



MEDIA RELEASE – Monday, November 15, 2021

## **Ray Borda to Fly the Flag for SA in Inaugural Phoenix**

Macro Group's Australian founder and Managing Director, Ray Borda, will carry the hopes of South Australia when his champion sprinter, Aston Rupee joins the line-up in the first running of The Phoenix on Saturday December 18.

The Phoenix – greyhound racing's equivalent of The Everest in thoroughbred racing – will be hosted by The Meadows in Victoria and will carry a total purse of \$1.145 million, from which the winner will walk away with a cheque for \$750,000.

Mr Borda, who pioneered the kangaroo meat industry in Australia, paid \$75,000 to secure the only breeder-owned place in the world's only 'paid slot' race for greyhounds.

First announced in February, The Phoenix is one of very few \$1 million races on the annual calendar and has captured the imagination of racing pundits from coast to coast.

Mr Borda is the only owner to have purchased a slot, with the remainder going to racing organisations or betting agencies Sportsbet and Tabcorp. Mr Borda will race Australia's fastest greyhound, Aston Rupee, against the seven other slot-holders selected by the racing states and betting agencies.

"I support the concept of The Phoenix. It's important for greyhound racing to continuously raise its profile by establishing a dream goal for aspiring trainers and owners," Mr Borda said.

"This is potentially a life-changing opportunity for many in the industry and a great incentive to work towards."

South Australian owned Aston Rupee won the Group 1 Topgun on Saturday November 6 at the Meadows – a \$214,000 race run on the same track at which The Phoenix will be held. He also holds the fastest time at the recently redeveloped Angle Park track and the Sandown Park track record. Under the care of astute trainer, Glenn Rounds, Aston Rupee has won 17 of his 30 starts.

If Aston Rupee is to land the prize for his South Australian owner, he will have to conquer one of the hottest field of sprinters to be assembled this year.

"I'm lucky enough to own the favourite. I've got the fastest dog in Australia and I'm in with a chance. It's a great feeling. I love a challenge, and I love that it's turning into a state versus state premier event," Mr Borda said.

"The other states are running semi-finals and finals to pick their entrants but I've got the luxury of nominating him straight into the field."

Mr Borda is a major sponsor of the South Australian Greyhounds As Pets program (GAP), which promotes the fostering and adoption of retired greyhounds at a cost of more than \$1.5 million annually. As a supporter of that initiative, he donates more than \$80,000 worth of dog food to the program and provides assistance on special projects.



If he wins The Phoenix, Mr Borda has committed to donating \$50,000 to Victoria's Greyhound Adoption Program in addition to the \$80,000 he already donates to the South Australian version.

"It's not just about the money. For me it's about promoting the sport, and it's about looking after the welfare of the greyhounds once they retire to ensure they live a happy, healthy life where they're loved, appreciated and looked after."

Greyhound Racing SA CEO Matt Corby said that all of South Australia was behind Mr Borda's bid to win The Phoenix.

"Ray is a great supporter of our state industry and a strong advocate for our sport," Mr Corby said.

"He cares about his greyhounds and about their welfare and wants to give back to the greyhound community where he can.

"We're thrilled to have him representing our local industry and we think he has an undeniable chance of bringing the inaugural Phoenix trophy back to South Australia. The South Australian industry is going from strength to strength and this would just be another sign of the health of the sport, here, and the opportunities that exist for new trainers, breeders and owners."

**Mr Borda is available to speak to the media. If you would like to arrange an interview with Mr Borda, please call Rachael Trott on 0458 193 651.**

**If you would like to speak to GRSA CEO Matt Corby, please contact Marketing Manager Matthew Watson on 0422 671 314.**