

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

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I write my submission for the Parliament's enquiry into greyhound racing based on my experience as a volunteer for Greyhound Rescue.

Here is my story:

I began volunteering in November 2011 after I met one beautiful blue female greyhound who was covered in scars, walking the park with her human brother aged 3 and doting dad. "Why was she covered in scars?" I asked.

The dad said "I'm not sure, she was a rescue."

"Was she a racing dog?"

"Yes," he said. "There's nothing nice about the industry you know."

From that day on, I researched, joined groups and found Greyhound Rescue to volunteer for.

The first day I visited kennels was the day the charity got a phone call. Allegedly one of the greyhounds who was being kept in a kennel on the same property as ours (but did not belong to GR) had died and was taken to a vets nearby. This was the first time I experienced first hand the hard reality of the industry.

I got to the kennels to find a woman who goes under the name of Jo, was hoarding dogs on part of our kennel property. There were about 10 greyhounds there, sitting in a weeks worth of urine and faeces with no food or clean water. All were in tact and some had terrible fly bitten ears. All were neglected, surely a form of animal abuse? Thank goodness, one had not died but this made Greyhound Rescue take action and we pushed and pushed for RSPCA and Animal Welfare League to investigate. It was a very long and distressful process for GR and the volunteers, who were told not to feed or help these animals and to attend to the ones in our care only.

Why mention this? Greyhound trainers were giving their dogs to her when they were finished or failed at racing. If there was no surplus in the breeding of greyhounds, Jo would not be hoarding greyhounds. If there were better regulations and laws enforcing the whereabouts of greyhounds after racing and CHECKS then these dogs would not be suffering. These dogs eventually were removed from the property we used and GR has no idea where they went. Most likely euthanised. But these figures won't be on greyhound data will they?

The next thing that shocked me was how many Greyhound Rescue had. I had no idea so many greyhounds were looking for a home. Greyhound Rescue then had 40 but now has 60 dogs looking for a home with a huge waiting list. Not to mention the surprises that arrive at the pounds from Tamworth, West Wyong, Blacktown, Renbury Farm, Campbeltown even stretching to Queanbeyan and Wagga Wagga.

Greyhound Rescue is just one charity with 60 looking for homes. There is also Greyhounds as Pets, Friends of the Hound, Greyhound Adoption Program and other charities that rescue greyhounds such as Dog Rescue Newcastle, RSPCA, AWL in NSW. Why is there such a need to rescue so many greyhounds? I don't see 4 Labrador charities in NSW alone. Let's just assume they have 10 greyhounds on their books at the minimum and the mixed breed rescues have 10 altogether. That means at any one time in NSW there could be at least, the bare minimum of 100 greyhounds looking for a home. If the industry allows for as many to be bred at this current time, how do you think these charities are going to keep finding homes for greyhounds?

Just a few of the greyhounds received whilst I was a volunteer

Possum:

- underweight
- poor teeth
- underwent numerous vet treatments due to her devastating condition
- it took months for her to recover

On arrival



after GR care



Lovely:

- found wondering the streets
- flea ridden
- underweight
- poor teeth (had an operation to remove rotting teeth)
- entered 52 races and won 8 of those and then had two litters of pups, yet abandoned at the age of 10
- she passed away in her forever home a month in October 2012. She had just 2 years as a companion animal in a loving home.

On Arrival



Rich:

- flea ridden
- found wondering the streets of Tamworth with Lily
- underweight
- poor skin and coat

On Arrival



After GR care



Lily:

- flea ridden
- found wondering the streets of Tamworth with Rich
- underweight
- poor skin and coat

On Arrival



After GR care



Audrey:

- found wondering the streets at just 21 months of age
- the pound called the owners who did not want to collect her
- underweight
- poor coat condition

On Arrival



Lee:

- found wondering the streets of Tamworth
- underweight
- poor coat
- owners contacted but did not want him

After GR care



7 puppies:

- 7 puppies surrendered to GR on the phone whilst mother was giving birth
- they were due to be drowned but someone stepped in and called GR
- result from an accidental litter, which the owner of the bitch was not told about so the bitch could still race
- they were taken away from the mother at 2 weeks of age, initially they were going to be removed at 1 week (so mother could race sooner) but GR pleaded for longer

on arrival



Millie:



Millie was surrendered to me, as a volunteer from Greyhound Rescue. I was alerted through social media that a greyhound puppy needed urgent rescue as the owner was due to euthanize. She was just a 12 week old brindle greyhound puppy.

I collected Millie from a whelping kennel in Campbeltown on the 21st of April with (what I was told) a few toes missing and a story of why that only the fly on the wall will know. I was told that her mother had probably bitten her toes off when she was maybe a couple of weeks old. The kennel was unsure of how it happened because the breeding bitches were kept in a small barn, in their own kennels and whelping boxes. There was no CCTV, no monitoring devices to alert the staff if anything

happened to the puppies or bitches. I was told that she was taken to the vet and all that she needed was regular bandage changes. I was also told that the owner had hoped her injury would heal so she would be able to breed, so he could get his money back that he spent on her. This made sense, as she was ear tagged earlier in the week.

When my husband and I got her home, we changed her bandage to find the photo below:



Our vet at Mosman Vet confirmed it was not a typical veterinary amputation and confirmed that it was a traumatic amputation done most likely without any anesthetic. Millie was surrendered to us with no antibiotics or pain relief. As soon as she saw Mosman Vets, they prescribed her morphine style drugs and antibiotics.

Millie now wears a prosthetic, as my husband and I along with our vets could not bear the thought of an amputation when she walked, ran and used her little stump with no problems. She has been officially adopted by my husband and I.

In 2009 Greyhound Rescue received this email:

*"Hello,
My name is Elle and I am 21 years of age. I am a veterinary nurse and on Monday worked in a clinic that had a high volume of Greyhound patients. This is through trainers and owners, and the veterinarian does a lot of 'implants' for Greyhound breeding.
I was disgusted at what went on there. This is not against the clinic but rather the entire industry. We had 'trainers' and owners literally dropping these dogs off (one owner dropped off a group of 5) to be euthanased because they did not run fast enough. These AMAZING and beautiful Greyhounds were only on average 1 and a half years old.
This needs to stop. I know that Greyhounds are left in terrible conditions and that euthanasing them is considered the 'humane' option (yes it is painless) but it is SO*

wrong and unjustified for their lives to be lost to an industry that SHOULD NOT EXIST.

I was wondering if you knew how I could have my voice be heard? I am in no way claiming I know anything about the industry, rather I am a vet nurse who held these dogs with tears in my eyes as they went to sleep.

These incredible dogs are being lost every day, if only more people knew about it before they place their bet that would inevitably support their deaths.

*Thank you so much for your time,
Elle"*

I leave you with these images and facts based on my experience as a volunteer as ask you to think about the welfare of these animals bred into this industry and hope that maybe you will make a change once and for all, to benefit the greyhounds. They did not ask to be born a greyhound. How different their life would be if they asked to be born a Labrador....

Regards,
Nora Anderson-Dieppe