

Submission
No 595

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 5/11/2013

Partially Confidential

To: Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW

Background

I am a third-generation greyhound trainer, having been involved in all facets of the industry full time for the past 15 years.

- (a) The economic viability of the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales and
- (b) The financial performance and conduct of the industry and of Greyhound Racing NSW including a comparison to other states of Australia

As a trainer I am finding it increasingly difficult to obtain higher class greyhounds to train in NSW due to the poor prize money return in comparison with Victorian racing. Victoria pays higher prize money for Group, metropolitan, and provincial racing.

The "Tab C" class meetings are very disappointing to owners and trainers. The TAB, Government and GRNSW all get their full 100% share out of these meetings, while the participants receive 50% prize money.

Our greyhound racing product is being provided on the cheap and subsidising the other two codes. Greyhound racing in NSW is suffering due to the 99 year Inter-Code agreement, with the prize money paid in NSW being significantly behind Victoria. In greyhound racing, I am a younger participant and it is mind-boggling that the Inter-Code agreement could still be a burden for my great grandchildren. In my opinion the Inter-Code is an agreement that is grossly unjust, unfair, and dishonest, therefore the Inter-Code may be deemed an unconscionable contract. I believe the Cameron Report whereby the Inter-Code is amended to a market share model, needs to be adopted as a matter of urgency.

- h) The capability and performance of Greyhound Racing NSW and governance of the industry

I am concerned by the cost and effectiveness of having such a large number of staff at GRNSW. In particular the number of managers they have for the size of the organization, GRNSW has a Chief Executive Officer, a Chief Operating Officer, four General Managers and five Managers. The culture of the staff at GRNSW also needs to be addressed, as I have found them to be rude on the phone and have little knowledge or interest in the sport. I am very disappointed in the way GRNSW have handled the sports interests at The Gardens race track. It has been a huge financial drain on the industry, with GRNSW continually having to prop the NCA up, with other tracks losing out on race dates and with GRNSW having to use industry money to buy 70% of the venue.

- (i) The incidence of drug administration and doping in the industry and the efficacy of Greyhound Racing NSW's control and testing processes

I believe there is very little incidence of doping in the greyhound industry, as evident by the very small percentage of positive swabs returned. Due to the highly sophisticated testing a large number of these positive swabs are for minute amounts of substances found in common food sources and accidentally fed in their diet.

GRNSW have nearly doubled their swabbing budget. In addition to Stewards directing greyhounds to be swabbed (for form reversals and unplaced favorites), I believe they should be taking more random samples through the re-introduction of the red marble system which worked in the past. Working like a lottery this system is a good deterrent with participants never knowing if they would draw the "red marble" and be swabbed. The current system is not transparent as greyhounds are swabbed by steward's discretion, which is therefore open to corruption.

- (k) The welfare of animals in the industry and the role of Greyhound Racing NSW in establishing and enforcing standards of treatment of animals

GRNSW have implemented a number of welfare practices;

1. Compulsory vaccination at 3 and 12 months of age
2. Pannus exemption, allowing greyhounds with Pannus to be given the necessary treatment without returning a positive swab
3. Hot weather policy, meetings being abandoned/postponed when the forecast temperature is 40°C.
4. Veterinarians attend all race meetings state wide, if a greyhound is injured at the track it is treated immediately, unlike dogs which are injured on the road, at the park or on a farm.
5. Micro chipping and ear branding of all pups
6. Introduction of GRNSW's Greyhound As Pets, program and subsequently the Greenhounds initiative.
7. Sophisticated anti-drug policies and large increases in race-day swabs.

However I believe there are further improvements which must be implemented;

1. All tracks must have eight wash down/water bays so each greyhound in a race can be cooled down immediately after a race.
2. All tracks should be padded on their outside fences, especially on the corners where dogs are more likely to fall, when this was submitted in a GBOTA motion to GRNSW, the response from GRNSW was We have referred the motion to the Animal Welfare and Veterinary unit for advice as to which tracks require attention, specific matters of concern should be directly raised. We note also that club maintenance funding is made available to all race clubs to address any such concerns as they arise. I feel this was an unsatisfactory response and adequate fence padding should be a requirement for a track to be licensed.
3. The GAP program needs to be restructured and widened, so that a larger number of greyhounds pass the program and are re-homed. Not all greyhounds are "little-dog/cat friendly" but still make great companions and pets. The NSW government and NSW TAB should both contribute to this program, as they are major beneficiaries of the sport. The Victorian government has recognised this need and contributed \$1 million to GRV adoption program.
4. To ensure, prolong and maximise the racing life of greyhounds in NSW, we must continue to race weekly on at least one straight track in this state. Many greyhounds, especially those with chronic injuries, have trouble racing on bends and need a straight track venue.
5. Trainers must be allowed (under veterinary supervision) to suppress oestrus in racing greyhound bitches, unlike horses who can continue to race while on heat and even while pregnant.
6. Scholarships and incentives for veterinary students to specialize in greyhounds.

Greyhound racing throughout Australia is already heavily regulated, and no other dog breeds are this well documented, recorded, licensed and tightly controlled.

I thank the Select Committee for the opportunity to put in this submission.