

The Hobart Greyhound Racing Club thanks the Committee for the opportunity to address the Terms of Reference set out for the inquiry into Greyhound Racing in Tasmania.

We would like to request that the HGRC's submission be treated as confidential as we have discussed the controlling bodies in our submission. The Club's Committee are licenced trainers and the Club is financially dependent on Tasracing.

If required we would be happy to give verbal evidence, preferably in camera if speaking of the controlling bodies, to the Committee on any issues that may need further explanation.

The Tasmanian greyhound racing industry does not condone nor support live baiting or any other form of animal cruelty and believe that there should be a zero tolerance on live baiting in the greyhound industry with punishments to reflect this position.

The abhorrent actions of some Interstate trainers who have broken the law should not and does not represent the legitimate training of racing greyhounds by trainers working within the law and the Rules of Racing.

Greyhound racing participants in Tasmania feel that they have been unjustly treated, Tasmanian trainers have not been implicated in the live baiting scandal but have had to endure disgusting behaviour from people who have no idea what actually happens in the greyhound industry, the general public, radio announcers and politicians have made incredible claims that have not been substantiated but has caused a great deal of backlash against participants and people who have adopted greyhounds as pets.

Participants feel there has been no-one who spoke up for the industry the participants or the greyhounds in this State when they have done nothing wrong. As pointed out in the report into Animal Welfare in the Tasmanian Greyhound Racing Industry, "there has been no evidence identified that live baiting is happening in Tasmania".

We are hopeful that the Joint Select Committee will focus on what happens in this State's Greyhound Racing Industry and have a balanced view of the systems in place in Tasmania and work with the Industry to improve animal welfare outcomes in the Tasmanian Greyhound Racing Industry.

(a) Practices in the Tasmanian greyhound racing industry

'Live baiting' -

Tasmanian greyhound trainers have not been implicated in the live baiting scandal and we believe that the training practices in this State are major reasons why. The training style in Tasmania is very different to practices Interstate as there are no private trial/breaking in centres in Tasmania, interstate the private trial tracks are used by many trainers who congregate together at trial times and I believe they also are able to have private trials as well, these facilities are not staffed by the controlling body but are owned privately whereas training and trialling in Tasmania are done on race tracks or trial tracks that are operated by Tasracing and staffed by the Clubs or Organisations who are registered by Racing Services Tasmania, this includes run on arm trials.

These trial sessions are the major training method for getting a greyhound fit for racing or maintaining their greyhound's fitness, the run on arm trials are a reward for greyhounds where they are allowed to catch the lure at the end of their run. The lure is made from a synthetic material, as this is all that is needed to encourage greyhounds to chase the lure. Trainers and greyhounds have access to all facilities at the track such as water, wash bays, kennelling and weighing facilities.

Some trainers have straight tracks on their properties that are used for fitness training; some also have bull rings where young greyhounds are educated to the boxes and chasing a lure before being brought to the track to get fit and ready for racing. These facilities come under scrutiny from the Stewards during kennel inspections.

There has not been any matters concerning live baiting in this state as pointed out in Mr Murray's report and stated by the RSPCA. The last major inquiry was in 2008 and this was for using a carcass not live baiting. This was a privately owned trial facility which is no longer in operation.

The Industry in Tasmania is heavily regulated with an emphasis on animal welfare; the Tasmanian greyhound industry has been making changes constantly and if the Director of Racings recommendations are implemented it will move the changes quickly and we support this being implemented.

‘Wastage’ – Life span of the greyhound

The grading schedule review recently produced by the Director of Racing Mr Murray has been well received by the Industry and sees a significant change to grading. The 14 changes recommended have significant emphasis on animal welfare and provide further racing opportunities for greyhounds that are not as competitive as others.

Responsible breeding, education and better communication are needed in the greyhound racing industry.

‘Draining’ – Blood Extraction

The questions that are pertinent to blood extraction from greyhounds to supply the blood bank for injured dogs or those having operations would need to be asked of veterinarians, it is not something that trainers are often asked and some trainers did not know that this took place. It might be that blood extraction is not regularly done in this State.

(b) The Role of regulatory authorities in upholding animal welfare standards in the industry and encouraging best practice

The unique position in Tasmania where the Commercial arm of racing and the Integrity section of the racing Industry are separated allowing integrity, animal welfare and enforcement decisions to be made without any influence or pressure for a commercial outcome. The Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry has recommended a move from a self-regulatory model in terms of how it upholds integrity and enforces compliance to one that separates the integrity and commercial arm of the racing industry.

Currently in the Tasmanian system there are areas where there could be improvements. Where there is an overlapping of responsibilities or duplication of integrity and animal welfare decisions and policies, they should be the sole responsibility of Racing Services Tasmania.

The other issue that has been raised before is whether the commercial side of the Tasmanian racing industry should be managed by a GBE, we should look at other systems that would better suit the size of this States racing Industry.

(c) The level of state government funding provided to the industry in Tasmania in the form of a 20 year funding deed signed in 2009.

There is a need to look back over the excessive amount of changes that has been made to the structure and administration of the greyhound racing industry and the racing industry as a whole as well as the political motivation behind those changes, below are some of the changes made in just 14 years.

- 2001 The Corporatisation of TAB trading as TOTE Tasmania which provided a greater certainty of funding of its earnings to the Tasmanian Racing Industry.
- 2004 Government review of Tasmanian Racing Industry which determines to separate integrity from operations.
- 2005 Restructure of Tasmanian Racing Industry, integrity matters moved to Racing Services Tasmania and the newly created code regulatory panels, with commercial matters remain with the Code Councils and TOTE
- 2008 Government requests and reviews advice on options for governance structure of the Tasmanian Racing Industry
- January 2009 the powers and functions in relation to governance and administration of the Tasmanian Racing Industry was removed from TOTE and vested in the newly established Tasmanian Racing Board. The Code Councils and regulatory panels were abolished. The view of the racing industry was that the political motivation of the Labour Government was to have the necessary procedures in place to sell TOTE even though the Government assured the industry that TOTE was not for sale, and as we know TOTE was sold.
- July 2009 Tasmanian Racing Board transitioned to Tasracing Pty Ltd. As the racing industry had lost its funding from TOTE the Government signed a 20 year Funding Deed with Tasracing.
- 2011 Revised Funding Deed

The Tasmanian Racing Industry never wanted to be funded from Consolidated Revenue and believed the Government when they said that the TOTE would not be sold, when the Government sold TOTE there was no other choice for the Industry.

After the Government sold TOTE the industries' major funding was taken from them therefore the Government had a responsibility for the funding of the industry but there was not any protection for the racing industry in the sale of TOTE, there was nothing in the sale that saw any revenue from UBet (TattsBet) come to the racing industry.

The ongoing financial support by the government for the Tasmanian racing Industry is supported by the contribution that the racing industry contributes to the Tasmanian economy. The Tasmanian racing industry contributes more than 103 million dollars and is directly responsible for sustaining 2,142 individuals in full time, part time and casual positions (almost 1,000 full time equivalent jobs).

(d) Report by the Director of Racing and the Chief Veterinary Officer – 29 recommendations.

We are supportive of the 29 recommendations put forward in the report, the report points out the following and we would expect that there will be wide consultation prior to the implementation of the recommendations

- The separation of commercial and integrity functions has meant that no decision made for a commercial gain can be at the expense of integrity and Animal Welfare. Because of this separation the Industry has been able to work with Racing Services and the Director of Racing in areas of grading and programming for older or for greyhounds with less ability to extend the greyhounds racing life.
- Racing Services Tasmania have been proactive in many areas introducing rules and maintaining data records for the tracking of all greyhounds that is not being done in other larger jurisdictions. It is important that this information is gathered so that policy and changes can be made on correct and relevant information.
- GAP – The Greyhound Industry has been adding extra financial support each year to the Greyhound Adoption Programme as the industry understands the importance of rehoming and has been in discussion with Tasracing regarding the expansion of the programme. This has been seen by participants as an important aspect of greyhound racing that the industry in this state takes responsibility for their greyhounds and that the most greyhounds as possible be rehomed. The industry also wants to be responsible in rehoming greyhounds making sure that the greyhounds are appropriately suited to their adopting family and that there is continuing support for those families and greyhounds.
- Other rehoming groups should be more accountable for the greyhounds that they put into the community and there should be some idea of where these greyhounds are going as some greyhounds have not been de-sexed or temperament tested among other issues.
- Education – education programmes with respect to contemporary animal welfare standards, the industry have been asking for regular forums/education sessions for a long time to cover all areas but especially breeding best practice, animal welfare and any significant changes to rules, National and Local, so that Participants can have full understanding of them and the consequences that would result if broken.

(e) Any other matter incidental thereto.

The following are issues and misinformation that we would like to discuss and we would also ask that training practises of the past should be viewed at that time, under those rules and what was publicly acceptable at that time. The following is discussed in the recent and current timeframe.

- Misinformation and lies are affecting our industry and participants even forcing good people, who have not done anything wrong, from the Industry they love.
- Taking greyhounds to the bush and shooting them, drilling holes in their heads and beating them over the head with hammers etc.

These are disgusting unfounded claims – as discussed above we are a heavily regulated industry, we have regular kennel inspections and greyhounds are checked by vets before each race meeting. Trainers must state where the greyhounds have gone when retired (under the rules of racing) and if the greyhound has been euthanised there must be documentation from the vet to verify this.

- Drowning greyhound pups at birth.

Breeding a litter of greyhound pups is a total commitment it is also a long term financial commitment. Therefore the above statement is against everything that a breeder is trying to achieve.

- Animals Australia (AA) has stated that – the manner in which racing greyhounds are raised, housed and trained often without adequate socialisation makes their adjustment to life as pet difficult. They also state that the retraining of an ex-race dog is high with a conservative estimate of around \$3,000.

The cost quoted above is extreme and the rest of the statement is misinformed. Greyhounds are kept in clean warm environments; they are well fed, exercised, socialised and happy.

The Greyhound Adoption Program in this state is doing a great job transforming greyhounds into couch potatoes and with further funds can do so much more, the industry trusts this program to ensure that the greyhounds going out to the community are ready and that the homes are suitable for them. A local rehoming group has on their Facebook page that they re-homed a greyhound 1 week after receiving it, this raises major concerns as the greyhound would not be de-sexed, temperament tested or properly matched to the adopting home.

It is understandable that the public was horrified by what they saw on the Four Corners report because we were as well. Animal cruelty has no place in society and certainly not in the greyhound racing industry.

It is very difficult to explain to you how a greyhound kennel works it is something that needs to be experienced. That is why it is so upsetting when we read the disgusting comments by people who have no idea and accept the narrow view of groups who are pushing their own agenda.

Submitted on behalf of the Hobart Greyhound Racing Club Committee

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