

Grading Survey Results & Recommendations

23 April 2021

GRV is currently undertaking a review of its current Grading Guidelines and thanks all Victorian participants that completed the recent Grading Survey. The survey was conducted during February 2021.

GRV has collated all responses and reviewed insights shared by participants to improve on the current grading guidelines. Proposed recommendations are part of this document and have been discussed with the Industry Consultancy Group (ICG) and GOTBA representatives and are now being shared with all participants for further feedback.

A total of 329 responses were received for the Grading Survey that took place in February 2021 and results are detailed below.

Question 1 - How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the current Grading and selection process? 1 being very unsatisfied, 5 being very satisfied.

The average score across all responses was 2.28

Question 2 - What is your level of understanding of how the ranking of a greyhound is calculated? 1 being very low, 5 being very high.

The average score across all responses was 3.04

Question 3 - What is your level of understanding of the various selection processes? 1 being very low, 5 being very high.

The average score across all responses was 3.14

Question 4 - What is your level of understanding of how the aged prizemoney (APM) figure is calculated? 1 being very low, 5 being very high.

The average score across all responses was 3.12

GRV acknowledges that several participants are unsatisfied with the current grading guidelines which suggests there is an appetite to see changes to the current grading model. Results for questions relating to participants level of understanding were similar across the different questions asked, with a large range of responses. The objective of the review is to explore opportunities available to simplify the guidelines and make it easier for participants to understand whilst ensuring a transparent and fair grading system.

Grade 6 & 7 Structure

78% of respondents support the current grade 6 & 7 structure in Victoria.
61% of respondents would also support the expansion of Grade 6 & 7 to include 2 wins in each category.

GRV - The most common response throughout the survey was that much more needs to be done to protect young greyhounds moving through the grades and greyhounds with low win counts. There was support for an expansion to two wins in each grade however GRV have undertaken an analysis of the current racing population and a change like this would result in very small nomination numbers for standard grade 5 events. GRV also considered the expansion of grade 6 to include greyhounds with 2 and 3 wins, however after consultation with GOTBA it was agreed that changes to the ranking points table and removal of Aged Prizemoney as the main selection method to better support low win greyhounds moving through the grades be first introduced with the impacts on the population and race composition monitored. If this change does not get the desired

result of protecting young greyhounds, then the grade 6 & 7 structure will be further reviewed.

Tier 3 Racing

37% of respondents believe that Tier 3 time standards require no change.

25% of respondents believe time standard should be lowered.

24% believed time standards should be increased.

A further 14% were not familiar with Tier 3 time standards.

57% of respondents did not support the removal of the 250+ ranking condition to be Tier 3 eligible.

GRV recommend no change to the current Tier 3 structure. Reserves will be removed from bottom-up graded meetings to ensure the greyhound with the lowest rank gains a start on each occasion.

Selection Methods

73% of respondents believe that a greyhounds ranking is a better assessment of ability when compared with Aged Prizemoney figure (APM).

74% of respondents did not believe Aged Prizemoney (APM) is a good method for selection.

77% of respondents supported a universal selection method for all levels of racing.

66% of respondents believe the current Special Event selection method works the best.

87% of respondents support the 2 unplaced run per track and distance to drop back in grade.

61% of respondents would support a trial that uses finishing time as a method to calculate rank.

When given the opportunity to order the factors used for selection results were:

1. Recent Form
2. Winning Times
3. Greyhounds Rankings
4. Prizemoney won
5. Unsuccessful Noms
6. Time Since Last run
7. Aged Prizemoney Figure

When given the opportunity to select a main selection method the results were:

1. Ranking
2. Times
3. Other
4. Win Count
5. Aged Prizemoney Figure
6. Overall Prizemoney

GRV propose to make the greatest number of changes to this area of the guidelines. Introduction of a consistent order of entry for all levels of race meetings will assist in understanding which greyhounds are selected. Aged Prizemoney (APM) will be removed as the main factor used for field selection and a greyhound's individual rank used as the main factor for field selection. Modification to the ranking points table will be made to give more weight to greyhounds that compete a metropolitan level and less weight to greyhounds competing in maiden, grade 7 & 6 races to better protect younger greyhounds moving through the grades.

Consecutive Days

61% of respondents support the expansion of the consecutive day rule to two days.
28% of respondents did not support the expansion
11% were not familiar with the rule

GRV propose to explore benefits and consequences of expanding the consecutive day rule to two days. The consecutive day rule cannot be updated as part of a rewrite of the grading guidelines.

Prizemoney

57% of respondents did not believe overall prizemoney should be a factor in race selection.

53% of respondents stated that all runners should not receive prizemoney instead of starters and travel fees.

GRV do not consider overall prizemoney for race selection and recommend no change to this area.

Programming

59% of respondents believe more races should be graded by gender alone.

GRV plan to highlight upcoming female greyhound only races via the greyhound monthly and Racing Update email. Grading more races on gender alone will reduce the number of nominations for certain grade and distance events resulting in greyhounds being drawn into unsuitable races based on gender. If nomination demand outweighs the current number of advertised events, GRV would then look to add more female greyhound only races to the calendar.

Distance Racing

51% of respondents believe that 6 should be the minimum number of nominations required to program a distance race.

23% of respondents believe that 5 should be the minimum number of nominations required to program a distance race.

13% of respondents believe that 4 should be the minimum number of nominations required to program a distance race.

7% of respondents believe that 7 should be the minimum number of nominations required to program a distance race.

5% of respondents believe that 8 should be the minimum number of nominations required to program a distance race.

78% of respondents are comfortable that a distance event with less than 8 nominations should be programmed ahead of a full field over shorter distances.

GRV recommend modifying the grading guidelines to grade a Free For All Events, distance events and advertised event when 6 nominations are received. GRV may elect to grade races when less than 6 nominations are received.

Upgrading

59% of respondents support the current auto-upgrade for provincial racing.

Of the 41% that did not support the auto-upgrade, the most common responses were Group Race and City wins should be used to upgrade greyhounds at provincial venues.

GRV recommend updating the automatic upgrade criteria from \$25,000 in prizemoney to \$35,000 in prizemoney to reflect recent prizemoney increases.

Comments

Participants were given the opportunity to respond to three open questions. The most common themes are listed below.

What are you most satisfied with the current system?

- Grade 6 & Grade 7 structure.
- Ranking Races at provincial meetings.
- Tier 3 and unsuccessful nomination count.

What are you least satisfied with the current system?

- Aged Prizemoney (APM).
- Young greyhounds being out graded early in career.
- Advertised Events (Hybrid Races) not being programmed when nominations are high.

Additional thoughts or improvements to streamline the grading process?

- Younger greyhounds need more protection moving through the grades.
- Explore opportunities available to remove current track and distance grading model.
- Expansion of Grade 6 and Grade 7 to include more wins.

Summary of Recommendations

Short Term

- Complete rewrite the Grading Guidelines
- Remove irrelevant or out of date rules in current grading guidelines
- Modification to the ranking points table to achieve the following:
 - Give more weight to greyhounds that compete a metropolitan level.
 - Less weight greyhounds competing in maiden, grade 7 & 6 races to better protect younger greyhounds moving through the grades.
- Modification to the minimum number of nominations required for a Free For All event, distance event and advertised event.
- Introduction of a consistent order of entry for all levels of race meetings (Tier 3 and Maiden events excluded)
- Removal of Aged Prizemoney (APM) as the main selection method used and changing to using a greyhounds individual ranking as the main selection method.
- Highlight Bitches only races in Racing Update and Greyhound Monthly.
- Redefine the definition of city win.
- Removal of Metropolitan upgrades
- Update the automatic upgrade criteria from \$25,000 in prizemoney to \$35,000 in prizemoney to reflect recent prizemoney increases.
- Removal of reserves at Bottom-Up Meetings
- All heats to be graded using seeded/random/guarded method with the top 25% seeded based on the greyhound individual rank and not Aged Prizemoney (APM) figure.
- All standard races will be banded together based on greyhounds of similar rank instead of Aged Prizemoney (APM) figure.

Mid Term

- Develop a Ranking calculator that participants can access to better understand how a greyhounds ranking is calculated.
- Redefine the definition of distance categories to be consistent with recent prizemoney increase.
- Explore areas of improvement for the same day engagement guidelines.

Long Term

- Explore opportunities and appetite for a state-wide grading system that replaces track and distance grading.
- Develop and trial a rating system that uses finishing time.
- Analysis benefits and consequences of expanding the consecutive day rule to 2 days instead of 1.

Feedback on the results of the grading survey and recommendations are welcome via graders@grv.org.au

Members of the GRV Racing Department will also be in attendance at the following race meetings to discuss the survey results, recommendations and general questions participants may have:

- Sunday 2nd May – Sandown (SAP) – Provincial Full Stakes. 1:30pm to 4pm.
- Tuesday 4th May – Geelong – Preference to Maiden, Grade 7 & Grade 6. 2:30pm to 5pm.
- Wednesday 5th May – Bendigo – 250+ Rank Limit. 2pm to 5pm
- Tuesday 11th May – Healesville – Provincial Half Stakes. 10:30am to 1pm