

GREYHOUND RACING

VICTORIA

Attending and Training Greyhounds

Booklet 1 - Introduction



Greyhound Racing Victoria
Attendant and Trainer Education Pack

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This is the first in a series of booklets that support you in attending and training racing greyhounds.

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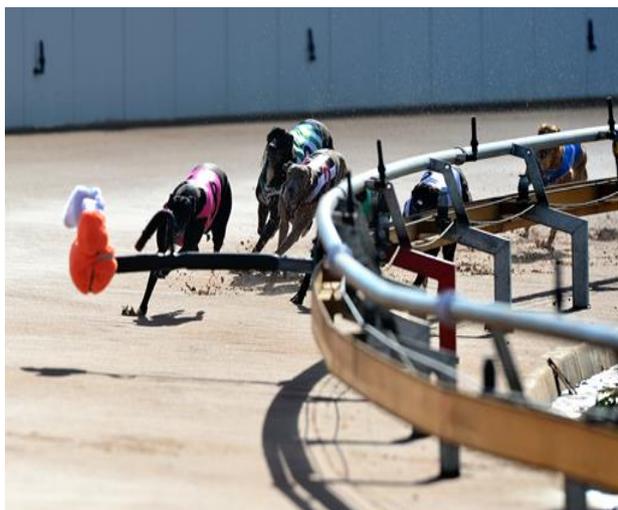
Booklet 13: Advanced Knowledge

The attendant

An attendant is a person registered by Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV), but is not a registered owner or trainer, who is authorised to be physically in charge of a greyhound on the premises of a club for racing.

This is a critical role as you are supporting both the trainers you work with and the greyhounds under your care. Therefore, it is important that you understand how the industry operates including the rules of racing when working at the race track, particularly as you may often be required to make decisions on behalf of the trainers and the greyhounds that you work with. It is also important that you understand how to care for greyhounds – not just at the track but also when you are getting the dogs to the track and home after a race. Excellence in welfare is at the core of the greyhound industry's integrity.

Whether or not you plan to pursue a trainer pathway in the industry, the role of the attendant requires a high level of responsibility.



1.1 Industry background

The greyhound racing industry in Victoria

In Victoria, Australia, Greyhound Racing Victoria is the body responsible for regulating and promoting the greyhound racing industry. A key part of its role is the setting of standards, regulating and policing the industry and the people involved. With close to 1,200 race meetings held across 13 racing clubs throughout Victoria each year, GRV distributes to owners and trainers around \$45 million in prizemoney and other returns.

The greyhound racing industry makes a substantial contribution to the Victorian economy, both as a recreational pursuit and as an industry, involving more than 15,000 Victorians and generating millions of dollars in wagering. The Greyhound Racing Victoria Annual Report 2017-18 stated that the economic impact that the greyhound industry makes to Victoria was in excess of \$400 million dollars annually.

GRV has the task of ensuring that industry participants fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the greyhounds they own and train. They support and encourage continual improvement of training and husbandry techniques through research and education and are committed to the ongoing welfare of greyhounds throughout their racing careers and into retirement. GRV encourages owners and trainers to think carefully about re-homing options at the outset of acquiring a greyhound.

Local and specialist greyhound re-homing agencies can also assist with re-homing.

To help care for those greyhounds that are no longer suited to racing, GRV has developed the highly successful Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) that helps to place ex-racing greyhounds into homes where they live out the rest of their lives as family pets. Information on GAP can be found at www.gap.grv.org.au.

GAP is just one way that GRV is involved in improving the welfare of racing greyhounds within the industry. However, the responsibility for the welfare of each individual greyhound always lies with the owner and those who are working with greyhounds on a daily basis.

The history of greyhound racing

The greyhound is considered one of the 'ancient' breeds of dog. Records indicate greyhounds existed in ancient Egypt and Greece. Greyhounds were often considered like royalty and their ownership was restricted, at times, to members of royalty.

It is thought that the sport of coursing was introduced by the Romans. Coursing involved dogs (generally greyhounds or other sight hounds) chasing a game animal; exhibiting a single dog's skill to sight, chase and catch a game animal. In the 16th century, coursing became a competitive sport with two dogs matched against each other in a race for the game. Dogs were judged on not only their speed but also their agility, and their owners would often bet on the result.

Coursing evolved into a spectator sport, and soon official coursing clubs began to evolve. Two greyhounds would course a single hare that had been given a head start. Spectators would come to watch and place bets on the competing dogs.

The introduction of an artificial lure occurred first in England, but it was an American, Owen Smith, who first introduced racing on a track using an artificial lure. He understood the appeal of coursing but wanted to make it 'a more humane sport with a broader spectator appeal'. The idea took off, and greyhound racing as we know it today, was born.

The industry continues to evolve

Greyhound racing takes place not only in Australia, but in Great Britain, Ireland, America, and Asia. Once thought of as the 'working man's sport', compared to thoroughbred and harness horse racing, it is now a vibrant and professional, multibillion-dollar industry. Greyhound racing is a sport that attracts people from all ages and all walks of life.



By deciding to become an attendant or trainer, you are entering an industry that is passionate about the sport of greyhound racing and even more passionate about the elite animal itself. The mandatory training required to become an attendant or trainer is always designed to ensure that the people entering our industry have the appropriate knowledge and skills to ensure the welfare of our greyhounds.

1.2 Industry structure

The greyhound racing industry in Australia

Race meetings throughout Australia are conducted by the various racing clubs under the control of the State or Territory Controlling Body as prescribed by the Racing Act in each jurisdiction.

To foster and achieve national co-operation and uniformity between the states, there is a national body called Greyhounds Australasia (GA). GA is made up of representatives of each state or territory Controlling Body, along with *representatives* from the New Zealand greyhound racing industry.

To help maintain consistency, GA is responsible for the naming of greyhounds, along with the maintaining and publishing of the annual Stud Book. They also oversee DNA testing, frozen semen and greyhound exports, along with the compiling and publishing of the National Rules (GARs).

The Victorian greyhound racing industry arrangements

Controlling Body

In Victoria, GRV is the 'Controlling Body'. It consists of a 'Board' whose members are appointed by the Minister for Racing, and the associated staff needed to manage and administer greyhound racing in the state.

Under the *Racing Act 1958* the functions of the Board are to:

- control the sport of greyhound racing;
- carry out research into aspects of greyhound racing to assist in planning

- future development;
- promote the sport of greyhound racing;
- promote and improve animal welfare within the sport of greyhound racing;
- promote and monitor compliance with the rules;
- conduct greyhound races;
- register greyhounds for greyhound racing or for stud or other purposes and to regulate the breeding, kennelling and verification of lineage of greyhounds for greyhound racing or for stud or other purposes; and
- consult with greyhound racing industry participants and facilitate consultation amongst greyhound racing industry participants.



The Board may also make rules in relation to the:

- registration of greyhounds as racing greyhounds, stud greyhounds or breeding greyhounds;
- recognition of registration of greyhounds in a State or Territory other than Victoria, or outside Australia;

- approval of registered greyhounds for racing;
- welfare of greyhounds;
- recognition of registration of greyhounds in a State or Territory other than Victoria, or outside Australia;
- approval of registered greyhounds for racing;
- breeding and kennelling of greyhounds, including the registration of services by stud greyhounds, results of matings and greyhound puppies in a litter;
- the collection of body samples from greyhounds to verify lineage for the purposes of registration; and
- fees to be paid for registration, recognition of registration, approval for racing and the collection and testing of body samples.

A copy of the *Racing Act 1958* can be found at

<http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>.

Registered Clubs and Associations

Like any association or club, Greyhound Racing Clubs are controlled by their members. People who have an interest in greyhound racing may choose to join the club by paying a membership fee. The club members then vote to appoint a Club President and Committee to run the club. Clubs usually provide facilities for their members to use.

Greyhounds Clubs Australia promotes and develops the greyhound industry nationally with its members representing the principal racing bodies across states and territories.

Coursing Clubs

Modern coursing (called Plumpton Coursing) in Victoria involves two greyhounds competing against each other in the chase for a mechanical quarry. Coursing competitions are usually elimination events with greyhounds who win a heat moving into the next round. This means that an individual greyhound may race a number of times on the same day. Coursing does not take place on a circular track, but rather a straight (normally grass) track over shorter distances. There are no starting boxes instead the two greyhounds are released from a special leash and collar by a person called the 'slipper'.

There are a number of coursing clubs throughout Victoria. They hold training sessions, and coursing competitions during the coursing 'season' which is from May through to late August/early September.

Regulatory framework

In addition to the *Racing Act 1958* which governs the greyhound racing industry, other legislation impacts on the industry.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Planning requirements for the keeping and training of racing dogs are incorporated into Victorian planning schemes under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Requirements for applicants to keep racing dogs and use and develop land for a racing dog facility in a rural zone are set out for new facilities or expanding an existing facility. A facility with an existing permit may continue to operate in accordance with the permit without having to obtain a new

permit or comply with the new requirements.

The planning requirements came into operation in 2017 and can be viewed at <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-reform/new-planning-guidelines-for-greyhound-facilities-across-victoria>.

Domestic Animals Act 1994

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (DAA) contains a range of provisions that relate to the care and management of greyhounds. A summary of these requirements can be found at: <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/greyhounds>.

The DAA also provides for the operation of the existing *Code of Practice for the Operation of Greyhound Establishments* and the updated *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds* which will commence on 1 January 2020.

A copy of the DAA can be found at <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>. The existing Code of Practice sets out the minimum accepted standards for participants in the greyhound industry and participants are expected to meet these standards. It is an important document and covers a range of areas including:

- staffing requirements;
- operation of your greyhound establishment;
- record keeping;
- nutrition;
- health care;
- exercise;
- setting up and managing a facility; and
- the sale and transfer of greyhounds.

These are updated in further detail in the

updated Code with additional content in relation to breeding, training and enrichment and socialisation and handling.

A copy of the updated Code of Practice can be obtained online at: <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/greyhounds/code-of-practice>.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986

The purpose of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTAA) is to prevent cruelty to animals, encourage their considerate treatment and improve the level of community awareness about the prevention of cruelty to animals. There are specific provisions preventing the use of animals as a lure or for bleeding greyhounds.

A copy of the POCTAA can be found at <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>.

1.3 Integrity within the industry

The importance of fair racing

Integrity refers to the ‘honesty’ of the industry. Greyhound racing is a multi-million-dollar industry in Victoria and wagering on the outcome of races is a large component of this. People who participate by entering their greyhounds in races, along with the people who wager on the races are relying on the races to be conducted in a fair and honest manner so that each greyhound can run on its merits.

A large part of the management of greyhound racing involves ensuring that the rules of greyhound racing are adhered to, and that participants do not do

anything to compromise the integrity of



the racing. GRV's integrity department (the Greyhound Racing Integrity Unit or GRIU) is responsible for the policing of these rules.

The rules of greyhound racing

There are several sets of rules that together form the rules of greyhound racing:

The National or **Greyhounds Australasia Rules** (GARs): this is a set of rules that apply to racing in all states of Australia and New Zealand and are issued by GA. When these rules are quoted, they carry the identifier GAR, for example GAR 106. The national rules cover the powers of the Controlling Body, the conduct of race meetings, offences, inquiries and penalties, along with the requirements of registration and breeding.

The **Local Rules** (LRs or LRRs): these are a set of rules that have been endorsed by

the state Controlling Body and vary from state to state. The local rules are identified by the letters LR, with the state in brackets, for example LR (Vic.) 42.6. The local rules cover some state-specific things such as grading, but also act to clarify the national rules such as registration, welfare, penalties, and eligibility to compete in events. The local rules take precedence over the national rules.

The **Plumpton Coursing Rules**: these are a set of rules that apply only to Plumpton Coursing events.

The **Betting and Bookmakers Rules**: these are a set of rules that govern bookmakers and betting when on course.

It is important that you are familiar with the rules of racing so that you can understand what happens at a race meeting, and what you can and can't do. The rules are constantly being updated, and it is your responsibility as a registered participant to be aware of any rule changes.

An up-to-date copy of the rules are ALWAYS available on the GRV website (<https://greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/rules-of-racing/>). You can download a copy free of charge. Any amendments or changes to the rules are also published and explained on the website. If you would like a hard copy of the rules, you can contact the Racing Services and Registrations Department of GRV and for a small fee, they will send you a hard copy version.

If you are planning on becoming an attendant you will need to understand all of the rules that apply to people handling a greyhound at a race meeting, along with your responsibilities towards the Stewards. Trainers are expected to have a much better knowledge of the rules as

they must also understand the rules that apply to training and nominating a greyhound for an event, along with how the outcomes of races are determined.

Role of the Stewards

The Stewards are responsible for ensuring that all racing is conducted in a fair and consistent manner. They also have the power to investigate any matter that may compromise the fair running of race meetings.

They can control, regulate and inquire into the conduct of officials, bookmakers, owners, trainers, attendants and other persons participating in or associated with race meetings. They have the ability to impose penalties on any registered person who breaches the rules of racing.

Stewards are in charge of supervising the actual running of race meetings and conduct out of competition testing.

Role of the Animal Welfare Inspectors

GRV's Animal Welfare Inspectors are authorised officers under the *Racing Act 1958* and conduct kennel inspections of registered trainers to ensure the rules and the Code of Practice relating to the welfare of the greyhounds in their care are being adhered to.

Greyhound Racing Victoria

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