

Stewards' Report

- Date:** Tuesday, 15 November 2022
- Panel:** Mr W Hadley (Chairperson), Ms A Turner, Mr R Doss, Mr J Randall
- Person:** Mr Laurence Thomas
- Rule:** GAR 21(1)(a), GAR 21(1)(d), GAR 21(2)
- Charge:**
1. Failed to provide proper and sufficient food at all times to eighteen (18) greyhounds in his care and custody at his registered kennel address in or around June 2022
 - 2 - 19. Failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to eighteen (18) greyhounds in his care and custody at his registered kennel address in or around June 2022 and July 2022
 - 20 - 37. Failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent eighteen (18) greyhounds in his care and custody at his registered kennel address from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering in or around June 2022 and July 2022
- Penalty:**
- Charge 1: One (1) year disqualification to be served concurrently with Charge 2 - 19
- Charge 2 - 19: Three (3) year disqualification
- Charge 20 - 37: Five (5) year disqualification to be served cumulative to Charge 2 - 19

Stewards of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission today concluded an inquiry in respect of evidence obtained from multiple kennel inspections undertaken by the Stewards at the registered kennel address of licensed trainer and owner Mr Laurence Thomas on 21 June 2022, 22 June 2022, 7 July 2022, 8 July 2022, 12 July 2022 and 5 August 2022, in which two (2) greyhounds were found deceased at the address and sixteen (16) greyhounds were subsequently seized.

At the initial kennel inspection on 21 June 2022, Stewards observed a number of greyhounds to be in poor condition in that they appeared emaciated with open wounds. Stewards conducted a further kennel inspection on 22 June 2022 with Dr Anthony Thomas, in which Dr Thomas examined twenty-six (26) greyhounds. Of those greyhounds, four (4) were assessed by Dr Thomas as having body condition scores of 1/5, six (6) with body condition scores of 1.5/5 and eleven (11) with body condition scores of 2/5. Veterinary treatment and advice were subsequently provided in respect of these greyhounds.

A further kennel inspection was conducted by the Stewards and Dr Thomas on 7 July 2022, in which Dr Thomas assessed the greyhounds as having no perceptible improvement and further recommending the immediate transfer of at least eight (8) greyhounds. A stewards' direction was subsequently issued to Mr Thomas entailing his care and welfare requirements, inclusive of a strict feeding regime, and further suspending Mr Thomas' licence and registration pending the outcome of the investigation.

On 8 July 2022, Integrity Investigative Stewards and Dr Keira Sharman attended Mr Thomas' registered kennel address, with Dr Sharman examining twenty-eight (28) greyhounds. Of those greyhounds, four (4) greyhounds were assessed by Dr Sharman as having body condition scores of 0.5/5, seven (7) with body condition scores of 1/5, four (4) with body condition scores of 1.5/5, and six (6) with body condition scores of 2/5. Eight (8) of those greyhounds deemed most critical by Dr Sharman were subsequently seized.

On 12 July 2022, Integrity Investigative Stewards and Dr Keira Sharman again attended Mr Thomas' registered kennel address and seized a further eight (8) greyhounds due to their poor body condition scores.

A subsequent kennel inspection by the Stewards on 5 August 2022 found the remaining greyhounds at Mr Thomas' registered kennel address appearing to be in an improved condition.

After considering all available evidence, including Veterinary Reports from Dr Anthony Thomas, Dr Keira Sharman and Dr Stacey Flynn, together with submissions from Mr Thomas and his wife, Mrs Susan Thomas, Stewards issued thirty-seven (37) charges pursuant to the Greyhounds Australasia Rules as follows:

Charge 1: Issued pursuant to Greyhounds Australasia Rule 21(1)(a), which provides:

A person must ensure that any greyhound in the person's care or custody, is at all times provided with proper and sufficient food, drink and protective apparel

The specifics of Charge 1 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide proper and sufficient food at all times to eighteen (18) greyhounds in his care and custody in or around June 2022 at his registered kennel address, with those greyhounds being Dinky Di Whispers, Yellow Moon, Red Hot Rocket, Expat Mohawk, Zambora Princess, Willow Returns, Cicada, Go Nikki, Lorenzo's Lady, Lorenzo's Lilly, Arreba, Pearly Whites, Moet Girl, Hillbilly Boots, Smiley Me Mate, Comfort The Bull, Expat Monza, and Lilly's Sparkles.

Charge 2 - 19: Issued pursuant to Greyhounds Australasia Rule 21(1)(d), which provides:

A person must ensure that any greyhound in the person's care or custody, is at all times provided with veterinary attention when necessary

The specifics of Charge 2 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Dinky Di Whispers, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 22 June 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1.5/5.

The specifics of Charge 3 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Yellow Moon, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 22 June 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 4 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Red Hot Rocket, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5.

The specifics of Charge 5 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Expat Mohawk, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5.

The specifics of Charge 6 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Zambora Princess, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 7 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Willow Returns, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 8 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Cicada, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 9 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Go Nikki, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5.

The specifics of Charge 10 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Lorenzo's Lady, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5.

The specifics of Charge 11 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Lorenzo's Lilly, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 12 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Arreba, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 13 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Pearly Whites, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 14 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Moet Girl, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5.

The specifics of Charge 15 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Hillbilly Boots, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1.5/5.

The specifics of Charge 16 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Smiley Me Mate, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5.

The specifics of Charge 17 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Comfort The Bull, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5.

The specifics of Charge 18 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Expat Monza, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5.

The specifics of Charge 19 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to provide veterinary attention when necessary to Lilly's Sparkles, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, which greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5.

Charge 20 - 37: Issued pursuant to Greyhounds Australasia Rule 21(2), which provides:

A person must exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent a greyhound under the person's care or custody from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering, or from anything which is likely to lead to unnecessary pain or suffering

The specifics of Charge 20 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Dinky Di Whispers, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 22 June 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1.5/5.

The specifics of Charge 21 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Yellow Moon, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 22 June 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with pressure sores.

The specifics of Charge 22 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Red Hot Rocket, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5 together with the greyhound's mentation being dull and withdrawn, appearing shut down in the kennel, only able to stand with support, bony prominence, tail tip trauma with bone exposure, full thickness wound on stifle, hot spots and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 23 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Expat Mohawk, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5 together with bony prominence, full thickness extending wound, hot spots and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 24 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Zambora Princess being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with bony prominence and hot spots.

The specifics of Charge 25 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Willow Returns, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with bony prominence, hot spots and tail tip trauma with bone exposure.

The specifics of Charge 26 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Cicada, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with bony prominence, hot spots and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 27 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Go Nikki, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5 together with bony prominence, tail tip regional swelling, hot spots and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 28 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Lorenzo's Lady, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 0.5/5 together with bony prominence and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 29 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Lorenzo's Lilly, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with bony prominence and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 30 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Arreba, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with bony prominence, hot spots and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 31 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Pearly Whites, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with bony prominence and extreme dental wear.

The specifics of Charge 32 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Moet Girl, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1/5 together with bony prominence, hot spots and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 33 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Hillbilly Boots, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 1.5/5 together with bony prominence and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 34 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Smiley Me Mate, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5 together with distal tibia bone growth with pain on palpation.

The specifics of Charge 35 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Comfort The Bull, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5 together with bony prominence and dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 36 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Expat Monza, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5 together with dental disease.

The specifics of Charge 37 were as follows:

That Mr Laurence Thomas failed to exercise the care and supervision necessary to prevent Lilly's Sparkles, being a greyhound in his care and custody at his registered kennel address on 8 July 2022, from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering after failing to provide veterinary attention when necessary when that greyhound was assessed as having a body condition score of 2/5 together with bony prominence, hot spots and dental disease.

Mr Thomas entered a plea of guilty to Charge 3 - 19 and a plea of not guilty to Charge 1, 2 and 20 - 37, providing further brief submissions in support of his not guilty pleas.

Stewards considered Mr Thomas' further submissions and the Stewards formally found Mr Thomas guilty of Charge 1, 2 and 20 - 37, with Mr Thomas then providing brief submissions regarding penalty.

In determining penalty, Stewards considered the following:

- Mr Thomas' plea of guilty to Charge 3 - 19 at the earliest available opportunity;
- Mr Thomas' plea of not guilty to Charge 1, 2 and 20 - 37;
- Mr Thomas' time in the greyhound racing industry as a trainer, being approximately forty (40) years;
- Mr Thomas' disciplinary history, noting no prior breaches of a similar nature;
- Mr Thomas' personal and financial circumstances, noting Mr Thomas does not rely solely upon income from the greyhound racing industry;
- that two (2) greyhounds were found deceased in Mr Thomas' care and custody with sixteen (16) greyhounds having to be seized due to their poor body condition scores of 2/5 or less, with some body condition scores being as low as 0.5/5;
- Mr Thomas' admission that the greyhounds in his care and custody were in an extremely poor condition and that he failed to provide veterinary treatment when necessary;
- Mr Thomas' failure to acknowledge that the greyhounds in his care and custody were not being fed proper and sufficient food, with Mr Thomas submitting the greyhounds were in such poor condition due to the cold weather and the meat and kibble being fed to those greyhounds, despite twelve (12) of those greyhounds weighing between approximately twelve (12) kilograms to seventeen (17) kilograms upon being seized, together with Dr Thomas' and Dr Flynn's findings that the greyhounds were severely malnourished, had received inadequate nutrition and inadequate calorie intake;

- Mr Thomas' failure to acknowledge any pain and suffering endured by the greyhounds in his care and custody, despite Dr Flynn's findings that the greyhounds had sustained chronic injuries with evidence of pressure sores, lameness and metabolic disease, and that their lack of calories and nutrients had placed them into a state of starvation;
- the serious nature of Mr Thomas' offending, with these offences being at the highest end of welfare offences in the opinion of the Stewards;
- the need to maintain the integrity of greyhound racing by imposing a penalty that sends a clear and unequivocal message to ensure that Mr Thomas, and all other participants, understand that the welfare of the animals is of the highest priority;
- that holding a licence within the greyhound racing industry is a privilege, not a right, and therefore compliance with the Greyhounds Australasia Rules is a core requirement of participating in the industry;
- the need for both specific deterrence to Mr Thomas and general deterrence to the wider industry; and
- relevant penalty precedents.

Accordingly, the Stewards issued the following penalties:

Charge 1: One (1) year disqualification to be served concurrently with Charge 2 - 19

Charge 2: Three (3) year disqualification

Charge 3: Five (5) year disqualification to be served cumulative to Charge 2 - 19

with the total period of disqualification being eight (8) years backdated to 7 July 2022, being the date Mr Thomas' licence and registration was suspended by the Stewards.

Stewards permitted Mr Thomas fourteen (14) days from midnight 15 November 2022 to transfer all greyhounds from his care and custody, with Stewards permission being required for each transfer.

Mr Thomas was advised of his right to an Internal Review.