

**GREYHOUNDS  
AUSTRALASIA  
Limited  
NATIONAL  
EMERGENCY  
GREYHOUND DISEASE  
PREPAREDNESS  
PLAN**

**Greyhounds Australasia Limited**

**Sandown Greyhound Complex**

**49-97 Lightwood Road**

**SPRINGVALE VIC 3171**

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## **PREFACE**

The Australian greyhound racing industry is fortunate because most of the serious diseases of dogs do not occur here.

While Australia has an effective national quarantine service, it is not a guarantee that a foreign disease incursion will not occur. The explosive outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom in 2001 and its subsequent spread to Europe illustrates just how devastating a serious epidemic can be.

With the assistance of the Queensland Racing Industry Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness Plan (QRIEADPP). Greyhounds Australasia Limited has developed this plan Greyhounds Australasia Limited Emergency Greyhound Disease Preparedness Plan (GALEGDPP), for the industry nationally to be prepared to respond to an outbreak of emergency disease.

The plan sets out the procedures GAL needs to adopt to prepare for and respond to an emergency animal disease outbreak. The plan refers diseases known to affect dogs and is subordinate to the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (Ausvetplan).

During an emergency, the State members of GAL will act as the emergency animal disease agency and will operate under State or Federal legislation.

This plan aims to provide GAL with scientific, logistic and management support to prepare for and respond to an emergency animal disease in any State of Australia. The plan is an evolving document, which will be reviewed regularly and updated as strategies are developed and new risk factors are recognised and responded to.

Recommendations for amendment should be forwarded to:

The Principal Veterinary Officer  
Greyhounds Australasia Limited  
PO Box 239  
Springvale VIC 3171

Telephone: (03) 9548 3500  
Facsimile: (03) 9548 3488  
Email: admin@galtd.org.au

## **DOCUMENT CONTROL**

A uniquely numbered copy of this plan will be issued to appropriate racing officials, approved official racing veterinarians and stipendiary stewards.

This plan must be kept in a safe place.

**The plan must not be photocopied for other racing personnel.**

Greyhound Australasia Limited will coordinate the recalling and reissuing of the plan to ensure everyone has a current copy.

## **AMENDMENT RECORD**

The content contained in this plan will be updated and new information will be added from time to time.

The Principal Veterinary Officer of the Greyhounds Australasia Limited will be the coordinator.

Each amendment will display the current revision number and will be signed by the Chairman, Greyhounds Australasia Limited.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

An outbreak of emergency dog disease could have very serious ramifications for GAL. Depending on the specific disease, the consequences could range from an inconvenience to the closure of the industry for an unspecified period of time. The Greyhounds Australasia Limited Emergency Greyhound Disease Preparedness Plan (GALEGDPP) documents the means to provide the Greyhound Racing Industry nationally with the relevant scientific, logistic and managerial support to optimally prepare for and respond to an emergency dog disease.

The role of GAL personnel in the investigative, alert, operational, stand-down and recovery phases of an emergency dog disease are documented in addition to the resources that must be provided.

This plan also contains the strategies GAL will adopt to underpin an effective emergency dog disease response and is constructed so that staff at all levels can quickly identify what tasks they are expected to perform. It will also serve to create awareness of the risk and consequences of an outbreak of emergency dog disease and assist with the training of various industry stakeholders.

It is intended for use in operations, in planning and for training and education.

### **Integration with the GALNEGDP**

- The GALNEGDP is written to support a national effort.
- The national plan is expected to be at a strategic policy level and to commit to funding via cost sharing arrangements with government.
- This national plan may include audits to ensure that each state and region undertake their obligations e.g. audits of records kept.

## **2. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GALNEGDP**

### **Outcome**

- Optimum preparedness for an outbreak of emergency dog disease

### **Objectives**

- A documented emergency greyhound disease preparedness plan that integrates with the NDPI emergency animal disease management plan is developed
- Greyhound Racing industry stakeholders are provided with emergency disease awareness training
- A program to encourage trainers to implement sound disease prevention strategies is developed
- The Greyhound racing industry is capable of responding by ensuring that industry resources and other information that is required for an appropriate response to an dog disease emergency are identified and accessible
- The Greyhound racing industry knows how to respond by ensuring that racing officials understand their roles, responsibilities and their duties in the alert and operational phases of an emergency greyhound disease response
- GAL appreciates the potential costs of an emergency animal disease outbreak and develops business continuity plans should an outbreak occur

## **3. PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS**

### **Background**

Compared with other parts of the world, Australia has suffered very few incidents of epidemic diseases that have the potential to plague livestock industries. Australia's policy is to eliminate any emergency animal disease as quickly and effectively as possible, because introduction of such diseases could have devastating effects.

Even one such disease emergency could cause serious problems for Australia's livestock production and export industries. There could be serious public health implications.

To keep Australia free from these problems, it is essential to have:

- Effective contingency plans to deal with potential animal disease emergencies.
- Well-trained personnel equipped to put these plans into action at a moment's notice.
- An alert and responsible rural industry working with the government veterinary community.

Emergency animal diseases include those that are not present in Australia (exotic diseases) and those that arise within Australia. These diseases have the potential to cause serious disruption to Australia's livestock industries and the national economy and to adversely affect human health.

They may include:

- Foreign (exotic) diseases that manage to penetrate our quarantine barriers, e.g. foot and mouth disease, equine influenza and African horse sickness.
- Diseases that emerge within Australia (e.g. Hendra virus)
- Diseases that occur in Australia, but may present as a serious epidemic (e.g. anthrax)

There are over one hundred animal diseases present in other countries that are not normally seen in Australia. An outbreak of one of these diseases in Australia could:

- Threaten our livestock industries including racing even if the disease does not affect dogs
- Cause severe financial hardship for individuals and their families
- Result in considerable social disruption for whole communities
- Place human health at risk
- Threaten the Australian economy

An animal disease emergency is different from other types of emergencies in that:

- It often affects the whole nation immediately
- An isolated outbreak could result in export bans affecting all of Australia
- The response usually lasts much longer than a response to natural disasters such as fire and flood
- An emergency animal disease response may last for many weeks or even months and the demand on resources may be much greater than for other emergencies

The implications of an emergency animal disease are not well understood. The reasons for many response measures are not always obvious to the general public or even to some of the people called on to assist.

**Table 1: Overview of the major emergency and exotic diseases that affect Greyhounds.**

<b>DISEASE</b>	<b>CAUSE</b>	<b>MAJOR CLINICAL SIGNS</b>	
Distemper	Canine distemper virus	Fever, nasal ocular discharge depression anorexia gastro intestinal signs then nervous system signs	Airbo
Parvo virus	Canine parvo virus type II	Hemorrhagic enteritis, vomiting, dehydration	Virus then
Hepatitis	Canine adeno virus I	Fever, anorexia, depression vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain central nervous system disfunction and death. Corneal swelling and jaundice	Saliv
Leptosporosis	Leptospria spp	Fever, anaemia haemoglobinuria, jaundice, abortion, lethargy, pain vomiting, melena, albuminuria, septicemia death	Urine conta
Rabies	Rabies virus	Change in attitude, erratic behavior e.g. aggression excitability disorientation, nervousness anxiety, solitude. Incoordination , excessive salivation, seizures paralysis	Saliv
Brucellosis	Brucella canis	Abortions reproductive failure. Lethargy pain in females. Genital disease in males	Abor excre
Corona virus	Canine corona virus	Haemorrhagic diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy , inappetance	Saliv
Babesiosis	Babesia canis	Lethargy anorexia pale color, fever vomiting jaundice weight loss	Ticks
Lyme disease	Borrelia burgdorferi	Recurrent arthritis and lameness, fever, anorexia, depression	Ticks
Infectious Tracheobronchitis – Kennel Cough	Canine parainfluenza virus, mycoplasma, bordetella bronchiseptica. Other bacterial species	Fever, dry cough. nasal discharge, lethargy, anorexia, pneumonia	Airbo

### **How would Australia get an emergency animal disease?**

Exotic diseases can enter Australia in a number of ways and could gain a foothold before they are detected. Some ways exotic diseases may enter include:

- Smuggling - Illegal importation of animals or animal products that may cause exotic disease.
- Swill feeding - This involves the feeding of untreated (and potentially imported) animal products to pigs.
- Garbage - Garbage from overseas ships or aircraft can contain potentially dangerous emergency disease agents.
- Boats - Australia's coastline is difficult to police, so fishing or refugee vessels could contain animals infected with exotic diseases. Livestock ships returning from overseas could also carry diseases if inadequately cleaned and decontaminated.

- Wind-borne spread - Insect vectors can be carried into northern Australia on monsoonal winds.
- By accident - The ease and speed of modern animal travel may allow infected animals in the early stages of infection, that are displaying no clinical signs, to enter or to move around Australia and make contact with other susceptible animals.

### **The potential impact of an emergency animal disease**

Outbreaks of major emergency animal diseases have enormous social and economic impact, as the following examples show.

- Loss of export trade - For example, if foot and mouth disease took hold in Australia, we would stand to lose most of our export markets for beef, sheep and pig meats, dairy products, and possibly wool. This could amount to losses of \$5000 million annually.
- Decreased production - Sick animals grow more slowly, produce less milk, poorer quality fleeces and lay fewer eggs. Some diseases cause very high mortality, with up to 100% of animals in affected herds or flocks dying.
- Control costs - Costs of controlling emergency animal diseases are high. Labour, materials, vaccines and compensation payments may add up to many millions of dollars!
- Social consequences - The livelihoods of a great many people are affected by an outbreak of an emergency animal disease. As well as farmers with affected and vulnerable stock, there would be repercussions at the transport and retail levels, for government agencies and for consumers. Movement restrictions could affect tourism in the area. Without adequate controls, unemployment would rise, government services would have to be cut and our standard of living would fall.
- Public health - Some animal diseases pose a direct risk to human health. An outbreak of rabies, for example, would cause great public alarm and damage our relationships with pets and wildlife.

Racing can be seriously affected by any emergency disease outbreak that results in movement restrictions on animals.

### **What is an emergency animal disease response?**

If there is an outbreak of an Emergency Animal Disease, a campaign must be implemented to *detect* and to *control* or *eradicate* all sources of infection. Many emergency animal diseases are highly contagious and can spread rapidly, so control measures must be implemented urgently. It is crucial that any outbreak of disease is recognised quickly and then brought under control and eradicated as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### **Effects of an emergency animal disease outbreak**

The impact of an emergency animal disease outbreak would be felt in many ways:

- Loss of betting revenue (Economic downturn)
- Breeding industry difficulties
- Financial difficulties in related industries e.g. feed merchants, feed producers and manufacturers, race clubs, bookmakers
- Increased costs of greyhound ownership e.g. cost of vaccinations.
- Actual cost of disease control measures

#### **4. PRINCIPLES OF AN EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE RESPONSE**

There are four major processes involved in an emergency animal disease response.

##### **Investigation**

There must be a thorough investigation in order to confirm the nature of the disease, find its source and where it has spread to and to monitor its prevalence.

##### **Containment**

The disease must be quickly localised or contained so that it does not spread any further. This is achieved by placing suspect premises under quarantine and, where appropriate, imposing restrictions on movement of animals, products, people, equipment and vehicles that may be contaminated.

##### **Eradication and/or control**

In order to control and/or eradicate a serious infectious disease in livestock e.g. cattle, poultry, the essential steps are:

- Slaughter or containment of infected livestock.
- Disposal of contaminated carcasses and materials.
- Thorough cleaning, disinfection and decontamination of suspect premises, equipment and materials.

Alternative strategies would be likely to be developed for greyhounds, as they are companion animals rather than production animals.

These response steps are followed by another important step.

## **Recovery**

Recovery from a disease outbreak must be planned during the response phase so that the affected community can return to normal as soon as practicable after the disease has been controlled or eradicated.

## **5. AUSVETPLAN GUIDELINES FOR EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS**

In Australia we have guidelines for responding to emergencies at Commonwealth, State and local levels. The Guidelines for responding to an animal disease emergency are contained within AUSVETPLAN (Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan). AUSVETPLAN defines five phases of an emergency response.

The Ausvetplan consists of a series of technical response plans and manuals that describe the proposed Australian approach to an emergency disease outbreak or suspected outbreak. The documents provide guidance on disease strategies, management, operational procedures, enterprise manuals, diagnostic resources, training resources and support plans. They depend on sound analysis, linking policy strategies, implementation and coordination, and emergency management plans. The GALNEGDPP is a support plan. The industry needs to prepare strategic, operational and action plans to optimally respond to an emergency disease threat.

An understanding of the Ausvetplan is essential to fully appreciate the operational aspects of an emergency disease response. The complete plan is available at the following web site – <http://www.aahc.com.au/ausvetplan/index.htm> The AUSVETPLAN is based around the five functional phases of an emergency disease response. These are:

### **Investigation phase**

The investigation phase starts when there is a report of an animal disease that may signal an animal health emergency. The report is investigated and assessed by officials and laboratory veterinarians in order to exclude or confirm a diagnosis.

### **Alert phase**

The Alert Phase exists if investigations suggest that an emergency disease is highly probable. During this phase, key personnel are placed "on standby" and Commonwealth and State animal health authorities are notified.

### **Operational phase**

If an emergency disease is confirmed, operations commence immediately to control and/or eradicate the disease. This phase continues as long as necessary or feasible.

### **Stand-down phase**

- When investigations conducted during the alert phase fail to confirm the presence of an emergency disease and the CVO (Chief Veterinary Officer) needs to notify various people and agencies that the emergency no longer exists or
- At the end of the operational phase when the winding-down of the operation occurs in a systematic and orderly way. The disease is either proven to have been eradicated or is deemed non-eradicated and is declared endemic.

### **Recovery Phase**

During the recovery phase, activities are aimed at assisting affected people, industries and communities to become re-established. This phase starts while operations are still in progress and continues well after their conclusion.

## **6. GUIDES TO RESPONDING TO A DISEASE ALERT**

### **Major indicators of an emergency animal disease**

Major indicators of an exotic or emergency animal disease could include one or more of the following:

- Unusually high numbers of sick or dead animals
- Vesicles (blisters), ulcers or erosions around the feet and/or mouth
- Profuse bloody diarrhoea
- Severe hacking cough
- Nervous signs, change of character
- Rapid spread through the kennel (i.e. highly contagious)
- Report of high risk from a private veterinary surgeon or laboratory
- Contact with an overseas country – animals, farms, animal products

### **Initial information required by GAL**

When GAL is contacted, they will need information before they will proceed. You should provide at least the following:

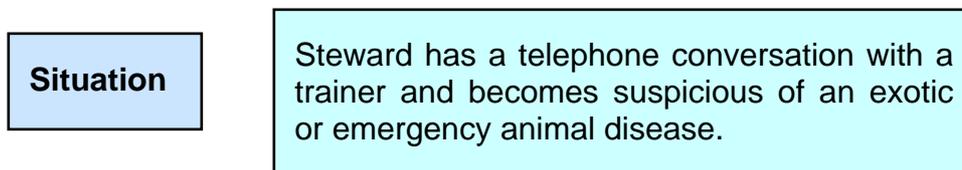
- Caller's name, address and telephone number
- Owner/trainer's name, address and telephone number
- Species affected
- Total number of that species on the property
- Number of sick animals
- Number of dead animals

- If there has been any recent overseas contact (Yes/No)
  - Type of contact (visitor, direct contact, package)
  - Date of last contact
  - Country
- Description of symptoms
- Directions to property

**Action plans**

The course of action to be taken in various scenarios if suspicions of an exotic or emergency animal disease arise are set out below. Figure 1 is for when information is received by telephone or fax or email and the dog is not seen. Figure 2 is for when the problem arises at a race meeting. Figure 3 is for when suspicions arise during a routine kennel inspection. Generally the trainer can be referred to his veterinary practitioner who should be able to make a more informed decision and contact GAL if necessary. However, the Chief Steward would be wise to follow up to see if GAL has been informed or if the problem has been solved.

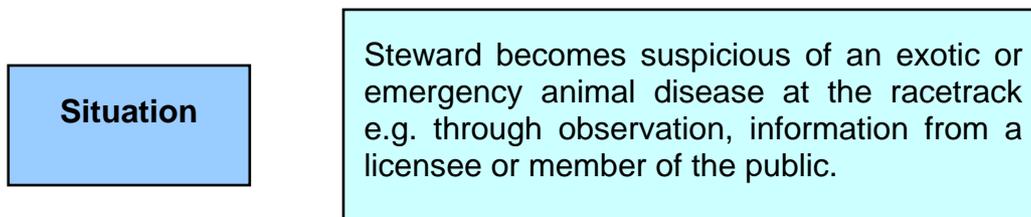
**Figure 1. Action plan if information is received over the telephone, by fax or by email that arouses suspicions of an exotic or emergency animal disease outbreak.**



Person	Appropriate Action
Steward	Report to Chairman of Stewards
Chairman of Stewards	Contact trainer to confirm suspicions Collect information. Advise trainer to isolate dogs pending veterinary advice Advise trainer to contact his private veterinary practitioner Ask trainer to advise of the outcome
	Advise trainer to contact GAL Veterinary Officer

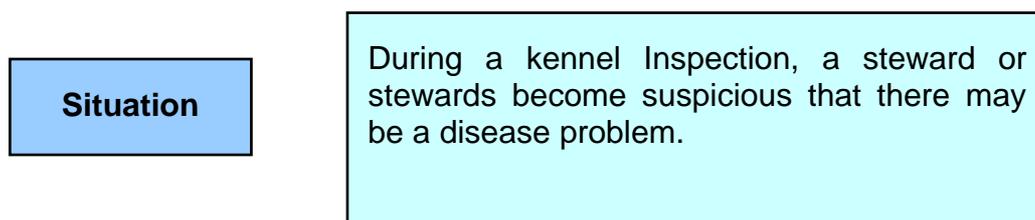


**Figure 2. Action plan if suspicions of an exotic or emergency animal disease arise at a race meeting.**



Person	Appropriate Action
Steward	Report to Chairman of Stewards
Chairman of Stewards	Ask raceday veterinarian to examine Greyhound and report findings.
Raceday Veterinarian	Examine dog Report negative findings to Chairman of Stewards  <i>If suspicious findings</i> Inform Chairman of Stewards Recommend isolation of greyhound Contact GAL Veterinary Officer
Chairman of Stewards	Ensure dog isolated and kept on course, pending GAL advice.

**Figure 3. Action plan when suspicions of an emergency animal disease situation arise during a stable inspection.**



Person	Appropriate Action
Steward	Advise trainer to call private veterinary practitioner to examine dog(s). Advise trainer to isolate the dog until the vet clears it. Report to Chairman of Stewards.
Chairman of Stewards	Contact trainer to assess developments. Collect information. Advise trainer to isolate dogs pending veterinary advice. Ask trainer to advise of the outcome.
<i>If dog cannot be examined promptly by private vet</i>	Advise trainer to contact GAL Veterinary Officer.

### Checklist for Chairman of Stewards

When informed of suspicions of an exotic or emergency animal disease case, complete the following:

### Checklist for Raceday Veterinarian

If suspicious of an exotic or emergency animal disease, complete the following:

Tick box	Check	Result	Next step
	1. Has the dog been isolated?	Yes	Good
		No	Organise isolation
	2. Has the trainer been questioned? History of illness Number of other animals sick or dead Number of dogs on the property Contact with overseas visitors or objects/material from overseas	Yes	
		No	Get background information
	3. Has the Chairman of Stewards been informed of suspicions?	Yes	
		No	Inform promptly

	4. Has the GAL been contacted?	Yes	
		No	Inform promptly
	5. Has the Chairman of Stewards been informed of GAL contact and their response? Yes / No		
	6. Await developments		

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

GAL Officials associated with greyhound racing and senior club officials in the greyhound racing industry have an important part to play in preparation for an exotic or emergency animal disease outbreak and in assisting GAL if an outbreak should occur. The responsibilities of these people and the roles they will assume are shown below.

### Chairmen of Stewards Of State & Territory Authorities

- ensure the availability of personal protective equipment
- ensure subordinate staff are familiar with the emergency raceday protocols
- establish systems that allow the rapid identification of all racing officials who may have contact with dogs or dog products at any race meeting or trial
- establish systems that allow the rapid identification of all registered persons who may have contact with dogs or dog products at any race meeting or trial
- establish systems that allow the rapid identification of any greyhound at a meeting or trial including its origin, destination and mode of travel
- establish systems to identify and record illness in dogs at any race meeting or trial
- ensure incidents involving unexplained illness are reported to the official raceday veterinarian

### Chief Executive Officer GAL

- provide the necessary resources for the industry to adequately prepare for and respond to an animal disease emergency
- promote the need for awareness of the implications of an emergency disease outbreak in the National Greyhound Racing Industry
- be able to make decisions regarding the use of resources and facilities without necessarily being able to refer the matter to a Committee or Board
- be familiar with the implications of a genuine animal emergency disease outbreak in the National Greyhound Racing Industry and establish business continuity plans
- maintain communications with the Chief Veterinary Officer within GAL

## 8. INFORMATION AND RECORDS

To be able to assist GAL investigate a disease outbreak, records of contact details and dog movements will be required. The following lists are not conclusive, but give an indication of the type of records that should be maintained by various participants in the greyhound racing industry.

### Control body records

- licensed persons' name, address, telephone number, other contact details
- dogs attending any race meeting, identification of transport to and from the meeting, person in charge of the dog at the meeting
- raceday staff records

### Trainer's records

- dogs in the kennels
- individual dogs movements including
  - when new dogs arrived
  - who transported them to the kennels
  - where they came from
  - when dogs leave the kennels
  - where the dogs go
  - who transported them
- visitor records including
  - date and time of visit
  - identification of visitor
  - dogs in contact with
- dog health records including problem, attending vet if required, veterinary treatment and result
- details of preventative medicine e.g. worming (date, product, amount used), vaccination
- details of disposal of old bedding etc
- staff records