



Greyhound Industry

Position Statement

The NZVA Te Pae Kīrehe believes that the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand must meet the standards of animal welfare as prescribed under the Animal Welfare Act (1999)

There are currently significant welfare risks and compromises to greyhounds which must be minimised and adequately balanced with provisions that ensure that the animals are provided with a life worth living. NZVA members must positively assist in maintaining and improving the overall welfare provisions for greyhounds. The industry must remain independently monitored to ensure this outcome.

NZVA's member veterinarians will continue to play an essential role in assisting the oversight and ensuring the lifetime welfare of greyhounds, whether in the racing industry or when retired as pets.

Background

The governance and practices relating to the welfare of greyhounds in the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand is facing increased scrutiny and has been the subject of four independent reviews between 2013 and 2022. Despite evidence of improvements in the industry's governance, policy, oversight, measurement and reporting of matters relating directly to greyhound welfare, the various completed reports also indicate past shortcomings and raise additional concerns about the future of the industry.

The government's decision on the future of the greyhound industry may depend on factors beyond varying perspectives on the progress that has or must yet be made regarding provisions for improved greyhound welfare.

Whether the industry may continue or must close, the minimisation of adverse welfare impacts on greyhounds must be a principal consideration.

The NZVA recognises that:

- greyhound breeding and racing in New Zealand is currently a legitimate activity, but current legitimacy is not a constant assurance to the industry's future.
- as with other animal industries, there are welfare risks and compromises, but these must be minimised and adequately balanced with provisions that ensure that the animals are provided a life worth living. The industry must remain independently monitored to ensure this outcome.
- Greyhound Racing New Zealand has made some progress and is demonstrating its commitment to improving the lifetime welfare of greyhounds.
- there are a range of views among the public including a range of views amongst our own member veterinarians about the greyhound racing industry.
- society's expectations of animal welfare standards are constantly evolving which means practices that were once deemed acceptable may no longer be seen as such. It is important to continue to monitor, examine, discuss and debate these issues using scientific and evidence-based research, to respond to public concerns.

Recommendations

If the industry is permitted to continue, then independent supervision of GRNZ is advocated. NZVA also advocates GRNZ's governance and leadership to maintain internal focus on greyhound welfare and that the GRNZ's Animal Health and Welfare Committee and the Serious Injury Review Committee, each integral to ongoing animal welfare, are provided increased authority, balanced with increased accountability.



Further, the Animal Health and Welfare Committee's broad remit should be sufficiently independent and represent a wide range of animal welfare expertise.

With an industry continuation, the Serious Injury Review Committee's purpose of injury reduction including the capturing of data around non-race day injuries is essential. Work must continue in predicting and preventing injuries to help inform future initiatives.

A decision to close the industry would need to be under the directive external supervision and strong internal governance, independent of current industry stakeholder groups, involving careful planning and stakeholder consultation.

If a decision is made to end greyhound racing in Aotearoa, the NZVA believes the industry would need to be closed down under close external supervision and strong internal governance to ensure animal welfare standards are maintained. NZVA would wish to see a gradual and carefully managed transition period with maintained close supervision ensuring minimisation of management welfare risks for those greyhounds still racing, while enabling a more measured release of greyhounds from the industry and into homes. Heightened traceability of the whereabouts of retiring greyhounds including through adoptions would be an important requirement.

Name	Approved by Board	Next Review Date <i>Unless circumstances require a lesser period</i>	Public
Greyhound Industry Position Statement	September 2024	September 2027	Yes