12 August 2025

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**DAVID BAKER**

**Date of Hearing:** 5 August 2025

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**Panel:** Magistrate Peter Reardon (Chairperson) and Mr Robert Abrahams.

**Appearances:** Ms Yana Podolskaya appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr David Baker represented himself.

**Charges:** Greyhounds Australasian Rule (“GAR”) 21(1)(a) states:

(1) A person must ensure that any greyhound in the person's care or custody, is at all times provided with:

(a) proper and sufficient food, drink and protective apparel.

GAR 21(1)(c) states:

(1) A person must ensure that any greyhound in the person's care or custody, is at all times provided with:

(c) kennels constructed and of a standard approved by a Controlling Body which are adequate in size and which are kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

GAR 21(1)(e) states:

(1) A person must ensure that any greyhound in the person's care or custody, is at all times provided with:

(e) appropriate treatment for the greyhound if the person is in charge of a sick or injured greyhound.

GAR 21(2) states:

(2) 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.

GAR 148(4) states:

(4) A person (other than a veterinarian) must not administer or allow to be administered, any Schedule 4 substance listed in the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons contained in the Australian Poisons Standard (Cth) as amended from time to time, unless that substance is administered as it was intended to be when it was prescribed by a veterinarian who prescribed that substance in compliance with relevant Commonwealth, state and/or territory legislation for the treatment of those greyhounds under their care after taking all reasonable steps to ensure a therapeutic need exists for that substance.

**Particulars of charges: Charge 1: GAR 21(1)(a)**

 1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 17279) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. At all relevant times you had the care or custody of the greyhounds housed at your GRV registered kennelling premises in Cranbourne, Victoria (Premises).

3. On the 10 January 2024, GRIU Investigative Stewards attended your premises and conducted a routine kennel inspection where it was found that the five greyhounds in your care or custody where not provided with proper and sufficient drink.

**Charge 2: GAR 21(1)(c)**

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 17279) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. At all relevant times you had the care or custody of the greyhounds housed at your GRV registered kennelling premises in Cranbourne, Victoria (Premises).

3. On 10 January 2024, GRIU Investigative Stewards attended your registered kennel address and conducted a routine kennel inspection where it was found that two greyhounds in your care (Fired Up Sally (VKSTF) and Sparky Girl (VGKJZ)) were being housed in a kennel bay that was insufficient in size for two greyhounds.

4. The yard surrounding the kennel bay where Fired Up Sally (VKSTF) and Sparky Girl (VGKJZ) were housed was overgrown with grass to a height of approximately two feet.

5. The kennels housing these two greyhounds were not of a standard approved by GRV.

**Charge 3: GAR 21(1)(e)**

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 17279) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. At all relevant times you were the owner of and had the care or custody of the greyhound ‘Fired Up Sally’ (VKSTF).

3. On 10 January 2024, GRIU Investigative Stewards attended your registered kennel address and conducted a routine kennel inspection where it was found that Fired Up Sally (VKSTF) was suffering from a significant injury to her back right leg, which was later revealed to have occurred on the morning of 10 January 2024 at the Cranbourne Slipping Track at approximately 6am.

4. On 10 January 2024, you administered expired Panadeine Forte (human grade medication) and Aspirin (human grade medication) to Fired Up Sally.

5. Fired Up Sally was not taken to a veterinary clinic or provided with any other form of treatment for the affected leg until the morning of 11 January 2024.

6. Fired Up Sally was subsequently euthanised at the veterinary clinic on 11 January 2024.

**Charge 4: GAR 21(2)**

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 17279) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. At all relevant times you were the owner of and had the care or custody of the greyhound ‘Fired Up Sally’ (VKSTF).

3. On 10 January 2024, GRIU Investigative Stewards attended your registered kennel address and conducted a routine kennel inspection where it was found that Fired Up Sally (VKSTF) was suffering from a significant injury to her back right leg, which was later revealed to have occurred on the morning of 10 January 2024 at the Cranbourne Slipping Track at approximately 6am.

4. Fired Up Sally was not taken to a veterinary clinic or provided with any other form of treatment for the affected leg until the morning of 11 January 2024.

5. Fired Up Sally was subsequently euthanised at the veterinary clinic on 11 January 2024.

6. You have not exercised the care and supervision necessary to prevent a greyhound under your care or custody from being subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering, or from anything which is likely to lead to unnecessary pain or suffering.

**Charge 5: GAR 148(4)**

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 17279) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. At all relevant times you were the owner of and had the care or custody of the greyhound ‘Fired Up Sally’ (VKSTF).

3. On 10 January 2024, Fired Up Sally (VKSTF) suffered an injury to her back right leg at the Cranbourne Slipping Track at approximately 6am.

4. On 10 January 2024, you have administered two tablets of ‘Panadeine Forte’ to Fired Up Sally (VKSTF).

5. Panadeine Forte is a Schedule 4 substance as per the ‘Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons’ (Australian Poison Standard Cth).

**Pleas:** Guilty

**DECISION**

1. Mr David Baker was at all relevant times a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) and a person bound by the Rules of racing. He is currently unlicensed.
2. At all relevant times, he had the care or custody of the greyhounds housed at his GRV registered kennelling premises in Cranbourne, Victoria.
3. On 10 January 2024, GRV Investigative Stewards attended his kennelling premises for the purposes of a routine kennel inspection. At the time of their arrival and during the inspection, Mr Baker was not at home and the Stewards spoke with his wife. They endeavoured to contact Mr Baker by phone three times, but the calls were not returned.
4. The five charges arise out of the Stewards inspection that day. Mr Baker has pleaded guilty to all five of those charges.
5. Charge 1 is a breach of GAR 21(1)(a), namely a failure to provide proper care and welfare for five greyhounds, mainly not providing sufficient drink. Stewards found four hanging water buckets on the front fence of the kennels with minimal water in each of the buckets and the water was green with algae growth. Another water bucket was located in an undercover kennelling area which contained dirty water and was only one third full.
6. Charge 2 is a breach of GAR 21(1)(c). The Stewards observed that two greyhounds were housed in a kennel bay that was insufficient for two greyhounds. It did not have a sufficient waterproof area. The kennel area was surrounded by approximately two feet of high grass. The kennel housing for the two greyhounds kennelled in this area was not of a standard approved by GRV and was very cramped and dirty.
7. Charge 3 is a breach of GAR 21(1)(e). The Stewards observed the greyhound, “Fired Up Sally” with an obvious injury to her right back leg. The greyhound could not weight bare on the injured leg. The leg was only bandaged with what appeared to be silver electrical tape. The Stewards later ascertained that the greyhound had sustained an injury to her right hind leg that day and had not been presented to a veterinarian at the time of the kennel inspection. The greyhound, upon inspection, had a swollen limb and feet. It was later found the greyhound had a fracture to her right hind hock.
8. The only medication provided to the greyhound was some Panadeine Forte. Two aspirin tablets were also given to the greyhound later that day. GRV Chief Veterinarian, Dr Steven Karamatic, opines that such medication was totally insufficient and inadequate. The greyhound was not seen by a veterinarian until the following day. The greyhound was ultimately euthanised that day.
9. Charge 4 involved a breach of GAR 21(2) by not providing the care and supervision necessary to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering to Fired Up Sally. Mr Baker informed the Stewards that the greyhound sustained an injury to her right hind leg when exercising at the Cranbourne slip track early on the morning of 10 January 2024.
10. He made enquiries with his veterinarian that day but was told that the greyhound could not be seen until the following day. Mr Baker told Stewards that he did not have enough time to seek an alternative veterinarian or attend another clinic that day as he had to take someone to the airport. He elected to treat the greyhound himself by strapping her leg with cotton wool, electrical tape and applying ice packs. In addition, he administered human grade medications. He believed that this made the greyhound comfortable. The greyhound was housed in its usual kennel and no consideration was given to separate it that night.
11. It was evident that the greyhound could not weight bare and, as such, required immediate veterinary attention to prevent unnecessary suffering and prevent any further damage to the leg.
12. The greyhound received no veterinary treatment until the following morning. X-Rays revealed a fractured back right hock. The bone was found to be powdery. Mr Baker was advised that the humane thing to do was to euthanise the greyhound. The greyhound was ultimately euthanised approximately 20 hours after the slipping track incident.
13. Charge 5 involved Mr Baker breaching GAR 148(4) by administering the two Panadeine Forte tablets to Fired Up Sally. Panadeine Forte is a Schedule 4 substance as per the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons (Australian Poison Standard Cth). Mr Baker had no permission or authorisation to provide such medicine to the greyhound.
14. Mr Baker was interviewed by the Stewards at his home on 16 January 2024. During that interview, he made partial and general admissions, namely the following:
* The kennel size for the housing of Fired Up Sally and the other greyhounds was inadequate;
* There was no set routine for mowing the lawns, that he had trouble with his lawnmower and that the grass was approximately two feet high;
* The water buckets and containers are cleaned every second or third day and water is topped up when needed;
* The water for the greyhounds was topped up the night before the inspection with sufficient water, although the Stewards had to top up the water upon their inspection;
* He agreed that the water buckets had not been cleaned out and that algae and dirt was present in them when inspected;
* The Panadeine Forte was purchased for human consumption, and he had not been advised by a veterinarian to administer the medication nor did he receive any advice that the medication was suitable for greyhounds; and
* The human medication was given to Fired Up Sally in an attempt to alleviate and control her pain levels.
1. The treatment and welfare of greyhounds has a high priority in greyhound racing. Breaches of the Rules involving animal welfare are viewed as very serious offences. If persons are found to be guilty of charges relating to the welfare of greyhounds, they will face significant punishment.
2. GRV has taken notice of public awareness and criticisms of greyhound racing in the past. The carrying out of regular inspections by the Stewards of kennels is an important and necessary component of the greyhound racing industry in ensuring that owners and trainers maintain a clean and healthy environment for greyhounds.
3. The inspection of this property carried out by the Stewards on 10 January 2024 demonstrated a totally inadequate environment for greyhounds. The premises was unkempt, hygiene was lacking, water buckets contained algae, were unclean and unfilled. The kennel housing of Fired Up Sally and another greyhound was significantly undersized and cramped. This displayed a general lack of care and welfare for the greyhounds overall.
4. This lack of care and welfare carried over to the totally inadequate treatment provided for Fired Up Sally when she broke her right hind leg in training that morning. This greyhound clearly required urgent veterinary treatment that day for an obvious serious injury. The reason for not providing the urgent treatment demonstrated an overall lack of genuine concern and consideration for greyhound welfare by Mr Baker.
5. Both general and specific deterrence are relevant in this type of case. A message must be sent to participants involved in the greyhound racing industry that a lack of proper care and welfare for greyhounds will not be tolerated by this Tribunal.
6. Mr Baker has entered a plea of guilty to all charges and therefore, Mr Baker is entitled to a discount in sentencing as a result of those guilty pleas.
7. He has been involved in the greyhound racing industry for approximately 40 years and has a good record over that period. In addition, Mr Baker fully cooperated with the Stewards in this matter.
8. Mr Baker is no longer licensed and has rehomed nearly all his greyhounds, except for two retired dogs. He is currently in the process of rehoming the remaining dogs in his care.
9. In all the circumstances, the Tribunal imposes the following penalties:

Charge 1: three month warning off period, to be served cumulatively upon the penalty imposed on Charge 4.

Charge 2: three month warning off period, to be served cumulatively upon the penalty imposed on Charge 4.

Charge 3: 12 month warning off period, to be served concurrently with the penalty imposed on Charge 4.

Charge 4: 12 month warning off period.

Charge 5: six month warning off period, to be served cumulatively upon the penalty imposed on Charge 4.

1. The total overall effective penalty is a 24 month warning off period, to commence immediately.

Kathleen Scully

Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal