

# Safety at the Track

## Safety around the lure: a case study

Collision between mechanical lure & registered person at Angle Park

6<sup>th</sup> September 2022

# Why is this important?

- ❖ Remind and highlight the importance of robust *and* responsive safe work systems for hazardous activities on the racetrack.
- ❖ Reduce risk of injury
- ❖ Reduce exposure to personal injury litigation
- ❖ Reduce exposure to criminal prosecution by regulators

# The Case Study

Angle Park racetrack is an oval, sand track with starting boxes located around the track. The track hosts race events and trials, including (training) trials.



# The Catching Pen

Angle Park racetrack allows a catching pen finish, with a catching pen gate that is manually opened and closed by staff who need to be with the catching pen gate.

The catching pen gate has a lure chute that must be manually slid shut after the lure passes the catching pen gate, to create a closed barrier to divert greyhounds into the catching pen.



# (Training) Trials

- ❖ Angle Park racetrack hosts training trials by:
  - Starting boxes
  - Hand slipping
  - Grabbing
- ❖ Trials may end in the catching pen or on the lure (finish on lure)
- ❖ Registered trainers and handlers can participate

# What happened?

On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022, a registered person (owner/handler) attending a training trial, was on the racetrack when they were struck by the lure running at speed. They were injured and required admission to hospital.



# Notification to regulator

The collision and injury was severe enough to mandate reporting of the incident to South Australia's work health and safety regulator:

Safework SA

- ✓ GRSA preserved the scene and seized the lure equipment.
  - ✓ GRSA supplied the full CCTV to Safework SA

# Internal investigation: root cause analysis

- ❖ A root cause analysis established that people were using the lure chute as a short cut to walk from the 342m boxes to the catching pen.
- ❖ This not only put them in proximity to the lure, but also allowed lingering on the racetrack, around the catching pen gate.

# Internal investigation: safe work system failures

- Inadequate risk analysis
- Inadequate policy and procedure around the lure / catching pen
- Lack of barrier protection (exclusion) between people and the lure
- Lack of warning signs alerting to the hazard
- Inadequate staff training on lure / catching pen
- Lack of registered person training on safety around the lure
- Inadequate recording of attendance at the racetrack

# Safework SA findings: the law

We (Greyhound Racing SA) have a **health and safety duty** prescribed by section 19(2) of the *Work Health Safety Act 2012* (“the Act”)(\*) to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business.

*(\*) Other States will likely have the same duty*

# Safework SA findings: the risks

Exposed to risk because:

- The trial requires greyhounds to be placed in a starting box and once the starting box opens the greyhounds follow a travelling mechanical lure before being herded into a catching pen.
- Before the conclusion of the trial, it was possible for owners and/or handlers to enter the racetrack.
- At the conclusion of the trial, as the greyhounds are moved to a catching pen, a mechanical lure travels through the path of a sliding gate.

# Safework SA findings: the risks

- It was possible for people to enter the catching pen area via a gap between the sliding gate and railing (the lure chute).
- It was possible for people to remain close to the inner rail and in the pathway of the mechanical lure.
- It was possible that a person could be struck by the mechanical lure as it went past.

# Safework SA findings: the failures

- By ensuring that the sliding gate could not be operated when the mechanical lure was in motion.
- By ensuring there were adequate barriers in place to restrict entry to the racetrack by participants during the conduct of and conclusion of trials.
- By enforcing a procedure by which whenever a trial was being conducted that participants were not allowed to enter or remain on the racetrack.
- By developing and implementing a policy whereby instructions, supervision and/or training was provided to participants about the risks associated with entering the racetrack during the conduct of a trial that was necessary to protect other persons from risks to safety arising from the task.
- By ensuring there was adequate signage prohibiting the entry to the racetrack by participants during the conduct of and conclusion of trials.

# What we did

- Immediate suspension of all training trials at all tracks in South Australia
- Review risk analysis on lure and catching pen gate operation
- Review policy and procedure on lure and catching pen gate operation
- Introduce barrier protection
- Install warning signs
- Train staff
- New trial (operations) policy (focusing on human safety) for all staff and registered persons
- 'Toolbox' safety briefings before trials
- Register of attendees to trials











# Catching pen gate modifications

- In addition to Safework SA requirements, we modified the catching pen gate to allow for as much clearance as possible between our staff and the mechanical lure.
- We also modified the gate latch, so no one needs to be in the path of the lure to properly lock the catching pen gate closed.





# But this has never happened before?

This was a frequent comment in the aftermath of the collision. In all the years of trials at Angle Park, this never happened.  
Why do we need such a response to the collision?



# But this has never happened before?

While the Angle Park racetrack has been operating for many years, in 2021, because of a redevelopment, the 388m start was changed to a 342m start. A small change, but one that *moved* the starting boxes to the opposite side of the catching pen gate.

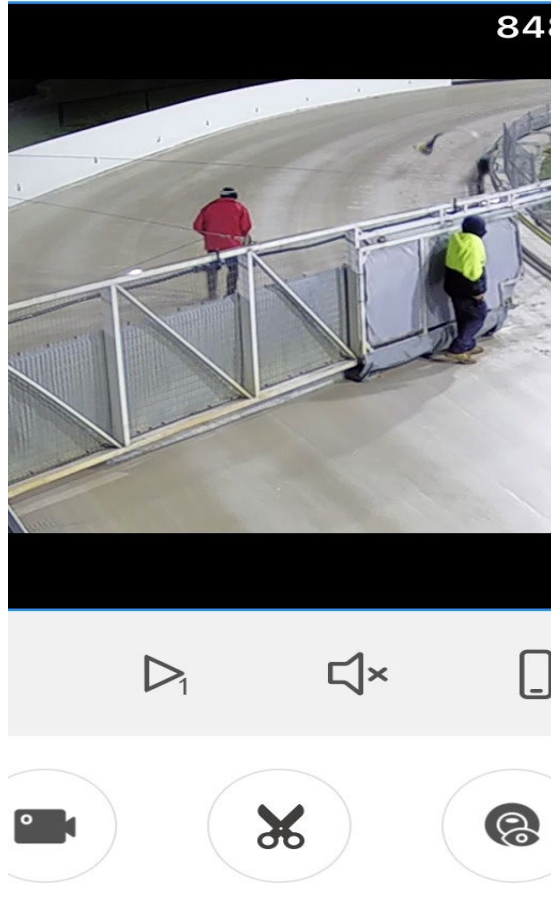
# But this has never happened before?

This change created the *opportunity* to use the catching pen lure chute as a short cut from the (new) 342m starting boxes to the catching pen (rather than walk the long way around behind the catching pen gate).

The new redevelopment *did not include* a (human) gate from the 342m starting boxes to the catching pen.

*A new (human) gate was installed after the collision.*

# You are too close!



- **MONITOR** your safe work systems
- **REVIEW** (including by practice) your safe work systems
- **TRAIN** on your safe work systems
  
- **PROMOTE** a positive safety culture (call out bad practice)

# The next challenge: close in trial work

After all these changes, the challenge remained to provide a safe environment for *on track* trial work:

- Hand slipping
- Grabbing

# New policy

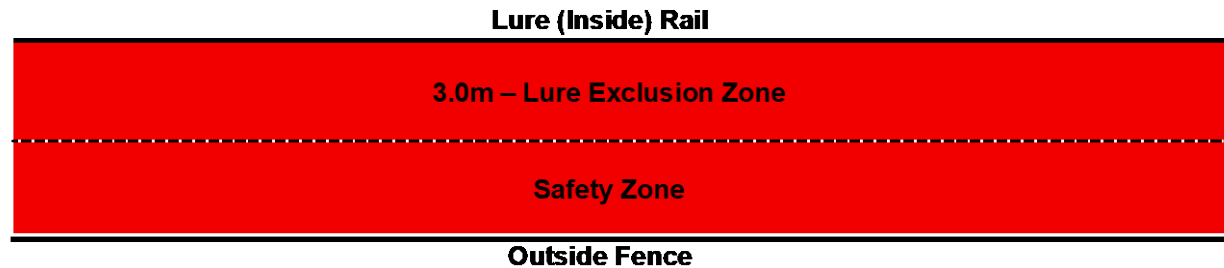
A new trial policy was developed for staff and registered persons that controls all types of trial work

# Trial (Operations) Policy

- Identification of different types of trials
- Establishment of working zones on the racetrack
- Limit as much as possible any presence on the racetrack
  - Close supervision of trials by staff
  - Training, including toolbox safety talks
    - Register of attendance

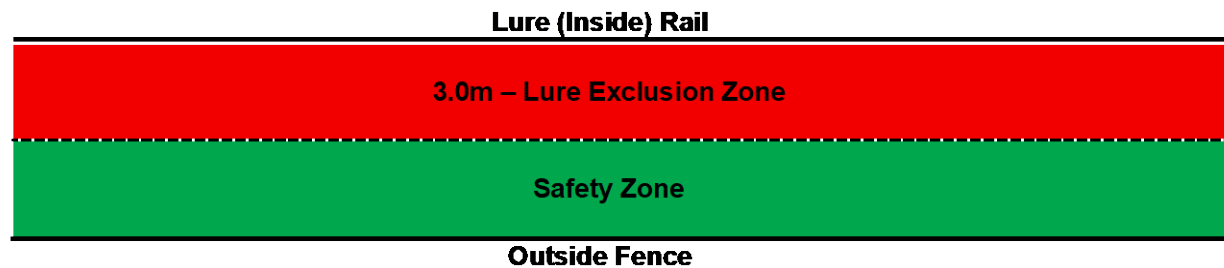
# Trial (Operations) Policy

Starting box start: no person on the racetrack



# Trial (Operations) Policy

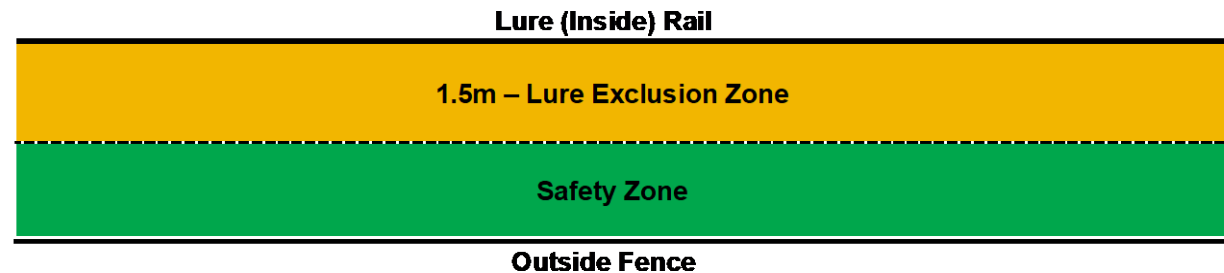
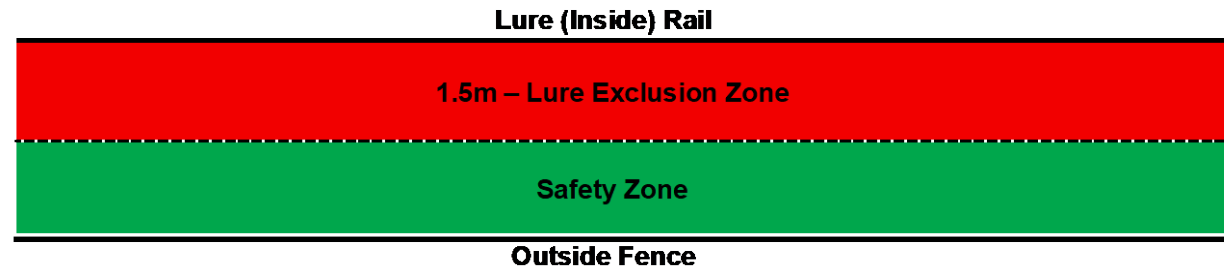
Hand slipping: may stand only in the Safety Zone and under supervision





# Trial (Operations) Policy

Grabbing (starting and recovery): lure at walking pace



# Lure modifications

Other than *eliminating* a risk (for example here, *never* conduct trials), a mechanical or engineered solution is advantageous.

GRSA commissioned Covey and Steriline to develop a walking pace (electronically governed) lure controller, to ensure the lure can never travel more than walking pace for close in work (grabbing).

# Points to Remember

- ❖ It is *highly likely* that in every State, a *visitor* to the racetrack – and this includes registered persons – are *owed a duty of care*.
- ❖ Even if you have a robust safe work method, the relocation of the starting boxes here is an example that the process of risk assessment is an ongoing concept and can never be set and forget.
- ❖ Identify risks
- ❖ Apply hierarchy of controls
- ❖ Train on policy and procedure
- ❖ Monitor safe work systems
- ❖ Positive safety culture – call out poor culture

# Thank you!

We hope this this case study serves as a reminder that race safety extends to all our people and requires ongoing risk analysis and training.

Always vigilant.

*Don't let hindsight become a part of risk management.*