

Submission – Racing Integrity Bill

Introduction

This submission is on behalf of the Queensland Greyhound Breeders, Owners & Trainers Association.

The Association is representative of over 3000 members nationally.

While the QGBOTA is supportive of change and improvements that are industry best practice to animal welfare, racing integrity and strategic management, it is highly concerned that the changes will not go far enough, nor has the greyhound industry been engaged in the process.

The QGBOTA has developed its own Strategic Plan and Code of Conduct for the greyhound industry and its members. Our executive over the past series of elections in Queensland has sort and met with elected officials from both sides of politics, raised the exact matters that seek the need for reform and change, but have been ignored.

While changing the current structure is required, we are concerned that there is a continuance of ignoring the greyhound industries concerns and needs.

Therefore, while the greyhound industry is supportive of the recommendation of a new statutory authority being created to ensuring the Integrity of the Queensland racing industry, we do not believe the recommendations go far enough.

The Industry however does not support the Commission's recommendation for a new all codes board as the control body, due to the history of continued bias, fraudulent and political interference of the greyhound industry.

Our concerns are outlined later in the submission.

Methodology

The QGBOTA believes that any reform and management of the greyhound industry needs to be driven by participants. Yes, we support external regulation, but the need for and acceptance of that change needs to involve the participants who supply the product.

In the past the State Government of the day has appointed persons with no vision or strategy. If you do not know the business and are not prepared to engage with the industry, how can the sport move forward?

This has been a continued systematic cycle for many years, and seen many opportunities lost to the greyhound industry in Queensland. It has also created the current climate, as concerns with integrity and animal welfare have been raised with both sides of politics by the greyhound industry over the past 15 years.

For example, the 'Agreement to Amalgamate' to form Racing Queensland in 2010 had a 'Conditions Precedent' which needed to be completed on behalf of greyhounds, and that was for a one turn track to be built for the industry. The State Government has failed to fulfill that agreement.

The QGBOTA submitted a Strategic Plan which included the topics; Strategic Vision, Business Plan, Environment, Wagering, Compliance & Integrity, Canine Athlete Welfare, Sponsorship & Branding and Working with Industry Participants.

This document has received industry wide support, not only in Queensland, but throughout Australia. Its format is being used to help develop similar policies in other greyhound jurisdictions. But in Queensland, there has been no feedback whatsoever from the Government, or Racing Queensland.

The QGBOTA is supportive of reform to the structure of the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board, but we believe these people should be appointed by the industry themselves. These people should be there to execute the needs of the separate industries, not dictate what they believe the industry needs.

The appointments of independent marketing persons, or business backgrounds loses momentum when they have no understanding of the industry. These people should be hired to implement the strategies of the three individual codes. The experience and knowledge to move the Racing Industry forward is already within each code.

The three racing codes are more than capable of coming together to identify projects, strategic vision, business plans, compliance and integrity etc. by themselves. All that is needed is Government support as a stakeholder.

To justify the greyhound industries concerns, over \$50m of return from wagering since 1999 has gone to both the other codes. Both sides of Government have closed greyhound tracks, not because they weren't financial, but due to failure to support the industry. The Gold Coast greyhound track was closed in 2008, and only \$10m given to build another track.

The Queensland Treasurer Andrew Fraser stated at the time, "We believe that it's a generous level of compensation, along with their holding of 50% of Albion Park. That places the Greyhound Industry with the ability, the assets and the cash to be able to plan for their future as an industry by themselves".

If this was the intent in 2008, why is it in 2016, that no track to replace the Gold Coast has been built, nor do the greyhound industry have a say in planning for their future as an industry by themselves.

The State Government states that they are stakeholders in the racing industry, but that has not been reflected within the greyhound industry for over the past 20 years.

Over the past 12 months the greyhound industry has been under attack. It's one thing condemning the industry for live baiting, we agree it's an abhorrent practice. But what time has told us is that it isn't wide spread, less than one half (0.5%) of the industry in Australia have been found live baiting.

The greyhound industry is no different to any other part of society where people will ignore the rules and take the law into their own hands.

Statistics:

Roy Morgan Research

There may not be a greyhound race that stops the nation, but 600,000 Australian adults bet on at least one during the year—and, despite the scandals and controversy, this average doggie bettor is around eight years younger than the average horse race punter, the latest consumer gambling data from Roy Morgan Research shows.

3.3 million Australian adults (18.0%) gambled on at least one horse race (excluding harness trots) in the past year, and their average age is almost 49—a bit older than the national mean. But among the 3.2% who bet on greyhounds, the average age is not quite 41—younger than the average Facebook website visitor, The Bachelor Australia viewer, or The Man from U.N.C.L.E movie-goer.

Much of the lower age average is driven by the overwhelmingly popularity of greyhound racing among 25-34 year-olds. This group is 80% more likely than average to bet on

dog races during the year, and make up the largest bloc of greyhound bettors (34.2%) despite being less than a fifth of the population.

As shown below, the age profile of greyhound bettors is a virtual mirror of horse racing: only around one in four greyhound gamblers is aged 50 -plus, compared with almost half of horse racing bettors—but the reverse is true for those aged 18-34. Those in the middle, aged 35-49, make up around 30% of each bettor group.

Angela Smith, Group Account Director, Roy Morgan Research, says:

"Betting on horse-racing has declined in popularity over the past decade: In 2005, 24% of people bet on at least one horse race; in 2015, around 18% of us did.

"Greyhound racing, meanwhile, seems to be on-trend—and last year's live baiting scandal, revealed on Four Corners in February last year, had only a marginal effect on betting incidence. Not only has its popularity been consistent over the past decade, but Aussies aged 18-34 now make up only nearly half of greyhound bettors, compared with only a quarter of horse-racing bettors.

"But it's not just this generational difference that suggests greyhound racing is trendy: by far the most likely Values Segment to bet on greyhounds (at rates well over double the norm) are those defined as 'Look at Me': a niche group of social butterflies who participate in cool or outrageous activities with the in-crowd of their peers, who follow trends and want to clearly distinguish themselves from previous generations.

"And, as with the overall age trend, this group is among the least likely to be interested in placing a bet on horses."

With all the research, success, policies and initiatives in other greyhound racing jurisdictions, and the QGBOTA's Strategic Plan, there has been no policy or support from Racing Queensland nor the State Government in 20 years, and especially since amalgamation in 2010.

This continued bias and fraudulent policy towards the Queensland greyhound industry has driven some of our best owners, trainer's and breeders to interstate jurisdictions where State Government's actually support greyhound racing.

The Queensland greyhound industry has no faith in the State Government to deliver fair and equitable policies across all three codes, as History shows that even contractual obligations like 'Conditions Precedents' are failed to be met.

Recommendation 1

INSTITUTIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL MODEL FOR INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT OF THE QUEENSLAND RACING INDUSTRY

Integrity management is required to apply the highest ethical standards to every aspect of the racing industry business. At the core of integrity management is the belief that an industry has a strong interest, as well as a responsibility, to act with integrity at all times.

The racing industry is more likely to succeed when they act with integrity and show increased awareness of the need to seek expert advice to help the racing industry align and incorporate high ethical standards with animal welfare and integrate them across all operational functions.

Today the general public are both better informed and more concerned about ethics, especially within the racing industry. As a result, we understand as an industry that governments are expected to legislate, and the racing industry to innovate, to ensure that high ethical standards are put at the heart of the racing industry.

The racing industry needs to respond to increasing awareness of the ethical treatment of racing animals and the resulting expectations for transparency and accountability.

The requirement for the racing industry to comply with a stricter legal framework and avoid negative publicity for unethical behavior and make participants within the racing industry more responsible to manage a sustainable and holistic racing industry.

Recommendation:

The Queensland greyhound industry is supportive of a new statutory authority being created to ensure the integrity of the Queensland racing industry, and all subsequent recommendations.

Recommendation 2

OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR THE COMMERCIAL BUSINESS OF THE RACING INDUSTRY

The QGBOTA believes that the proposed structure will continue to fail the greyhound industry as in the past.

Unless industry elected persons with experience are appointed, there will continue to be ongoing disparities in policy that benefits the greyhound industry.

The stakeholders who supply the product should drive the reform and management of their industry.

Recommendation:

The QGBOTA recommends to the inquiry that a policy is drafted for all three (3) codes, in which all licensed participants are a member of the relevant industry body, and that debate regarding policy and direction of each code is formulated at this level.

The methodology:

Involvement in sport & racing associations leads to feeling more socially connected.

Social networks developed through involvement in sport and racing organisations are of more value for perceived social support than those developed through non-sport community organisations.

Sport and racing involvement does provide a resource upon which people can draw, often at times of need, yet it appears that it is no more important than other community settings in which people voluntarily come together for mutual benefit.

Involvement in sport does have a relationship to heightened social connectedness.

Generalized trust is generated from membership of community sport organisations rather than the other way around. Sport involvement is positively linked to physical and mental health while other forms of community involvement are not associated with higher physical health scores and were more weakly associated with higher mental health scores.

Membership of sport & racing associations leads to the development of social networks and leads to the development of social networks which are used in four primary ways:

a. the development of friendships, which reduce people's isolation and provide them with joy or happiness;

- b. enabling members to access a network of resources, and provide people with access to opportunities and experiences to which they would not otherwise have;
- c. providing people with support and assistance at times of stress, hardship and crisis, and;
- d. allowing members to engage with the broader community.

Sport and racing associations can be considered as 'fly paper', attracting people who share a common interest or goal, thus facilitating their access to a larger social network.

Members can access resources through their participation in the club's social networks; these additional resources are based on the skills and competencies of fellow association members.

Association members who viewed their sport as an opportunity to socialise, develop social networks or develop friendships were more likely to have developed strong friendships and were therefore more likely to call on fellow members for help or support.

Sport & racing associations help build community

Many members view their association as a 'family' or a 'community' and thus with a sense that they were also members of the broader community in which the club was located and many of them lived.

While associations may not emphasise the creation, development and maintenance of social connections among their members, it is clearly an outcome generated through the very nature of being associated with an organisation made up of people with a common interest.

The actions of associations and members in creating and maintaining a positive culture is an important element in providing the environment in which social connections among members will flourish.

But also maintaining those associations 'Code of Conduct' and refraining from illegal activities.

Under the proposed board's functions and Powers:

(3) The primary function includes, but is not limited to, each of the following matters relevant to the board codes of racing collectively and

individually—

- (a) identifying, assessing and developing responses to strategic issues, including challenges relevant to each code and all the board codes of racing;
- (b) leading and undertaking negotiations with other entities about the strategic issues, and about agreements, that affect each code and all the board codes of racing;
- (c) identifying priorities for major capital expenditure for each code and all the board codes of racing;
- (d) developing and implementing plans and strategies for developing, promoting and marketing each code and all the board codes of racing;
- (e) making recommendations to the Minister as it considers appropriate;
- (f) working collaboratively with the commission and others to ensure the integrity of the racing industry in Queensland;
- (g) considering a matter referred to the board by the Minister and reporting to the Minister about the matter.

Nowhere is there stated engagement with the individual codes to create or deliver policy in the best interests of the individual racing bodies.

The QGBOTA spent 2 years studying and investigating best practice models for greyhound racing across both international and Australian based jurisdictions. How can the greyhound industry put faith in a Government appointed person who hasn't outlined their vision or knowledge of the greyhound industry?

History has also shown us that the greyhound industry has been considered last in any strategy or policy to improve the industry in Qld and seen it fall behind every other state jurisdiction.

We cannot support change that will not see policies that reflect greyhound racing's popularity, while also maintaining policy that sees an unfair and unequitable return on its growth and performance.

Recommendation 3:

THE DETECTING, ASSESSING, MITIGATING AND PROSECUTION OF ALL BREACHES OF THE RACING ACT OR ANY OTHER RELEVANT ACT

The Australian GBOTA has no concern with regards to the review of the Racing Act, Animal Care and Protection Act 2002 or Criminal Code (Qld).

We do ask however that consideration be given to individuals and/or groups to be liable for misrepresenting or the exaggeration of facts with regards to the Racing Industry in Queensland.

This should also include individuals and/or groups who continue to make false or misleading claims, in an attempt to damage the integrity of the Racing Industry in Queensland.

If the accusations are found to be false, this could and may lead to damage of the integrity of the sport, which may affect turnover and ultimately jobs and opportunities within the racing industry.

The racing industry is accountable to the community and its ongoing support, however there is a clear line between the integrity of racing, and those who wish to close down all types of racing.

The greyhound industry also feels some of the recommendations don't go far enough to protect industry participants.

The industry believes any person present or past found guilty of any form of animal cruelty should have significant restrictions placed on their license, and if found guilty a second time, receive a life ban from the sport.

Under the new Bill, 60 Forum of Standards, what is glaring is the omission of stake holders input. Stakeholders must be involved in the Integrity Commission process to educate authorities and give them a greater understanding of the industry, while stakeholders will get an understanding of where the industry needs to improve.

Yes, the Racing Industry and the Integrity Commission need to be separate. But they need to share information to best police the racing industry.

Regards

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