



MEDIA STATEMENT

MONDAY 19 AUGUST 2019

GREYHOUND REGULATOR RESPONDS TO CRITICISM

The Commission is aware of recent public commentary suggesting the Commission is an overzealous regulator and is attempting to shut the greyhound racing industry down by stealth. The Commission rejects these claims outright.

In the first 12 months of its operations, the Commission has successfully oversighted more than 11,000 race starts at 1,178 race meetings. It has processed more than 22,800 transactions and taken more than 18,000 phone calls from participants. The Commission has also introduced for the first time ever, new online services to make things easier and more efficient for participants.

As part of the recent process to renew registrations, over 4,300 participants have made a conscious decision to remain in the industry. Over the past 12 months, another 260 individuals have also entered the industry for the first time, and over 350 individual breeders in NSW have made decisions to breed more than 500 litters and 3,747 pups.

Since commencement the Commission has created new mechanisms to engage with participants and to seek their views on matters pertaining to the industry, such as the GWIC Industry Knowledge Network, participation by trainers on the Race injury Review Panel, breeders forums and pop-up stands manned by Commission staff at race meetings across the state.

All of the above suggests that the vast majority of participants have confidence in the industry going forward.

In relation to the Commission's regulatory programs, more than 700 kennel inspections have taken place involving 3,300 greyhounds. The vast majority of these inspections have occurred without complaint and have shown that the majority of participants provide excellent care for their greyhounds. Of the kennel inspections undertaken the Commission's Inspectors issued 55 welfare notices and assisted those participants to meet their requirements.

The Commission uses body worn cameras for staff working in the field to ensure inspectors are doing their jobs as expected. Participants are advised of this at the commencement of every inspection. The use of body worn cameras protects participants as much as Commission staff as the footage provides audio and visual evidence of what occurs at every inspection. Participants are entitled to a copy of the footage taken at their inspections upon request. To date, only one request has been received. A review of the footage relating to any complaint lodged by a participant is an essential component of the complaint handling process. Very often the complaint is not supported by close review of the body worn camera footage.

In its first 12 months more than 350 welfare and integrity concerns have been reported to the Commission by members of the community. Of these 280 have been subject to some form of regulatory response, which could be an inspection of kennels; advice to participants on how to address health or welfare issues with their dogs; and in some cases, disciplinary action. The Commission does not apologise for taking

responsible and proportionate action to protect the welfare of greyhounds that fall within the Commission's jurisdiction.

Under the Greyhound Racing Act, the Commission also has responsibility for the welfare of retired greyhounds. Recently the Commission contracted an independent, external firm to conduct an investigation into the handling of a complaint from a participant who was advised by one of the Commission's inspectors to seek veterinary attention for a retired greyhound. The Commission has confidence in the process, conduct and outcome of that investigation.

The NSW greyhound racing industry has come a long way in 12 months. As exposed in the McHugh and Iemma reviews, the Commission exists because the previous model of industry self-regulation failed.

The Commission will continue to work with the industry to ensure NSW is leading the way in protecting the welfare of greyhounds and safeguarding the integrity of the industry. That way the Commission is able to assist the industry achieve a secure and viable future.

Media contact: Katie 0448 193 270