

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

I write to you regarding the greyhound racing industry which I strongly believe requires significant investigation, as well as review as to its function and purpose within the community.

I too saw the 7:30 Report on the 15/10/2013 whereby the collusions, cruelty and behaviour within the industry was explored. I have no doubt that it has left very many community members with a heavy heart. I volunteer with Greyhound Rescue sewing winter coats, working on market stalls to make much required finance and doing everything possible to educate people, assist in rehoming and interact with the many beautiful greyhounds which are disposed of.

There are multiple issues which I would like to raise in regards to the greyhound racing industry. These include: the cruelty within the industry, the overproduction within the industry, the barriers to rehoming greyhounds and the rescue organisations which work tirelessly within the community for these amazing creatures.

It is not surprising to note the pervasive cruelty shown to greyhounds within the industry - the hundreds of cases of positive drug tests (for cocaine, amphetamines, viagra etc) which is not only illegal, but cruel and unkind to the dogs which are forced to go through this. Just as in humans, these drugs are not healthy and will result in likely impairments and disorders within a canine. Heart failure, epilepsy, neurological impairment, restlessness, agitation, distress and discomfort just to name a few. Further, the number of greyhounds which fracture bones whilst training and racing is astounding. Greyhounds are routinely pulled off the track after sustaining a painful yet completely treatable injury and are euthanised. There are reports that they are euthanised directly in to the heart, which is considered the most painful form of euthanasia. Greyhounds are disposed of trackside frequently without appropriate veterinary care post injury. I have two sighthounds, one of which has sustained a leg break. The leg was repaired and she was back to normal function within 6 weeks. I am astounded that so many greyhounds are euthanised trackside due to injury which is treatable. It disgusts me and I do not know how trainers and people within the industry sleep at night.

Forcing any animal to race over temperatures of 30 degrees is cruel. They travel far distances in cramped and small places in the excessive heat and are forced to run in conditions which are unhealthy and unkind. This needs to be closely regulated as we educate the community to take care of their animals during hot periods, but yet, dogs are forced to perform during hot periods. It is unacceptable to send this message.

Further, there are a significant number of reports of trainers utilising cruel methods of training, including live luring and the attachment of electrical stimulation and burning creams to greyhound genitals, as well as other places to make them run. The way in which greyhounds are kept is also unacceptable - in tiny concrete cells not big enough for them to turn around or wag their tails without breaking them on the sides of the pen. What a miserable and cruel life to put any dog through. The method by which greyhounds are culled is intolerable - being bludgeoned to death or shot to avoid paying a fee to humanely euthanise the animal. Further, trainers sell greyhounds to vet practices, universities (e.g. University of Newcastle) to conduct awake surgeries, drain their blood from their body to use for other animals and for training veterinary students. It is abhorrent. It requires transparent investigation.

Overproduction is clearly a significant problem requiring investigation. It is estimated that 40% of greyhounds bred are never raced. Trainers have serious numbers of dogs which are used for breeding. Large litters are born and discarded. Unplanned matings are killed immediately as they cannot be registered or raced. Significant numbers are culled and disappear and are never accounted for. Greyhound Racing NSW provide data which is incomplete and it is difficult to identify how many greyhounds were bred, where they ended up and which ones were rehomed. Their rehoming program (Greyhound Adoption Program) rehomes less than 0.1% of greyhounds post racing. That is a miserable effort and they are corrupt and dishonest. 80 133 greyhounds were registered as being born between 2003 - 2011 - this excludes accidental matings and discarded puppies. 2552 greyhounds were registered pets in the 2011. 6150 greyhounds registered as racing in 2011. This equates to 71431 dead greyhounds. Greyhound racing NSW rehomed a tiny 300 greyhounds since 2009. Shameful. The overproduction in the industry makes these beautiful souls disposable and no doubt leads to significant levels of cruelty in both training and disposal.

Rehoming ex-racing greyhounds is not for the faint hearted. It is a thankless awful job which brings such heartache and distress. I literally have nightmares every single night about the fate for these animals. I have personally witnessed the result of cruelty when working with ex-racing dogs. They are

scared and distressed. They pace backwards and forwards, they shake and pant in distress. They come in with missing fur, terrible scars, festering wounds, broken toes and feet, broken and missing tails, broken jaws and appalling teeth condition. They are often emaciated and malnourished. They often cower when you try to pat them. They are afraid of loud noises and clapping. Some are petrified of men and have probably suffered cruelty beyond comprehension at the hands of trainers. This does not make it easy to rehabilitate greyhounds but people work tirelessly to ensure they can regain their confidence and understand that human interaction is not all about money and corruption and cruelty.

The perception by the public about greyhounds is dreadful. They are convinced that they are aggressive, chasing, biting dogs who could never possibly share a house with you. This couldn't be further from the truth. Muzzles do NOT help. Mandatory muzzling in this state is offensive. Why must NSW be so behind? Other states have removed mandatory muzzling of a breed which does not equate for the maulings and attacks we see plastered in the media every other day. This has been supported by data. Daschunds and shih-tzus account for higher levels of damage and biting requiring medical intervention. If mandatory muzzling is not required for breeds with lock-jaw tendencies, I cannot believe the ridiculousness by which greyhounds are treated. They do NOT require muzzling if they are under the effective control of an adult. Muzzling only adds to the difficulty of rehoming the excess greyhounds. The public are afraid of muzzles. When I introduce families to greyhounds without muzzles in the kennels, they are overwhelmed with love for the breed. They consistently ask why they require muzzling. Honestly, NSW, let's move forward with prehistoric nonsense with no evidence. The Green Collar program is run by the industry, so is also a minefield of corruption and requires review.

The work which rescue organisations is invaluable within the community and funding needs to be provided from the industry to ADEQUATELY support this. People work tirelessly to ensure the very small number of greyhounds which trainers give to rescue (they of course do not like to give the dogs to rescue, they would prefer to see them senselessly culled) are rehabilitated and rehomed. They make the most wonderful pets and are fantastic for older people as they require very little exercise. These groups require a great deal more support and it would be nice to see the government providing that.

A few other points - the parliamentary inquiry in to greyhound racing is LONG overdue. We deserve a transparent process which openly and honestly outlines the issues and suggests suitable recommendations. The people of NSW and Australia deserve that. And most importantly, the 23,000 greyhounds which are culled each year deserve that. I am appalled that Minister Borsak has been put on the committee for the inquiry. This is a conflict of interest and is incredibly disappointing. He should be replaced immediately. Please consider it.

The Racing Integrity Hotline has been disconnected. WHY? What a joke.

David Landa is a well respected individual who resigned as the Greyhound Racing integrity auditor in 2012 due to the pervasive corruption and criticised the role as compromised and unworkable. He was right when he noted that "Leaving a gaming industry without the proper checks and balances - no government does this" - EXCEPT OURS.

"Nowhere in the world would the gaming industry be allowed to self-regulate like this" EXCEPT OURS.

These issues require attention. Make it transparent and fair.