

## Hobart Dog Walking Association Inc.



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### **To the Parliamentary Select Committee on Greyhound Racing**

I am writing on behalf of the Hobart Dog Walking Association (HDWA) to encourage the Parliamentary Select Committee on Greyhound Racing to consider the speedy removal, of the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled when on-lead (subject to suitable testing).

Walking greyhounds on-lead without a muzzle is a separate issue to live baiting. Live baiting is an animal welfare and cruelty issue that needs investigation. We are pleased the Select Committee is looking into this matter.

We are, however, unhappy at the delay involved in implementing a simple reform to the management of greyhounds within the general community. The issue of muzzling on-lead greyhounds has been considered in depth for many years and needs to be separated from the more complex issue of managing the greyhound racing industry.

More people are adopting greyhounds as pets. Greyhounds have been trained to walk well on-lead and while on-lead should not need to be muzzled in public.

Muzzling on-lead greyhounds places a constraint on the greyhounds' capacity to share the normal enjoyment of walking experienced by other dogs (e.g. sniffing grass, trees) or to socialise with them. It also conveys to at least some members of the public a negative image of these dogs as dangerous, potentially limiting their opportunities for adoption. Greyhounds are gentle in nature and are said to be good pets for older people given they walk easily on-lead and don't require much exercise.

### **The review to date**

In 2012, the then State Government was approached by local government and TasRacing with proposed amendments to the *Dog Control Act 2000*.

On **6 October 2013**, the Director of Local Government released an Issues Paper [http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/local\\_government/dog\\_control](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/local_government/dog_control) which proposed several amendments to the *Dog Control Act*. Public submissions were invited. In early 2014, the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Local Government Division advised that the outcome

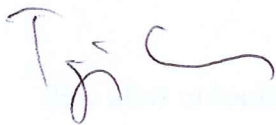
and recommendations from the consultation process had been submitted to the relevant Minister.

Specifically, the Issues Paper proposed an alteration to Section 18 of the Act to “exempt greyhounds that have graduated from the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) from the requirement to wear a muzzle while in a public place.” This proposal received overwhelming support from key stakeholders – from the industry, GAP, adopting greyhound owners and associations concerned with the welfare of dogs.

Since then a serious issue of ‘live baiting’ in greyhound racing has emerged. We welcome the establishment of a Parliamentary Select Committee to investigate live baiting. Although we have no evidence to offer on this aspect, we hope strong action will be taken to ensure this practice cannot happen in Tasmania.

The provisions of Section 18 of the 2000 Dog Control Act requiring greyhounds to be muzzled on-lead were first enacted in 1932 and transferred unamended into the 2000 Act. Since then, a growing number of ex-racing greyhounds, which would previously have been destroyed, have been prepared for adoption by the Tasmanian Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP).

We urge the Select Committee to recommend that this long discussed recommendation, which has wide community support, be incorporated into legislation without delay.



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