

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Name suppressed

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The Director
Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Submission on the Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in New South Wales

I appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to the Select Committee on the inquiry into greyhound racing in New South Wales, and offer the comments below which I trust will be considered and will contribute towards improved animal welfare measures.

I feel very strongly that the use of greyhounds for racing is inhumane and I support a ban of the sport, particularly due to the inappropriate standards of care that these animals receive and the fact that thousands of dogs are killed each year as a result of injury, from being unprofitable, or simply being unwanted. I believe that the greyhound industry places financial considerations before of the welfare of the dogs. I am supportive of the parliamentary inquiry into greyhound racing in NSW, and my view is that the primary issues that should be addressed involve the welfare of the greyhounds.

Australia represents the 3rd largest greyhound racing industry in the world, predominantly in New South Wales where 34 of the 77 national race tracks are located.

Thousands of greyhounds are bred in Australia, up to 20,000 a year, and then killed as a result of the 'sport', either because they are underperforming or from injuries sustained during racing.

Although exact numbers are unknown due to a lack of proper monitoring, an estimated 17,000 greyhounds are believed to be killed in Australia each year – it would follow that NSW, being the predominant state for greyhound racing, would account for at least 8,000 of these deaths. This oversupply of dogs available has fuelled the use of greyhounds in research, for teaching in veterinary schools, and as a live export 'commodity'. This raises further concerns since most greyhounds exported from Australia are sent to Macau in China which is renowned for its poor welfare standards and high death rates. Of the thousands of dogs bred and raced in NSW, just 300 dogs have been re-homed since 2009 under Greyhound Racing NSW's 'Greyhounds As Pets' program. The greyhound racing industry takes no responsibility for the welfare of these animals, purely using them until they have served their purpose, wasting valuable lives for profit. At the absolute minimum, the industry should be held accountable for these animals for the duration of their lives, drastically reducing the numbers bred for racing and guaranteeing them a home at the end of their careers. I am strongly opposed to the over-breeding and mass killing of greyhounds each year in Australia, and believe that no animal should die in the name of sport or entertainment. No industry that routinely kills the majority of the animals purpose-bred, and healthy, simply because they get injured or cannot run fast enough should be deemed acceptable, by any community.

In addition to the over breeding and mass wastage of greyhounds, there is an appallingly high rate of injury suffered by greyhounds. Injuries sustained from racing may include broken legs, paralysis, head trauma, or cardiac arrest from the exertion. The living conditions of racing greyhounds are questionable at best. Greyhounds spend the majority of their lives in crates or small kennels with minimal human contact. For any other breed of dog this would amount to animal abuse. Often, greyhounds are underfed to maintain their racing weight. There are also allegations of doping and the use of performance enhancing drugs. According to GRNSW's own figures, positive drug swabs rose 82 per cent from 2010-11 to 2011-12.

I am also gravely concerned about the lack of governance and independent oversight in the industry. 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. The integrity auditor is appointed 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. The lack of an independent regulatory body makes it impossible for the integrity of the industry to be monitored. In addition, there is no government body which takes responsibility for the welfare of greyhounds. Neither the Greyhound Racing Act or any other regulatory instrument requires GRNSW to report welfare issues or cruelty cases to the RSPCA, the government, the media or to the public. The lack of public scrutiny of the racing industry means that the majority of welfare issues are not reported to the media or recorded in any reports, industry or otherwise. It is of deep concern that the welfare of racing greyhounds is the sole responsibility of GRNSW, whose focus is to promote and expand the industry.

To summarise, I am strongly opposed to the continuation of greyhound racing in NSW for the following reasons:

- Over breeding and mass wastage of greyhounds with no plans to reduce numbers bred
- Industry acceptance of high levels of greyhound wastage
- High rates of injury sustained during racing, often fatal
- Ineffective re-homing program by GRNSW
- Distinct lack of importance awarded to the welfare of the animals
- Insufficient regulation and monitoring of animal welfare by GRNSW
- Use of performance enhancing drugs on the animals
- Lack of independent regulatory body to monitor the industry

I appreciate the opportunity to make this submission, and sincerely hope my comments are taken into consideration during the inquiry into greyhound racing in New South Wales.

Regards,