

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

I have been involved with rescue greyhound organisations for several years; fostering greyhounds, helping with fundraising and raising awareness that greyhounds make great pets. I also have a pet greyhound - she is a joy to have as part of our family. She is gentle with children and very intelligent; she has learnt over 20 commands and tricks.

The longer I am involved in this field, the more I learn and the more I hear of first-hand accounts of sick and malnourished greyhounds being rescued. I see the stress and emotional strain of rescuers as their foster hounds go through surgeries, have behavioural issues as a result of abuse and who have to be taught how to do basic things such as walk up stairs, play with a toy, eat a bone - a lot don't have the opportunity to experience normal and healthy canine behaviour in their greyhound kennel where 22 or so hours of their day is usually spent.

Greyhounds, contrary to popular myth aren't born to race. They like a short run or walk and then a 12 hour nap on the couch – and in many cases, preferably with their head on your lap.

The over-breeding of greyhounds (approx. 20,000 annually in Australia) is shocking. The approximate guess is that 40%+ of greyhounds born never see a race track as they don't have the instinct to chase (another popular myth debunked). That equates to 40% of dogs who cannot be a money-making commodity for a racing industry person, and is therefore classed as useless - the industry term for these dogs is 'wastage'. Most of those are killed, be it humanely via euthanasia or cruelly via other means. Greyhound racing results in the largest puppy milling operation in Australia yet most turn a blind eye to this fact. It is time for this killing industry to be held to account. Thousands and thousands of beautiful greys are getting killed every year – their only crime is not running fast enough or becoming too old to bare puppies. Every time I see a brood girl come through the rescue my heart breaks – here's a dog that has been used as a puppy machine, and once she's no longer useful, at around 8 years old, to make someone money they take her to the vet to be killed. This is unacceptable.

'Blooding' is illegal in Australia but it is general knowledge that it is a common form of training technique still used in greyhound training. Blooding involves dragging live rabbits, possums or cats around a track. I have heard that rabbits are used most as the scream they let off as their dying revs up the greyhounds, so they're better for training. If you contact pet rabbit sellers from Gumtree and similar selling websites, it does not take long to find a seller who refuses to sell to greyhound trainers. I myself have seen an advert with 'no greyhound trainers please' at the bottom of the ad. So there is not only cruelty to dogs - but to cats, possums and rabbits in the greyhound racing industry.

Many greyhounds brake bones on the track as a direct result of racing - fact. The majority of those injured dogs are put to death - fact. A very high percentage of injured could be medically attended to, recover and be rehomed to a family – fact. A very small percentage would need to be euthanised. Why, as a society, as a group of educated individuals, can we tolerate such inhumane treatment to man's best friend? Dogs of all breeds feel pain and fear; greyhounds are no different and thus need protection from such human behaviour generated by greed for money. The topic of economic rationalisation is no longer something that can be hidden behind anymore.

I urge you to use your position to help protect the lovely greyhound breed by ensuring that the over-breeding and killings stop and greyhounds are treated with the same respect and care that our community would expect for any animal. The classification of the greyhound breed needs to be changed to that of a companion animal - currently they are not. They should not be treated as a commodity. Please represent my concerns about the status of greyhounds and the treatment of the greyhounds in New South Wales, and Australia as a whole. The greys don't have a voice, so we need people of principle to stand up and be theirs.