



On the 8th December 2015 Canberra Greyhound Racing Club Inc. (CGRC), Board of Management (BOM) endorsed the following GRNSW policy, banning the use of barking muzzles at race tracks.

Use Of Barking Muzzles Banned At Race Tracks

Written by: GRNSW

26/11/15



Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW) has announced that barking muzzles will no longer be permitted to be used at NSW race tracks from 1 December 2015 due to the risk they pose to the health and welfare of greyhounds.

Barking muzzles are a risk to a greyhound's health and welfare as:

- They have the potential to limit panting and heat exchange;
- By restricting the opening of the mouth there is risk of aspiration of vomit; and
- They do not alleviate the underlying reason for barking and as such risk increase a dog's anxiety and frustration.

Use of barking muzzles to attempt to reduce the greyhound's energy expenditure prior to racing also cannot be justified on animal welfare grounds and fails to recognise that the greyhound may experience increased distress by restricting its ability to perform a behaviour that can be a coping mechanism (a displacement behaviour). This may have consequences for performance as well as welfare.

The decision by GRNSW to ban barking muzzles aligns with the RSPCA muzzle policy, which states:

RSPCA Policy A07 Companion animal management
7.5.6 Muzzles

7.5.6.1 RSPCA Australia believes that muzzles should not be used as a routine management procedure as they restrict dogs' natural behaviour and serve no practical purpose for the majority of dogs.

7.5.6.2 The use of muzzles should be based on the behaviour of each individual dog. Where muzzling devices are used, they must:

- only be worn for short periods of time where the dog is under constant supervision
- be properly fitted to ensure they do not cause injury, pain or distress
- allow the dog to undertake normal activities such as panting and drinking (the only exception is muzzles used for veterinary clinical examinations).

To alleviate anxiety, participants are advised to trial the use of body suits and 'thunder shirts' which show some evidence of providing a calming effect by applying gentle constant pressure to the greyhound's body.

Participants are also advised to give close consideration to rearing and training practices of all greyhounds to ensure they are provided with opportunities to become familiar with the racing and kennelling environment and, therefore, do not experience fear and excitement that may precipitate barking.

American style muzzles allowing the dog normal opening of the mouth are, at this point, permitted as a means to prevent a dog chewing at an enclosure but please note that these will be checked by a vet before kennelling on race days to ensure they do not cause injury, pain or distress.