

New face around the GRA

By **DAVID BRASCH**

THAT old Aussie song “I’ve Been Everywhere Man”, could easily be adapted to include new GRA grading panel member Ken Hutchinson.

It will have to be changed to read “I’ve Done Everything Man” to encompass Ken who moved from Canberra last month to take up the position left vacant with the retirement of Reuben Redhead at the end of January.

Now 50, Ken has lived much of his life in the South Coast district of NSW but has spent the past 15 years breeding and training

greyhounds, and more than three years as secretary at the Canberra Club.

Ken has been going racing since he was a kid, but also made a name for himself playing rugby league for Cronulla in the early 70s.

“I got to third grade at Cronulla as a hooker, played in the Presidents Cup team and was captain for a season,” he told *The Journal*.

“I threw myself at the opposition and at the end of one season had made \$33.”

A bout of appendicitis put paid to his football career.

He took up running a touch football comp in Sydney for six years and coached rep teams to win three national titles from 1983-85.

It didn’t help that he developed a cancer on his arm in 1988 and sent him to hospital on and off for eight months. “I had four melanomas removed in that time and the doctors gave me little chance of surviving that particular form of cancer,” he said. “But for some reason after



the fourth one was removed, it never came back.

“I even had six nuclear scans of my body for the cancer.”

He has been checked every year but no cancer has shown up for the past five years.

“I worked as a sales rep for different companies for 15 years and my then girlfriend, and now wife, Susan (an occupational therapist) and I lived in Vancouver in Canada for six months in 1989.

Ken couldn’t get a work visa at the time, but still managed to earn \$5 an hour for four hours work cleaning out horse stables there for a couple of months. He even did a stint as a nanny for a month.

In January 1990, the couple returned to Kiama on the coast and were married in May.

“I took up work for a courier service in Sydney and stayed there for five years,” he said.

In the meantime, Ken threw himself into greyhound training as a hobby. He took

up a job selling Austar on the South Coast, then sold advertising for Val Morgan cinema group.

“All this time I had greyhounds, keeping two in work winning a few races as we went,” he said.

These included success with Noah’s Ark a maiden winner at Wentworth Park who in turn produced Wentworth Park winner Bahama Cruise.

“Because I was in dogs, I decided I wanted to get into the admin side of the industry,” he said. “I picked up a copy of the Greyhound Recorder one day, and I hadn’t bought one for months, to find the Canberra Club was seeking a secretary.

“I got the job in August 2000 and they took me on without any greyhound racing administration experience.

“I would like to think I made a difference there, gave the club a higher profile and made a lot of changes that have benefited Canberra.”

A new state of the art kennel block at the track is the highlight.

After three and a half years there, Ken applied for a vacant stewards position at the Queensland GRA. That job went to Gail Thorsby but when Redhead announced his retirement, Ken was approached to fill the gap.

Ken, Susan and their son Tyler, 7, have moved to Murrumba Downs and Susan has been transferred through the Commonwealth Rehab Services.

“Now we just have to get used to the heat,” said Ken.