COVID-19

If you are currently racing your greyhounds, you will be aware of the huge commitment and tremendous work done by GWIC stewards, vets and club officials at the tracks to keep greyhound racing going during the COVID-19 pandemic. You are also part of that success, by embracing the new race day protocols and displaying the spirit of good will and cooperation. Thank you for the role you have played in keeping the industry going during this time. Let’s keep that same spirit of cooperation in place as we move forward once pandemic restrictions start being lifted. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge GBOTA and GRNSW staff, whose engagement with GWIC has been incredibly valuable during this difficult period.

You should also know that, as well as helping keep tracks open and races happening, GWIC has also been the front foot throughout this crisis, developing contingency strategies to look after and support participants if the Government determined that racing could not proceed. These strategies were shared with GRNSW in March and included direct financial support for participants to cover feeding and other costs to keep all registered greyhounds in good shape during any enforced shut down. Whilst the racing industry has been able to continue to operate and these strategies have not needed to be implemented, it is important that you know that we understand the financial pressures and concerns that this crisis creates for the people across our industry and have been working hard to ensure that the support and assistance would be there if needed.

I also encourage you to consider subscribing to the COVID-19 Safe App recently released by the Federal Government. This app is designed to keep everyone safe by facilitating faster and more accurate contact tracing of those who may have been in contact with COVID-19 - particularly important for industries like ours so we can restart public gatherings at race days as soon as possible.

NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice

Over two hundred submissions were made on the draft Code of Practice for the Welfare of Greyhounds. As part of its role in facilitating the creation of the Code, GWIC is currently reviewing submissions and developing options and advice to relevant Ministers. Further discussions have already taken place with GRNSW, GBOTA and other stakeholders on key issues arising in the submissions and possible responses to these issues. Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend a consultation session and/or prepare a submission.

It is important to remember that at its heart, the Code is an articulation of your commitment and that of your fellow greyhound industry participants, to the high animal welfare standards that exist in this industry. In doing so it protects the industry from the criticism that has been levelled against it in the past and enables us to move confidently into the future.
Online Ownership Transfers

I am pleased to see participants embrace the latest online service, with the ability to undertake owner transfers now available online. When GWIC took over as the controlling body on 1 July 2018, most participant requirements were time consuming and paper based.

Since its inception, GWIC has delivered a range of online services all designed to make your participation in the industry quicker, easier and cheaper. For example, you can now lodge owner transfers online quickly and easily and save the $20 cost associated with a paper-based form.

In the very near future you will also be able to do trainer transfers in the same way.

Once this capability has been delivered you will be able to complete all your transactions with GWIC simply and easily online.

You can be assured that GWIC will continue to focus on looking at ways to reduce regulatory burden on the industry and make it simpler and easier for participants to meet their regulatory obligations.

Industry Consultation Forum

In December last year GWIC called for expressions of interest for a proposed Industry Consultation Forum (ICF). Ten expressions of interest were received and I express my appreciation to everyone who applied. However, after further consideration about how best GWIC can engage with all greyhound industry stakeholders and in the light of the current disrupted COVID-19 environment, I have decided to focus on strengthening existing industry consultation mechanisms rather than to proceed with the creation of the ICF.

These existing consultation mechanisms include:

- Regular dialogue with officials of Greyhound Racing NSW
- Biannual meetings with the board directors of the Greyhound Breeders Owners & Trainers’ Association (GBOTA)
- Ongoing discussions with key GBOTA staff
- Contact with members of GWIC’s Greyhound Industry Knowledge Network
- Informal discussions with industry participants
- Quarterly meetings of the GWIC’s Greyhound Industry Animal Welfare Committee.

GWIC intends to expand on these industry engagement processes, including scheduling more regular ‘grass roots’ engagement sessions at regions across the State. This initiative will be progressed when COVID-19 restrictions are able to be relaxed.

Correcting Misinformation

Over the past 18 months GWIC has been subject to much criticism. What is clear is that certain people with vested interests continue to make it their business to spread misinformation about GWIC, including its finances. Recently, GWIC’s Chief Commissioner, Alan Brown AM, had no choice but to publicly correct the record in response to inaccurate media commentary. A copy of the ‘True Facts’ document is available here.

Creating GWIC was a fundamental plank of the Government’s changes to the industry to allow it to continue to operate. GWIC has always been open to feedback about how it can do things better for you and I have, and continue to have, conversations with trusted industry participants who are happy to provide balanced and useful feedback in pursuit of our joint goal of sustaining a prosperous industry through enhanced integrity and welfare. I thank those individuals for their ongoing contributions and welcome others in the industry that share this constructive outlook to connect via ceofeedback@gwic.nsw.gov.au.

Review of Race Day Functions

In the spirit of improving how we do things, some of you already know that GWIC has engaged independent integrity consultant, Mr Ray Murrhy to undertake an assessment of our stewarding capabilities. This review is an important initiative to identify whether and where improvements can be made so that our race day capabilities are as efficient and effective as possible.

Mr Murrhy will be consulting widely with GWIC staff, GRNSW, GBOTA and other jurisdictions. It was expected that Mr Murrhy would attend racetracks in March and April, however for obvious reasons that was not possible. His work is ongoing, and I encourage you to engage in the consultation process.

Customer Feedback

At the beginning of this year GWIC commenced an ongoing process of surveying its customers. GWIC is committed to improving the way that it supports and services the industry and for this reason it is actively seeking your feedback via these surveys.

The first round of this activity involved sending surveys to 399 industry participants who had recently conducted business with GWIC.
Over 106 participants responded indicating their satisfaction with GWIC’s services was at 86%.

While this was a pleasing result, GWIC will continue to look to implement service improvements that will increase our customer satisfaction to even higher levels.

I hope you continue to enjoy good health and safe racing.

Regards,
Judy Lind (and Roy)