

Submission  
No 608

## INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Members of the Committee:

We have worked for Greyhound Rescue agencies for five years, both in Western Australia and here in the East. We feel that we do make a difference not only to the individual dogs that we save but to the education and awareness of the general public. We're not radicals or extremists, we're just ordinary folks that found out what actually happens to these dogs and were initially in disbelief, then outraged, then compelled to help.

It has become obvious to us that the registration figure of 20,000 pups per year is at the route of the massive wastage – How can it be that the industry needs this number of pups to sustain themselves, when out of this number there are 95% the dogs being killed, the numbers speak for themselves, the rescue groups Australia wide see no more than five percent of this total number. How can this consumption be justified.? The dogs we save were certain to be euthanised, whether because of lack of speed or injury, they were no longer of use. Some 'fortunate' dogs are euthanized by a qualified vet, others are bled out and then euthanized, but many, many are shot by designated people in the industry for the charge of a few bucks. These are not isolated cases; many hundreds are disposed of in this way. I met a trainer once who actually said to me, "There's no choice to make, \$70 for the vet to do it or 70c for a bullet". Yes, of course, it's illegal, but who cares? The laws that already exist are not being enforced. Up until now the sins of the industry stayed in the industry. We have all spoken to trainers/owners who don't indulge in these types of methods, and treat their dogs with care, but they know those who do, and they do nothing. It's also worth mentioning that even the caring trainers seem to be blinded to the fact the race itself is injurious to many dogs and fatal to several in a given year.

I had a beautiful four year old who died in my arms a year ago of kidney failure – when presented to the vet 6 months earlier – he was unequivocally diagnosed as being a 'drug dog'. He had been pumped full of drugs to keep him running, till he couldn't run anymore. When his kidneys showed signs of trouble, did they take him to be treated? No, he was sent to the vet school to be euthanised. Thankfully they were oversubscribed so he was rescued, and spent the rest of his short life being properly cared for. This practice is also illegal, and it is routine in the racing world – but the industry is not adequately policed, so they give the dogs whatever they believe will give them an edge against the rival dogs. It could be steroids, cocaine, methamphetamine, which is popular at the moment, or all manner of stimulants and concoctions. They hope, of course, not to be caught by the stewards, but if they are, they treat it as an occupational hazard and move on with a fine or a ban for three months, in extreme incidences. Whatever penalty has been ascribed to them fine or ban, there is rarely any official

intervention by the police. The dogs do not administer the drugs to themselves or do they buy them on the street. So someone is committing an offence, why are they not prosecuted?

In some cases, they remove their ears (they have identifying tattoos) before turning them out to scavenge on the streets, in some warped way they think this is kinder than killing them. Some dogs come in with previously untreated fractures and ligament damage, cigarette burns on their bodies and ears, teeth rotting in their heads. This is barbarism in our midst, and the general public knows little of it, and when they do find out, they are as stunned as we were that these gentle creatures are suffering terrible abuse ; for sport?

Why did we get rid of Cock fighting? Why do we ban Pit Bulls and other fighting dogs? Why are we too afraid to scrutinize the cruelty and neglect that is going on in communities all over Australia? It can't be just because it's conveniently disguised in a glossy coat, surely. Is it really necessary to generate 20,000 puppies per year to feed this industry that refuses to firstly, own up to the depravity and secondly, discipline it's offenders adequately, and rid themselves of these undesirables. It's worth repeating that only a few percent of this massive amount ever reach loving homes.

In America there are only three States left which condone this ugly sport. In the UK, dog racing has declined tremendously in the last 13 years, mainly because the critical mass of people who learned what was going on behind closed doors, increased to the point where it was politically untenable to support such practices.

Are we less civilized than the UK or the US? Surely, we don't want to be branded as the barbarous cousins of the western nations. We have led the field in so many modern concepts, why are we reticent to take action here? We must cut down drastically on the wastage of these beautiful dogs. Therefore, there has to be action taken to reduce the annual breeding numbers and increase the responsibility of aftercare for trainers and owners. If they want to make money from them, it's only fair that they must pay restitution for their welfare, before, during and after racing. It's not anywhere near sufficient for Greyhounds Australia to fund and staff a few adoption agencies around the country to salve their consciences and keep the public quiet, when they only save a handful of that 20,000. I can't think of another section of Australian society that is flouting the laws and regulations in such a cavalier manner, and getting away with murder.

There will always be gambling, in moderation it's exciting entertainment and has been in our culture for millennia. But we have moved past betting on the direction of Nero's thumb and we have also moved past using live animals for entertainment. The day is not far away when using animals in circuses will be a thing of the past worldwide, because the public had a distaste for the cruelty that has been revealed, as they will when enough people realise what's going in the

Greyhound world. There may be a lot of money riding on it, but when there are so many other legitimate alternatives to gamble on, we must not throw away our collective morality to enable this blatant misuse of the word Sport. Aussie's like to think of sport as a wholesome pursuit, if anyone tries to look into this with open eyes, they will find that it is anything but.

These are only some of the facts, I have had no need to exaggerate or elaborate the content of this submission. In so many ways the issues are more shocking than can be written about in a document of this size and the horrors more graphic than can be described. I will mention however, the inhumanity of selling and shipping hundreds of dogs to Macau, to suffer terror, cruelty and eventual slaughter. To send these wonderful trusting creatures to a country that has the most appalling record for human rights, let alone animal ones is nothing short of a travesty. How is this right, or even possible for us to sanction? As has been said before, if we were talking about Golden Retrievers or Maltese Terriers the country would be up in arms. We are talking about killing thousands upon thousands of sensitive, gentle and loving Greyhounds, who just need us to scratch the surface of their plight – then they will get the help and care they need. Until then they will be left to this fate.

Please be open minded enough to question many of the denials made by the industry, and search for the sometimes unpalatable true– if that happens I know that you will be willing to help us eventually eradicate this stain on our character. Make sure we understand what is going on, curtail the greed and punish the offenders. Above all, do everything we can to address the immediate need to reduce the annual numbers and make sure they help with the aftercare, for the very dogs that give their all for them. Otherwise we cannot yet call ourselves a civilized nation.