8 October 2025

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**VANESSA JOHNSON**

**Date of penalty hearing:** 30 September 2025

**Date of decision:** 30 September 2025

**Panel:** Judge Marilyn Harbison (Deputy Chairperson) and Dr Andrew Gould.

**Appearances:** Ms Amara Hughes, instructed by Ms Evangeline Murray, appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Vanessa Johnson represented herself.

**Charges and particulars:**

**Charge No. 1 of 6**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 156 (e) reads as follows:

An offence is committed if a person:

(e) aids, abets, counsels or procures a person to commit a breach of the Rules.

**Particulars of the Charge being:**

1. You were at all times, the Owner of BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY), registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 317549) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 19 June 2024 you rehomed greyhounds, SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to a friend of your partner, that person being Josh HENSCHEL.
3. On 20 June 2024 greyhound SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) died at your premises. You then assisted your partner to rehome BEKERE (NKGZO) to Josh HENSCHEL instead of SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) as it was deceased.
4. Josh HENSCHEL was not a genuine rehoming prospect and there is no evidence that he took possession of the greyhounds. You and your partner waited for an opportunity to surrender the greyhounds to the local pound after the 21 day requirement in the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds elapsed.
5. On 24 July 2024 about 30 days after the false transfer to Josh HENSCHEL, your partner and Josh HENSCHEL surrendered greyhounds BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to Latrobe City Council Pound.
6. You aided and abetted your partner to breach the rules when you completed and submitted the Notice of Retirement as a Pet – Transfer to New Owner forms for the three greyhounds, BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) for rehoming to Josh HENSCHEL.
7. GAR 156(e) is a serious charge.

**Charge No. 2 of 6**

Local Rule **12.4.** reads as follows:

It is a *Serious Offence* to provide false or misleading information to the *Controlling Body* in connection with Rule 12.

**Particulars of the Charge being:**

1. You were at all times, the Owner of BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 317549) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 19 June 2024 you completed documents referred to as Notice of Retirement as a Pet – Transfer to New Owner alleging you had rehomed greyhounds, SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to a friend of your partner, that person being Josh HENSCHEL.
3. On 20 June 2024 greyhound SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) died at your premises. You then completed a document referred to as Notice of Retirement as a Pet – Transfer to New Owner alleging you had rehomed greyhound BEKERE (NKGZO) to Josh HENSCHEL instead of SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) as it was deceased.
4. Josh HENSCHEL was not a genuine rehoming prospect and there is no evidence that he took possession of the greyhounds.
5. You and your partner waited for an opportunity to surrender the greyhounds to the local pound after the 21 day requirement in the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds elapsed.
6. On 24 July 2024 about 30 days after the false transfer to HENSCHEL, your partner and HENSCHEL surrendered greyhounds BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to Latrobe City Council Pound.
7. The documents referred to as Notice of Retirement as a Pet – Transfer to New Owner were submitted to GRV in accordance with Local Rule12.
8. You provided false or misleading information in connection to Local Rule 12 by submitting the documents referred to as v for the above mentioned greyhounds knowing the documents contained false and misleading information.
9. LR 12.4 is a serious offence.

**Charge No. 3 of 6**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule **156 (v)** reads as follows:

An offence is committed if a person:

(v) in the opinion of the Controlling Body or its Stewards, is guilty of neglect or any dishonest, corrupt or improper act or practice in connection with the breeding, registration, sale or transfer of greyhounds, or has attempted such an act or practice.

**Particulars of the Charge being:**

1. You were at all times, the Owner of BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 317549) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 19 June 2024 you rehomed greyhounds, SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to a friend of your partner, that person being Josh HENSCHEL.
3. On 20 June 2024 greyhound SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) died at your premises. You then assisted your partner to rehome BEKERE (NKGZO) to Josh HENSCHEL instead of SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) as it was deceased.
4. Josh HENSCHEL was not a genuine rehoming prospect and there is no evidence that he took possession of the greyhounds. You and your partner waited for an opportunity to surrender the greyhounds to the local pound after the 21 day requirement in the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds elapsed.
5. On 24 July 2024 about 30 days after the false transfer to HENSCHEL, your partner and HENSCHEL surrendered greyhounds BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to Latrobe City Council Pound.
6. You have engaged in a dishonest, corrupt or improper act in connection with the transfer of greyhounds BEKERE (NKGZO) FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY).
7. GAR 156(v) is a serious charge.

**Charge No. 4 of 6**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 156 (w) reads as follows:

An offence is committed if a person:

(w) fails to comply with a policy or code of practice adopted by a Controlling Body.

**Particulars of the Charge being:**

1. You were at all times, the Owner of BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 317549) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 19 June 2024 you rehomed greyhounds, SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to a friend of your partner, that person being Josh HENSCHEL.
3. On 20 June 2024 greyhound SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) died at your premises. You then assisted your partner to rehome BEKERE (NKGZO) to Josh HENSCHEL instead of SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) as it was deceased.
4. Josh HENSCHEL was not a genuine rehoming prospect and there is no evidence that he took possession of the greyhounds. You and your partner waited for an opportunity to surrender the greyhounds to the local pound after the 21 day requirement in the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds elapsed.
5. On 24 July 2024 about 30 days after the false transfer to Josh HENSCHEL, your partner and Josh HENSCHEL surrendered greyhounds BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to Latrobe City Council Pound.
6. By surrendering BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to Latrobe City Council Pound it is believed you are in breach of 6.5.1 of the Code of Practice For The Keeping of Racing Greyhounds.

**Charge No. 5 of 6**

Local Rule **12.1.** reads as follows:

When a *greyhound* is to no longer be utilised for *racing* or *breeding* purposes, every effort must be made by the *Owner* of the *greyhound* to rehome that *greyhound* to an appropriate home.

**Particulars of the Charge being:**

1. You were at all times, the Owner of BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 317549) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 19 June 2024 you rehomed greyhounds, SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to a friend of your partner, that person being Josh HENSCHEL.
3. On 20 June 2024 greyhound SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) died at your premises. You then assisted your partner to rehome BEKERE (NKGZO) to Josh HENSCHEL instead of SAME NIGHTMARE (VLAPN) as it was deceased.
4. Josh HENSCHEL was not a genuine rehoming prospect and there is no evidence that he took possession of the greyhounds. You and your partner waited for an opportunity to surrender the greyhounds to the local pound after the 21 day requirement in the Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds elapsed.
5. On 24 July 2024 about 30 days after the false transfer to HENSCHEL, your partner and Josh HENSCHEL surrendered greyhounds BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to Latrobe City Council Pound.
6. You did not make the required effort as the Owner to rehome of BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to an appropriate home.

**Charge No. 6 of 6**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 165 (a) reads as follows:

An offence is committed if a person (including an official):

(a) commits or omits to do any act or engages in conduct which is in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest, welfare, image, control or promotion of greyhound racing**.**

**Particulars of the Charge being:**

1. You were at all times, the Owner of BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 317549) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. Your partner assisted in surrendering greyhounds, BEKERE (NKGZO), FRIDAY KNOCK OFF (NKASU) and CANNONEER (VKHWY) to the Latrobe City pound.
3. On 28 July 2024 at 11:46am Racing 2 Rehome a greyhound adoption agency, made a Facebook post that in part related to the suspicious rehoming of the three greyhounds your partner surrendered.
4. Your partner responded to the Racing 2 Rehome Facebook post, effectively identifying himself publicly and admitting to his involvement in the matter stating it was genuine rehoming.
5. As at 5:02 pm on the 29 July 2024 the Facebook post had 325 negative emoji reactions, 205 comments and 126 shares. Most of the comments highlighted the negative impact such conduct has on the industry.
6. Your actions in the false rehoming and subsequent pound surrender, lead to the creation of a negative Facebook thread that your partner also commented in. Your conduct is detrimental to the interest, welfare, image, control and promotion of greyhound racing.

**Pleas:** Not Guilty to Charges 1 – 5

Charge 6 was withdrawn by the Stewards.

**DECISION**

**PENALTY**

1. On 3 September 2025, this Tribunal found Ms Vanessa Johnson not guilty of Charges 1, 2 and 3 and found her guilty of Charges 4 and 5.
2. We now deal with the penalties to be imposed in relation to Charges 4 and 5. Each of those charges relate to her failure to rehome the three greyhounds to a suitable home.
3. The Stewards submitted that there was equivalent culpability between Ms Johnson and Mr Orr. Even though each person took on a different role in relation to the rehoming of the three greyhounds, the submission was that those roles were equally reprehensible. Ms Johnson completely relinquished all responsibility for the three greyhounds which she owned. She did not exercise any independent judgement in signing the transfer forms but merely did what she was told to by her partner. She showed no concern at all for the fate of the greyhounds which she owned.
4. Ms Johnson provided written submissions as to the penalty to be imposed and also provided character references. We have taken these materials into account in her favour in assessing the penalty to be imposed.
5. She argued that the appropriate penalty was a suspension and that suspension should be backdated to the date that Mr Orr had been disqualified – that is, to the date of the hearing on 13 June 2025. She said that this date was appropriate because the dogs which she owned had been removed from her property on that date, effectively ending her participation in greyhound racing as Mr Orr was not allowed to reside in the same property as she did if dogs were present on the property.
6. As we understand it, she has now separated from Mr Orr and is living in different premises. She has no present plans to resume greyhound ownership or training, although she said she may be involved in catching dogs in the future. She told us that she had trusted Mr Orr and had been disappointed with him.
7. She works full time in aged care and sends much of her earnings back to her family in the Philippines.
8. Taking into account all the circumstances, we agree with the Stewards that the offending in Charges 4 and 5 is comparable to that of Mr Orr and we propose to impose an identical penalty to reflect this finding.
9. Accordingly, on Charge 4, the penalty is that Ms Johnson be disqualified for six months. On Charge 5, the penalty is that she be disqualified for six months. Given that they each arise out of the same circumstances, both penalties are to be served concurrently, making a total effective sentence of six months disqualification.
10. It is our view that this penalty should commence from today. We find that there is no good reason to backdate it as was proposed by Ms Johnson.

Mark Howard

Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal