

**INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND WELFARE AND
INTEGRITY COMMISSION**

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Submission to the Parliamentary Committee Inquiry

Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commissioner

Submitted by: Jan O'Leary

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I believe the role of the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission is essential to regulating and enforcing welfare measures within the industry. The Commission must remain at arm's length of the industry and ensure that no conflicts of interest affect the well-being of greyhounds. The Commission should be established as a statutory corporation in legislation. It is essential that no responsibilities of the Commission should be shifted to any body associated with the greyhound industry.

Terms of Reference

(a) the policies, procedures, mechanisms, and overarching principles of the Commission in relation to industry participants,

The rehoming of "retired" greyhounds must occur based on the basis of the greyhounds' best interests. Current rehoming policy allows euthanasia as a quick solution rather than rehoming as a first priority. All outcomes should be made publicly accessible. It is currently too easy to disappear unwanted greyhounds. Sending an animal to a pound or shelter is not the end of the story either. That can merely pass on the killing of a healthy animal to another party.

The behaviour test has become a convenient way of sentencing dogs to death. Any such test should genuinely aim to assess the animal's suitability for rehoming and the Commission must ensure the test is administered in the animal's best interest and not that of the owner or the industry in general.

The numbers of greyhounds being bred will always affect the number being required to be rehomed. The Commission must put controls on breeding and ensure they are met.

(b) the appropriateness of disciplinary action for those industry participants breaching legal requirements as set out by the Commission,

There are too many options for the imposition of disciplinary, many of which are far too lenient. If penalties are to have any impact they must be severe and rigorously enforced.

(c) the options for appeal by industry participants who breach legal requirements as set out by the Commission,

One appeal to be assessed by Commissioners with an animal welfare group on the panel.

(d) the combined relationship of the Commission, the industry operator Greyhound Racing NSW, and industry participants in relation to the overall greyhound racing industry,

As outlined earlier, the Commission must remain at arm's length from the industry at all times keeping in mind that it is there to ensure the welfare of greyhounds and not to ensure the most 'efficient' functioning of the industry.

(e) the existing funding agreement between the Commission and Greyhound Racing NSW with a view to considering recommended options,

The Commission should definitely not be wholly or partially funded by GR NSW. If the Commission is to be independent of the industry, it must be financially independent. That is an obvious observation that shouldn't need stressing. There is certainly an argument for the industry to be taxed by the government but this arrangement should be totally separate from the funding of the Commission.

(f) the actions, conduct and effectiveness of the Commission and GRNSW, in particular in relation to its role in improving the welfare of greyhounds,

The Greyhound Racing Act 2017 well spells out the objectives and functions of the Commission. However, all constraints on the Commission being able to do their specified jobs enabling them to improve the welfare of greyhounds must be removed. Their ability to act directly to institute initiatives to improve greyhound welfare must be extended.

(g) any other related matter.

The problem underlying the high euthanasia rate of greyhounds is the lack of restriction on the number of greyhounds being bred. Limits on numbers of greyhounds being bred must be a priority for the Commission.

As for medical professionals and now priests all those witnessing or having knowledge of cruelty to greyhounds or offences proscribed by the Commission should be obliged to report such with penalties applying for failure to report.