

RSPCA Australia and RSPCA Tasmania Joint Submission

The Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition's Work Plan

June 2026

The RSPCA is an independent, community-based charity dedicated to advancing animal welfare for the humane treatment of animals. Guided by our vision where animals and people live together with dignity, respect and compassion, we work tirelessly to prevent cruelty by actively promoting the care and protection of animals Australia-wide.

Our activities span all states and territories and include operating animal rehoming shelters, investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty complaints and educating the community on responsible pet ownership. Informed by contemporary values and the latest scientific knowledge, we work with governments and industries to address critical animal welfare issues.

This submission reflects our ongoing commitment to the development of policies and practices that uphold the welfare of animals across all sectors. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this consultation, with the objective of working collaboratively towards meaningful progress in animal welfare.

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1. Summary of recommendations

The RSPCA Australia and RSPCA Tasmania recommends the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition's Work Plan incorporate the following recommendations to ensure the phase-out of greyhound racing in Tasmania is orderly, well-resourced, transparent, independently monitored and centred on greyhound welfare.

RECOMMENDATION 1	Pass the legislation without further delay to allow transition planning to begin and provide participants with clarity about the industry's future in Tasmania.
RECOMMENDATION 2	Provide adequate government funding to maintain welfare and integrity oversight if the Bill is not supported and after the Deed expires.
RECOMMENDATION 3	Ensure the Commissioner has powers to monitor the TIU's performance in overseeing and safeguarding greyhound welfare.
RECOMMENDATION 4	Review and introduce penalties for breaches of the Rules of Racing that are commensurate with similar offences under the <i>Animal Welfare Act 1993</i> .
RECOMMENDATION 5	Review the Code of Practice for Greyhound Welfare to ensure the highest welfare standards and formally adopt it under the Rules of Racing.
RECOMMENDATION 6	Require all IAW kennel audit staff to complete formal animal welfare training.
RECOMMENDATION 7	Seek independent expert advice to develop a robust, evidence-based kennel audit template covering health status, socialisation and enrichment plans, with independent audit oversight.
RECOMMENDATION 8	Require Tasracing's kennel audit reports to include: • number and date of audits; • percentage of kennels compliant with each standard; • number of infringements and improvement notices issued; and • percentage of infringements and improvement notices closed out.
RECOMMENDATION 9	Require all kennels be audited annually and the TIU publish kennel audit reports every six months.
RECOMMENDATION 10	Require annual kennel audits and reporting to continue beyond 1 July 2029 for any greyhounds remaining in racing kennels, rehabilitation, foster care or awaiting rehoming.
RECOMMENDATION 11	Establish an Animal Welfare Advisory Panel to review welfare-related standards, policies and rules, and provide independent expert advice on rehoming, welfare and euthanasia decisions. The Panel's role should continue beyond 1 July 2029 until all suitable greyhounds are independently verified as successfully rehomed.
RECOMMENDATION 12	Require TIU kennel audits to verify the status of all registered greyhounds attached to licensed premises against Tasracing's records.
RECOMMENDATION 13	Provide transition funding to support a greyhound foster care program.

RECOMMENDATION 14	Develop rehoming policies and procedures covering all rehoming pathways to ensure consistency, transparency and welfare safeguards until every suitable greyhound is independently verified as successfully rehomed (including after 1 July 2029). These safeguards must apply to private rehoming, with all privately rehomed greyhounds subject to the mandatory health checks, assessments and follow-ups outlined in Recommendation 16.
RECOMMENDATION 15	Consider establishing a government-appointed rehoming body to coordinate procedures, ensure compliance with the rehoming policy, and provide every greyhound with the same level of care and adoption opportunity.
RECOMMENDATION 16	Ensure the rehoming program includes: a. mandatory veterinary health checks; b. desexing requirements; c. behavioural assessments, using qualified canine behavioural expertise, to confirm each greyhound’s suitability for rehoming; d. clear processes for managing greyhounds assessed as unsuitable for rehoming; e. robust home checks and matching processes for suitable homes; f. a comprehensive foster care program; g. follow-up support and independent verification of the new owner; and h. transparent, biannual reporting of all rehoming outcomes.
RECOMMENDATION 17	Define and verify “successful rehoming” under the new legal framework.
RECOMMENDATION 18	Report transparently on greyhound waiting list numbers and waiting times to enter rehoming programs and be adopted.
RECOMMENDATION 19	Report transparently on returned rehomed greyhounds, including numbers, reasons for return and actions taken to improve future adoption success.
RECOMMENDATION 20	Report transparently on the number of greyhounds in the Recovery Rebate Scheme and their outcomes.
RECOMMENDATION 21	Give the Animal Welfare Advisory Panel independent oversight of greyhounds in the Recovery Rebate Scheme, including treatment and rehabilitation plans, progress, euthanasia decisions and rehoming outcomes.
RECOMMENDATION 22	Establish an independent Injury Review Panel to review all serious injuries and deaths and ensure racing-field pressures do not compromise greyhound welfare.
RECOMMENDATION 23	Give the Commissioner power to close tracks where conditions pose a predicted high risk of serious injury or death.
RECOMMENDATION 24	Prohibit the overseas export of racing greyhounds.
RECOMMENDATION 25	Permit transport of greyhounds to mainland Australia only for rehoming, not racing, with independently verified rehoming outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 26	Develop a comprehensive rehoming plan that coordinates all rehoming agencies and provides consistent marketing and messaging for new caregivers.
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2. Background

2.1 The importance of a well-considered transition plan

RSPCA Australia and RSPCA Tasmania strongly support the government's bill to legislate an end to greyhound racing in Tasmania. Greyhound racing in Tasmania has been subjected to numerous inquiries, largely driven by concerns about significant animal welfare issues inherent to the industry, the lack of transparency and independent oversight, and the amount of public money invested into the sport. These issues and overwhelming public opposition to greyhound racing in Tasmania are well documented (EMRS, 2025)¹.

The introduction of legislation accompanied by a well-resourced and considered transition plan are necessary to ensure that greyhound welfare is prioritised. For the Committee's work program to be successful and to have the support of the Tasmanian public, key risks must be addressed including:

- a robust well considered and well-resourced rehoming program;
- independent monitoring of compliance and enforcement of animal welfare standards, policies and rules; and
- accurate data recording and transparent, public reporting.

The work program must extend beyond the closure date in 2029, until every suitable greyhound is successfully rehomed.

Transparency has long been a concern in the Tasmanian greyhound racing industry. Despite the establishment of an integrity commissioner and integrity unit, significant gaps remain in welfare data, including whole-of-life traceability, on and off-track injuries and deaths, rehabilitation and rehoming outcomes, kennel audit compliance, track safety improvements and injury reduction strategies. During the transition, all welfare initiatives must be independently evaluated and publicly reported to provide accountability and maintain public confidence.

2.2 Ongoing delays progressing the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 plan

The Tasmanian *Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025* (the Bill) aims to officially end commercial greyhound racing in the state by June 30, 2029². The legislation lays out a staged transition and establishes key protections during the phase-out, including:

- An immediate ban on breeding greyhounds for racing.
- Approval requirements for any interstate or overseas greyhound to participate in Tasmanian greyhound races.
- A prohibition on euthanasia of racing greyhounds for non-medical reasons.
- Preventing greyhounds racing that have not raced for 12 months or are 6 years, or more, of age³.

¹<https://www.emrs.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/Tasmanians%20back%20greyhound%20ban%2015%20August%202025.pdf>

² https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/103553/9.-For-publishing-JH-Greyhound-Transition-Final.pdf

³ Greyhound racing legislation

Yanotti et al. (2026) also proposed 19 recommendations to support the Tasmanian industry to transition from racing including animal welfare reforms to end racing-related breeding, mandate transparent reporting of injuries and deaths, strengthen rehoming programs, and prohibit the import and export of greyhounds for racing.

The proposed legislation offers a responsible pathway to wind down the industry, prioritising the safety and rehoming of greyhounds while providing certainty for participants and rehoming agencies. However, the prolonged delays in the Legislative Council progressing the Bill mean that it could be nearly a year for the Bill to be passed after the Government's original announcement to phase out racing.

While awaiting final parliamentary approval, more greyhounds are being bred for racing and greyhounds remain exposed to ongoing harm. Additionally, as confidence in the future of the industry declines and the industry approaches closure, risks to animal welfare, reduced compliance, and loss of accountability will likely increase.

Recommendation 1: Pass the legislation without further delay to allow transition planning to begin and provide participants with clarity about the industry's future in Tasmania.

2.3 The Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition's workplan

On Monday, 25 May 2026 the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition (the Committee) resolved to initiate its new workplan. The workplan was established to guide the Committee's work within its existing Terms of Reference, as established by the Houses of the Parliament of Tasmania.

The current workplan is as follows:

1. An examination of other jurisdictions, including any parliamentary or statutory inquiries, decisions to phase out the industry, transition frameworks implemented, animal welfare issues, support for participants, compensation arrangements, timelines followed and social and economic impacts;
2. Financial, economic and animal welfare impacts of the proposed phase out of greyhound racing in Tasmania; and
3. The future of the Tasmanian racing Deed.

3. RSPCA's Comments on the Committee's proposed work plan

3.1 Risks associated with government funding being withdrawn without the phase-out legislation being passed

RSPCA Tasmania and RSPCA Australia consider that a well-planned, legislated transition is crucial to deliver stronger animal-welfare outcomes by ensuring coordinated rehoming, oversight, and support systems, while avoiding the higher risks of harm, neglect, and unmanaged outcomes associated with a prolonged, unstructured industry decline.

The RSPCA's view is that the Committee's workplan must consider the regulatory vacuum that defunding greyhound racing in Tasmania without legislation creates. Tasracing's funding deed (the Deed) is due to expire at the end of the 2028–29 financial year. In May 2026, Tasmanian Labor leader Josh Willie indicated that the greyhound racing industry can survive without government funding and “stand on its own two feet” from 2029⁴. However, there is no evidence to support this claim.

If government funding is withdrawn without the phase-out legislation being passed, greyhound racing may not automatically cease. Instead, it risks becoming an unfunded industry operating outside the Deed framework. Tasracing's authority to regulate participants, conduct kennel audits, enforce welfare standards and maintain jurisdiction over registered greyhounds depends on the current regulatory and funding framework.

If this framework lapses without legislation preserving a regulator with clear jurisdiction and as income for participants is reduced, greyhound welfare risks will increase. This includes reduced compliance and tracking of greyhounds, poorer enforcement of rehoming and euthanasia requirements, and reduced investment into infrastructure such as kennel maintenance and planned upgrades, and track safety. As confidence in the industry's future declines and closure approaches, comprehensive kennel audits and proactive enforcement of standards, policies and rules will be more important than ever.

In the absence of a licensed industry regulator, enforcement of animal welfare standards would default to RSPCA Tasmania inspectors under the Animal Welfare Act 1993. RSPCA Tasmania is not resourced, staffed, or mandated to assume regulatory oversight of a commercial racing industry or its former participants. This is not a role RSPCA Tasmania can or should be expected to fill.

An orderly, legislated phase-out is the only mechanism that maintains regulatory continuity and preserves RSPCA Tasmania's defined role under the Deed with the Department of Natural Resources, investigating animal cruelty complaints relating to companion animals, rather than substituting as an under resourced regulator for a failed commercial industry.

Therefore, the Committee's workplan must provide the legal framework to ensure animal welfare standards and rehoming requirements are properly enforced by the government, to prevent greyhounds being exposed to unmanaged risks, when the Deed expires.

⁴ Labor leader says greyhound racing industry can 'stand on its own two feet' from 2029 - Pulse Tasmania

Recommendation 2: Provide adequate government funding to maintain welfare and integrity oversight if the Bill is not supported and after the Deed expires.

3.2 Tasracing and the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner will retain jurisdiction over greyhounds

If Tasracing's Integrity Unit (TIU) is to retain the day-to-day integrity functions for overseeing greyhound welfare, there would need to be strong confidence in the level of monitoring of the industry and enforcement. In the lead up to the greyhound racing industry being closed in New Zealand, the Racing Integrity Board (RIB) reported that if a decision is made to close the industry, *"Increased monitoring of animal welfare would be required during the transition. This could take the form of increased kennel audits or inspections and more active monitoring of relevant data."* (RIB, 2023)

The RIB considered a well-planned transition would need to include ensuring traceability requirements are met, increased monitoring of animal welfare through independent kennel audits and adoption outcomes (especially greyhounds rehomed by participants), more active monitoring of relevant welfare data, and expanding rehoming opportunities (RIB, 2023). Animal welfare risks associated with a phase out of greyhound racing identified by the RIB included:

1. Without effective oversight of welfare and adoption practices, the welfare of greyhounds may be compromised.
2. Reduced income for licenced persons during the transition period, and no income after industry closure, impacts their ability to care for greyhounds.
3. Capacity in GRNZ rehoming facilities is insufficient as licenced persons divest themselves of their greyhounds.
4. Demand for greyhound adoptions does not increase to meet the increase in supply.
5. Increased rates of injury or death if track standards are not maintained or greyhounds are raced when they should not be (e.g. over-raced).

While the Bill provides the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner (the Commissioner) powers to enter and inspect premises for the purposes of conducting an audit or investigation during the transition period, it will be crucial that the legislation ensures the Commissioner is provided with the necessary regulatory powers to monitor the TIU's performance closely. This is not explicitly written into the Bill as a standalone clause.

Recommendation 3: Ensure the Commissioner has powers to monitor the TIU's performance in overseeing and safeguarding greyhound welfare.

The Commissioner must be able to ensure the TIU is effectively carrying out frontline enforcement. This should include annual kennel audits of every licensed property, proactive monitoring of compliance with the Code of Practice, Rules of Racing and new restrictions under the Bill, and rigorous enforcement of socialisation, enrichment, export, rehoming and euthanasia requirements.

Any breaches of these rules should be penalised appropriately and proportionately with members of the public who are prosecuted under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*. These cases often result in criminal convictions, significant financial penalties, animal ownership bans, and the prospect of imprisonment. For example, in August 2025, a Tasmanian man was convicted of animal cruelty after repeatedly refusing to seek proper veterinary treatment for his dog who endured months of suffering

with a significant leg fracture⁵. He was sentenced to one month in prison, suspended for 18 months on condition that he commit no further offences, fined \$4,131.49 and was disqualified for 5 years from owning dogs.

In contrast, in a recent TIU decision, a participant was fined \$200 and disqualified for 12 months after being found guilty to five charges relating to failing to provide proper and sufficient food, water, protective apparel, veterinary attention and keeping a greyhound in circumstances which may be detrimental to its welfare⁶.

Given that participants are licensed, registered, and subject to ongoing oversight, and are expected to meet the highest standards of animal welfare, it is reasonable to consider whether the threshold for compliance and the consequences for non-compliance should be at least equivalent to, if not higher than, those applied to members of the general public.

Recommendation 4: Review and introduce penalties for breaches of the Rules of Racing that are commensurate with similar offences under the Animal Welfare Act 1993.

Tasracing released a draft Code of Practice for Racing Greyhound Welfare⁷ for consultation in April 2025. The draft Code notes that compliance with these standards will be monitored and enforced by the stewards or others appointed under the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024*. There is no indication it has been formally adopted or incorporated into the rules of racing. There are some examples of Codes of Practice in other jurisdictions that could be used to review Tasracing's current standards that include requirements for socialisation and enrichment⁸.

Recommendation 5: Review the Code of Practice for Greyhound Welfare to ensure the highest welfare standards and formally adopt it under the Rules of Racing.

In its first report⁹, the TIU describes establishment of an Investigations & Animal Welfare (IAW) function and stated that capability development was a priority, with one IAW staff member completing a Certificate IV in Investigations. It is not clear what animal welfare expertise exists under this function, but it is recommended that IAW staff conducting kennel audits receive appropriate training in recognising key indicators for physical and mental health to enable prompt referral to a veterinarian for further assessment.

Recommendation 6: Require all IAW kennel audit staff to complete formal animal welfare training.

TIU kennel audits should include animal and resource-based measures and be independently verified. For example, animal-based measures should include dental and health assessments; health issues that impact on rehoming (e.g. chronic health conditions associated with previous injuries or

⁵ [Animal Cruelty Conviction: Five-Year Disqualification for Tasmanian Man](#) * RSPCA Tasmania - Prevent Animal Cruelty | Educate & Advocate

⁶ [Jordan Young pleads guilty to chronic neglect of greyhound Buck](#) | Herald Sun

⁷ [Code of Practice for Greyhound Welfare - Draft.pdf](#)

⁸ For example, [Greyhound Welfare Standards 2023 \(Amended 2024\) WEB.pdf](#); [Code of Practice \(January 2026\).pdf](#); [Exercise, Socialisation & Enrichment \(ESE\) Plan](#)

⁹ [Tasracing Integrity Unit - First Anniversary Report Final.pdf](#)

predisposition to specific ailments incurred as a consequence of long-term kennelling in the racing kennel environment).

Recommendation 7: Seek independent expert advice to develop a robust, evidence-based kennel audit template covering health status, socialisation and enrichment plans, with independent audit oversight.

Currently, Tasracing's reports do not include compliance data from greyhound kennel audit visits such as compliance rates, audit findings, proportion of properties meeting standards. As a result, it is difficult to determine what standards and rules are being enforced, the extent of compliance and whether improvements are being made. It is the RSPCA's view that all compliance data must be verified independently and be publicly accessible, including full traceability and transparent reporting of rehoming outcomes, particularly for private and third-party rehoming.

This must include oversight of greyhounds remaining in the Greyhound Recovery Rebate Scheme and transparent reporting of the numbers of greyhounds in the scheme, treatment and rehabilitation plans and outcomes. During the transition period, there should be mandatory annual audits of every kennel and biannual reporting of all compliance data.

Recommendation 8: Require Tasracing's kennel audit reports to include:

- a. number and date of audits;*
- b. percentage of kennels compliant with each standard*
- c. number of infringements and improvement notices issued; and*
- d. percentage of infringements and improvement notices closed out.*

Recommendation 9: Require all kennels be audited annually and the TIU publish kennel audit reports every six months.

It is anticipated that oversight of greyhounds will be required after the phase out deadline as there is likely to be a number of greyhounds who require rehoming.

Therefore, oversight must not cease on 1 July 2029. While the Bill appears to transition greyhounds remaining after that date to general protection under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, this would remove the additional racing-specific safeguards needed while greyhounds remain in racing kennels, rehabilitation or awaiting rehoming. Unlike Wales and Scotland, where the number of greyhounds requiring rehoming was relatively small, Tasmania is likely to require continued monitoring beyond the closure date to ensure all greyhounds are traced, cared for and successfully rehomed.

Given the substantial animal welfare risks associated with greyhound racing and the likelihood of these risks being heightened during the transition period, appointing an animal welfare advisory panel would play an important role in reviewing steps being taken to mitigate these risks and to identify any potential unexpected welfare issues.

Recommendation 10: Require annual kennel audits and reporting to continue beyond 1 July 2029 for any greyhounds remaining in racing kennels, rehabilitation, or awaiting rehoming.

Recommendation 11: Establish an Animal Welfare Advisory Panel to review welfare-related standards, policies and rules, and provide independent expert advice on rehoming, welfare and euthanasia decisions. The Panel's role should continue beyond 1 July 2029 until all suitable greyhounds are independently verified as successfully rehomed.

3.3 Traceability

Tasracing does not utilise an e-tracking system such as that used in New South Wales. Instead, it relies primarily on the OzChase database, which utilises self-reporting and is not designed to provide comprehensive whole of life traceability, thus limiting visibility of greyhound outcomes over time. This raises significant concerns around whole of life traceability.

The RIB considered that “Traceability will be key to ensuring the welfare of greyhounds is managed and monitored during the transition and greyhounds are accounted for through to adoption” (RIB, 2023).

Given these issues are currently a concern and are part of the reason for the community's lack of support for the industry, it is critical that the transition plan addresses this.

Recommendation 12: Require TIU kennel audits to verify the status of all registered greyhounds attached to licensed premises against Tasracing's records.

3.4 A robust rehoming program with transparent reporting

Rehoming programs already struggle to meet capacity requirements and with the challenge of managing greyhounds suffering from long-standing issues inherited from the racing environment. These include managing and assessing greyhounds with behavioural problems associated with the lack of socialisation and enrichment, and a lack of basic health care. Dental disease is also well recognised in retired greyhounds (O'Neill et al., 2019). Inadequate diet and dental care of greyhounds whilst racing is likely to be a significant contributor to ongoing dental disease. Kennelled dogs may also exhibit behaviours associated with boredom and/or frustration including cage biting which can cause wearing down and in some cases fractures of the canine teeth (Advanced Animal Dentistry, 2025).

Many greyhounds suffer musculo-skeletal injuries during their racing careers, and these can have a profound impact on their life after racing. A USA study reported that 15% of adopted greyhounds died within 2 years of being rehomed with more than half of the deaths due to cancer, and 25% of dogs who died had osteosarcoma (Lord, 2007).

This puts pressure on rehoming programs and often leads to extended periods greyhounds wait to be rehomed, which can exacerbate health and behavioural problems. Those awaiting adoption should ideally be retained by foster carers. Foster homes provide a low-stress environment where

greyhounds can be socialised, acclimatised to the home environment and habituated to household sights and sounds. A review on foster care programs in the USA and Canada concluded that fostering improves animal welfare and adoption outcomes and reduces the number returned after adoption (Phillips and Gunter, 2024).

Recommendation 13: Provide transition funding to support a greyhound foster care program.

Tasracing's data on retired greyhounds suggests there is a significant number being kept as pets or rehomed privately by participants. Private rehoming raises serious concerns because there is limited verifiable data confirming that greyhounds are placed in appropriate homes. Tasracing relies on unverified self-reporting through OzChase, with no evidence of follow-up checks to confirm location, health or welfare. As the closure approaches, independent verification will be essential to ensure private rehoming is not used to avoid euthanasia policies or reduce accountability.

Independent checks would ensure compliance with rehoming and euthanasia policies and procedures, improve rehoming outcomes, welfare and transparency. There should be a formal mechanism to ensure these adoptions have undergone appropriate behavioural assessments and veterinary checks to ensure they are suitable for rehoming and well matched with the new family.

Recommendation 14: Develop rehoming policies and procedures covering all rehoming pathways to ensure consistency, transparency and welfare safeguards until every suitable greyhound is independently verified as successfully rehomed (including after 1 July 2029). These safeguards must apply to private rehoming, with all privately rehomed greyhounds subject to the mandatory health checks, assessments and follow-ups outlined in Recommendation 16.

Recommendation 15: Consider establishing a government-appointed rehoming body to coordinate procedures, ensure compliance with the rehoming policy, and provide every greyhound with the same level of care and adoption opportunity.

Recommendation 16: Ensure the rehoming program includes:

- a. mandatory veterinary health checks;*
 - b. desexing requirements;*
 - c. behavioural assessments, using qualified canine behavioural expertise, to confirm each greyhound's suitability for rehoming;*
 - d. clear processes for managing greyhounds assessed as unsuitable for rehoming;*
 - e. robust home checks and matching processes for suitable homes;*
 - f. a comprehensive foster care program;*
 - g. follow-up support and independent verification of the new owner; and*
 - h. transparent, biannual reporting of all rehoming outcomes.*
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The Committee will need to clarify how “successful rehoming” is defined and verified under the new legislative framework as this has implications for rehoming outcomes.

Recommendation 17: Define and verify “successful rehoming” under the new legal framework.

3.5 Review and enforce exercise, socialisation and enrichment standards

Unlike most companion dogs, greyhounds have generally spent all their pre-adoption lives confined to high density kennel housing, with a lack of enrichment and socialisation. Many greyhounds have been maintained in an environment devoid of normal everyday household sights and sounds that companion dogs are exposed to such as vacuum cleaners, televisions, stairs, glass doors, and people.

If compliance with the Exercise, Socialisation and Enrichment standards in Tasracing’s Code of Practice were enforced, the risk of behavioural issues associated with the lack of socialisation would be reduced by the time greyhounds are entered into rehoming programs. These issues can lead to extended periods waiting to be rehomed, thereby increasing the risk of physical health deteriorating and anxiety or stress-related behaviours.

Tasracing reported that there has been a decrease in the waiting time to be rehomed on the GAP program due to an initiative encouraging participants to ‘re-train’ greyhounds prior to entry into GAP and introduction of an expedited intake stream (Express Entry). However no data are published regarding the numbers on waiting list, or waiting times to enter GAP or be adopted. It is not uncommon for greyhounds to be waiting over one year to be rehomed, or more for those in rehabilitation programs, but Tasracing does not report on this data.

Recommendation 18: Report transparently on greyhound waiting list numbers and waiting times to enter rehoming programs and be adopted.

There is also a lack of data being reported on the return rate of adopted greyhounds, reasons for this and next steps to improve the likelihood of a successful adoption.

Recommendation 19: Report transparently on returned rehomed greyhounds, including numbers, reasons for return and actions taken to improve future adoption success.

3.6 Risks of on track injuries and deaths may increase as the closure approaches

Serious injuries in Tasmania increased by 75% from 20 in 2024, to 35 in 2025, which is of significant concern. While Tasracing celebrates a decline in the number of greyhounds who died or were euthanased on race day, it fails to explain this is largely due to the Greyhound Recovery Rebate Scheme providing financial support for treating serious on-track injuries. This scheme raises significant concerns relating to the outcomes for these greyhounds and rehabilitation often involves multiple surgeries, long-term confinement, chronic conditions and impacts on rehoming success. Injured dogs suffer pain, fear and anxiety relating to the injury itself as well as subsequent treatment and rehabilitation efforts.

Recommendation 20: Report transparently on the number of greyhounds in the Recovery Rebate Scheme and their outcomes.

Recommendation 21: Give the Animal Welfare Advisory Panel independent oversight of greyhounds in the Recovery Rebate Scheme, including treatment and rehabilitation plans, progress, euthanasia decisions and rehoming outcomes.

As the phase out progresses and the population of racing greyhounds' declines, there is a risk that greyhounds may be raced more frequently, continue racing beyond when they would normally be retired due to injury or age, or move from the rehoming waiting list to return to race until the closure. Additionally, it is likely that there will be less investment into track safety.

Tasracing currently reports on capital investment in infrastructure, but currently there is no information regarding track safety improvements or other injury reduction strategies.

Unlike the NSW Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission and Greyhound Racing Victoria, Tasracing also have no Injury Review Panel. These panels are responsible for the systematic review of all Category F injuries (considered to be the most severe). The aim is to better understand the underlying causes of racing injuries and deaths and to develop and implement preventative measures to reduce these incidences. These panels identify and analyse all contributing factors for each Category F injury, including age, the greyhound's racing history, frequency of racing, prior experience and performance, previous injuries, number of greyhounds in the race, track conditions and other factors. In comparison, in Tasmania these injuries are simply recorded by stewards with no review or transparency around how the injury data informs track safety decisions or improvements to track infrastructure.

Recommendation 22: Establish an independent Injury Review Panel to review all serious injuries and deaths and ensure racing-field pressures do not compromise greyhound welfare.

Recommendation 23: Give the Commissioner power to close tracks where conditions pose a predicted high risk of serious injury or death.

4. Learnings from other jurisdictions that have phased out greyhound racing

4.1 New Zealand

4.1.1 A comparison of New Zealand's closure model and regulatory oversight of greyhound welfare

The Transition Agency (the Agency) was established in New Zealand in 2026 to oversee the orderly closure of the greyhound racing industry, implement a fair transition plan, assume relevant functions and staff, and support the rehoming of registered greyhounds.

The New Zealand model provides an example of shifting legal powers away from the industry and its regulator to an independent statutory body with a well-funded and structured transition plan, instead of relying on existing governance structures that couldn't be trusted to manage the phase-out. The Agency assumes Greyhound Racing New Zealand's (GRNZ) assets and responsibilities, and manages the transition plan, with the TAB legally required to fund housing, training, rehoming and veterinary care for the estimated 1,700 greyhounds to be rehomed.

Key elements of the Agency's work, as stated, include:

- Assistance for greyhound owners, to ensure dogs receive a high standard of care while awaiting rehoming, including housing, training and behavioural support for the dogs.
- Partnerships with existing rehoming agencies, with practical support in place to expand their rehoming capacity and the number of dogs adopted.
- Retraining and redeployment support for industry workers, delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, to help affected workers move into new jobs¹⁰.

This differs to Tasmania's current approach that relies heavily on financial compensation, including funding schemes for participants exiting the industry early.

Under the new legislation¹¹, the functions of the Agency include to:

- facilitate the rehoming of specified greyhounds and oversee their welfare until they are successfully rehomed;
- retain, maintain, and develop (as necessary) any existing systems to trace the ownership of specified greyhounds until they are successfully rehomed;
- keep a record of specified greyhounds that have been successfully rehomed.

The Agency must provide the Minister with an annual report the welfare and rehoming outcomes for greyhounds; the number successfully rehomed, awaiting rehoming and euthanasias or deaths.

NOTE: Recommendation 15 above outlines the benefits of establishing a dedicated independent rehoming body.

¹⁰ [Greyhound racing to end as bill passes | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/news/greyhound-racing-to-end-as-bill-passes)

¹¹ [Racing Industry Act 2020 | New Zealand Legislation](https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0000/1.127.0/1.127.0.html)

4.1.2 Learnings from New Zealand prior to the closure of greyhound racing

Some risks highlighted in the lead up to the closure of greyhound racing in New Zealand should be considered within the Committee's work plan to ensure the legal framework prevents the same happening in Tasmania. Two recent examples include:

1. In the months prior to the shutdown, GRNZ increased prizemoney and provided extra incentives (e.g., travel payments) for races, (e.g., a \$150 cash payout per greyhound entered to race, a travel payment of \$100 per meeting for participants)¹². Therefore, spending money intended to fund greyhound care and rehoming after the industry closure.
2. Despite main airlines refusing to transport greyhounds for racing, a leaked message revealed that GRNZ had chartered a plane to fly 70 greyhounds from New Zealand to Queensland in an attempt to get as many greyhounds as possible exported for breeding and racing prior to the ban¹³. There were no provisions in either country's legislation to prevent this happening, putting these greyhounds under further risks of harm or death and more pressure on already under resourced rehoming organisations¹⁴.

The transition plan must ensure greyhounds are rehomed and not relocated so that they can continue to be bred and trained for racing. There are significant risks associated with the export of greyhounds. While approval through the Greyhound Passport System is mandatory, there have been a number of greyhounds who have slipped through the system without approval and end up being exported to countries with no legal animal welfare protections, putting them at significant risk of poor welfare outcomes.

Inadequate oversight of greyhound exports can also result in greyhounds being used in unregulated or illegal racing operations overseas¹⁵.

Recommendation 24: Prohibit the overseas export of racing greyhounds.

Recommendation 25: Permit transport of greyhounds to mainland Australia only for rehoming, not racing, with independently verified rehoming outcomes.

4.2 Other jurisdictions

4.2.1 Example models implemented by other jurisdictions that have banned greyhound racing

Macau

Other countries that have banned greyhounds racing have had a less structured approach to phasing out greyhound racing. When greyhound racing ended in Macau in July 2018, the operator had not prepared a rehoming strategy for the approximately 600 greyhounds, which were mostly bred in Australia. An international network of animal welfare organisations subsequently coordinated a large-scale rescue effort, through which over 500 abandoned greyhounds received veterinary care and

¹² Greyhound Racing NZ lifts prizemoney weeks before sport banned - NZ Herald

¹³ Dozens of New Zealand greyhounds expected to arrive in Queensland ahead of racing ban - ABC News

¹⁴ Dozens of NZ greyhounds expected to arrive in Queensland ahead of racing ban | RNZ

¹⁵ Shocking greyhound exports to China - where dogs are eaten and boiled alive - still going on as authorities fail to act and Inside the international operation using Australian greyhounds to grow China's illegal racing industry - ABC News

were rehomed in Europe, North America, Australia and locally in Macau¹⁶. Relying on already under-resourced, overstretched rehoming organisations to manage and oversee rehoming in Tasmania is not a viable option.

USA

In the United States, the approach was largely focused on legally prohibiting gambling on greyhound racing state by state, with Florida, the most recent state to ban it. In Florida greyhound racing was phased out over two years. Thousands of greyhounds were rehomed, however, historical gaps in industry reporting and data transparency made it difficult to ascertain the outcomes of all greyhounds rehomed. This would not be an acceptable outcome in Tasmania. It was also reported that participants refused to work with some adoption organisations that had supported the ban, limiting rehoming to selected groups that were pro-racing or neutral about the ban were endorsed¹⁷.

If, the greyhound racing industry in Tasmania takes a similar approach and refused to work with organisations like the RSPCA and other adoption agencies that have established community ties and trust, rehoming opportunities could be significantly reduced leading to more wait time for rehoming and poor animal welfare outcomes. A recent example in New Zealand highlighted this issue in media coverage titled “*Greyhound adoption sours over terms and conditions*”¹⁸.

Recommendation 26: Develop a comprehensive rehoming plan that coordinates all rehoming agencies and provides consistent marketing and messaging for new caregivers.

Scotland

In Scotland, the industry was extremely small and had been in decline for some time with only one operational track¹⁹. Greyhounds were not concentrated in large commercial kennelling systems as they are in Tasmania, and most greyhounds were kept at home by a small number of participants. Therefore, large-scale rehoming was not identified as a significant implementation challenge in the phase-out process.

Wales

In Wales, approximately 350 greyhounds were actively racing at the country’s only remaining track²⁰. Rehoming was identified as a key challenge, requiring coordinated planning, an implementation group, and partnerships with animal welfare organisations to ensure rehoming capacity²¹. The implementation group which included representatives from the racing industry, animal welfare organisations and the local authority, advised Welsh Ministers during the phase out while prioritising greyhound welfare, social and economic impacts and ensuring a transparent, evidence-based, and fair process²².

¹⁶ Greyhound Racing in Macau | GREY2K USA Worldwide

¹⁷ Greyhound racing is all but dead as Florida prepares for its final races | Humane World for Animals

¹⁸ Greyhound adoption sours over terms and conditions | Stuff

¹⁹ RAIS62026R02 | Scottish Parliament Website

²⁰ Greyhound racing will be banned in Wales, but what happens to dogs when they can no longer compete? - The Cardiffian

²¹ Welsh Government announces plans to ban greyhound racing, work to rehome dogs underway

²² Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill: integrated impact assessment

5. Conclusion

RSPCA Australia and RSPCA Tasmania consider the greyhound industry is beyond reform and the only way to protect greyhound welfare is through the proposed Bill to legislate an end to greyhound racing in Tasmania. With strengthened definitions, protections, independence, and transparency, the Committee's work plan can deliver a transition that genuinely prioritises animal welfare and ensures that no greyhound is left unprotected as the industry winds down.

For the Committee's work plan to be successful and to have the support of the Tasmanian public, key risks must be addressed including:

- a robust well considered and well-resourced rehoming program;
- independent monitoring of compliance and enforcement of animal welfare standards, policies and rules;
- accurate data recording and timely transparent public reporting.

The work plan, and all associated welfare, traceability and rehoming safeguards, must remain in place beyond the 2029 closure date until every suitable greyhound is independently verified as successfully rehomed.

We would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to speak to this submission.

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