

## **INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW**

**Organisation:** GREY2K USA Worldwide

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# GREY2K USA WORLDWIDE



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The Director  
Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Director,

GREY2K USA Worldwide is pleased that the Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW is undertaking an inquiry into the greyhound racing industry. We are deeply concerned about the welfare of greyhounds in Australia's largest greyhound racing and breeding state. The continuing flow of negative publicity and damning information in regards to the treatment of greyhounds, the administering of drugs to dogs to fix races, other criminal involvement and the overall integrity of the industry, raises important questions and makes your work very timely. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

GREY2K USA was formed in 2001 to be a voice for greyhounds in the United States, and has now officially adopted an international mission. It is our position that greyhound racing is inherently cruel and must end. By researching and documenting the injuries and standard lack of care given to racing dogs, we have helped to pass prohibitions on dog racing in several states. In fact, since our formation, the American industry has been more than cut in half. Where there were nearly fifty tracks in a total of fifteen states at the time of our incorporation, today there are just twenty-one tracks in seven remaining host states. Both lawmakers and everyday citizens alike have come to realize that greyhound racing is antiquated, indefensible and in great conflict with mainstream views on the proper treatment of animals.

In the pages that follow, we will address our concerns related to the Terms of References of the inquiry.

### **(d) The effectiveness of current industry regulation, including the level of autonomy of Greyhound Racing NSW**

The greyhound racing industry in NSW is currently lacking any form of independent oversight. Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW), a non-government body established in 2009 under the *Greyhound Racing Act 2009* (NSW), has been granted full autonomy in governing the industry's regulatory and commercial functions. Part 2, Section 5 of the *Greyhound Racing Act 2009* (NSW) states that GRNSW or any of its subsidiaries 'does not represent the Crown and is not subject to direction or control by or on behalf of the

Government'.<sup>1</sup> GREY2K USA Worldwide is of the opinion that it is unacceptable to grant an industry that uses animals for commercial purposes full autonomy. Specifically, bestowing GRNSW with a regulatory role represents a conflict of interest to the detriment of the integrity of racing and the regulation of the welfare of greyhounds. Complaints to this effect come from both inside and outside of the industry. All stakeholders will benefit by changing this regulatory structure and by bringing back independent scrutiny to this industry.

A clear indication that the current system is fatally flawed is evidenced by the resignation of former greyhound racing integrity auditor, former chief magistrate of NSW David Landa, in April 2012. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Mr Landa said that his position was 'untenable – because he was powerless to run public inquiries into problems within the industry.'<sup>2</sup> The *SMH* further states that Mr Landa said that 'his ability to function as auditor had been compromised when he was told he would not receive funding to undertake proposed work.'<sup>3</sup>

Mr Landa told *The Sun-Herald* that 'the lack of oversight was unprecedented around the world' and that GRNSW "hit the roof" at the prospect of a public inquiry into why Mr Landa's predecessor, Mr Costigan, had been allowed to continue holding the position for 18 months even though he was not carrying out his duties.<sup>4</sup> Mr Landa was also blocked when he wanted to do an investigation into drug swabbing.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, in an ABC 7.30 Report of 15 October 2013, Mr Landa confirmed his views by saying "I was obstructed almost from the start with greyhound racing. They simply did not want oversight." He said that it was a fraud on the public "because they were 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."<sup>6</sup>

Mr Landa's experiences and stories clearly show that GRNSW is not interested in transparency or allowing proper public scrutiny of its own industry. In addition to Mr Landa, Dr. Rob Zammit, a former official on-course vet for GRNSW, has characterized the problems in the industry as "endemic".<sup>7</sup> He told the *SMH* in 2012 that the industry "has not been honest, there are no two ways about it. I once tried to right the wrongs, advising that there are drugs being used in dogs that are not showing up that we should test for, and I lost my greyhound clientele overnight because of it."<sup>8</sup>

Further concerns about the industry's openness, in particular in relation to the welfare of animals and the drugging of dogs, is raised by the disbandment of the independent Veterinary Advisory Panel which was replaced by vets directly employed by GRNSW.<sup>9</sup>

GREY2K USA Worldwide sees a clear need for independent oversight of this industry by the NSW government with a strong and pro-active focus on monitoring and improving the welfare of greyhounds. Information provided by an industry body with a vested interest in avoiding negative attention is *per se* unreliable. This not only hurts the public but is also damaging to the industry itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Greyhound Racing Act 2009

<sup>2</sup> Natalie O'Brien, *Vastly different stories in 50 shades of greyhounds*, August 12 2012, The Sydney Morning Herald, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/vastly-different-stories-in-50-shades-of-greyhounds-20120811-2418n.html>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Natalie O'Brien, *Going to the dogs - bikies, dopers and fraudsters*, August 12 2012, The Sydney Morning Herald, <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/going-to-the-dogs--bikies-dopers-and-fraudsters-20120811-2418m.html>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Sean Rubinzstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, ABC 7.30 Report, *Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry*, 15 October 2013, ABC 7.30 Report, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3869813.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Natalie O'Brien, *Going to the dogs - bikies, dopers and fraudsters*, August 12 2012, The Sydney Morning Herald, <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/going-to-the-dogs--bikies-dopers-and-fraudsters-20120811-2418m.html>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

**(g) The effectiveness of the current arrangements for, and role of, the Integrity Auditor of Greyhound Racing NSW**

As an appointee of the GRNSW, it is difficult to envision how the position of Integrity Auditor can be fulfilled in an unbiased and independent manner. Our concern is supported by revelations of former integrity auditor Mr David Landa, as described above, and by the lack of evidence of any substantial investigation into drug testing in particular.

To avoid any compromise and restrictions to the proper undertaking of the role of an Integrity Auditor, the appointing of this position should be in the hands of government instead of the industry itself, which will avoid the conflict of interest that is currently at play.

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

Frequently, greyhounds are found positive for drugs or doping when tested after winning a race. Test samples have been found to contain substances such as cocaine, EPO, amphetamines, caffeine, anabolic steroids and Viagra.<sup>10</sup> GRNSW claims that the percentage is low and that most tested dogs are clean, but based on the industry's history, and on the opinion of some involved in greyhound racing today, it is appropriate to question the credibility of GRNSW's drug testing program.

According to an ABC 7.30 Report investigation in October, half of all dogs that were tested positive for banned substances this year were in NSW.<sup>11</sup> Greyhound trainer Christos Arletos spoke out about the systemic drug problem in the industry and said that "80 per cent of greyhound trainers are looking for something to dope their dogs"<sup>12</sup> Former on-course veterinarian Ted Humphries said that cocaine is very popular as a stimulatory drug and that it is more difficult to detect.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Zammit has also explained that people have tried to buy EPO from his clinic to use it for their animals because it is harder to find on a swab.<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Humphries, who sat on the NSW Greyhounds' veterinary advisory committee until it was disbanded two years ago and was the whistle-blower on a major corruption scandal in 2000 related to urine samples, says that not much has changed since. He states, "I don't think the security is there that needs to be there."<sup>15</sup>

**(j) Sale and breeding of greyhounds including the market conditions and welfare of animals**

The breeding of greyhounds for commercial greyhound racing has the sole purpose to breed fast dogs that can win races. All other dogs are of little value to the breeder or trainer. In such a system, dogs are treated as disposable commodities and are given little consideration. This is evidenced by the thousands of greyhounds that are killed in NSW every year. GRNSW estimates this number to be around 3,000,<sup>16</sup> but, disappointingly, is not able to provide accurate figures. Thus the real numbers remain unknown.

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<sup>10</sup> Sean Rubinstein-Dunlop and Lesley Robinson, ABC 7.30 Report, *Doping, cruelty and collusion claims dog greyhound racing industry*, 15 October 2013, ABC 7.30 Report, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3869813.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Matt Carney, *Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry*, November 9 2012, ABC Lateline, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2012/s3629916.htm>

It is reported that well over 8,000 greyhounds are born in NSW every year.<sup>17</sup> Industry statistics indicate that the number of race meetings and starters has remained fairly steady since 2003.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that the number of dogs participating in racing will have been on a stable level, too. As only a very small percentage of greyhounds are adopted or kept for breeding purposes and only few die of old age in this industry, it can be concluded that approximately the same number of greyhounds that are born each year are also discarded every year.

Every greyhound born deserves to be protected from cruelty and an unnecessary death. GRNSW clearly fails to do so and it is appropriate for the NSW government to take measures that ensure that every greyhound receives the protection it deserves.

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

Significant animal welfare concerns are linked to the killing of unwanted greyhounds by industry participants. It has been reported that inhumane methods are being used by industry participants. Dr. Humphries has stated in relation to the killing of unwanted greyhounds that “[i]f we don’t humanely euthanase them, then they’ll often inhumanely euthanase them by shooting, hanging, gassing, drowning—any manner of alternative methods can be used if these people get desperate. I think hammers occasionally have been incriminated as being a way of destroying an animal.” “I’ve not only heard about it; I’ve firsthand experience of it.”<sup>19</sup>

The high number and severity of injuries sustained by greyhounds is also an unacceptable inherent welfare issue in greyhound racing. NSW Stewards Reports document thousands of injuries per year. These include injuries such as broken legs, broken backs and necks, paralysis etc. of which the outcome not seldom is that the dog will never return to racing and is likely to be killed if he or she has not died of the injury.

The industry prefers to report injury rates based on the number of starters, but this provides a distorted picture as greyhounds race on average eleven races per year<sup>20</sup> and it is the dogs who suffer the pain and disability. GRNSW reported that on average 1.92% of named greyhounds were reported as sustaining an injury each year in New South Wales.<sup>21</sup> It also reported that an average of 0.06% of greyhounds which are injured at a track are euthanased each year in New South Wales.<sup>22</sup> Based on Stewards Reports, we question the accuracy of these figures and recommend that these figures be independently verified.

The responsibility for developing and enforcing standards for the welfare of animals should be with the government. This should never be left to an industry that has a primary focus to make a profit from the use of animals as there will always be a conflict of interest. We recommend that the NSW Government will take full control over these aspects to remove this clear conflict of interest.

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

The killing of young and healthy dogs for a gambling industry is completely unacceptable. But this practice is an inherent part of the greyhound racing industry. In November 2012, GRNSW CEO Brent Hogan said that

<sup>17</sup> Answers to NSW Parliament questions, 20 December 2012, <http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/lc/qalc.nsf/18101dc36b638302ca257146007ee41a/58a60367046f09b3ca257abc0029aa66?OpenDocument>

<sup>18</sup> Greyhounds Australasia, Australian Racing Statistics, <http://www.galtd.org.au/GreyhoundsAustralasia/index.php?q=node/111>

<sup>19</sup> Timothy McDonald, *Greyhounds killed if they don’t perform*, November 9 2012, ABC Radio AM, <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2012/s3629114.htm>

<sup>20</sup> Answers to NSW Parliament questions, 20 December 2012, <http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/lc/qalc.nsf/18101dc36b638302ca257146007ee41a/58a60367046f09b3ca257abc0029aa66?OpenDocument>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

“We believe at present it is around 3,000 greyhounds a year that are euthanized.”<sup>23</sup> This is a staggering number and the industry is now forced to admit that it is ‘too high’. But Mr Hogan’s further comment that GRNSW has “set about putting in place a number of actions which will bring that number down to a level which is more acceptable”<sup>24</sup> shows a lack of understanding of society’s values concerning dogs. GRNSW accepts the killing of healthy young dogs as a part of doing business, but we firmly believe that the majority of Australians would disagree.

The limited success of GRNSW’s greyhound rehoming program, which only managed to rehome 300 greyhounds since 2009,<sup>25</sup> is another indication that GRNSW is not taking its responsibility to reduce the number of greyhounds that are discarded seriously enough.

It remains to be seen to what level the industry is capable of reducing the number of greyhounds that are killed, but bringing the level down to zero will only be possible with a change in the business model and intervention by the NSW government. The NSW government should legislate and enforce a ban on the killing of greyhounds except when deemed necessary for humane reasons by an independent vet.

**(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**

There appears to be a distinct lack of data gathering and analyses by GRNSW on key animal welfare indicators. GRNSW is not capable of providing accurate figures for the number of greyhounds killed. Additionally, GRNSW also does not take responsibility for greyhounds that are not named, yet these were bred for the racing industry and GRNSW should take full responsibility for these dogs’ welfare too. If the industry were serious about caring for animals and improving animal welfare, it would ensure to keep exact records so as to track and report on progress and account for every greyhound born and raised. Transparency mandates that this information be provided to the public as well.

**Conclusion**

Commercial greyhound racing is inherently cruel, as it causes dogs to suffer and die, some due to injury and others due to lack of homes. We submit that commercial greyhound racing should end in NSW.

For the remaining time that commercial greyhound racing continues to exist, the NSW government should ensure that there is independent oversight of this industry, breeding should be strictly limited, strict animal welfare standards should be developed and enforced and it should be made illegal to kill a greyhound except when deemed necessary for humane reasons by an independent veterinarian.

In conclusion, we are confident that the commercial greyhound racing industry lacks community support in NSW and that the majority of citizens would prefer to see an end to this cruel industry. We request that the greyhounds be taken into account in any decisions made on the future of dog racing in NSW.

Please contact us if further information or clarification of this submission would be of assistance to the Committee.

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<sup>23</sup> Matt Carney, *Allegations of doping in greyhound racing industry*, November 9 2012, ABC Lateline, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2012/s3629916.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Answers to NSW Parliament questions, 27 June 2013, <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/la/qala.nsf/18101dc36b638302ca257146007ee41a/73129441ba2b6f30ca257b750000790d?OpenDocument>

Yours sincerely,

Jeroen van Kernebeek  
Australian Director