

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Mrs Anh Hamilton

Date received: 5/11/2013

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

My husband and I adopted my first two greyhounds in May this year. They were both ex racing greyhounds. Before these dogs came into our lives, we knew very little about the greyhound racing industry. However, through our firsthand experience with our two pets and the volunteer adoption group that we got them from, we have been witness to several breaches of animal welfare standards. All of which stem directly from the governance or lack of in the greyhound racing industry.

We constantly see requests from the adoption program coordinators for foster carers or permanent adoption of greyhounds. The coordinators receive daily contact from other sympathetic supporters in the racing industry to take on dogs that have been discarded by their trainers or owners. These dogs are taken to vets to be live blood donors before they are euthanised. The adoption group website is updated constantly with new greyhounds saved from this situation.

Due to the mass number ex racing greyhounds, most of which are euthanised due to the lack of homes available, my husband and I decided to start fostering. Our first foster greyhound, was severely underweight when we picked him up. His entire rib cage was visible and exposed beyond what is considered a healthy weight for greyhounds. He also suffered from several behavioural issues resulting from his treatment he received from his previous owner. He was jumpy and constantly nervous. If my husband and I raised our hands or moved abruptly, he would tuck his tail under in fear and take flight. Despite loving his food, he would only eat for a limited time then cower away from his bowl. During the time my husband and I had him, we would have to stand completely still while he ate the first half of his meals then spend the next twenty minutes coaxing him to finish the rest because he was too afraid to finish eating it. One can only assume what was done to him in his previous life for him to behave this way. After several weeks of this, he is now able to eat an entire meal on his own.

Recently, the ABC's 7:30 Report aired a report animal cruelty, mass doping, wastage of greyhounds in the greyhound racing industry. Many greyhound trainers and owners have responded to the report and denied that such behaviour occurs, that all their dogs are well treated and every effort is made to find homes for their dogs once their career is over. However, my experience with greyhounds is contrary to the claims of the trainers and owners involved in the greyhound racing industry and support the findings from the 7:30 Report investigation. All the dogs that come through the program are received from the trainer/owners in extremely poor health. They are underweight, flea ridden, bad skin and patchy fur. Most have bad teeth. There has even been some that have had limbs broken and left to heal naturally. The treatment of these greyhounds and their rehabilitation have been left entirely to the adoption program with no responsibility taken by their trainers.

I respectfully urge the Committee to abolish greyhound racing in the state of New South Wales to be followed shortly by all other States and Territories in Australia.

In the meantime, I would like to see more incentives offered for reducing euthanasia and increasing re-homing. And that these incentives are offered to all greyhound adoption organisations not just industry funded organisations. These incentives should be based on the merit of the organisations and their proven re-homing track records not automatically funneled into greyhound racing PR programs.

Yours faithfully,
Anh Hamilton.