

# Hon Meka Whaitiri

MP for Ikaroa-Rāwhiti

Minister of Customs

Minister for Veterans

Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare)

Associate Minister of Statistics



MIN20-0909

NZ Greyhound Racing  
greyhound@grnz.co.nz

Tēnā koe Glenda,

I would like to thank you for the quarterly progress reports you have provided since your work programme began in 2018, addressing the recommendations from the Hansen Report. Implementation of the recommendations is critical to ensure good welfare for greyhounds, both within the racing industry and once their racing career has ended.

On 18 June 2020, the then Minister for Racing, Rt Hon Winston Peters and the Minister of Agriculture, Hon Damien O'Connor, received a final report from you with an update on the latest progress against the Hansen Report recommendations. The report also advised that Greyhound Racing New Zealand had responded to all 20 recommendations and therefore progress reporting would cease.

The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), my advisory committee on animal welfare matters, is concerned that there was insufficient information in the final report provided. I understand that NAWAC has suggested that you provide your animal welfare committee with further detail on how each of the recommendations have been implemented.

I have considered this advice and I agree with NAWAC's concerns. I would also like to see the reporting reinstated. I am pleased with some of the advances that Greyhound Racing New Zealand has made to date and encourage you to continue to resource and implement all of the recommendations in full.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Meka Whaitiri'.

Hon Meka Whaitiri

**Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare)**



23 December 2020

The Hon Meka Whaitiri  
Associate Minister of Agriculture responsible for Animal Welfare  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

CC. The Hon Grant Robertson  
Minister of Racing  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Tena Koe Minister,

I have received your letter in relation to our quarterly progress report which Greyhounds New Zealand has continued to provide to yours and the Minister of Racing's offices following our correspondence on 1 May 2018. We note your concern that your NAWAC advisors have raised re being insufficient detail in the final report. I am very happy to furnish any specific information required but at this stage I am unaware of what this may be.

For your information, the Chair of NAWAC called the Independent Chair of the GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2020. During that call, our Chair recommended that the NAWAC Chairperson contact me (as the CEO of GRNZ) directly and come to a mutual agreement of the information needed by NAWAC and the frequency of that reporting.

To date I have not been contacted and the report forwarded to you was in the format originally agreed between the previous CEO (Mauro Barsi) and the Ministers office.

It is important for clarity, that I advise you that I commissioned the Hansen Review of greyhound racing as Chairperson of the New Zealand Racing Board. This was an industry driven review and as part of that we offered to keep the then Minister of Racing informed. This was not a review commissioned by the Ministry for Primary Industries, whom we also kept informed via their representation as an observer on our Health and Welfare Committee.

The Hansen review was then followed by the Messara review which quite rightly acknowledges the importance of Welfare in all racing and recommends these matters become the strong focus of the new combined Racing Integrity Board and is a key focus for all Racing Codes. In my role as a member of Racing NZ I am working with my colleagues to ensure that all codes get the best advice possible to ensure the welfare of our animals and we are finding this collaboration helpful as well.

Since taking over as CEO of Greyhounds New Zealand in 2019, I like you am pleased with the advances Greyhounds New Zealand has made. Due to the current level of record keeping we are

now able to continue to work to ensure good welfare for greyhounds, both within the racing industry and once their racing career is ended.

My personal view is that to understand the actions taken by our trainers and licensed persons it is best to visit our rehoming, training, and racing facilities to observe what is taking place. To date only the Chair and the senior vet of our external observers on our welfare committee have taken this opportunity which my predecessor offered, I recently restated this offer. Now we have hopefully progressed past the restrictions we implemented because of Covid-19 these visits may occur. Note the current Racing Integrity Unit, attend all our race meetings, and regularly visit our kennels to ensure they are adhering to all of our animal welfare requirements.

Currently I am pleased we are at a stage where we can measure our performance against our past performance. It is frustrating though that we are currently unable to measure our number of euthanasians against other organisations. In contrast in Australia the RSPCA releases a full report with similar measurements to ours reporting percentage and number of animals euthanised and rehoming. I would suggest we would get a greater grasp of all the current animal welfare issues in relation to the dog population if these were recorded and reported.

Greyhounds New Zealand recognise the importance of our social licence and we are also aware that there will always be a minority who feel that racing animals is not acceptable. In saying this we are cognisant of the importance of the welfare of our dogs, and how critical it is for our Greyhounds both during their racing careers and their retirement.

Although the earlier correspondence with the previous Minister of Racing identified the report you recently received as a final, we will be continuing to keep records and publishing in our annual report we will also deliver the report directly to your office and should you require anything additional we will be happy to respond.

Should you wish to discuss any matters set out in this correspondence, or any other matters to do with the Hansen report and our response to it we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and do so.

Nga Mihi



Glenda Hughes  
**Chief Executive**  
Greyhound Racing NZ