

**Submission
No 767**

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Mr Patra Gopal

Date received: 5/11/2013

Dear Director,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important inquiry into greyhound racing.

I am very concerned about the treatment of greyhounds in the racing industry in NSW. I feel that current regulations allow unacceptable abuse of these beautiful dogs which are cruelly treated and left wasted and spent by the racing industry.

These are the main points I believe should be considered by the Committee:

1. The need for better management of the sale and over-breeding of greyhounds. Whilst animals are considered to be property under current Australian law, this form of 'property' needs to be more tightly regulated to ensure that there is not needless suffering and wastage perpetuated by greyhound breeders and owners of racing dogs. For no other reason, it makes no sense to operate the greyhound racing industry as an economy of scale, hoping to churn out one winner from hundreds or thousands. Instead, for the financial welfare of owners and the actual welfare of greyhounds, there should be limits imposed so that a single animal can be nurtured.
2. The need for measures, such as financial incentives, to reduce the high numbers of greyhounds euthanased each year. This goes hand in hand with regulation to control the sale and over-breeding of greyhounds. There needs to be a less wasteful attitude toward life that is implemented in the racing industry from management. It is simply not sufficient to say that the life of an animal is worth less than a life of a human and so it does not matter how many lives are lost each year due to this shameful form of 'entertainment'. The attitudes of a society towards those who are vulnerable - children, aged persons, persons with physical and mental impairments, animals - in short, the voiceless, have a tremendous impact on our individual values, ethics and morals. We cannot expect our lives to be respected when we do not actively demonstrate that we have respect for life.
3. Allegations of the 'doping' of dogs (as I saw on ABC). If you haven't already done so, I strongly urge you to watch the ABC's 7:30 report on this subject. If you choose to do nothing to change this industry, at least make sure that it is an informed choice.
4. Concern about the welfare of animals in the industry and the conflict of interest represented by Greyhound Racing NSW's role in establishing and enforcing standards for the treatment of animals in the industry.
5. The need for prosecution where animal cruelty is found. The current laws in NSW are inadequate without the will to pursue and prosecute acts of animal cruelty. It is not enough to say that because there are laws against certain forms of animal cruelty, these laws are sufficient for these issues to be ignored. The efficacy of our laws needs to be constantly evaluated in the face of the changing values of society and with reference to statistics. If there are little to no successful prosecutions under any head of law, it must be questioned whether it is because the burden of proof was not met, or whether it is because the law itself is flawed.
6. The inadequacy and questionable integrity of data collection in the industry: including the number of pups born, the number of dogs euthanased and injury rates. Given the lack of regulation for the breeding of animals such as greyhounds and the associated data generation and collection that comes with regulation, it is not surprising that the integrity of 'data' in the industry

is questioned. Self-reporting is a form of regulation that only works if all parties involved have a strength of character, morality and ethics.

7. The ongoing export of greyhounds to countries where there are no effective animal cruelty laws, like Macau. Australia cannot forever hide behind the shield that we are not responsible for acts that occur outside our sovereign borders, regardless of whether we have contributed to these acts or not. We cannot expect others to act responsibly and strive towards the same values when we do not ourselves act in responsible and ethical manner.

I urge you to take these issues into account and I hope this Inquiry leads to strong recommendations which will improve the treatment of these dogs.

Sincerely,

Patra Gopal