

Submission
No 587

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 6/11/2013

Partially Confidential

To : Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW

Date: 6 November 2013

Submission Heading – Various Issues

Relevance / Terms of Reference – (a) The economic viability of the Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW

(d) The effectiveness of current industry regulation, including the level of autonomy of Greyhound Racing NSW

(h) The capability and performance of Greyhound Racing NSW and governance of the industry

What I would Like to Say:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to put in a submission in relation to greyhound racing in New South Wales. I have a number of points I would like to make.

1. The first issue I would like to raise is the poor return to owners and trainers. The costs of purchasing/breeding and maintaining greyhounds have increased over the years. These costs include petrol, meat, kibble, supplements and vet bills. Greyhounds are professional animals and so need to be fed, housed and trained properly. Although there has been some increase in prize money it has not kept pace with the costs. It is difficult to continue racing in New South Wales while the prize money is so low. I do not like the TAB C meetings because the owner/trainer gets half prize money while the government, TAB, other bookmakers and GRNSW get their full share. If a meeting is to be put on TAB it should be the full TAB prize money.
2. I am concerned at the way GRNSW is constantly changing the rules and policies with no consultation with participants. Worse still there are cases of no notification to participants and where there is it is on the website which many participants do not

access. An example of where participants have had no notification of a change is in relation to performance trial time standards. These are unpopular. Participants were told that they were introduced to ensure that greyhounds racing at TAB meetings had disclosed form and this would be better for punters. However, the TAB did not include the performance trials on their form sheets. Over time these trials have involved to the stage where there is a time standard. However, GRNSW will not tell participants what the time standard is.

3. I am not happy that GRNSW waited so long to cancel the racing licence of the NCA. Too much industry money has been wasted propping up the NCA.
4. I allege that GRNSW's 70% share of the Gardens complex is a conflict of interest. GRNSW distributes funds, race dates etc. to all the tracks including the Gardens. How can GRNSW be seen to be fair when it has a majority share of one of the tracks.
5. I find that staff and board members of GRNSW are unapproachable. I signed a petition requesting members of the board meet with participants to hear our concerns. The only reply was a letter giving an email address where participants could send their concerns.
6. I do not agree with the GRNSW decision to cease publishing race fields and race results in the mainstream media. I think it reduces the coverage of our sport as there are still many people who use the newspaper for information as they cannot use a computer.
7. I allege GRNSW has mismanaged our funds by having such large numbers of employees with too many working in areas that should belong to the clubs. The "Our Team" shows a CEO, Chief Operating Officer, 4 General Managers and 5 Managers. Why do they need a general manager media and content as well as a communication's manager.

8. I also allege GRNSW have mismanaged our funds in relation to the new computer system. The IT people did not consult with either club officials or participants when the system was being designed. Since then we have seen races redrawn, the points system changed to accommodate the computer rather than the other way around and country tracks having to wait hours for their draws. Probably the worst of all is the new race book which is cumbersome and hard to read in that information for the one greyhound is on 2 pages and I believe expensive for the clubs.

9. GRNSW have approximately 61 staff and 3 of the staff are employed in the media section, why does our industry need 3 staff in the media is this the reason why GRNSW has cut expenses for media coverage in newspapers i.e. no race fields or race results in the Sun Herald, Sydney Morning Herald. I believe GRNSW is also intending to cut the last remaining media coverage in the The Daily Telegraph & Sunday Telegraph. Like all sports we need media coverage & good stories to promote our great sport and to encourage new and younger people (future generation as owners & trainers to our sport). Also not everybody owns a computer or is computer literate and if they don't see any coverage in our daily newspapers they will think that there is no greyhound racing in NSW and will invest their money elsewhere i.e. interstate, pokies etc.

10. I am just one of many who knows that the Greyhound Industry should be governed and or controlled by a Government Body to keep the "Bastards" Honest (an old saying from Sir Joh Bjelke-Peterson) as who elected the current GRNSW Administration etc. and why aren't these people made to go through a re-selection process just like all politicians who have to be re-elected after every 3/4 years?? What is the selection criteria & process and who checks if the current GRNSW administration is meeting all the company requirements and standards, who checks their KPI's and Appraisals and allocates their pay increases every year.

11. Also I would like to allege how unprofessional GRNSW is i.e. a dress code especially when they are conducting hearings etc. on a Friday when it is mufti day??

12. Why does GRNSW update their office furniture every 12 months?
13. I am a third generation hobby owner, trainer and breeder of greyhounds. I have 2 retired Greyhounds that I kept as pets, even though neither of them made it to the race track, 1 fell in a trail and broke his leg which I paid the \$1000.00 for the operation plus all the ongoing veterinary costs for the next 4 to 6 months and the other dog was very injury prone and never raced either but I kept both of them. They are now 8 years old and live a life of luxury and still get walked and fed twice a day just like when they were in race training, they have hammocks and nice soft mattresses that are covered with blankets and are rugged up in the winter months. They love travelling in the car whether it is a trip to the vets or to the beach for a swim in summer time.
14. I am concerned that whenever prize money is allocated that too much goes towards the 1st prize of Group Races. The prize money should be allocated evenly and fairly across the board from 1st place to last (8th) place to help cover the costs of racing a greyhound as the current allocation does not make it viable for participants to stay and compete in the industry. We need a far better distribution of the prize money as the current allocation does not cover the cost of petrol, fares into the track, dinner, the preparation of getting the dogs fit to race day/night fitness i.e. trials, food and vet bills. We need to be able to keep all of the current participants in the sport and we also need new and bigger incentives to attract new and younger participants to become involved in the sport.
15. The travel allowance that is currently in place should be increased as it does not cover the costs of petrol and wear and tear to your vehicle.
16. I believe the dress code should be changed from a white shirt to a darker colour say black or navy blue and that GRNSW should also adopt the same rug coloured coats that is currently in place in Adelaide it looks more professional and more appealing to the audience i.e. on track or on sky channel

17. I believe the waiting period for the Greyhound Adoption Programme or Greyhounds As Pets is anywhere from a 12 months to 18 months waiting list just to get the retired greyhound/racer into. I also believe it is very hard for the retired greyhound / racer to pass the programme to be re-homed.

18. I allege the announcement that GRNSW made back in September, 2013 re investing \$1.3 million on greyhound welfare initiatives including the Greyhound Adoption Programme in 2013/14 was only made after the Greyhound Action Group were successful in obtaining a Parliamentary Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in NSW. Why is GRNSW all of a sudden concerned regarding welfare issues in the Greyhound Industry when numerous breeders, owners, trainers and participants in NSW have been trying to obtain a meeting with the GRNSW Executive Officer, Board of Directors and Admin (whoever) re the participants concerns with the industry in NSW to no avail, why is it all of a sudden after the Parliamentary Inquiry was approved that GRNSW is now making out that they are concerned for the industry when they did not want to meet and talk to any of the participants in NSW.

19. I allege the \$1.3 million GRNSW is investing in the above is being paid for by the industry yet again from the Country Tracks i.e. Prize money etc. why is GRNSW not using the \$1.3 million from the \$5 million profit that the industry returned in the last financial year oh that's right I allege they need to keep the \$5 million for themselves i.e. Staff Bonuses, Annual Pay Increases, New Office Furniture (I believe every 12 months this happens), Overtime, Gym Memberships etc.

20. I allege Sky Channel always favours the other 2 codes i.e. Thoroughbred and Standard bred Harness in particular then the Greyhounds, we run a very poor last for coverage etc. why is GRNSW not going into bat for the Greyhound participants for a fairer deal on coverage etc. and why should the battling code of the 3 race codes have to pay for the additional SKY 2 channel so greyhound owners can see their dogs race as the dogs are always relegated to SKY 2 for coverage.

21. I am concerned with GRNSW new release dated 01-11-13 (all of below statement) especially the point of "FUTURE DIRECTION OF METROPOLITAN RACING" as I allege that GRNSW wants to relocate Metropolitan Racing from Wentworth Park to preferably Richmond Greyhound Racing Club or even the slightest possibility to the Gardens. I allege that this is a conflict of interest as the current CEO of Richmond Racing Club's previous employment was with GRNSW as a Steward and all the talk going around for the past 4 6 months is that Richmond is going to be the Metropolitan Track in the near future.

22. I also allege that there is a conflict of interest with the Gardens as GRNSW owns 70 % of the land at this venue. Three tracks, Wyong, Singleton and Cessnock were closed and their dates taken over by the Gardens in order for the Gardens to be viable.

23. GRNSW is embarking on a new strategic planning process to outline a shared vision and direction that will ensure greyhound racing in NSW continues to prosper into the future.

Consultation is an important component of developing the strategic plan for the next phase in the future of our sport.

As part of this process GRNSW will be seeking feedback from participants and other stakeholders on the following issues:

- Future direction of Metropolitan Racing;
- Location of and accessibility to racing;
- Racing and trialing facilities;
- Spread of TAB B and C meetings;
- Race programming;
- Growing participation;

- Ongoing animal welfare improvements; and
- Other issues that people may wish to raise.

As part of its consultation activities, GRNSW will hold a series of focus groups around the state to discuss the key challenges and issues facing the sport over the next decade. The focus groups are designed to be representative of all sections of the industry and are an opportunity for participants to share their ideas on how to make the sport better. However, none of the focus group dates are scheduled for a weekend which would be a good time for participants who work.

In addition to the focus groups, GRNSW will also be taking written submissions from any interested party.

Yours Sincerely