

**Submission
No 591**

INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

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Parliamentary Submission

To: Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW

November 4th 2013

Reply to terms of reference

a) Economic viability is achievable with increased “Fair Share” funding which would also allow a greater percentage of funds received to animal welfare practices.

b) The financial performance of GRNSW has been restricted after having had to work through the SKY Channel/TVN media vision war and later the Equine Influenza outbreak. The Equine Influenza outbreak had a great effect on all the racing codes but very much the funding of the Greyhound Industry indirectly via a major decrease in overall TAB Investments/commissions. The greyhound industry did increase racing during that time to supply much needed product for the TAB and SKY Channel but at a cost to its own industry.

c) NSW was once the “Premier” state in all aspects but even the Greyhound Racing in this state is falling behind other states including Victoria who has a superior income stream from Government and can even show an 8 million dollar profit whereby GRNSW is forced to work on a “break even” budget to survive.

d) Industry Regulation is effective in its current form but is ongoing and can improve to stronger solid regulation in the future. Decisions that greatly effect country racing is of concern. Country racing is vital to not only local communities but Animal Welfare as many greyhounds who struggle to compete in the harder provincial class have often moved to the country racing circuit that allows them to race on and with adequate funding special older dog racing could become popular like “golden oldies, veterans, grey paws events” etc.

e) The selection process is adequate...

f) The current “Independent” Board can lack the full industry knowledge of intricate issues. The Board of GRNSW should contain BOTH industry stakeholder members and also Independent members with corporate and/or professional expertise. Possibly 3 of each plus GRICG (Greyhound Racing Industry Consultation Group) as 7 Members should ensure a Chairman casting

vote holds appropriate power. The GRNSW Board in the past did not work fairly with conflicts of interest among stakeholders on the Board.

g) The Integrity Auditor is an absolute necessity and with a specific role should be effective.

h) The capability of GRNSW has been hamstrung by major occurrences during their term including the SKY Channel/TVN vision war and prior to a full recovery from that the Equine Influenza outbreak. I believe they have instigated many essential changes but have done so with “top” heavy management at a substantial admin cost well above the joint cost of the previous GHRRA and GRNSW. The need for increased Integrity and Animal Welfare services are going to “cost” but are essential and GRNSW can do so with much of staff now and utilise the expertise that they developed in their team.

From a personal point of view GRNSW has a consultation process that lacks substance as participants get consulted attend forums but minimal action or acknowledgement comes from the process. This is not a major issue and can be improved.

i) Since GRNSW has taken on the Integrity/Stewarding roles they have had a proactive approach to drug detection. It is fact that they have substantially increased the swabbing budget. It is pleasing that there is only a small percentage of “positive” results with the majority of those either in meat contamination or in the endeavour to keep female greyhounds “off” season. The incidence of “go fast” drugs (caffeine, amphetamines etc) is now a very small minority. The incidence of what we would “hard core illegal” drugs Cocaine, EPO etc are even at a much lower percentage than therapeutic positives. The swabbing is at a level that needs to be maintained or increased if the funding short falls are addressed. The swabbing level is strong for winning greyhounds and increased swabbing of some of the beaten greyhounds would be beneficial as well. As a participant for 37 years the Industry has never been better policed and the number of swabs has never been so high and it does not sit well with me when “alleged” 82% increase in positive swabs is bandied about by uninformed people who just believe that if you throw enough “mud” some will stick.

j) Sale and breeding of greyhounds has improved under GRNSW with strict requirement of “kennel notifications” for any greyhound sold for racing both within and interstate. This process assists in keeping the location of racing animals within the licensed areas of both owner/trainer and kennel housing. The

breeding process has undergone changes in recent times with Greyhounds Australasia introducing increased charges for registering “stud dogs” in an endeavour to reduce the incidents of “back yard breeding” that had previously placed a lesser breed on the market that with lower price tag and at times lower performance level produce an inferior racer. Now with compulsory DNA testing and registering including microchips, the breed is better tracked from birth to racing and this something just did not happen in nearly 40 years of my experience.

k) GRNSW have worked hard for the welfare of greyhounds and have introduced strict and regular kennel inspections has been a great policy that keeps the racing animal in quality housing. Any prospective owner/trainer/breeder must have a kennel inspections prior having greyhounds at a property, these inspections require certain standards be met with regard to drainage, ventilation, mobility and general safety. These standards have improved markedly over the past 20 years but more importantly have been policed over the past few years since GRNSW has taken over the regulatory role.

l) With the appropriate increase in funding the introduction of incentives for reducing euthanasia would be a step forward. There are prosecutions and laws for animal mistreatments in place now but if financial increases to police the “alleged” animal cruelty would be welcomed. The alleged “beating” of greyhounds to death has no substance and any person who believes they have “truthful” occurrences of this and does not report them are no better than so called beater. GRNSW has worked hard at “Greyhounds as Pets” and “Greyhound Adoption Programs” this can be improved upon and I would encourage them to do so. The Government does need to address the funding shortfalls that have hampered the Industry and a set percentage of the funding increase should be documented and even legislated for the Animal Welfare issues even establishment of a Greyhound Adoption farm in line with the successful Victorian model.

m) GRNSW have improved data collection in the industry and currently are working hard at collation of data with regard to pups born, the number of dogs injured and euthanized. It is an ongoing vision of GRNSW to keep improving this aspect of the industry.

n) ... greyhound breeders, owners and trainers do look after and care for their greyhounds while in their custody, they do not go without food and water (some trainers feed the dogs before themselves and all make sure the dog is fed and bedded down after racing or trialling before they feed and bed themselves) and the animal housing is currently policed to a much higher standard than in years gone by. *Fact a show dog bred and with crooked feet was headed for euthanasia until a greyhound trainer took her home as a “house” dog to save her after the “show” breeder discarded because of a minor birth defect. At a recent dog show, a large breed (not greyhound) grabbed a little show dog and shook it to an inch of its life due to “care” of owners/handlers not being adequate.

It is not like the pet owner who allows their dog to roam the street and ultimately ending up in a **“dog fight” “hit by a car” or “unwanted pregnancy”** or when they do come home, sleep in the dirt under the house BUT that is okay because they are family “pets”. I admit that this is not ALL pet owners but this just proves that you cannot **“brand”** people by a certain minor bad element in all walks of life. Things happen in life but with care and due diligence unsavoury incidents can be reduced, greyhound owners and trainers work hard for the well being of their dogs and are most distressed when injuries and illness may happen.

I know Greyhound Racing has never had a body working harder to ensure the greyhound is looked after, their fact sheets and information on their website portray information for all owners, trainers and breeders. Even prospective owners, trainers and breeders. They should be applauded for that.

I was personally disgusted at the “ABC 7.30 report” which tried its hardest to portray cruelty to the greyhound but only bought shame to itself with convicted “drug using” trainers being given “credibility” then old vet “man handling” and deliberately pulling a young greyhound to make it “cry/squeal” who may have suffered injuries in a “rearing rumble” of siblings that also happens to other breeds as well. The other “shame” was that the RSPCA did not have the guts to approach that vet for an act “animal cruelty” to sensationalise a story on national television.

As for the integrity issue raised about the year 2000 when Government employee Rodney Potter was the “bad apple” and six trainers were coerced and

turned to crime by one unscrupulous operator. Six of 9000 participants is about .065%. The story is OLD news but they had to dig that up to make a story.

ALLEGED is a loose word as there is a lot of “alleged” happenings in Greyhound Racing but in any of the submissions has anyone put in facts that can be acted upon. I and GRNSW would welcome that as we the participants and administrators would then work hard to KEEP our industry in the best shape integrity wise that it has been in its history...

Yours sincerely,

Glenn Midson,

Owner/Trainer/Breeder/Stud Master/Kennel Proprietor/Administrator.