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26 October 2023

Kempshall's Counting Down to a Paw-some Birthday

Counting down the days until your birthday when you become eligible for your licence – it is a rite of passage which all teenagers experience, but when it comes to Jasper Kempshall there is a twist.

The licence that Kempshall is so eager to be eligible for is his associate attendant registration from the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) when he turns 14 on July 29.

The smile on the face of the Sandy Crossing teenager when he talks about one day becoming a greyhound trainer is as big as the Clarence River.

“I am really excited, it’s going to be fun. I’ve been counting down the days since day dot,” Kempshall said.

“I was just thrilled to find out I could do it, I was ready to do it as soon as I could. I was working every trial day, every time I could. I was just having fun with the sport.

“Mum and Dad will be ready to retire soon, so I might take over the business in a couple of years’ time. It will be good, I will have a lot of fun with that,” he cheekily adds.

Having grown up on his family property - Blaster Park Greyhound Kennels - Kempshall has learned plenty from watching his parents Warren and Sonia work with, and care for, greyhounds.

When he was 12 Kempshall immediately applied for a junior attendant permit from GWIC, which allowed him to catch and box greyhounds under supervision at greyhound trials.

That sparked his desire to do more.

“I got involved through Mum and Dad, they always used to bring me down to the kennels – whether it was cleaning up or walking dogs out, it all depended on what they wanted me to do,” he said.

“When they’re training the dogs and you’re seeing how they run, seeing them have fun competing with each other, seeing what they can do, it’s really fun. “It is a lot of fun finding out their skills and working out what they’re not good at, helping them perform better.”

The associate attendant licence registration process includes an assessment from GWIC stewards to ensure Kempshall can safely handle greyhounds and act as a catcher at race meetings.

If approved, he can fulfil those actions under the supervision of an adult who holds a current attendant registration.

The Commission’s acting chief steward Dean Degan was the man tasked with overseeing Kempshall’s assessment, which involved watching how comfortable and confident he is with greyhounds, how he rugs greyhounds and his competency in boxing greyhounds.

It is a part of the job that Degan finds particularly rewarding.

“Jasper, I have seen him at the track since he was a young one and I am really looking forward to seeing Jasper progress through his career. I know he has been waiting a long time for this,” Degan said.



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“It’s great to see the young ones coming through, we need the next generation. Most of them have been brought up by a family involved in greyhound racing. I like to support them and encourage them because they are our future.”

Just as he has enjoyed watching greyhounds trained by his parents find success, Kempshall has appreciated the encouragement he has received from GWIC.

It’s one of the reasons why Kempshall thinks more teenagers should get involved with the sport.

“I get a lot of support from GWIC, especially at the track. They support me a lot with what I want to do and show me how to do things,” he said.

“It’s good to get a dog and see how far you can go with it. It just feels awesome to see them win, to know that your dogs are going well and that you’ve put in the hard work and it’s come back as a gift. Seeing how happy Mum and Dad are when our dogs win, it’s super cool.

“It’s the funnest sport you can get into, it’s just so fun with the dogs, they show you a lot of affection.”