



# WELFARE OF RACING GREYHOUNDS

# IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE & REHOMING

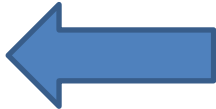
Karen Cunnington BSc BVSc Hons

[www.greyhoundrehomingcentre.org](http://www.greyhoundrehomingcentre.org)

Advocating welfare improvement for all greyhounds through education & cultural change



# Statistics: The Facts

- 3,300 litters per year are registered with Greyhounds Australasia\*
- $3,300 \times 6.5$  (average numbers of puppies in a litter)=21, 450
- 13,300 greyhounds named (registered for racing)
- $21\ 450 - 13,300 = \mathbf{8150}$  puppies/young that are not suitable for racing (failure to chase, injuries, lack ability)
- **38 % initial failure rate**  STRESS = REDUCED PERFORMANCE
- Very little if any regulation of the dogs that are unnamed

\*figures obtained from Greyhounds Australasia



# STRESS AFFECTS PERFORMANCE & COMPROMISES WELFARE

- Proactive collaborative approach with researchers to
  - Reduce the number of dogs bred
  - Reduce rejection rates (wastage)
  - Reduce rehoming pressure

VS

- Reactive
  - GAP
- Financially viable?

The  
Greyhound  
Rehoming  
Centre



# UK FUNDED RSPCA RESEARCH

- 4 year project
- Multiple areas of concern identified at all life stages, similar to Australia
- Identified areas of priority are:
  - Effects of transport
    - Short and long distance
  - Periodontal disease
  - To reduce “wastage”
    - Using a statistical modelling technique to assess all factors that have an impact on performance

The  
Greyhound  
Rehoming  
Centre



# GOOD WELFARE

PHYSICAL

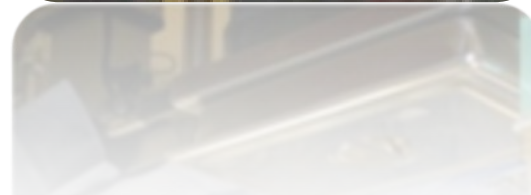
MENTAL

One without the other = stress



# BREEDING

- Surgical procedures
  - AI
- In-breeding
- Injury prone lines
- Anxiety is heritable





# PUPPIES (to 12 weeks)



- Minimal handling
- Lack of socialisation and exposure to novel stimuli





# REARING (3 – 15 months)

- Largely outdoors in paddocks
- Minimal human contact, Nutritional concerns
- Lack of appropriate socialisation & exposure to novel stimuli (habituation)
  - Excessive prey drive
  - Generalised fearfulness





The  
Greyhound  
Rehoming  
Centre



# REARING



\*picture from No Agent Reality, "Premium Greyhound Rearing Property for sale"



# TRAINING

- Extremely stressful time
  - Not habituated to kennels
  - Transport
  - Nutrition
  - Injuries
  - Lose contact with other dogs
  - Shut in their sleeping quarters
- Lack of environmental enrichment
- Approach and knowledge is lacking



Fear = Compromised welfare = wastage

# REHOMING



**Need this for racing**



**But want this for retirement**

**And there is no time, facilities, budget or expertise for this remarkable transformation to take place!**



# ADOPTION COSTS

- \$3000 - \$6000 per dog
- Cost to re-home 50 % of dogs under current adoption model
  - \$ 60 million!





# HOW DOES REARING, TRAINING & RACING IMPACT ON REHOMING SUCCESS?

Case studies:

- Joe: High prey drive [Joe.wmv](#)
- Betty Blue: Generalised fear [Betty blue.wmv](#)

# NSW Government

## Companion Animals Act 1998

Pt 5 Division 1 Sn 33A

### **What is a declared dangerous dog?**

- has, without provocation, repeatedly threatened to attack or repeatedly chased a person or animal (not including vermin)



# It is an offence under the Companion Animals Act 1998 to:

- Sell or advertising for sale, *a proposed* dangerous or menacing dog
  - 150 penalty units/\$16,500
- Accept ownership of *a proposed* dangerous or menacing dog
  - 150 penalty units/\$16,500



# Joe



What would you do?

# Summary

- Additional funding for rehoming is pointless unless it is combined with significant changes to:
  - Breeding
  - Rearing
  - Kennelling
  - Training
  - Education &
  - Enforcement





# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Independent audit of rearing establishments
  - Numbers of dogs
  - Environment
  - Socialisation
  - Success rates

