

The Q Investigations

Racing Regulation in Queensland

The Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games (DSROPG) has the legislative responsibilities for the administration of the *Racing Act 2002* (Racing Act). The Racing Act establishes the Racing Queensland Board (RQ) as the control body for thoroughbred, harness and greyhound codes of racing and generally, provides for the management, operation, development and promotion of the racing industry in Queensland.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has the legislative responsibilities for the administration of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* (RI Act). The purpose of the RI Act is to safeguard the welfare of animals, to ensure the integrity of persons involved in the racing industry and to manage matters relating to betting and sporting contingencies. It establishes the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) to achieve these purposes.

QRIC employs stewards who are empowered by the Rules of Racing and the RI Act to control and regulate the codes of racing. QRIC stewards are responsible for safeguarding the welfare of all racing animals as well as regulating race meetings throughout Queensland.

The Q

This new, world-class multi-use greyhound racing facility opened on 7 June 2025, near Ipswich. The venue known as 'The Q' features parklands inclusive of gardens, walkways and community facilities. The Q is owned by RQ but independently leased and operated by the Queensland Greyhound Racing Club (QGRC).

Designed and commissioned by the former Labor Government, The Q's total project cost of \$90 million is comprised of:

- \$44.15 million of Racing Infrastructure Fund (RIF) contribution; and
- \$45.85 million of Racing Queensland funding.

The RIF funds priority racing infrastructure projects supporting the operations and sustainability of Queensland's racing industry.

Racing design features of the Q include:

- a large one-turn track, a two-turn track and a straight track
- track radius and surface banking designed to reduce excessive limb forces acting on Greyhounds while racing
- modern cambers and a world-class racing surface
- best-practice starting boxes incorporating data-driven initiatives including grille heights and starting location alignment, and air-conditioned, sound-attenuated kennels with best-practice pre and post racing support facilities.

The Q is the only greyhound centre in the world with three individual options to suit the size, age, running gait and athletic abilities of different greyhounds.

The Investigations

On 4 July 2025, QGRC issued an industry statement noting one of the tracks (Q2) had been inadvertently overwatered overnight.

A pre-race track inspection was undertaken by QRIC stewards on 5 July 2025 (the day of the Brisbane Cup) who deemed the track was suitable for racing.

Following concerns raised by trainers after the running of the second race, it was determined by QRIC that due to varying levels of firmness, the track was not suitable to continue racing.

On 6 July 2025, the Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Minister) requested DPI undertake an urgent investigation into the abandonment of the Brisbane Cup on 5 July 2025.

Subsequently the Minister requested a further investigation into the initial design and construction of the track to be conducted by DSROPG.

DPI engaged the services of Mr Mark Ainsworth, contract investigator, former police officer and former Deputy Racing Integrity Commissioner to undertake the investigation into the abandonment of the Brisbane Cup.

DSROPG engaged the services of SPORTENG to investigate the initial design and subsequent construction and operations for the sand tracks at The Q, including post cancellation of the Brisbane Cup.

Findings

Race Day Cancellation – Findings

The investigation into the circumstances leading up to the abandonment of the 2025 Brisbane Cup at The Q Racetrack on 5 July 2025 found that overwatering caused track suitability issues. Importantly, the investigation highlighted that consideration of animal welfare was the primary and only concern the QRIC stewards, RQ and QGRC had in relation to abandoning the Brisbane Cup meeting.

The investigation also found there was both consultation and consensus between QRIC, RQ and The Q curator in relation to the track's safety prior to making the decision to abandon the meeting.

The findings highlighted the importance of appropriate training, governance, documented procedures, record keeping and communication in all aspects of track preparation.

Initial Design and Construction – Findings

The investigation identified several challenges:

- **Drainage inefficiencies:** The zero longitudinal grade of the drainage system and clogging of geofabric reduced the system's effectiveness.
- **Reliance on manual operations:** The manual operation of drainage valves posed a risk of human error.
- **Shade impacts:** Shading from structures affected consistent moisture levels in the sand profile.
- **Sand inconsistencies:** Variations in sand particle size and hydraulic conductivity were identified, with some sand samples exceeding recommended silt/clay percentages.
- **Moisture management challenges:** The sand profile's stability was highly dependent on moisture content, with saturation levels between 25-30% leading to instability.

Despite these challenges, the tracks were constructed in accordance with the design documentation.

This investigation also highlighted the importance of documented procedures and operation manuals related to the curation of the tracks.

Recommendations and Implementation

Race Day Cancellation – Recommendations

The investigation has made a number of recommendations which will continue to prioritise animal welfare, track certainty and enhanced communications between the three organisations involved in greyhound racing, integrity and track preparation. The recommendations apply to QRIC, RQ and QGRC across the areas of:

- track preparation – enhance training and governance for curators;
- race day operations – clear protocols and communication between QRIC, RQ and QGRC;
- safety protocols, animal welfare and injury prevention – continued prioritisation of safety and injury prevention; and
- compliance and governance – improved record keeping and oversight.

Initial Design and Construction – Recommendations

The investigation has made a number of recommendations to assist to mitigate those issues identified in the findings.

Recommendations include:

- the development of a comprehensive Maintenance Manual – to guide track preparation and maintenance to properly curate the sand tracks profiles;
- improved of moisture testing – methods to assess moisture levels in both the upper and lower sand profile;
- automation of drainage values – investigate automation to reduce reliance on manual operations of the drainage valves;
- replacing the existing geofabric on all three tracks – with a material that allows better water infiltration;
- increase the number of drainage outlets across the three tracks; and
- investigate wireless moisture sensors – to monitor moisture levels in real time.

Next Steps

RQ, QRIC and QGRC will be expected to continue to prioritise animal welfare in the implementation of recommendations to ensure The Q's infrastructure, operations and the communication between entities delivers positive outcomes for the greyhound racing industry and community.

Each entity will:

- develop an implementation plan; and
- provide quarterly reporting to the Minister.

The collaborative efforts of these organisations aim to ensure The Q delivers positive outcomes for the greyhound racing industry.

The Q Investigations – Recommendations, Responsibility and Implementation

DPI Investigation

Deficiencies in track preparation and operations		
#	Recommendation	Responsibility
1	An urgent review of staffing levels including experienced curators to provide sufficient staff to track preparation and maintenance.	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
2	The compulsory enrolment of all The Q staff in the Certificate III in National Track Maintenance Program training program. The program aims for National Consistency, information exchange between participants and creates a National Cohort of connected track workers. The course is run by Greyhound Racing Victoria and is an approved education course.	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
3	Consideration of relevant managers and QRIC stewards to attend the same course to understand track preparation, maintenance and issues.	Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
4	The immediate compilation of a manual or Standing Operating Procedures pertaining to the preparation and maintenance of The Q tracks.	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
5	The immediate review and/or creation of relevant operational policies and record keeping pertaining to track work and maintenance.	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
6	RQ and The Q to address the current breakdown in working relationships between the parties previously mentioned to ensure a professional and appropriate approach to track preparation and maintenance.	Joint Racing Queensland and Queensland Racing Integrity Commission

Race day operations		
#	Recommendation	Responsibility
7	The introduction of a compulsory hand over document from club curators to the Senior Steward chairing a race meeting in relation to the preparation of the track for the particular race meeting. Document should include any concerns, irrigation records, moisture readings and track records including maintenance, problematic areas. Such document should be provided to stewards prior to the stewards track inspection. Such document would provide stewards with a detailed knowledge of the track to assist in their inspections.	Joint Racing Queensland and Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
8	Development of a policy to ensure no maintenance including but not limited to watering, sweeping of the track occurs, after the stewards have concluded their track inspection unless directed by the Senior steward chairing the relevant meeting.	Joint Racing Queensland and Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
9	QRIC Race Day stewards to keep an electronic record of decisions pertaining to track inspections, requests to curators and other integrity matters pertaining to a race meeting.	Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
10	The Q club consider upgrading the vet room with the following equipment which would enhance a vet response to injury greyhounds racing at the Q tracks. Whilst there is expense in obtaining the below items, advice from the QRIC Acting Chief Vet and Animal Welfare officer is these items would be hugely beneficial in applying the right level of pain killers to injured dogs and would allow more accurate determination of treatment or otherwise for injured dogs.	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
11	The installation of X-ray capabilities would allow vets to undertake an Xray of the injured animal at the earliest stage then email the Xray to an orthopaedic specialist to obtain informed advice on the treatment or otherwise of the injured animal. A discussion between the QRIC race day vets and the Q club should be undertaken in determining the necessity for the items listed. • General anaesthetic machine* • Drug safe to the standard of housing Schedule 8 drugs*	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd

	- Digital X ray machine with safety requirements and plates* - Handheld ultrasound (for tendon injuries, internal bleeding)* - Handheld ECG - Pulse oximeter - IV fluid pump x2 - Interior environmental monitoring - Small autoclave - Surgical light - Software for digital X-rays - Surgical table N.B. * denotes more urgent equipment required.	
Safety protocols, animal welfare and injury protection		
#	Recommendation	Responsibility
12	Consideration be undertaken to providing race day stewards to club trials in order to enhance integrity and animal welfare requirements. Evaluation of the capability of QRIC to facilitate such a recommendation needs to be considered in terms of staffing ability and finances to undertake the same role. The additional part of this recommendation is for the reporting by race day stewards on the trials carefully recording injuries, fatalities or any other issues on a stewards report visible to the public. Such recommendation would close the gap on possible loss of injury and fatality statistics from club trials.	Joint Racing Queensland and Queensland Racing Integrity Commission

13	There be one point of truth in injury and fatality data and that responsibility is the responsibility of QRIC which has the lead responsibilities in legislation for Animal Welfare. The compilation of these statistics needs to be validated and shared with RQ and racing clubs. One set of accurate data provided to the Minister for Racing would greatly benefit the industry.	Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
14	Urgent recommencement of the Injury Management Committee for Greyhound Racing and the inclusion of outcomes of these meetings to the quarterly briefing to the Minister for Racing.	Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
15	The Injury Management Committee for Greyhound Racing be chaired by an independent expert external to RQ and QRIC to ensure meetings occur and outcomes are achieved. Consideration could be given to the involvement of a representative of the RSPCA on such committee.	Joint Racing Queensland and Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
Compliance and governance		
#	Recommendation	Responsibility
16	A complete review of all governance documents including policies, procedures, processes to ensure the proper operation of The Q club once the new Chief Executive Officer commences.	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
17	A review of what training has been provided to staff relevant to their positions and was such training, if any, relevant to the performance of their role.	Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd

DSROPG Investigation

Tracks – Q1, Q2 and Q3		
#	Recommendation	Responsibility
A	Develop a Maintenance Manual for the tracks that adequately covers all works to be undertaken to properly curate the sand track profiles.	Joint Racing Queensland and Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd

B	The Maintenance Manual should also consider the method of testing moisture in the profile. Currently moisture readings are taken from the surface and can only take a reading of the top 80-100mm of the profile. Tests should be undertaken to ensure the moisture in the lower 100mm of the profile is known as the surface moisture content may be appropriate, but the underlying layers may be saturated.	Joint Racing Queensland and Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
C	Investigate the inclusion of wireless moisture sensors in all three (3) track profiles to aid with monitoring profile moisture levels.	Joint Racing Queensland and Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
D	Consider full automation of all drainage gate valves to allow full control of them which will remove the manual aspect of walking around and opening each valve and then closing them again. This will also enable remote access to the valves in the event no curating staff is on site.	Joint Racing Queensland and Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
E	Replace the existing Bidim A34 geofabric on all three (3) tracks with a fabric that allows for more effective water infiltration through to the Atlantis drainage log and drainage outlet gates. Target the replacement of the geofabric with a 0.5 m wide strip along the inside rail (Q1 and Q2) and outside rail (Q Straight), where the existing geofabric covers the Atlantis drainage log. Coverage should span the full circumference of Q1 and Q2 and the length of Q Straight tracks.	Joint Racing Queensland and Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd
F	Increase the number of drainage outlets across all three (3) tracks, particularly along the bends where water will migrate quicker to the inside of the track due to the steeper grades.	Joint Racing Queensland and Brisbane Greyhound Racing Club Ltd