

The NSW Greyhound Breeders, Owners & Trainers' Association



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Greyhound Racing NSW
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cc: NSW Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission; stacey.bennett@racing.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir / Madam,

The NSW Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association, on behalf of its members, makes the following submission with regards to the proposed Greyhounds Australasia Rule changes.

Introduction

The NSW Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association (NSW GBOTA) is an advocacy body which seeks to promote the position of NSW participants. It believes that the development of rules and regulation should be undertaken in strong consultation with industry stakeholders so as to ensure that sound policies and rules are developed, based upon science and evidence, which are able to be clearly understood and complied with.

The development of the proposed rule changes by Greyhounds Australasia has not been undertaken with prior consultation with industry stakeholders. Therefore, NSW GBOTA believes that a number of the proposed changes are not holistic in their approach, have not been supported by research, nor do they have regard, in all instances, for the racing greyhound's welfare.

Greyhounds Australasia released the proposed rule changes in February 2018 with an intent of implementation on March 1, 2018. NSW GBOTA believes that for NSW, consideration of rule implementation must be delayed so as to allow consideration by the NSW Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC). This consideration may also include a full review

of the rules of racing, as per the Greyhound Racing Act 2017:

12 Functions of Commission

The Commission has the following functions:

- (a) to control, supervise and regulate (subject to this Act) greyhound racing in the State,***
- (b) to initiate, develop and implement policies relating to the welfare of greyhounds***
- (c) to undertake research and investigation into any aspect of the breeding of greyhounds and of greyhound racing generally***
- (d) to consult with animal welfare bodies in developing change to legislation relating to the welfare of greyhounds***
- (e) to provide the Minister with such information, advice or reports as the Minister may request***
- (f) to inform the Minister about any event or matter that may adversely affect the integrity of greyhound racing***
- (g) such other functions as are conferred or imposed on the Commission by or under this or any other Act.***

The NSW GBOTA would therefore call on GRNSW to delay the consideration of the proposed changes until at least September 1, 2018 to allow the GWIC review.

The following response has been provided to each proposal so to assist GWIC consideration in the latter half of 2018.

GAR 1 – Definition of Prohibited Substances

The NSW GBOTA is opposed to the proposed rule change. The Association's objection relates to:

- (b) lxii: vitamins administered by injection
- (e) *unusual or abnormal amounts of an endogenous, environmental, dietary or otherwise naturally present, substance;*

Greyhounds Australasia's release indicates that the rule changes are to align the industry rules with the other codes of racing. (e) does not align to RNSW Rules of Racing as an example, however. This clause, in particular, is so broad that it does not provide participants with clear guidelines for racing. Given the obligation upon a participant to present a greyhound for racing in accordance with NRR 83(a)2: *The owner, trainer or person in charge of a greyhound – shall present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance*, NSW GBOTA believes absolute clarity must be provided to the participant to ensure compliance with the Rules of Racing. Currently (e) as proposed, would make this impossible.

With regards to (b) *lxii: vitamins administered by injection*, NSW GBOTA seeks clarity as to the intent of the rule. Greyhounds race with greater frequency than either gallopers or trotters. Therefore, the ability for participants to safely aid the recovery process is imperative to the overall welfare of the greyhound. In addition, it is not uncommon for greyhounds to have to travel for greater periods of time to and from race meetings, as well

as be kenneled for a period of up to four hours without trainer access or monitoring. Therefore, rules must have regard for the differences that apply in the racing codes and the metabolism variations that apply. At the current time it is the position of NSW GBOTA that insufficient research has been conducted around the use of injectable vitamins and their impact upon assisting greyhounds which for example cramp or are poor travelers and whether Vitamin B12, C or B-Complex do provide performance enhancing benefits. This work should be undertaken prior to any rule change implementation.

Further to this proposed change, NSW GBOTA believes that the GWIC needs to undertake further industry consultation around the understanding and terminology of “prohibited substances” and “permanently banned substances”. NSW GBOTA believes that further education and ongoing support is required including details on withholding periods, applications and impact upon racing. Education remains critical to the industry’s approach to improved welfare outcomes.

GAR 1 – Norethisterone exemption

The NSW GBOTA supports the proposed change and further consideration of alternatives into the future.

GAR 21A – National Ban on consecutive days racing

The NSW GBOTA supports the proposed rule change, however, support systems and procedures must be updated also. Examples of why this is required is provided below.

Example: A participant nominates for a race meeting and is drawn as a second reserve. The participant, based upon their assessment of the field may make the decision to nominate for a subsequent meeting 24 hours following. Should the greyhound gain a start in the initial meeting, then it must be able to withdraw from the secondary meeting without penalty.

NSW, and presumably the remainder of Australia, will be presented in the near future, with a landscape which requires as many greyhounds as possible to be available to sustain full fields. Therefore, a greyhound which may have been drawn as a reserve could aid a field at a meeting on a subsequent day. The development of a system which allows this to occur will only benefit the NSW greyhound racing industry.

GAR 79A – Out of Competition Testing / List of permanently banned prohibited substances to be expanded in Greyhounds Australasia Rules

NSW GBOTA believes that, as it is currently written, the rules are a catch all and don’t have regard for examples where appropriate animal welfare considerations are being undertaken, supported by veterinarian guidance. As the application of 79A applies from birth to retirement, as stated by GA’s own release, the use of listed prohibited substances could therefore be considered against the rules of racing, despite being undertaken for the benefit of the greyhound.

Examples included, but are not limited to:

(vii) Insulin. *“They can produce a performance enhancing effect, and have welfare concerns*

for greyhounds which are treated with these substances without therapeutic cause, however treatment for therapeutic reasons would require retirement of the greyhound from racing.”

(GA Release)

NSW GBOTA seeks the basis for this statement from Greyhounds Australasia. Particularly the determination that a greyhound which is appropriately diagnosed, monitored and treated by a qualified veterinarian with Insulin for therapeutic reasons cannot continue to race, if deemed appropriate by the treating veterinarian.

(viii) Growth Hormones.

The rule is again a catch all. There may be examples as to the need for growth hormone in the early stages of development, supported by Veterinarian advice. While the Association is not aware of any testing applying to greyhounds younger than 16months of age, the rules must be written in such a way that ensure appropriate use by a qualified professional can still apply where required.

(xvii) Venoms.

The rule is again a catch all. Should a greyhound be bitten and having sought treatment, then the presence of venom in out of competition testing should not be of concern. There is no supporting system which easily allows a participant to note when the greyhound is in the preparation of racing or out of racing and therefore under specific care and management. The rule as it is currently presented does not appear to have regard for these issues.

(xx) Anabolic Steroid.

The use of anabolic steroid to assist in the treatment of conditions such as acidosis, under veterinarian care is imperative. Obviously, the steroid would need to be out of the greyhound's system prior to racing but the treatment is essential and the rules must accommodate this reality. NSW GBOTA believes further work with appropriate industry representatives and treating veterinarians is required prior to the implementation of any catch all rule.

(xxiii) Hydrocortisone.

The NSW GBOTA note that the current rules of racing have a threshold of 1000 nanograms per milliliter of urine. The Association does not hold enough data at the current time to understand the relative levels of Cortisone administered to achieve this concentration level. The NSW GBOTA believes further information is required to understand what is an unacceptable level and again if a greyhound is not racing and under treatment, that sufficient room exists for the safe treatment and pain management of those greyhounds.

GAR 83A – Restrictions on Treatment prior to racing

The NSW GBOTA does not support the proposed rule change as it is currently written.

- (1) No person without the permission of the Stewards may administer or cause to be administered any treatment to a greyhound at any time on the day of the meeting until that greyhound is no longer presented for an Event.*

(2) *The Stewards may order that any greyhound that has been administered a treatment in contravention of sub-rule (1) of this Rule be withdrawn from an Event.*

(3) *In addition to sub-rule (1) of this Rule, no person without the permission of Stewards may administer or cause to be administered any injectable substance to a greyhound at any time on the day prior to the day of an Event that it is nominated to compete in.*

For the purposes of this Rule, “treatment” includes:

- a) All Controlled Drugs (Schedule 8) administered by a veterinarian;*
- b) All Prescription Animal Remedies and Prescription Only Medicines (Schedule 4);*
- c) Any injectable substance not already specified in this Rule;*
- d) All Pharmacist Only (Schedule 3) and Pharmacy Only (Schedule 2) medicines;*
- e) All veterinary and other substances containing other scheduled and unscheduled prohibited substances.*

For the purposes of this Rule, “day” means the 24 hour period from 12:01am to 12 midnight on any calendar day.

Concerns held by the NSW GBOTA are:

83A (1) – the rule is again a catch all. Given treatment includes any prescription administered by a Veterinarian and any injectable.

The concerns are supported by further statements made within the GA release *“Therefore, the change now means that no injectable substance can be administered to a greyhound on the day prior to an Event it is nominated to compete in. As is currently the case, an injectable substance is any substance that is designed to be, or capable of being, administered by injection regardless of whether it is given by injection.”*

NSW GBOTA believes that given the change of rules to prevent administration of any treatment from 12.01am, the day prior to racing, that this rule, as it is written does not ensure appropriate animal welfare outcomes. The proposed change does not have regard for the differences which apply between greyhound racing and the horse codes, such as travel and kenneling.

Further the release makes comment *“Where a “treatment” is required to be given daily e.g. oestrous suppression, this can be given after the greyhound has completed its engagement in an Event and left the racecourse (i.e. given on the nightly feed at home).”* NSW GBOTA believes this is counter to Veterinarian advice of consistent administration.

The proposed rules, due to a lack of consultation, do not have regard for the reasons participants may seek to administer product such as electrolyte supplement. *“Only normal feeding and supplementation that can be achieved by the greyhound voluntarily eating or drinking can be considered acceptable on the day of racing. For the avoidance of doubt, in order to comply with this rule no tablets, capsules, caplets, pills, etc or any liquid, paste, etc*

that requires syringing into the oral cavity to encourage administration should be administered on the day of racing. Standard administration of an oral electrolyte supplement is acceptable if voluntarily drunk or eaten by the greyhound.” There are a range of greyhounds which, due to temperament, are unlikely to consume products such as electrolytes. The proposed rule and application is therefore very concerning to NSW GBOTA, and should not be implemented without further testing and industry consultation.

GAR84A – Treatment record requirement

NSW GBOTA believes that until there is the development of a system which allows more comprehensive recording and ease of recording, that daily recording requirements should not be enforceable. It is the view of the Association that records do need to be kept up to date, but within a reasonable period of 5-7 days may be more suitable.

Further, the rule as written references a greyhound, without stipulating age or in fact where it applies only to a racing greyhound. The suggestion within the paper is for the records to commence at 16 months of age. This should be supported which specific detail within the rule.

Conclusion

NSW GBOTA supports the early engagement with industry stakeholders to ensure rule changes will not be detrimental to the overall welfare of the greyhound. It is the view of the NSW GBOTA that a delay must be undertaken in NSW so to allow proper consideration of the rules in line with the Greyhound Racing Act 2017.