

# MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, 11 March 2015



## **Commissioner delivers interim report into live baiting allegations in Greyhound racing**

The Racing Integrity Commissioner, Sal Perna, yesterday delivered to the Minister for Racing, an interim report on the Commissioner's own motion inquiry into live baiting in Greyhound racing in Victoria.

The Commissioner's inquiry commenced following the allegations that were aired on the ABC Four Corners program on Monday 16 February 2015.

This report outlines interim findings and recommendations arising from the own motion inquiry which commenced on Tuesday 17 February 2015 and includes a preliminary analysis of information and intelligence collected up to midday on Friday 6 March 2015.

The interim report is the result of interviews with current and former employees of GRV including the Board, CEO, senior management and staff involved in the integrity and welfare functions as well as industry participants, stakeholders and the general public. In a number of instances, the Commissioner exercised his power to compel attendance at an examination to give evidence under oath or affirmation in accordance with section 37BA of the *Racing Act 1958*.

The interim findings include the following:

1. Whilst to date there is no direct evidence of live baiting occurring at any other Victorian registered Greyhound facility apart from the Tooradin Trial track, it would be naïve to accept that this practice is not, and has not, been occurring elsewhere in Victoria.

The weight of information from industry participants indicates that the practice continues to occur as a clandestine method of educating, breaking in and training of Greyhounds for racing.

2. There is no evidence that the GRV Board, CEO or senior management knew about the practice of live baiting occurring in Victoria. It is understandable that a general perception exists that certain persons in GRV knew by virtue of their relationship with industry participants but there's no evidence to date to support this.

3. On the balance of probabilities, GRV could not have been expected to know about this practice when taking into consideration the lack of powers in regards to entry and inspection of properties

and the approaches used by those at GRV who are charged with detecting this type of practice.

4. There is no current evidence to substantiate the allegations that there was corruption or a 'cover up' at GRV in regards to live baiting at Tooradin or elsewhere.

"I have recommended to the Minister that a number of changes be implemented to address the issues I have identified as part of this own motion inquiry. These include:

- The increase of powers for animal welfare compliance and education and integrity staff at GRV;
- That GRV introduce a regulatory framework for any premises or person involved in the education, breaking in, and training of Greyhounds;
- The initiating of a review and trial by GRV of alternate methods to assist Greyhounds to consistently chase the lure and perform at their best e.g. 'run on' and 'hoop' lures;
- That GRV amend the rules of racing so only lures made of synthetic or artificial materials can be used;
- That GRV introduce requirements that a) all trainers that are subject of a suspension or disqualification, must obtain prior approval from the Chief Steward or his delegate before being permitted to transfer their Greyhounds to another registered person, b) to prohibit the transfer of Greyhounds from a suspended or disqualified person to a relative, spouse of legally defined partner, and c) that any suspension of a registered person also apply to that person's property or properties; and
- That GRV initiate formalised agreements/ Memoranda of Understanding with relevant animal welfare groups. Such agreements to include arrangements for the exchange of information and **immediate** reporting of alleged and suspected animal cruelty related issues in the Greyhound industry to relevant authorities".

"I am at a loss to understand the acceptance by some industry participants of the use of live animals in the training of Greyhounds. I will address the issue of culture in my final report which will be made public. In that final report I also intend to make comment regarding the need to undertake a national study to implement the introduction of a registration process to encompass the life cycle of a racing Greyhound."

The own motion inquiry will continue until Friday 10 April 2015 and any person with information regarding the practice of live baiting in Victorian Greyhound racing is encouraged to contact the office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner.

A final report will be delivered by Thursday 30 April 2015.

To contact the Office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner, please call 8684 7776; fax 8684 7778; email [enquiries@racingintegrity.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@racingintegrity.vic.gov.au) or contact the Racing Integrity Hotline on 1300 227 225.

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