17 September 2025

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**PAUL GALEA**

**Date of Hearing:** 8 September 2025

**Date of Decision:** 8 September 2025

**Panel:** Judge Marilyn Harbison (Deputy Chairperson), Ms Heidi Keighran and Dr Andrew Gould.

**Appearances:** Mr Jordan Vassis appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Paul Galea represented himself.

**Charges and particulars: Charge No. 1 of 5**

**Rule 139 Permanently banned prohibited substances and certain offences in relation to them.**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 139 (6) and (7) reads as follows:

(6) If any permanently banned prohibited substance is found at any premises used in relation to greyhound racing, any registered person who owns, trains or races or is in charge of a greyhound or greyhounds at those premises is deemed to have the substance or preparation in their possession.

(7) An offence is committed if a person is deemed to be in possession of a relevant substance or preparation pursuant to subrule (6).

**Particulars of Charge**

1. You are, and were at all relevant times, a trainer and owner registered by Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 2010) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. On 24 February 2025 GRV Stewards and a GRV Veterinarian attended your residential and kennel address at Rosedale for a kennel inspection.

3. During the kennel inspection GRV Stewards located in a rubbish bin, one used syringe with an attached needle, with liquid present in the syringe.

4. Examination of this syringe by Racing Analytical Services Ltd confirmed the presence of the permanently banned prohibited substance Gonadorelin.

**Charge No. 2 of 5**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 144(1) (a) (b) (c) (d) reads as follows:

**Rule 144 Administration, acquisition or possession of permanently banned prohibited substances**.

(1) An offence is committed if a person:

(a) administers, attempts to administer, allows to be administered or causes to be administered a permanently banned prohibited substance to a greyhound.

**Particulars of Charge**

1. You are, and were at all relevant times, a trainer and owner registered by Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 2010) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer and owner of the greyhound WISE ABALONE.

3. On 24 February 2025 one used syringe with an attached needle, with liquid in the syringe, was located in a rubbish bin in front of a filing cabinet in your kennels. This syringe contained the permanently banned prohibited substance gonadorelin and the DNA of WISE ABALONE.

4. Sometime between December 2024 and February 2025 you held WISE ABALONE whilst an unnamed friend of yours used this syringe to inject WISE ABALONE with a substance you believed to be Fertagyl.

5. The product administered to WISE ABALONE, Fertagyl, contains the permanently banned prohibited substance Gonadorelin.

**Charge No. 3 of 5**

**Rule 139 Permanently banned prohibited substances and certain offences in relation to them.**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 139 (6) and (7) reads as follows:

(6) If any permanently banned prohibited substance is found at any premises used in relation to greyhound racing, any registered person who owns, trains or races or is in charge of a greyhound or greyhounds at those premises is deemed to have the substance or preparation in their possession.

(7) An offence is committed if a person is deemed to be in possession of a relevant substance or preparation pursuant to subrule (6).

**Particulars of Charge**

1. You are, and were at all relevant times, a trainer and owner registered by Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 2010) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. On 24 February 2025 GRV Stewards and a GRV veterinarian attended your residential and kennel address at Rosedale for a kennel inspection.

3. During the kennel inspection GRV Stewards located various syringes in the bottom draw of a filing cabinet.

4. Examination of these syringes by Racing Analytical Services Ltd confirmed the presence of the permanently banned prohibited substance Testosterone Propionate.

**Charge No. 4 of 5**

**148 Possession of a prohibited substance, exempted substance or other substance and other rules in relation to certain substances**.

(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.

(5) A person who is in breach of subrule 148(1)(2) or (4) commits an offence.

**Particulars of Charge**

1. You are, and were at all relevant times, a trainer and owner registered by Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 2010) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer and owner of the greyhound WISE ABALONE.

3. Fertagyl is a product containing the permanently banned prohibited substance gonadorelin, and is a Schedule 4 (Prescription Animal Remedy) substance listed in the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons contained in the Australian Poisons Standard (Cth).

4. Sometime between around December 2024 and February 2025 you administered, or allowed an unnamed friend of yours to administer, Fertagyl by injection to the greyhound WISE ABALONE.

5. The Fertagyl was not prescribed by a veterinarian for the treatment of a greyhound.

**Charge No. 5 of 5**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 164(b) reads as follows:

**164 Offences in relation to investigations and inquiries An offence is committed if a person (including an official):**

(b) refuses or fails to attend or to give evidence at an inquiry (or at any other disciplinary process, hearing or appeal proceeding) or produce a document or other thing in relation to an investigation, examination, test or inquiry (or other disciplinary process, hearing or appeal proceeding) pursuant to the Rules when directed by a Controlling Body, the Stewards, or another authorised person.

**Particulars of Charge**

1. You are, and were at all relevant times, a trainer and owner registered by Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 2010) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. On 2 June 2025 you were directed to hand over your mobile telephone for examination by GRV Stewards which you refused to do.

3. By refusing to produce your mobile telephone during an Inquiry, you are in breach of 164 (b).

**Pleas:** Guilty to Charges 1, 2, 4 and 5.

 Not Guilty to charge 3.

**DECISION**

1. Mr Paul Galea is a registered trainer and breeder with Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”). His kennels are situated in Rosedale, Victoria. His registration has been suspended since 16 July 2025 as a result of the events described below.
2. Mr Galea is facing five charges.
3. The first is that he possessed the permanently banned prohibited substance, gonadorelin, which was found in a used syringe at the time of an unannounced kennel inspection on 24 February 2025.
4. The second charge is that he administered a permanently banned prohibited substance, gonadorelin, to his greyhound, “Wise Abalone”.
5. The third charge is that he was in possession of a syringe containing another substance on his property during the kennel inspection on 24 February 2025. This substance was testosterone propionate, which is also a permanently banned prohibited substance. It is a form of testosterone. At the Inquiry on 14 July 2025, Mr Galea told the Stewards that he had used this substance over 10 years ago when it was not a prohibited substance. He used it as a birth control for his dogs.
6. The fourth charge is one of assisting to administer gonadorelin to his greyhound Wise Abalone. Mr Galea admitted at an Inquiry held on 14 July 2025 that he had held his dog Wise Abalone whilst it was injected by a friend of his with a substance which he thought was fertagyl. This substance contains gonadorelin.
7. Thus, Mr Galea is charged with having assisted to administer that substance to his dog between December 2024 and February 2025.
8. The last charge is a charge of refusing to provide his mobile telephone for examination by the Stewards.
9. Mr Galea pleaded not guilty to the third charge. He pleaded guilty to the other four charges.
10. We therefore considered the evidence presented by the Stewards on Charge 3 – that is as to the finding of testosterone propionate in a syringe located at his kennels during an unannounced kennel inspection on 24 February 2025. We also considered the scientific evidence produced which established that the substance found in the syringe was testosterone propionate. Mr Galea did not challenge this evidence. In his defence, he stated that he had not used this substance since it was banned under the Rules, but had just mistakenly left some syringes lying around instead of discarding them. He admitted he had done so out of laziness.
11. The third charge is of possession, not administering. We found the charge proven on the evidence of the Stewards and also confirmed by the evidence which Mr Galea gave.
12. In relation to the three charges concerning gonadorelin, it is to be noted that the dog was sampled three times between 21 August 2024 and 20 March 2025 and no prohibited substances were detected. This, of course, does not prove that there was no gonadorelin administered to the dogs on the occasions which are the subject of Charges 2 and 4. The Stewards say that detection of gonadorelin by sampling is very challenging as it is metabolised and eliminated quickly. In any event, Mr Galea has admitted that he did inject and assist in injecting this substance to his dog as he thought it would help with her fertility.
13. The Stewards submitted that this was a very bad example of possession and administration, given that Mr Galea had, in his possession, not one, but two distinct types of permanently banned drugs and that he had demonstrated lack of cooperation with the Stewards by refusing to hand over his mobile phone.
14. We agree with the submissions of the Stewards that possession of permanently banned drugs is to be taken very seriously indeed. Neither of these drugs are allowed to be used on greyhounds in any way. It is not just a matter of an otherwise therapeutic drug being used in excess. Neither drug has any place in kennels.
15. The use of drugs strikes at the very heart of the greyhound industry. It is very dangerous for the welfare of the dogs themselves, and it is catastrophic for the reputation of this sport. Prohibited substances have no place at all in greyhound racing and permanently banned prohibited substances more so. We accept that this Tribunal has a responsibility to denounce such conduct and to attempt to deter other owners and trainers from attempting to do the same.
16. However, there are some significant mitigating factors. Firstly, Mr Galea is almost 72 years of age and has been in the industry for 50 years. He has a very good record given that lengthy period of time. Ms Danni McPherson, who is a neighbour of his, gave character evidence on his behalf. Ms McPherson described the love and affection she sees him display towards all animals and particularly, to his dogs.
17. Secondly, we accept the explanation of Mr Galea that the Testoprop has not been used by him since it was banned. We accept that, at the time it was purchased, it was legal to be used on a racing greyhound. Mr Galea’s wrongdoing is that he failed to dispose of the syringes when the Rules changed. This shows very poor animal husbandry and a disregard for the Rules, but we do not characterise it as a situation in which he is suspected to be intentionally injecting his dogs in order to give them a potential benefit in racing.
18. We further accept Mr Galea’s explanation that he refused to hand over his phone because of his medical condition. He suffers from several significant medical problems, having suffered a stroke and being diabetic. He lives alone and has no landline, so is dependent on contact with his family in case of medical emergency. Indeed, the day after the Stewards visit, he was unexpectedly required to be admitted to hospital in Sale and then transferred to Melbourne. Without his phone, he would not have been able to contact help.
19. The way in which he outright refused to hand over the phone was not to his credit. He could have been much more forthcoming with the Stewards as to the very real medical issues that he faced.
20. However, we do accept that his reaction was triggered by his concern about his health, rather than any intention to stand in the way of the Stewards obtaining information.
21. We note that he has been quite forthcoming in his interaction with the Stewards otherwise. Indeed, there would not have been any evidence in relation to Charge 4 if he had not himself volunteered that he had assisted his friend to administer the gonadorelin to his dog.
22. We consider that he has been quite open in his evidence to the Stewards about these matters. He made no attempt to hide or disguise the incriminating syringes.
23. Having said that, it is clear that Charges 1, 2 and 4, all of which relate to the possession and administration of gonadorelin, are quite serious. Mr Galea openly told the Stewards that he had sought veterinary advice about his dog’s fertility and had disregarded that advice. He had instead turned to a friend who he refused to name. This friend said that he had success in injecting gonadorelin on cows. Mr Galea most unwisely took up his friends offer to inject it into his greyhound.
24. This was a massive mistake. He risked the health of his greyhound and his own reputation in the industry in doing so. His conduct is to be deplored.
25. We are acutely aware of the enormous role that greyhounds play in Mr Galea’s life. We understand that he will see it as an immense catastrophe if he faces any period of disqualification. We understand that he is also a pensioner who lives alone and appears to not have much social support. However, given the serious nature of the offending, in our view, a significant period of disqualification is inevitable.
26. Taking all the matters into account, the penalties which we impose are as follows:
27. On Charge 1, possessing gonadorelin, a permanently banned substance, we impose a period of disqualification for 17 months.
28. On Charge 2, administering gonadorelin, a permanently banned substance, we impose a period of disqualification of 17 months.
29. On Charge 3, possessing testosterone propionate, a permanently banned substance, we impose a period of disqualification for six months.
30. On Charge 4, assisting a person to administer gonadorelin, a permanently banned substance, to his dog, we impose a period of disqualification for 17 months.
31. On Charge 5, refusing to provide his mobile telephone, we impose a period of disqualification for one month.
32. We order that the sentences on Charges 1, 2 and 4 be served concurrently. The sentences on Charges 3 and 5 are to be served cumulatively on each other sentence. This makes a total effective period of disqualification of two years.
33. The disqualification is to commence from 14 July 2025, being the date of commencement of Mr Galea’s suspension by the Stewards.

Mark Howard

Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal