

**Submission
No 349**

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Organisation: Registered Greyhound Participants Association

Date received: 5/11/2013

Attention; 4/11/2013
Legislative Council Select Committee to Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in NSW

Submission provided by:
Registered Greyhound Participants Association INC9879692
Date of Incorporation 8th May 2003

Honourable Members of Committee,

Introduction : Background on Association R.G.P.A.

The RGPA was Incorporated 10 yrs ago in 2003, Our Association formally constituted in January 2004. The RGPA was formally recognised by Government in 2009 and is an Eligible Industry Body holding a position on the Greyhound Racing Industry Consultative Group . GRICG. The RGPA has held a representative position on the Greyhound Animal Welfare Committees and attended numerous Consultative forums conducted by the former Greyhound Authority bodies GRA, GHRRA and the current body GRNSW.

The Registered Greyhound Participants Assoc. articles of Association contain objectives that in brief state the following:

- a. Foster Greyhound Animal welfare and the interests of Members
- b. To foster financial viability through assisting development of planning, policies to benefit welfare of animals and the participants.
- c. To provide a conduit for communication between Industry Representatives , the participant members and Authority to advance the betterment of greyhound racing.
- d. To provide Cooperation with GRNSW and other bodies in any way connected with management and control of greyhound racing by provision of participant input through representation on advisory panels, and provide advice to working parties.

Our Association has earned a reputation of credibility over the past decade ,we fought for formal recognition by Government, OLGR and GRNSW for the representative position on GRICG. RGPA campaign PEACEFULLY for greyhound welfare changes by formally contributing Submissions, correspondence, participating in representative Meetings held with several Former N.S.W. Racing Ministers . OLGR , GHRRA and GRNSW.

To clarify the Funding and Independence of the RGPA it is a Not For Profit Association funding the objectives with no assistance from the Controlling Authority, the activities are funded by raffles and volunteers who contribute their time to provide advice, positive suggestions to constructive reform to policies to progress greyhound welfare and integrity measures for racing in NSW.

The R.G.P.A. thank the Members of the Select Committee for the opportunity to contribute and submit our views, comment and recommendations for reform ,specifically Greyhound Racing Funding Reform, Terms of Reference , Parliamentary Inquiry into NSW Greyhound Racing.

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NEW SOUTH WALES
TERMS OF REFERENCE as noted:

a. The Economic Viability of Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW.

1. Participant Costs - Economic Viability:

The RGPA participated in an exercise several years ago conducted by GRNSW to supply figures relating to participant expenses to engage in the Sport.

The majority of participants have concerns that the sport of greyhound racing in NSW is not economically viable to encourage people to enter and indeed continue participation in the Sport. The G.R. participants are under pressure with rising costs to maintain their involvement in greyhound racing. The greyhound as an animal requires a high standard of love and care, the feeding of quality meat and vitamin additives. The Veterinary Fees are constantly rising for your greyhound visits. The average trainer/owner engages in a minimum weekly visit to the Vets, it is required to check your greyhounds muscles to prevent injuries and maintain the dogs peak overall health. The Sport of Greyhound Racing requires travel to race meetings, trialling a greyhound for fitness, visits to the Vets. The petrol and car maintenance rising costs contribute to the weekly expenses.

The AVERAGE cost to rear and whelp a litter of 7 greyhound pups is approximately \$21,000 to the Racing age. The costs include veterinary care and immunisations.

The AVERAGE cost to buy a pup rear to racing age including schooling approximately \$7,000

The hobby trainer costs to train a greyhound conservatively total approximately \$75 per week.

2. Economic Viability of Race Clubs and Peak Body GRNSW – Funding

Our Association is comforted that the Honourable Members of the Committee would have been extensively Briefed on the Intercode Deed, Racing Distribution Agreement, associated Legislations Totalisator Act, Race Fields, Racing Administration Act., Greyhound and Harness Racing Act 2009

The various NSW Legislations and TAB Contracts I.C. and R.D.A. are the three race codes base for majority of funding. The three codes Harness, Greyhounds and Thoroughbred signed a long term agreement contract entered into for a period of 99 yrs.

The prospect of the long term viability of the NSW Greyhound Industry under the current contractual funding arrangements appears bleak and unsustainable in the long term.

The current funding model arrangements re: G.R. returns of 13.2% from Intercode Agreement and current supply of race meeting is well above the RDA. The G.R. supply equates to a Market Share product supply of 20%.

The History of the Signing of the Document and Associated Deed is history:

Perceived Reasoning of Former Labor Government:

The Sale of the TAB by the Labor Government reaped approximately \$1 Billion Dollars for NSW, the Labor Government amended the Totalisator Act to allow a long term protectionist position for the TAB from the Trade Practices Act,

The perceived intent of the Intercode terms for 99 yrs was to ensure a protection for the TAB core business ie: profits from wagering on NSW Racing product Thoroughbreds, Harness and Greyhounds.

The percentage cuts distribution to each code was determined by agreement between the three codes, obviously the parties, signatories of the Intercode Contract terms for 99 years had not examined the need to include a renegotiation proviso, review clause to be included in the Document. The Intercode document should be a living document subject to periodic review.

The current deed is a long term contract, NO Review for rewarding either of the three codes for productivity. The current deed stifles viability, impedes G.R. Race Code Sport Growth.

3. Impact on Current Funding Arrangements under Intercode

The Impact of the 99 yr Term of the Contracts associated with the TAB Sale ie: Intercode, RDA , the current percentage return is stifling the Greyhound Industry impacting on the sustainability, restricting growth for future expansion of TAB Racing, stagnating prize money, impeding much needed additional revenue to enhance welfare initiatives, education of greyhound care, promotion for rehoming of former racing greyhounds, acquisition of a greyhound facility for retired greyhounds.

In simple terms the funding model needs an urgent review based on productivity and wagering market contribution. GRNSW states in the Cameron Report that the Intercode Agreement has cost the Greyhound Sport an estimated \$125 million dollars since the signing of the document in 1997.

The Former Labor Government COMPLETELY IGNORED the recommendations in the Allan Cameron Report , Independent Review of Wagering in NSW, outlining the necessary reform, funding recommendations for the future to sustain the GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY IN NSW.

The state of NSW has the largest number of greyhound race clubs ie: 33 and the only state in Australia to supply the Sport access to Non-TAB Racing. The Peak Body GRNSW has an unachievable task to maintain a supply of funds for the Capital Works for the existing 33 ageing Race track facilities in NSW.

The majority of Greyhound Race Clubs conduct a meeting once a week, the average attendance is poor consisting of race participants who have dogs engaged at the race meeting. The prospects of the Race Clubs receiving secondary income from the majority of the venues is almost non-existent.

The race clubs subsequently rely heavily on Funding for Administration and Capital Works.

The Peak Body of GRNSW provide Staff resources re: Veterinary Surgeons to attend race meetings, Stewards engaged by GRNSW, Grading I.T. facilities and additional back office staff resource to conduct racing on NSW Race Courses.

GRNSW funds approximately 95% of the costs to run the majority of NSW Greyhound Race Clubs.

(C) (D) (H) Government Initiatives and Assistance Measures to Support the Industry comparative to other Racing Codes:

The former Labor Government assisted the other two codes to obtain funding assistance by providing the following measures:

The Thoroughbred Racing code received Government Assistance in the form of 'ONE OFF UP FRONT PAYMENTS FOR TRACKSIDE' in addition a Gov. Grant of \$24 million the total figures reported to be approximately \$174 million dollars.

The Harness Racing code a rezoning of Harold Park the Metropolitan venue netting approximately \$155 million for Sale of property at Harold Park.

The Greyhound Industry, as far as the RGPA is aware, has only received token figures for Club regional grants for Capital works.

Greyhound Code Cost Impact : Government Decisions Past Governance Structural Reforms:

Contrary to the other two codes the Greyhound Industry has been Impacted by The Additional Cost Burden forced on the Greyhound Sport by the Former Labor Government. During the Labor term in office, at the changing Whim and lobbying by "Minority Self Interest Groups" the Labor Government implemented FIVE STRUCTURAL GOVERNANCE REFORMS for the Greyhound Racing Code in NSW.

The peak bodies have changed since 1998 from G.R.C.B. Greyhound Racing Control Board, G.R.A.

Greyhound Racing Authority ,GRNSW Greyhound Racing NSW Commercial Board, separation of Commercial and Regulatory functions, GHRRRA Greyhound and Harness Racing Regulatory Board, Then after that Complete disaster of separating the functions of Commercial and Regulatory role combining the functions and controls back to the Peak Body GRNSW Greyhound Racing NSW. The former Government changed the Legislation accordingly for the Governance and Structural Reforms costing our Industry Millions and the reform costs were never supported by any form of Government Grants , No offer of Government Monetary Assistance to provide compensation to employees of the Codes Peak Body who were former Public Servants under the Greyhound Racing Control Board. GRCB and/or G.R.A.

(i) The Incidence of Drug Administration and GRNSW Control and Testing process

GRNSW in 2012 increased its swabbing budget to \$1.2 million dollars, the RGPA believes the figure to be the highest swabbing budget in Australia.

(quote information below provided by extracts from THE DOGS site "Brents Blog" Oct 2013)

The swabbing statistics for the 2012/2013 GRNSW carried out 5,562 swabs during this period. This is a 47% increase on the previous year 2011/2012 and a record number for a 12 mth period of racing. The 5,562 samples tested by the laboratory declared 35 positives, down from 48 positives in the previous year.

The RGPA supports the vigilance of swabbing greyhounds and screening. The NSW Greyhound Industry receives its funding from wagering , it is the core for the survival of the Sport. The Integrity of our race fields and the projection of "true form" is the main factor that has contributed to the growth in the wagering market share to 20%.

The RGPA is not impressed by the Bad Publicity the Greyhound Industry has recently received "trial by media" and the use of drugs in ANY Sport is not condoned. The reality is that a small minority in any sport will seek to take an advantage, BUT the reality is the persons are being weeded out by the swabbing process and penalised.

The RGPA supports HEAVIER PENALTIES to be implemented to offenders for administration of hard core drugs. The effect of drug administration is devastating to the image of the Sport. The RGPA believes that protecting the welfare of the greyhounds by efficient drug screening is paramount.

The RGPA believes Justice should be dealt at a Swifter Rate to the Drug Offenders , Less time spent on Adjournments sometimes multiple adjournment requests extending over 6 mths on numerous occasions. The participants are subjected to these offenders still racing against them for long periods and receiving prize money while adjourning cases, the offenders should be suspended and stood down pending their Inquiry, this would hasten the offenders to "front up" at the Inquiry.

The Swab recording notation process: the Public transparency of the swabbing declaration system, swabs declared on THE DOGS site Negatives listed and positives noted in Open Inquiries details listed. Outcome of Inquiries and Appeals posted on Website. The swabs taken at each race meeting dog and race swab recorded in Stewards Report and the Steward Report posted on THE DOGS site.

(j) (k) Sale, Breeding Greyhounds , Welfare of Animals Greyhounds (n) Any other Related Matter

The RGPA is committed to promoting the advancement of the welfare of greyhounds. The RGPA committee & members practice the principle of providing their former racers a retirement position as pets in the home and or farm environment. The RGPA supports the Greyhound Industry should ensure education of responsible Dog Ownership and encourage Greyhound Owners to provide a Home or provision for care arrangements for their retired Greyhounds.

The RGPA is concerned that the Honourable Members of the Committee have not been advised that a number of Greyhound Participants provide a place in their Home and property after greyhounds retire from racing. The Greyhound Sport in NSW continues to function by the contribution of Hobbyist Trainers and Owners, majority of volunteers specifically at NonTAB level. The people who make up the 98% of the Hobby Trainers who participate in the Sport receive little or no profit from funds they have invested. The participants are passionate and the majority are dedicated to their greyhound. Overall their reward for participation in the Sport results from the visual reward of the Beauty of watching the greyhound run. The greyhound is a wonderful athlete and a companion, the origin of the breed itself dates back thousands of years, it is a hunting dog by nature this natural instinct now converted to "tin hare racing" , using a mechanical lure, to allow the greyhound the thrill of free galloping. The cost of buying a greyhound is not cheap, why would people who are responsible for the care of this beautiful animal mistreat the dog and Not provide good nutrition?

The people in the Greyhound Industry are incensed by the various allegations of mistreatment recently aired by the ABC program .

(N) Any Other Matter; Recommendations

1. Recommendation for Government Assistance for Grants to Implement Welfare Initiatives, The RGPA supports a recommendation for a Greyhounds as Pets rehoming centre, promotion of education related to Breeding , Recommendation Government Funding Grants assistance for Greyhound Rehoming Centre.

2. Government Assistance to Review and Amend the specific Legislations relative to G.R. Funding: Need to provide Assistance to Enhance Greyhound Funding Assistance From Government

2.a. Review Implementation of the Recommendations Wagering Review Report CAMERON . Specific to rewarding productivity.

2.b. Recommend a reduction to Government in N.S.W. of State Government Wagering Tax. The wagering tax in Victoria was reduced from 19.11 per cent to 7.6 per cent in August 2012 The tax reduction was part of the new arrangements implemented with the 2012 Victorian Wagering and Betting Licence.

2.c. Recommend the Minister facilitate meetings between the three codes and TABCORP To discuss a review of the Intercode distribution terms and percentages.

2.d. Recommend Amendment to " Race Fields Legislation" Racing Administration Regulation to remove the Cap that applies to the race fields fee or increase the % for the Fee.

Thank you for the Opportunity to Contribute to the Recommendations for G.R. Funding Review,

Yours Sincerely,
On Behalf of the Registered Greyhound Participants Assoc.
INC9879692 date of Incorporation: 8th May 2003

Mr. Mark Alamango President
Public Officer

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