INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

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I would like to make the following submission to ban greyhound racing in Australia, in line with the evidence brought about by the Humane Society International as follows:

There is a distinct lack of transparency with respect to animal welfare, with over 3,000 greyhounds 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 careers (figures provided by Greyhound Racing, NSW).

Just 300 dogs have been re-homed since 2009 under Greyhound Racing NSW's 'Greyhounds as Pets' program.

Nationally, it is estimated that 17,000 greyhounds are killed in Australia each year.

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

WHAT IS UNKOWN

There are also allegations that dogs are being fed performance enhancing drugs. Across the country, positive 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 greyhounds 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 publicly available. Either scenario is unacceptable in accounting for the welfare of dogs in the greyhound racing industry.

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.

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.

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 reach of ICAC.

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 per cent 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.

Yours sincerely

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