

Media Release – GRSA Racing Operations

Date: 5 March 2014

Subject: Decision Arising from the Finish-On Lure-Catching Pen Review



The Finish-On Lure (FOL) system for pulling up greyhounds post-race was introduced into South Australia in early 2009 and has subsequently been implemented at Angle Park, Gawler and Mount Gambier.

Whilst the FOL system was also being utilised in Queensland at that time, it was removed from that state in early 2011 leaving South Australia as the only national jurisdiction utilising this approach. It remains the case that the FOL is the methodology of choice for all NZ tracks.

The Management of GRSA recently undertook a comprehensive survey of industry to gauge the current thinking of the industry in relation to this particular aspect of our racing operations. The survey incorporated feedback from the ICG and was restricted to the pool of registered trainers and breeders given their more intimate knowledge of the operational facets of the sport. The process generated a response rate of 36%, fairly exceeding any recent comparable exercise with industry, in addition to which a number of written submissions were also received.

In noting that there is still a general preference for the FOL amongst many of the state's leading trainers, the survey response revealed that the nominal preference for the FOL system had fallen to just 25%, with support for Catching Pens increasing to 73% – two respondents indicated a preference for neither system or had no opinion. Notwithstanding, it is notable that whilst the pool of FOL supporters is clearly a minority, they are also responsible for providing a majority of overall runners in South Australia.

Industry opinion on this issue has become increasingly divided over the passage of time with many participants holding extreme views either for or against the continuation of this system. Despite the general preference for the FOL amongst the state's leading trainers, the Board has a fundamental obligation to govern in the interests of all participants, on which basis it was difficult to ignore a nominal preference for Catching Pens evident on a ratio of almost 3:1.

The Board also considered a number of related issues including the cost of introducing 'best practice' Catching Pens, statistical and anecdotal feedback regarding racing injuries, evidence of racing 'manners' under each system, the effect that the two approaches have had on interstate transfers and the suitability of the cable lure system for the FOL approach.

In noting the shift of support for Catching Pens that was evident from this survey process, a Catching Pen facility (with run-off) will be constructed at Angle Park for utilisation at all meetings from July 1 or upon completion, whichever is the later date.

On the basis of the support shown by leading trainers for the FOL system, the significant costs associated with implementing and operating Catching Pens and other factors militating for its retention, the Board has decided to retain the FOL system at Gawler in an effort to preserve an opportunity for the ongoing utilisation of that methodology.

An announcement regarding the future methodology at Mount Gambier will be made pursuant to discussion with the Committee of that Club in the weeks immediately ahead.

Only at the dogs

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The Board considers this strategy to represent its final decision on this matter and has no plans for ongoing periodical review.



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