

BRIEFING FOR THE MINISTER OF RACING			
<b>Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgent	<input type="checkbox"/> Time-Sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Routine
<b>Title</b>	Greyhound Review Work Programme - Racing Integrity Board quarterly update		
<b>Date</b>	28 May 2024	<b>Ref</b>	N/A

### Recommendations

The Racing Integrity Board (RIB) recommends the Minister for Racing:

- a) **Note** the RIB has assessed GRNZ's progress as at 30 April 2024 against the 15 focus areas used to monitor the Greyhound Review work programme and 14 were assessed as adequate or good progress and one assessed as slow.
- b) **Note** GRNZ's progress against the 75 recommendations in the RIB's December 2022 final report.
- c) **Note** GRNZ's performance against its KPIs for the first three quarters of the 2023/24 racing season.
- d) **Note** injury rates for the racing season to date and further findings following an expert independent data review, comparison with international benchmarks and GRNZ's injury reduction plan.
- e) **Note** GRNZ's current initiatives and progress to increase adoption rates.
- f) **Note** the RIB's concern at GRNZ's slow progress to amend its Rules to give full effect to the RIB's regulatory powers.
- g) **Agree** the RIB will continue to report quarterly on the agreed work programme, with the next report including Quarter 4 (up to 31 July 2024). **Yes / No**
- h) **Agree** this briefing is shared with the Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare). **Yes / No**
- i) **Agree** this briefing is shared with Greyhound Racing New Zealand. **Yes / No**
- j) **Agree** this briefing is published on the RIB's website. **Yes / No**

### Minister's comments and signature

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Hon Minister for Racing

## **Greyhound Review Work Programme – Racing Integrity Board quarterly update**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this briefing is to provide you with an update on the Greyhound Review Work Programme and Greyhound Racing New Zealand's (GRNZ's) progress since the last briefing. This briefing covers Quarter 3 (February to April) of the 2023/24 racing season and an update on subsequent activity as appropriate.

### **Background**

2. On 13 February 2024, the RIB received direction from you that the current level of monitoring of this work and quarterly reporting continue until further notice.
3. In accordance with your expectations, the RIB has continued to monitor GRNZ's progress at a level consistent with that undertaken since late 2021.
4. This is the fifth Minister's briefing provided on the Greyhound Review programme (refer to briefings 14 April, 14 September, 19 December 2023 and 11 April 2024) since the RIB submitted its Greyhound Review Final Report on 12 December 2022.
5. This briefing provides an update on GRNZ's progress against the review programme's 15 focus areas, the RIB's 78 recommendations and GRNZ's 2023/24 key performance indicators (KPIs). (Appendix 2)
6. In the RIB's final report, GRNZ's progress against recommendations in the Hansen (2017) and Robertson (2021) reviews was assessed in two ways, as at 30 November 2022:
  - overall progress against the plan for each of the 15 focus areas (slow, adequate or good)
  - the status of each recommendation in the change management cycle (plan, implement, embed, evaluate or close).
7. For this briefing, the RIB assessed progress against the focus areas and the status of each recommendation in the December 2022 final report. The assessments in this briefing are as at 30 April 2024.
8. When assessing progress against focus areas, consideration has been given to the impact of changing priorities in response to emerging issues.

### **2024 Greyhound Review Work Programme**

9. GRNZ's programme plan covers the period February to July 2024. The planned activities remain consistent with the Greyhound Review focus areas.
10. GRNZ's progress against the plan is being monitored through joint fortnightly meetings. The GRNZ and RIB Chief Executives also meet on alternate fortnights, as do the programme leads.

### **Focus area progress assessment**

11. In the Quarter 3 assessment of the 15 focus areas, 10 are considered to have made good progress, four are adequate and one is slow. (Appendix 1)

12. Two focus areas (population management; and adjudicate and investigate) have moved from adequate to good progress over this period.
13. One focus area (standards, rules and policies) has been assessed as slow in Quarter 3, compared with an assessment of adequate in Quarter 1. This reflects GRNZ's ongoing delay in progressing rule changes, particularly those amendments which are required by the RIB to give full effect to its regulatory powers.
14. Comparatively, in December 2022, the RIB assessed five focus areas as slow, five as adequate and five as good.
15. This improvement in performance reflects GRNZ's commitment to progress over the last 16 months.

### **Status of recommendations**

16. Analysis of the recommendations in previous industry reviews highlighted concerns that GRNZ had not fully implemented or embedded changes to address report recommendations and there had been some regression.
17. In the December 2022 final report, the RIB assessed the status of the recommendations in previous reviews. This assessment involved reviewing the work on each recommendation to determine whether it was in the 'plan', 'implement', 'embed', 'evaluate' or 'closed' stage.
18. The RIB's December 2022 final report included 78 updated recommendations, of which three were for the RIB. The RIB's assessment of the remaining 75 recommendations in Quarters 1 and 3 of the 2023/24 racing season is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1: The RIB's assessment of the status of 75 recommendations from its December 2022 final report for Quarters 1 and 3 of the 2023/24 racing season.*

<b>Status of recommendations</b>	<b>Quarter 1 31 October 2023</b>	<b>Quarter 3 30 April 2024</b>
GRNZ not to progress	N/A	2 (3%)
Plan	15 (20%)	4 (5%)
Implement	27 (36%)	28 (37%)
Embed or Evaluate	26 (35%)	33 (44%)
Close	7 (9%)	8 (11%)

19. Progress to address recommendations over the last two quarters includes:
  - recommendations in the 'plan' stage reducing from 20% to 7%
  - recommendations in the 'embed' and 'evaluate' stage increasing from 35% to 44%.

20. GRNZ has advised it does not intend to progress two recommendations and the RIB is in agreement with the reprioritisation at this time:
  - implementing a code of conduct is not seen as a current priority
  - developing and implementing a safety management plan for transitioning greyhounds between oval tracks and the straight track is not considered necessary.
21. Should RIB monitoring continue, it would be timely and appropriate to review the scope of future monitoring, close matters as appropriate and assess the need to incorporate further items.

**Population management (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

22. Over the last 18 months, GRNZ's population management discussions have become broader, encompassing a range of population factors.
23. Since February 2024, GRNZ has included population management as a regular agenda item, along with a population report, at its Board and Animal Health and Welfare Committee meetings.
24. As outlined in the Quarter 2 briefing in April 2024, GRNZ remains concerned about the low levels of breeding over the last two seasons and how these impact on the number of greyhounds available to support the racing calendar.
25. In the 2021/22 racing season, 744 puppies were born. This compares with 471 in 2022/23 and 445 in the 2023/24 season as at 30 April 2024.
26. It should be noted Entain proposed an increase in racing events for the 2024/25 racing season. However, GRNZ advised this was not possible due to current population levels, with the racing calendar set to remain at a similar level to 2023/24.
27. In relation to population management, GRNZ also recognises the importance of rehoming initiatives to increase adoptions. (Refer to the Rehoming section)

## Injuries (GRNZ’s response assessed as ‘adequate’)

*Performance against GRNZ’s 2023/24 injury KPI targets for the season to date*

28. GRNZ reports its injury KPIs against a 2020/21 racing season benchmark and has set a target of a 15% reduction for this racing season (Table 2). The information in Table 2 is supplied by GRNZ and verified by the RIB.

*Table 2: GRNZ’s performance against injury KPIs for the year to date (2023/24 season).*

KPI Description	2023/24 KPI Target	2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024
Reduce the number of Category D <sup>1</sup> injuries as per GA <sup>2</sup> classifications (22+ days). Measured as rate per 1000 starters against a 2020/21 benchmark of 7.02.	15% reduction on benchmark 5.97 per 1000 starters	0.7% reduction on benchmark 6.97 per 1000 starters
Reduce the number of Category F <sup>3</sup> injuries as per GA classifications (43+ days). Measured as rate per 1000 starters against a 2020/21 benchmark of 2.44.	15% reduction on benchmark 2.07 per 1000 starters	20.3% increase on benchmark 2.93 per 1000 starters
Number of races on straight tracks.	150	0
Percentage of total races conducted as Preferred Box Draws (PBDs).	60%	66%

29. Although outside the Quarter 3 reporting period, the RIB notes that on 16 May there were two race day euthanasias at Addington in the same race, following racing interference. There was also a sudden death immediately post-race on Thursday 24 May at Whanganui, with sample analysis pending.
30. While unrelated to the race incident, that race meeting was abandoned due to concerns regarding the racing surface at a different part of the track. The race meeting scheduled for the following day was cancelled to enable GRNZ to undertake maintenance. Subsequent race meetings have taken place and GRNZ is undertaking further investigative work to inform their maintenance program.
31. There have been no races on straight tracks this racing season due to delays with the Whanganui straight track. Trials commenced in March and continue into May 2024, with racing expected to commence in June 2024 or when the track is deemed ready and safe for racing.
32. GRNZ remains on target to achieve its KPI to conduct 60% of races using Preferred Box Draws (PBD).

<sup>1</sup> Category D: Injuries with stand downs of 22 days or more.

<sup>2</sup> Greyhounds Australasia.

<sup>3</sup> Category F: Catastrophic and injuries with a 43-90 day stand down. Injuries that apply under Category F: death or euthanasia on-track; any skull or spine fracture or paralysis (partial or complete); any long bone fracture (i.e. humerus, radius/ulna, femur or tibia); a hock fracture/dislocation where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; metacarpal/metatarsal fracture where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; any other joint injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; a skin injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; a soft tissue injury (including muscle injury) where the stand-down period is 90 days

### *Injury data analysis*

33. The RIB has moved to enhance its statistical analysis methodology and during Quarter 3, worked with Dr Stephen Grice from Tara Science to obtain an independent expert analysis of sets of data produced to date. (Appendix 3)
34. Dr Grice's report identifies that the injury dataset is described by an expected probability distribution and that there are 'outlier' race meeting events with injury rates outside the expected distribution. An outlier, in statistical terms, refers to a data point that significantly deviates from the majority of other observations in the dataset.
35. The statistical analysis for Category D injuries indicates:
  - injury data is relatively constant over the four seasons, starting with the 2020/21 baseline year through to March 2024
  - the mean rate of injuries is 6.8 per 1000 starters over the four seasons to March 2024
  - the minimum rate of injuries, maximum rate and interquartile range<sup>4</sup> is almost constant over the four seasons
  - there are outlier race meetings with Category D injury rates outside the expected distribution.
36. The statistical analysis for category F injuries indicates:
  - the mean rate of injuries is 2.3 per 1000 starters over the four seasons starting with the 2020/21 baseline year through to March 2024
  - the minimum rate of injuries, maximum rate and interquartile range are all constant (zero) over the four racing seasons to March 2024
  - there has been a qualitative increase in Category F injury rates in the five months to March 2024
  - there are outlier race meetings with Category F injury rates outside the expected distribution
  - an increase in Category F injury rates has been observed over five months to March 2024 at Christchurch (Addington) and Auckland (Manukau). An increase has also been observed at Palmerston North (Manawatu) racetrack over six months to March 2024.
37. Dr Grice suggests further work could be undertaken to quantify where possible, which causal features or combination of features are responsible for outliers in the dataset.

### *Response to increased injury rates*

38. GRNZ's injury reduction taskforce, established in February in response to the increase in injuries, continues to meet regularly to discuss injury risk factors.

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<sup>4</sup> The interquartile range is a statistical measure that provides insight into the spread of data within the middle 50% of a distribution.

39. GRNZ has updated its injury reduction plan, aligned with the three areas of focus in its Injury Reduction Strategy:
- improving track design and maintenance
  - greyhound risk factors
  - reducing racing incidents.
40. In addition, there is an Injury Reduction Taskforce Plan outlining specific areas of focus for the taskforce.
41. A summary of actions in both plans is provided in Appendix 4.
42. Recent injury reduction initiatives include:
- closure of the Auckland track between 21 March and 11 May for track remediation and an independent review. Over the first three meetings, there have been no serious (Category F) injuries. (Refer to the Track standards section)
  - GRNZ Board approval of a new rule for management of vacant start boxes, intended to reduce interference
  - GRNZ Board approval for implementation of the Safe Return to Racing policy
  - trainer education about the Safe Return to Racing Policy and injury reduction approaches
  - plans to undertake maintenance at Christchurch in June.
43. GRNZ is of the view the reasons for injuries are multi-factorial, with no single reason which stands above others in terms of prominence or importance.
44. Other avenues being explored by GRNZ include the impact of weather, home training facilities, trainer factors and underlying injuries.
45. GRNZ has provided comparative injury data from various Australian greyhound racing jurisdictions and the RIB has also sourced further publicly available information (Table 3). The RIB believes that, notwithstanding differences across racing jurisdictions, comparative benchmarks remain a useful reference point to assess the New Zealand data.

*Table 3: Comparative injury data.*

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Category D per 1000 starts</b>	<b>Category F per 1000 starts</b>
GRNZ (1 August 2020 to 31 March 2023)	6.8	2.3
GWIC <sup>5</sup> (1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023)	7.5	3.2
RWWA <sup>6</sup> (annual report 2022/23)	5.1	2.7

46. The RIB's view is there is value in extending this benchmark analysis to include other comparable jurisdictions where possible.

<sup>5</sup> Greyhounds Welfare Integrity Commission (New South Wales)

<sup>6</sup> Racing and Wagering Western Australia

47. The RIB recognises the complex and multifactorial nature of greyhound injuries. The retrospective statistical analysis undertaken by Dr Grice identifies that while there are outlier events, the rate of injuries in New Zealand has remained relatively constant over time.
48. Assessing injury rates against comparative Australian data suggests GRNZ's experience is not unduly exceptional and within industry norms.
49. The RIB continues to encourage GRNZ to continue its injury management reduction program to ensure all appropriate infrastructure and policy levers are implemented and monitored.

#### *GRNZ's Safe Return to Racing Policy*

50. The Safe Return to Racing Policy and supporting guidelines are intended to ensure greyhounds returning to racing following a rest period are fit to do so.
51. Following delays over the last year, the policy is now scheduled for implementation on 1 August 2024.
52. During the consultation process, GRNZ moved some aspects of the policy which are enforceable, to guidelines which are not enforceable. The RIB's view is that the policy should be strengthened in line with the original proposal.
53. The RIB will monitor GRNZ's progress to enforce compliance and outcomes of the policy.

#### *Non-race day injuries*

54. The reporting of non-race day injuries remains an industry challenge across Australasia.
55. Licenced persons are required to report to RIB stewards on health or welfare issues that may impact a greyhound's racing performance.
56. The new Safe Return to Racing Policy will support improvements to reporting of serious injuries outside of race day, with the requirement for licenced persons to provide information about greyhounds that have not raced for 60 days or more.

#### *Canine first aid training*

57. Four canine first aid courses, offered to licenced persons and club staff, have been delivered by veterinarians in 2024.
58. Achieving good levels of attendance at these courses has been a challenge, with a total of 33 attendees across four events.
59. As previously reported by GRNZ, attendance is an important deliverable and access to qualified persons and first-aid kits in the event of an incident during non-race day trials is required for clubs to safely hold trials.
60. GRNZ plans to evaluate the course in June.

#### *Injury research projects*

61. The Greyhounds Australasia (GA) epidemiological study aimed at identifying risk factors for serious injuries is progressing. It includes a large dataset from across Australasia, including GRNZ injury data. Preliminary results are expected by the end of 2024.



- 62. GRNZ is undertaking an additional study aimed at gaining insights into how different non-race day management practices contribute to the risk of injuries. This study is based on a survey undertaken by the New South Wales Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC), where licenced persons with the highest and lowest injury rates were interviewed.
- 63. GRNZ's study is an important initiative with potential to understand how training practices, nutrition and other non-race day factors may contribute to injuries and develop a mentoring programme for those identified as high risk. This study has been delayed with GRNZ now planning to begin interviews in May.

**Euthanasia / Deaths (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

- 64. As at 30 April 2024, nine (0.33 per 1000 starts) greyhounds died or were euthanised on race day.
- 65. Figure 1 presents both race day and non-race day deaths and euthanasias. A total of 57 greyhounds were euthanised and 47 died in the 2023/24 racing season to 30 April 2024.

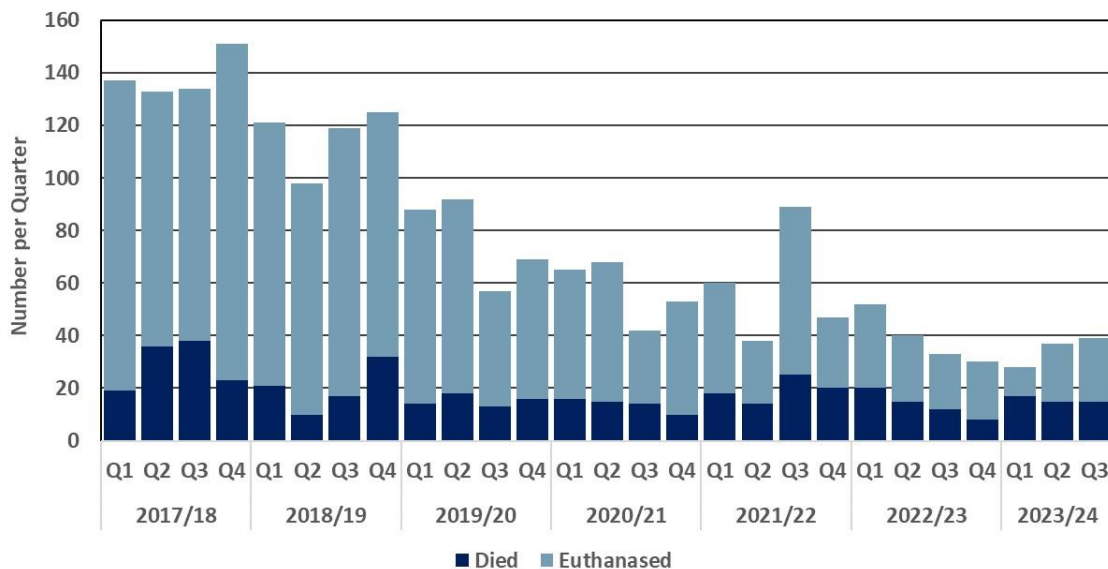


Figure 1: Total euthanasia and death rates by quarter, across racing seasons from 2017/18 until 2023/24.

- 66. The Rehabilitate to Rehome (RtR) programme funds treatment, surgery, rehabilitation and rehoming of greyhounds that sustain serious injuries on race day. This contributes to the lower rates of race day euthanasias compared to previous years.

*Proposed amendments to the GRNZ euthanasia policy*

- 67. An amendment to GRNZ's euthanasia policy will enable more timely action when a greyhound seriously attacks a person or another dog, and euthanasia is considered appropriate. The amendment was approved for consultation by the GRNZ Board in May 2024.
- 68. The RIB continues to monitor compliance with the euthanasia policy.

*Performance against GRNZ’s 2023/24 euthanasia KPI target for the year to date*

69. GRNZ reported there has been one greyhound euthanised outside of the policy (Table 4). This result may change following the outcome of a current investigation. (Refer to the Investigate and adjudicate section)

*Table 4: GRNZ’s performance against its euthanasia KPI for the year to date (2023/24 racing season).*

<b>KPI description</b>	<b>2023/24 KPI Target</b>	<b>2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024</b>
Euthanasias outside of GRNZ’s Euthanasia Policy	<4% of total euthanasias	1.8%

**Track standards (GRNZ’s response assessed as ‘good’)**

70. GRNZ continues to make good progress on a number of track initiatives, upskilling track staff, and recruiting new staff.
71. There continues to be investment in track maintenance and upgrading of aged infrastructure to improve track safety, including installation of new lures and safety rails.
72. Phase 3 of the Track Diagnostics Programme has been completed with weather stations operational at all tracks and data available to track staff. This provides additional data to assist with managing water application.
73. GRNZ’s draft Tracks and Infrastructure Management Guidelines and Minimum Standards is scheduled to be completed in June. The document includes GRNZ’s track preparation policy, track rating procedures and minimum standards. It is an important resource for ensuring consistency of track management across all venues.
74. The fourth national track curators’ workshop is scheduled for June 2024.

*Remediation and upgrading of tracks*

75. Following the suspension of racing in March 2024 at the Auckland track, an assessment by independent track experts has been undertaken.
76. GRNZ received a verbal update on recommendations prior to receiving a draft report on 13 May 2024.
77. Prior to recommencing racing, GRNZ undertook remediation of the track surface and installed a new lure system. In addition, all racing has moved to PBD.
78. Racing resumed on 12 May 2024.
79. At the time of preparing this briefing, the RIB had not received a copy of the consultant’s report.
80. The Auckland track however requires refurbishment. GRNZ has advised it will not undertake this work unless a longer-term lease can be secured with the Auckland City Council.
81. GRNZ advised the maintenance scheduled for the Christchurch track in June will be informed by an upcoming geo-survey.

82. GRNZ continues to progress a proposal to establish a new venue in Ashburton, including a straight and a sweeping one-turn track. GRNZ has indicated a final decision on whether to proceed with this development is subject to further clarity about the future of the industry.

### **Rehoming (GRNZ’s response assessed as ‘adequate’)**

83. GRNZ and its adoption partners continue to work together on a range of initiatives, including community events, to increase adoptions and reduce waiting times to enter the rehoming programme. This has helped lift adoption numbers this season.
84. An external provider was engaged to complete a review of the current use of behavioural assessments by Great Mates and rehoming agencies. Key findings include:
- inconsistencies in the application of the behavioural assessment methodology
  - the assessment used is not greyhound specific.
85. Next steps are being considered, including a review of behavioural assessment methodologies used in greyhound rehoming programmes overseas.

### *Performance against GRNZ’s 2023/24 rehoming KPI targets for the year to date*

86. The number of greyhounds on the waiting list, both awaiting entry into the Great Mates rehoming programme and those within the Great Mates kennels, has been a challenge for GRNZ.
87. Of the 345 greyhounds on the Great Mates waiting list as at 30 April 2024, 38% entered the rehoming programme in less than 90 days, against a target of 70%. (Table 5)
88. A total of 455 greyhounds were adopted in the first three quarters of the current racing season, compared with 362 adoptions for the same period in the 2022/23 season.
89. Adoptions for the first three quarters of the 2023/24 season include 102 privately rehomed or kept as a pet by a licenced person and 14 greyhounds exported to the USA.

*Table 5: GRNZ’s performance against its rehoming KPIs for the year to date (2023/24 racing season).*

<b>KPI description</b>	<b>2023/24 KPI Target</b>	<b>2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024</b>
Retired greyhounds have access to enter the Great Mates rehoming programme in a timely fashion (as measured by the percentage of greyhounds on the waiting list for less than 90 days at the end of the month being reported on).	70% within 90 days	38% within 90 days
Increase GRNZ supported rehoming kennel capacity to a total of:	210	208
Increase greyhound adoptions.	525	455

90. The KPI for timeliness of entry into the Great Mates rehoming programme is unlikely to be met this season.
91. GRNZ is on target to meet both the rehoming kennel capacity and adoptions KPIs.

#### *GRNZ initiatives to increase adoption rates and reduce waiting times*

92. GRNZ's USA adoption programme commenced with the first 14 greyhounds sent to the USA in April and a group of 15 in May. The next group of 15 greyhounds is scheduled to leave on 29 May 2024.
93. The programme is a collaboration with Greyhound Pets of America. GRNZ intends to export approximately 30 greyhounds per month for nine months of the year, with approximately 205 in this calendar year.
94. The SPCA provided feedback on GRNZ's guidelines that lay out the principles to consider when exporting greyhounds for adoption. GRNZ provided a formal response to the SPCA in May 2024.

#### *Private rehoming*

95. There has been an increase in the number of greyhounds privately rehomed or kept as pets by licenced persons over the last year, with 102 over the first three quarters of the 2023/24 season compared to 67 in the full 2022/23 season.
96. GRNZ plans to implement improvements to its private rehoming processes by 1 August 2024. These include a licenced person's declaration confirming specific training has been undertaken to transition the greyhound into pet life and suitability for adoption.
97. The RIB will undertake a review of private rehoming records to assess compliance with the policy in Quarter 4.

### **Licensed persons and greyhound registrations (GRNZ's response assessed as 'adequate')**

#### *Traceability of greyhounds*

98. The traceability KPI is measured at the end of the racing season. GRNZ has advised it is on track to meet the KPI.
99. The intent of the traceability KPI is to ensure all registered greyhounds are accounted for at least once a year, where greyhounds are subject to at least an annual 'check-in'.
100. New processes and supporting technology are scheduled to be implemented by 31 July 2024.
101. *GRNZ's Breeding Exemption Policy*
102. GRNZ's new Breeding Exemption Policy is under consultation. The new policy will provide a clearer framework for deciding exemptions to breed where a greyhound becomes inactive under the rules, including where the greyhound has whelped more than three litters or is over seven years of age.
103. The policy is intended to be implemented in June 2024.

## Vaccinations

104. Vaccination levels have improved for retired greyhounds and remain high for other populations over the 2023/24 racing season. (Table 6)

*Table 6: The percentage of greyhounds with current vaccinations in the 2023/24 racing season.*

Greyhound population	As at 31 August 2023	As at 30 April 2024
Racing	99%	98%
Pre-racing	96%	95%
Breeding	98%	97%
Retired in industry	55%	85%

## Verification of death and euthanasia records

105. In May, the RIB completed a review of a sample of death and euthanasia records for Quarters 1 to 3, to verify the required documentation had been received and its completeness.
106. At a high level, the findings were similar to a previous review in August 2023 which identified the required documentation was not always available on the greyhound record.
107. The review findings have recently been shared with GRNZ for their consideration and response.

## Standards, rules and policies (GRNZ's response assessed as 'slow')

108. Racing codes are responsible for the rules of racing, including those required by the RIB to fulfil its legislated regulatory functions.
109. GRNZ implemented new Rules of Racing on 1 February 2023 (Tranche 1) largely based on Greyhounds Australasia (GA) rules.
110. At the time, GRNZ decided not to assign regulatory powers in the GA rules to the RIB, contrary to the expectations of the RIB.
111. GRNZ undertook to progress Tranche 2 rule changes in the first half of 2023, including changes to regulatory powers which the RIB anticipated would address its concerns.
112. Minimal progress was made on this matter prior to 30 April 2024. The RIB has recently escalated its concerns to the GRNZ Board Chair with an expectation this issue will be resolved with some urgency. It is noted GRNZ prioritised and implemented other rule changes during this period.
113. It is important these rules are progressed to ensure the RIB's ability to perform its regulatory functions is not compromised.

## Inform and educate the industry (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')

114. GRNZ has drafted modules for the second round of compulsory relicensing education, including information for breeders and litter masters.

115. The education programme is scheduled to be undertaken between June and July 2024.

116. Six regional workshops have been held during the 2023/24 racing season. A further four were held in May. The agenda included updates on the greyhound review, welfare standards, injuries and the new Safe Return to Racing Policy.

### **GRNZ information systems (GRNZ's response assessed as 'adequate')**

117. The Access to Web project, the traceability project, and changes to the GRNZ website content represent a significant IT work programme.

118. Software development for GRNZ's Access to Web project commenced in April 2024. This multi-year project includes upgrading to modern technology, designed to better support race day and non-race day activities.

119. GRNZ started preparing requirements for a new licenced person portal in May 2024.

120. GRNZ is working with a New Zealand technology provider to implement its new traceability system by the end of the 2023/24 racing season.

### **Governance (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

#### *Animal Health and Welfare Committee (AHWC)*

121. The AHWC met in April 2024.

122. In addition to standing items, the agenda included an update on the Safe Return to Racing Policy and the SPCA's submission on GRNZ's guidelines for exporting greyhounds.

#### *Serious Injury Review Committee (SIRC)*

123. The SIRC's focus continues to be on reviewing serious injuries and key risks.

124. At the April 2024 meeting, the SIRC was also provided with an update from the GRNZ Injury Reduction Taskforce on injury reduction activities as well as analysis of the increase in injuries at the Palmerston North track.

### **Kennel standards (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

125. The 2023 round of kennel audits has extended into 2024. This is due to the implementation of new Greyhound Welfare Standards on 1 May 2023 which required time for education and embedding.

126. Between February 2023 and 30 April 2024, 172 partial and full audits were completed, with many kennels visited twice during this period. This includes 43 audits conducted in the last quarter.

127. Given significant changes to the welfare standards, a direct comparison between audits conducted in 2022 and the current round of audits is difficult.

128. The RIB is working with licenced persons, with support from GRNZ, to ensure improvement notices raised during audits are addressed.

129. Key areas of improved compliance and non-compliance have not changed substantively from those reported in the Quarter 2 briefing in April 2024.

130. Areas where compliance has improved include:

- fewer injuries/illness detected that require veterinary treatment
- treatment records provided
- appropriate bedding provided.

131. Opportunities to improve compliance include:

- greyhounds not located at the registered address and in the custody of the registered person
- dental issues requiring veterinarian attention
- exercise, socialisation and enrichment plans were not complete or not available.

**Investigate and adjudicate on animal welfare breaches (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

132. GRNZ has continued to refer issues of non-compliance to the RIB for investigation in addition to other intelligence channels.

133. The RIB has confirmed a number of breaches of the vaccination rule that requires a five day stand down period after a greyhound is vaccinated before it can race. These breaches occurred between May 2023 and February 2024, with potential mitigating circumstances. Therefore, in this case, the RIB has chosen to engage with GRNZ about options to address the breaches and these discussions are in progress.

134. The investigation into a case of potential non-compliance with GRNZ's euthanasia policy, mentioned in previous briefings, continues.

135. Three licenced persons were charged during Quarter 3 for having greyhounds in their care presenting positive for arsenic. Previous cases of this type have arisen through greyhounds chewing part of their kennel built with treated wood. Adjudicators' decisions are pending on two of these.

**Information management (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

136. The RIB continues to verify GRNZ's data and analysis, including GRNZ's performance against KPI reporting, and continues to work with the Serious Injury Review Committee.

137. Over the last quarter, the RIB has worked with Dr Stephen Grice from Tara Science to obtain an expert opinion and support for improving the methodology and analysis of greyhound injury data. (Refer to the Injuries section)

138. The RIB also verified euthanasia/death records for this briefing. (Refer to the Licenced persons and greyhound registrations section)

**GRNZ / RIB engagement (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

139. The RIB continues to monitor GRNZ's progress to address recommendations in the 2022 report and the 2024 Greyhound Review Work Programme.

140. Engagement between the two parties remains constructive.

### **Stakeholder engagement (GRNZ's response assessed as 'good')**

141. GRNZ has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, with the aim of ensuring engagement methods and messaging are tailored for different audiences.
142. Improvements to GRNZ's website content should further improve access to, and the currency of information.
143. Prior to exporting greyhounds to the USA, GRNZ sought feedback from the SPCA on its guidelines for exporting greyhounds for adoption. Feedback was provided and GRNZ has formally responded.
144. While outside the reporting period, the RIB notes media reporting on GRNZ's position rejecting the SPCA's offer to assist with rehoming in the event of an industry closure.

### **Next steps**

145. The RIB will continue to work with GRNZ to monitor progress against the work programme until further instruction from the Minister.
146. The RIB's priorities over the next period include monitoring:
  - a. GRNZ's progress with the introduction of the rule changes required by the RIB
  - b. injury rates and analysis, and GRNZ's response to this issue
  - c. traceability and private rehoming records
  - d. progress on compulsory relicensing education.

<b>First contact</b>	Eliot Forbes, Chief Executive Racing Integrity Board	027 3549711
<b>Second contact</b>	Nick Ydgren, Director Animal Welfare Racing Integrity Board	021 964120



**Appendix 1: RIB and GRNZ's assessments of progress against the 15 focus areas as at 30 April 2024.**

Improved rating	Reduced rating
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Focus Area	Scope	RIB assessment			GRNZ assessment
		Dec 2022	Oct 2023	Apr 2024	Apr 2024
Population management	Implement a model that accurately forecasts the number of greyhounds required to meet the needs of the industry and ensure the number of greyhounds bred and / or imported does not exceed those requirements	Good	Adequate	Good	Good
Injuries	By understanding and mitigating risk factors, minimise injuries to greyhounds.	Slow	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Euthanasia / deaths	By understanding and mitigating risk factors, minimise unnecessary euthanasia.	Good	Good	Good	Good
Track standards	Improve track safety to lower rates of death and injury.	Slow	Good	Good	Good
Rehoming	By ensuring supply and demand aligns with capacity and adoption of socialisation standards, greyhounds will be successfully rehomed.	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Good
Licensed person and greyhound registrations	GRNZ holds accurate registration data on all greyhounds, from birth to deregistration and these dogs are in the care of a competent licensed person.	Slow	Adequate	Adequate	Good
Standards, rules and policies	By ensuring animal welfare policies, standards and rules are understood, fit for purpose and enforceable, greyhounds have a good quality of life.	Slow	Adequate	Slow	Adequate
Inform and educate the industry	Implement education programmes that ensure all licensed persons understand their obligations under the standards, rules and policies.	Slow	Good	Good	Good
GRNZ information systems	Ensure comprehensive, accurate and accessible data and insights are available to support transparent reporting and evidence-based policy development.	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Good

Focus Area	Scope	RIB assessment			GRNZ assessment
		Dec 2022	Oct 2023	Apr 2024	Apr 2024
Governance	An independent animal welfare committee ensures science-based advice, combined with strengthened animal welfare capability, drives a best practice animal welfare agenda.	Good	Good	Good	Good
Kennel standards	Through RIB kennel audits, ensure registered greyhounds are being kept and cared for according to required industry animal welfare standards and policies.	Good	Good	Good	Good
Investigate and adjudicate on animal welfare breaches	Investigate compliance with the rules, policies and standards, ensuring there is a well-publicised complaints system so that people can speak out about noncompliance	Adequate	Adequate	Good	Good
Information management	GRNZ holds accurate, accessible information on greyhounds from whelping to retirement, that the public has confidence in.	Good	Good	Good	Good
GRNZ/RIB engagement	The RIB's clear communication of the standards for successful reform will provide a sound basis for (reporting progress and) future consideration of GRNZ's social license to operate.	Adequate	Good	Good	Good
Stakeholder engagement	By understanding stakeholders' engagement needs and with an unfailing commitment to transparency (of information), improve trust and confidence in the greyhound racing industry.	Adequate	Good	Good	Good

**Appendix 2: GRNZ's KPI report – Animal Welfare 2023/24 - performance for Quarters 1 - 3, up to 30 April 2023/24.**

	Category	Description	2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
<b>Background: GRNZ has implemented a Policy to ensure any euthanasia of registered greyhounds is carried out in line with GRNZ's Euthanasia Policy.</b>						
1	Euthanasia	Euthanasias outside of GRNZ's Euthanasia Policy	<b>1.8%</b>	<4% of total euthanasias	<2% of total euthanasias	<2% of total euthanasias
<i><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 1:</b> One greyhound with injuries that were not life-threatening has been euthanised without seeking an NOI first, out of 57 euthanasias to 30 April. Trainer issued with a warning to remind him of his obligations.</i>						
<b>Background: Reducing raceday injuries will be an ongoing focus for GRNZ through providing a world class racing environment. This will be enhanced through a number of new initiatives including track management, increased preferred box draw races, possible introduction of GPS technology to monitor racing incidents, and introduction of straight track racing.</b>						
2	Injuries	Reduce the number of Category D injuries as per GA classifications (22+ days). Measured as rate per 1000 starters against a 2020/21 Benchmark of 7.02	<b>6.97 per 1,000 starters = 0.7% decrease on benchmark (6.30 in 2022/23)</b>	15% reduction 5.97 per 1000 starters	17.5% reduction 5.79 per 1000 starters	20% reduction 5.62 per 1000 starters
<i><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 2:</b> After a promising first quarter with injuries down 19% on benchmark, six months later we are just 0.7% below benchmark and 16.8% over Target. To mitigate this, further interventions will be rolled out over the final quarter of the season. Some improvements were noted in March and April, however further improvement is required in the last quarter.</i>						

	Category	Description	2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
3	Serious Injuries	Reduce the number of Category F injuries as per GA classifications Measured as rate per 1000 starters against a 2020/21 Benchmark of 2.44	<b>2.93 per 1000 starters (+20.3%)</b>	15% reduction 2.07 per 1000 starters	17.5% reduction 2.01 per 1000 starters	20% reduction 1.95 per 1000 starters
<p><i>GA's "Category F" is designed to remove inter-seasonal quantitative issues by qualitatively listing the types of injuries that apply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>&gt; death or euthanasia on-track;</i></li> <li><i>&gt; any skull or spine fracture or paralysis (partial or complete);</i></li> <li><i>&gt; any long bone fracture (i.e. humerus, radius/ulna, femur or tibia);</i></li> <li><i>&gt; a hock fracture/dislocation where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days;</i></li> <li><i>&gt; metacarpal/metatarsal fracture where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days;</i></li> <li><i>&gt; any other joint injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days;</i></li> <li><i>&gt; a skin injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days;</i></li> <li><i>&gt; a soft tissue injury (including muscle injury) where the stand-down period is 90 days.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 3:</b> See comments above with respect to KPI 2.</p> <p><i>There were 102 such injuries in the Benchmark year (some were only given 28 day stand downs) at a rate of 2.44 per 1,000 starters. Up to April 30 2024 there have been 80 such injuries - a rate of 2.93. This is 20.3% above the Benchmark &amp; 41.5% above Target.</i></p> <p><i>For comparative purposes, for the 2022/23 Season there were 76 Category F injuries, at a rate of 2.08. Injury Reduction taskforce established to consider what steps can be initiated to drive improved outcomes, along with a review of each instance by the Serious Injury Review Committee.</i></p>						

	Category	Description	2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
4	Injuries	Number of races on straight tracks	0	150	300	600
<p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 4:</b> <i>Trialling commenced on Wanganui straight track in April, with totalisator racing likely to commence early June. Timing and officials facilities being completed in mid-May.</i></p>						
5	Injuries	Percent of total races conducted as Preferred Box Draws (PBD)	66%	60%	65%	70%
<p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 5:</b> <i>From 1 August 2023 all sprint races (excluding features) have been agreed by the GRNZ Board to be PBD. Up to 30 Apr 2024, 2473 out of 3712 races were PBD.</i></p>						
<p><b>Background:</b> GRNZ is to increase education of its trainers in relation to their obligations and best practice with animal welfare. Education will focus on increasing trainers' awareness and professionalism, with training being mandatory as a condition of licensing.</p>						
6	Education	Registered persons participate in GRNZ continuous professional development and animal welfare training as a condition of their licence renewal	100%	100%	100%	100%
<p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 6:</b> <i>As a condition of licensing, all LPs are required to undertake this training. This KPI will be addressed as a condition of relicensing in 2024 as was done for 2023. Programme for 2024 being finalised in May, for relicensing in June/July.</i></p>						

	Category	Description	2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
<b>Background: An increased focus will be placed on GRNZ systems on knowing the status and location of registered greyhounds (up to adoption).</b>						
7	Traceability	All greyhounds within the industry are subject to at least an annual independent "check in". Note racing dogs subject to a check in in the last 6 months and non-racing greyhounds 12 months.	Racing Dogs 99% Non-Racing 97.5%	Racing dogs 100% Non racing 95%	Racing dogs 100% Non racing 100%	Racing dogs 100% Non racing 100%
<p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 7:</b> The target for 2023/24 is based on the full year. Performance in this area is an assessment on 30 April, based on check ins to confirm details of the dogs concerned. The greyhounds included are all those whelped between 1 August 2009 and 30 April 2024. Check ins include racing, trialling, vaccinations, breeding, animal registration, whelping, a service, change of trainer/owner, retirement and processing through rehoming processes. This confirms the existence of the dogs at the time of those interactions with GRNZ processes. By end of the year GRNZ systems will confirm all such dogs, along with matching to RIB kennel audits.</p>						
<b>Background: Ensuring dogs have a life after racing will be an ongoing focus with GRNZ rehoming schemes along with having effective working relationships with adoption agencies.</b>						
8	Rehoming	Retired greyhounds have access to enter the Great Mates rehoming programme in a timely fashion (As measured by the percentage of greyhounds on the waiting list for less than 90 days at the end of the month being reported on)	38% within 90 days	70% within 90 days	80% within 90 days	90% within 90 days

	Category	Description	2023/24 YTD to 30 April 2024	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
<p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 8:</b> The actual rate for the first eight months of the season reflects the longer waiting times as adoption rates have not matched retirement numbers. Recent movement in the adoption levels in the last six months has seen some positive movement in this area, with further improvement expected across the year. The America project, introduced late April, along with at least maintaining domestic adoption numbers, will see a significant improvement in waiting lists over the balance of the 2024 calendar year.</p>						
9	Rehoming	Increase GRNZ supported rehoming kennel capacity to a total of	208	210	215	220
<p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 9:</b> Great Mates kennel capacity is being maintained at a level consistent with 2022/23 - with emphasis being given to adoptions and improving throughput rather than just increasing capacity awaiting adoption.</p>						
10	Rehoming	Increase greyhound adoptions	455	525	575	600
<p><b>Commentary on welfare KPI 10:</b> See comments in Item 8 above. For the first nine months of the season, adoption results have been: Industry/Private Rehoming 102, Adoption Agencies 353 - with monthly results of 38, 46, 41, 80, 57, 40, 52, 38 and 63. With increased activity with public events and the exploration of new adoption initiatives (eg USA) it is expected that adoption rates will increase over the season and achieve an actual result in excess of the annual target. Domestic adoptions for FY24 projected at 550 (480 LY), with 105 American adoptions by 31 July.</p>						

## Appendix 3: Expert opinion on greyhound injury analysis



18 May 2024

Dr Stephen Grice  
Chief Science Officer  
Tara Science

Level 1, 178 Featherston  
Street,  
Wellington, 6011,

Dr Eliot Forbes  
Chief Executive  
Racing Integrity Board (RIB)

Dear Dr Forbes,

### **Re: Expert opinion on improving the methodology and analysis of greyhound injury data**

You have asked me to provide an expert opinion on how to improve the methodology and analysis of the greyhound racing injury dataset. This includes reviewing the current reporting methodologies and presentations. The review is limited to the data set that results from the “Extract, Load and Transform” process managed by the RIB.

### **Statistical approach**

The analysis began by analysing the race injuries by race meeting and extended the statistical measures beyond the mean, to include other statistical measures that describe more fully the probability distribution of injuries in the dataset.

The new approach highlights two new features. The first feature is that the injury dataset is described by an expected probability distribution, and the second feature is the presence of “outlier” race meeting events, with injury rates outside the expected distribution.

### **Observations**

The Category D<sup>7</sup> injuries show:

- statistical measures of injury data are relatively constant over the 4 seasons observed starting with the baseline 2020/21 year
- the mean rate of injuries ( $\lambda=6.8$  /1000 starts) over the 4 seasons to March 2024, the minimum rate, maximum rate, and interquartile range is almost constant over this period

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<sup>7</sup> Category D injuries have stand-downs of 22 days or more.



- race meetings are observed with outlier injury rates, some of which are outside the expected distribution.

The Category F<sup>8</sup> injuries show:

- a mean rate ( $\lambda=2.3$  /1000 starts) over the 4 seasons to March 2024 of injuries
- a majority of race meetings experience no Category F injuries
- the minimum rate, maximum rate and interquartile range are all zero, over the observed 4 racing seasons
- there has been a recent increase in Category F injury rates in the 5 months to March 2024 and this is reflected in a non-zero mean rate, upper quartile, and maximum injury rate in this period
- there are outlier race meetings with Category F injury rates outside the expected distribution.
- positive qualitative correlations of increased Category F injury rates have been observed over the five months to March 2024 at Christchurch (Addington) and Auckland (Manukau). An increase has also been observed at Palmerston North (Manawatu) racetrack over approximately the 6 months to March 2024.

### Next steps

Further work can be undertaken to quantify which causal features are responsible for outliers in the dataset. This would include looking at features and combinations of features that are responsible for outliers using quantitative statistical inferences.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Stephen Grice  
Chief Science Officer  
Tara Science

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<sup>8</sup> Category F are catastrophic and injuries with a 43-90 day stand down. Injuries that apply under Category F: death or euthanasia on-track; any skull or spine fracture or paralysis (partial or complete); any long bone fracture (i.e. humerus, radius/ulna, femur or tibia); a hock fracture/dislocation where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; metacarpal/metatarsal fracture where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; any other joint injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; a skin injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; a soft tissue injury (including muscle injury) where the stand-down period is 90 days.

## Appendix 4: GRNZ's injury reduction plans

This appendix provides a list of actions only, taken from GRNZ's injury reduction plans.

### 2024-25 GRNZ Injury Reduction Action Plan

Initiatives currently being implemented

Action
<b>Improving track design and maintenance</b>
Introduce the Track & Infrastructure Minimum Standards Guidelines
Educate/develop track staff
Straight track implementation
SafeChase lures & driver development
<b>Greyhound risk factors</b>
Safe Return to Racing Policy
GA Research: Epidemiology of hock injuries and their risk factors
<b>Reducing racing incidents</b>
PBD racing expansion
Flexibility in rules to allow for vacant box 1

### GRNZ Injury Reduction Taskforce Plan

The taskforce is an informal management working group to enable swift analysis/ response to serious racing incidents.

Action
Analyse injury rate at Auckland, Palmerston North and Christchurch
Suspend racing at Auckland track for review and remediation
Environmental impacts: injury spikes during summer periods
Trial expanded warm-ups for older dogs
Training influences research: Comparisons in rearing, feeding and injury management between trainers with higher and lower serious injury rates
Training facilities: Understanding access to training facilities and impact on injuries
Trainer education: Checking greyhounds for injury
Trainer education: Preventing hock injuries