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SECOND READING SPEECH

THE HON JANE HOWLETT

Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025

Honourable Speaker

I move that the Bill now be read a second time.

In 2024 the Tasmanian Government introduced the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024* to address community concerns and to strengthen animal welfare outcomes across all codes of racing.

A key feature of this new legislation was the establishment and appointment of the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner, who has extensive powers to set integrity and animal welfare standards and investigatory functions.

The comprehensive reforms have set the harness and thoroughbred racing for success into the future, while ensuring probity and animal welfare are at the forefront.

However, with the introduction of *Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025* (the Bill), the Government is recognising that greyhound racing no longer aligns with community expectations.

The Bill will phase out greyhound racing in Tasmania through a staged and considered approach with the code to end on 30 June 2029.

This timing coincides with the end of the current Tasracing funding deed.

The Bill will operate through a series of transitional and consequential amendments to the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024*, the *Dog Control Act 2000* and the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* which I will now outline in more detail.

Parts 1 and 4 of the Bill are intended to commence on 1 January 2026.

Parts 2, 3 and 5 of the Bill will commence in law from the 'greyhound racing closure date' which is 30 June 2029.

Honourable Speaker, I will first provide an overview of those Parts of the Bill that will commence operating on 1 January 2026.

Part 1 provides is enabling and provides for the commencement dates for the Parts of the Bill.

Part 4 of the Bill will amend the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024* to include a new Schedule 8, which has provisions to support the phase out of greyhound racing that will operate during the transition period between 1 January 2026 and 30 June 2029.

The new transitional schedule will make provision for the following requirements to apply during the transitional period:

- The Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner is to develop and implement a greyhound racing closure plan. This will guide the phase out of greyhound racing in Tasmania during the transition period. The plan must be approved by the Minister for Racing.

- The transfer of registered greyhounds to a new owner will require the notification and consent of Tasracing.
- A registered greyhound that has reached the age of 6 years, or that has not raced for a 12-month period will be deemed retired and deregistered. Exceptions will be made for a greyhound that has not raced for 12 months due to injury and is certified recovered by a veterinary surgeon.
- The racing of an overseas or interstate registered greyhounds in Tasmania during the transition period will require the written consent of Tasracing.
- Destruction of a greyhound (other than by a vet in an emergency) can only be for animal welfare reasons and will require the written consent of Tasracing.
- The breeding of racing greyhounds during the transition period will be prohibited.
- All permits, licences, registrations and other forms of authorisations that purport to allow or authorise greyhound racing will be automatically cancelled on and after 30 June 2029.

The powers of the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner to enter and inspect premises for the purposes of conducting an audit or investigation during the transition period have also been clarified. During the transition period, the Commissioner can direct a person to allow the Commissioner or person assisting the Commissioner to enter premises on which greyhounds are being kept, trained or raced for purposes of conducting an audit or inspection, or other form of investigation.

The Bill does not empower the Commissioner to enter a residence by force without a warrant, or without the cooperation of the occupier of the premises. However, a person who (without reasonable excuse) fails to comply with the Commissioner's direction to allow entry to a premises will be committing an obstruction offence and be liable to a fine.

The transitional powers are in addition to all the Commissioner's current powers of investigation and inquiry under the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act*. This includes the ability to refer a matter to racing stewards, who have powers of entry under the Greyhound Rules of Racing, or to officers under the *Animal Welfare Act*, who have powers of entry in the connection with the enforcement of that Act.

Honourable Speaker, I will next outline those Parts of the Bill that will operate to ban greyhound racing after 30 June 2029. As was previously noted, these are Parts 2, 3 and 5 of the Bill which will commence in law on 1 July 2029.

Part 2 of the Bill contains consequential amendments to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* which will operate to ban greyhound racing.

A new section 11C will be inserted into the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* which makes it an offence (after 30 June 2029) to race greyhounds in any way (time trials, lure or no lure) and to race other dog breeds in a way that replicates current greyhound racing (defined as "commercial dog racing").

The new *Animal Welfare Act* section will also make it an offence to keep a dog for racing or to keep, sell, breed or acquire any dog that is intended to be used in greyhound racing or commercial dog racing.

Part 3 of the Bill will amend the provisions of the *Dog Control Act 2000* which currently impose additional restrictions on racing greyhounds.

The special requirements for muzzling and effective control of greyhounds in section 18 of the *Dog Control Act* will continue after 30 June 2029. However, the Bill will amend the Act to expand the types of programs and suitability assessments that can occur to enable the greyhound to be unmuzzled in public places.

Currently it can only be a program operated by Tasracing, but the Bill allows for other expanded programs approved by the Secretary, or their delegate, that might include programs operated by (for example) the RSPCA or a licensed dog breeder.

A new section 18B will also be inserted into the *Dog Control Act* which prohibits the breeding of greyhounds intended for racing, however breeding of greyhounds as pets is allowed.

Honourable Speaker, I will conclude with Part 5 of the Bill. It contains a suite of consequential amendments to the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024* to remove references to greyhound racing.

These amendments have the effect that, after the full closure of greyhound racing, the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act* will only regulate horse racing (harness and thoroughbreds) in Tasmania.

Honourable Speaker, the Government understands that the phasing out of greyhound racing will impact those involved in the code and the broader racing industry and is committed to ensuring a measured transition that focuses on the welfare of participants and greyhounds.

A Greyhound Racing Transition Working Group overseen by the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner has been formed to assist in the operational, animal welfare and integrity components of the transition. Additionally, a Parliamentary Committee will provide scrutiny and public accountability for the work being undertaken by the Commissioner.

Recreational ownership of greyhounds will continue, and matters relating to the general animal welfare of greyhounds and community safety issues will continue to be addressed under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and the *Dog Control Act 2000*.

Honourable Speaker, with this Bill, the Tasmanian Government has delivered on its commitment, made earlier in the year, to do what is necessary to phase out greyhound racing in the State before the end of the decade.

I commend the Bill to the House.