



## **Monthly message to industry participants from the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission Chief Executive Officer**

This is the first in a series of regular messages designed to keep industry participants better informed about what GWIC is doing; its priorities; what we are finding from our compliance work and other relevant information.

It comes at a time when the racing industry, initially thoroughbreds and now greyhounds, has become the centre of media attention and public debate on animal welfare issues. In relation to the greyhound industry I refer in particular to reports of GRV's investigation into allegations of live baiting by registered greyhound racing participants in Victoria. It is interesting to note that the overwhelming response from stakeholders, politicians and animal welfare groups, is not that the industry should be shut down because of what has allegedly been found, but that the industry is now properly regulated, with effective strategies and capabilities in place to detect and address serious wrongdoing.

I relate this back to my own recent experience. It was only in August 2019 when GWIC came under media attack, with allegations of 'overzealous' regulation and calls for GWIC to be shut down. I can tell you that I would rather be accused of being an overzealous regulator (which, by the way, GWIC is not) than one which is either under regulating or inept.

If you are concerned about the potential fallout from the events in Victoria, I can assure you that GWIC has been diligently going about its business of seeking out any breaches of the rules and welfare standards and appropriately penalising those who are caught. Where we see minor breaches of rules and standards GWIC actively reminds participants about their responsibilities, as I recently did in relation to the requirement to use synthetic lure materials only. We also work with any participant who is struggling to meet requirements, by providing additional assistance, with a particular focus on removing any animal welfare risks.

On the specific issue of live baiting, since GWIC opened its doors in July 2018 we have received four anonymous complaints alleging live baiting. We have fully investigated each one of those allegations. These investigations require considerable efforts to corroborate the information; to undertake fact finding and other investigative work until we get to the point of being able to establish the truth or otherwise of the allegations. In each of these four instances, the evidence did not support the allegations. GWIC will continue to pursue to its logical conclusion every allegation of serious wrong doing within the industry. As a participant doing the right thing and wanting the industry to succeed, you should expect no less from my team.

As we go forward GWIC will be introducing some new initiatives so we can work more effectively with you, the participants. Stay tuned for more information about GWIC's Industry

Consultative Group and Participant Advocacy Network – both of which will be implemented early in 2020.

I will also be making contact with breeders, rearers and trainers who are willing to assist with the production of a series of videos, championing best practice in the rearing and training of greyhounds.

Nearly 18 months into the journey I am encouraged by the many participants who are clearly committed to and already embrace the highest standards of ethical conduct within this industry. I encourage you all to continue to work with GWIC to help secure a prosperous industry by improving welfare and integrity.

**Judy Lind**  
**Chief Executive Officer**