

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Organisation: Friends of the Hound Inc.

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FRIENDS OF THE HOUND INC.

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Friends of the Hound Inc. is a volunteer, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to rescuing Greyhounds and finding homes for them as family pets and companions. Since 2003, Friends of the Hound has found homes for many beautiful greyhounds and raised much community awareness about greyhounds as pets, and their plight. Our submission focuses on the **welfare** of Greyhounds.

Friends of the Hound opposes dog racing due to the fact that the industry cannot exist without breeding and disposing of large numbers of Greyhounds, and the economics and viability of the industry require that profits be valued above the welfare of the dogs.

We have developed relationships and a good reputation in our bid to save and rehome greyhounds. We work for the dogs - and do not want to see more dogs' lives jeopardised. Our passion, drive and commitment is in saving greyhounds that would otherwise be destroyed as part of the cyclical nature of the exploitation of their speed and natural ability – crudely summed up by a greyhound owner/trainer recently with, *“we breed ‘em, we race ‘em and we kill ‘em – what’s ya problem?”*

We recommend that it be considered unnecessary, unethical and illegal to use and abuse dogs for gambling/wagering in our modern society, and we ask that our government representatives acknowledge this and legislate accordingly.

Friends of the Hound has over ten years of history, experience and knowledge about the dogs, the industry and the people involved. I, personally, have spent an average of 30 hours per week over the past 10 years running this organisation, including meeting with owners/trainers, rescuing dogs, assessing and caring for the dogs, arranging fostering and adoption placement, as well as attending promotional and fundraising events.

My family has cared for well over 450 greyhounds in our own home, and I and my colleagues have had dealings with hundreds of greyhound racing participants in the course of this voluntary work. The members of Friends of the Hound have also had the pleasure of meeting and discussing the issue with countless numbers of community members, ordinary people from all walks of life, who admire our dedication and determination, support our work and agree with our stance and viewpoint.

At times we are contacted by people who are disturbed by knowledge or information they have, or scenes they have witnessed, about greyhounds involved in the racing industry, to see if there is something we can do to help, unfortunately refusing to contact the relevant authorities due to a lack of confidence or faith in the regulatory control or, due to concern or alarm regarding the character of those involved, and fear of retribution or recrimination.

The emotional case against greyhound racing is easy to make... people love dogs, and racing dogs face short lives. It isn't just a few... there are thousands upon thousands bred and subsequently killed. We understand that unfortunately emotions alone don't change policy, especially not when significant sums of money are purportedly involved. Money, as a justification for activities considered immoral, archaic or inexplicable generates levels of social activism and advocacy. Dog racing is one such activity.

An anti-racing movement is building and it too, is focused on numbers – the numbers of dogs bred which subsequently render this a dog-killing industry; the number of greyhounds being exported to Asian countries - with no animal welfare laws; the small minority of active participants actually involved in this 'sport' (see table 1 of Appendix); the amount of government spending (tax-payer dollars) to prop up this code of racing; the high rate of injuries sustained by the animals providing this 'product'; the high incidence of doping, and prohibitive costs/lack of funds for eradicating the misuse of these illegal and performance enhancing drugs; widespread dissatisfaction and conflict within the industry regarding mismanagement, poor governance, corruption and lack of profit-share; the absence of transparency and accountability; and lack of funding and vested interest in real animal welfare improvements and regulations.

With regard to welfare issues in Greyhound Racing... the first and foremost focus is on:-

Overbreeding

Based on industry figures there are around 20,000 Greyhounds bred for dog racing in Australia every year. (<http://www.galtd.org.au/GreyhoundsAustralasia/index.php?q=node/111>) This fact stands alone as a predominant reason to ban Greyhound racing in our country.

The Greyhound racing industry is a breeding lottery for the fastest dog, with no regulatory efforts being made to curb breeding numbers, in fact there are breeding incentives in place throughout the code.

There is no cap on the numbers of litters that can be bred, no limit to how many times one bitch can produce pups, or age limit of registered breeding dogs, and no effective breeding selection processes. A vet nurse contacted us recently, dismayed at having a 12 year old Greyhound in the clinic that had a belly full of pups. It is not an acceptable life for a dog - living in a cage (even in accordance to Codes of Practice), and pumping out litters of pups for a lifetime. We have rescued stud dogs at 9 years of age and even 11 years of age that were no longer needed by their racing/breeding owners – not even years of producing pups and profits for their owners grants these dogs a full life expectancy, or suitable care

and comfort in their twilight years – instead finding themselves dumped at vets, pounds or rescue groups when no longer required or able to make their owners money.

Puppy-farming has gained much focus around Australia as a major animal welfare concern with many key animal welfare groups and government representatives advocating the abolishment of puppy mills. Yet the Greyhound racing industry is the largest group of puppy farmers in the country and the breeding and killing of Greyhounds has continued to go unchecked.

It has long been common for Greyhound industry spokespersons to ignore the issue of overbreeding, and the subsequent mass wastage which occurs, instead spruiking economic benefits or financial gains, or claiming that most participants are hobbyists that keep all of their dogs. Participants proclaim that there are ‘good’ ones that ‘love their dogs’. Whilst some are grateful and appreciative of groups like ours that take and find homes for their dogs, there is a general ‘head in the sand’ attitude or blind acceptance, with many refusing to acknowledge the endemic problems, or just shirking responsibility and ignoring the fact that their involvement is supporting and perpetuating an industry that routinely kills the majority of dogs that are bred. It is unreasonable and arrogant to expect that the Australian public should not be concerned that 20,000 Greyhounds are bred every year for gambling, with just under half of those actually making it to the track, and where the only possible outcome for the majority of dogs is an early death.

Exploitation

We all know that humans have long given themselves rights and privileges over other species. Our animal welfare laws are structured around the use of animals balanced against legitimate human benefit. Animal exploitation for the purpose of sport/entertainment/gambling has a fragile moral claim. Given that the Greyhound racing industry requires large-scale killing of animals each year (in excess of 3000 dogs every year in NSW alone) the industry has a rather questionable claim on legitimacy.

Mass Wastage

The rationale by Brent Hogan, CEO of Greyhound Racing NSW is that *“community attitudes have moved on from where they were 10-20 years ago”* (thus the sport now needs to *“reflect those attitudes by rehoming more Greyhounds and reducing the number that are euthanised”*). The fact is... there has been increased public awareness about what actually happens to the multitudes of Greyhounds bred, exploited and disposed of by the industry. The past decade has seen concentrated effort and emphasis from grass-roots greyhound rescue groups and animal welfare organisations in Australia and around the

world, in educating people and creating awareness about Greyhounds, and there has been a significant shift in attitude about the breed, and about Greyhound racing.

Decades of racing promotion, seeing them muzzled and thinking of them only as those fast dogs that chase things definitely produced a stigma about Greyhounds, which benefited the racing industry in preventing a public outcry. Years of rescue, rehoming and promotion and bringing them into the community has dispelled many of the misconceptions and has seen an increase in rehoming opportunities.

For Greyhounds it, literally, is.... **the QUICK, or the DEAD.**

As seen with the Victorian model, the recommendations that were put forward aimed at addressing the major identified issues within the sport, were education, rule changes, better enforcement and expanded racing opportunities. Apparent improvements which Brent Hogan, CEO of Greyhound Racing NSW is already claiming to implement. **None of which address the main problem of overbreeding.** To suggest that such changes are designed to decrease wastage and improve the likelihood of each greyhound going on to actually race is ignoring the real problem of:- too many dogs bred = too many dogs dead.

Educating participants about breeding, rearing and training of greyhounds does not address the overbreeding and wastage problem. Recognising that there are many Greyhounds that do not make it to the track due to a lack of ability, injury or other reasons and then instituting better breeding strategies to improve the number of stock making it to the track **still does not address the overall wastage issue**, only the timing of the wastage. Likewise 'training methods' and 'injury rehabilitation'.

This focus on the supposition that only those Greyhounds with lack of ability or injury, whose racing careers do not eventuate or are shortened, are deemed **unnecessary wastage** is yet another example of the complete lack of understanding, accountability and responsibility shown by the industry as to the major welfare and image problem the industry faces. The failure to recognise the wastage of the 'retired' dogs, thousands of 3 or 4 year old ex-racers that are killed once no longer able to compete, is convenient, but unreasonable or a poor oversight.

It is estimated that as many as 90% of Greyhounds bred contribute to the wastage – the dogs are either destroyed if they are too slow, won't chase, or injury prevents them from racing, or they are 'retired' between 3-5 years of age and subsequently destroyed. Whether they make it to the racing track or not does not define their death as unnecessary.

Some Greyhounds are kept for breeding, some are kept by racing owners and around 4-5% are rehomed as pets by rescue groups. Large numbers of Greyhounds are taken to universities and science labs each year – the over-abundance of unwanted Greyhounds, along with their favoured anatomy for veterinary science study and training make them an ideal choice for laboratories and classrooms. A University student, studying 2nd year Veterinary Science, stated that in her class alone on campus, they ‘use’ 20 greyhounds a week.

Masses of Greyhounds end up in Vet Clinics, particularly specialist Vet Clinics, where they are utilised as blood donors before being euthanized, again the justification being that they are wastage anyway, the end product of a racing industry, and at least this way they are put to sleep humanely by a qualified Veterinarian and saved from cruel and violent deaths.

Hundreds of Greyhounds are also exported to China each year.

The argument is always thrown at animal welfare advocates and those that oppose dog racing to provide the figures and evidence of ‘wastage’; it is farcical that the industry has been, and is still permitted to self-govern, with the obvious lack of accountability or integrity in recording and supplying accurate data about the animals that are the core product of this industry.

Regarding the claim that many Greyhound owners ‘keep their dogs’ – or rehome their dogs...

- a Greyhound’s lifespan is approximately 12-14 years;
- the amount of Greyhounds bred over a 10 year period (based on figures of litters registered supplied by the industry) would equate to around 190,000 dogs, over 80,000 of which were bred in NSW;
- the NSW Department of Local Government currently has 2,550 Greyhounds registered in NSW.
- there is 6,150 Greyhounds registered for racing in NSW at this time.

There is a huge discrepancy in the numbers.

A simple, independent “where are they now” exercise highlighting dogs that were registered for racing in a selected timeframe and tracking their whereabouts now would certainly indicate the wastage reality for these dogs.

An independent audit of some of the industry’s large-scale (group 1) trainers whose facilities house hundreds of dogs should be undertaken – to determine exactly how many they breed and race, and what happens to them when not racing or ‘retired’.

The document *'Improving the welfare of the racing greyhound – a GRV perspective'* states “images of ‘mass’ burials or anecdotal stories of greyhounds being shot or killed in other unsavoury ways continue to surface. Probably the biggest outrage occurred in England with the publication of a story in the *Sunday Times* about a man who claimed to have shot and buried 10,000 greyhounds at his property for trainers who no longer considered the dogs suitable for racing. The article included a photo of the man wheeling a wheelbarrow containing the bodies of a number of greyhounds. This article led to a parliamentary enquiry into the welfare of greyhounds and a complete overhaul of greyhound welfare regulations in the UK.” There is anecdotal evidence of the same thing happening here in Australia. There is no doubt that properties exist where large numbers of Greyhounds have been killed.

About 18 months ago, a golfer at Cessnock in NSW lost his ball in the rough near a boundary fence and was horrified to witness a tractor laden with dead Greyhounds emerge from a shed on the neighbouring property. His wife phoned a representative of our rescue group to inform us and express her disgust and dismay, but unfortunately shied from giving her details or contacting authorities.

I received an anonymous call from a person in the Hunter region who helped out a racing owner by walking his Greyhounds, etc. When accompanying him to the trial track this person was apparently appalled to learn of the fate of Greyhounds there who did not perform well enough, alluding to the fact that Greyhounds were killed on site, mentioning the large dam on the property, and called to ask what could be done about it, but refused to give a name or to contact relevant authorities – for fear of retribution or recrimination from the acquaintance and those involved. (We understand that the anonymity of these allegations bears no weight, however such information is still usually passed on to the RSPCA, other animal advocacy groups, and media representatives).

Anecdotal evidence of atrocities have also been heard regarding other private trial tracks and racing owners' properties around the country and there are accounts of persons offering their services to rid people of their unwanted Greyhounds. A few years ago there was mention of an old chap in the Northern Rivers who would shoot your Greyhound for \$20, – but out there a local vet also provided a service to Greyhound racing people offering 'cheap Thursday' where Greyhounds could be euthanised for \$25. Of course, shooting or euthanizing dogs is not an offence by law, but appalling nonetheless.

The phone call I received earlier today is typical of the calls we receive almost daily... a trainer that has a retired racer, 3 year old female, gorgeous girl, make a great pet, can't wait months, actually.. is travelling south to pick up a litter of pups next week so needs her gone straight away, she only raced last night, she is booked into the vet for Friday afternoon –they will take her blood and euthanize her, but if he can rehome her before then, it would be good as she is a lovely, quiet dog.

Where is the duty of care and responsibility for these animals? – raced her last race on a Monday night, and booked into the Vet to be killed on Friday - because he has more young racing propositions coming to fill up his kennels. His guilt is assuaged because he made a phone call – we either take her, despite having a huge waiting list – or she dies. Responsibility for her death now transferred to us.

Insufficient Rehoming

A significant amount of the relatively small percentage of Greyhounds that do find homes as companion animals are usually at the expense of non-profit groups and the effort of volunteer rescuers.

Unfortunately there is still only a relatively small number of groups dedicated to helping this breed in Australia. The industry-affiliated Greyhound Adoption Program (or Greyhounds as Pets as it is now known in NSW) was introduced to protect the industry, not the dogs.

The NSW Department of Local Government has helped the racing industry to further monopolise, control and benefit from Greyhounds with the Greenhounds program. An independent body of skilled professionals invested in welfare and adoption to control and manage this program of muzzling exemptions would have been preferable.

According to Dr John Kaye, MLC (The Greens), the NSW Greyhounds as Pets program (which has received hundreds of thousands of dollars of funding from Greyhound Racing NSW) have placed around 300 Greyhounds into homes since 2009, and in comparison, our small, non-profit, volunteer group based on the north coast has rehomed more than 500 in that time. Friends of the Hound Inc. relies on the fundraising efforts of its volunteers and donations from the public to finance its rescue program. (Please note that Greyhound advocates have been requesting the information on rehoming figures for the 'Greyhounds as Pets' program on several occasions – but they were not made available).

It is interesting to note that the Greyhound racing-affiliated GAP programs do not mention or link to other Greyhound adoption sites despite their extensive waiting lists and the subsequent widespread dissatisfaction with their process shown by owners and trainers. Queensland GAP even went as far as publishing in a previous newsletter *"Please consider the image of the industry when placing your dogs with other rescue and rehoming groups. Dogs languishing in pounds is surely not the image we wish to portray. Whilst well-intentioned, some groups hold at their very core strong anti-racing sentiment and are certainly not friends of the industry."* (Note the apt use of 'languishing' - meaning 'grow weak', 'rot', 'suffer'). Despite the industry being aware that *"perceived wastage is still one of racing's biggest welfare and image problems"* it is obviously much more concerned with 'image' than the welfare of the dogs.

There are profound issues with the testing protocol and processes of the GAP organisations and many trainers have opted to utilise our program over the GAP program. The assessment or temperament testing in these programs appear to be structured in a way that the majority of dogs are set up to fail – with an obvious irony in the fact that the industry breeds and trains the dogs to chase, and their adoption agencies assess and kill them for doing so. Dogs that are “too quiet” or shy are also failed and put to death. In previous years many Greyhounds that have ‘failed’ their assessment to enter the GAP program have found their way to our organisation and have been successfully rehomed as family pets and companions (many to homes with cats and other small animals). The difference being a quick, short, kennel-based assessment conducted by GAP, over a longer in-home assessment conducted over several weeks (which allows the dog time to settle, relax, adapt and be assessed more thoroughly without excessive anxiety or disorientation and giving a fairer evaluation). There is an apparent high ‘failure’ rate with GAP and thus many more dogs being put to death based on short, ineffective testing.

Injuries

It has been estimated that at least one injury occurs in every race. Many of the injuries suffered are life threatening – as even the less acute injuries such as broken toes, muscle injuries, joint, tendon, ligament injuries and strains can result in the animal being euthanized. There are countless examples of dogs being ‘retired’ (a well-known euphemism for ‘killed’) for injuries sustained that prevent them from performing adequately. Some dogs even collapse and die on the track.

Many injuries and accidents that happen on the track occur due to cornering. Round tracks cause significant physical strain on the dogs (most Veterinarians would confirm the significant stress and strain placed on dogs from running in a circular motion), and these tracks provide a much higher incidence of bumping and collisions, leading to serious injuries. Why then, if welfare is a supposedly a key issue, are there so many round tracks, and plans to refurbish or build round tracks? During a conversation with a trainer who rang to surrender a couple of dogs, I was told that they call the tracks with a turn at the start (where the dogs come out of the starting boxes and have an immediate corner) “bookmakers tracks” - when the dogs bunch up going into these turns and collide, fall over, get injured or killed it apparently makes for more entertaining viewing – particularly for televised racing.

Despite the prevalent injuries and consequences conceived by the owners and trainers of these dogs they knowingly continue to subject their dogs to these inherent risks every time they race them.

Drug Use

There is widespread use of drugs that have been illegally administered to racing Greyhounds by their trainers or owners. You only have to look online at the Australian Racing Greyhound website to see how many cases are being prosecuted for illegal use of steroids and other substances on dogs.

<http://www.australianracinggreyhound.com/tag/positive-swabs>

<http://www.australianracinggreyhound.com/tag/stewards-inquiries>

It was only in 2008 that Greyhounds Australasia started testing the dogs for possible illegal use of substances such as steroids. An increase in successful prosecutions has led people wishing to gain an unfair advantage over their competitors on the racing circuit to try other substances.

<http://www.australianracinggreyhound.com/australian-greyhound-racing/administration/grnsw-finally-acknowledges-its-growing-integrity-problems/42917>

Greyhound Racing NSW has claimed that it has nearly doubled its swabbing budget – taking over 5,500 samples in the past year and hoping to conduct an estimated 6,750 in the new year. However, given that there has been over 70,000-80,000 Greyhounds racing in the field during this time, this number falls way short of ensuring a level playing field, cost being a prohibitive factor for effective regulation and drug detection. Drugs such as cocaine are found in winning dogs, but it is understood that there is no reporting of these infringements to Police - despite the fact that “it is illegal to use, possess, supply or manufacture prohibited drugs”. Can the Select Committee confirm or determine if/why these offences are not reported to NSW Police? And also look at the relatively inconsequential punitive measures meted out by this independently regulated industry.

Our rescue group often sees the effects of drug use in the dogs surrendered to our rehoming program – with incontinence in females being diagnosed by Veterinarians as resultant from steroid use; and other organ dysfunctions attributed to same. Of course there are other effects on the poor abused animals that are not granted any weight as all focus and concern from industry people is directed at ‘punter confidence’ and creating a level playing field, - there is little concern about the effect of prohibitive substances on the defenceless animals.

“The rise in the number of prohibited substance cases over the last year has been disappointing. Those who participate in a race, whether as owners, trainers or the like, are entitled to expect that all other dogs will run on a level playing field. Likewise, the public is entitled to expect that when they wager their money everyone will be competing on an equal basis.”

Export

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-01-21/greyhounds-macau/3784360>

Hundreds of Greyhounds are exported from Australia to race in China a country with no animal welfare legislation, where certain death awaits these dogs. There has been significant media attention and focus by key animal welfare groups - however, in reality, the outcome of death is no different from what is happening here, in Australia, to thousands upon thousands of dogs every year.

“GRNSW is working with Greyhounds Australasia and the other State bodies to holistically ensure our approach to the welfare of greyhounds, including those that are exported to race internationally, meets best practice.”

Again, with this statement in the recent Greyhound Racing NSW Annual Report – the issue is not about ‘best practice’ being met – but the awful fact that dogs are exported to Asian countries to run at places like the Canindrome in Macau where it is known that the dogs will be killed after underperforming only a few times. What is BEST is not to send them.

Governance and Regulation

The lack of transparency is still widely apparent in an industry that has previously enjoyed free reign and minimal attention and there is a growing dissatisfaction with the obvious lack of accountability and responsibility shown by the authorities and participants involved. It is no longer a simple case of denial, deflection or denunciation of alleged radical claims. Too many Greyhounds ‘disappear’ and Greyhound Racing NSW and in fact, the code in all states, cannot provide adequate records and data to explain or justify this disappearance. Is it a case of ineffectual and insufficient record-keeping, administration, and regulation – or is it that the industry does not want it known what happens to the dogs – or both?

Rather than an honest, transparent approach, we have seen false and misleading claims with regard to welfare and numbers of dogs bred and disposed of, and indications that effective data has either not been collected or recorded effectively, or is simply being kept hidden.

The implementation of microchipping as a means of ensuring responsibility and tracking of Greyhounds combined with a retirement notification system has little merit when the database is kept in-house and the onus is placed on voluntary notification. By not placing this information on the NSW Companion Animals Register there is again a lack of transparency which could lend further proof to claims of ‘hiding’ data. It is already understood that there is a significantly large proportion of participants that do not

particularly care what happens to their dogs post racing, and the current process for tracking them relies on these participants advising the racing board of their disposal means by completing a form. Who regulates this? Who is tracking them? Where is the data?

It is thought that the simple inclusion of Greyhounds on the NSW Companion Animal (microchip) database would provide transparency and tracking capabilities and make it simpler for rescue groups and adoption agencies in their rehoming, particularly as the industry claims it is invested in the dogs going on to become companion animals. The Department of Local Government has made it clear that they are not interested in knowing about the racing Greyhounds, only if and when, they become pets.

In June 2011, the Companion Animals 2008 Regulation was amended to addresses procedural issues which have arisen from the decision by Greyhounds Australasia to require all greyhounds whelped in Australia after 1 January 2011 to be microchipped.

http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/dlg_InformationIndex.asp?mi=9&ml=1&areaindex=CA&index=313

Greyhounds registered in accordance with the rules under the Greyhound Racing Act 2009 ("registered racing greyhounds") are exempt from the identification and lifetime registration requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998. The microchipping of registered racing greyhounds is therefore considered to be "voluntary".

The Regulation amendment makes clear that a registered racing greyhound remains exempt from the identification requirements of the Act, even if it is voluntarily microchipped.

Registration

*When a greyhound ceases to be a registered racing greyhound, for example after being rehomed through an adoption program, it automatically loses its exemption from the identification and lifetime registration requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998. NSW greyhound racing rules have been updated to require trainers to notify their **local council** when they transfer a former racing greyhound to a new owner.*

So, how is this 'transfer' of information to be made, and how many trainers are actually notifying their local council when getting rid of their dogs to pounds, vets, or rescue groups? Could this separation of data be just another way of helping the racing industry to 'hide' the figures of dogs involved?

At a Dec 2010 meeting of the Greyhound Industry Consultation Group this statement was endorsed by TONY O'MARA, General Manager of GRNSW.

"It is the preferred option that greyhounds be adopted or humanely euthanized by a Veterinary Surgeon. It is not appropriate for greyhounds to be handed in to Council pounds."

This is not because of welfare concerns as there is not increased suffering for the animal at a pound as Greyhounds live their entire racing lives in cages. Many Greyhounds incarcerated in pounds actually have a chance of being rescued and rehomed by an adoption group or member of the public. Friends of the Hound and other rescue groups have saved many Greyhounds from pounds throughout NSW and successfully rehomed them as pets. Is the suggestion that they be denied this chance just another way of ensuring data on dumpage rates of Greyhounds is not readily available?

Prioritising humane euthanasia as a solution to welfare problems is again not sufficient. "Humane" being characterised by compassion, kindness and mercy; and "euthanasia" being the practice of ending a life to relieve pain and suffering.

There is nothing kind nor compassionate about killing a healthy, young dog simply because it is no longer useful for making one money in a commercial racing and gambling industry.

Minimum standards and Codes of Practice are only worth implementing if they contain adequate welfare principles at their core and teamed with sufficient enforcement and regulation.

A trainer in Northern Rivers claims that, in over 30 years of breeding, training and racing greyhounds at their property, they have never had a visit from a steward. No industry representative has set foot on their property to conduct an inspection or check on compliance to the Code of Practice for keeping and racing Greyhounds. This apparently is not uncommon. Unfortunately it is rumoured by other trainers that these particular people also use live baiting as a training method.

Live baiting is believed to be quite prevalent, with anecdotal stories surfacing regularly and insufficient regulation and penalties surrounding alleged occurrences.

We have also formed a close working relationship with the NSW RSPCA to not only improve outcomes for ex-racers, but to improve the regulatory monitoring of participants from an animal welfare perspective.

What exactly does this mean? Greyhound Racing NSW needs to clarify this statement and explain its relationship to NSW RSPCA – and likewise, RSPCA need to confirm their association with the racing industry and their stance on Greyhound racing.

Industry Attitude

Last week I had a call from a local pet shop salesperson who mentioned that a man had come in and asked about the cheapest dog food they had. She quizzed him about his dogs and was told he was a greyhound trainer. She asked if he found homes for them after racing. He replied that it wasn't nice having to put them down but it's not possible for him to keep them all. When she mentioned that she had adopted a Greyhound through a local rehoming group he responded with *"oh, those bastards expect you to give them money to take them"*. He was talking about our nominal \$50 surrender fee, which goes toward the desexing, vaccination, and other veterinary costs, including dental surgery, plus worming and flea treatments, food, accessories, etc. that is spent on each rescued dog before rehoming. Sadly this attitude is shared by a few within the industry that stupidly believe we 'make money' by saving their dogs from death.

Two local Greyhound trainers refused to pay the \$50 surrender fee our group requests when I arrived to collect the dogs from their property. One because he could *"get rid of it another way much cheaper"* and the other because he *"just can't afford to pay it"*. The first has held "Trainer of the Year" status at a local coursing club, and the other, I'm told, is seen regularly down pub with his wife on Friday nights.

And we deal with the 'good' ones. That is, the owners/trainers who do actively seek an alternative to just heedlessly putting their dogs down. Unfortunately there are many others that we do not hear from.

Just last week a Greyhound owner walked into a Sydney vet with a sweet, young female Greyhound and when asked by the Vet nurse if he would agree to her being rehomed he said "Hell no!" Accordingly that young dog was put to sleep at this vet clinic despite having the opportunity to be saved and rehomed by our adoption group.

The unfortunate situation has arisen whereby industry participants who are offended, disturbed or concerned by negative publicity generated by welfare advocates and rescue groups in their endeavour to save dogs, are preferring to 'dispose' of the dogs rather than surrender them to the "anti's" or "tree huggers" and "do-gooders". Owner/trainers have threatened various versions of this statement aimed at me...*"that's it – I'm just going to kill all mine now"*. The real victims of this 'punishment' are the dogs.

Public Interest

There is an increasing, proactive opposition to dog racing in Australia and the negative consequences for the Greyhounds that are overbred, exploited and destroyed as a result of this industry.

Gone are the days where the Greyhound racing industry can believe it is untouchable, or that by coming up with clever 'spin' or developing new marketing strategies or writing about another unregulated welfare initiative it will escape any such negative attention. There is a huge focus on animal welfare around the world and the exploitation of dogs for a gambling industry is set to receive increasing and widespread attention. There are many members of the general public who do not believe that 20,000 dogs should be bred every year for a racing and gambling industry, and there is much disgust at the obvious 'wastage' that occurs.

In our country of over 23 million people it is estimated that over 60% of Australian households own pets, with around 40% having dogs (figures provided by RSPCA Australia). Of those that do not currently own a pet, around half express an interest in having a pet in the future. Pets are an integral member of the family unit, however constituted, and there is great potential for widespread interest in animal welfare issues surrounding companion animals.

People do not want millions of tax-payer dollars handed to race clubs each year to subsidise racing, particularly when there are issues such as health, education and environment that require funding and infrastructure. (See Appendix 2 for an example of state and local government expenditure for racing from recent NSW Annual Report).

There is extensive lobbying, with significant campaigns and efforts from many welfare groups and individuals in the fight to bring about positive changes for animals. There are many that are aware of the rampant problems in Greyhound racing and the evidence of poor governance and regulation, and corruption. Greyhound racing is a dog-killing industry and, as seen by the widespread public reaction to the 'live export' campaign, people are prepared to speak out in support of animal welfare, and many are likely to support welfare rights for a breed of "man's best friend". The ball is rolling for a ban on Greyhound racing and is likely to gather momentum.

There is currently only seven states in the USA that have operational Greyhound tracks, and groups there are lobbying for further bans on racing. Greyhound racing is illegal in South Africa (see excerpt 3 in Appendix).

Gambling

Australians spend about \$20 billion every year gambling. This level of expenditure is, according to The Economist, the highest in the world on a per capita basis. Some would say this reflects Australian's love of a bet, however the concept of Australia as a betting nation more likely reflects our highly accessible gambling markets.

Electronic gaming machines account for around 60% of gambling expenditure and are the dominant source of gambling revenue. Most wagering is still on horses, but sports betting has grown fast. The harms from problem gambling can include suicide, depression, relationship breakdown, lowered work productivity, job loss, bankruptcy and crime. A 2008 survey found that gambling was the most common motivation for fraud. For each problem gambler, several others are affected – including family members, friends, employers and colleagues.

Sadly there is an absence of choice in being subjected to racing and betting. Clubs and pubs promote and screen racing and other forms of gambling in public areas. It is increasingly difficult to take your family into one of these venues for a meal without being exposed to it. Just as the banning of smoking in eating areas and places of entertainment came about to protect the public and their rights – so too should the banning of televised racing in these public areas. Dog racing, horse racing and other forms of gambling should be confined to gaming rooms or designated areas where they can be sought by choice and not screened in bistros, dining rooms and lounges where people, including children, are subject to it without option for the purpose of inducement.

Summary

- Greyhound racing exists by overbreeding and exploiting large numbers of dogs.
- Mass wastage is a direct result of the overbreeding and exploitation of Greyhounds for racing and gambling.
- Dogs that do not perform, or who can no longer race, are routinely discarded.
- Injuries are common-place in racing dogs, with less serious injuries also often leading to an earlier death. Round racing tracks increase the risks of injury and death.
- The racing industry is plagued by doping and use of banned substances on the animals.

- Drug detection measures to effectively eradicate misuse of steroids and illegal substances in dog racing are considered cost-prohibitive by the industry.
- Insufficient penalties or punishments exist for participants caught administering drugs and banned substances to their Greyhounds.
- A lack of transparency and accountability is shown by the racing industry about the dogs that it overbreeds, exploits and discards; there is inadequate record-keeping or data to account for the dogs that 'disappear' and an absence of responsibility or integrity concerning the overbreeding and wastage.
- There is a lack of recognised or proven welfare initiatives aimed at reducing breeding and preventing the killing of healthy Greyhounds, in fact breeding incentives are in place; low importance and inadequate funding is shown for the welfare of the dogs.
- There is inadequate and inefficient control, monitoring and regulation of standards, practices and treatment with regard to animal welfare in Greyhound racing.
- The racing industry's independent governance is plagued with conflict, confusion, discord, corruption and mismanagement.
- There is growing opposition to dog racing in Australia and around the world, due to welfare concerns for the animals exploited for this gambling industry.

Conclusion

Unfortunately Greyhound racing as a form of gaming and racing is heralded by many members of parliament for its contribution to our economy. Individuals and groups like ours have become increasingly frustrated at trite responses from members of parliament that have been contacted with concerns about the Greyhound racing industry. The current parliamentary enquiry into this industry is indeed welcome, despite the inference that the 'true aims' of the enquiry concern the viability and long-term sustainability of the industry – and not welfare

(<http://www.australianracinggreyhound.com/tag/animal-welfare>).

Friends of the Hound Inc. implore the Select Committee to give full consideration into the real problems of the industry which do concern welfare and the absence of integrity. It **is** time for change.

Ultimately the goal of Friends of the Hound Inc. is not to be needed – we would much prefer that organisations like ours were not necessary to save the lives of these beautiful dogs, that the wonderful people volunteering in these organisations were spared the heartbreak and frustration of knowing they can only save a small percentage of the dogs overbred, exploited and killed for this racing and wagering industry. By 'not needed' we mean no surplus of Greyhounds routinely killed, and no concealment or covert attempts to hide the activities from public scrutiny.

Friends of the Hound Inc. would like to see a restriction in the numbers of Greyhounds bred in Australia so that it reflects the number of those that can successfully be rehomed, however this figure is likely to be closer to 2,000 dogs per year, rather than the current overbreeding rate of 20,000.

Even with tighter regulations and improved governance we feel the industry would still present serious ethical and moral issues.

Appendix

Table 1 – NSW Greyhound Racing

Participants

<u>Y_e_a_r_</u>	<u>Trainers_</u>	<u>Owner/Trainers_</u>	<u>Attendants</u>
2_0_0_2_-_0_3_	1_7_7_0_	5_2_4_3_	1_1_1_6_
2_0_0_3_-_0_4_	1_4_9_8_	4_2_8_2_	7_4_8_
2_0_0_4_-_0_5_	1_6_8_7_	4_6_9_8_	9_3_6_
2_0_0_5_-_0_6_	1_4_9_7_	4_2_1_5_	7_0_0_
2_0_0_6_-_0_7_	1_6_9_0_	4_5_3_4_	8_0_2_
2_0_0_7_-_0_8_	1_6_0_7_	2_6_5_3_	1_4_0_0_
2_0_0_8_-_0_9_	1_7_5_3_	2_7_0_4_	1_5_0_2_
2_0_0_9_-_1_0_	1_5_5_3_	2_3_2_9_	1_2_3_3_
2_0_1_0_-_1_1_	1_5_9_5_	2_3_3_0_	1_3_4_2_
2_0_1_1_-_1_2_	1_5_8_9_	2_0_8_2_	1_1_7_0_

2

Goulburn Upgrade And Introduction Of LocalTAB C Racing

The upgrade to Goulburn's facilities, which include a worldclasskennel block and a new judge's tower, **cost more than \$900,000 and was achieved due to an unprecedented three-way partnership between the NSW Government, Goulburn Mulwaree Council and GRNSW.**

The completion of the project means Goulburn is now a quality facility in a key regional area of NSW that stages weekly TAB meetings which are beamed live into living rooms across Australia and the world on Sky Racing.

The Goulburn Mulwaree Council was a strong supporter of the upgrade ever since GRNSW first made a request for it to put forward a third of the funding.

In the future, I hope that GRNSW can enter into similar arrangements with more local councils across the state to allow tracks to undergo vital upgrades to their infrastructure.

More exciting times await Goulburn with the construction of a new Multi-Use Facility, which will provide outstanding amenities and comfort for racegoers as well as a multi-function area for wider community use. The construction of the new building is scheduled to commence in late 2012 **at a cost of \$5.7 million, with GRNSW contributing \$300,000.**

Court says no to dog racing – News 24 – South Africa – 20/06/2002

Bloemfontein - The Bloemfontein High Court on Thursday turned down an application to allow dog racing, the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals said (NSPCA).

The applicant, the United Greyhound Racing and Breeders Society, challenged existing provincial ordinances in the Free State prohibiting dog racing, the NSPCA said in a statement.

The court dismissed the application with costs. Reacting to the judgment, NSPCA executive director Marcelle Meredith said: "A potential disaster for greyhounds has been averted."

The NSPCA opposes dog racing in South Africa. Its main concern was what happened before and after the day of the race. Before the race dogs were given stimulants - or ill-treated - to make them run faster. Afterwards, dogs that were not regarded as good enough were killed, sometimes by hanging.

According to a recent news report, a United States advocacy group estimated that 20 000 racing dogs were killed in that country annually.

The NSPCA said thousands of animals would suffer if dog racing was legalised in South Africa.

- SAPA