

Greyhound racing gets a fair deal



GRA Chair

Phil Bennett

In the July edition of The Journal there was criticism by the then vice-president of the QGBOTA of the running of the Albion Park Raceway (APR) and the alleged bad deal the greyhound industry is getting in relation to this jointly held asset.

I wish to address this criticism.

It is true the asset is jointly owned.

The Queensland Harness Racing Board and the GRA have entered into a joint venture arrangement to manage the asset.

The chairs of both Control bodies are on the management committee which is chaired by Don Davies, an independent person.

Don is a prominent Brisbane solicitor who was the Chair of the Albion Park Trust and is very familiar with the operations of the complex.

The two clubs that operate from the premises pay basically the same rent and pay their share of some of the costs such as power and water.

The APR is responsible for the upkeep of the facilities and the two tracks.

It is true the costs associated with the upkeep of the harness track greatly exceeds the cost of the greyhound track, but there are a number of other factors which need to be considered before it can be said it is an onerous deal for the greyhound industry.

The first is the fact the BGRC race at the track three times a week as opposed to the twice a week the APHRC races.

Secondly, there are two other major tenants of the facility, All Crowd Catering and Kevin Seymour's racing stables. The combined income earned from these two sources is significant. (I am not at liberty to

divulge the figures as they are in confidence agreements.)

All Crowd Catering would not be a tenant if it were not for the operation of Silks Restaurant which basically only operates on the Saturday nights when harness racing takes place.

It must therefore be realised that harness racing is bringing to this arrangement more income through their presence than greyhounds.

For the above reasons, I believe the arrangement is not unfair to the greyhound racing industry.

The 2003-04 financial year has finished.

The income earned under the Product and Programme Agreement exceeded our budget estimates.

The Board recognised this early and at mid-year announced major prizemoney boosts which will continue for the next 12 months.

Turnover on greyhound racing grew by around 10% in the past 12 months. The only dark cloud on the horizon for the continued increase in TAB turnover appears to be the effect the takeover of Tab Limited by TABCORP will have on UNiTAB turnover.

The GRA in its budgeting for the next 12 months has accordingly taken a conservative approach to the income expected to be earned.

There could be major beneficial movements on the UNiTAB front, as from August, the shareholding restrictions on the company will be removed and there could be some interesting plays made for the control of that company.

If there are positive changes in the income stream during the next 12 months, the Board will again consider prizemoney levels.