

**Submission
No 606**

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

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Date received: 6/11/2013

The Director
Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in New South Wales
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6 November 2013

To the Director,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in New South Wales. I wish to commend Dr John Kaye MLC and the Greens for moving a motion to establish this inquiry.

I would like to add my voice to the chorus of concerned members of the Australian community who are alarmed by the significant animal welfare issues associated with the greyhound racing industry.

I would specifically like to provide comment in relation to (1)(i) – (m) of the Terms of Reference of this Inquiry.

(i) The incidence of drug administration and doping in the industry and the efficacy of Greyhound Racing NSW's control and testing processes

Although Greyhound Racing New South Wales (GRNSW) downplays the seriousness and prevalence of drug administration and doping in the greyhound racing industry, testing has confirmed that across Australia, positive drug swabs rose 82 per cent from 2010/11 to 2011/12¹.

The Independent Commission against Corruption investigated the greyhound racing industry in 2000, finding former chief steward Rodney Potter guilty of corrupt conduct and implicating five other people². The ABC's 7:30 program noted in its recent investigation into the industry that this inquiry "exposed rampant drug use, fraudulent testing and bribery. There was supposed to have been a clean-up but claims of endemic problems have persisted"³. The corruption inquiry uncovered that Mr Potter had accepted tens of thousands of dollars in bribes in exchange for switching dog urine samples⁴. As a result of the 2000 inquiry, Rodney Potter was sent to jail and several trainers were banned for life.

¹ The Age, Editorial, 'A duty of care and transparency to all players', 12 August 2012, <http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/editorial/a-duty-of-care-and-transparency-to-all-players-20120811-24141.html>

² Natalie O'Brien, The Sydney Morning Herald, 'NSW racing going to the dogs', 15 July 2012, <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/nsw-racing-going-to-the-dogs-20120714-2230l.html>

³ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3869813.htm>

⁴ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

The 7:30 investigation into the industry also noted that dogs have tested positive to an array of drugs including cocaine, amphetamines, caffeine, anabolic steroids, Viagra and Erythropoietin (EPO)⁵.

Mr Christos Arletos, greyhound trainer, told 7:30 that “80 per cent of greyhound trainers are looking for something to dope their dogs. Simple as that”⁶.

Dr Ted Humphries, Veterinarian, stated that “cocaine is very popular and it's more difficult to detect. The most common way to be administered is just before the animal starts to race. It'll either be administered by a sneaky injection or by wiping the powder on the animal's mucous membrane or gums”⁷. Dr Humphries, who sat on the NSW Greyhounds' veterinary advisory committee, alleged that during a committee meeting, a lab analyst openly offered to falsify test results. Dr Humphries is of the view that NSW Greyhounds officials are too close to the trainers they're supposed to police⁸.

Dr Rob Zammit, another Veterinarian, told 7:30 that “I've had people that are not my clients come in and try and buy EPO from the clinic. We don't even stock it but they're obviously out there hunting for it so they can use it for their animals because it's harder to find on the swab”⁹.

A Lateline investigation into the greyhound industry in 2012 reported that use of the performance enhancing drug EPO is difficult to detect (as was the case with high profile EPO user Lance Armstrong) and is alleged to be in widespread use¹⁰.

Dr Humphries told Lateline in 2012 that “there seem to be a lot of illegal supply available. Most of it is channelled through human sources to the racing circles”. Dr Humphries told Lateline that it is easy for trainers to hide EPO use, as the drug can be administered several days before a race, ensuring that there is no trace of the drug in the dog's system on the day of the race, but the red blood cell count remain high, carrying more oxygen to the muscles and making the dogs run faster¹¹. Dr Humphries also alleged that EPO use is hard to detect through urine samples, and stated that there are never blood samples taken, resulting in undetected EPO use¹².

Lateline also interviewed a trainer who wanted to remain unidentified, who confirmed that EPO was in circulation and had witnessed other trainers injecting the drug into their dogs¹³.

Mr Brent Hogan, Chief Executive of GRNSW, has claimed that EPO is able to be detected in urine samples and that despite having conducted several hundred EPO tests through urine samples, not one positive result has been returned. Mr Hogan

⁵ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, ‘Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry’, 15 October 2013

⁶ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, ‘Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry’, 15 October 2013

⁷ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, ‘Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry’, 15 October 2013

⁸ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, ‘Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry’, 15 October 2013

⁹ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, ‘Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry’, 15 October 2013

¹⁰ Matt Carney, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Lateline, ‘Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry’, 9 November 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2012/s3629916.htm>

¹¹ Matt Carney, Lateline, ‘Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry’, 9 November 2012

¹² Matt Carney, Lateline, ‘Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry’, 9 November 2012

¹³ Matt Carney, Lateline, ‘Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry’, 9 November 2012

states that “no State to date has found EPO in a sample”¹⁴. Given the widespread anecdotal evidence from veterinarians and other sources in the industry to the contrary, it appears that GRNSW’s drug testing program is deeply flawed if not one positive EPO sample has been returned. It is clear that inroads have not been made to stamp out drug use in the industry since the 2000 inquiry.

(i) Sale and breeding of greyhounds including the market conditions and welfare of Animals

The most significant problem posed by the greyhound industry in Australia is the staggering rate of overbreeding and consequent “wastage” of dogs. The industry’s current approach to breeding and euthanasia is one of the most disturbing animal welfare issues in Australia.

(i) Euthanasia rates and breeding practices

While no reliable statistics on the number of dogs bred or killed as a result of the racing industry are available (see comments below regarding term of reference (1)(m)), it is clear that the “wastage” rate is shockingly high:

- Researchers Alexandra McEwan and Krishna Skandakumar have estimated in the Australian Animal Protection Law Journal that approximately 17,000 greyhounds are killed in Australia each year, with a mere four to five per cent being re-homed at the end of their racing career¹⁵.
- The Animal Welfare Lobby echoes the estimate of 17,000 greyhounds killed each year¹⁶.
- Mr Brent Hogan, Chief Executive of GRNSW, conceded in 2012 that in New South Wales (NSW) alone, around 3,000 greyhounds a year are euthanased¹⁷. GRNSW, in a letter to the ABC in 2012 in response to an investigation into greyhound racing, admitted that “the number of greyhounds euthanased in NSW is too high”¹⁸.
- Dr Jade Norris from the RSPCA has stated that the GRNSW figure is a minimum estimate:

“It is possible that that is an underestimate and the problem is there is a real lack of national published data so we don't have exact euthanasia figures to draw from and that's another problem with the industry: this lack of transparency. But we do have enough evidence to know that the euthanasia problems are very serious. The high euthanasia rates are unacceptable and urgent action needs to be taken to reduce them”¹⁹.

¹⁴ Matt Carney, Lateline, ‘Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry’, 9 November 2012

¹⁵ Alexandra McEwan and Krishna Skandakumar, Australian Animal Protection Law Journal, ‘The welfare of greyhounds in Australian racing: has the industry run its course?’, (2011) 6 AAPLJ 53, http://www.animallaw.info/nonus/articles/art_pdf/McEwan_Skandakumar_AAPLJ_Greyhound_2013.pdf

¹⁶ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, ‘Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry’, 15 October 2013

¹⁷ Matt Carney, Lateline, ‘Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry’, 9 November 2012

¹⁸ GRNSW Open Letter to the ABC, in response to the Background Briefing program, ‘The quick and the dead’, 11 November 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/linkableblob/4370800/data/grnsw-open-letter-data.pdf>

¹⁹ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, ‘Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry’, 15 October 2013

- Dr Ted Humphries, Veterinarian at the Rossmore Veterinary Centre and greyhound industry whistleblower, told ABC's Lateline program in 2012 that the euthanasia figure is probably much higher than the GRNSW estimate of 3,000 a year. Dr Humphries has stated that at his clinic alone, approximately 500 dogs a year are euthanased²⁰.
- As a result of the 2008 review of integrity assurance in Victoria's Racing Industry, Judge G. D. Lewis AM, County Court of Victoria, stated that while not within the terms of reference of the review, he deemed greyhound litter numbers to be "worthy of comment"²¹ in the cover letter to the report. While his inquiry related to the Victorian racing industry, the figures cited by Judge Lewis are indicative of the problem across the country. Judge Lewis stated that:
 - 7,680 live greyhound pups were born in Victoria in 2006.
 - 4,000 of these pups were registered as racing greyhounds. Of these 4,000, approximately 700 were retained for breeding or as pets following the end of their careers. Approximately 320 were rehomed through the Victorian industry-based Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP). Judge Lewis estimated that this left about 3,000 surplus "fit young dogs who are killed".
 - From the original 7,680 pups born in 2006, Judge Lewis estimated that the remaining 3,500 dogs (who were not registered as racing greyhounds) "do not make it to the track. I accept that the greater proportion are killed because they are too slow to race. The conclusion which can be drawn, is that of the 7,500 greyhounds born, approximately only 1,000 will live a full life span".
 - Judge Lewis concluded that "GRV should utilise its existing regulatory powers to control registration to breed, to minimise the present unnecessary carnage involving young and healthy dogs"²².

Whatever the true figure is, it is undeniable that many thousands of dogs are killed each year as a "byproduct" of the greyhound racing industry.

What is most alarming about these estimates is that it is not just sick, injured or elderly greyhounds that are killed. The 2012 Lateline investigation into greyhound racing stated that while some dogs are put down because they have been injured on the track, many more are killed simply because they show no racing potential or are past their prime on the track²³. It is important to note that this reference to "past their prime" does not refer to an elderly greyhound – a greyhound's racing 'career' generally ends at about the age of four²⁴, while the life expectancy of a greyhound is generally around 10 to 13 years²⁵.

It is clear that the euthanasia of huge numbers of healthy greyhounds each year is a direct result of the rampant overbreeding within the industry.

²⁰ Matt Carney, Lateline, 'Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry', 9 November 2012

²¹ Judge G. D. Lewis AM, Cover letter for the report on integrity assurance in the Victorian racing industry, 2008, <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/justice+system/laws+and+regulation/report+on+integrity+assurance+in+the+victorian+racing+industry>

²² Judge G. D. Lewis AM, Cover letter for the report on integrity assurance in the Victorian racing industry, 2008

²³ Matt Carney, Lateline, 'Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry', 9 November 2012

²⁴ James Cockington, The Sydney Morning Herald, 'This is no slumdog', 20 June 2012, <http://www.smh.com.au/money/investing/this-is-no-slumdog-20120619-20kqg.html>

²⁵ Caroline Coile, Ph. D., Encyclopedia of Dog Breeds, Barron's Educational Series, 2005, p. 77

The RSPCA has stated that the wastage rate in the greyhound industry is unacceptable and that urgent action must be taken to reduce the massive overbreeding problem²⁶.

As noted by Dr Jade Norris from the RSPCA, thousands of greyhounds are born every year that are surplus to industry requirements²⁷.

Animals Australia estimates that 20,000 greyhound puppies are bred in Australia for racing each year²⁸.

The RSPCA estimates that approximately 40 per cent of the greyhounds born every year in Australia will never even race²⁹. Based on the Animals Australia estimate of pups born each year, this would suggest that 8,000 greyhounds a year (40 per cent of 20,000 dogs) are bred each year in Australia who will never even race.

From 2003 to 2011 there were 80,133 greyhounds born in NSW³⁰ (not including puppies resulting from unplanned litters who are killed at birth).

The animal welfare group Greyhound Freedom found that in 2012 there were 2,552 greyhounds registered as pets and 6,150 greyhounds registered as racing greyhounds in NSW. This is a total of 8,702 greyhounds registered in NSW. Given the life expectancy of a greyhound, in 2012 there should more than 80,133 greyhounds alive given the breeding rate. Therefore it would seem that more than 70,000 greyhounds are unaccounted for in NSW alone.³¹

GRNSW does not make its adoption figures publicly available, but estimates suggest that a mere 300 dogs have been rehomed by the industry-based adoption program since 2009³². While other adoption groups (not funded by the industry) exist, they have limited resources and are only able to rehome a fraction of the dogs bred each year.

It is quite clear from these figures that only a tiny percentage of the greyhounds bred each year are being rehomed, and are instead being killed in large numbers.

As outlined above, it is not just greyhounds who are sick, injured or elderly that are killed by the industry. Dogs who have been retired from racing and many who were not deemed fast enough to race at all are killed simply because they serve no financial purpose and are considered surplus to the requirements of the industry. As noted by Mr Tim Vasudeva, Chief Executive of the Animal Welfare League, "killing that dog is not euthanasia; it's just killing it because you bred too many and of the six

²⁶ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

²⁷ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

²⁸ Animals Australia, 'Tell greyhound racing all bets are off', http://www.animalsaustralia.org/take_action/save-greyhounds/

²⁹ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

³⁰ Answers to questions on notice lodged by MP for Sydney Alex Greenwhich 23 May 2013. Full text of questions and answers available at: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/la/qala.nsf/18101dc36b638302ca257146007ee41a/73129441ba2b6f30ca257b750000790d>

³¹ Greyhound Freedom, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Greyhound-Freedom/341841249187362?fref=ts>

³² Answers to questions on notice lodged by MP for Sydney Alex Greenwhich 23 May 2013

that you just bred one of them is a good racer, one of them might make it and the other four are no good. That is not euthanasia, that is just killing dogs”³³.

While the industry tries to hide this sinister side of the industry, volunteer groups involved in the rescue and rehoming of greyhounds see the alarming truth on a daily basis. I have personally heard many stories of trainers who dump their dogs at vet clinics to be killed or used as live blood donors, and show a complete lack of personal responsibility for the welfare of the dogs.

The history of my own rescue greyhound illustrates the callous disregard that greyhounds are treated with. At the age of two and completely healthy, Polly was dumped at a vet clinic in Quakers Hill, NSW, to be put down. This was simply because she did not show an aptitude for racing. As a young dog who had never raced, with no injuries and no behavioural issues, Polly was completely rehomeable. However in the trainer’s eyes, she was not going to generate any earnings, so she was deemed worthless, like so many other greyhounds. For most greyhounds, that is the end of their life. No personal responsibility is taken by the owners or trainers to attempt to rehome the vast majority of these dogs. They are deemed ‘e’ (euthanasia) dogs and put down. Polly was one of the lucky few who was rescued by a vet nurse at the clinic and rehomed through the Friends of The Hound group.

Friends of The Hound is just one of many, many greyhound rescue groups across Australia who have been formed out of necessity given the overwhelming number of greyhounds who are deemed surplus to the requirements of the industry each year. The group receives calls from trainers every day to take dogs and are only able to help a tiny percentage of dogs needing homes due to resourcing constraints and the sheer number of ‘surplus’ dogs.

Owners and trainers deny any knowledge of greyhounds being killed en masse and claim that all greyhounds bred are treated well during their careers and then either kept by the owners/trainers as pets or rehomed at the end of their careers. The figures and cases outlined above stand in stark opposition to these claims. The huge number of dogs bred each year are clearly not being absorbed by the community as family pets, or the number of pets registered as greyhounds would be much, much higher than it is.

(ii) Unregistered puppies

Breeding of greyhounds is regulated under the GRNSW Greyhound Racing Rules. Rules 126 – 140 of the Greyhound Racing Rules relate to the siring, whelping and breeding of greyhounds.

It is not uncommon for accidental matings to occur. Any resulting puppies fall outside the strict regulation of the Greyhound Racing Rules.

GRNSW’s approach to breeding results in an unknown number of puppies being killed each year.

One reported case involved greyhound trainer Tony Lockett, who sold unlicensed greyhound puppies and was sued as a result. Nearly 40 puppies had not been sired in accordance with the Greyhound Racing Rules and following tests to confirm this,

³³ Timothy McDonald, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, AM, ‘Greyhounds killed if they don’t perform’, 9 November 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2012/s3629114.htm>

authorities had the puppies' breeding certificates removed, and they were killed as a result³⁴.

The recent 7:30 investigation into the industry aired the story of one woman who was told to drown a litter of puppies in a bucket as soon as they were born³⁵.

It is clear that few attempts are made to rehome these unregistered puppies. Rescue groups are rarely given the opportunity to rehome puppies and mostly deal with adult dogs.

Greyhounds are not required to be registered until they are 12 weeks of age, when there is a change of ownership or at point of sale (whichever of these events occurs first)³⁶.

Part 9 of the Animal Welfare Policy, Principles and Policies on Greyhound and Animal Welfare, states that GRNSW will work with stakeholders to develop lifetime tracking of all registered greyhounds pups to ensure industry accountability for the welfare of all greyhounds bred in NSW³⁷. However this commitment does not appear to have been followed through on. As a result, accurate data is not collected on how many greyhound puppies are born each year, as they are not required to be registered at birth. As a result, an unknown number of puppies are killed each year without a trace.

(iii) The role of GRNSW in regulating breeding

It is clear from the figures outlined above that the current rate of overbreeding in the greyhound industry is directly resulting in a huge number of dogs being killed each year. If the massive overbreeding problem and consequential mass killing of greyhounds is ever going to be brought under control, the breeding and registration of greyhounds needs to be much more strictly regulated.

Mr Brent Hogan, Chief Executive of GRNSW claims that GRNSW has set about putting in place a number of actions which will bring the euthanasia rate down to a "level which is more acceptable"³⁸.

The 2012 Lateline investigation noted the industry's claim that it is improving the situation by supporting a growing adoption program for discarded greyhounds and training the dogs that do race as family pets. However these programs only meet a fraction of the need. The industry-based adoption program (GAP) seems to be little more than a PR exercise considering the extremely small percentage of unwanted dogs rehomed by this group. As outlined above, GRNSW does not make its adoption figures publicly available, but estimates suggest that a mere 300 dogs have been rehomed by the industry-based adoption program since 2009³⁹.

³⁴ Mark Forbes, The Age, 'Lockett Sued Over Alleged Greyhound Scam', 17 September 1998, <http://www.greyhoundbreeding.com.au/greyhound-breeding-articles/1998/9/17/lockett-sued-over-alleged-greyhound-scam/>

³⁵ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

³⁶ Department of Premier and Cabinet, Division of Local Government, 'Information for dog owners in NSW', September 2011, http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/DLG/DLGHome/Documents/Information/Information_for_Dog_Owners_in_NSW_-_Brochure.pdf

³⁷ Greyhound Racing New South Wales, Animal Welfare Policy, November 2006, <http://www.thedogs.com.au/Uploads/Userfiles/Animal%20Welfare%20Policy.pdf>

³⁸ Matt Carney, Lateline, 'Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry', 9 November 2012

³⁹ Answers to questions on notice lodged by MP for Sydney Alex Green which 23 May 2013

GRNSW's reluctance to make the number of dogs rehomed by the group public highlights the fact that industry-based adoption programs are a feeble attempt to address the problem of 'surplus' dogs. GRNSW's 2011-2012 Annual Report states that less than half of one per cent of their turnover is contributed towards the GAP program and Greenhounds (Muzzle Exemption Program) combined (0.43%)⁴⁰.

The industry is doing nothing to address the root cause of the "wastage" - the reckless and irresponsible overbreeding by owners. Until this root cause is addressed, thousands of dogs will continue to die each year as a byproduct of the greyhound industry.

GRNSW states under part 9 of its Animal Welfare Policy that "appropriate breeding policies that support the principles of animal welfare will actively promote and support the Greyhound as Pets program to find responsible, loving, long term homes for as many greyhounds as possible"⁴¹.

The scale of the overbreeding problem is massive and clearly GRNSW are only making token attempts to be seen to be addressing this problem. Instead, stronger regulation is needed around greyhound breeding and registration.

GRNSW claims to be committed to an initiative involving lifetime tracking of all greyhounds registered with GRNSW⁴². It is critical that GRNSW follow through on this undertaking as it is impossible to hold the industry accountable for the mass wastage of dogs when accurate figures on the number greyhounds bred and killed each year are not available. An independent body is needed to audit the tracking of greyhounds in order to ensure that the system captures all greyhounds bred in NSW. The harsh approach to the regulation of unauthorised matings also needs to be reviewed given that in many instances, puppies resulting from unauthorised matings would never be registered with GRNSW in the first place, instead being killed before anyone is even aware of their existence.

The number of dogs bred is completely indefensible in light of the fact that most of these dogs considered 'surplus to requirements' are clearly not being rehomed, but are adding to the thousands of greyhounds killed each year.

As noted by Dr John Kaye MLC, "Greyhound owners and animal welfare groups have comprehensively lost confidence in the industry's ability to regulate itself. The widespread slaughter of dogs that are deemed to be too slow together with the unacceptable toll of animals injured on the racetrack and during training has raised serious community concerns"⁴³.

(k) The welfare of animals in the industry and the role of Greyhound Racing NSW in establishing and enforcing standards of treatment of animals

While some owners and trainers claim to treat their greyhounds well, it is clear that if and when a dog is no longer earning money, the majority are discarded – killed, or in the case of the lucky few, dumped on a rescue group. Those involved in the industry are clearly motivated by financial considerations above all else and take little

⁴⁰ Greyhound Racing NSW 2011-2012 Annual Report, pages 35 and 46, [http://www.thedogs.com.au/Uploads/Userfiles/GRNSW%20AR12%20LR%20F%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.thedogs.com.au/Uploads/Userfiles/GRNSW%20AR12%20LR%20F%20(2).pdf)

⁴¹ Greyhound Racing New South Wales Animal Welfare Policy, November 2006

⁴² GRNSW Open Letter to the ABC, in response to the Background Briefing program, 'The quick and the dead'

⁴³ John Kaye MLC, 'NSW Upper House inquiry to shine a light on greyhound racing', 28 August 2013, <http://johnkaye.org.au/nsw-upper-house-to-shine-a-light-onto-greyhound-racing/>

personal responsibility for the rehoming of dogs who are retired, injured or were not considered 'suitable' for racing in the first place.

(i) Treatment

Many greyhound owners and trainers claim that they feed their dogs premium food and treat them like royalty, yet the reality witnessed by rescue groups is in stark contrast to these claims. There are widespread reports of sickeningly poor treatment of greyhounds by owners and trainers.

Many owners keep their dogs in cages for long periods, often up to 20 hours a day. This would not be tolerated of a pet owner yet it is considered completely acceptable practice by greyhound owners. Section 9 of the NSW *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (Confined animals to be exercised) states that:

- (1) A person in charge of an animal which is confined shall not fail to provide the animal with adequate exercise; and
- (3) A person in charge of an animal (other than a stock animal) shall not confine the animal in a cage of which the height, length or breadth is insufficient to allow the animal a reasonable opportunity for adequate exercise.

Many dogs come to rescue groups riddled with fleas and underweight, some to the point of being severely malnourished, as trainers feel the need to keep dogs at a "racing weight" – feeding them only enough to keep them going and no more. My own rescue dog came to the Friends of The Hound group quite thin and with a skin condition, possibly resulting from the poor diet she had been fed. Dr John Kaye MLC has also noted this treatment, stating that "some trainers keep dogs in tiny pens and, in some cases, withhold food from their animals to maintain their racing weight"⁴⁴.

Section 8 (Animals to be provided with food, drink or shelter) of the NSW *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* states that (1) a person in charge of an animal shall not fail to provide the animal with food, drink or shelter, or any of them, which, in each case, is proper and sufficient and which it is reasonably practicable in the circumstances for the person to provide. Subsections 8(2) and (3) further state that evidence of an animal not being provided with clean water, food or shelter during a 24 hour period is evidence that the person accused of the offence has failed to provide the animal with proper and sufficient drink, food or shelter during that 24 hour period. Given the extremely poor condition that some greyhounds are surrendered to rescue groups in, it is evident that many greyhound owners and trainers are committing offences under section 8 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*.

A recent, extremely disturbing example of the poor treatment of many greyhounds relates to two greyhounds, a male and a female, dumped at the Wagga Wagga Pound in October 2013. While the investigation into this matter is ongoing, greyhound rescue group Every Greyhound⁴⁵ has reported that a greyhound owner or trainer in Northern NSW had given the dogs to someone in Wagga Wagga for the purpose of hunting. Both dogs were then surrendered to the pound in an extremely emaciated condition, with the male weighing 19 kilograms and the female weighing a mere 15 kilograms. The healthy weight range for a male dog is 27 - 40 kilograms and

⁴⁴ John Kaye MLC, 'NSW Upper House inquiry to shine a light on greyhound racing', 28 August 2013

⁴⁵ It should be noted that Every Greyhound is a neutral rescue group who do not wish to engage in the debate about the ethics of the greyhound industry. They provided these details on their Facebook page for purely factual purposes.

for a female, 27 - 34 kilograms⁴⁶. Every Greyhound has reported that the female was in particularly bad condition – experiencing severe dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, and with a hole in her foot so bad that bone was visible⁴⁷.

In addition to the poor treatment suffered by greyhounds at the hands of their owners and trainers, the incidence of injuries sustained by greyhounds while racing is staggering.

I have personally seen, through my association with the Friends of The Hound group, several dogs who have permanent injuries such as torn ligaments, back injuries and broken bones suffered as a result of racing.

While reliable statistics are not available on the number of dogs injured while racing, investigations by the group Greyhound Freedom has revealed that from January 2012 to September 2013, there were approximately 31,186 injuries suffered by greyhounds while racing across Australia⁴⁸. These greyhounds were either scratched from a race due to injuries or suffered an injury from a race. Injuries and illnesses suffered by dogs in the greyhound racing industry include broken legs, paralysis, head trauma and cardiac arrests from over exertion⁴⁹.

Greyhound Freedom found that across Australia, 324 greyhounds died at the track over this period, having either collapsed on the track or in the catching pen, or were euthanased as a result of their injuries⁵⁰. Few of these dogs are afforded veterinary care for their often very treatable injuries, but are generally just killed – as veterinary care would cost the owners money.

Greyhound Freedom was unable to determine the number of injuries and deaths that occurred at the 20 non-TAB greyhound tracks in NSW, as the stewards' reports are not publicly accessible⁵¹.

At the Dapto track, claimed as one of the safest tracks in NSW⁵², three dogs died in one meeting in April 2013. A dog broke its back in race two, another dog broke its neck in race eight, and a third dog was euthanased after breaking its offside hock⁵³. Although GRNSW claimed to have "launched a full investigation into each of the individual injuries suffered at the meeting"⁵⁴, the results of the investigation have been kept hidden from the public.

As outlined by the Humane Society International (HSI) in its submission, race tracks with corners are much more likely to result in serious injuries and collisions⁵⁵. HSI further noted in its submission that other countries (for example, Denmark) have introduced straight tracks, decreasing the injury rate significantly.

⁴⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greyhound>

⁴⁷ Every Greyhound, <https://www.facebook.com/egreyhound?fref=ts>

⁴⁸ Greyhound Freedom Facebook page

⁴⁹ John Kaye MLC, 'NSW Upper House inquiry to shine a light on greyhound racing', 28 August 2013

⁵⁰ Greyhound Freedom Facebook page

⁵¹ Greyhound Freedom Facebook page

⁵² Humane Society International, Submission to the Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in NSW (Submission No 180), 21 October 2013, [http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/Parlment/committee.nsf/0/3bf75c2927063cbfca257c0f0008466c/\\$FILE/0180%20Humane%20Society%20International.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/Parlment/committee.nsf/0/3bf75c2927063cbfca257c0f0008466c/$FILE/0180%20Humane%20Society%20International.pdf)

⁵³ Cydonee Mardon, Illawarra Mercury, 'Investigation after three dogs die at Dapto', 15 April 2013, <http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/1434045/investigation-after-three-dogs-die-at-dapto/>

⁵⁴ Cydonee Mardon, Illawarra Mercury, 'Investigation after three dogs die at Dapto', 15 April 2013

⁵⁵ Humane Society International, Submission to the Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in NSW

(ii) Inhumane methods of euthanasia employed by the greyhound industry

As outlined above, the estimated number of greyhounds killed each year is shockingly high. Even more distressing than the figures alone are the widespread reports that when dogs are euthanased, it is often not done in a humane way.

Part 12 of GRNSW's Code of Practice states that "when necessary, the method of humane and painless death for any greyhound is a rapid intravenous injection of concentrated barbiturate solution. Such methods of euthanasia must be performed by a veterinarian"⁵⁶.

Janet Flann, a volunteer who rehomes greyhounds, recently told 7:30 that it is common for unwanted dogs to be bludgeoned to death or shot, remarking that "if they get to the vets to be euthanased properly they're lucky, really"⁵⁷. Dr Ted Humphries echoed this sickening reality in a 2012 Lateline interview, stating that although it weighs heavily on him having to put down approximately 500 greyhounds annually at his clinic alone, that it at least gives them a humane death. Dr Humphries told Lateline that left in the hands of some owners, dogs can suffer a cruel fate - "they do it inhumanely. They shoot them or hammer them or throw them off bridges. I knew one particular person who would hang them"⁵⁸.

Greyhounds suffer immensely at the hands of owners and trainers who are motivated to save the few hundred dollars it would cost to have an unwanted greyhound euthanased by a vet and instead, end dogs' lives in cruel and brutal ways. Even in death, there is a complete lack of dignity afforded to far too many greyhounds.

Submissions made to the current inquiry by owners and trainers have largely denied the existence of any welfare issues in the industry. These claims are at odds with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, and are clearly made in order to preserve the industry for financial gain.

As noted in the HSI submission to the current inquiry, "it is important to note that the definition of "euthanasia" describes the act or practice of painlessly ending the life of an animal or a willing individual who has a terminal illness or incurable condition, as by giving a lethal drug. However, in the case of greyhounds, a number of these are perfectly healthy animals, so these are in fact convenience killings as the dogs are no longer deemed profitable. 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"⁵⁹.

(iii) The role of GRNSW in establishing and enforcing standards of treatment

The existing GRNSW regulation is doing nothing to address welfare issues and strict, independent regulation and heavy penalties are needed if animal welfare standards are to be effectively enforced.

⁵⁶ GRNSW Code of Practice – For the Keeping of Greyhounds in Training, April 2011, <http://www.thedogs.com.au/Uploads/Userfiles/CODE%20OF%20PRACTICE%20%20Greyhounds%20in%20Training%202011%20FINAL.pdf>

⁵⁷ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

⁵⁸ Matt Carney, Lateline, 'Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry', 9 November 2012

⁵⁹ Humane Society International, Submission to the Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in NSW, 21 October 2013

Section 9 of the *Greyhound Racing Act 2009* (NSW) sets out the functions of GRNSW. Under subsection 9(2)(c) of the Act, GRNSW is responsible for initiating, developing and implementing policies considered conducive to the promotion, strategic development and welfare of the greyhound racing industry in NSW.

GRNSW's Animal Welfare Policy further states that "the welfare of all animals must be a primary consideration for all participants in the greyhound racing industry"⁶⁰. Part 9 of the Animal Welfare Policy (Principles and Policies on Greyhound and Animal Welfare) states that GRNSW will work with stakeholders to develop lifetime tracking of all registered greyhounds pups to ensure industry accountability for the welfare of all greyhounds bred in NSW, as well as policies and initiatives to extend the racing life of greyhounds where this does not adversely affect the welfare of the greyhound⁶¹.

GRNSW further states under part 9 that "appropriate breeding policies that support the principles of animal welfare will actively promote and support the Greyhound as Pets program to find responsible, loving, long term homes for as many greyhounds as possible"⁶².

In response to the ABC's recent investigation into greyhound racing, GRNSW provided a statement to the ABC claiming that:

"...All greyhound racing participants in NSW are bound by GRNSW's Code of Practice and the Greyhound Racing Rules which outline animal welfare standards, as well as strict management and care practices that are appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of greyhounds.

GRNSW has a zero tolerance policy for participants who do not meet our animal welfare standards. Any trainer found ending the life of a greyhound in an inhumane manner or mistreating the greyhounds in their care in some other way is not welcome in our sport. They would not only be violating the rules of greyhound racing and our code of practice, but could also be committing a criminal offence under the NSW Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

GRNSW is committed to improving the welfare of greyhounds in NSW. Since assuming responsibility for animal welfare in 2009, GRNSW has set about launching numerous initiatives to ensure that the welfare of all animals is a primary consideration for all participants in the greyhound industry. This commitment will ramp up over the next 12 months, with \$1.3 million to be invested on greyhound welfare in that period.

By encouraging smarter breeding practices, ensuring safer racing and providing greater re-homing opportunities, GRNSW is confident it will provide a better life for greyhounds after racing..."⁶³.

It is evident that despite these platitudes and GRNSW's responsibilities under the Act, enforcement of animal welfare standards by GRNSW is vastly inadequate, given the numerous welfare issues outlined throughout this submission.

⁶⁰ Greyhound Racing New South Wales Animal Welfare Policy, November 2006

⁶¹ Greyhound Racing New South Wales Animal Welfare Policy, November 2006

⁶² Greyhound Racing New South Wales Animal Welfare Policy, November 2006

⁶³ GRNSW Media Announcement, 'GRNSW Responds to Welfare and Integrity Allegations', in response to 7:30 program, 15 October 2013, http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/201310/r1188141_15258599.pdf

As an industry body, GRNSW is motivated by profit and self-preservation. Australia has the world's third largest greyhound racing industry. In 2009, \$73 million was spent by gamblers nationally on greyhound racing⁶⁴. The NSW racing industry alone generated \$48 million of income in the 2011/12 financial year⁶⁵. As noted by a 2012 Sydney Morning Herald article, GRNSW is not subject to direction by government or oversight by the Independent Commission against Corruption and is responsible for both the regulatory and commercial functions of the greyhound racing industry in NSW⁶⁶, despite the significant and systemic issues with the industry.

As outlined above, the Independent Commission against Corruption investigated the industry in 2000, finding former chief steward Rodney Potter guilty of corrupt conduct and implicating five other people⁶⁷.

Mr David Landa, a former NSW ombudsman and former chief magistrate of NSW Local Courts resigned as the integrity auditor for GRNSW in 2012, having been appointed in 2011 to oversee drug testing and control, stewards, registration and the independent investigation of complaints⁶⁸. Following his resignation, Mr Landa told the ABC "it's fiction and it was a fraud, really, on the public. [The public was] led to believe that there was an Integrity Auditor capable of dealing with issues that ought to be dealt with: matters of integrity, matters of honesty, matters of fair dealing and those powers were not able to be performed"⁶⁹. Mr Landa has also stated that "leaving a gaming industry without the proper checks and balances – no government does that...nowhere in the world would the gaming industry be allowed to self-regulate like this"⁷⁰.

Giving the same industry body responsibility for the commercial as well as the regulatory aspect of the industry creates a major conflict of interest and it is little wonder that the welfare of greyhounds has suffered as a result. As noted in the HSI submission, no government department has any oversight of the greyhound racing industry in NSW - not the Minister for Agriculture, who administers the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, and not the Minister for Racing⁷¹.

Giving responsibility for animal welfare oversight to this industry body is ludicrous in the extreme. GRNSW has no interest in the greyhounds themselves but only in maintaining the profitability of the industry. To the racing industry, the concept of animal welfare is a PR problem to be managed through empty gestures, and not a serious concern requiring genuine efforts to stamp out abuse and mistreatment.

An independent regulator is needed to police the enforcement of animal welfare standards in the greyhound racing industry, as GRNSW is clearly doing an incredibly poor job of policing themselves and their own industry.

⁶⁴ John Kaye MLC, 'NSW Upper House inquiry to shine a light on greyhound racing', 28 August 2013

⁶⁵ GRNSW 2011-2012 Annual Report

⁶⁶ Natalie O'Brien, The Sydney Morning Herald, 'NSW racing going to the dogs', 15 July 2012

⁶⁷ Natalie O'Brien, The Sydney Morning Herald, 'NSW racing going to the dogs', 15 July 2012

⁶⁸ Natalie O'Brien, The Sydney Morning Herald, 'NSW racing going to the dogs', 15 July 2012

⁶⁹ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 'Greyhound racing industry hit with doping, cruelty, collusion allegations', 16 October 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-15/greyhound-racing-industry-hit-by-doping-cruelty-allegations/5024714>

⁷⁰ Natalie O'Brien, The Sydney Morning Herald, 'NSW racing going to the dogs', 15 July 2012

⁷¹ Humane Society International, Submission to the Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in NSW, 21 October 2013

(l) Financial incentives for reducing euthanasia and prosecutions for animal mistreatment

Despite the NSW *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* stating that it is an offence not to provide an animal with adequate clean water, food or shelter (section 8), adequate exercise (subsection 9(1)), to confine an animal in a cage which is too small to allow the animal a reasonable opportunity for adequate exercise (subsection 9(3)), or to commit an Act of cruelty against an animal more generally (section 5)⁷², it is evident from the welfare issues outlined above that many greyhound owners and trainers are committing offences under the Act. The RSPCA has responsibility for prosecuting individuals for offences of animal cruelty, yet cruelty against greyhounds is widespread and little is done to enforce the Act in relation to the treatment of greyhounds.

GRNSW's own Code of Practice and Animal Welfare Policy are also flagrantly breached by owners and trainers across the state.

Much stricter enforcement of animal welfare legislation and policies is needed if any improvements are going to be made to the welfare of greyhounds.

In addition, financial incentives for reducing euthanasia could be a step in the right direction. GRNSW's empty statements regarding developing sustainable breeding policies have clearly not improved the euthanasia rates at all. Greyhound racing is a profit driven industry - almost \$3 billion a year is gambled on greyhound racing in Australia⁷³. GRNSW made a profit of approximately \$5 million in the 2011/12 financial year⁷⁴. If even a small percentage of these profits went towards encouraging sustainable breeding practices and improved efforts to rehome dogs through financial incentives for owners, the euthanasia rate, which CEO of GRNSW Brent Hogan has conceded is "too high"⁷⁵, could perhaps be improved.

Clearly the current approach of self-regulation is doing nothing to stop the mass killing of greyhounds. Financial incentives, stricter regulation of the industry and enforcement of animal welfare legislation will be the only way to change behaviour.

(m) The adequacy and integrity of data collection in the industry, including the number of pups born, the number of dogs euthanased and injury rates

It is clear from the varying estimates of the number of greyhounds bred and euthanased each year in Australia (as outlined above) that the data collected by the industry is vastly inadequate. It is in the best interest of the industry to keep the public, the government and welfare organisations in the dark about the number of dogs injured and euthanased each year so that the industry can continue with its current practices unimpeded.

As noted above, Dr Jade Norris from the RSPCA has stated that the figures kept by the industry are inadequate – "there is a real lack of national published data so we don't have exact euthanasia figures to draw from and that's another problem with the industry: this lack of transparency"⁷⁶.

⁷² *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (New South Wales)

⁷³ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

⁷⁴ GRNSW 2011-2012 Annual Report

⁷⁵ GRNSW Open Letter to the ABC, in response to the Background Briefing program, 'The quick and the dead'

⁷⁶ Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, 7:30, 'Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry', 15 October 2013

The fact that GRNSW is not even able to provide exact figures on the number of dogs killed each year speaks volumes for how inadequate the data collection is.

There are widespread reports of dogs being listed as “retired” on racing websites, when in fact they have been killed following an injury or the end of their racing career.

The NSW Government has stated that greyhounds registered under the *Greyhound Racing Act 2009* are exempt from the identification and lifetime registration requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*⁷⁷.

Despite part 9 of the Animal Welfare Policy stating that GRNSW will work with stakeholders to develop lifetime tracking of all registered greyhounds pups to ensure industry accountability for the welfare of all greyhounds bred in NSW⁷⁸, accurate data continues to not be available in relation to the number of greyhound puppies born each year. As outlined above, unplanned litters often result in greyhound puppies being killed at birth without a trace.

The industry will not be held to account for the mass atrocities suffered by dogs until comprehensive data is kept on the number of dogs bred, injured and killed each year. All greyhounds should be registered and microchipped and the rules around unplanned litters relaxed to stamp out the destruction of such litters. Registration requirements must be strictly enforced in order to establish a level of transparency in the industry and improve outcomes for greyhounds. In addition, GAP should make its rehoming figures public.

Conclusions

Many owners and trainers involved in the greyhound industry claim that there are few or no welfare issues associated with the industry, and that allegations by rescue groups regarding welfare issues are overstated if not completely fabricated. Owners claim that any neglect or cruelty suffered by greyhounds is the work of a few “bad apples” and that the majority of the industry treat their dogs well, rehome all surplus dogs, and have no case to answer.

The fact is that rescue groups have no reason to overinflate the gravity of the situation or lie about the treatment that greyhounds are subjected to. Involvement in rescue organisations is borne out of a genuine concern for the thousands of greyhounds who are suffering unnecessarily across Australia at the hands of the profit-driven greyhound industry. People involved in rescue groups are not hysterical “bleeding hearts” but rational and pragmatic individuals who believe that the unnecessary cruelty and death of thousands of dogs a year is not acceptable practice in modern day Australia. Those involved in the greyhound industry, on the other hand, have a vested financial interest in the industry continuing and any welfare issues being swept under the carpet.

The mass killing and abhorrent treatment of greyhounds is completely repugnant and out of step with the Australian community’s expectations in relation to the treatment of animals.

⁷⁷ Department of Premier and Cabinet, Division of Local Government, ‘Greyhounds’, http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/dlg_InformationIndex.asp?mi=9&ml=1&areaindex=CA&index=313

⁷⁸ Greyhound Racing New South Wales Animal Welfare Policy, November 2006

The Committee has an opportunity to bring about real and meaningful change in the greyhound racing industry, for the sake of the voiceless dogs involved. I therefore look forward with interest to the outcomes of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Eve Gibson