



Race Injury Review Panel analysis and recommendations

8 February 2019 - 30 June 2019

Foreword

On 8 February 2019 the NSW Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (the Commission) established the Race Injury Review Panel to provide a mechanism for the systematic review of serious and catastrophic injuries to greyhounds racing on NSW tracks.

The [Terms of Reference](#) for the Panel are located on the GWIC website.

The fundamental purpose of the Race Injury Review Panel process is to better understand the underlying causes of racing injuries and to develop and implement preventative measures aimed at reducing the incidence and severity of injuries to racing greyhounds.

This report provides an overview of the collective findings of the reviews conducted by the Race Injury Review Panel since commencement on 8 February until 30 June 2019.

How to interpret this report

Due to the multi-factorial nature of racing related greyhound injuries, each Panel uses its individual and collective experience, knowledge and judgement to form a view about the likely causes of each incident reviewed by the Panel.

Therefore both the findings of each individual review and the collective findings in this report should not be interpreted as being indisputable. They are 'judgement' based assessments reflecting the best endeavours of each panel to form conclusions about causal factors.

Particular care should be taken in the interpretation of this first report due to the relatively small number of panel reviews conducted.

Subsequent versions of this report will include yearly trend analysis that, over time, will provide a more reliable picture of the contributing causal factors of Major II and Catastrophic greyhound injuries.

An explanation of the Panel's review process

All catastrophic injuries that result in the euthanasia of a greyhound on welfare grounds and any sudden deaths occurring at race meetings are subject to a detailed case by case review by the Panel. The Panel also analysed the majority of all serious (Major II) injuries. During this reporting period, the panel analysed the race replays and all supporting information in relation to 51 catastrophic and 51 major II injuries.

The Panel analysed all contributing factors to each case according to the following criteria:

1. Race-related: race factors such as interference, collisions and falls
2. Track-related: the conditions of the track at the time of the incident; track maintenance history and environmental influences
3. Greyhound-related: the greyhound's racing history, including frequency of racing; its prior experience and performance; breeding and genetics; training influences; previous injuries.

The Panel meets monthly and keeps a log of contributing factors and recommendations. Feedback is also provided to GRNSW where track issues are judged to be contributing factors

Analysis

1. Catastrophic injuries: Contributing Factors

Month	Race Factors	%	Track Factors	%	Greyhound Factors	%	Misadventure	%	Other	%	Unknown	%	Total
Jan	4	40.0%	2	20.0%	4	40.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10
Feb	2	20.0%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	1	14.3%	7
March	5	50.0%	2	12.5%	4	25.0%	2	12.5%	2	12.5%	1	6.3%	16
April	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	4
May	7	87.5%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8
June	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	4	66.7%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	6
Total:	21	41.2%	6	11.8%	15	29.4%	2	3.9%	4	7.8%	3	5.9%	51

The majority (41.2%) of catastrophic injuries in the 1st six months of 2019 were as a result of racing incidents, usually collisions resulting in a fall. Greyhound factors accounted for the next highest category (29.4%). In these cases, the previous racing frequency or injury history of the greyhound may have predisposed to the catastrophic event. Many of these were chronic muscle or joint injuries that were being managed; or where the greyhound had been rested for a period of >42 days and had recently returned to racing; or where the greyhound had an excessive number of lifetime starts and was over four years of age. Fitness may play a role in these injuries and will continue to be monitored as a contributing factor. Inexperienced greyhounds that were younger with few starts or were racing at a new venue for the first time also accounted for some of these injuries. Training and racing patterns of younger greyhounds should be considered further as a contributing factor for catastrophic injuries.

Track related factors accounted for the third highest category (11.8%), usually in combination with a racing incident. Most commonly, a drier racing surface, with less traction may have contributed, particularly to incidents around a bend.

2. Major II injuries: Contributing Factors

Month	Race Factors	%	Track Factors	%	Greyhound Factors	%	Misadventure	%	Other	%	Unknown	%	Total
Jan	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Feb	2	25%	0	0.0%	3	37.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	37.5%	8
March	2	22.2%	1	11.1%	4	44.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	22.2%	9
April	1	10.0%	1	10.0%	3	30.0%	0	0.0%	3	30.0%	2	20.0%	10
May	5	38.5%	2	15.4%	3	23.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	23.1%	13
June	4	36.4%	0	0.0%	7	63.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11
Total:	14	27.5%	4	7.8%	20	39.2%	0	0.0%	3	5.9%	10	19.6%	51

The Major II or serious injury analysis reveals that the highest contributing factor (39.2%) were greyhound factors. Previous injury history was most represented as well as racing frequency. Racing incidents accounted for the second highest contributing factor at 27.5% and unknown/undetermined causes represented the second highest category at 19.6%. No Major II injuries were analysed for the month of January, during the Panel's 1st meeting due to time constraints.

A trainer's representative joined the panel deliberations for the months of May and June. This resulted in broader industry knowledge of greyhound racing patterns, training practices, racing frequencies and racing history being highlighted. The contributions of trainers to this Panel is invaluable, both to understanding the contributing factors to racing injuries and to the development of strategies that can address these causes. The representation of trainers on the panel will continue into the future

Injury Prevention Strategies and Responses

The Panel has identified a number of ideas and strategies that over time may assist with reducing the incidence and severity of racing related injuries. These include:

1. Reviewing the genetics and breeding of greyhounds with common injuries
2. Reviewing design specifications and construction at tracks with higher injury rates
3. Instituting a system to review previous injury and racing history of all greyhounds prior to each race meeting
4. Paying particular attention to greyhounds with a history of not having raced for 42 days and requiring further veterinary assessment of these greyhounds if they have an injury history
5. Understanding the relationship between the grades of races and the incidence of injuries
6. Paying attention to weight variations of greyhounds currently racing as an indicator of possible injury

The Commission will undertake more work to assess the feasibility and timeframes for implementing these recommendations.