ In the following slides, we note, in shortened form, our organisational position on the following issues:
 - ▶ Prizemoney
 - ▶ Track surfaces
 - ▶ Rehoming/Greyhound Adoption
 - ▶ Administration of the sport in Victoria
 - ▶ Grading
 - ▶ Integrity and the disciplinary system
 - ▶ Animal welfare
 - ▶ Injury reporting

GOTBA Vic: Our position and areas of concern: PRIZEMONEY

Prizemoney: Participants in Victoria are **UNDERPAID** by \$7M-\$10M every year.

Our issues:

- ▶ Prizemoney decline over many years despite an increase in GRV income. Cost increases are creating huge pressure on participants.
- ▶ Victoria is now 3rd or 4th in Australia for per race returns, despite having most income.
- ▶ Level 2 and Level 3 returns too low - grave sustainability issue.
- ▶ Third party ownership not sustainable for other than Level 1 and good Level 2 greyhounds.
- ▶ Calendar increases - more races, more meetings at Level 3 not acceptable : NO MORE calendar changes at lowest possible cost to GRV
- ▶ Cannot have GRV executive salaries increase by more than participant returns
- ▶ **Minimum 50 percent of GRV gross income should be returned to participants annually (42.9% in 19/20, down from 48% in FY15/16 and 53% in FY 14/15)**

**GOTBA Vic:
Our position
and areas of
concern:
TRACK
SURFACES**

Track safety: all aspects of tracks must be safe for racing greyhounds, above all other considerations (eg fast times)

Our issues/areas of concern:

- ▶ Inconsistent surfaces and profiles lead to unnecessary catastrophic injuries or deaths - ongoing seasonal issues remain at known tracks
- ▶ Any major maintenance **MUST** be communicated to trainers for safe racing/trialling - no **DEEP HARROWING** without prior notice on Fastrack
- ▶ Development of gold standard track specifications using previously obtained independent reports
- ▶ Industry needs to publish and action a five year works program.

GOTBA Vic: Our position and areas of concern: REHOMING /GREYHOUND ADOPTION

Adoption is vital to the ongoing viability of greyhound racing. We need to maximise it, and break through the 2700 barrier.

Position:

- ▶ All greyhounds should have the same opportunity in retirement, as dogs passing GAP assessment. This is the path to maximum rehoming.
- ▶ Industry assistance to be available for all retired greyhounds for desexing, dental, vaccination, certain injury rehab costs - balance with owner obligations
- ▶ Maintain flexibility in mode and method: lots of people and groups do it well
- ▶ Support aims and activities of GRV and all other (pro/neutral) adoption groups in promoting and achieving increased adoptions
- ▶ Financial support for registered volunteer rehoming groups, NOT just GRV funding per dog
- ▶ Increasing adoptions past 2700 - we can do better
- ▶ No unnecessary increase to size of racing greyhound stock without overall adoptability assessment

GOTBA Vic: Our position and areas of concern: Administration of the sport

Administration: An activity for maximising the benefits of greyhound racing in the community. It must be efficient and place those who work in the sport - the people and the animals first.

Our issues:

- ▶ Victoria is no longer the leading jurisdiction in Australia.
- ▶ GRV far too big and wasteful. 190 full time staff; \$60m spent annually on things other than prizemoney.
- ▶ Arrogance - not answerable. Tendency to 'rule from above', too many questions go unanswered, default to decisions to increase participant burden.
- ▶ Culture: A 'We work for Government' culture rather than 'We work for participants and industry'? Over focus on internal marketing.

**GOTBA Vic:
Our position
and areas of
concern:
Grading**

Grading must maximise the racing opportunities and prizemoney potential of each greyhound, with simplicity and transparency

Our issues:

- ▶ **Keep it simple, but flexible: avoid unnecessary conditions**
- ▶ **Avoiding ‘blockages’: greyhounds should be able to move promptly up or down in grade**

GOTBA Vic: Our position and areas of concern: The disciplinary system

Disciplinary system must treat participants with fairness, respect and dignity, but apply firm penalties to persons found guilty of positive wrongdoing.

Our common issues:

- ▶ Adversarial, over punishment of obviously accidental or inconsequential (ie trace) positive swabs: disconnect with impacts on racing (ie no performance enhancement)
- ▶ Thresholds and warning system required
- ▶ Poor recognition of mental health effects on participants of engagement with system
- ▶ Excessive, cardboard cut-out penalties, wider detrimental effect on the sport and the community around it.
 - ▶ Far too onerous compared to equivalent in thoroughbreds, harness
 - ▶ Professionals (doctors, lawyers etc) rarely suspended or disqualified save for offences of intentional conduct. Why is it different?

GOTBA Vic:
Our position
and areas of
concern:
Integrity:
what is it?

Integrity: Everyone (including regulated and regulator) following proper rules and procedures that are created with regard to, and in true consultation with, participants. A firm but fair - enforcement of the same.

Our areas of concern:

- ▶ Broad-based inefficient rules that apply wide costs, without wide benefits
- ▶ Ineffective/no change contemplated consultation
- ▶ Stewards to be obeyed BUT they must be **answerable** for fair, respectful conduct towards participant in enforcing rules;
- ▶ Enforcement: Inflexible penalty system does not recognise effects - treatment should more reflective of disciplinary system for professionals

GOTBA Vic:
Our position
and areas of
concern:
Injury
reporting

Injury reporting must reflect the true injury rate having regard to athletic nature of the sport

Our issues:

- ▶ Reporting of stand downs of less than 10 days, as injuries. Particularly if greyhounds are subsequently cleared and race within that period, is practice is detrimental to the image of greyhound racing



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