

2 March 2020

## **GRSA ANIMAL WELFARE ALERT:** **CANINE ENTERIC CORONAVIRUS**



In response to the recent detection of cases of Canine Enteric Coronavirus ('coronavirus') in multiple Australian jurisdictions, Greyhound Racing SA (GRSA) is introducing a policy which seeks to mitigate the risk of further spread of infection. **In raising this alert, it is critical to note that this strain of virus is in no way related to the current outbreak of Novel Coronavirus causing respiratory illness in the global human population and that there is no known risk of cross-species contamination (ie canine to human) relating to same.**

Coronavirus in the canine population is generally considered to be a relatively mild disease unless it occurs simultaneously with a viral canine parvovirus infection or an infection caused by other intestinal pathogens, in which instances the consequences can become more serious. The symptoms of infection vary with sub-clinical disease possible where greyhounds shed the virus without showing symptoms. Where symptoms of gastroenteritis are evident, they will typically present in the form of vomiting and/or a few days of diarrhoea. Puppies are more prone to exhibit protracted diarrhoea and dehydration as a result of coronavirus and are at most risk of developing serious complications.

The Veterinary and Analysts Committee (VAC) of Greyhounds Australasia met on Thursday 13 February to discuss the issue following the receipt of confirmatory results that day by Queensland Racing Integrity Commission. There had previously been cases confirmed in Western Australian (WA), albeit that the most recent evidence of the virus in WA dates back to January. Since that meeting, gastroenteritis has occurred at one (1) property in the Northern Territory (NT), which is suspected may be due to coronavirus. There have now been one (1) confirmed and ten (10) suspected cases of coronavirus in South Australia, all from the one property in the mid-northern region. **As of 29 February 2020, a small number of cases of coronavirus have been confirmed by the Controlling Bodies in New South Wales and Victoria.**

The various interstate Controlling Bodies have been made aware of the risk and, in the states where infection has been identified, have been working with the relevant participants to quarantine greyhounds and provide direct veterinary support. Greyhounds Australasia is continuing to monitor and assess its position in relation to this matter.

At a local level, GRSA has quarantined the property at which this state's only known and suspected cases have been identified. Henceforth, any greyhounds coming to South Australia from other states which are known to have had suspected cases of coronavirus will be the subject of the new policy.

### Statement Regarding Affected Property in SA

The eleven (11) confirmed and suspected cases of coronavirus in South Australia – all located on the one property in the mid-northern region of South Australia – came about as the result of infection from a greyhound that was transferred from Queensland on 20 February 2020. That greyhound had shown no symptoms of infection prior to leaving that state. The greyhound in question trialed at Angle Park on the morning of Saturday 22 February. Additional rigour has been applied to sanitising the areas that the greyhound occupied during its brief attendance at that venue.

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## Coronavirus Management Policy – GRSA (effective from 2 March 2020)

In response to the current threat of coronavirus infection, GRSA is implementing the following policy with immediate effect. It applies to any greyhounds which are transferred, or with regard to which efforts are being made to transfer, from states ('affected states') known to have confirmed cases of coronavirus since February 1. Those states currently include Queensland, the Northern Territory, **New South Wales and Victoria** but may be expanded as circumstances warrant. The following Conditions will remain in place until further advice is issued in their place:



1. GRSA registered participants are expected to make reasonable efforts to satisfy themselves that any greyhound that has been transferred from an affected state is not currently infected with the virus or is coming from premises upon which any other cases of the virus have been diagnosed in the past four (4) weeks;
2. Any greyhound that has been transferred from an affected state must be isolated from other greyhounds on the participant's registered premises for a period of ten (10) full days and be monitored for symptoms of the virus (which may include vomiting, diarrhoea, elevated temperature, lethargy);
3. Any greyhound that has been transferred from an affected state will not be permitted to attend trials, race meetings or any other training property for a period of ten (10) full days after GRSA has been notified that the greyhound has entered the state;
4. Registered participants are required to continue to monitor all greyhounds in their care and report any greyhounds exhibiting symptoms of illness to their veterinarian and Stewards.

The requirements identified under Conditions 2 and 3 will be waived under the circumstances wherein a greyhound has been tested by a veterinary practitioner and found not to be infected with the coronavirus. Certification to that effect will need to be provided to GRSA before that exemption applies.

In the event that a registered premises in SA is not equipped to accommodate the isolation of the greyhound, the transfer from interstate may only proceed in the event that the greyhound has been tested by a veterinary practitioner in the state of origin and found to be free of the virus, supported by certification being provided to GRSA, prior to its being transported.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in a breach of the Rules and charges may be laid.

These measures are aimed at mitigating the risk of further infection at a point in time wherein the issue remains highly manageable. GRSA reserves the right to replace this policy with more strident measures in the event of evidence of more widespread infection coming to hand.

Separately, we take this opportunity to reiterate to trainers and breeders the heightened need to employ all practical biosecurity and hygiene measures including:

- Maintenance of the general cleanliness of living conditions;
- Routine washing of hands;
- Use of protective clothing and equipment;
- Cleaning and disinfecting of all equipment including vehicles used to transfer greyhounds;

For more information, please contact the Integrity Department.

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