



NSW News

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Classified as the best one turn track in the country and probably the world, Harold Park in Sydney has now been closed for 16 years.

No sooner had the famous course run its last race, that the industry wanted it back. In the past decade, rumours and speculation have circulated about the reopening of Harold Park but other options were continually pressured.

Real estate in Sydney's west became available at Liverpool and it was suggested greyhound racing should purchase the land and construct its own track where we would be in financial control, have no council, Show Society or landlord problems.

But as NSW remains in a state of disillusion as to where this industry is going, all these options were sidestepped before the National Coursing Association purchased the Breakers Stadium in Newcastle.

Then it appeared finally a smart business move had been made.

A club that owned its own land, had a licensed club and the aim to construct a premier greyhound track in the Hunter Valley.

But many hurdles have seen plans lay idle.

In recent weeks the speculation and rumours have surfaced regarding the return to Harold Park, and this time they have a strong foundation.

In the past 12 months and more so in the past six, both metropolitan clubs have had open communication with Harold Park.

CEO of Harold Park, John Dumesny, has admitted the club would welcome back greyhound racing and it is one of his goals now as CEO.



“We (Harold Park) have opened dialogue with both metropolitan clubs. The three parties have spoken at least six times in the past six months. “If either or both clubs return to Harold Park, they will come back as tenants. We own the property where Harold Park is based and it would be beneficial to both parties,” Dumesny said.

If both the NCA and GBOTA were to move out of Wentworth Park it would have to be at a reduced cost in rent to make it a viable move, but the facilities for racing at Harold Park are certainly far more acceptable than on offer at present at Wentworth Park.

Problems at Wenty are the needed upgrade of kennels and the current bistro which is situated below the grandstand. The Miracle Mile restaurant at Harold Park is a perfect racing-dining facility.

The grandstand at Wenty was built for the 1970's rather than the requirements of today.

The cost to move back to Harold Park would be around \$3 million according to Dumesny.

“Rough estimates would have costing at around three million plus, a cost that the government predicted a few years ago.

“We would have to look at all the engineering skills to decide if we should construct a smaller

track or a large one-turn track and then where to have the infield car park.”

A tunnel like Mooney Valley is expected.

At present Harold Park also controls the Menangle Park track in Sydney’s south-west.

But there has been no talk and no possibility of greyhound racing in that area according to Dumesny.

“Harold Park is the richest club anywhere and there is a place for greyhound racing.

The trots race twice a week and the dogs should be racing here two or three times a week. This complex needs to be utilized at its full capacity,” he said.

When asked if losing greyhound to Harold Park back in the late 80’s is now a regret, his said: “I was not around then, but yes it has been, it was the choice of the club to leave but is was prompted by government at the time.

“We (Harold Park) are here to listen and to help, on a scale of 1-10 on greyhound racing returning to Harold Park, I rate it a 10.

“It is growing stronger than a 50-50 chance at this stage. It is now up to both greyhound clubs”, Dumesny said.

So now the pressure returns to both the NCA and GBOTA to fuel talks and bring it to a conclusion as soon as possible.

Harold Park has been the place of champions, Zoom Top, Chief Havoc, Brother Fox.

Victoria lost Olympic Park but gained The Meadows, Queensland lost the Gabba but gained Albion Park, so why can’t NSW return to the place where racing should never have ceased.

Harold Park wants greyhound racing back, surely this industry can finally move in a direction that has been badly lacking for years and make a decision in the months ahead.

There have been some great memories over five decades at Wenty but there is a place for only one city track now and the future may about to be resurrected.