

## **How the Palaszczuk government wasted \$11 million of taxpayer money**

Established as a result of Recommendation 1 of the MacSporran inquiry into Queensland's greyhound racing industry, the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) is an "independent statutory body, which oversees the integrity and welfare standards of racing animals and participants in Queensland".

It was formed on 1 July 2016 with \$11 million of taxpayer money and recently released its first annual report on 29 September 2017.

However, those hoping for transparency into the racing industry will be disappointed.

### **Missing information**

The first year highlights regarding greyhound welfare, as detailed in the QRIC's annual report, include a 100% drug testing rate of winning greyhounds including testing for Erythropoietin (EPO); additions to the GAP facility including an on-site veterinary hospital; the lease of new, fully-equipped vehicles to transport GAP greyhounds; and a record 318 greyhounds rehomed by GAP.

What's conspicuously absent is a variety of details, included as standard in the annual reports of some other states' greyhound racing regulators. The missing datasets include the number of:

- Litters and pups bred
- Dogs named and the fate of those that do not make the track
- Race meetings and races
- Starters, dogs racing and average races per dog
- Track deaths
- Race injuries by severity (NSW even publishes quarterly injury reports which include dogs euthanised away from the track as a result of a race injury)
- Dogs rehomed by non-GAP sources.

Considering the amount of money spent on the QRIC, it is wrong, and certainly not transparent, that the only way a member of the public can find out something as basic as the number of race meetings, is by painstakingly researching every Racing Queensland race day stewards report available online.

This is in spite of QRIC commissioner Ross Barnett telling the Brisbane Times in February 2017 that actual numbers of racing deaths and injuries should be put in context of the number of animals that race every week.

"I think you've always got to think about those numbers in terms of the number of animals who race every week across the year so we get a rate of Injuries and deaths per thousand runners to give it some context," Mr Barnett said.

*Brisbane Times, February 2017*

If this is Mr Barnett's position on determining the risk to race dogs, then why has he not made sure to include this information in the QRIC's annual report?

### **QRIC didn't do it – but we have**

There were 561 race meetings in 2016/17, but only 539 of those have stewards reports available on the Racing Queensland website.

### **Greyhound racing – deadlier than ever**

We reviewed the stewards reports for those 539 race meetings and found that:

**\* 57 greyhounds sustained catastrophic injuries and were euthanised at the track**

**\* A further 972 injuries were recorded, including 157 major/extreme injuries (those that incurred stand-down periods of more than 21 days).**



A comparison to 2015/2016 data reveals that a greyhound's chances of dying during a race meeting are unchanged and the dogs had a slightly higher chance of injury. <sup>1</sup>

### **Track fatalities and injuries are still hidden**

Disappointingly, the QRIC has continued Racing Queensland's old practice of comparing the track deaths and injuries to the number of starters for the year to downplay the level of risk borne by racing greyhounds. The only way to know the true risk of death or injury to the individual dog is to compare those figures to the number of dogs who raced, because most race dogs will have more than one start in their career.

The annual report does not reveal how many dogs:

\* Raced in Queensland

\* Sustained injuries while racing

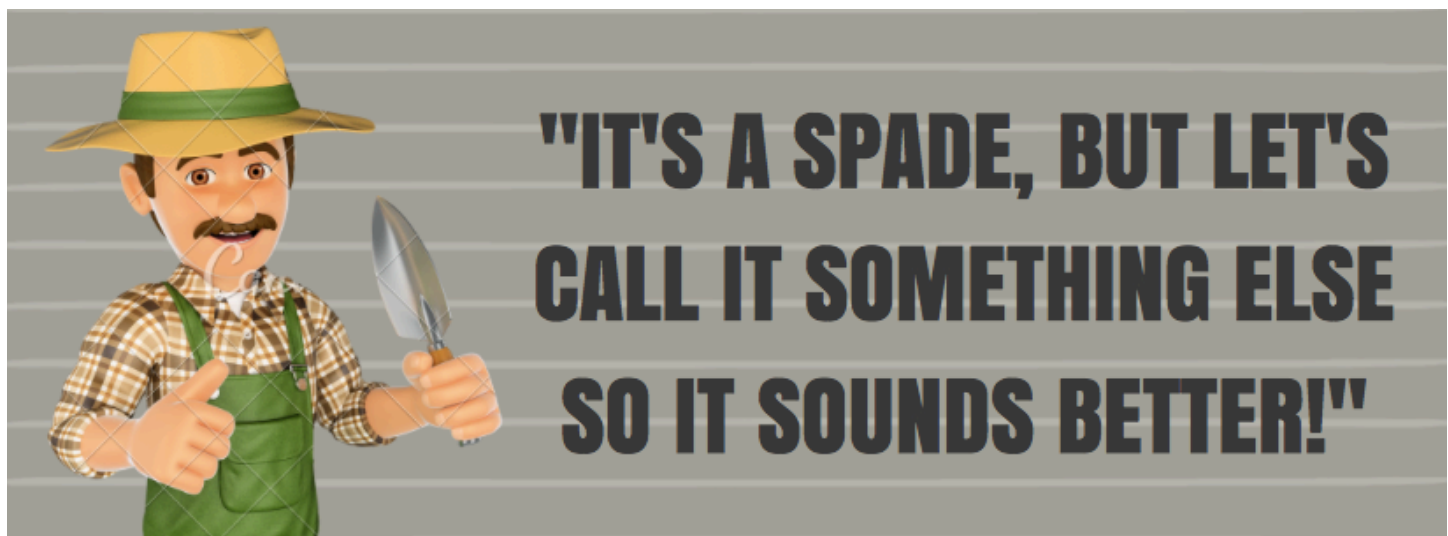
- \* Died or were euthanised at the track
- \* Were euthanised away from the track as a result of their injuries

There also continues to be a lack of transparency in the recording of injuries in race day stewards reports. Only a few times in 2017 has an injury been described as a 'fracture', when the stand-down period indicates that this is the most likely nature of the injury.

**Take for example Miranda Rose Hi.** She was given a 90-day stand-down period for an 'injured near side hock'. According to stewards reports from all other states, a 90-day stand-down period indicates a fracture or dislocation. But in QLD, most injuries are only described with 'injured' followed by the body part, e.g. 'injured back'.

7.	<p><b><u>WWW.IPSWICHGREYHOUNDS.COM 5<sup>th</sup> GRADE HEAT 2 431M</u></b></p> <p>Even start. Approaching the first turn HOPEFUL BLUE and LOTS OF TIME collided on a number of occasions and were checked as a result. Through the first turn LOVED UP was tightened for room and severely checked. Rounding the turn into the back straight LOTS OF TIME was tightened for room and momentarily hampered. LOVED UP which was trailing was checked as a consequence. Shortly after MIRANDA ROSE HI commenced to give ground from the field and take no further part in the event. In the back straight HOPEFUL BLUE was wide. Rounding the turn into the front straight BOGART BLEND collided with AINIA resulting in that runner to be checked and shift outwards. HOPEFUL BLUE which was racing to its outside was checked and shifted outwards as a consequence. In the front straight HOPEFUL BLUE was wide.</p> <p>The greyhound MIRANDA ROSE HI underwent a post-race veterinary examination and was found to have suffered an injury to the near side hock and was stood down for a period of 90 days.</p> <p><b>SWABS TAKEN:</b> MAGGIE BENZ – Post Race – Gary Pettersen</p>
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Even amongst the dogs euthanised at the track, the most common injury description provided in stewards reports is 'injured hock' followed by 'injured leg' – not 'fractured hock' or 'fractured leg'.



## **Full death figures are not published**

Again, the annual report fails to provide a total for the number of dogs who died during the year. In the Brisbane Times article already mentioned, the QRIC stated that 285 dogs died or were put down in the seven months since it was established (1 Jul 2016 – 31 Jan 2017).

We do not know what the total death tally for the whole year is. We do not even know whether that number includes all the dogs who never made the track; dogs who were never named for racing; dogs who died as a result of a race injury (either at the track or later, away from the spotlight); dogs deemed “not rehomingable” by trainers. None of this information is in the annual report.

Based on 285 deaths in 7 months (assuming that figure includes is all categories), we can estimate that approximately 488 dogs died during the year. What this means is that the greyhound racing industry is still **killing many more dogs than they are rehoming** as pets.

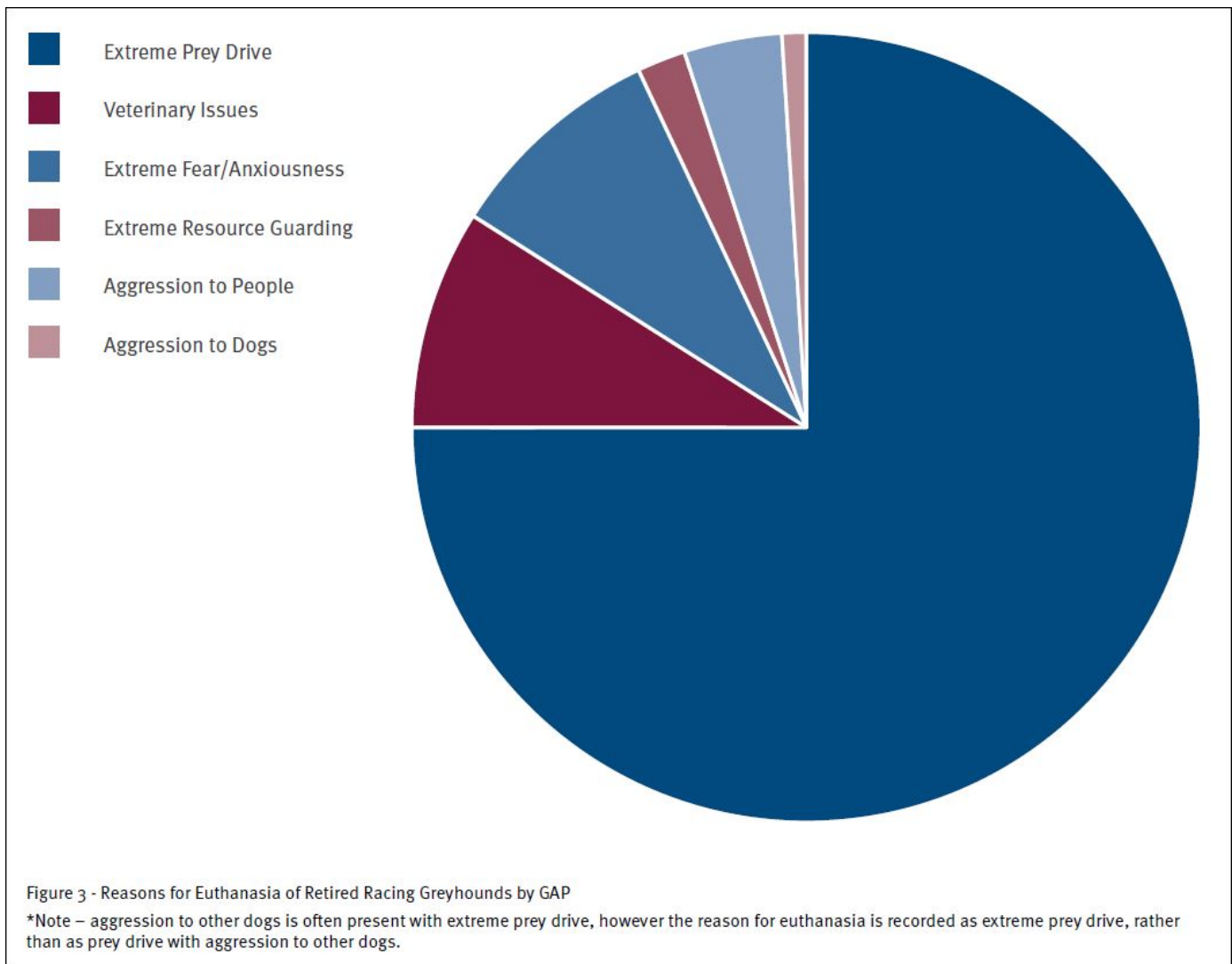
## **The contribution of greyhound rescuers is ignored**

QRIC reported that GAP rehomed a record 318 greyhounds in 2016/2017, something Racing Minister Grace Grace described as “an absolutely fantastic result”. What the Racing Minister and the QRIC Annual Report failed to acknowledge is the rehoming work done by volunteer-run groups. While some other states include statistics on dogs rehomed through non-GAP channels in their annual reports, QRIC makes no mention of those ‘channels’.<sup>2</sup> And yet their contribution to greyhound welfare, without industry fund assistance, is far from insignificant.

In 2016, the 3 largest greyhound-specific rescues in Queensland rehomed 335-345 dogs. There are also a number of smaller greyhound-specific rescues as well as non-breed specific rescues that adopted out greyhounds in 2016, including AWLQ who rehomed 42 greyhounds in a 6-month period.

The fact is – **the public is still rehoming more of the industry’s dogs than the industry.**

While 318 dogs rehomed by GAP is a welcome improvement on previous years (230 in 2015, 57-90 in 2014 – depending on the source <sup>3</sup>), QLD’s GAP also euthanised 101 dogs in their program – that’s almost 1 in 4 – as unsuitable for rehoming due to behavioural or health issues. Interestingly, this is despite the acceptance criteria for GAP stating dogs must be “in good health and not aggressive to people or other animals”.



QRIC Annual Report 2016-2017, page 28

### QRIC has a questionable solution to the high euthanasia rate

QRIC's proposed solution is to "implement a mandatory veterinary pre-screening and behavioural pre-assessment process...to identify and exclude unsuitable greyhounds from entry to the program".

Basically, this means screening out dogs that will fail so that only dogs who are very likely to pass the GAP assessment will be able to enter the program. This is a very deceptive way of making the stats look good for Racing Queensland. It is not transparency but engineered to provide nicer-looking statistics in the annual report for GAP's rehoming versus euthanasia rate.

**It does not address the fate of those dogs who fail the pre-screening, nor does it place any onus on the industry to help those dogs be suitable in the first place.**

### What about the other MacSporran report recommendations?

The Labor government's performance in greyhound welfare has been nothing short of appalling.

Of the 15 recommendations set out by the MacSporrán report, only 5 have been implemented by QRIC. The other 10 are “still being actioned”.

Despite the QRIC assuring Fairfax Media in February 2017, that birth-to-death tracking was possible, just not yet publically available, we are still waiting.

#### **Recommendation 5**

54. The Commission recommends that there be a requirement that the QRIC maintain a database of information such as Ozchase, available to the public upon request and payment of a reasonable fee, to enable the identification of a particular greyhound from the time it is registered, as contemplated in Recommendation 4 above, until it leaves the industry or is deceased whether or not it ever races.

#### **Recommendation 6**

55. The Commission recommends that such a database include details of injuries suffered by greyhounds during the course of racing. If a dog is then euthanased, even if this occurs after race day, that fact be recorded as well. This data should also be available to the public upon request.

*Page 7, Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry*

Even the basic job of regulation is not being carried out properly by the QRIC. Some of race dogs are “humanely euthanised” despite having treatable injuries.

**Take Spring Lola, for instance.** She sustained an **injured toe** racing at Ipswich on 5 August 2016. A query to QRIC revealed the injury was a fractured toe but resulted in **no further action** as the vet was “comfortable with his decision and actions”.

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Euthanasia of Spring Lola

Please find some dot points in relation to your request.

\* A race meeting was held at Ipswich on the 5th August 2016, whereby the registered Greyhound SPRING LOLA, which was competing in Race 1, suffered interference resulting in the animal falling during the event and taking no competitive part thereafter.

\* Mr Mal Braunberger who was the Chairman of Stewards of that meeting ordered a full post-race Veterinary examination to be carried out on Spring Lola.

\* The examination was conducted by the Veterinary Surgeon Dr Charlie Welch, who after examining the animal found that the greyhound had suffered a fractured off hind toe.

\* Stewards were advised of these finding initially through the connections of that animal. After receiving this advice, Stewards proceeded straight to the Veterinary room to confirm the information provided by the trainer.

\* Dr Welch confirmed these findings and advised that the greyhound had been euthanised on humane grounds, after gaining consent from the connections of Spring Lola.

\* A Veterinary Examination Incident and Injury Report Form and Euthanised Certificate was provided to the Stewards by Dr. Welch at the completion of the meeting.

\* Mr. Braunberger asked several questions of Dr. Welch in relation to this matter, to which Dr Welch confirmed he was comfortable with his decision and actions.

\* Please find below an extract from Stewards Report Race 1 - 05/08/16

Even start with JUST SIZE marginally slow to begin. THROTTLE ON and STRONG STEP bumped shortly after the start resulting in THROTTLE ON shifting in bumping the hindquarters of SPRING LOLA who became unbalanced and shifted in tightening ROSDUE BLUE GUM in onto MONLOR KIM, in onto HIRED GOON, resulting in ROSDUE BLUE GUM racing onto the hindquarters of SPRING LOLA causing SPRING LOLA to fall and ROSDUE BLUE GUM losing considerable ground. STUBBORN MISS, JUST SIZE and ROSDUE BLUE GUM raced wide in the back straight. STUBBORN MISS, THROTTLE ON, JUST SIZE and ROSDUE BLUE GUM raced wide in the home straight.

The greyhound ROSDUE BLUE GUM underwent a post-race veterinarian examination and no apparent injuries were found.

The greyhound SPRING LOLA underwent a post-race veterinarian examination and was found to have suffered an injury to the off hind toe and was humanely euthanised.

Regards

[REDACTED]  
Queensland Racing Integrity Commission

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It seems QRIC has a long way to go to deliver the transparency the public expects. At the moment, it does not seem like that \$11 million of taxpayer money was well-spent.

Notes:

1. QLD death and injury statistics 2015/2016

\* 576 race meetings in 2015/2016

\* 58 catastrophic injuries

\* A further 840 injuries were recorded

2. GRV Annual Report 2016/2017, page 10

GAP rehomed 1314 dogs and another 1379 dogs were rehomed through non-GAP channels.

[https://gallery.mailchimp.com/af6e39bd97629b9f9dc3ee1dc/files/634cfe22-b133-4c97-aed0-b4bb31c86b40/GRV\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/af6e39bd97629b9f9dc3ee1dc/files/634cfe22-b133-4c97-aed0-b4bb31c86b40/GRV_Annual_Report_2017.pdf)

RWWA Annual Report 2016/2017, page 30

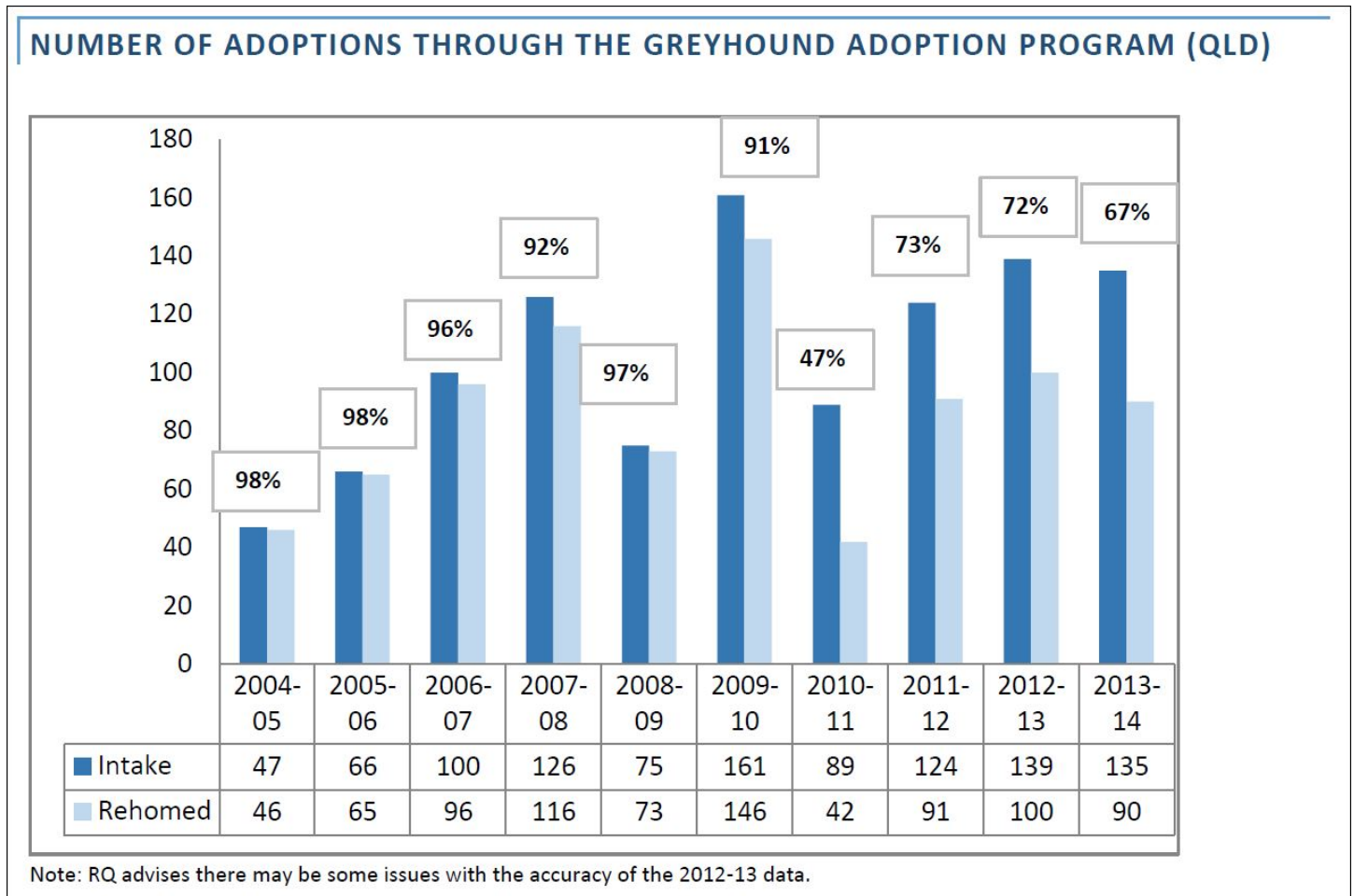
GAP rehomed 245 dogs and another 331 dogs were rehomed by other organisations.

[http://www.rwwa.com.au/home/documents/Final\\_wth\\_covers\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://www.rwwa.com.au/home/documents/Final_wth_covers_low_res.pdf)

3. Media Release June 24, 2017

<http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2017/6/24/greyhound-adoptions-set-to-hit-300-this-financial-year>

MacSporran Inquiry, page 46



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[http://www.grnsw.com.au/uploads/141066%20GRNSW%20AR\\_2016\\_LR\(1\).pdf](http://www.grnsw.com.au/uploads/141066%20GRNSW%20AR_2016_LR(1).pdf)

GRNSW Quarterly Greyhound Racing Injury Report 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017

<http://www.grnsw.com.au/uploads/2017%20Q2%20Greyhound%20Racing%20Injury%20Report.pdf>



Stewards Report 24 February 2017

<http://www.racingqueensland.com.au/Greyhound/Racing-Calendar/Race-Meeting/Ipswich/20170224/Stewards-Report>

Greyhounds Australasian Statistics

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Media Release

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<http://www.racingqueensland.com.au/Greyhound/Racing-Calendar/Race-Meeting/Ipswich/20160805/Stewards-Report>

GAP

<http://www.gapqld.com.au/information/>