

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

**Organisation:** Greyhound Rescue Inc

**Date received:** 5/11/2013

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# A SUBMISSION BY GREYHOUND RESCUE

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TO THE INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING  
IN NEW SOUTH WALES

**November 2013**

Greyhound Rescue is a not for profit organisation with full charity status. ABN 89 282 387 425 and CFN/21338. To learn more about Greyhound Rescue, please visit <http://greyhoundrescue.com.au>

## **ABOUT GREYHOUND RESCUE**

Greyhound Rescue is a non profit organisation established in 2009 by Janet and Peter Flann. Greyhound Rescue's mission is to rescue greyhounds discarded by the racing industry.

The organisation aims to:

- rehabilitate and rehome greyhounds discarded by the racing industry;
- raise funds to facilitate greyhound rescue;
- raise community awareness of greyhounds as pets; and
- actively lobby governing bodies of greyhound racing in order to reduce the destruction of greyhounds.

Greyhound Rescue, through its volunteers and donors, pays for all veterinary costs incurred in rescuing and rehabilitating greyhounds.

At present, Greyhound Rescue has under its care 60 greyhounds looking for a home. In 2012, Greyhound Rescue found permanent homes for more than 80 greyhounds. In 2013, it is expected that we will find homes for more than 100 greyhounds.

## **PATRON**

Dr Robert Zammit

Veterinarian

Vineyard Veterinary Hospital, 703 Windsor Road, Vineyard, NSW 2765b

Greyhound Rescue is fortunate to have the support of Robert, who provides veterinary care for our greyhounds. Robert has practiced as a vet since 1980 and is a well known and admired veterinarian. Rob has dedicated his life to not only caring for animals but also teaching others to enjoy that similar passion. Robert is also known for his media work in such programs as *A Country Practice*, *Burkes Backyard* and *2GB* and he is also a published author on pets and pet care.

For further information, visit <http://greyhoundrescue.com.au/>.

All correspondence in relation to this submission should be directed to:

Peter and Janet Flann  
Greyhound Rescue Inc

## **Submission to Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW**

### **Introduction**

This submission has been prepared by Greyhound Rescue in response to the call for submissions to the inquiry into greyhound racing in New South Wales.

Greyhound Rescue is opposed to the greyhound racing industry.

This submission will address the following terms of reference of the inquiry:

- (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
- (n) Any other related matter.

### **Greyhounds in our care**

Greyhound Rescue takes in greyhounds from two sources, primarily. Firstly, trainers surrender greyhounds into our care when the dogs are no longer needed for industry purposes or are not being kept as a pet. Secondly, Greyhound Rescue takes in greyhounds that are held in Council facilities. These greyhounds have either been surrendered by their owners or have been picked up by council rangers as strays.

Occasionally greyhounds brought to veterinarians for euthanasia are surrendered into our care instead. On some occasions, veterinary nurses are horrified by the high euthanasia rate of their clinics and contact our organisation for assistance. Please see Appendix A for an example email from a concerned veterinary nurse.

Greyhounds that come into our care can generally be categorised as follows:

- (a) Greyhounds that have finished their racing career. These are usually between 3 and 4 and a half years old;
- (b) Greyhounds that were deemed to be too slow to have a racing career. These are usually between 18 months and two years old;
- (c) Greyhounds that are too old for breeding. These are usually aged between eight and ten years of age.

### **Condition of greyhounds surrendered into care**

Greyhounds taken in by our organisation are often in poor health. Greyhounds taken in from Council pounds are usually in poor to very poor health.

Common health conditions/injuries are:

- Injuries to toes/hocks including broken bones. It is often found upon inspection by our veterinary surgeon that toes and/or hocks have been broken and never or improperly set.
- Poor dental health (e.g. tartar, rotten teeth)
- Broken leg or hip bones. It is often found upon inspection by our veterinary surgeon that bones have been broken and never or improperly set.
- Eye injuries
- Flea infestation
- Moderately to severely underweight

As an example, Oscar came to us from Kurri Kurri pound. He had been handed in to the pound with a badly damaged foot. One toe was so badly broken and infected that it had to be amputated. Non-surgical staples were also found in the foot. See Appendix B for a photo of Oscar's foot. This situation was reported to both Greyhound Racing NSW and the RSPCA but no action was taken.

Another example is Baz, who was surrendered into our care after he was brought to a veterinarian for euthanasia as he was no longer able to be raced. He was a healthy greyhound however he was blinded in one eye by his trainer who hit Baz in the eye with his belt buckle.

Female greyhounds that have been used for breeding are often in very poor health due to overbreeding. Appendix C contains an email which provides the story of Lucy, a female greyhound surrendered into our care. Lucy's story highlights a number of welfare concerns in relation to the breeding of greyhounds. These concerns are (1) the overbreeding of greyhounds; (2) the breeding of female greyhounds with little or no concern for their health; (3) the high euthanasia rate of greyhounds deemed unsuitable for racing, or those injured in training or on the track.

Sometimes greyhounds taken from Council pounds are in very dire health and require urgent medical treatment in order to survive.

In late October 2013, two greyhounds were taken into care from Wagga pound. The male weighed 19kg on arrival and had a bad wound. The female greyhound weighed 15kg on arrival. She was severely dehydrated, had vomiting, diarrhea and a hole in her foot that went through to the bone. Both dogs have undergone veterinary care which involved being administered antibiotics and intravenous fluids, having the abscess drained and their wounds washed daily. See Appendix D for photos. It is understood that the police are investigating this case.

### Greyhound puppies

Greyhound puppies are rarely surrendered into care. Greyhound trainers rarely contact our organisation to surrender unwanted puppies into care. Greyhound puppies are also rarely found in Council pounds.

During 2012 and 2013, our organisation has taken in a few puppies under traumatic conditions.

1. Basil was surrendered into care as a 10 week old puppy. Visible trauma included a head injury (visible dent in his forehead) and two broken toes on his back foot that needed to be amputated. See Appendix E for a photo of Basil's foot.
2. In April 2013, Millie was surrendered into our care as an 8 week old puppy. We were told that Millie's mother "had chewed a couple of toes off". When Millie was examined at Mosman Veterinary Hospital, the vet found that Millie had lost her whole foot and all of her toes, leaving in its place just a raw pink stump. It appeared that the pads of the foot had been cut off. The vet determined that Millie was required to have extensive surgery in order to amputate the foot and prepare her leg in order to have a prosthetic foot fitted. More than \$5000 was raised by the community to fund the cost of the operations and rehabilitation. See Appendix F for a photo of Millie's amputation.
2. In May 2013, our organisation was asked to take into care a litter of seven 2 week old greyhound puppies. We were informed that the puppies were the result of an unintended mating and the trainer intended to drown the unwanted puppies in order to prevent the owner of the bitch from discovering that she had delivered puppies from an unintended sire. The puppies were taken into care by our organisation and all seven puppies survived and have been adopted.

We have been informed by a number of sources that drowning of unwanted puppies is a common practice in the industry. This information is of concern to Greyhound Rescue. It seems that many unwanted puppies are disposed of (by drowning or other means) rather than being surrendered to greyhound rescue organisations.

## Appendix A

Date: 22 October 2009 8:31:01 PM  
To: <peter@greyhoundrescue.com.au>  
Subject: How can I help?

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,

## Appendix B

Oscar's foot





## Appendix C

Date: 22 October 2013 12:48:05 PM

To: "peter@greyhoundrescue.com.au" <peter@greyhoundrescue.com.au>

Subject: Re Lucy

Lucy came into my care after she was given to 4 young boys to breed with. She had had 2 previous owners. She was a failed racer after she broke both her back leg hocks. She was saved and kept for breeding. As it would be her 4th litter via Caesarian I tried desperately to deter these boys from breeding with her, they did not listen. So after she was served they bought her back to me and I cared for her during her pregnancy. When the time came she was taken to the vet to deliver and I didn't see her again until she was bought to me about 3 weeks later. She had severe mastitis and a high fever from an infection in her scar from the delivery. The pups were starving as she wasn't able to feed them. I took Lucy to the vet and she was given medication but I almost lost her she was so ill, she recovered but was never the same. The pups I had to hand feed but sadly I lost 3 out of the 9 in the litter. The pups stayed with me and slowly recovered and grew to be very big dogs. One was given to the previous owner as that was the deal. Two were sold but stayed with me, and 2 were kept and also stayed with me until they were ready for racing. When they left my care at about 18 months I didn't see them again. Lucy wasn't of any use to them so she was going to be taken to put to sleep I asked to rehome her and was given a few weeks and with only 1 day to go she was kindly rescued by Greyhound Rescue and now has found her forever home at the age of 9 years. Sadly 1 of the female pups broke her neck. Three were euthanised as failed racers. The last one Harry I luckily managed to track down in Young not far from me was also a failed racer and was about to be euthanised. He was rescued again by Greyhound Rescue and has now been reunited with his Mumma on his 3rd birthday and is being fostered by Lucy's owners. I have tried to track down all Lucy's other litters which I believe to be another three. Sadly most of them are deceased as failed racers.

## Appendix D

Greyhounds rescued from Wagga pound. Late October 2013.



## Appendix E

Basil's broken toes. The middle toes were required to be amputated.



## Appendix F

Millie's amputated stump



More information about Millie's operation and rehabilitation can be found at

<http://greyhoundrescue.com.au/news/millies-story/> and

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/north-shore/mosman-vet-helps-greyhound-millie-walk-properly-again-with-prosthetic-limb-from-us/story-fngr8h9d-1226704427205>