

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Ms Lisa J Ryan

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**Submission Response - NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on
Greyhound Racing in New South Wales (November 2013)**
Lisa J Ryan

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The Director, Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in New South Wales
Parliament House
Macquarie St
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1. Purpose

To seek to advise the Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in New South Wales on the impact the industry has upon the animal welfare aspect of greyhounds

2. Submissions

Close: 6 November 2013

3. Submission

Members of the community, including key stakeholders, have been invited by the Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in New South Wales to make submissions about the Greyhound Industry in NSW.

This submission will address all following sections according to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:

- (a) The economic viability of the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales
- (b) The financial performance and conduct of the industry and of Greyhound Racing NSW including a comparison to other states of Australia
- (c) Government initiatives and assistance measures to support the industry and comparison of assistance to other racing codes
- (d) The effectiveness of current industry regulation, including the level of autonomy of Greyhound Racing NSW
- (e) The selection process for the board of Greyhound Racing NSW
- (f) The effectiveness and accountability of the board and management of Greyhound Racing NSW
- (g) The effectiveness of the current arrangements for, and role of, the Integrity Auditor of Greyhound Racing NSW
- (h) The capability and performance of Greyhound Racing NSW and governance of the Industry

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- (i) The incidence of drug administration and doping in the industry and the efficacy of Greyhound Racing NSW's control and testing processes
- (j) Sale and breeding of greyhounds including the market conditions and welfare of Animals
- (k) The welfare of animals in the industry and the role of Greyhound Racing NSW in establishing and enforcing standards of treatment of animals
- (l) Financial incentives for reducing euthanasia and prosecutions for animal Mistreatment
- (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, and
- (n) Any other related matter.

I highlight in this submission under this 'other' heading my personal serious and overriding concerns relating to :

- Dumping and surrender rates of Greyhounds in the industry;
- Unaccounted abuse and kill rates – local government pounds, shelters, vets, private individuals and the industry;
- Vet abuse - (draining for blood and experimentation);
- Complete lack of transparency and access to factual information;
- Complete lack of AW protection for Greyhounds in comparison to other dogs;
- RSPCA and lack of advocacy for Greyhounds;
- Export market China etc;
- McGrath Foundation;
- Gambling implications and impact on community;
- Insufficient specialist and industry based Greyhound rescue & re-homing;
- Calibre, credentials and independence of those reviewing submissions (The Hon Robert Borsak MLC Shooters and Fishers Party Chair).

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I have read, agree with and support in full the contents and concerns raised in submissions made by No. 12, Animal Liberation NSW, No. 24, Society of Companion Animal Rescuers Inc and No. 180, Humane Society International. There is little I can add to the relevant and legitimate points already made in these comprehensive submissions.

I have also read several submissions made by 'industry' players including racing clubs, trainers and individuals. What is glaringly obvious is that in spite of the overwhelming community concerns over Greyhound abuse, cruelty and deaths in addition to the complete lack of accountability of the 'industry', industry submissions include an overwhelming focus on money and financial considerations.

The vast majority of industry submissions are void of substance or animal welfare concerns apart from one club (Mudgee and District Greyhound Club) who make the claim "Please accept video 3 as a submission to your parliamentary inquiry. This video is from the Mudgee and District Greyhound Club. On this particular day, we supported Mission Australia, the RSPCA, and The Adoption Programme.

I was very disappointed to note that RSPCA NSW profit out of Greyhound racing in spite of their advocacy for the horses in the horse racing industry.

I have also noted the substantial number of submissions made where names/submission content has been suppressed. The fear of 'retaliations' is prevalent in the Greyhound industry and this larger than average number of suppressions speaks volumes.

I am a long time dog owner (hounds), lover and advocate/activist for progressive change in relation to improved animal welfare standards. I am also a NSW resident and an ANKC member and participate with the rescue and re-homing of companion animals.

The greyhound racing industry is no stranger to controversy. Animal welfare scandals, questions over the transparency of governance and allegations of criminal involvement have plagued the industry for many decades. To date the response from the 'industry' has been totally lacking in a thorough and transparent review and response. This enquiry is long overdue.

There is a substantial and ever growing community/public concern over the unknown thousands of dogs who are either missing, killed or abandoned because they are deemed to be "too slow." The true and accurate numbers are not even known.

Snap shot of the disposal/ retirement form for greyhounds in NSW. Until last year it was not compulsory to fill this out.

Injury - because they have a broken hock, spinal or head trauma resulting from racing OR a broken toe. Yes greyhounds have been euthanased for broken toes.

Not suitable for re-homing or GAP - health problems or they haven't been socialised with small dogs and they think they are meant to chase them.

Lack of ability - because they want to play or not chase small furry animals or they don't run fast enough to win races

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Accidental causes - like dying from dehydration in 40 degrees heat or getting bitten by a snake. There are A LOT of greyhounds that happen to get bitten by snakes coincidentally.

1. Animal welfare – deaths, injuries and a lack of transparency

What is known:

- According to figures provided by Greyhound Racing NSW, over 3,000 greyhounds are put down in NSW alone each year because they are “too slow”, have been injured racing or training, or have reached the end of their racing career.

- Just 300 dogs have been rehomed since 2009 under Greyhound Racing NSW’s ‘Greyhounds As Pet’ program.

- Nationally it has been estimated that 17,000 greyhounds are killed in Australia each year.

- Injuries and illnesses suffered by dogs in the greyhound racing industry include broken legs, paralysis, head trauma and cardiac arrests from over exertion. In April 2013 three dogs died at the one meeting at the Dapto track; one broke its neck in race eight while another broke its back in race two; a third dog was destroyed after breaking its offside hock.

What is unknown:

- There are also allegations that dogs are being fed performance enhancing drugs. Across the country, positive drug swabs rose 82 per cent from 2010/11 to 2011/12.

- Collated data on the number of pups born, incidences of injuries and number of dogs killed in the NSW greyhound racing industry each year remains hidden from the public.

- Tracking of greyhound from birth to death largely relies on breeders and owners self-reporting to Greyhound Racing NSW.

- It is unclear whether Greyhound Racing NSW is failing to collect data on the fate of greyhounds or they are not making it publically available. Either scenario is unacceptable in accounting for the welfare of dogs in the greyhound racing industry.

2. Governance concerns and a lack of independent oversight

- 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. GRNSW is responsible for both the regulatory and commercial functions of the industry.

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- Former greyhound racing integrity auditor, David Landa, resigned last year because he said he was unable to facilitate public inquiries into the problems within the industry. Landa claimed that “failings in the legislation make the functioning of this position as an independent oversight, simply not possible.” No legislative or regulatory change was enacted following Mr Landa’s resignation.

- 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.

3. Alleged criminal activity

- The greyhound racing industry has been plagued by allegations of doping, with reports of links to outlaw motorcycle club involvement.

- Former integrity auditor David Landa expressed concern that GRNSW had not conducted any public inquiry into criminal or motorcycle club involvement in the industry.

- The industry has a history of criminal activity. In 2000, when the industry was still under government regulation, an inquiry into the sport by the Independent Commission Against Corruption led to six people being charged with corrupt practices and the jailing of the former chief steward Rodney Potter. Now that the industry is self-regulating, it is out of the reach of ICAC.

4. Questionable funding model

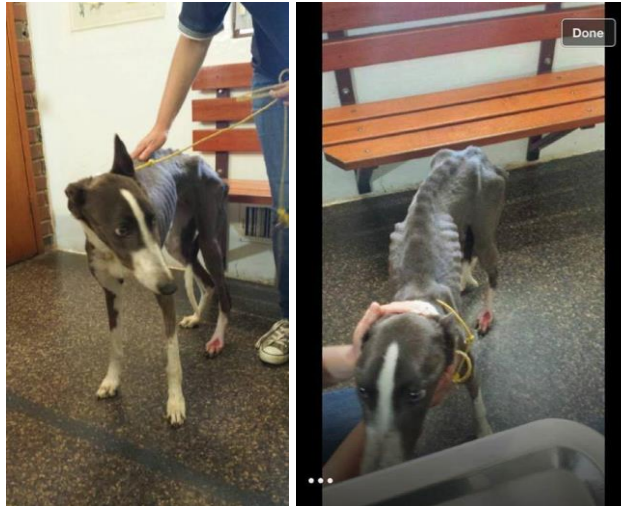
- The Intercode Agreement signed in 1998 by the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing bodies divides the shares of the TAB takings between the three codes.

- GRNSW receives 13 percent of the TAB takings, despite claiming to generate more than 20 per cent of betting revenue. GRNSW argues it has cost its code \$125 million since 1998. Owners, handlers and trainers have criticised the management of the Intercode agreement by GRNSW.

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Below illustrates the condition of NSW Greyhounds who had been sold/given away by a Greyhound breeder/trainer to a member of the public for hunting and were then subsequently and very recently dumped in a NSW council pound in the most distressing and appalling condition.



Below illustrates the conditions of a NSW whelping area for Greyhound pups (mid winter) by a NSW Greyhound breeder/and trainer who participates in NSW Greyhound racing.

