

## RE-OPEN HARROLD'S CROSS MAKE THE IRISH GREYHOUND INDUSTRY GREAT AGAIN

<b>Bill Murphy</b>	Chairman of the National GOBA
<b>Kenneth Mann</b>	PRO of the Dublin GOBA
<b>Mick O'Keefe</b>	Secretary of the Dublin GOBA
<b>Delores Ruth</b>	Derby Winning Greyhound Trainer
<b>Arlene Moore</b>	IGB Tote Operations Manager (2004 to 2009)
<b>Kieran Boles</b>	MBA, HDip, CCNA, CCENT, MTA, VCA
<b>Stephen Bourke</b>	Young Owner & Breeder
<b>Paddy Ryan</b>	Former MD of Shelbourne Park
<b>Paschal Taggart</b>	Businessman & Chairman of IGB (1995 to 2006)

# Delores Ruth



# Derby Winning Trainer

# The Irish Greyhound is renowned all over the world

- It is a heritage sport that is in our blood and one that **crosses the City/Country divide**.
- We have a **world class reputation** for Breeding and Training the best greyhounds.
- We are **world leaders** in this sport.

# Our Industry is on the Brink of Collapse

- Racing must resume in Dublin
- No Racing in Dublin will lead to an **industry collapse**

# The Beating heart of the industry

- We love our Greyhounds and the Sport
- People are being **forced out of the sport** due to the closure of Harold's Cross and the ongoing decline of the industry

# Enough is Enough

- The industry realises it must do something to stop the decline
- 750 people **travelled from all over the country** to attend a public meeting in Thurles

# The power of Social Media

- Thousands of people are following closely as matters unfold
- **800,000 views** on one forum topic in only 8 weeks
- We now have pro-racing activists

# It is not too late to change

- We can learn from the New South Wales debacle
- The **unjust decisions were reversed**
- 1000's will support those who support us



# Our Industry is in Free Fall

- Trainers struggling to make a living
- **Suicidal**
- **Depression**
- A way of life being destroyed

# Potential Welfare Crisis

- Owners, Trainers and Breeders in financial difficulties as a result of IGB actions
- Potential Welfare issue if people can no longer afford to look after their Dogs the way they would like to

# Effect of Harold's Cross Closure

- Trainers cannot get the same amount of runners on in country tracks as they had in Harold's Cross / Shelbourne Park
- With both Dublin tracks closed **owners removing Dogs from trainers and sending them to the UK**

# Greyhound Matings

- 2003 = **4800** matings.
- 2016 = **2520** matings
- Track matings: Jan - April 10<sup>th</sup> 2016 = 110
- Track matings: Jan - April 10<sup>th</sup> 2017 = 45

# You must help stop this Rot

- **Ensure Harolds Cross re-opens**
- Effectuate the necessary changes in the structure of the IGB
  
- Gerry Melia
- Owen McKenna

# Irish Greyhound Industry



1986

1984

1967

1974

1978

1959

1976

1985

1983

1993

2007

1981

1980'977

200

2002

2006

2011

2013?

2003

1996

1972

1970

1965 1966

Irish Greyhound Derby 2013  
GTS

Irish Greyhound Derby 2013  
GTS

1968



**Phil Meaney requested an extension to Adrian Neilan's seven year contract** in a letter to Gerry Greally on 30.10.2013. This is amazing when you consider that he was responsible for the Limerick debacle, the dramatic fall in turnover and the ETS Irish Derby sponsorship.

[quote]

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine  
Agriculture House  
Kildare St.  
Dublin

Dear Gerry,

I wish to respond to your e-mail of 22nd October 2013. The Board of Bord na gCon (BnG) has discussed with Adrian Neilan that any extension to his contract can only be considered on the basis of a reduced salary of €132,920 p.a. Mr Neilan has confirmed that he would be willing to accept a salary of €132,920. In terms of the justification for the request by the Board to extend the term of Adrian Neilan by two years, the following are key drivers for this request.

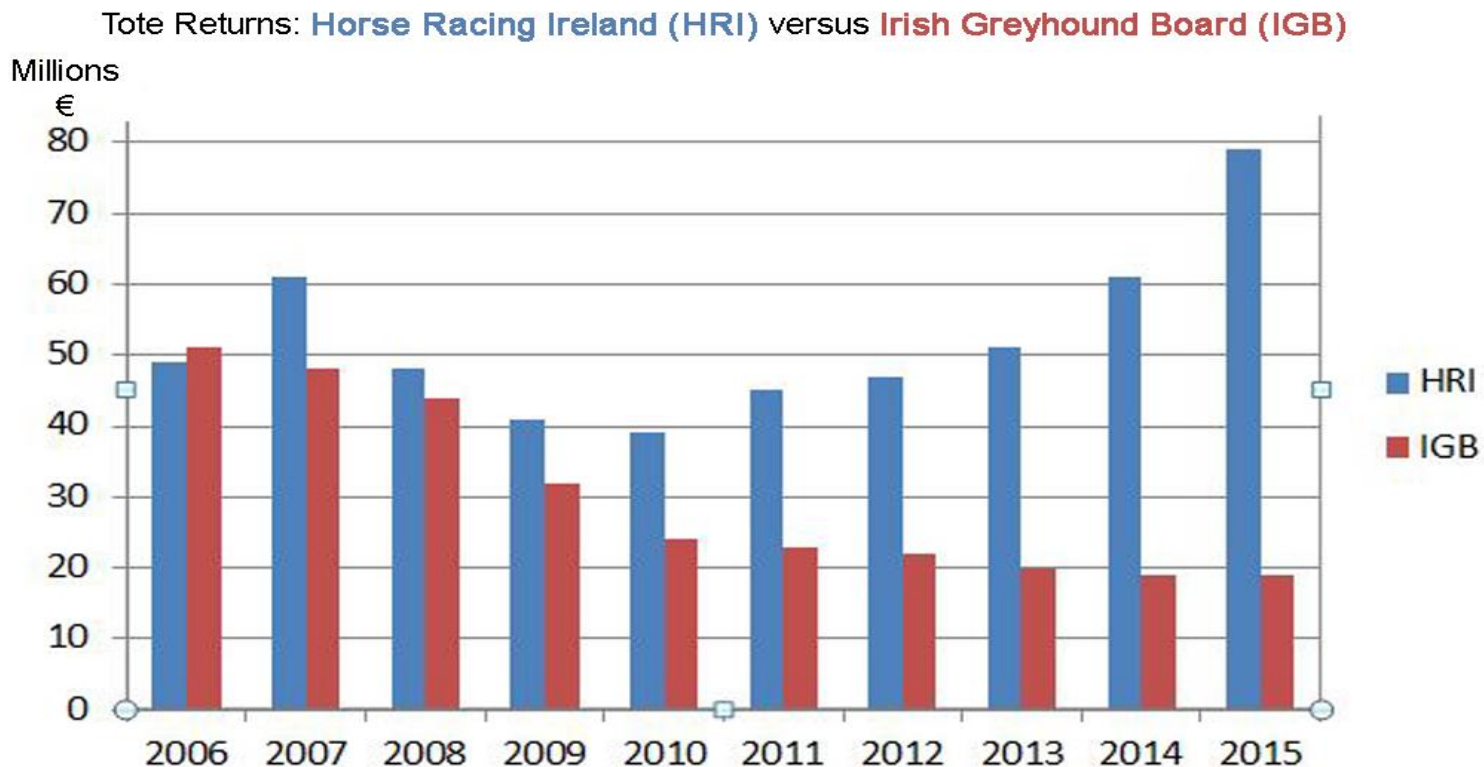
Prior to Adrian Neilan taking over the role, BnG went through a period of two CEO's losing their job prematurely as well as two periods of interim CEO's. Adrian Neilan has now brought stability to the role as he works well with all stakeholders of the industry especially the Board members to achieve industry objectives. However, the tier of management that reports to Mr Neilan has been changed and enlarged significantly recently which has brought refreshment to the organisation and the Board considers that it is essential that the current CEO should remain while the new management structure is further developed.

**BnG has delivered over €21.08m in operating surpluses over the period 2007 to 2011 under the stewardship of Adrian Neilan.** This result compares very favourably with operating surpluses delivered between the years 2002 to 2006, (€22.3m) despite the presence of a much tougher economic environment for discretionary consumer spend in the more recent time period. The Board considers that the continued leadership and commercial ability demonstrated by Adrian Neilan is crucial at this time when the ability to deliver financial surpluses is a key requirement for BnG.

[unquote]

Amazingly Simon Coveney looked for, and obtained a special sanction to allow a sitting semi-state CEO to get a contract extension. In the end Mr Neilan decided on a position in Trinity's Corporate Services Division instead of CEO of the IGB. ([click here](#))

In 2006 the greyhounds out performed the horses by €1.5 million  
By 2015 the horses had out performed the greyhounds by €60 million  
**That's a swing of €61.5 million**





Prize-money is the life blood for owners & trainers many of whom are currently on the bread line.

## Prize-money: Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) versus Horse Racing Ireland (HRI)

<b>Year</b>	<b>IGB</b>	<b>HRI</b>
2007	€12.2 M	€60 M
2015	€6.6 M	€54.4 M

In December 2016, the IGB were still working on the 2015 accounts while Horse Racing Ireland were increasing their prize-money to a record high.

“Horse Racing Ireland (HRI)’s budget for 2017... prioritises prize-money, integrity, ownership and point-to-points. Prize-money will rise by €3.7 million, to a record high of €60.5 million”.

<http://www.hri.ie/press-office/press-releases>

**Prize money is the life blood for owners and trainers many of whom are currently on the bread line.**

The operating surplus figure in the annual IGB accounts mean almost nothing. What is material is the level of prize money, capital expenditure & profit from betting. Obviously if you reduce prize money you increase your operating surplus.

### **IGB Prize-money Cuts (2008 - 2015)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Prize-money € (millions)</b>	<b>Difference since 2007</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>12.23</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>11.39</b>	<b>0.84</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>10.71</b>	<b>1.52</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>7.81</b>	<b>4.42</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>7.25</b>	<b>4.98</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>5.03</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>7.85</b>	<b>4.38</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>7.54</b>	<b>4.69</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>6.67</b>	<b>5.56</b>
<b>Total Prize-money Cuts</b>		<b>€31.42</b>

**The IGB cut prize money by €31.42 million** between 2008 and 2015.

Obviously if you **reduce prize money to this extent you turn large annual operating losses to surpluses**. The board then use these artificial surpluses to get their CEO reappointed. (see letter to DOA – slide 15)

Prize-money is the life blood for owners & trainers many of whom are currently on the bread line.

**I have to ask do the Board, the officials of the Department of Agriculture & Marine, the PAC and now the two Ministers, not understand how this Board arrive at their annual surplus.**

**FACTS:**

Annual tote profits reduced from €6 million to €1 million.

Annual attendances down from 1.4 million to 675,000.

Loss of profits @ say €5 for this exercise equals €3.6 million.

Legal fees 2015 €1.5 million. Projected legal fees in 2016 – €1.2 million.

**These reductions in income were compensated by a reduction of €31.42 million in prize money from 2007 to 2015.**

**When the Board state that their surpluses are on a par with the latter years of my Board they are totally incorrect if not disingenuous.**

On a like for like basis their surplus of €2.5 million is actually an operating **loss of €2.5 million** because they have paid out €5 million less prize money.

Who paid for these losses but the poor old greyhound owner and trainer who lost THIRTY ONE MILLION in prize money.

**Where did the €31 million come from, the Horse and Greyhound Fund.**

**And it is not only greyhound owners and breeders who benefit from the greyhound industry.**

Economist Jim Power in his 2010 report states that the greyhound industry “makes a very valuable contribution to rural economic and social life... The industry **employs just over 10,300 people** directly and indirectly. The gross wage bill generated by this **employment is estimated at €207 million per annum** and the tax contribution from this employment is estimated at €21 million” Power (2010).

## **Indecon report highlighting the IGB's inability to run the greyhound industry.**

The IGB and the Department like to quote the Indecon Report as their reason for selling HX. However the Indecon report also comments on the board and their performance;

- \* Page iii – “The first year of the strategic plan ended with a total group surplus of **€40,000 compared with the plan figure of €238,000**”
- \* Page iv – “Our analysis of board skills indicates that there were **skills gaps**”
- \* Page iv – “We note however that the Audit Committee of the Board did meet. A Risk Register was developed by the Board in 2011 but **did not address all the key issues** and was not updated or monitored at Board level”
- \* Page viii – “There has also been a **significant decline** in the number of active owners and in breeding activity... We have also identified some deficiencies in aspects of governance and in the legislation.”

## Indecon report highlighting the IGB's inability to run the greyhound industry (continued)

- Page xi – “In the light of **historical deficiencies** identified in certain procurement and other practices the role of the internal auditor has particular significance.”
- Page xi – “Indecon noted the **absence of a CFO** from April 2008 until February 2012.”
- Page xiii – “It appears to Indecon that the existing Control Committee and Control Appeals Committee are operating on an independent basis and have a mix of skills... Indecon considers that the present legislation, regulations and processes for provision of integrity services in the greyhound **industry must be enhanced.**”
- Page 6 – “The **scale of the decline** in gate receipts and programme sales, entry fees and catering income is very marked. Together these accounted for €5.049 million of the fall in income between 2007 and 2013
- Page 7 – “gate receipts and programme **sales remain at approximately half their 2007 level.** Since 2007, the decline in sponsorship income by €1.219 million has also been an important development. This eroded again in 2013.”

## Indecon report highlighting the IGB's inability to run the greyhound industry (continued)

- Page 7 – “Bord na gCon commissions on greyhound sales have virtually collapsed... from the **precipitous 91.5% fall** in commissions earned from €67,020 in 2006 to €5,718 in 2013”
- Page 7 – ““Actual results for 2013 were 6% below budget and 4.6% below 2012. When compared with 2007 attendances of almost 1.3 million, the 2013 figure of 687,510 **represents a profound drop** over the period 2007 to 2013.”
- Page 18 – “Indecon’s analysis has demonstrated an organisation that has faced **dramatic declines in revenues.**”
- Page 24 – “Another issue facing Bord na gCon is its **underfunded pension** plan. The underfunding stood at €6.839 million at end 2013.”
- Page 24 – “Net turnover from racing facilities showed an **unfavourable** variance of €0.815 million.”

## Monitoring & Control

Brendan Gleeson from the Department of Agriculture stated to the PAC (16/2/17) that “one of the recommendations in the Indecon report was to sell assets and while the report wasn’t prescriptive about what should be sold, Harolds Cross was one of the assets named” ([PAC](#)).

So while HX was one of the assets “considered”, the IGB are clinging to this one element of the report to justify the sale of HX despite the fact that Phil Meaney has signed off on some of the worst annual returns in the history of the state.

However the [Indecon report](#) (page iii & 28) also stated that “Indecon considers that it will be necessary for the Board of Directors as well as for **the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to monitor performance closely in 2014.**”

And they were right as turnover in 2014 **dropped by €5 million!**

The Department of Agriculture has played a very passive role in monitoring the performance of the IGB over a ten year period when **over €100 million** of tax payer’s money has been paid to the IGB since Paschal Taggart’ term as chairman.

This lack of action is all the more startling when you consider that page iii of the Indecon report stated; “The most significant aspect of the 2013 performance was the non achievement of the target for net turnover from racing facilities and the plan appears to be approximately **one year behind targets**”.



## Monitoring & Control (continued)

When Brendan Moore an IGB member resigned stating “***[Political influence] has served Bord na gCon very badly and the commercial and regulatory awareness of the board in the present and past has led the industry to its present position.***”

The DOA’s response to what effectively was a **whistle blower** was to dismiss his skills as being limited to his knowledge of the greyhound industry;

*“The individual board member in question was appointed on the basis of his depth of knowledge of the greyhound industry... This is regrettable, as it would reasonably be expected that he would have regarded the board of IGB as the correct forum to raise these issues in the first instance. Had they been raised, **his lack of awareness** of the current operations of IGB might have been addressed and the damage to the organisation avoided.”*  
([click here](#))

Note that the Indecon Report (2014 p38) agreed with Brendan Moore and stated that “our analysis of board skills has shown that **skills gaps were evident**”.

The Morris Report (2015) stated in paragraph 20.4.3.2.2.3 that “the IGB is therefore **not an educated customer**, and so is neither able to set a suitable performance standard for the laboratory, nor does it audit whether this standard is being achieved” and went on to state that “there is inadequate information and expertise available to the IGB and to the Control Committee [21.3]. The **dearth of available expertise** in anti-doping and medication control has led to sub-optimal policy making, implementation, and integrity”

The sale of Harold's Cross stadium represents a **Moral Hazzard** for the Minister due to IGB's financial performance under this regime.

The Moral Hazzard is that if the current IGB receive the proceeds of the HX sale then the Minister will be **rewarding failure**. He will be establishing a **lack of incentive to guard against risk** where the IGB are protected from the consequences of their bad decisions.

The money from this proposed sale will be wasted by funding the current management structure and **prolonging the current status quo** until the next crises and subsequent **track fire sale**.

**Why? Because the current IGB does not have the skill sets to run the greyhound industry in the competitive entertainment industry.**

## **Critical issue is population & spending power - not the distance between the tracks**

Harold's Cross was opened in 1927 and has always been regarded as the 'Dubs Track'. It is an iconic track with a tremendous history in both greyhound racing and football.

Harold's Cross and Shelbourne Park are the two most profitable tracks of the 17 greyhound tracks in Ireland because Dublin has a population of **1.5 million** and more importantly it has up to 50% of the Irish GDP.

Therefore it makes sense to ensure that **SPK and HX are both open on Fridays, Saturdays** and possibly Sundays because people in Dublin have more disposable income and tend to spend it at the week-ends.

**Different dogs, different crowds** – so while certain customers want top class racing and will only go to SPK there will be many others who are more concerned about a fun night out and will visit HX due to convenience or affiliation to the crowd.

If you close Harold's Cross then it will result in the closure of provincial tracks into the future. The critical issue is not whether SPK and HX are 5 kilometers apart, but that the population is **1.5 million compared to Limerick (191k), Galway (250k) and the even smaller towns** that have a greyhound track . ([CSO 2011](#))

## **Critical issue is population & spending power - not the distance between the tracks**

It is important to note that the revenue generated from the two Dublin tracks will be required to support regional tracks that may be struggling due to their location population.

Davy (2015) stated that “Ireland’s economy is especially reliant on its capital. The share of Dublin in nominal GDP remained close to 40% throughout the period 2002-2011. Including the mid-east region, comprising counties bordering Dublin, the share rises to **close to 50% of GDP**. In comparison, official ONS data indicate that London’s share of the UK economy is just over 20%”.

In addition a Central Statistics Office (2017) statistical release highlighted that “out of the eight regional authority areas, **the Dublin region had the highest average disposable income per person** in 2014. At €21,963 it was 14.5% higher than the State figure of €19,178... Dublin continues to remain the only region with higher per capita disposable income than the State average during the entire 2006-2014 period while the Midland, Border and West regions continue to earn less than the State average.”

## Reasons for not selling HX and how to secure the future of the greyhound industry

Greyhound racing is a **great product** and the IGB under Paschal Taggart's board and executive proved that it is **commercially viable**. The only thing that has changed since 2007 is the way the industry has been run and that can be corrected by the Ministers.

Greyhound racing is all about bums on seats, on track betting, SIS betting and betting on apps. We would point out that we do not have any knowledge of the boards 3 or 5 year plans. Our financial forecasts are based on the experience and expertise of the following individuals;

**Paddy Ryan – former CEO of Shelbourne Park.**

**Paschal Taggart – former Chairman of IGB (1995 – 2006) and businessman.**

**Arlene Moore – former Tote director with the IGB.**

**Kieran Boles – MBA, HDip, CCNA.**

All the above are genuine greyhound racing supporters who have owned and bred greyhounds. They are giving their experience and time for free because they feel that the greyhound industry is on the verge of terminal decline. We all fear for greyhound racing in Ireland without a some changes in the board member and key executives.

However with the right environment and by following simple steps based on practices and techniques that have been proven to have worked, we all feel that the finances of the greyhound industry can be dramatically improved.

## Reasons for not selling HX and how to secure the future of the greyhound industry (continued)

### *Forecasted additional income in year 3*

	€ (millions)
Increased Tote Revenue (note 1)	4.72
Profit on Increased Attendances (note 2)	2.75
Profit on SIS (note 3)	<u>2.00</u>

### **Additional Profits**

**€9.47 million**

There is no magic solution and it will take 2 to 3 years to achieve these forecasts but they are realistic and achievable. **If our suggested changes are activated and this plan is not working after 3 years the DGOBA will agree to sell Harold's Cross.** With no planning restrictions the sites **value will double and make €20 to €25 million.**

The indecon report (page ii) stated that “our examination of the performance of both Bord na gCon and private tracks for 2013 shows that the three largest tracks in terms of revenues are Shelbourne Park, Harold's Cross and Cork.”

**Why sell of your 2<sup>nd</sup> most valuable asset when there is no need.**

## Reasons for not selling HX and how to secure the future of the greyhound industry

### Note 1:

Tote turnover at €52 million \* with profit @11%

Tote turnover in 2015 was €18 million @ 5%

€ (millions)

€5.72

(€1.0)

**Gain**

**€4.72**

\*€52 million was the tote turnover in 2006 and was achieved without on-line betting

### Note 2:

Present Attendances is 675,000

Forecasted Attendances in year 3 is 950,000

When you consider that attendances were 1.4 million in 2005 and assume our sales & marketing strategy is implemented in full then we believe that our figures are conservative.

[275,000 @ €10 per head profit for admission, food and drink - **€2.75 million**]

### Note 3:

We congratulate the board on their SIS deal which they have stated will generate €1 million profit in 2017. These figures should go from strength to strength and we therefore have included **€2 million** profits in 3 year.

All in all a **very healthy financial position** is a possibility in year 3 if Harold's Cross is reopened and the simple initiatives that we have outlined are acted upon.

Equally important is the fact that **the IGB have retained a €20 / €25 million asset in Dublin 6** and retained all the owners and trainers who will spend their money in HX. If HX is closed these people will be lost to the sport forever as their dogs cannot win in Shelbourne Park.

**IGB chairman, Phil Meany, has rejected Paschal Taggart's financial justification for not selling Harold's Cross so it is appropriate to compare their performance.**

**IGB - Taggart's Chairmanship  
Debt: €13.7 million in 2005**

- €7 million on upgrade in Shelbourne Park.
- World class track and stadium in Cork.
- World class track and stadium in Dundalk.
- World class stadium in Lifford.
- World class stadium in Harold's Cross.
- Brand new stadium in Waterford.
- Brand new stadium in Tralee.
- Brand new stadium in Thurles.
- Brand new stadium in Mullingar.
- Brand new stadium in Newbridge.
- Brand new stadium in Galway.

**IGB - after Taggart's Chairmanship  
Debt: €20.3 million in 2017**

- Brand new stadium in Limerick.
- Small upgrade in Clonmel.
- Small upgrade in Youghal.



## Phil Meaney's performance as chairman of the IGB

- In 2012 Phil Meaney sat beside Adrian Neilan when he told the PAC that they had signed 30 new contracts that would generate new profits of €825,000 in 2014 and €5 million a year from 2017 onwards. ([Click here](#))
- However it wasn't until Aug 2013, that "eircom and the IGB signed a three-year €1.1 million partnership earlier this year which enables the IGB to increase the streaming of greyhound racing and data worldwide". ([eolasmagazine.ie](http://eolasmagazine.ie))
- He wrote in the 2012 Annual Report; "Our 5 year strategic review is complete and will give the organisation a clear direction and focus from 2013 to 2017"
- [Indecon report](#) (page iii) stated; "The most significant aspect of the 2013 performance was the non-achievement of the target for net turnover from racing facilities and the plan appears to be approximately one year behind targets".
- Mr Meaney's asserted that "the IGB can stand over their statement that targets for the first year of the strategic plan were met." ([Examiner, July 09, 2014](#))
- Indecon's prediction is proven to be true and the 2014 annual accounts show a €5 million drop in turnover despite spending over €1 million in marketing.

## Phil Meaney's performance as chairman of the IGB (continued)

- At the Public Accounts Committee in November 2015, the chairman could not continue to deny the Indecon claims due to the €5m loss in the 2014 accounts so he comes up with the new “updated commercial strategy”.
- He stated in his Oireachtas statement that the “the Board in 2014 took significant steps to step up commercial performance through a new strategy and more appropriate levels of funding... All stadia now have their own web presence which is linked to gogreyhoundracing dot ie.” ([Oireachtas statement](#)).
- However there is a digital trail that shows that this **“updated commercial strategy” was never implemented** through the domain name gogreyhoundracing dot ie.”
- By 2016 the situation is getting bad for the IGB as their “updated commercial strategy” has not worked naturally enough because it was never implemented. Now they select one suggestion from the Indecon report i.e. the sale of HX.

## Tote Betting

Tote betting is a **vital revenue for the greyhound industry** because variable costs and capacity are not constraints unlike other revenue streams such as restaurant sales. If Tote turnover decreases then our Tote retention decreases which will leave us with far less revenue from which to finance our industry.

In 2006 the Tote turnover for greyhounds was €1.5 million higher than horse racing at over €50 million and **generated €6 million profits**. This success was achieved without the IGB website as it is today and online betting, and through **inter track betting, aggressive marketing and innovative new products** such as Pick 7, Pick 6 & Pick 4's with pools of over €100,000 and guaranteed Trio Pools.

Arlene was part of the team that achieved these 2006 figures and believes it would be relatively straight forward to repeat it again in a 3 year period. Staff were trained to upsell these products from the Tote Operator to the Track Continuity Announcer.

Such was the demand for these innovative products that smaller stadiums not due to open on a particular night would be **opened just to bet into the Shelbourne Park & Harold's Cross Jackpot Pools**.

## Tote Betting

Note that we are not inventing the wheel here, as these types of innovative **products are very successful in Australia and America.**

Technology has improved which means that there is an array of e-tools such as email, mobile and social media marketing that could push this tote turnover figure even higher. In addition, with the right IT infrastructure, **the opportunities for on-line betting on the Tote are colossal** with the right marketing plan and Tote operations team.

The IGB has been taking **22.5% (win & place) and 25% (forecasts & trio's)** from the tote under this regime. Industry best practice has shown that the price elasticity of demand for tote products is elastic meaning that changes in price tend to have an adverse effect on demand. Therefore we would **reduce these figures to 17% (win & place) and 19% (forecasts & trio's) because tote betting is all about value, liquidity and churn.**

There is no reason why we cannot make these products available to other internet wagering sites whether they are exchange or bookmaking sites as long as there is in place an agreed fixed return percentage of profit from our new partners.

I note the IGB currently have an SIS deal in place which operates at 3 tracks. It **returns a pittance to greyhound owners @ €10 per runner** considering that in the UK it is not unusual for owners at SIS tracks to receive £40-£50 per runner.

## **Sales & Marketing**

Since 2007 we have seen **huge reductions in all the key performance indicators (KPIs)** for the greyhound industry. The devastating fall in turnover, prizemoney, track attendance, sponsorship, ownership, breeding, bookmaker and tote income can be directly related to sales and marketing.

The Indecon report mentions 'marketing' on page 30 & 39 stating "and the crucial need to rebuild attendances by inter alia effective marketing". That's it!

**The IGB are using the Indecon report as their reason why they must sell HX and quoting it like the 'bible' for the future of greyhound racing. However it does not address the most important problem of getting customers through the turnstiles and betting on the tote.**

**Do the IGB have a marketing plan and can we get a copy of it?**

The greyhound industry needs a sales & marketing department that can formulate and implement best practice techniques using all the marketing e-tools that are currently available through technology. If the IGB's **sales & marketing activities are sorted then many of the other problems for the greyhound industry will fall into place.**

## Sales & Marketing

Geraldine Larkin's remarks to the Oireachtas ([click here](#)) stated that "increased marketing spend has **enabled investment in marketing to the Tour Operator** and Incentive markets. We have increased our presence at the number of Irish, UK and European Trade Fairs and all of this activity should yield dividends based on the booking cycles of these companies from next year onwards."

Consequently the IGB's activities in Sales & Marketing are focused on the tourist trade. We believe that this target audience will not produce the greatest positive return for the IGB business model. **Do the IGB have a marketing plan?**

Ms Larkin's remarks are confirmed by a tweet on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2017 "selling #anightatthedogs to tourism & travel trade". We believe that tourists will **not spend big on the tote** and are naturally **never going to become regular customers**.

There are so many other customer segments that should be targeted ahead of the tourist trade. What brought the IGB's marketing department to the decision that this "increased marketing spend" on the tourist trade would generate the best value for money for the greyhound industry.



## Sales & Marketing

We believe that the IGB do not have a plan. Consequently we have written a 96 page strategic framework to develop a sales & marketing plan for the greyhound industry.

[www.pietas.ie/pdf/igbreport.pdf](http://www.pietas.ie/pdf/igbreport.pdf)

The aim is to identify the **most and least profitable customer segments** of the business to ensure that funding and resources are applied to those areas that produce the greatest positive return. We would be confident that **tour operators would fall into the least profitable category** and the IGB seven figure marketing budget could be much better spent.

This process begins by identifying every value proposition that applies to each track. The value proposition asks the question '**what problem are you solving**' or '**what need are you satisfying**' for the customer.

A problem might be a football club or a social group looking for a platform to raise funds. A need might be 25 year old's wanting entertainment and a few pints before they hit the night clubs or a family with young kids wanting something fun to do on the weekend.

## Sales & Marketing

These problems and needs will differ and will help to identify the different customer segments that relate to the business model and which need to be forensically targeted.

Each track should have at least ten customer segments to target that **relate back to their local market**. Though validation we can figure out these customer's geographic, social, behavioural and demographic characteristics in order to develop an archetype or persona of the customer.

**What you are trying to do is identify groups of consumers who respond in a similar way to marketing efforts.**

Once you have identified your customer segments then the **distribution channels** (how does the marketing message get to the customers) become obvious.

For example you might use social media for the 25 year old wanting entertainment and a few pints before hitting the night clubs. Maybe you would use email marketing to communicate with clubs or groups looking to raise funds and **each track should develop and maintain a database of contacts for each customer segment in their area.**



## Sales & Marketing

Identifying the customer segments will also help to refine your content marketing. **The content in the marketing message should be relevant and add value to the recipient.**

In our previous example, the 25 year old will not want to hear about 'communions & confirmations' offers.

The overall objective is to create a framework that **identifies all the possible revenue streams that are available and add-value** to the greyhound industry. Only then can we develop a series of hypotheses that allows us to organise our thinking in terms of the tactical tools (email, social media, mobile marketing, off-line marketing) to apply to the relevant customer segments, for each of the profitable revenue streams.

**In other words the customer segment determines the marketing mix.**

This is a lean / agile process that involves the idea of iteration and the incremental delivery of the solution through trial and error where error is used as a source of information. If every trial provides you with information about what does not work, you start zooming in on a solution – so every attempt becomes valuable, more like an expense than an error.

This process will develop a marketing plan for the greyhound industry that incorporates all the **best practice techniques and tools that will be needed to get the sales figures back to the levels** when Paschal Taggart was chairman of the IGB.

## IGB Bank Debt

With all bank interest being paid in full for all years and significant capital repayments in the last 2 years, plus a positive business plan, there is **very little chance of the bank putting in a receiver or liquidator.**

### Interest paid in full each year

2011	€550,489
2012	€530,315
2013	€377,438
2014	€492,299
2015	€479,152
2016	€409,000

### Bank balance changes each year

2012	Increased debt	€137,161
2013	Increased debt	€27,207
2014	Increased debt	€166,133
2015	Repaid debt	€1,112,919
2016	Repaid debt	€750,000

**We can only assume that the bank are putting pressure on the IGB due to the fact that the IGB projections for the last ten years have never been achieved.**

# RE-OPEN HARROLD'S CROSS MAKE THE IRISH GREYHOUND INDUSTRY GREAT AGAIN

The IGB nearly halved prize money from 2007 to 2015. No wonder greyhound folk from all over Ireland met in the Horse and Jockey on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> of April and **voted unanimously for the removal of this Board and Dr Brady.**



The facts are **devastating falls** in turnover, prizemoney, track attendance, sponsorship, ownership, breeding, bookmaker and tote income. The only thing that has **gone up is IGB wages** and yet the board trumpet a solid surpluses to the Dial, the media and the public every year.

## CLOSURE OF HAROLDS CROSS

Dr Sean Brady was appointed interim CEO of the IGB. Within 3 weeks of his appointment, **without even calling a meeting of the HX Directors**, he padlocked the gates in the middle of the night, and supervised the removal of traps, equipment and furniture.

To say the DGOBA members were infuriated is putting it mildly. This dastardly act **united nearly every greyhound owner and trainer** from Knocknagoshel to Ballymena against Dr Brady and the Board.

Huge, huge mistake.

The DGOBA and their hundreds of supporters commenced a picket on Shelbourne Park with the result **there has been no racing in Dublin for the past eight weeks** and with little prospect of a resolution.

This is causing severe financial pressure on owners, trainers and dozens of part time staff. It is also **killing the go greyhound racing brand**.

## CLOSURE OF HAROLDS CROSS

The IGB are still having to pay the permanent staff in both stadiums. Dr Brady did call a meeting for yesterday in Dublin to **give protective notices** but when some of the staff called in their union, **the union informed him that they would call out their union members in Limerick** and elsewhere which would close every track in the country.

**As HX and SP are the main financial drivers of the Irish Greyhound Industry it will be very interesting to see how this Board will arrive at their usual operating surplus in 2017.**

When you take this very stupid decision, and examine the financial disasters of the past few years, paid for by reducing prize money dramatically to owners and trainers, then you would think this Board would do the decent thing and **resign.**

We know there are several good people on the Board but unfortunately collectively they have made a monumental error of judgement. The resolve of the DGOBA is such that even the sale of HX will not stop their picket on SP, and as long as that picket is in place none of our greyhounds will be even entered to race there.

## RE-OPEN HARROLD'S CROSS MAKE THE IRISH GREYHOUND INDUSTRY GREAT AGAIN

The two Ministers in charge have been badly advised. Their Department officials have fallen into the trap of believing operating surpluses mean a healthy greyhound industry.

I recommend that the Department of Agriculture put in place monitoring & control procedures to protect the taxpayer and ensure adequate prize money for the greyhound owner, trainer and breeder. There should always be a DOA official on the board or at worst attending board meetings and that this official has a strong financial background.

During all of the time I was Chairman of the Irish Greyhound Board there was **always a DOA official on the board (Mr Luke Mulligan)**.

Prize money is the only figure that matters to the owner and trainer, and this amount has collapsed spectacularly between 2007 and 2016 despite increases in the Horse and Greyhound grants.

Access this slideshow and the sales & marketing report online at;

[www.pietas.ie/pdf/igbreport.pdf](http://www.pietas.ie/pdf/igbreport.pdf)

[www.pietas.ie/pdf/slides.pdf](http://www.pietas.ie/pdf/slides.pdf)

The Chairman, the Acting CEO, the BOARD have to go. **Their performance over the past number of years has been absolutely horrendous.** They have signed off on some of the worst annual accounts in Irish commercial history.