



RACING AND WAGERING
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: REVIEW OF WA GREYHOUND RACETRACKS



UTS REVIEW

Why did RWWA commission the University of Technology Sydney to undertake a review?

Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWWA) commissioned the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to assess the State's three racing tracks against the latest design and maintenance standards to ensure they deliver the best levels of care for racing greyhounds.

The tracks at Northam, Mandurah, and Cannington were built in line with design and animal welfare standards of the time, but advancements in technology and new research allow for improvements to be made.

The UTS recommendations provide clear advice on improving the State's three greyhound tracks to bring them in line with up-to-date design elements.

Is this the first time this type of review has been undertaken?

It is the first time such a review has been conducted in WA, but other States have commissioned UTS for similar studies. These reviews have been undertaken by Professor David Eager, who is an internationally recognised expert on sport and recreation surface safety, equipment safety and playground and play surfaces safety. Some of that expertise has direct relevance to greyhound track design and maintenance, particularly in relation to track composition and race dynamics.

RWWA will continue to work with UTS as it implements the review recommendations following concept design and testing.



UTS REVIEW

Will RWWA continue to undertake these type reviews?

We will continue to work with UTS and the greyhound industry as it implements work related to the key recommendations.

RWWA is committed to having rigorous welfare standards to ensure every greyhound receives the best possible treatment. This is achieved through evidence-based decisions using transparent and dependable data to deliver measurable advances in animal welfare.

What period of data was reviewed?

The data utilised for research purposes was 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2020.

RWWA has considered the findings of the review, resulting in a series of current and planned works. Major upgrade works are subject to conceptual design works, contracts being issued, and relevant approvals being obtained. At this stage it is anticipated that the proposed major works would commence in mid-2022.

What is the specific focus of the review?

The UTS review looks at the biomechanics of the racetracks and the opportunities for reducing risk factors that can be controlled and ensuring the best possible care of racing greyhounds.

There are three key focus areas for the review:

1. Track shapes, cross-falls, race dynamics and injury rates
2. Starting boxes and catch pens
3. Track surface maintenance

RWWA has considered the findings, resulting in a series of current and planned works.



UTS REVIEW

What are the key outcomes of the review?

The UTS recommendations provide advice on how to elevate existing standards based on the most up-to-date design elements and greyhound racing research.

The review assessed the biomechanics of WA's greyhound tracks, including track design, cross-falls, race dynamics and injury rates, starting boxes and catching pens as well as track surface maintenance.

RWWA has considered all recommendations in the review, resulting in a series of current and planned works. An outline of the review recommendations and RWWA's response and planned works is available [here](#).

When are works due to commence?

Some work including maintenance has already commenced or been completed.

Cannington and Mandurah tracks have been surveyed and are in the process of being regraded to ensure a smooth surface and even crossfalls.

The Northam remedial works will allow for better track preparation and ensure safer racing. It is anticipated these works will be completed by late September and will be reviewed by UTS prior to racing resuming at the track.

Design work for the Mandurah track upgrades have been commissioned and are due to be delivered by October 2021. Following the awarding of contracts and relevant approvals, it is anticipated the upgrades will commence mid-2022.

WA Greyhound Racing Association (WAGRA) is responsible for track maintenance at all three tracks. RWWA has provided WAGRA with suitable equipment for track surface maintenance as recommended in the UTS review. WAGRA will ensure track surface maintenance is carried out in line with UTS advice.

Further details and the recommendation, RWWA's response and status of works is available [here](#).



UTS REVIEW

How will the works be funded?

The State's racing industry is funded through the profits from WA TAB together with income generated by the WA Race Bets Levy and Point of Consumption Tax paid by wagering operators.

Ultimately, it is the people participating in race day activities that are helping to improve industry standards.

What is the cost of the upgrades to the tracks?

Preliminary works, including Northam upgrades, equipment purchases and track surveying at Cannington and Mandurah, is budgeted at \$366,000. As design work is still being developed and contracts have not been awarded, costs are yet to be determined for major works.

When will the Northam greyhound track be closed?

The RWWA Board has commissioned a business case assessment of building a new facility at a greenfield location to replace Northam. The centre will aim for a holistic approach by providing spaces to support early education services and training resources as well as racing premises with optimal track composition for greyhound safety and welfare. The business case is expected to be completed by December 2021. A decision will be made once the business case has been evaluated.

In conjunction with UTS, appropriate upgrades for the Northam track were determined, which are expected to be completed by late September. UTS will conduct a review of the track to ensure its suitability for racing whilst a business case for a new facility is explored.

What will happen to the Northam facilities?

The Northam facility is a dual-code facility, occupied by both WAGRA and the Northam Harness Racing Club (NHRC). If RWWA transitions out of the Northam greyhound track, harness racing will continue at the venue. The NHRC operates independently of greyhound racing. It holds the land under lease from the Northam Shire, with a Memorandum of Understanding between WAGRA and NHRC outlining the conditions of use for greyhounds.



UPGRADE IMPACTS ON GREYHOUND RACING

Who is responsible for greyhound track maintenance?

The WA Greyhound Racing Association (WAGRA) is responsible for track maintenance at all three greyhound tracks. RWWA has provided WAGRA with suitable equipment for track grading as recommended in the UTS review.

How soon will the works at Northam be completed?

Northam works are expected to be completed by late September. UTS will review the works prior to racing resuming at the track.

Will works impact race meet schedules?

Schedules may be altered to allow for track upgrades and a change of locations, but racing will continue. The aim is to have Northam and Cannington operating while Mandurah is being upgraded.

When will racing return at Northam?

Once the works at Northam have been completed, UTS will conduct a review of the track prior to racing recommencing. In addition to this, RWWA's stewards will also undertake assessments of the track before racing is able to proceed.



What is the Code of Practice for the keeping of racing greyhounds in WA?

RWWA's Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds is based on scientific knowledge and recommended industry practice and developed in consultation with the RSPCA as well as experts in greyhound management, welfare, and veterinary science.

The code of practice covers on and off-track activities and stipulates the expectations for the physical and behavioural care of greyhounds.

RWWA's stewards are the 'police' of the industry. They have the power to strictly enforce the Rules of Racing on and off the track. Stewards can, at any time, enter a property where racing animals are kept.

Unannounced kennel inspections are regularly carried out to check on racing animals. Stewards' powers as prescribed within the *RWWA Act 2003* are more extensive than those provided to WA police and include the power to compel people to give evidence, admit entry and answer questions.

How does the injury rebate scheme work?

All racetracks are designed with the safety of the racing greyhounds in mind, and include such things as camber, careful surface preparation and monitoring of track conditions using scientific instrumentation.

Track conditions are also inspected by RWWA stewards at the beginning of every meeting, and periodically throughout the meeting to ensure its suitability for racing.

In the event a greyhound is injured, support is in place to ensure appropriate care is available:

- Greyhound Injury Rebate Scheme: provides financial assistance to owners and trainers to cover the cost of veterinary treatments.
- Greyhound Injury Full Recovery Scheme: allows owners and trainers to sign over ownership of the greyhound to RWWA, where all veterinary costs are paid. Once recovered, the greyhound is rehomed through RWWA's Greyhounds as Pets (GAP) program. There are rules in place that ensure greyhounds are responsible rehomed once they retire from racing.



ANIMAL WELFARE

How many retired racing greyhounds are successfully rehomed?

In 2019/20, RWWA rehomed 330 greyhounds through GAP and the Greyhound Injury Full Recovery Scheme

There are rules in place that ensure industry must responsibly rehome greyhounds once they retire from racing. RWWA heavily invests in its GAP rehoming facility in Southern River, which facilitates the successful transition of greyhounds from their racing careers to new homes.

The industry works with other greyhound rehoming groups to maximise rehoming and foster care opportunities for retired greyhounds.

TERMINOLOGIES

Clegg Hammer

The Clegg Impact Hammer measures the hardness or shock absorption properties of a turf surface. It is used widely around the world in a variety of winter and summer sports. In Australia, it is used to test the hardness of AFL playing surfaces. It is also used to determine the safety and consistency of equine surfaces.

Clothoidal Turn

A transitional bend designed to ease the change from straight sections of the track.

Jerk

Jerk is the rate of change in acceleration. Lower jerk values are essential as they indicate that the change in centrifugal acceleration is minimal for a greyhound while it is navigating its trajectory. Transitional bends assist in lowering jerk rates for racing greyhounds.