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# **How New Zealand Greyhound Racing Industry Licensed Persons Perceive the Industry, Greyhound Welfare, and Their Ability to Create Change.**

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Sandrine Korver

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## **Abstract**

The greyhound racing industry in New Zealand is facing increasing concerns about animal welfare, and its social license to operate is diminishing. A social license to operate refers to the informal and intangible agreement that determines whether an industry or business can continue operating based on its social acceptability. The New Zealand government, represented by Hon. Grant Robertson, put the greyhound racing industry on notice in September 2021 following an independent review of the industry and its practices. The review recommended major changes in three areas: data recording, transparency of all activities, and improvement of animal welfare in general.

In this study, I aimed to better understand greyhound racing industry participants' perspectives, practices, and attitudes, particularly regarding greyhound welfare and management. This study provided critical insight into a commonly overlooked and undervalued stakeholder whose perspectives are essential in understanding the appetite to make changes to align with evolving community expectations. I surveyed 46 New Zealand registered greyhound racing license holders and collected quantitative and qualitative data. I used a mixed-methods approach, including reflexive thematic analysis for qualitative data.

This research provides a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives, motivations, and opinions of license holders within the New Zealand greyhound racing industry. The participants care deeply about their dogs and understand the basic requirements for the racing greyhounds. However, they could benefit from further education regarding what good welfare means for greyhounds. The participants rated affective state and survival-related categories of welfare as the most important categories for ensuring good greyhound welfare. Behaviour interactions were rated as less important towards maintaining good greyhound welfare. Their responses around greyhound welfare indicated further clarification of terminology would be beneficial and would elucidate whether increased animal welfare educational efforts are necessary.

This research highlights the key areas where changes are needed and suggests effective approaches to support, involve, empower, and educate the racing greyhound license holders.

Greyhound license holders felt excluded from decision-making that impacts them and their dogs. They wanted greater support from industry authorities to improve canine welfare. They expressed their eagerness to improve their industry and their desire to be included in decisions regarding changes, through being included in committees, meetings and ensuring their input is acknowledged and applied. They are committed to improving the social license to operate. They want the public to understand the sport better and greyhound welfare through increased transparency and openness, by involving the public in open days and events. The findings of the study will help the license holders adapt and apply these approaches to improve greyhound welfare and management practices.

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. History and Overview of the Greyhound Racing Industry in New Zealand**

Greyhound racing has existed in New Zealand since 1876, when the first clubs were founded in Southland. Three years after the first racing clubs were established (1879), dogs were raced in the first Waterloo Cup - a well-established annual racing competition run near Oamaru (Fletcher, 2002). The first New Zealand governing body for greyhound racing was the National Coursing Association, formed in 1908, which became the New Zealand Greyhound Racing Association in 1954 (Mountier, 2013). This was the same time that coursing was banned in New Zealand. Coursing was the 'original greyhound racing' where two dogs simultaneously chased hares across fields, eventually evolving into fenced tracks. This ban occurred due to concerns and issues relating to animal cruelty (Mountier, 2013). There is little information explaining what animal cruelty issues caused the ban. However, since the evolution of artificial lures occurred around the same time (Cameron et al., 2024), it was likely related to rabbit/hare welfare issues.

## **1.2. Current State and the New Zealand Government's Position on Greyhound Racing**

Following changing community attitudes toward animal use and increasing concern for the welfare of racing greyhounds globally, the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand was placed on notice by the New Zealand Government, represented by Hon. Grant Robertson in 2021 (Robertson & Whitiri, 2021). This followed an independent review by Hon. Sir Bruce Robertson that recommended major changes were required to ensure the continuation of the industry (Robertson, 2021). Three fundamental issues were identified that needed to be addressed: the data recording, the transparency of all activities, and an improvement to animal welfare in general (Robertson & Whitiri, 2021; Robertson, 2021). Under the topic of data recording, a critical issue mentioned was a need for Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ) to revamp its database to ensure all information on greyhounds either born or

imported into New Zealand until they are de-registered, needs to be accurate, accessible and up to date. Issues around attaining and sharing accurate information were noted, particularly with greyhound injuries, euthanasia, rehoming numbers, whelped puppies, population projections, and health-related statistics. This led to another area needing improvement: greater transparency (Robertson, 2021). The review stated that there needed to be more opportunities to portray the industry's overall performance due to a lack of transparency in information. One of the areas that required further transparency was around active population management.

Animal welfare improvements stated in the review included rehoming complications, commonly due to unsuitable behaviours. This was linked to concerns during the training and breeding period in young greyhounds, where there was a lack of socialisation with humans and dogs. Another area of welfare issue mentioned in the review was euthanasia. The review acknowledged the effort to reduce the number of euthanasia cases. However, with less euthanasia occurring, canine welfare may be negatively impacted due to greyhounds being kept alive to avoid euthanasia when it is the best outcome. This caused further stress on the rehoming section of the industry (Robertson, 2021). Robertson's review discussed the seemingly counterintuitive suggestion to increase euthanasia rates. Despite decreased euthanasia sounding more acceptable to the public, there were worries about poor animal welfare being prioritised to improve the reputation of the industry (Robertson, 2021).

As well as the governmental authority ordering change, there has been a concurrent campaign to ban the sport from many other groups in New Zealand, for example, animal activist groups, the media, and the public. Together, in addition to the predominantly poor reputation relating to animal welfare that the industry holds in the eye of the public, these pressures are eroding greyhound racing's social license to operate and subsequently threatening its sustainability as an industry reliant upon animals (Robertson & Whaitiri, 2021).

A social license to operate can be described as the public communities' acceptance of an industry and its practices. While it is not a tangible legal contract, it holds much weight in an industry's continuation (Duncan et al., 2018). Hon Grant Roberston, the previous Minister for Racing, stated, "This is a very clear signal....it is either things improve, or they [the NZ greyhound racing industry] lose their social license to exist." (Cameron et al., 2024). This statement presents a straightforward view: greyhound racing in New Zealand must rebuild its

social license. Otherwise, the public perception (and consequently, the community approval to operate) will keep deteriorating, similar to that observed in other jurisdictions like the United Kingdom and Australia. (Cameron et al., 2024). This improvement is only possible through restoring the industry's reputation. The current poor reputation exists due to the industry's lack of transparency (predominantly around euthanasia), poor or inaccurate data recording, and dog welfare and management issues. Management-related issues include poor population management and its impact on rehoming services. Inadequate socialisation and training also impact future rehoming possibilities. Improvement is needed to track maintenance and safety standards to reduce the occurrence of injuries (Robertson, 2021). Illegal drug use is also a concern (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2021). The industry's poor reputation is also impacted by the ongoing discussion of the social acceptability of using animals in sports (Cameron et al., 2024).

### **1.3. Research Aims and Objectives.**

My research focused on understanding the racing industry participants' practices and attitudes, particularly around greyhound welfare and management. As often overlooked stakeholders, insight into their perspective is critical in understanding the appetite to make changes to align with the progressing community expectations. This underpins the industry's future by laying a strong foundation for future research and enabling possible improvements and changes to be made. I aimed to understand how the registered greyhound racing license holders in New Zealand conceptualise their role in managing racing greyhounds and their welfare. The scope of the data collection included their perspective on greyhound welfare and management, the community within greyhound racing, the changes necessary within the industry, how they would change it, or what support they would require to achieve this.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Negative Perception of Greyhound Racing and Erosion of Social License to Operate.**

The negative perception of greyhound racing held by stakeholders outside the industry influences the industry's social license to operate. A social license to operate refers to a non-legally binding social contract or the social acceptability given to something informally (McManus, 2022). Many groups of stakeholders outside the industry hold a negative perception of greyhound racing. In a study by Cameron et al. (2024), 72% of respondents reported having a negative view of commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand. According to a study by Carr (2015), the foundation of greyhound racing is often imagined to be gambling and betting on the greyhounds and that of a blood sport. Since gambling and betting, leading to the commodification of the dogs, are not very socially acceptable, this image of greyhound racing creates a negative association (Markwell et al., 2017). This view of live greyhounds as commodities to be bought and sold makes it hard for greyhound racing participants who preach passion and love for the dogs to be taken seriously. The perception of greyhound racing as a blood sport comes from the origin of the lure evoking the hunt within the greyhounds. This same perception is not associated with horse racing, even though it is also an entertainment and racing sport (Markwell et al., 2017). This is because people view a 'hunt' as bloody and brutal, while horse racing does not share this same origin, so people do not associate it with a similar context. The negatively biased perception of greyhound racing could be a potential contributor to the perception of their welfare being poor.

### **2.2. Animal Welfare Issues in New Zealand Greyhound Racing**

#### **2.2.1. Euthanasia**

Euthanasia occurs relatively frequently in the racing industry and, along with injury, forms one of the main points of tension between the greyhound racing industry and the wider community. The number of euthanasia's performed in New Zealand has decreased

significantly since the 2017 review into the racing industry (Robertson, 2021). According to the 2021 review into greyhound racing in New Zealand, the number of greyhounds euthanised due to injuries since 2017 was 285 (Robertson, 2021). Despite lower euthanasia rates, this part of the industry is poorly received by the public, as a family dog with the same injuries would still be considered healthy enough to continue living with appropriate veterinary treatment (Groizard, 2019). However, people working with greyhounds may have different attitudes towards their dogs than a typical family to their companion dog (Taylor & Signal, 2009). These different attitudes towards dogs create tensions between stakeholders. This is discussed by Serpell (2004), who proposes that affect (emotional responses and attitudes towards animals) and utility (an animal's instrumental value) are the two primary motivations behind humans' attitudes towards (non-human) animals. Since a large category of dog ownership worldwide falls under 'companion', many people struggle to view canines as anything else. This leads to the other motivational determinant, utility. A working or sporting dog, such as a racing greyhound, will likely be perceived through its utility. The instrumental value of a working/sporting dog is their ability to work for their owner. Whether that is lessening the workload, earning money, or the ability to win races. A companion dog owner has an entirely different perception of their dog and is likely to view their dog as having a similar value to a human companion.

There is also a dilemma that must be faced by those involved in the industry between risking their social license to operate with high euthanasia rates or the resources and issues associated with prolonging the lives of greyhounds with poor welfare. The 2021 review states that one of the risks for the New Zealand racing industry relates to some greyhounds being kept alive longer than appropriate, potentially causing more welfare issues for the dogs (Robertson, 2021). These dogs may have terrible injuries or be unable to be rehomed, leading them to spend the remainder of their lives in kennels, with the potential lack of appropriate social interactions and enrichment. This demonstrates the impact of the wrong type of push for change, creating an imbalance between the accepted rates of euthanasia and what is realistically within the means of care possible for the racing industry participants.

Lack of transparency regarding the euthanasia of greyhounds is a key issue threatening the social license of the racing industry in New Zealand. While euthanasia rates have decreased since the 2017 review of the industry, the most common reason for euthanasia stated in the

2017 review was labelled as “no reason given”, with 462 deaths categorised in this way (Robertson, 2021). This calls into question whether the reason for euthanasia is unknown to those within the greyhound racing community or to the governmental data and officials reporting on the reasons (in this case, the data came from GRNZ, the authoritative body for the greyhound racing industry participants). Whether the people working with greyhounds are aware of why these deaths are occurring or not makes a difference to their continued social license to operate. If they know the reasoning but choose not to report it transparently, it could be interpreted as disinformation, where they are deliberately providing misleading or inaccurate information (Fallis, 2014). If this were the case, it could be indicative of sensitivity to public attitudes and feelings of alienation and mistrust from those outside the racing industry’s community. The data collection method used by authorities does not ensure that people who work with greyhounds feel safe enough to trust and answer honestly, demonstrating the need to better understand the greyhound racing industry participants in general.

### **2.2.2. Overpopulation**

Greyhound populations can increase rapidly due to their large litter size compared to other animals used for sports entertainment, such as horse racing. This means overpopulation (relative to needs) can occur. While there are no statistics on overpopulation being managed using euthanasia in New Zealand, it is unclear if the greyhound racing industry has created population projections to ensure there is not an excessive amount of greyhounds being bred for the industry (Robertson, 2021).

### **2.2.3. Prevalence of Injuries**

Greyhound injuries are a prominent social license issue within racing. They impact welfare and cause many dogs to have short career durations and lifespans. The leading causes of racing greyhound injuries are noted below.

### **2.2.3.1. Training Volume**

Training and racing frequency and intensity can contribute towards a higher incidence of injuries due to the tendency for the greyhounds to be overexerted or underworked. Greyhounds that race more than once a week are more likely to have soft-tissue injuries when compared to greyhounds racing only once per week (Palmer et al., 2021a). However, in contrast, greyhounds with a low training and racing frequency (those racing more than seven days apart) are 1.33 times more likely to suffer from a fracture than those with a higher frequency. Fractures were deemed to have a more significant impact on the canine's future as a racing greyhound due to the severity of the injury. However, these occurred less frequently than soft tissue injuries. The overall incidence of injury was recorded as 20.05 per 1000 starts. For each injury category, there were: 14.02 per 1000 starts for soft tissue injuries, 2.93 per 1000 starts for lacerations, and 2.09 per 1000 starts for fractures (Palmer et al., 2021a). An optimal training volume has not been reported in the literature. However, Palmer et al. (2021a) suggest increased effort in investigating and screening greyhounds infrequently racing to facilitate early detection of injuries.

To try minimising the risk of an unbalanced training routine causing injuries, some trainers use strategically developed training programmes that improve anaerobic performance and help with physiological adaptations (Palmer et al., 2020b). These programmes are also tailored to prevent muscular injury. When there is an understanding of the balance required between the recovery period (for the greyhounds to rest and recuperate) and training volume, the frequency of injuries decreases (Palmer et al., 2020b).

Good management of the dogs is the main factor for improvement to prevent injuries or training problems. Once there is an understanding of the greyhound racing industry participants' opinions of their management, advice on improving the training schedules will be easier to translate.

### **2.2.3.2. Poor Markers of Greyhound Readiness**

Trainers often begin formal training of greyhounds when they can reach time milestones and when young dogs display the desired 'appearance' (Palmer et al., 2020b). The exact appearance discussed is not formally noted but is suspected to be judged from a familiarity with the breed and racing greyhounds. This indicates shared knowledge (or 'culture') within

the greyhound racing community (Groizard, 2019). However, these milestones have been found to increase the likelihood of injuries as they are inappropriate indicators of whether a greyhound is ready to begin formal training (Palmer et al., 2020b).

#### **2.2.3.3. Age**

Age is a significant factor in the prevalence of injuries. Starting too young or continuing to race older greyhounds increases the likelihood of sustaining injuries, such as fractures (Palmer et al., 2020a; 2021b). Since there is a strong correlation between how trainers manage various greyhound ages and injury volume, it is a factor that needs to be improved and better understood within the community.

#### **2.2.3.4. Track Design and Conditions**

Track design has also been shown to be a major contributor towards greyhound injuries. The track's first bend is the most frequent location for injuries sustained while racing (Palmer et al., 2021b). A report by Eager et al. (2017) stated that nearly half of all injuries were predicted to have occurred on the bend. This is due to the centrifugal forces causing greyhounds to slow down as they enter a bend, commonly creating congestion and increasing the instability of the greyhound. This, combined with an inadequate camber (curved lean of the track surface) for the greyhounds to counteract the forces and lean into the bend, causes a significantly high likelihood of injuries.

Ambient temperature also contributes to track-related injuries. Higher temperatures cause more evaporation of moisture, making the race track drier and harder. The harder surface creates more injuries (Eager et al., 2017).

### **2.3. Greyhound Culture in New Zealand**

The culture (or community) occurring within the greyhound racing industry is formed from shared values, beliefs and traditions that shape similar patterns of behaviours and beliefs within that community (Deal & Peterson, 1999). The culture discussed in this research is that of which the greyhound people are a part. Culture has a massive influence on a person's

perspective, actions, and identity. Therefore, it is a significant area of consideration when exploring the greyhound racing industry participants.

### **2.3.1. What is a Greyhound Person?**

Greyhound people are the dog trainers, breeders, handlers, and owners. But a step further from that, they are divided into separate sub-groups. A study in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, found that these subgroups are divided by differing priorities (Groizard, 2019). Some were found to primarily love the sport, the dogs and participating, with the profits being secondary. This group was especially proud to call themselves greyhound people. Others held a primarily money-based interest (Groizard, 2019; Ledger, 2020). The NSW study also noted that having these separate subgroups already formed presented an opportunity to improve welfare by working within and creating change (Groizard, 2019). The opportunity they alluded to is the already formed values that motivate the groups that can be applied to creating change. While this study occurred in Australia, we may discover the same subgroupings in New Zealand. If this is the case, identification of the sub-groups we are working with and their values is essential for understanding the next step on what will motivate each of these groups. It is important to note that this research classifies all greyhound trainers, breeders and owners as greyhound people, regardless of their priorities, i.e., whether money-based or passion-based. Groizard (2019) only includes the passionate, contributing people as greyhound people and the others as money people.

### **2.3.2. Greyhound Racing Culture/Community**

For the passionate subgroup of greyhound people, their social identity is significantly formed from being a part of the community. A sense of shared identity results in a shared sense of morality and moral obligation (Groizard, 2019). Strong bonds and relationships are formed with others perceived as fellow greyhound people, and the shared understanding of the struggles and misunderstandings from outside the community solidifies their strong culture (Groizard, 2019).

### **2.3.3. The Values of Greyhound People**

The values of the greyhound people depend on the subgroup discussed. The passionate greyhound people who enjoy actively participating with others in the industry make up the culture and community; for them, being a greyhound person is more than a job or a means of income; it is a social identity (Groizard, 2019). This group of greyhound people have a lot of respect for the dogs and have many positive interactions with the greyhounds compared to the money group of greyhound people.

Being a part of the community is an opportunity for them to create an achieved status from their knowledge, experience, efforts and talents within the industry (Groizard, 2019). They hold immense pride and value in their status – frequently using it as a way of creating a new status that is separate from their own ascribed status given to them outside of the community and their control (Groizard, 2019)

### **2.3.4. What does this mean for Creating Change?**

A culture or community can make it challenging for outside sources to try to cause sustainable change (Talbert, 2010). When this change is hard to create, an isolation or alienation effect occurs from both inside the community and outside the industry (Talbert, 2010; Groizard, 2019). They commonly close off from accepting advice from outside sources and tend to value their forms of evidence a lot higher. The knowledge found to be of influence in greyhound racing communities comes from shared findings and experience gained through interactions with the dogs and the community. This valued knowledge is not from academic findings but is strongly trusted within the community. To have and share this knowledge shows a long-term association in the industry and gives members confidence and a sense of belonging (Groizard, 2019).

Outside of this community, their lack of receptiveness to change creates a reputation for being unwilling to improve. This creates hostility, and the change makers become pushier and more assertive but not as effective or sustainable as change made from inside the culture (Ledger, 2020). This lack of understanding of the essential underlying principles that engage the targeted group often causes them to feel alienated. They comply with the rules without caring or engaging in the change properly. Instead, it is surface-level change because they have to – not because they want to or agree with it (Talbert, 2010). To reach a viable change, a

connection needs to occur from a better understanding of those within the industry and an educated, tailored approach to change from those outside the industry.

Greyhound people who state they have good relationships with their dogs and their enjoyment does not come from the money show a promise when wanting to improve greyhound welfare (Groizard, 2019). In a study of dog agility competitions, having the love and passion for the dogs as the primary driving force behind involvement kept the sport much more dog-centred, i.e., it reduced the commodification of the dogs (Ikonen & Pehkonen, 2017). This provides an opportunity to use the greyhound people's love for the dogs as inspiration and motivation to improve their management if love for them and sport is a driving factor.

There is little information on what these values are in New Zealand; however, I suspect an increased incentive to gain more money or resources from improved welfare will motivate the money-orientated groups within the industry. Encouraging pride in the industry's positive aspects is likely to create a drive to continue achieving more, especially among those part of the strong culture within greyhound racing (Ledger, 2020; Groizard, 2019).

The lack of literature on the New Zealand greyhound racing culture or community provides both an opportunity for this research to fill and difficulty properly assessing the New Zealand greyhound community. While there is no New Zealand-focused research on the community, we can compare and contrast multiple studies conducted in Australia (Groizard, 2019; Ledger, 2020).

## **2.4. The Stakeholders and Actors of the Greyhound Racing Industry in New Zealand**

The greyhound racing industry in New Zealand has undergone many changes in recent years, with various stakeholders as the driving forces. These stakeholders all differ in perspectives and positions on the continuation of greyhound racing in New Zealand. The role these stakeholders play and the actions they create make them actors within the system also. Therefore, it is essential to understand who they are, what they influence and why it matters to the New Zealand greyhound racing industry.

#### **2.4.1. Greyhound Racing New Zealand**

Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ) is formally recognised as a part of the New Zealand racing industry (Racing Industry Act, 2020). They are responsible for all greyhound racing in New Zealand and the supporting functions of greyhound racing, such as breeding and training of the dogs, dog welfare, and involvement in the racing schedules, stakes, and promotions (Greyhound Racing New Zealand, 2021a). GRNZ has an influential role in the system as they are a step above the trainers and breeders regarding the direct welfare impact on the dogs by representing these individual license holders. They have frequently stated their plans to improve the welfare practices and management of the greyhounds. GRNZ has created rules and codes of conduct to prove their commitment to enhancing welfare (Greyhound Racing New Zealand, 2021b). As these policies are not governmental legislation, there is no legal obligation for the greyhound racing community to abide by these policies. Instead, establishing internal policies represents a sign of good intentions and potentially an attempt at lessening the negative public image held against them by the public and animal rights groups. The Racing Integrity Board kennel audits are now being measured against the new GRNZ welfare standards (Greyhound Racing New Zealand, 2023). These kennel audits provide a mechanism for animal welfare compliance – with infringement notices being issued for non-compliance.

GRNZ is a very well-connected stakeholder in the system. Since all racing goes through them, they significantly influence the greyhound breeders' and trainers' actions and practices. They are also affected by the opinions of the government due to the regulations and rules set. The New Zealand Racing Board and the Racing Integrity Board also significantly influence GRNZ since they audit GRNZ practices and report to the Minister for Racing.

#### **2.4.2. Racing Integrity Board**

The Racing Integrity Board was established under the Racing Industry Act 2020 to oversee the racing integrity system as an independent body. They are governed by another independent board appointed by the Minister for Racing (Racing Integrity Board, 2021). As actors within the system, the Racing Integrity Board works to enforce and maintain the regulations and rules of racing. They test for prohibited substances and monitor interactions to ensure actions

comply with racing codes and welfare policies (Racing Integrity Board, 2022). The government establishes the requirements through the Racing Industry Act (2020).

#### **2.4.3. Government**

The government is one of the most prominent stakeholders, due to its overarching legislative authority at the national level and to having many stakeholders under its direct influence. Governmental departments of relevance to greyhound racing include the Department of Internal Affairs, which enforces the Racing Industry Act (2020) (an Act authorising the Totalisator Agency Board (TAB), the sole national betting agency of New Zealand (“About TAB” 2023)) and the Ministry for Primary Industries, which enforces the Animal Welfare Act (1999). This makes the government's involvement in the industry very challenging as they have motives to remove and continue greyhound racing in New Zealand, depending on the department.

Since greyhound racing provides many earnings for the TAB, they are motivated to continue the sport for the sake of profits and employment the industry provides. However, they also have a social license to maintain, and the idea of the government supporting an industry involved in poor animal welfare may harm their image. By having an Animal Welfare Act that opposes poor welfare practices, they must also ensure welfare standards are met and maintained according to the Act (1999). The government influences every stakeholder involved due to its authority and the rules and regulations it issues.

#### **2.4.4. Politicians**

Politicians are government representatives with direct access to influence change at a government level relative to the access afforded to the general public, making them vital actors in the greyhound racing system. Politicians reflect the opinions of the general public as they are public figures elected to represent their communities on important issues in a forum with the power to effect change to legislation and practices. The media often serve to amplify general community concerns and political stances.

#### **2.4.5. National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee**

The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee informs and advises the government on animal welfare matters. They were established under the Animal Welfare Act (1999) and, therefore, are a vital actor in improving the welfare of the greyhounds at a legislative level and hold a lot of power to create change. For example, the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee stated that there was insufficient information provided by GRNZ regarding the recommendations they were expected to complete after governmental reports and the industry's "on notice" status. This opinion resulted in the Department of Internal Affairs undertaking another industry review (Robertson, 2021). The committee is influenced by individual members who have extensive animal health and welfare knowledge. These include veterinarians and animal welfare scientists. They influence the decisions of the government regarding animal matters significantly.

#### **2.4.6. Veterinarians**

Veterinarians are respected and reliable stakeholders who also prioritise the welfare of greyhounds as they are heavily invested in improving the welfare of all animals. In the racing industry, a veterinarian must examine every dog before racing as required in the Racing Industry Act (2020). A veterinarian is observing every race for injuries and other potential issues.

Because veterinarians work closely with the dogs, trainers, and breeders, they are regularly required to be members of relevant boards (such as the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee) or closely involved in organisations (such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). As such, veterinarians are likely well-informed on the practices occurring within the industry and well-integrated into the various areas of the system. This group of actors can influence the opinions of others within these critical groups.

#### **2.4.7. New Zealand Veterinary Association**

New Zealand Veterinary Association is similar to the veterinarians' stakeholders discussed above; however, they represent veterinarians as a collective rather than an individual's opinion. They are a credible and respected association with influence on many stakeholders in the system but must be seen to represent the opinions of the majority. They have not

disclosed their position regarding greyhound racing in New Zealand to the general public. One difference between the New Zealand Veterinary Association and individual veterinarians is their higher-level authority and governmental input, which individual veterinarians do not have. This input includes their contribution to the development of legislation (New Zealand Veterinary Association, 2012).

#### **2.4.8. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is New Zealand's oldest and largest animal welfare charity. They are a trusted, influential organisation that focuses on improving animal welfare. They want to see greyhound racing banned in New Zealand since there has been little improvement in practices and transparency in the past ("Greyhound racing," 2022).

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals plays a key role in the system. It is involved in various committees regarding animal welfare decisions and advises on many governmental legislations. They also enforce the Codes of Welfare (secondary legislation under the Animal Welfare Act). They employ animal welfare officers, scientists, and veterinarians and are often influenced by their opinions and vice versa. Because of their abolitionist view of greyhound racing, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been excluded from the GRNZ animal health and welfare committee, the consultants of GRNZ around greyhound health and welfare. They have communicated this exclusion with the media, creating a negative image of GRNZ to the public, inferring that GRNZ is not interested in improving welfare (George & Kerr-Lazenby, 2022).

#### **2.4.9. Animal Welfare Officers**

These individual actors are likely to operate from a strong evidence base, sharing the same opinions as the more prominent organisations they are a part of (e.g., animal welfare officers working for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) but have less governmental or authoritative impact.

#### **2.4.10. Animal Welfare Scientists**

Animal welfare scientists operate in many different spaces (in organisations like the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Ministry for Primary Industries, private companies related to greyhound racing, or in universities).

#### **2.4.11. Animal Advocacy and Animal Rights Groups**

Organisations such as Save Animals from Exploitation, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, International Organization for Animal Protection, and Greyhound Protection League of New Zealand are united in calling for an end to greyhound racing in New Zealand. They are invested in the welfare and rights of the dogs and believe the best option is to end greyhound racing. These groups are confident and united in their perspective. This causes their messages to be heard widely and effectively influences the public. The media also cover their demonstrations due to the public interest they reflect and generate. They also work in unison with other groups. In the case of greyhound racing, Save Animals from Exploitation is working alongside Chloe Swarbrick to create a member's bill to end greyhound racing (Swarbrick, 2021), showing how they can significantly impact the system.

#### **2.4.12. Media**

The media uses various platforms to inform the public about information and situations. The media varies significantly in its methods of relaying information, biases, motives, reliability, and credibility. They are very involved in the greyhound racing industry due to people's strong opinions and interests on the subject. They can shape the opinions of many different groups, primarily the general public.

#### **2.4.13. Public**

The general public is a large group easily influenced by many different groups. As actors within the system, individually, they have no power for change. However, combined, they are the main factor influencing a social license to operate, which often becomes why other larger organisations change. Combined, they can create difficult situations until their desired change is undertaken. Many of the public hold the same opinion against greyhound racing due to the negative image produced by animal rights groups (such as Save Animals from Exploitation).

Businesses that also announce they do not support greyhound racing are likely to influence the public due to the everyday interactions the public has with many of these businesses. Many stakeholders target the public for support for many of their motives. On the other side of the argument, gamblers are normally just members of the public. Hence, they are likely to share their views, but this will occur on a much smaller level than the larger displays taken by animal rights groups and politicians, so the impact is much less.

When considering the motivational determinant of a person's attitude towards dogs created by Serpell (2004), the public is likely to follow the 'affect' position, with an emotional attachment towards dogs due to the companion animal experience of most of the public. Because of this attitude, they are likely to struggle to perceive the racing greyhounds differently and, therefore, do not comprehend the perception of racing greyhounds under the 'utility' position that most licensed greyhound persons likely hold.

#### **2.4.14. Other Stakeholders**

These stakeholders also influence the system and have been occasionally mentioned due to their influence on other stakeholders. While they are important, their part is arguably not as significant as the other stakeholders discussed above. These include gamblers, racetrack owners, the horse racing community, and various businesses.

#### **2.4.15. Greyhound Racing License Holders**

Greyhound license holders encompass the trainers, owners, breeders, and handlers of greyhound racing. Many of these license holders identify under multiple of the roles mentioned. They are the chosen focus of my research due to their direct impact on greyhound welfare and the lack of existing input they have in changes within the system.

Due to the nature of these jobs, the greyhound license holders interact directly with the greyhounds. They hold a lot of information and knowledge about the daily life of a greyhound and what it is like to work with them. Hence, they are likely also aware of the downfalls and areas of improvement for greyhound welfare and management. Because of their direct role in managing greyhound welfare, they are critical to improving it. However, they are commonly overlooked actors in the system. The purpose of this research is to help the license holders to feel seen and heard. This empowers them to feel they have the influence and power to

improve greyhound welfare and management. Other higher-level authorities assess the welfare standards of the dogs but do not actively participate in creating the level of welfare the dogs have. Greyhound license holders are heavily connected to other stakeholders in the system and are frequently influenced by many other stakeholders due to the set regulations.

This study contributes towards building a foundation for future research into greyhound welfare or management and creating changes in animal entertainment/sporting industries. The lack of current information on the opinions, perspectives, and input of the New Zealand greyhound racing license holders means the results developed from this study provide great insight that can be applied to any future changes and decisions within the industry (and potentially other similar industries). By understanding the greyhound people at the centre of the industry, future changes can be tailored to be more adaptable and, therefore, sustainable to the greyhound racing license holders of New Zealand. This will improve the understanding and application of changes for all parties within the industry, including authority figures.

## **3. Methods**

My study aimed to gain insight into the opinions, perspectives, and other relevant factors affecting the greyhound people's commitment to change - especially change relating to greyhound welfare and management. I also aimed to empower participants to feel involved in creating changes within the industry, hoping that this would ensure that future changes are more effective and sustainable.

The original study was designed to use focus groups to elicit responses from participants and encourage involvement using participatory action research techniques. However, a poor response rate to these focus groups meant I had to change the data collection method to an online survey. This limited the participatory action research approach and the opportunity for discussion amongst participants. However, the online survey's accessibility encouraged more involvement and meant qualitative and quantitative data were collected.

### **3.1. Ethical Review Process**

This study required a full ethics application due to the nature of the questions, the research aim, and the potential risks to the industry it explored. This process ensured an in-depth evaluation of the risk versus reward this research would provide by an independent group. Many measures were taken to ensure the ethical treatment of participants. Potential risks were evaluated, and strategies to combat these were considered. There was a low risk of participants answering questions with a negative connotation about the greyhound racing industry, potentially causing social acceptability risk within the industry.

Confidentiality of identities was maintained through the data being anonymised immediately and remaining anonymous throughout the study. All participants signed a confidentiality agreement and consent form before data collection to prevent sharing any information with participants. The research team were the only people with access to the data, all of whom signed confidentiality agreements. I avoided questions that could cause a participant to feel obliged to answer in a way that may cause any risk or harm to themselves, others, or the industry. Participation was voluntary, and participants could refrain from answering any

questions they were uncomfortable answering and remove themselves from the study at any time.

By providing an information sheet at the beginning of all data collection methods, all the potential risks and the rights of the participants were laid out so there was a clear understanding of what they were participating in before consenting. Information sheet can be found in **Appendix A**.

## **3.2. Participants**

### **3.2.1. Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible to partake in this study, participants had to be registered trainers, breeders, owners, and/or handlers of racing greyhounds in New Zealand and over 18 years old. GRNZ records show there were 750 eligible potential participants. The study involved 46 participants (6.1% of the eligible population).

### **3.2.2. The Recruitment and Sampling Strategy**

Greyhound racing licence holders were informed of the study and the opportunity to participate through multiple channels. After discussions with the chief executive officer and chief operating officer of Greyhound Racing New Zealand, we decided the most efficient communication method would be through the private Facebook page for all licence holders in New Zealand. Study details were shared through this forum and in the newsletter sent to every licence holder. I also visited numerous racetracks on race days, where I discussed the details of the study with potential participants. Any participants unable to make the original focus group dates and times provided were encouraged to contact me to organise another time or method for participation. Participants were provided food during the focus groups and given koha (gift vouchers) for participating. These were included to add extra incentive to partake in the study.

These recruitment methods meant the research information was shared with most eligible participants. However, if someone did not have a Facebook account, did not read the newsletter, or attended race days at racetracks that the researcher did not visit, they may not have been alerted of the opportunity to be involved. This potential group is estimated to be

reasonably small, as the private Facebook group was stated to be the most common method of communication with licence holders.

The online survey was extensively and repeatedly shared on the Facebook group. A poster containing the study details and a QR code connecting straight to the online participant explanatory statement with the option to commence the survey was distributed to all the racetrack managers around New Zealand. Found in **Appendix B**. These posters were put on noticeboards at the racetracks.

### **3.3. Data collection**

#### **3.3.1. Planned Data Collection Methods - Focus Groups**

Focus groups were initially selected for this research. A focus group is a group of individuals brought together to discuss a specific subject. In the case of many focus groups, the participants all share similar characteristics, knowledge, or personal experiences with the subject being discussed (Powell & Single, 1996). Focus groups usually contain 6-8 people (Wilkinson, 1998). Despite the methodology not being used in this research, there was a significant amount of reasoning for its intended use. This is expanded on in **Appendix C** along with more information on participatory action research approach. The techniques of which were to be integrated into the questions asked to involve participants and empower them to share their opinions and ideas. Furthermore, the hope was that this would increase their comfort in sharing information so a better understanding would be possible. Focus groups are an excellent methodology for using participatory action research techniques as they encourage a lot of group discussion and reflection.

### **3.4. What Happened and the Need for Change**

After the information about the research, its locations, and dates and times were provided to potential participants, data collection using the focus groups began. However, this method did not result in enough participants for the research. The lack of participation in focus groups was unexpected and added unforeseen delays to the data collection process, as a new method was needed.

We never got clear answers on the reasoning for the insufficient participation of the focus groups. However, a few factors may have contributed to the low participation. Firstly, the competitive nature of the community may have made them less likely to share their perspectives. Because participants are known to be very exclusive and talk of a strong community or culture between them, I thought they would prefer to share ideas, thoughts, and opinions in a group setting. However, I did not factor in the license holders being quite competitive with each other as they all still race together. It is an interesting dynamic between being friends and competitors. This may have meant they were not keen to share their strategies and techniques. Additionally, with the greyhound racing industry currently feeling under attack due to their on-notice status and public spotlight, they potentially felt uneasy about speaking openly with someone outside the industry like me. I shared initial information about the research study with industry leaders to mitigate potential negative feelings. However, this may not have affected their willingness to speak with me, especially if they feel threatened by authority in their industry.

Another potential setback for the lack of focus group popularity could have been the time cost of attending the groups. The petrol costs were lessened by the petrol vouchers offered to participants. However, the distance they have travelled to partake is unknown, so this may not have outweighed the petrol-related participation costs. Those working with the dogs are often kept very busy by their jobs. This can mean that making time to attend the focus groups and having the energy to share and talk could have been quite difficult.

Since this last factor was predicted to be a significant contributing factor, an online survey looked like a desirable option when brainstorming future data collection methods.

### **3.5. The New Data Collection Method – Online Surveys**

#### **3.5.1. Introduction to Online Surveys as a Method**

A survey is a type of research methodology that collects data through a set of pre-defined questions. A survey can be conducted in person or online, through the Internet or other media (Phillips, 2017). This research used an online survey created on Qualtrics software, Version 03/2023 of Qualtrics. Copyright © 2023 (Qualtrics, Provo, UT, USA). This was attached to a link or QR code accessed online.

### **3.5.2. Advantages and Limitations of Online Surveys**

The main advantages of using online surveys for data collection relate to the ease of the process for both the participants and the researchers. For the researchers, the turnaround time of receiving the data is quick and effortless, which means online surveys can collect a large amount of data (Jansen & Corley, 2007). As long as the survey has been adequately shared and distributed to the intended groups, multiple participants can participate simultaneously at any time. If the survey was done in person, only a few people could take it at a time, which would take much longer.

The convenience of online surveys is a great advantage to the participants. While the focus group was estimated to take one hour, the online survey took roughly 10 minutes for a participant to complete. It also can be done any time of day, unlike the focus groups, which were organised at set times and locations (Wright, 2005).

A limitation of online surveys includes the potential of technological-related issues (Jansen & Corley, 2007), whether with the survey and its program directly or internet access and issues for the participants attempting to access the survey.

Another noteworthy limitation is the reduced involvement compared to the focus groups. This often leads to less in-depth answers and less understanding of the participants' emotions, thoughts and opinions, which are much harder to interpret from a written answer. The online survey design meant every participant completed the survey individually, did not discuss their answers with others, or reflect on each other's ideas.

### **3.5.3. Why Online Surveys were Chosen for this Research**

The easy accessibility was one of the main reasons behind choosing the online survey format for data collection. This allowed far more data to be collected as participants could partake whenever and wherever they pleased. This change meant many more licence holders who could not attend the focus group times, did not have the time or energy, or lived too far away could now partake from their own living room.

### **3.5.4. Editing of Questions**

The focus group questions and schedule were edited to fit an online 10-minute survey. I adapted most questions from the focus group to fit the online survey format. This new method allowed for both quantitative and qualitative questions to be asked. However, this new method meant fewer participatory action research techniques could be included. Moreover, the opportunity for discussion between participants was lost. This was a significant disadvantage to the new data collection method.

Since the new method required adaptations to the questions and format, input from the research team was received to help tailor these questions appropriately. Multiple survey tests (>10) were run within the research team to ensure an efficient and effective survey would be distributed. The ethics committee was also updated on the change of methods and questions.

Questions asking the participants what they would change about the industry, how they think it could be improved, and how they could be better supported to make positive changes were included in the online survey. The survey questions have been included in **Appendix D**.

Nonetheless, by changing to online surveys, participation in the study increased immensely, resulting in 46 submissions.

## **3.6. Data Analysis**

### **3.6.1. Mixed Methods – Quantitative and Qualitative**

The data were analysed using a mixed methods approach. The online survey produced qualitative and quantitative data, meaning separate analysis methods were needed. The methods that aligned the best with the research were reflexive thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. This study's aims were exploratory rather than hypothetical/deductive; therefore, I did not include statistical analysis (such as gender comparisons) in this study.

### **3.6.2. Qualitative data analysis using reflexive thematic analysis:**

#### **3.6.2.1. Introduction to Reflexive Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method used to identify and interpret a dataset's themes, codes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher creates codes of data to answer the overarching research question. These codes are then collated into

potential themes and repeatedly reviewed. Once the themes reflect the dataset best, they are defined and refined to be appropriately analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Reflexive thematic analysis refers to the researchers' process when analysing the dataset. It is noticing the different factors and viewpoints a researcher has going into the analysis and how this shapes the themes they create (Braun et al., 2022). Since I was looking into the opinions and perspectives of the participants, my own experiences and perspectives do influence and create assumptions about the data that differ between every individual. However, the inductive approach to reflexive thematic analysis is expected to have researcher influence as it is their role to interpret the data (Braun et al., 2022).

Reflexive thematic analysis was chosen for this data as there were no predetermined themes or patterns I was planning to find. This meant an inductive approach was a much better fit for this dataset. Existing knowledge or research must be available to create preconceived themes. Since no relevant research similar to this has been conducted within this industry or community in New Zealand, it was clear that a reflexive thematic analysis was more fitting. It is important to note that the themes created in this study are not simply already existing and waiting to emerge through thematic analysis. Themes are actively developed and constructed as an output of studying the data, not something you uncover (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

#### **3.6.2.2. Advantages and Limitations to Reflexive Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is a popular method of qualitative data analysis for many reasons. Its flexibility is a significant positive factor for most researchers due to all the different ways it can be conducted. The multiple forms and approaches to thematic analysis mean it can fit many research questions, aims and approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Another advantage of thematic analysis is the simplicity of the process. Especially if you are a less experienced researcher, either overall or in that discipline, using both inductive and deductive approaches, thematic analysis can be used regardless of the amount of existing knowledge in that area (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

While some personal interpretation and researcher influence are expected when using thematic analysis, efforts to remain unbiased and professional with the data and generated themes are necessary (Javadi & Zarea, 2016).

Also, ensuring that the analysis and the themes generated are consistent and coherent with the data is very important. Having too many or too few themes or overlapping, unrelated, or unsupported themes is a commonly mentioned problem (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). However, following the advised steps of thematic analysis discussed in Braun & Clarke (2006) prevented such problems.

### **3.6.2.3. The Application of Reflexive Thematic Analysis in this Research**

Part of the reflexive thematic analysis process requires reflecting on how my personal perspective influences my analysis.

I am a New Zealand European female in my early twenties. I completed my Bachelor's in animal science with an animal welfare major in 2021. I was hooked by the first paper involving animal welfare and behaviour I took in my undergraduate degree. I loved everything about it and felt like I had finally found my calling within my wider area of interest. After completing my bachelor's, I felt I was not done with learning and expanding on what I knew about animal welfare. I decided to continue my studies and began my Master of Science. With an immense love for all animals, I was open-minded towards what research project to undertake. However, companion animals hold a special place in my heart due to the wide variety of pets I have owned throughout my life. These pets include many dogs. Growing up on a lifestyle block, we always acquired unwanted working dog breeds with sad backstories of abuse or neglect, including our current two elderly dogs, aged 12 and 14. Despite the rough start to life almost all my dogs encountered, they all were/are the most amazing and loyal companions that significantly shaped my childhood.

So, when my supervisor, Kat Littlewood, suggested a research study around the greyhound racing industry, I was immediately keen. I felt that this topic was the perfect blend of my passion for animal welfare and my love for dogs. This project also allowed me to expand my knowledge and experience with canines, as all the dogs I had interacted with previously were companion animals, excluding farm working dogs, so I had never experienced dogs in an industry setting. I found this change to be eye-opening and incredibly interesting.

I had no strong opinions about greyhound racing before beginning this thesis. However, like most of the public, I only knew what I had seen in the media, which was mostly negative and showed undesirable animal welfare. While I tried not to believe everything I read immediately, I acknowledge that I began this research with a slightly negative perspective of the industry.

Once I began collecting data and met with license holders, my perspective on the industry shifted. I realised the love, passion and dedication most license holders felt towards their greyhounds. This helped me counteract the negative perception I had of the industry persons due to first-hand experience opposing what I saw in the media. This helped in remaining reasonably unbiased in having a preferred option around its continuation while analysing the data. My background focusing on animal welfare and my experiences having little-to-none interactions with greyhound racing and animal entertainment industries influenced my perspective while analysing the data as I understandably lean towards improving animal welfare wherever possible. However, I feel more open-minded to the different options available to do this.

Following the recommended steps from Braun & Clarke (2006), I familiarised myself with the data by reading through it repeatedly and in different forms. As PowerPoint slides, PDF documents of all participants' answers to a question, and individual responses. After this, I began making initial codes by highlighting all similar answers with the same colour. I repeated this for every open-ended question. I then transferred these codes to an Excel document and began rearranging and grouping the codes into the different themes in each question. To help review the themes, I created mind maps of all the relevant codes until I felt they were in an accurate grouping. If I felt uncertain of a grouping or a theme, I would organise a meeting with my supervisors to discuss my uncertainty until I was confident. Because all codes and themes were created by me, there was consistency in the perspective and process used to construct the codes and themes. And if further input was needed, it was always from the same collaborators (my team of supervisors) so unanimous agreement was consistently reached during the data analysis. I then renamed themes (if needed) and provided definitions. I included examples or quotes from the data when presenting these in the results section. I ensured that none of the quotes provided identifying information about the participants. To explore the overarching themes repeated throughout the dataset, I investigated the data, codes, and themes from the whole dataset to look for recurring themes. These themes were mentioned in the results and then discussed in-depth in the discussion section.

### **3.6.3. Quantitative - Statistics (Descriptive Statistics)**

#### **3.6.3.1. Introduction to Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics refers to the various methods used to gain an efficient overview of the results. As Vetter (2017) stated, it answers the critical questions of any quantitative data; “who, where, what, why, when, how, and how much?”. It describes the measure of central tendency (which includes the mean, median and mode) and the distribution of the results, often displayed as variance, standard deviation, minimum values, and maximum values (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). Descriptive statistics enables a large amount of data to be easily communicated and translated in a simple process and straightforward layout (Mishra et al., 2019).

#### **3.6.3.2. The Application of Descriptive Statistics in this Research**

Descriptive statistics were used in this study to present the quantitative results in a simple, clear, and concise way. Since this study focused on understanding opinions and perspectives, my main focus has been exploring the qualitative results. Because of this, there was less focus on providing an in-depth analysis of the quantitative data as it simply was not necessary. Due to this decision, the best approach was descriptive statistics.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Participant Characteristics

The online survey had 46 responses from 750 potential eligible respondents, showing a 6.1% response rate. Not all participants answered every question.

Of the 46 total respondents, 16 identified as female, 12 as male, and 18 did not provide gender details. Only 26 (56.5%) participants answered the open-ended ethnicity question. Seventeen respondents recorded New Zealand European or New Zealander as ethnicity, seven as European, and two as Māori. The minimum time the respondents (N=40) had been involved in the greyhound racing industry was two years, and the maximum was 44 years. The average length of involvement was 17.5 years, with a standard deviation of 12.3 years.

The participants were asked to record their role in the greyhound racing industry. They were allowed to select more than one option if it applied to them. **Table 1** displays the diversity of roles among the 39 respondents to the question. The most common role of participants was owners, with 33 of the 39 respondents (84.6%) stating they owned racing greyhounds.

**Table 1:** Roles of participants within the greyhound racing industry (N=39)

ROLE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Owners	33	30.6%
Handlers	23	21.3%
Trainers	21	19.4%
Breeders	19	17.6%
Punters	9	8.3%
Other	3	2.8%

## 4.2. Quantitative Data

### 4.2.1. Question Five

Participants were asked to rate, from 1 to 9, how important welfare-relevant categories were for ensuring their greyhounds had good welfare (**Table 2**). The maximum rating for all categories was nine (N=35). The minimum rating ranged from 2 to 7. The minimum rating for ‘Good health’ and ‘A comfortable living space’ was 7, resulting in small values for the standard deviations (0.5 and 0.6 respectively) of their means (8.8 and 8.7 respectively). ‘Choosing their interactions with other dogs’ had the lowest minimum value (2) with the largest standard deviation (1.9) of the mean (6.6).

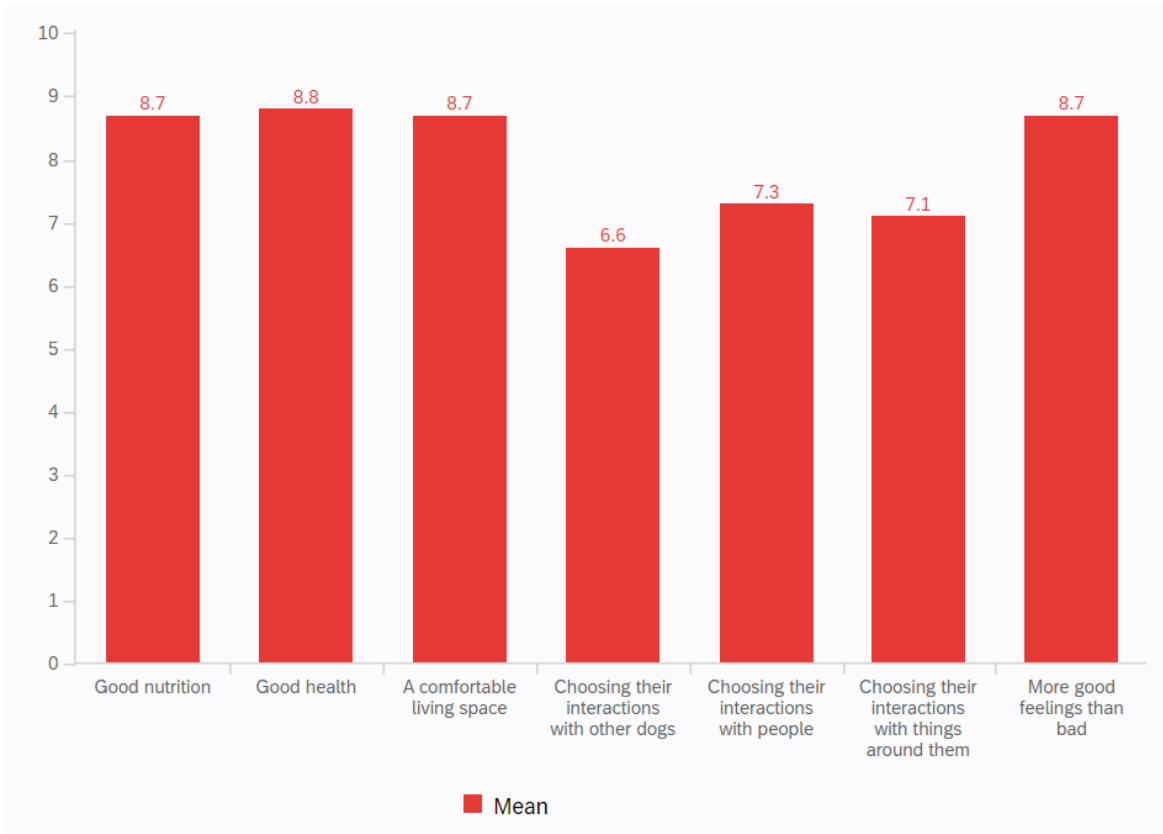
**Table 2:** The number of respondents who chose the minimum and maximum values for each category. N = 35 for all categories except “More good feelings than bad” where N = 34.

CATEGORIES	MINIMUM VALUE GIVEN	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT CHOSE THE MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE GIVEN	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT CHOSE THE MAXIMUM VALUE	STANDARD DEVIATION	TOTAL NUMBER THAT ANSWERED EACH CATEGORY
Good nutrition	5	1 (2.9%)	9	29 (82.9%)	0.9	35
Good health	7	1 (2.9%)	9	30 (85.7%)	0.5	35
A comfortable living space	7	3 (8.6%)	9	26 (74.3%)	0.6	35
Choosing their interactions with other dogs	2	2 (5.7%)	9	8 (22.9%)	1.9	35
Choosing their interactions with people	4	1 (2.9%)	9	13 (37.1%)	1.5	35
Choosing their interactions with things around them	4	2 (5.7%)	9	12 (34.3%)	1.7	35

<b>More good feelings than bad</b>	6	1 (2.9%)	9	28 (82.3%)	0.7	<b>34</b>
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The mean for each category is presented in **Figure 1**. ‘Good health’ had the highest mean effect at 8.8. This was followed by ‘More good feelings than bad’ (8.7). ‘Good nutrition’ (8.7) and ‘A comfortable living space’ (8.7) had similar mean ratings.

**Figure 1:** Bar graph displaying the mean (y-axis) of each category (x-axis) from Question 5, “How important are the following categories for ensuring greyhounds have good welfare? Rated from 1 (not important) to 9 (very important).

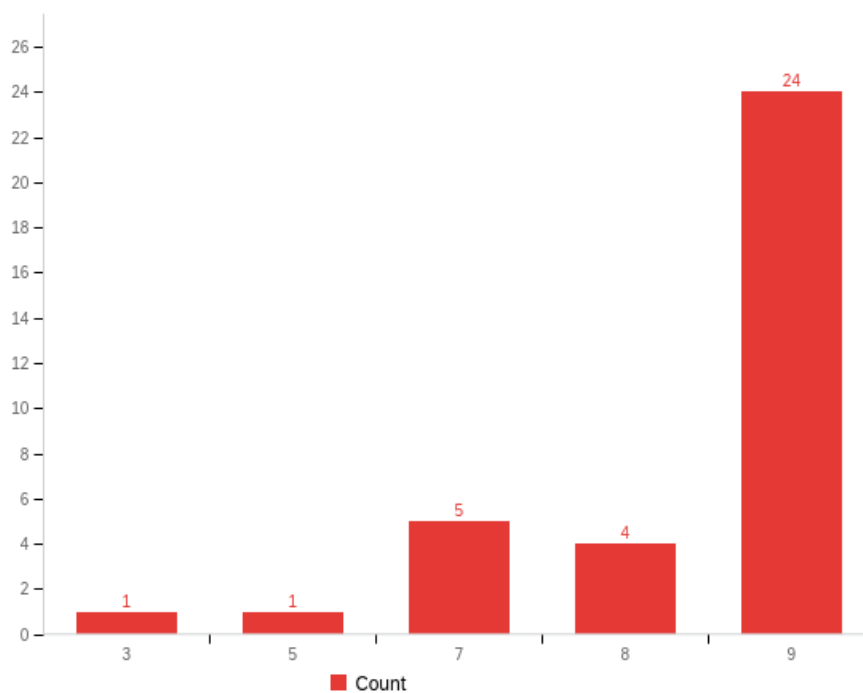


#### 4.2.2. Question Six

When asked how confident they were in answering question 5, the mean confidence rating reported by respondents was 8.3 (N=35) and ranged between 3 and 9.

Of the 35 respondents, 24 (68.6%) felt very confident, with a rating of 9 (**Figure 2**). Only 2 (5.7%) participants gave a rating below 5.

**Figure 2:** Number of participants rating their level of confidence in answering Question 5 (welfare important categories) N=35



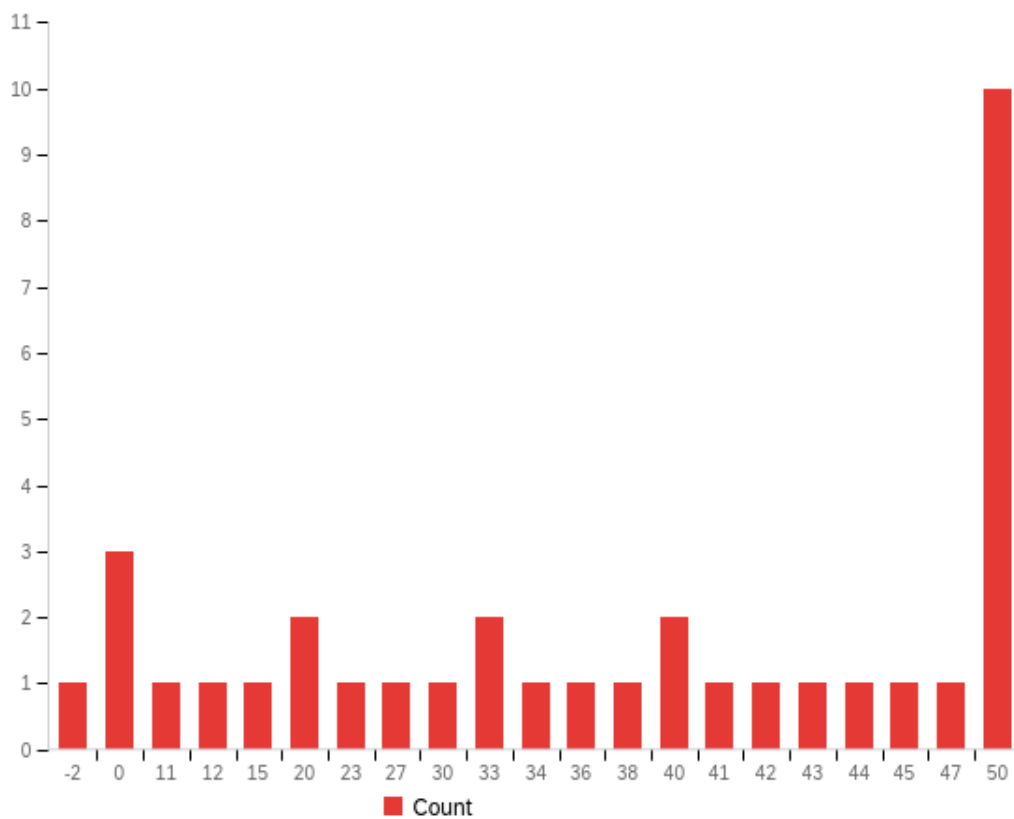
#### 4.2.3. Question Seven

The scale for the question “How well do you understand what racing greyhounds need compared to the average greyhound license holder/participants?” ranged from -50 to +50. This scale allowed participants to accurately represent their position, including if they felt they had a negative or very low understanding compared to other licensed persons (LPs).

The mean perceived understanding of racing greyhound needs was 33.5 (N=35; SD 16.9). The maximum rating was 50, while the minimum was -2. The most frequently reported answer

was 50 (N=10), as shown in **Figure 3**. The median value for this question was 40 and the 95% confidence interval was 5.6.

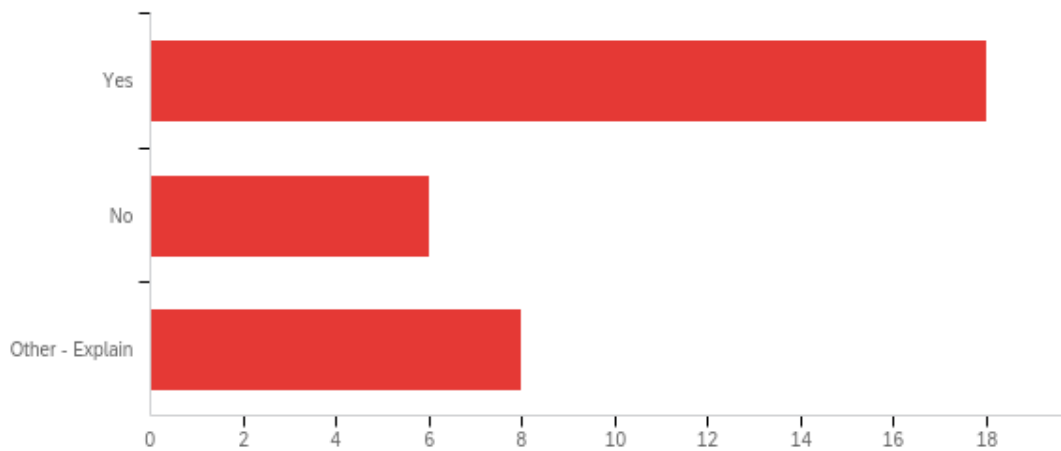
**Figure 3:** Bar graph showing the number of participants (N=35) that chose each value from Question Seven (“How well do you understand what racing greyhounds need compared to the average greyhound license holder/participants?”)



#### 4.2.4. Question 10

The most common answer (N=35) to the question “Do you feel a sense of community or culture within the greyhound racing industry, particularly among trainers, breeders, owners, and handlers?” was ‘yes’ (N=18 (56.3%)). A further six (18.8%) chose ‘no’, and eight (25.0%) selected ‘other’ (**Figure 4**). The responses to ‘other’ were analysed using thematic analysis and are discussed below in the qualitative results section.

**Figure 4:** Bar Graph displaying the variation of responses from participants to Question 10 (N=32)



#### 4.2.5. Question 14

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with 20 statements (**Table 3**). Only one statement received complete agreement from the participants (N=28). This statement was, “The welfare of racing greyhounds is important to me”.

There were four statements with a variance higher than four. These were, “Racing greyhounds should not be treated as if they were pets”, “If a racing greyhound is not aggressive, that means it is experiencing good welfare”, “Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people when they are learning how to race”, and “Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people when they are very young”. These four statements all received the minimum and maximum rating of agreement, showing many conflicting opinions around these statements.

**Table 3:** Descriptive statistics for the 20 statements included in Question 14. (N=28, except for the statement, “If a racing greyhound is not aggressive, that means it is experiencing good welfare” where N=26)

STATEMENT	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	VARIANCE	COUNT
Greyhounds kept for breeding are generally well cared for	3	9	8.07	1.33	1.78	28
Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people when they are very young	1	9	7.54	2.04	4.18	28
Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people when they are learning how to race	1	9	7.32	2.3	5.29	28
If a racing greyhound is not aggressive, that means it is experiencing good welfare	1	9	4.46	2.47	6.09	26
An acceptable percentage of racing greyhounds become adopted as pets when their racing career ends	2	9	8.11	1.45	2.1	28
Racing greyhounds should not be treated as if they were pets	1	9	5.43	2.53	6.39	28
Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people throughout their racing lives	2	9	8.11	1.72	2.95	28
Racing greyhounds should be kept in good physical health	7	9	8.93	0.37	0.14	28
The greyhound industry has a responsibility to ensure that greyhounds are prepared for life as a pet after their racing career ends	3	9	7.96	1.66	2.75	28
Greyhounds are generally well cared for once they retire from racing	3	9	8	1.39	1.93	28
The general public does not understand the sport of greyhound racing	4	9	7.89	1.52	2.31	28
If a racing greyhound is in good physical health, that means it is experiencing good welfare	5	9	7.96	1.38	1.89	28
The welfare of racing greyhounds is important to me	9	9	9	0	0	28

Greyhounds are generally well cared for while they are growing up	4	9	8.18	1.23	1.5	28
Greyhounds that participate in races have racing careers that are too short	1	8	4.14	1.79	3.19	28
Greyhounds are generally well cared for as young puppies	3	9	8.18	1.34	1.79	28
The racing greyhound industry has been unfairly portrayed in recent media reports	2	9	7.93	1.93	3.71	28
An acceptable percentage of greyhounds bred for racing actually end up participating in races	3	9	7.82	1.51	2.29	28
Greyhounds are generally well cared for while they are learning to race	3	9	8.11	1.37	1.88	28
Greyhounds are generally well cared for while they are racing	4	9	8.14	1.27	1.62	28

### 4.3. Qualitative Data

The codes and themes for each open-ended question were added to **Appendix E**. These include the initial codes created, the number of occurrences of each code, and an example of each. I have also included the themes formed from each question and how these codes were included and categorised.

#### 4.3.1. Overarching Themes

There were several recurring themes throughout the qualitative dataset. These themes support a better understanding of the license holders' perspectives and some of the main factors affecting changes. The three key themes were 'inclusiveness around changes', 'improving openness/social license to operate', and 'increased support'. Some other recurring themes included 'the love for the greyhounds held by license holders'. Survey respondents reiterated that the dogs are prioritised, loved, and well cared for. This theme was repeated throughout the responses to various questions, showing their admiration for the dogs.

### **4.3.2. Main Theme: Inclusiveness Around Changes**

A common theme of this study was the 'lack of inclusion' felt by the license holders. The license holders' responses to questions showed frustration at their lack of influence. Another important theme discussed was the 'need for changes'. This theme has been included under the overarching theme of inclusiveness, as this was a key issue relating to the license holders' feelings of exclusion. They felt unheard throughout the process of creating and making changes. They stated that they were not asked for their opinions and perspectives, not listened to, and the changes made were not feasible or maintainable for them. This area of this theme relates to main theme three (more support), as improved inclusiveness increases their support in these areas.

#### **4.3.2.1. Sub-themes**

A significant aspect of the exclusion that some individuals experienced was their 'desire to change the leadership or workforce of Greyhound Racing New Zealand'. This sub-theme highlights the LP's need for greater representation and involvement in the decision-making process, which they believe could be achieved by replacing those responsible for making decisions and gaining more authority.

A second sub-theme was related to 'rules and regulations'. An example of this response was, "Sensible rules and standards that are upheld by all". Participants directly discussed specific rules that needed to be added, removed, or changed. A specific regulation change mentioned was "restrictions on how many dogs each trainer can have". They also discussed the need for changes to the rules and regulations to ensure more inclusivity and influence. This sub-theme is important as it highlights the participants' efforts and desires to bring about necessary changes.

#### **4.3.2.2. Evidence for Theme**

Question 10 asked the participants if they felt a sense of community or culture within the greyhound racing industry, especially among license holders. This question was a multiple-choice question with the option to pick yes, no, or other. If they chose 'other', they could expand on their choice. This question received various responses (shown in **Table 4**). Some

license holders said that they did feel a sense of community and a lot of support. Others said they did not feel a sense of community, as there were disrespectful people and behaviours and a lot of competitiveness among them. Many participants responded to this question with a divided answer of yes and no, stating varying levels of inclusiveness. This question provided the first insight into inclusiveness as a repeating theme.

**Table 4:** Themes and codes created from Question 10 (do you feel a sense of community or culture within the greyhound racing industry, particularly among trainers, breeders, owners, and handlers?)

THEMES	CODES INCLUDED	EXAMPLES
Feel a sense of community	Very supported	"When times get tough, they are always there"
Don't feel a sense of community	Disrespectful people/behaviour	"There are some clowns involved in the game"
	Very competitive	"Not really it is a competitive industry"
Both/divided	Divided (yes and no)	"In some ways yes and in other ways no"

The sub-themes above are mentioned in Question 11 (**Table 5**) and Question 13 (**Table 6**). These tables show a recurring pattern of participants wanting further inclusion and influence in the decisions made. This is visible from all the suggested changes seen in **Table 5** and **Table 6**. The subtheme of 'desire to change the leadership or workforce of Greyhound Racing New Zealand' can be seen through the codes and themes of "change authority/GRNZ" in both Questions 11 and 13 themes.

**Table 5** show the sub-theme of 'changes to rules and regulations'. While some respondents made vague statements about desiring more sensible rules or stricter punishments, others specified more precise changes, such as wanting kennel numbers to be limited or improving breed standards. Regardless of their level of specificity, all respondents expressed their desire for change and to be involved in the process of making changes.

**Table 5: Themes and codes created from Question 11 (if you could change two things about the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand, what would they be?).**

<b>Q11 THEMES</b>	<b>CODES INCLUDED</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
<b>More rules and regulations enforced</b>	Stricter punishments	"Stricter punishment for those breaking laws"
	More sensible rules	"Sensible rules and standards that are upheld by all"
	PBD (Preferred Box Draw) enforced	"Roll out P.B.D for all grades and distances"
	Limit kennel numbers	"Restrictions on how many dogs each trainer can have"
<b>Change authority/GRNZ</b>	Change GRNZ/authority governing	"A more effectual governing body"
	Change GRNZ people	"Get rid of office staff"
	Improve knowledge of industry persons	"Make sure those running the game have good knowledge of the racing greyhound and its needs"
<b>No more rules/changes</b>	No more rules/changes	"The constant rule changes and over strictness that seems to undermine us as owner/trainer's"
<b>Support license holders more</b>	Support younger people more	"I would like to see more pathways for younger participants to establish themselves"
	Support small kennels more	"I would like to see more help for the smaller breeders and trainers"
	Improve the community (toxic)	"Get more people involved"
	Improve prizemoney	"More prizemoney over all"
<b>More positive publicity</b>	More positive information given to the media/public	"Change the public perception of Greyhound Racing"
<b>More help for rehoming services/reduce their need</b>	Support rehoming services more	"Rehoming needs to be run better"
	Improve breeding standards	"Better breeding standards"

<b>Improve facilities</b>	Add/repair facilities	"GRNZ needs to own more facilities"
	More efforts to reduce injuries	"Minimize injury risks"

**Table 6:** Themes and codes created from Question 13 (how could Greyhound Racing New Zealand support you in creating positive changes?). N=24

<b>Q13 THEMES</b>	<b>CODES INCLUDED</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
<b>Change public perceptions</b>	Promote positively to the public	"If they encouraged the public to see what life was like involved in greyhound racing"
<b>Create changes</b>	Be more proactive/make changes	"Be pro active in supply of information"
	Change GRNZ (people & process)	"They are the ones that need to change"
<b>Change/add facilities</b>	Add/redevelop tracks	"Look at redevelopment of tracks"
<b>More support and help for trainers</b>	Help/support trainers more	"Support the trainers more and actually ask the trainers their opinion"
	More education	"They could run more educational programs"

#### **4.3.3. Main Theme: Improving Openness / Social License to Operate**

Openness was combined with improving the social license to operate (SLO) in this theme as they directly relate to each other. Throughout the action research worded questions (Questions 11, 12 and 13), when asked about making changes to the industry or improving the public image, participants suggested ideas to do with more openness and transparency. Improvement in these areas would positively affect the SLO and public perception of the industry.

##### **4.3.3.1. Sub-themes**

Sub-themes related to the openness of the industry included 'more positive publicity / more positive promotion to the public', 'open days to involve the public' (day in the life of a racing

greyhound), ‘improved transparency’, and ‘reducing negative press’/fighting back on mistruths.

#### 4.3.3.2. Evidence for Theme

This theme and sub-themes were strongly suggested under Question 12: what do you think could be done to improve or change the viewpoint of greyhound racing held by the public? All the sub-themes discussed above were mentioned in Question 12. (Shown in **Table 7**). License holders commented that they wanted a change in the press/media coverage, saying there needed to be more positive and accurate reporting and a decrease in negative, false coverage. Promoting positively to the public was included additionally in answers to Questions 11 and 13 (**Tables 5 and 6**).

Public open days were frequently mentioned. Many respondents stated further transparency and involving the public, to see the reality of greyhound racing, and what a “day in the life of a greyhound” is like. These codes and themes are seen in **Table 7**. They are evidence of the overarching theme ‘improving openness / social license to operate’.

**Table 7:** Themes and codes created from Question 12 (what do you think could be done to improve or change the viewpoint of greyhound racing held by the public?). N=27

Q12 THEMES	CODES INCLUDED	EXAMPLES
Change stories/press releases	Promote more positive press/stories	"Provide more positive facts and marketing strategies"
Fight back on mistruths	Remove silence is golden approach	"Ditch the silence is golden policy"
	Reduce negative press/stories	"Stop the media from publishing lies"

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<b>Involve public/open days</b>	Open to public/involve them	"If someone opened up their kennels for the public to see what life on a greyhound kennel was really like"
	Transparency	"Transparency"
<b>No improvements possible</b>	Nothing can be done	"Nothing"
<b>Better managements (dogs and facilities)</b>	Less injuries	"Less injuries"
	Better track care and staff	"The track staff work on the track better"
<b>More support and promotion of small trainers</b>	Promote small trainers	"Promotion of the small suburban trainers"

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#### **4.3.4. Main Theme: More Support for License Holders**

More support is an important theme that includes multiple different aspects. The license holders want to feel reinforced by the industry. The word 'support' is used here to encompass all the different ways they seek further assistance. These are included in the sub-themes.

##### **4.3.4.1. Sub-themes**

Sub-themes of 'creating more support' were based around a few key areas. Respondents wanted to 'feel listened to' and that their ideas had been asked for and taken on board. 'More assistance' for younger or smaller kennels (any minorities) within the industry, receiving 'additional help and promotion', 'Increased education support' through the provision of educational opportunities, 'financial support' by way of funding the redevelopment of tracks and increased prize money, and 'more help for rehoming services'.

##### **4.3.4.2. Evidence for Theme**

Question 11 asked the license holders what two things they would change about the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand. 'More support' was the main theme of this question. This question's sub-themes included 'more support for younger people joining the

industry', small kennels, and an 'improved community environment' (supporting a healthier, better community or culture within greyhound racing). Two other sub-themes under increased support for Question 11 included 'more help for rehoming services', 'improved prize money', and 'improved facilities'. (**Table 5**).

Question 12 asked how to improve or change the public's viewpoint of greyhound racing. This question only touched on 'more support', stating that promoting small trainers could help their perspective. (**Table 7**).

Question 13 directly discussed supporting license holders as the question asked, how could Greyhound Racing New Zealand support you in creating positive changes? This question included the sub-themes of 'more assistance' for the trainers, 'increased educational support' and the addition/redevelopment of tracks and similar facilities. (**Table 6**).

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Aim of the Study**

The objective of my research was to gain insight into how New Zealand greyhound people (Licensed persons) perceive their role and responsibilities in ensuring the welfare of racing greyhounds. In addition, this research sought to understand how they view the oversight of other individuals in the industry. Finally, I explored their perspectives regarding the change required within the industry and how they would implement it. While the responses I received were less comprehensive than I had hoped, I still extended our understanding of the attitudes held by racing greyhound license holders in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

### **5.2. Main Findings of My Research**

The main findings from my research were evident from repeating themes throughout the answers to survey questions. Greyhound license holders felt excluded from decision-making that impacts them and their dogs. They wanted greater support from industry authorities to improve canine welfare. Their responses around greyhound welfare indicated further clarification of terminology would be beneficial and would elucidate whether increased animal welfare educational efforts are necessary. Additionally, participants expressed commitment to improving the industry's transparency and openness to the public to restore their social license to operate.

### **5.3. Quantitative Results Discussion**

#### **5.3.1. Participants' Perspectives of Important Welfare Categories**

Of the welfare categories included in the survey, participants rated good health, good nutrition, comfortable living space, and more good feelings than bad as the most important for ensuring greyhounds have good welfare. Animals being able to choose their interactions (i.e., exercise agency) was considered relatively low importance compared to these other areas. Choosing their interactions with other dogs had the lowest minimum value (2). This category also had the most considerable variance (3.6), indicating various opinions on the

importance of dogs choosing their interactions, especially with other dogs. This finding closely relates to a discussion by Cobb et al. (2022), where canine social and enrichment activities were perceived as less important than survival-related and health-related needs. This shows a consistency in the behavioural interactions receiving a low rating of importance across multiple communities and individuals. An interesting finding from Cobb et al. (2022) was the greater emphasis on the importance of behavioural interactions (especially with humans) in the qualitative thematic analysis compared to the earlier findings from the quantitative survey questions. This begs the question, do the participants need clarification with what the categories signify? If their perception of important categories to kennelled dog welfare is inconsistent between the differing modes of data collection, maybe they misunderstand the extent of what the categories cover. It could be argued that their perception of category importance remains the same, but the qualitative data allowed a deeper understanding of their attitudes. Since the data collection method for this study was via survey questions, they may have misunderstood the categories and what they all entail. Further in-person questions and data collection would likely clarify if this were the case and help gain a more comprehensive understanding of their perceptions.

This question was based on the Five Domains Model, a framework that includes the relevant elements essential for gaining a comprehensive overview of animal welfare (Mellor, 2017). Domains 1, 2, and 3 focus on survival-related factors affecting animal welfare. These are nutrition, health, and physical environment (Mellor et al., 2020). The fourth domain (Behavioural Interactions) focuses on external circumstances affecting the animal and their ability to exercise agency. The greyhounds' survival-related factors (good health, good nutrition, comfortable living space) and the affective state (more good feelings than bad) were deemed most important in this study. This is inconsistent with our contemporary understanding of animal welfare as it is a combination of internal survival-related factors and agency that contribute to an animal's mental experiences (or affective state), which determines the animal's welfare status (Mellor et al., 2020). However, it is interesting that the affective state was viewed as very important towards maintaining good welfare as this aligns with the predominant affective state orientation of the three orientations of animal welfare (Fraser et al., 1997), frequently used in contemporary literature (Mellor & Beausoleil, 2015; Green & Mellor, 2011).

An ability to exercise agency is often required for animals to experience overall positive welfare. Agency is an animal's capacity to perform voluntary, self-generated, goal-orientated behaviours (Littlewood et al., 2023; Spinka & Wemelsfelder, 2011). Despite this, the behavioural interactions domain was given the lowest rating by the participants in this study. This low rating may have resulted from a lack of understanding of animal welfare and how an overall positive mental state occurs for greyhounds. However, the participants rated 'more good feelings than bad' as essential for good greyhound welfare, indicating that they have some understanding that welfare is more than a lack of negative mental experiences (Littlewood et al., 2023).

There are multiple probable reasons for this rating. Firstly, it could be due to a personal dilemma. Many kennelled facilities are made with the idea of housing maximum numbers and the ease of maintaining hygiene (Cobb et al., 2015a). This sometimes means the kennels do not provide much room to incorporate other needs of a dog, such as agency or behavioural interactions. Participants could be unaware that agency is vital or unable to provide it; therefore, avoid confronting its necessity. This is discussed in von Hippel and Trivers (2011) as self-deception. If the participants are using self-deception in this instance, it would be because they do not provide agency to their dogs, so they deceive themselves by pretending it is unnecessary. This helps to relieve the mental load of knowing you are inadequately providing for the dogs.

Another possible reason for the low rating of importance given to behavioural interactions and agency, could be because agency does not align with their orientation to animal welfare. The three orientations of animal welfare are biological function, affective state, and natural living (Fraser, 2003). All three orientations are informed by scientific knowledge and allude to each person's different viewpoints and values (Green & Mellor, 2011). Biological function prioritises good health, growth, reproductive ability, and low stress. Affective state focuses on positive emotional experiences/mental state and interactions with animals, people, and the environment. Natural living is about allowing an animal to be as close to its wild, natural state as possible and exhibit natural behaviours (Green & Mellor, 2011; Fraser, 2003). Following my studies' findings, the greyhound racing participants prioritise biological functioning as the primary view of animal welfare. This is evident in their high rating of 'good health' and 'good nutrition'. Affective state is also highly prioritised due to the high ratings of 'more good feelings

than bad'. Natural living focuses heavily on agency, leading me to believe this is not an orientation they align with. It also could be argued that greyhound racing as a sport follows the natural hunting instinct of greyhounds and their 'choice' to chase, showing a certain level of natural living orientation in action.

Another highly likely reason for perceiving behavioural interactions as a category of low importance is that they did not understand the question. As found by Cobb et al. (2022), the level of emphasis of importance for behavioural interactions differed depending on the type of data collection. When qualitative data was collected, behavioural interactions were seen as more important. We could conclude that the participants did not understand the category entirely and were able to make a proper judgement when being questioned in person as they were able to get clarification.

These results allowed us to discover what is essential for greyhound welfare from the participants' perspectives and what areas they may benefit from future education or clarification. Greyhound license holders may benefit from more training to provide their dogs with opportunities to exercise agency, e.g. through enrichment activities. Enrichment is vital to maintaining good greyhound welfare and ensuring young greyhounds are appropriately socialised. This impacts the industry's rehoming section as poor socialisation, and unsuitable behaviours are key causes of being unable to rehome retired greyhounds (Roberston, 2021). The positive effect on behaviour, physiology and welfare of kennelled dogs who are provided various enrichment forms is significant. Enrichment can occur in many different forms. Olfactory, auditory, and tactile stimulation, intra and inter-specific interactions, toys/furniture, and exercise are all forms of enrichment (Cobb et al., 2022). Dogs without proper fulfilment of their behavioural needs are likely to have negative experiences of loneliness and frustration; this impacts not only their welfare but also their behavioural responses, impacting their training, learning and performance (Cobb et al., 2015a). This highlights the importance of meeting and exceeding the behavioural interaction needs of the greyhounds, not only for their welfare but also for improved training and racing performance.

### **5.3.2. Perspectives of Participants When Compared to Others in the Industry.**

Most license holders felt quite confident in their understanding of greyhound welfare and what a racing greyhound needs. When comparing this with a study conducted by Cobb et al. (2020), this study follows similar patterns of dog owners rating their canine welfare mainly

high. However, in the case of both my study and Cobb et al. (2020) study, it is hard to tell if the high welfare rating is due to excellent care or a self-enhancement bias of an exaggerated positive view of their own abilities and care (Roy & Liersch, 2013).

The viewpoint that greyhounds have good welfare contradicts that found in the media and scientific studies when participants from various backgrounds (mostly viewed as the general public) rated their perception of canine welfare in different contexts. Racing greyhounds received one of the lowest ratings of perceived welfare (Cobb et al., 2020). These findings confirm the need to improve the social acceptability of greyhound racing and, therefore, the social license to operate for continuation.

### **5.3.3. Perspectives held around the Greyhound Community or Culture.**

The majority of the New Zealand greyhound racing license holders felt a strong sense of community or culture amongst them. When comparing these results with a study by Groizard (2019), she discussed similar outcomes of a strong sense of community or culture amongst the New South Wales greyhound racing license holders.

Most of the participants in my study felt the New Zealand greyhound racing industry had a similar 'community' to it. I had heard mentions of the strong community within the license holders that were not very receptive to outsiders; however, I could not find any first-hand mention of this by the New Zealand license holders. 'Competitiveness' is frequently discussed throughout the survey results, with a different emotion attached each time. Some people loved the competitive side of racing, and some believed it was a downside to the industry. Without further explanation of the competitiveness-related responses, it is challenging to conclude if participants viewed this as a positive or negative aspect of the greyhound racing industry.

A potential reason for the license holders' reputation as an exclusive community is related to the exclusion they feel they have received from other groups and areas. This results in feelings of isolation and dependence on each other, causing less trust in those outside the license-holder community. Similar evidence of this is discussed in Groizard (2019), where the participants were reported to feel discriminated against and stigmatised by the public, especially during the breakdown of their social license to operate.

A study by Voci (2006) discussed how a value threat, an attack against the social identity/value of being a group member, strengthened the identification of in-group members and further the distrust of out-group members. This gives insight into the perspectives of the participants in my study. The threat of a retracted social license to operate and a potential ban on the sport has caused the greyhound industry participants to lean more on each other and increased the idea of an in-group and out-group mentality, deepening the community's exclusivity. It was found that the best way to alleviate the social identity attack on the in-group was to devalue the negative message being portrayed (Voci, 2006). For the greyhound racing community, increasing the transparency of actions and information, the claims of inappropriate occurrences become devalued.

#### **5.3.4. Participants' Perspective of Greyhound Welfare**

As part of the New South Wales (NSW) Greyhound racing review (Cobb et al., 2015b), the researchers used a variety of statements to delve deeper into the participants' attitudes towards welfare and management. This approach aimed to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the study participants' viewpoints. I included the same questions in this study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and to identify any differences or similarities between the two groups. In the NSW report, a range from the minimum to the maximum value was seen for every statement. At the same time, the responses in my study all had the highest number as the maximum value, but there was a vast difference in the minimum values. These results show more consistency in the viewpoints around greyhound welfare for the New Zealand greyhound industry participants and much less variety of perspectives than the NSW review. The highest means in the NSW study were for 'the welfare of racing greyhounds is important to me' and 'racing greyhounds should be kept in good physical health' (Cobb et al., 2015b). In my research, 'the welfare of racing greyhounds is important to me' had the highest rating with a complete consensus. This could indicate a like-mindedness of the New Zealand greyhound racing industry participants. When comparing both studies, these similarities in ratings are interesting as they show the common feelings of the significance greyhound welfare holds for both greyhound racing communities. This could be a motivating factor for improvement due to the considerably high rating of importance. A motivator is essential for sustainable behaviour change (Michie et al., 2011).

These findings could help guide behaviour change frameworks tailored for greyhound racing license holders. Additionally, helping further educate the license holders to understand the impact of their management on greyhound welfare could be a noteworthy direction for welfare improvement.

## **5.4. Qualitative Themes**

### **5.4.1. Other Recurring Themes**

A minor recurring theme included 'the love for the greyhounds held by the license holders'. Survey respondents reiterated that the dogs are prioritised, loved, and well cared for. This theme was repeated throughout the responses to various questions, showing their admiration for the dogs. While this theme highlights the importance of the dogs, it does not provide much insight into the reasons behind the resistance to change. However, it does suggest that their affection for the animals is a significant motivator, but it is unclear how much this factor can be used to encourage change.

The license holder's love for their dogs was mentioned in multiple forms, including loving being in their proximity, loving the breed, spending time with them, and loving the individual dogs. Participants also stated they loved watching and aiding in the progression of the greyhounds, including watching them grow, race, and win.

This love for the greyhounds was not only mentioned to be something the license holders benefitted from and enjoyed; when participants were asked what a good quality of life for a racing greyhound is, being happy and loved were some of the top responses.

Despite the answers received from question five indicating that participants did not consider the behavioural interactions domain of the Five Domains Model held much importance concerning good welfare of greyhounds, many participants stated positive interactions make for a good quality of life for a racing greyhound. This theme included 'involved trainers/interactions with people' and 'interactions with other dogs'. There are strong connections between an animal exercising agency and experiencing a positive affective state (Mellor & Beausoleil, 2015). License holders view good quality of life as an important part of maintaining good greyhound welfare despite how their answers may appear in the results. Since they know that behavioural interactions are needed for a good quality of life but have

indicated that they are not an essential part of good welfare, it shows a misunderstanding about their definitions of good quality of life and good welfare. Their potential confusion on the topic is understandable, given the divided literature between quality of life and animal welfare (Green & Mellor, 2011). Quality of life is described as the overall balance of negative and positive affects, an animal experiences (at any time or period), and is equivalent to animal welfare status (Mellor & Beausoleil, 2015). To further support that license holders rate a good quality of life as important, they rated 'more good feelings than bad' as highly important when providing their perspective on the various welfare categories. Future research should focus on a more detailed analysis of how animal welfare is characterised. Still, inconsistent views on what is needed for good animal welfare signifies further educational efforts would be helpful.

When translating the factors necessary for a successful racing greyhound, the key themes were 'good characteristics from the dog', 'good management and care', and 'good training'. Within these three themes, a positive affective state, good health, nutrition, environment, breeding, and good/involved trainers are all deemed essential. There is no mention of a greyhound's interactions outside of being with a trainer. I expected to see more mention of interaction between dogs. Good animal welfare is based on increasing positive and decreasing negative mental experiences (Mellor & Beausoleil, 2015). Interactions with the same species are commonly associated with increasing positive mental experiences, leading to positive welfare overall (Mellor, 2015). Communicating this information could prove very beneficial for license holders to ensure greyhound welfare is optimised.

#### **5.4.2. Main Theme One - Inclusiveness Around Changes**

License holders communicated their frustration repeatedly throughout the survey. This frustration links back to multiple areas, including their need for inclusion and influence. Changes are constantly occurring within the greyhound racing industry. However, the main subjects of the changes are the license holders, who feel left out. Participants shared their perspectives on inclusion, influence, and necessary changes, which were combined into one overarching theme due to their frequent occurrence together.

The greyhound racing industry in New Zealand has undergone many changes in recent years, with various stakeholders as the driving forces, including industry authorities, the public (with social license), animal activist groups (Save Animals from Exploitation, 2023), and government

officials/reports (Robertson, 2021). Many of these changes have been around the management and welfare of greyhounds. This means these changes directly affect the license holders as they adapt. Unfortunately, license holders have had little say in the changes, discussions, or decisions. This exclusion has resulted in many license holders feeling frustrated.

What does a lack of inclusion and lack of influence mean? The feelings of lack of inclusion stem from not being involved in the processes of discussing and making changes. License holders felt their opinions and perspectives were not sought, even when the changes directly affected them and their everyday lives. They felt that the lack of inclusion was a big factor in the changes not being feasible or sustainable for them. The lack of influence refers to the situations where they have shared an opinion or viewpoint that has not been appropriately acknowledged or heard. Participants felt that they held very little influence even when they added input. A study by Irawanto (2015) emphasises how allowing employees to participate in decision-making and having their contributions acknowledged and appreciated positively impacted employees in multiple ways. These employees' work motivation increased; they felt more involved and secure in their roles, and stated higher levels of performance and effectiveness. By involving the license holders in decision-making and giving them a voice, they may feel more motivated to adapt to changes and more satisfied with the industry's peak body and the changes occurring.

A sub-theme displaying the frustration felt by the lack of inclusion is the 'desire to change the leadership or workforce of Greyhound Racing New Zealand'. Participants felt that by removing the current authority figures, they could gain better representation in the creation of changes. This sub-theme focuses on how they would gain more inclusion, i.e., by changing the existing process used to make the changes and decisions. Frustration and distrust in the current system increases the demand for leadership change (Li, 2011). When participants feel unheard, they desire to start fresh with a whole new system/person running it. These points all demonstrate the need to give the license holders a voice.

A second sub-theme, 'rules and regulations', is based on the changes they want to make. Participants mentioned a desire to change the existing general rules and regulations and the precise, individual rules. Examples of individual rule changes included 'limit kennel numbers' or 'enforce preferred box draw'.

The specific changes to the industry mentioned in the survey can be categorised by the party driving the change. For example, changes driven by GRNZ/industry, changes driven by license holders, changes driven by public/social license, and changes driven by government/system-level change. Many of the changes mentioned fit into all the categories except 'changes driven by license holders'. An example of a license-holder-driven change would be increasing puppy socialisation to help rehoming possibilities upon retirement. However, the responses seen in the survey focus more on changes made by other groups, mainly GRNZ/industry level. Such as 'More funding for rehoming practices'. The motivating factors creating change are from all areas, excluding license holders, which indicates their lack of influence and speaks to the level of autonomy they feel they have. It also could indicate they do not feel that they have a role to play in the changes needed, or they are avoiding accountability. Further questioning of license holders responses to these survey questions would provide clarity on the underlying reasons for a lack of license holder driven change.

Groizard (2019) discusses how the alienation of the license holders in the New South Wales Greyhound racing community is a counterproductive method of inspiring license holders to change. Instead, discovering the motivators and perspectives of the differing groups within this community and working alongside them offers more insight and potential for effective change to occur. This is also relevant to the New Zealand license-holder communities and shows the need for license-holder representation when creating changes. To address this problem, future tactics should prioritise the input of license holders by including them in the process of making change and in any communication around it. Racing bodies should make an effort to involve them and give more emphasis to their opinions. An example of this is including licensed persons in the committees designed for decision-making, especially those where the decisions directly impact the license holders.

#### **5.4.3. Main Theme Two - Improving Transparency/Social License to Operate**

Improving the openness and transparency of the greyhound racing industry was a theme present throughout this study and in previous reports on the industry conducted by government officials. In an independent review undertaken by Hon Sir Bruce Robertson (Robertson, 2021), it was stated that maintainable changes to three key areas were needed to continue the industry. These areas were the data recording, the transparency of all activities,

and improved animal welfare in general (Robertson & Whaitiri, 2021; Robertson, 2021). Transparency is required for a social license to operate. Social license to operate refers to a social contract between industries and the public – decided by whether the public deems an industry acceptable. Since the public needs to know what is happening to decide if it is acceptable, transparency is required for a social license. A social license is not a legally binding or written contract (Duncan et al., 2018). However, it is an essential part of the existence of an industry (McManus, 2022). If an industry loses its social license to operate, the industry loses the support, confidence, and acceptance of the public, who then no longer involve themselves in the industry, and often causes industry closure. Therefore, maintaining a social license is essential for continuing greyhound racing.

The license holder participants frequently mentioned improving their public image through increased transparency and openness. Some suggestions for this were to hold open days where the public could visit kennels and see what the life of a racing greyhound is like. This shows a consistent trend of improving social licenses as an important goal of license holders. This is significant given the perceived exclusivity of the greyhound racing community. Although many believe that those in the community are hesitant to share information with ‘outsiders’, multiple participants suggested that more transparency and openness to the public could improve public perception. This indicates that they may not be as resistant to sharing as previously thought and that their reluctance is driven by fear of further alienation from society. However, they recognise that transparency is crucial to enhancing the social license of greyhound racing (Brunt, 2022).

Participants also mentioned more positive stories in the media, wanting to improve their social license to operate, or in other words, improve the public confidence and acceptance in the industry and sport. While positive publicity is good, excessive positivity can impact the message's legitimacy and negatively affect the social license. This is discussed in Hampton et al. (2020), where the extremely positive stories create more suspicion of what is being withheld from the public and negatively impact the social license. In Brunt (2022), this is discussed as manipulative transparency due to the selectivity of the information provided. It was found that the best way to counteract this is through a proactive approach where these industries owned their issues and embraced reform and changes, as opposed to the reactive

approach where the industries denied any problems and attempted to use public relations to re-establish their reputations, which only held short term success (Hampton et al., 2020).

It is also vital that all stakeholders communicate and work together to reach a consensus around the decided pursuit of transparency (Brunt, 2022). Ensuring everyone within the industry is on board with the vision and aware of the planned approach is essential to expressing a clear message and making progress. This reinforces the need to involve all industry groups, including license holders.

#### **5.4.4. Main Theme Three - More Support for License Holders**

Throughout the data analysis, it was evident that license holders require more support. The term 'support' encompasses all the different types of assistance mentioned by the license holders as crucial for them to implement the changes required by both GRNZ/ industry and the public. They have requested specific areas of help and more general mentions of support.

Specific types of support mentioned were related to diversity, financial, and cultural. The first support area related to helping minorities within the industry. This included supporting younger people entering the industry, small kennels, and rehoming services. The second group was around facilities and financial support. The areas within this category include improving prize money, increasing education efforts, improving mental health services and support, and repairing/adding facilities (emphasis on reducing injuries). The last mentions of help wanted were improving the community's environment and helping/supporting trainers.

Cullen et al. (2014) found that employees' perception of how supported they felt by their organisation/industry was increased when efforts were made to reduce their feelings of uncertainty. Especially uncertainty around changes happening in the workplace. They also mentioned that identifying and applying extra assistance to those struggling with adaption to workplace changes helped with employees' views of the support they are receiving.

This research indicates the importance of reassurance to the license holders and increased efforts to make them feel heard and supported. Providing a line of communication available for those struggling with changes to voice their concerns or uncertainty could be beneficial. Also, directly asking and implementing the input of license holders would increase their perception of the amount of support they receive from the industry.

## **5.5. Limitations**

The main limitation of this study was the use of an online survey as opposed to the original plan of in-person focus groups. While this change was necessary to gain participants and collect data, the loss of conversation and follow-up questions significantly limited the depth of possible data analysis. As with all online surveys, it is only sometimes possible to predict what questions need more probing before collecting the data. If the questions were asked in person, I could have encouraged participants to expand further on their answers, giving more information to work with and more in-depth answers.

While this limitation is an unfortunate side-effect of online surveys, future research should consider including a follow-up question below most questions, asking participants why they gave the answer, rating or response that they did. In doing so, they will be able to further expand on the findings of the present research.

Despite piloting the survey questions, there is evidence that participants needed some questions to be better explained. For example, a few participants answered the question “what is a good quality of life for a racing greyhound?” with the number of years they believed is an acceptable length of time for a racing greyhound to race/live. Adding definitions of terminology could have avoided some confusion.

I found it difficult to avoid jumping into themes too early when analysing the data. However, I made a consistent and conscious effort to avoid creating them too soon and to limit the themes from being a poor representation of the data. I advise future researchers to remain aware of this when using reflexive thematic analysis and creating themes.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This research provided an understanding of the perspectives of license holders within the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand. Greyhound people are eager to improve their industry. They want to feel included and represented in changes to come. They want the public to better understand what the sport and greyhound welfare are like through increased transparency and openness, and in doing so, improve the public view and their social license

to operate. They are desperate to feel more support from their own industry and the country, and they are willing to put in the work and changes needed for that. They care deeply about the welfare of racing greyhounds and have a solid understanding of what is essential for providing this. However, they could greatly benefit from further educational efforts and clarification around animal welfare requirements. This research informs the industry authorities about the key areas where changes are needed and what approach will be the most effective at supporting, involving, empowering, and educating license holders. By providing this insight, the greyhound racing industry officials and government regulators/legislators can implement more maintainable changes, increasing the industry's sustainability and improving greyhound welfare.

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## **Appendix A**

**Information Sheet supplied to all potential participants of this research.**

### **The role greyhound people play in the lives of racing greyhounds in New Zealand**

#### **INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

##### **Researcher Introduction**

My name is Sandrine Korver. I am a master's student at Massey University with a strong interest in animal welfare and management. This study contributes to my thesis research – with my supervisors Dr. Kat Littlewood, Izzy Norris, from the Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre (AWSBC) at Massey University, and Dr. Mia Cobb, from Melbourne University.

##### **Project Description and Invitation**

This project, funded by Greyhound Racing New Zealand, will be exploring the opinions and perspectives held by the trainers, breeders and/or owners of racing greyhounds. Particularly your opinions on greyhound management. This research will give you the opportunity to share your thoughts on how the current techniques could be improved, and your opinions on the best strategies for creating change. A better understanding of the values, motivations and opinions held by the trainers, breeders, and owners, is likely to encourage more sustainable changes that are tailored to fit around those working directly with the greyhounds.

I invite you to participate in a focus group which will provide you an opportunity to share your perspectives. Participation in this research is voluntary, but those that take the time to participate will receive a voucher as koha for their participation.

##### **Project Questions and Discussion**

If you choose to participate in this one-hour focus group, you will be asked questions about:

- the current management of racing greyhounds;
- how much influence you feel you have on creating change;
- the barriers you experience, and,
- how and what change you would make if given the opportunity.

##### **Participant Identification and Recruitment**

You have been invited to participate because you are a registered greyhound trainer, breeder, and/or owner with Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ). If interested, you will participate in a one-hour focus group with roughly six other trainers, breeders, and/or owners in your area. I will be selecting potential participants across New

Zealand greyhound racetracks. No identifying information about you, your dogs, or peers, will be included in any publicly available documents that result from this study.

### **Participant Procedures**

To participate in this study:

1. You will indicate that you agree to participate and sign the attached consent form and confidentiality agreement. I will collect these at the beginning of the focus group;
2. Once you have expressed interest in participating, I will contact you to arrange a suitable time and place for the focus group to occur, one that is convenient for you and the other members wanting to participate in your area;
3. During your focus group, I will ask questions on your opinions and thoughts on greyhound management and creating change. This is expected to take around 60 minutes. There is also a short demographic form for you to complete – these will not be used to identify you and will be kept confidential to the research team. Demographic information is being collected for descriptive purposes only.

If you would like to bring a support person (e.g., a friend or family/whānau member) to the focus group they will need to sign a consent form as well.

If you would like to participate in this project but prefer not to attend a focus group or prefer another method of communication, please let me know and an alternative method such as a phone conversation, online survey, or individual interview may be possible instead. You will receive the same questions as asked in the focus groups. A signed consent form will be necessary for any of these alternative methods.

### **Data Management**

I will sound record the dialogue from the focus group so that I can analyse the content later. The recording will be de-identified, by changing your name, after being transcribed.

The audio recording, research analysis, and findings will be kept on password protected Massey University computers and servers accessed only by my research team. The signed form indicating your consent to participate will be stored in a locked office. Information that indicates your identity will not be shared with anyone, unless with your specific consent. The data will be stored for five years and then they will be destroyed.

All reporting on findings will protect your identity – your participation will be anonymous. Responses cannot be identified for withdrawal once shared within the focus group however you can withdraw from answering any further questions.

While every endeavour will be made to ensure confidentiality, it cannot be guaranteed due to small population of those within the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand. GRNZ support this research and are aware of potential risks to their organization.

## **Participants Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study before your focus group interview;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded. This will be supplied as a concise document of the main conclusions derived from the study results.

## **Project Contacts**

Please feel free to contact either myself or my main supervisor with any questions regarding this project.

### Researcher

Sandrine Korver  
Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre  
School of Veterinary Science  
Massey University  
Palmerston North, NZ  
[sjkorver@gmail.com](mailto:sjkorver@gmail.com)

### Main Supervisor

Dr. Kat Littlewood  
Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre  
School of Veterinary Science  
Massey University  
Palmerston North, NZ  
[K.Littlewood@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.Littlewood@massey.ac.nz)

## **Helpline details**

Helpline services are available right now in New Zealand that offer support, information and help for you and your parents, family, whānau and friends.

All the services listed here are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week unless otherwise specified.

- Need to talk? Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor.
- Lifeline – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP).
- Gambling Helpline – 0800 654 655
- Anxiety NZ – 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY).
- Family Services 211 Helpline – 0800 211 211 for help finding (and direct transfer to) community based health and social support services in your area

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 22/53. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz).*

## Appendix B

Survey advertisement shared with License Holder Facebook Group

**Are you a greyhound trainer, breeder, or owner?**

Anonymous survey to hear your opinions and perspectives

Survey closes 21st of April 2023

Participate through this survey link:

<https://bit.ly/greyhounds2023>

Or scan the QR code through your phone camera



 **MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

SCHOOL OF VETERINARY SCIENCE  
TĀWHARAU ORA

## **Appendix C**

### **Additional Focus Group Information**

Introduction to focus groups as a methodology.

A focus group is a group of individuals brought together to discuss a specific subject. In the case of many focus groups, the participants all share similar characteristics, knowledge, or personal experience with the subject being discussed (Powell & Single, 1996). Regarding the present research, all participants were license holders of racing greyhounds. Focus groups usually contain 6-8 people (Wilkinson, 1998).

A moderator facilitates the discussion. The moderator's role is to lead the discussion topics and questions and provide verbal and non-verbal responses throughout the focus group to guide the conversation (Morrison-Beedy et al., 2001). Often focus groups have a planned structure of questions and topics that will be discussed. The moderator's job is to redirect and steer the conversation to follow this structure without being too dominating while encouraging active participation (Morrison-Beedy et al., 2001).

#### Advantages and limitations of focus groups

The main advantage of a focus group over other data collection methods is the unique experience of participants being able to discuss viewpoints with other participants (Plummer-D'Amato, 2008). Hearing other participants' responses can help create a chain of responses and allows participants to bounce ideas off each other. This often gives the researcher a more in-depth response than if they were undertaking a different data collection method, such as one-on-one interviews. Focus groups encourage participants to refine, justify, elaborate, and develop their ideas and viewpoints when explaining them in a group setting (Plummer-D'Amato, 2008). The group setting also encourages more participation from members who might otherwise be reluctant to answer questions in an isolated interview setting (Kitzinger, 1995). These are

significant advantages of the focus group methodology, especially when the research aims to understand attitudes, viewpoints, and ideas, such as this research does.

A key limitation of focus groups is the participants' comfort level in sharing and discussing the topic. In some cases, dominant voices in the group may cause other members to feel uncomfortable sharing their opinions (especially if they have opposing opinions or perspectives). The dominant voices drown out the other voices, so only one overriding viewpoint is heard (Smithson, 2000).

Another noteworthy limitation of focus groups is the intensive and expensive nature of focus groups. Often travel is needed to conduct the focus groups and hire a meeting room and a transcription service afterwards. If travel is needed, accommodation and transport must be accounted for in the planning. This causes focus groups to be much more labour-intensive than surveys or questionnaires (Barbour, 2005).

Why focus groups were initially chosen for this research.

Focus groups were chosen over individual interviews due to the perceived closeness of the community. This assumption was based on research conducted in an Australian greyhound community and the culture and closeness seen there (Groizard, 2019). The decision to use focus groups for this research was made on the prediction that since the community is comfortable with each other, they would be more likely to participate and bounce ideas or share more in-depth opinions with each other rather than one-on-one with a stranger.

I aimed to discover the opinions and perspectives of the license holders. Focus groups were the obvious choice of methodology due to the significant number of scientific articles reinforcing their strength in uncovering precisely that. This is discussed at length by Morgan (1996), where he talks about the recurring theme of focus groups being used to provide a voice to marginalised groups. He also discusses that they sometimes even go a step further and empower participants

or provide them with a sense of control due to the semi-structured nature and open discussion a focus group provides.

### Details of my focus groups

The focus groups were organised at five different locations around New Zealand. Auckland, Cambridge, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Invercargill. All locations contained greyhound racing communities and racetracks. These focus groups were to be an hour long and have roughly six participants each. These focus groups were organised to take place throughout February and March 2023.

These locations offered additional advantages. Christchurch has the largest greyhound racing community and the most racetrack events in New Zealand. Auckland's venue is a stand-alone racetrack purpose-built for only greyhound racing. Palmerston North has the newest all-weather track. Cambridge Racetrack is known for its fastest racing times and keen competitors. And Invercargill racetrack is much smaller but known for its sense of community and local charm.

A quiet private room was booked in the town's public library or a meeting room in each location. Efforts were made to find a location less than a 15-minute drive from the racetrack so the participants would not need to travel too far. While the primary data collection method was to be the focus groups, participants were also offered alternative methods if they wanted to participate but would prefer not to attend a focus group. They were offered a phone conversation or individual interview. These alternative methods asked the same questions and followed the same schedule as the focus group. If they were still meeting in person, the location of the meeting would be the same as the focus group, just at a different time.

### Focus group questions

This focus group was to be semi-structured with primarily open-ended questions. By having already set questions and ideas to discuss, the conversation had a guideline to keep the focus group within the timeframe but also allowed for time and space for extra conversation or a slight change of direction to occur.

The question began light and easy, so the participants had time to get comfortable before the more in-depth discussions began. The plan for these focus groups was to make them as interactive as possible so the participants felt very involved. Efforts to do this involved using whiteboards to write answers to questions and passing around sticky notes and diagrams for the participants to fill out. The questions were created using participatory action research techniques to take the interactive approach one step further.

#### Introduction to Participatory Action Research Approach

Participatory action research is an empowering qualitative research approach. It involves researchers and participants of a study collaborating to create ideas and potential approaches toward whatever dilemma is being researched (MacDonald, 2012).

Participatory action research techniques are often used through the researcher asking or prompting the participants to share their ideas on how action and change could be done, therefore involving them in the process (McTaggart, 1991). It takes qualitative research one step further than listening to participants' struggles and issues and then developing solutions separately. By asking the participants what solutions they can envision, they often feel empowered by their enlarged part to play in the actions and changes made.

#### The Advantages and Limitations of Participatory Action Research

This technique often increases participant engagement, meaning they are more likely to share ideas and thoughts as they feel heard (Baum, 2006).

It is recommended when conducting research in community development as it encourages the oppressed groups to speak up, giving them the confidence they often need to feel empowered and control their knowledge (Bennett, 2004). These groups often struggle with feeling a lack of influence. This approach works to counteract that and often is the first step towards social change occurring.

A potential limitation of participatory action research is the perception differences between participants and researchers. They may have different ideas of what is needed to solve the issues or what the issues are, potentially resulting in miscommunication and different interpretations of findings from the research (Baum, 2006).

## Appendix D

### Survey Questions given to Participants.

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#### **Are you a New Zealand greyhound trainer, breeder, or owner?**

This research, funded by Greyhound Racing New Zealand, will allow you to share your thoughts on current management techniques and your opinions on the best strategies for creating change. A better understanding of the values, motivations and opinions of trainers, breeders, and owners is likely to encourage more sustainable changes tailored to those working directly with greyhounds.

My name is Sandrine Korver. I am a master's student at Massey University with a strong interest in animal welfare and management. This survey contributes towards my thesis research with my supervisors, Dr Kat Littlewood and Izzy Norris, from the Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre (AWSBC) at Massey University, and Dr Mia Cobb, from The Animal Welfare Science Centre at The University of Melbourne.

This survey is estimated to take around 10 minutes to complete.

#### **Participant Identification and Recruitment**

You have been invited to participate because you are a registered greyhound trainer, breeder, and/or owner with Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ). Participation in this research is voluntary and anonymous. No identifying information about you, your dogs, or your peers will be included in any publicly available documents that result from this study.

#### **Participant Procedures**

To participate in this study, you need to be at least 18 years old, and provide consent. The survey responses you provide, the research analysis, and the findings, will be kept on password protected Massey University computers and servers accessed only by my research team. Information that indicates your identity will not be shared with anyone, unless with your specific consent. The data will be stored for five years and then they will be destroyed. All reporting on findings will protect your identity – your participation will be anonymous.

## **Participants Rights**

You are under no obligation to partake in this survey. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- contact the research team or human ethics committee and ask any questions about the study at any time;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded. This will be supplied as a concise document of the main conclusions derived from the study results.

While every endeavour will be made to ensure confidentiality, it cannot be guaranteed due to the small population of those within the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand.

## **Project Contacts**

Please feel free to contact either myself or my main supervisor with any questions regarding this project.

### Researcher

Sandrine Korver  
Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre  
School of Veterinary Science  
Massey University  
Palmerston North, NZ  
sjkorver@gmail.com

### Main Supervisor

Dr Kat Littlewood  
Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre  
School of Veterinary Science  
Massey University  
Palmerston North, NZ  
K.Littlewood@massey.ac.nz

***This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 22/53. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz***

I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and consent to collecting my responses.  
(Please click on the 'Yes I Consent' choice if you wish to proceed.)

Yes I Consent

No I do not Consent

---

Age Are you over 18 years old?

Yes

No

---

Q1 What is your role in the greyhound racing industry?

Trainer

Breeder

Owner

Handler

Punter

Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q2 How many years have you been involved in the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand?

Years involved \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q3 What do you enjoy most about the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q4 What is a good quality of life for racing greyhounds?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

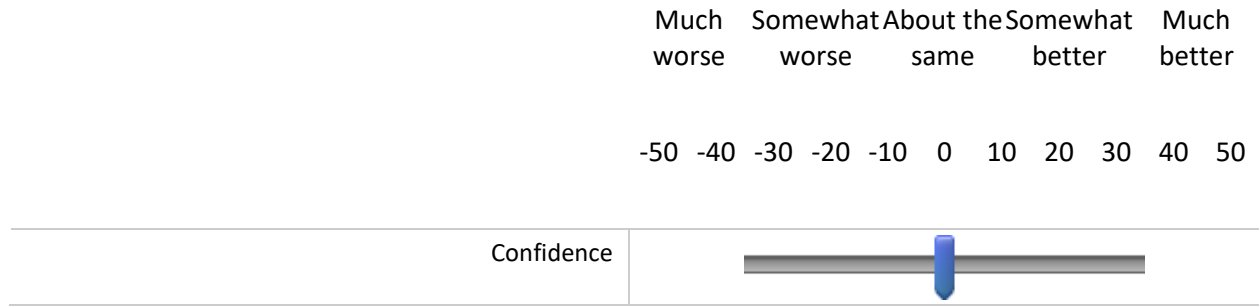
Q5 How important are the following categories for ensuring greyhounds have good welfare? Please rate between 1 (not important) and 9 (very important) by dragging the slider.

	Least important	Somewhat important	Most important						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Good nutrition									
Good health									
A comfortable living space									
Choosing their interactions with other dogs									
Choosing their interactions with people									
Choosing their interactions with things around them									
More good feelings than bad									

Q6 Rate your level of confidence in answering Q5 (the question above).

	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Confidence									

Q7 How well do you understand what racing greyhounds need compared to the average greyhound license holder/participants?



Q8 What does the Greyhound Racing New Zealand motto, "we love our dogs" mean to you?

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Q9 What do you think makes a successful racing greyhound?

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Q10 Do you feel a sense of community or culture within the greyhound racing industry, particularly among trainers, breeders, owners, and handlers?

- Yes
- No
- Other - Explain \_\_\_\_\_



Greyhounds are generally well cared for while they are racing	
Greyhounds are generally well cared for while they are learning to race	
An acceptable percentage of greyhounds bred for racing actually end up participating in races	
The racing greyhound industry has been unfairly portrayed in recent media reports	
Greyhounds are generally well cared for as young puppies	
Greyhounds that participate in races have racing careers that are too short	
Greyhounds are generally well cared for while they are growing up	
The welfare of racing greyhounds is important to me	
If a racing greyhound is in good physical health, that means it is experiencing good welfare	
The general public does not understand the sport of greyhound racing	
Greyhounds are generally well cared for once they retire from racing	
The greyhound industry has a responsibility to ensure that greyhounds are prepared for life as a pet after their racing career ends	
Racing greyhounds should be kept in good physical health	
Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people throughout their racing lives	
Racing greyhounds should not be treated as if they were pets	
An acceptable percentage of racing greyhounds become adopted as pets when their racing career ends	
If a racing greyhound is not aggressive, that means it is experiencing good welfare	
Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people when they are learning how to race	
Racing greyhounds should have regular contact with people when they are very young	
Greyhounds kept for breeding are generally well cared for	

Q15 How old are you?

Age \_\_\_\_\_

-----

Q16 What is your gender/sex?

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

Q17 Which ethnic group do you belong to?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

### Codes and Themes created from Thematic Analysis

Q3 - What do you enjoy most about the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand?

Q3 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
competitiveness	3	"The competitive nature of the sport"
community/culture	4	"Family and community spirit"
dogs unspecified	17	"The dogs"
love of dogs	5	"The love of the dogs"
working with dogs	7	"Working with the amazing dogs"
watching progression of dogs	6	"Watching them progress from pups to race dogs, then going into pet homes"
prize money	1	"Prize money"
dogs love to race	5	"Dogs enjoying the chase"

Q3 Themes	Codes included
Dogs - love for them, proximity, breed, time and	dogs unspecified
	love of dogs
	working with dogs
Dogs racing/progressing	watching progression of dogs
	dogs love to race
Winning	prize money
	competitiveness
Culture/people	community/culture
	competitiveness

Q4 - What is a good quality of life for racing greyhounds?

Q4 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
Loved dogs	14	"Plenty of love"
Happy dogs	7	"Happy greyhounds"
Exercised dogs	10	"Being kept fit"
Injury free/vet care	4	"Access to veterinary care"
Suitable kennels	5	"Spacious kennels"
Healthy/well fed	15	"Being fed a healthy and balanced diet"
Interactions with other dogs	4	"Having good interactions with older dogs"
Good housing	10	"Being routinely toileted and housed in warm, clean suitable kennels"
Misunderstood (years given)	3	"2.5 years"
Long life/retirement	9	"Great retirement as a pet"
Wanting/getting to race	8	"Regular opportunity to race"
Well cared for	15	"Well looked after and cared for"
Involved trainers/people interactions	11	"Being socialised with humans"
Small kennels	1	"Small kennels"

Q4 Themes	Codes included
Positive affective states	Loved dogs
	Happy dogs
Good care/management	Well cared for
	Exercised dogs
	Good housing
	Healthy/well fed
	Injury free/vet care
	Suitable kennels
	Long life/retirement
Positive interactions	Involved trainers/people interactions
	Interactions with other dogs

Q8 - What does the Greyhound Racing New Zealand motto, "we love our dogs" mean to you?

Q8 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
Love of the dogs	15	"That the people in the industry have a genuine love and care for their greyhounds"
Dogs come first	9	"Their welfare is paramount above all"
True/correct statement	11	"It is so true"
Dogs are well cared for	10	"We care for them"
Corny/silly	2	"Actually find it a bit corny"
Money making machines	2	"It means some of us love our dogs and others just like the money they can make"
Not just for money/sport	5	"It means they always come first. They are not money making machines"

Q8 Themes	Codes included
Dogs are loved	Love of the dogs
	True/correct statement
Dogs are priority	Dogs come first
	Dogs are well cared for
More than just for racing	Not just for money/sport
Disagree with statement/commodities	Corny/silly
	Money making machines

Q9 - What do you think makes a successful racing greyhound?

Q9 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
Happy dog	11	"A happy dog"
Speed/ability of dogs	5	"Natural athletic ability"
Proper care (health/diet)	18	"Well fed and well cared for"
Good temperament/attitude	7	"A dog's temperament and personal traits"
Good breeding	6	"Choice of quality bloodlines of both sire and dam"
Want to chase	6	"Stronger natural instincts to chase"
Good/involved trainer	7	"A loving trainer"

Smaller trainer to dog ratio	2	"Smaller numbers of dogs for each trainer"
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Q9 Themes	Codes included
Good characteristics from the dog	Speed/ability of dogs
	Good temperament/attitude
	Want to chase
	Happy dog
Good management and care	Proper care (health/diet)
	Good breeding
	Happy dog
Good training	Good/involved trainers
	Smaller trainer to dog ratio

Q10 - Do you feel a sense of community or culture within the greyhound racing industry, particularly among trainers, breeders, owners, and handlers?

NOTE: this open-ended question was for people who chose "other" to explain why

Q10 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
Divided (yes and no)	4	"In some ways yes and in other ways no"
Very supported	2	"When times get tough they are always there"
Very competitive	3	"Not really it is a competitive industry"
Disrespectful people/behaviour	3	"There are some clowns involved in the game"

Themes	Codes included
Feel a sense of community	Very supported
Don't feel sense of community	Disrespectful people/behaviour
	Very competitive
Both/divided	Divided (yes and no)

Q11 - If you could change two things about the greyhound racing industry in New Zealand, what would they be?

Q11 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
No more rules/changes	3	"The constant rule changes and over strictness that seems to undermine us as owner/trainer's"
Stricter punishments	1	"Stricter punishment for those breaking laws"
More sensible rules	3	"Sensible rules and standards that are upheld by all"
PBD enforced	3	"Roll out P.B.D for all grades and distances"
More efforts to reduce injuries	2	"Minimize injury risks"
Improve the community (toxic)	4	"Get more people involved"
More positive information given to the media/pu	9	"Change the public perception of Greyhound Racing"
Support younger people more	3	"I would like to see more pathways for younger participants to establish themselves"
Support small kennels more	2	"I would like to see more help for the smaller breeders and trainers"
Change GRNZ/authority governing	3	"A more effectual governing body"
Change GRNZ people	2	"Get rid of office staff"
Support rehoming services more	4	"Rehoming needs to be run better"
Improve prizemoney	3	"More prizemoney over all"
Add/repair facilities	5	"GRNZ needs to own more facilities"
Improve knowledge of industry persons	3	"Make sure those running the game have good knowledge of the racing greyhound and its needs"
Improve breeding standards	2	"Better breeding standards"
Limit kennel numbers	6	"Restrictions on how many dogs each trainer can have"

Q11 Themes	Codes included
More rules and regulations enforced	Stricter punishments
	More sensible rules
	PBD enforced
	Limit kennel numbers
Change authority/GRNZ	Change GRNZ/authority governing
	Change GRNZ people
	Improve knowledge of industry persons
No more rules/changes	No more rules/changes
Support license holders more	Support younger people more
	Support small kennels more
	Improve the community (toxic)
	Improve prizemoney
More positive publicity	More positive information given to the media/public
More help for rehoming services/reduce their ne	Support rehoming services more
	Improve breeding standards
	Limit kennel numbers
Improve facilities	Add/repair facilities
	More efforts to reduce injuries

Q12 - What do you think could be done to improve or change the viewpoint of greyhound racing held by the public?

Q12 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
Reduce negative press/stories	10	"Stop the media from publishing lies"
Promote more positive press/stories	9	"Provide more positive facts and marketing strategies"
Open to public/involve them	8	"If someone opened up their kennels for the public to see what life on a greyhound kennel was really like"
Remove silence is golden approach	2	"Ditch the silence is golden policy"
Nothing can be done	3	"Nothing"
Less injuries	1	"Less injuries"
Better track care and staff	1	"The track staff work on the track better"
Transparency	1	"Transparency"
Promote small trainers	1	"Promotion of the small suburban trainers"

Q12 Themes	Codes included
Change stories/press releases	Reduce negative press/stories
	Promote more positive press/stories
Fight back on mistruths	Remove silence is golden approach
	Reduce negative press/stories
Involve public/open days	Open to public/involve them
	Transparency
No improvements possible	Nothing can be done
Better managements (dogs and facilities)	Less injuries
	Better track care and staff
More support and promotion of small trainers	Promote small trainers

Q13 - How could Greyhound Racing New Zealand support you in creating positive changes?

Q13 Codes	Number of Occurrences	Examples:
More education	2	"They could run more educational programs"
Add/redevelop tracks	2	"Look at redevelopment of tracks"
Less greed	2	"Stop supporting greed"
Promote positively to the public	3	"If they encouraged the public to see what life was like involved in greyhound racing"
Be more proactive/make changes	4	"Be pro active in supply of information"
Change GRNZ (people & process)	2	"They are the ones that need to change"
Help/support trainers more	6	"Support the trainers more and actually ask the trainers their opinion"

Q13 Themes	Codes included
Change public perceptions	Promote positively to the public
Create changes	Be more proactive/make changes Change GRNZ (people & process)
Change/add facilities	Add/redevelop tracks More education
More support and help for trainers	Help/support trainers more More education

