

Submission
No 539

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Submission to NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Greyhound Racing

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." -Ghandi

As an animal-lover who believes that all animals have the right to be treated with respect and dignity I felt compelled to make this submission.

My connection with greyhounds goes back more than 30 years to when I was a small child. My great-grandfather kept and raced greyhounds. The greyhounds were kept in cages outside the house, and were muzzled whenever outside their cages. There was a treadmill out the front of the house the dogs were "walked" on as part of their training. And as children we were instructed not to pat or play with the greyhounds. Not that we wanted to anyway, their muzzles made them look like Hannibal Lecter.

Oddly, my great-grandparents kept pet dogs as well. These dogs didn't live in cages but were allowed to act like "normal" dogs, wandering around without restraint and being petted. At the time it didn't seem unusual but in hindsight I wonder what the greyhounds felt, being held captive while others of their species got to be normal dogs.

I later found out that "training" involved letting live rabbits free on the beach and setting the dogs off in pursuit. Naturally I was horrified but assumed that this was the ways of an era past, and was sure the industry would have been cleaned up by now. Surely these barbaric training methods and archaic ways of treating dogs as nothing more than money-making objects had changed?

What I now know of the industry (and which will no doubt be outlined by many other submissions) is that this industry is still cruel and barbaric. It treats dogs like disposable objects and denies them the welfare standards that are afforded to pet dogs. And I now know this to be wrong. Greyhounds are not machines, they are dogs just like my Maltese terrier, his Cavoodle, her Jack Russell, their Labrador. They seek company and affection and feel fear, pain and loneliness. Their welfare considerations must be the same as that of pet dogs.

This ghastly industry must cease – it is disgusting and barbaric, and goes against all animal welfare standards that exist in this country for companion animals.

If this industry is allowed to continue I am requesting that the following be enforced:

- Include the welfare of greyhounds in the standards that apply to all dogs and apply harsh penalties to those who commit acts of cruelty
- Hold the greyhound racing industry to account and make them responsible for re-homing all “excess” greyhounds (by enforcing levies that would allow animal welfare groups to undertake this activity)
- Address the “waste” of the industry. That is, the overbreeding of greyhounds which leads to thousands of animals being unnecessarily killed each year
- Impose lifetime pet ownership bans on people who commit acts of cruelty such as administering performance –enhancing drugs, killing dogs, cruel training methods
- Name and shame those operators in the industry who are found to breach welfare rules
- Stop “waste” greyhounds being used by universities for testing
- Stop
- Stop the export industry that allows dogs to be transported to Macau for a life of suffering

As a child I couldn't stop the cruelty I witnessed. But now we all have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of countless dogs. Stopping this cruel industry will demonstrate that the people of NSW take animal welfare seriously, and will make it clear that we will not stand by as animals are abused in the name of “sport”.