

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Name Suppressed

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Partially Confidential

The Director
Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir/ Madam

History has proven that any industry that relies on making financial gains from animals is likely to be fraught with animal abuse and a lack of transparency arising from poor governance; and the greyhound racing industry in NSW is no different.

The evidence available, which is often questionable or under-represented as much of it is generated from the Greyhound Racing NSW itself

Animal welfare and abuse concerns:

- Estimates suggest that 17,000 greyhounds are killed in Australia each year.
- According to figures provided by Greyhound Racing NSW, over 3,000 greyhounds are put down in NSW alone each year, essentially because they are not 'profitable' (i.e. "too slow", have been injured racing or training, or have reached the end of their racing career).
- These figures are likely to be grossly under-represented as data on the number of pups born, incidences of injuries and number of dogs killed in the NSW greyhound racing industry each year is not publically available, and there are no government requirements relating to the collation and auditing of such data. Tracking of greyhound from birth to death largely relies on breeders and owners self-reporting to Greyhound Racing NSW. This situation is totally unacceptable and government requirements and standards for data collation and reporting should be put on the industry. This process should preferably be independent.
- Injuries and illnesses suffered by dogs in the greyhound racing industry include broken legs, paralysis, head trauma and cardiac arrests from over exertion. Racing is based on pushing animals to, or beyond their physical limits, in order to make profits for owners.
- As highlighted in a recent report on ABC's 4 Corners, there are also allegations that dogs are being fed performance enhancing drugs, including cocaine and amphetamines. Across the Australia, positive drug swabs rose 82 per cent from 2010/11 to 2011/12.
- The fact that only 300 dogs have been re-homed since 2009 under Greyhound Racing NSW's 'Greyhounds As Pets' program highlights the lack of concern or compassion by owners. There have been several reports that many owners are more content to have their dogs injected, shot or bled to death.

Lack of governance concerns and independent oversight

- There is no independent oversight of the greyhound racing industry in NSW. The industry is governed by Greyhound Racing NSW, an autonomous non-government body established in 2009 under the *Greyhound Racing Act*. GRNSW is responsible for both the regulatory and commercial functions of the industry.
- Under the legislation an integrity auditor is to be appointed, however this appointment is by GRNSW itself. This creates a clear conflict of interest as the integrity officer is responsible for

overseeing stewards, drug testing, and control and registration, advising GRNSW on those matters and investigating complaints against racing officials.

- Former greyhound racing integrity auditor, David Landa, resigned last year because he said he was unable to facilitate public inquiries into the problems within the industry. Landa claimed that "failings in the legislation make the functioning of this position as an independent oversight, simply not possible."

Questionable funding model

- The Intercode Agreement signed in 1998 by the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing bodies divides the shares of the TAB takings between the three codes.
- GRNSW receives 13 percent of the TAB takings, despite claiming to generate more than 20 per cent of betting revenue. GRNSW argues it has cost its code \$125 million since 1998. Owners, handlers and trainers have criticised the management of the Intercode agreement by GRNSW.

Alleged criminal activity

- The greyhound racing industry has been plagued by allegations of doping, with reports of links to outlaw motorcycle club involvement.
- Former integrity auditor David Landa expressed concern that GRNSW had not conducted any public inquiry into criminal or motorcycle club involvement in the industry.
- The industry has a history of criminal activity. In 2000, when the industry was still under government regulation, an inquiry into the sport by the Independent Commission Against Corruption led to six people being charged with corrupt practices and the jailing of the former chief steward Rodney Potter. Now that the industry is self-regulating, it is out of the reach of ICAC.

Clearly this is not an industry that can be trusted with self-regulation. It requires increased regulation, greatly improved animal welfare standards, increased requirements for the accurate collation and reporting of data, particularly in relation to the dogs and their fate.

Regards