Submission No 596

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

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SUBMISSION REGARDING GREYHOUND RACING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

NEW SOUTH WALES NEEDS TO BECOME AN EXAMPLE TO THE REST OF AUSTRALIA WITH REGARDS TO GREYHOUND RACING – TO STOP THE ANIMAL AND GREYHOUND WELFARE ATROCITIES THAT OCCUR IN THIS COUNTRY EVERY DAY.

The following submission is in regards to Greyhound Racing in New South Wales. As a Veterinary Nurse who has worked in both Queensland and New South Wales Veterinary Surgeries, I am not a stranger to the dark side of Greyhound Racing. I am the owner of a rescued greyhound myself, who, would have been drained of his blood and then euthanased in Brisbane, if a colleague of mine had not have intervened.

Each year in Australia, an estimated 17,000 greyhounds are killed each year, due to their inability to race “fast enough”, injuries sustained on the racing track or simply put to sleep because they have reached the end of their racing career. While Greyhound Racing NSW “Greyhounds as Pets Program” has been established since 2009, only 300 greyhounds have been re-homed under this program. The fate of Greyhounds who can no longer race, is devastating in not only New South Wales, but the whole of Australia. In Victoria, the number of Greyhounds who become pets is less than 5% according to Judge G.D. Lewis (2008).

What happens to the greyhounds who are not fast enough and never even named, injured on the track or too old to continue racing?

“Not Fast Enough”Puppies

In a litter of six greyhound puppies, only one may be good on the racetrack, so what happens to the others? Many are shot, starved to death, drowned or have their throat cut.

Injured on the Racetrack

At the speeds these dogs race, injury is inevitable. If a greyhound becomes injured during a race, they are euthanased or inhumanely disposed of. Common injuries include broken legs, broken back and broken necks. In 2012 more than 270 greyhounds left a

TAB greyhound track in a body bag and another 336 greyhounds had broken bones. A very large majority of these would have been euthanased.

Blood Drained at Vet Clinics

Due to their universal blood type, which means their blood can be donated to any other breed of dog, Greyhounds are often surrendered by their trainers to an emergency or specialist veterinary hospital to be drained of their blood and euthanased. This is a free form of euthanasia for the trainer, as they do not need to pay the fee for the euthanasia solution given to the animal to be put to sleep.

Invasive Surgery while conscious

Many greyhounds are sent to universities to be experimented on for Veterinary training purposes or scientific research. An attached report looks into experiments conducted on conscious greyhounds at the University of Newcastle, in 2011. The greyhounds are rarely anaesthetised and as shown in this report, are not provided with any pain relief, post surgery and during experimentation.

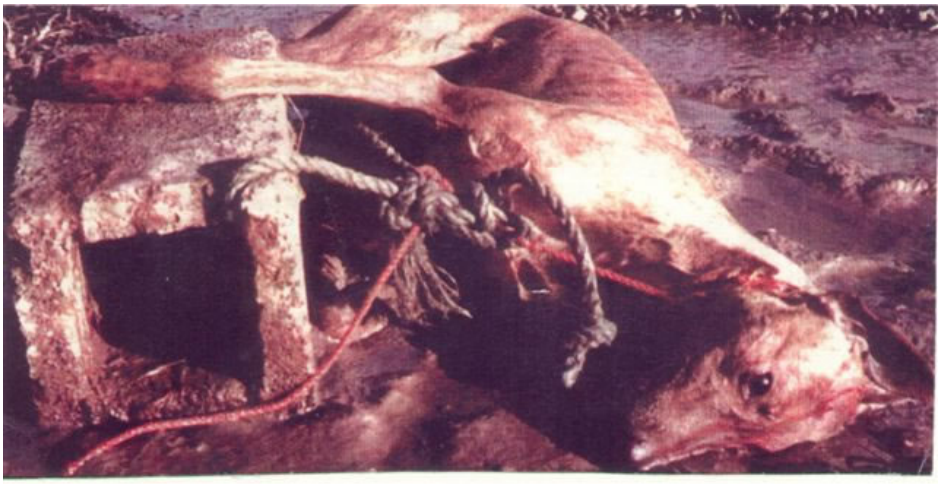
Sent to Asia to become fast food

Disgustingly, Australian greyhounds are also sent to countries in Asia to be raced, and when their racing career is over, they are used as meat for human consumption. Australia is a huge player in the promoting of greyhound racing in Asia, particularly in countries such as Korea, Vietnam, Macau and China. When these dogs finish racing in

these countries, there are no laws regarding humane euthanasia of the animals. In Korea they are electrocuted, strangled, skinned alive or bludgeoned to death. Koreans believe that the rush of adrenalin through an animals body when it dies, increases human virility.

The RSPCA outlines the five freedoms of animals.

1. *Freedom from hunger and thirst*: by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. *Freedom from discomfort:* by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. *Freedom from pain, injury or disease:* by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. *Freedom to express normal behaviour:* by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
5. *Freedom from fear and distress:* by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.



Is this freedom from fear, distress, pain and injury?

Freedom One is not always adhered too by Greyhound trainers to their greyhounds. If the dogs are unable to race and win for them, they are sometimes starved to death, or face another harrowing fate.

Freedom Two, Greyhounds are often kept in unsanitary conditions, housed in concrete kennels their entire lives, until they no longer serve a purpose for their trainer.

Freedom Three, Four & Five are not provided for greyhounds who are sent to Asia to be tortured before being eaten, used in university experiments not anaethetised, drained of their blood and then killed, drowned, bludgeoned and shot.

For the Australian public to be able to make a submission regarding greyhound racing is a great opportunity to bring to light the atrocities that occur. It is devastating the fate of these beautiful dogs, simply because greedy people want to race them and dispose of them once they no longer serve them a purpose. Not only is this an animal welfare issue, but it is also an issue for those who people who have gambling issues. This is an industry that promotes gambling and animal cruelty. There is no need for people to

breed these dogs for gambling purposes to make money, they should go out and get a real job that doesn't exploit innocent animals, and people with gambling addictions.

The photos below are some examples of the atrocities that occur when Australian Greyhounds are sent overseas when they are deemed no longer good enough. The below article is the report regarding experiments conducted on conscious greyhounds at Newcastle University.

KRISTA NICHOLAS

Invasive surgery conducted on conscious greyhounds

Twelve greyhounds subjected to invasive surgery without general anaesthesia or any form of sedation.

'Integration of baroreflex and autoregulation control of bronchial blood flow in awake dogs' McIlveen, S, White, S, Quail, A, McLeod, D, & Parsons, G (2011).

Background

In a recently published study[1] conducted by researchers at the University of Newcastle, greyhounds underwent invasive and distressing surgery without general anaesthetic or any form of sedative.

This experiment was conducted in an attempt to further explore the body's stabilising mechanisms for maintaining blood pressure in relation to bronchial circulation in the lungs (baroreflex).

The Procedure

The first part of the procedure involved the twelve greyhounds having pulsed Doppler blood flow transducers (a medical device for measuring blood flow) surgically implanted on the right bronchial artery.

In order to achieve this, the dogs were placed under general anaesthesia and a surgical incision was made into the chest wall. The exposure of major organs (heart and lung) and veins illustrates the invasive nature of even this initial part of the study. The transducer wires were passed from the chest cavity through the back of the dogs' bodies.

A second skin incision was then made along the groove between the shoulder and neck, in order to pass catheters into the aorta, so as to measure aortic and central venous pressures. A second catheter was positioned in the right upper chamber of the heart.

The dogs then underwent a 10 day period of recovery and laboratory training. While the authors stated that antibiotics were given during the recovery period, there was no mention of additional pain relief being given at any point after the initial end of operation period. .

After the 10 day post-op period, the dogs underwent another procedure. **This time the experiment involved the deliberate decision to abstain from administering any form of general anaesthetic or sedative**. This means that the dogs were fully awake and aware of the surgery being conducted on them.

First, "the dogs were placed on their sides and catheters and probes connected to the recording system". The dogs were (supposedly) "trained to lie *unsedated* on their side on a padded table with the dog's attendant at the head". Under only local anaesthetic, the right femoral artery (thigh) was exposed, and a balloon catheter, with attached balloons, passed into the lower part of the heart. The balloons were then inflated and deflated repeatedly in a sustained manner to s(t)imulate appropriate states of blood pressure / blood flow. The authors stated that "the dogs appeared unaware of the balloon inflation/deflation process during experiments", despite the lack of sedation or general anaesthesia.

Furthermore, in six of the dogs, the same process was conducted after they were given particular chemicals in order to induce dilation of blood vessels, and therefore slow the heart rate and lower blood pressure.

In one dog, a catheter was passed through the jugular vein in the neck into the heart, and again the induced change in blood pressure was measured after being raised and lowered through the

process of inflation and deflation of the aortic balloon catheter. This invasive part of the study was again conducted using only under local anaesthesia.
The authors stated that the absence of anaesthesia was justified as “it was inappropriate to use anaesthetics and sedatives which selectively block or enhance autonomic activity”.

The authors do not state whether the dogs were euthanised after completion of the study. In the interests of cost efficiency they might be used again, but as Australia does not have retirement facilities for these animals the only other option is to kill them.

The experiment was supported by a Project Grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC).

A number of very similar experiments had been conducted in the past, making the replication of the procedure in this study highly questionable. A previous study, undertaken by the same researchers, had its results invalidated by the fact that the dogs became stressed due to unfamiliar staff and inadequate assessment of animal welfare concerns([3)].

Animal welfare concerns

The experimental process and care of the dogs was approved by the Animal Care and Ethics Committee of the University of Newcastle.
However, Humane Research Australia has a number of concerns about this study, including.

Why were chronic arterial catheters used when the authors themselves state that they are particularly prone to pressure-extrusion in animals?

Why is there no mention of additional pain relief during the recovery period?

How can such invasive surgery as this, including passing catheters through main veins and arteries into the heart, be approved when only local anaesthetic was used?

How can the decision not to use general anaesthesia or sedatives be justified when the experiment involved the inflation and deflation of balloons that were specifically designed to cause a raise in blood pressure, and therefore distress?

The study does not provide any indication of the housing arrangements for the dogs, or where they were sourced from. Can we perhaps presume that they are failed racing dogs?

Was it really necessary to conduct this experiment given that a number of very similar experiments had been conducted in the past? (It would seem not as the results from this study did not differ from those of previous studies)

What the experts say:

Comments from Andre Menache BSc(Hons) BVSc MRCVS,Veterinarian:

'T[his].. study is an example of **curiosity-driven basic research**, which is generally defined thus:

“Basic research is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view”

The principal author (McIlveen) has been conducting similar research on dogs and sheep since 1976. Similar animal studies have been criticised by clinical cardiologists, based on **cost-benefit** analysis (the **cost** in terms of animal suffering, versus the lack of human medical **benefit**

Where such studies are funded by taxpayer money, **there is a need for greater transparency and accountability.** According to Ray Greek MD, “if society does not condone using sentient animals in research that does not lead to cures and if basic research is just that kind of research, then society does not condone using sentient animals in basic research.”

The following paragraph was written by John J. Pippin MD FACC in a report entitled “Curiosity Killed the Dog”. Although the report refers to another series of dog studies, it could just as well apply to the above study:

By way of overview, this team’s research involves a single area of physiological expertise and a single animal preparation. It has successfully mined those attributes to carry out largely **repetitive and unproductive** animal studies, using their own and others’ previous findings to carry on with minor variations upon very few central themes. By doing so, they have published scientific articles for over 16 years, without apparent correlation with, or influence upon, similar areas of human physiology or medicine. **This body of work amounts, in my view, to a startling example of the pursuit of disconnected scientific knowledge with no clear human benefits, and to the detriment of dogs.**

Relevance to humans

The researchers make no specific comment on the relevance of this research to humans.

Andre Menache BSc(Hons) BVSc MRCVS,Veterinarian, comments

In addition to the welfare and cost-benefit concerns in the McIlveen study, there are significant methodological issues that should have alerted the animal ethics committee before approving the study. Such concerns should also have been raised by the funding body (National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia).

Whereas in humans, nearly 70% of the blood volume is situated below the level of the heart, in quadrupeds (e.g. dogs, sheep) 70% of their blood volume is at or above the level of the heart. This difference can have a profound influence on venous return and cardiac filling in the two species

Baroreflex and autoregulation control of bronchial blood flow are subject to intrinsic as well as extrinsic factors, including complex gene function. Although some gene functions may be categorised as conserved processes; and may be shared between dogs, sheep and humans, this is still insufficient for inter-species extrapolation when the trait or response being studied is located at higher levels of organization, is in a different module, or is influenced by other modules.

A more rational approach to the study of baroreflex and autoregulation control of bronchial blood flow would be to observe human spinal cord injury (SCI) patients. The study by Phillips et al (2012) is illustrative of the advantages of such an approach: “Baroreflex sensitivity (i.e., the capability of the autonomic nervous system to detect and respond effectively to acute changes in blood pressure) has been recognized as having predictive value for cardiovascular events, as well as playing a role in effective short-term regulation of blood pressure”[12].