

GRNSW Race Injury Rebate Scheme

Background to the Policy

This scheme is an important part of GRNSW's ongoing commitment to improving welfare outcomes for racing greyhounds by preventing unnecessary euthanasia of greyhounds in NSW and providing greyhounds which are physically healthy and behaviourally sound the opportunity to live out their natural life span as a companion animal.

The scheme recognises that the treatment of some of the more serious injuries can be expensive. An owner may consider euthanasia to be the only option to safeguard the welfare of the greyhound, because the cost of the required treatment/surgery is prohibitive and without such treatment/surgery the greyhound would suffer unnecessarily. This scheme provides the greyhound owner with financial assistance, if needed, to ensure that a seriously injured greyhound receives appropriate veterinary care and treatment including surgery if required.

The scheme also enables participants to obtain an accurate off-track diagnosis/prognosis for their seriously injured greyhound, so that a fully-informed decision on appropriate treatment can be made.

The Policy

GRNSW will pay all reasonable off-track veterinary costs for treatment of a greyhound admitted into the scheme, up to a maximum of \$2,500 including GST (and in exceptional cases, a greater amount).

Election by an owner to participate in the scheme is voluntary. To be considered for the scheme, a participant must be registered with the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) or another recognised Greyhound Racing Authority and their greyhound must have sustained an eligible injury on a NSW greyhound race track during a race meeting or during qualifying or Club trials. Trials must be staffed by a GWIC On-Track Veterinarian (OTV) and/or a NSW Registered Greyhound Club Manager at the time the injury is sustained.

The participant responsible for the greyhound (the owner or the trainer) may take the greyhound to any NSW registered veterinary practitioner(s) for off-track assessment, diagnosis and treatment under the scheme.

Funding under the scheme will be either by way of reimbursement of the participant on provision of receipted veterinary tax invoice(s) or payment directly to the veterinarian(s).

Notwithstanding admission into the scheme, the participant will remain responsible for the greyhound, including:

- arranging transport for the greyhound to the initial off-track veterinary consultation;
- ensuring appropriate care and rehabilitation for the greyhound while it recovers; and
- rehoming the greyhound (although it will have priority entry into the Greyhounds as Pets (GAP) NSW program).

Application of the Policy

Race Day Veterinary Assessment

An injury sustained at a NSW Registered Greyhound Racing Track will ordinarily be assessed by the On Track Veterinarian (OTV) engaged by GWIC. The OTV will assess the injury and based on criteria set by GWIC will make a professional judgement as to the likely incapacitation period for the injury.

Eligible injuries under the Scheme align with those injuries that are categorised as Major II or above (i.e. the incapacitation period is 42 days (6 weeks) or more). The GWIC OTV will advise the participant of the availability of the scheme. If the injury is sustained during club trialling the NSW Registered Greyhound Club Manager will notify the participant of the availability of the scheme and report the injury to GRNSW (preferably via email: vets@grnsw.com.au) to facilitate access to the rebate.

If the participant agrees to entering the scheme the OTV will complete the injury description and the incapacitation period in Part A of the form and sign the form. The signed form will be provided to the participant who will complete part B of the form and provide the form to the off-track veterinarian providing the treatment to complete Part C. At Club trials the NSW Registered Greyhound Club Manager of the track where the injury is sustained may complete Part A.

In some circumstances the form may not be available for the OTV or Club Manager to complete. In this case the participant will complete part A & B of the form. Where this occurs eligibility will be verified by GRNSW using the Steward's Report for the relevant race meeting or by contacting the Club directly. Until eligibility is confirmed the owner or trainer remains liable for all veterinary costs.

Private Veterinary Assessment

The private veterinary assessment should initially involve a detailed examination of the greyhound including appropriate radiological investigations or other imaging techniques. This initial assessment and treatment/surgery up to \$2500 (incl GST) is covered under the rebate without prior approval for eligible injuries. In some cases the treatment or surgery may need to be carried out at different veterinary practices or a second veterinary opinion may need to be sought, this can also be covered under the scheme.

In the case where the total treatment/surgery exceeds \$2500 (incl GST), the participant will initially be responsible for paying the difference pending approval by GRNSW for cover above the cap.

If full or partial payment is made by the participant reimbursement will require submission to GRNSW of the completed RIR form, full details of the veterinary treatment in a report/clinical notes from the veterinarian and a copy of the invoice and receipt from the veterinary practice where the treatment was provided. GRNSW reserves the right to verify all such claims by contacting the veterinary practice (or practices) where the treatment (or treatments) were provided.

Exceptional Cases

In the event that the participant cannot afford the cost of the treatment proposed by the off-track veterinarian, the participant may request further financial assistance under the Scheme that exceeds the maximum rebate amount of \$2500 (including GST).

Additional funding may be made available in exceptional cases, where:

- the veterinarian at the initial veterinary consultation confirms that the injury is an eligible injury with an acceptable welfare prognosis; and
- the reasonable veterinary costs of subsequent treatment (including after-care), in conjunction with the cost of the initial veterinary consultation, are expected to materially exceed \$2,500 (including GST) – such as where multiple surgeries are required and/or the case is very complex.

Approval for exceptional cases should be sought after the veterinarian has completed Part C of the form and this has been forwarded to GRNSW (preferably via email: vets@grnsw.com.au) along with a report providing the details of the injury, proposed treatment plan, clinical notes and invoice/s for the assessment and treatment up to that point. The GRNSW GM Welfare (or an alternative GRNSW representative) will consider approval of exceptional cases at the time of submission by assessing the individual case and costs. This decision may also be subject to the results of a further veterinary examination (i.e. second opinion) that may be requested by the GM Welfare. If approved, the treatment above the cap will be covered at GRNSW's expense.

Applications for further financial assistance will also be considered in the event that the participant is able to pay some, but not all, of the treatment costs over the \$2500 maximum rebate amount. Participants must indicate what amount of financial assistance they are seeking in these cases.

Priority Entry to GAP NSW

Following treatment and an appropriate rehabilitation period, if the owner of the greyhound does not wish to continue racing or keep that greyhound as a pet or for breeding purposes, it will be granted priority access to a standard Pre-entry Assessment for the GAP NSW program.

It is expected that this rehabilitation period would be for a minimum of four (4) weeks or any other such rehabilitation period as directed by the veterinarian overseeing the treatment of the greyhound.

As per normal practice, the greyhound must pass the Pre-entry Assessment to be accepted into GAP NSW. In order to pass, the greyhound must have recovered and be of sound health.

Appeals

If an injury to a greyhound is deemed not to be covered under this scheme by the OTV or off-track veterinarian, participants have the right to appeal that decision. The appeal, which must be made in writing within 14 days, will be considered by the GRNSW GM Welfare. Any

decision made in this regard will be final.

If the GRNSW GM Welfare determines that additional funding (exceeding the ordinary limit of \$2,500, inclusive of GST) should not be provided under this scheme, participants have the right to appeal that decision. The appeal, which must be made in writing within 14 days to the GRNSW Chief Operating Officer. Any decision made by the GRNSW COO in this regard will be final.