

MEDIA RELEASE

FRIDAY 20 JULY 2018

Animal welfare a top priority for newly established Commission

The Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission, which began its regulatory function on 1 July 2018, has named animal welfare as a top priority over the coming months and into the future.

Chief Executive Officer, Judy Lind, has confirmed a number of processes are already underway to ensure that welfare standards are upheld within the NSW greyhound racing industry.

“The Commission’s inspectors are prioritising and targeting locations with animals considered ‘high-risk’ in terms of their welfare, as well as conducting broader inspections to establish benchmark levels for compliance and welfare standards,” Ms Lind said.

“We recognise that the majority of participants are meeting their obligations and are setting an excellent example, it’s those who have animal welfare shortfalls we will be focusing on.

“Our inspectors have a range of investigation and enforcement powers that support the Commission’s welfare and integrity functions including: entering, examining and inspecting premises and the animals therein, acquiring information and records, and recording and taking evidence.”

The Commission also has the power to impose a number of penalties if a person is in breach of the *Greyhound Racing Act 2017* and Regulations, and the Greyhound Racing Rules and policies. The Commission can also take action under *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* to bring to account those who harm their animals.

“We will have vets at every race meeting who will complete health and fitness checks, assess the animals’ before and after races, and recommend treatment and follow-up assessments where necessary,” Ms Lind said.

The Commission’s vets will provide free veterinary advice to participants in the event a greyhound requires further care. Trainers who consistently present dogs to race in poor condition will be a focus for follow up by the Commission.

“The Commission is genuine in its offer to help industry participants who, for whatever reason, are struggling to care for their dogs. Early intervention and prevention are key to achieving welfare outcomes,” Ms Lind said.

Anyone with animal welfare concerns should contact the Commission’s Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Hotline on 1800 680 775 or complete the online form available on the website www.gwic.nsw.gov.au.

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