

Tabled by Mance Collopy  
5/2/2014.

Mr. Chair and committee members, albeit there are numerous problems in our industry, there is nothing wrong which cannot be fixed, it is not hard to solve the problems ... nor is it costly.

TO EXPAND ON MY WRITTEN SUBMISSION, I BELIEVE THAT

- The Racing portfolio needs to be removed from the long list of responsibilities of ONE minister and, perhaps along with gaming, be a stand alone portfolio, for even a junior minister.

Historically, Racing in NSW has been combined under one minister with numerous other more popular or more visible ministerial portfolios, and has therefore taken a back seat to its fellow portfolios of tourism, major events, hospitality, liquor, arts, sports, gaming, etc.

It needs a dedicated ministry to sort the industry's issues, even if only for the short term.

I mean no criticism of the current minister, The Honourable George Souris, after all, the problems facing the industry were inherited from former state governments.

**But we need a minister with the time to correct the errors.**

Incidentally, in Victoria, the Premier himself is the Minister for Racing, which is an indication of the importance of the industry there. Greyhound Racing Victoria re-negotiated its agreement with Tabcorp and the other racing codes, as we wish to do, and has since experienced significant growth and income.

- The Alan Cameron report **recommended** that the state government intervene and solve the unfair tri-code agreement if the 3 codes could not do it themselves. However, this was **not supported** by the minister of the day, which is just another example of the lack of time, interest and understanding of the industry by **repeated** racing ministers and state governments, and I ask you to recommend that the current government does just that ... **intervene**.
- I believe that the GRNSW Board needs to be reconstituted with a criteria of 60% of the board membership having hands-on industry experience, to prevent more appalling decision making. Appointing bean counters and those with no industry knowledge or with conflicted interests ... has not been a successful exercise.

- Poor decision making resulted in the closure of Cessnock, Wyong and Singleton, 3 tracks in the greyhound breeding belt and heartland, which then led to participants leaving the sport ... less breeding ... thus, the current lack of nominations at key tracks ... the lack of reserves ... the lack of quality fields, and thus a downturn in TAB wagering and income.
- This can be partly solved by encouraging breeding. Breeding takes place in country NSW, not the urban areas (due to noise and cost of land restraints), so key breeding regions must be encouraged, and one way to do that is to reopen Cessnock with a loam surface. The cost of converting the Gunnedah track to loam was only \$60,000, so we are not talking about big money here.

If tracks are to be closed, we should take into account demographics, the number of participants, the number of nearby breeders, the number of nominations, the effect their closure will have on the industry overall.

The closure of the Cessnock track was an example of the lack of planning and vision of management and the board at the time. Only three months prior to closure, Greyhound Racing NSW spent \$428,000 at Cessnock on a new kennel block, a watering system and installation of Sky. Cessnock's turnover was \$450,000 per meeting, second in the industry only to Wentworth Park, and as a comparison the Maitland track held less than \$250,000 per meeting.

- The focus in recent years in NSW has been on regulation, adding costs. Rome is burning, yet there has been no focus on growth, correcting past errors or increasing income through fairer tab dividends ... the regulation focus needs to be matched by better administration, innovation and promotion.

We the industry participants continue to carry the industry whilst our ministers, boards and regulators let us down, we need to work as one.

The Honourable Robert Borsak and committee members, thank you for initiating this committee, and showing more interest in our industry than previous state governments have shown in decades.

Recognising the cost of this enquiry, and the efforts of participants in presenting 1000 submissions, I hope that you will make the necessary recommendations ... allowing the industry to solve its problems and go forward.

I repeat that the myriad of problems are not hard or costly to solve, but the state government needs to want to solve them, and we need you to provide that leadership.