

## Submission to Parliamentary Select Committee on Greyhound Racing

Philip and Inna Eldridge

Our submission urges swift action in removing the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled in a public place even when *on-lead*.

Following a long process of debate and public consultation, a recommendation was forwarded in early 2014 to the Minister Assisting the Premier in Local Government to *amend Section 18 of the Dog Control Act 2000* so as to remove this requirement in the case of greyhounds adopted under the Tasmanian Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP). This change was overwhelmingly supported by greyhound owners, GAP, the racing industry and the community at large.

Over a year has now passed without any sign of a response to this recommendation. Indeed, this proposal, together with all other issues relating to review of the Dog Control Act have been 'put on ice' whether or not they are relevant to the consideration of managing greyhound racing. A similar situation applies to the Animal Welfare Act.

The current enquiry was triggered by revelations of live baiting in the training of greyhounds. We support the efforts of the Committee in ensuring this practice does not and will not occur in Tasmania. However, if public debate were to polarise between the greyhound racing industry and those who may use the issue of live baiting to advocate its abolition, prospects for sensible reform could be buried in the crossfire. Hopefully, this will not happen but the delay resulting from the establishment of the Select Committee is very frustrating to adopting greyhound owners and others who have waited and struggled for this change over many years.

We see no reason for further delaying this reform pending inevitably complex and lengthy investigations across the whole field of greyhound racing in Tasmania. Unless the Committee plans to delve into the GAP's training regime anew, **please issue an interim recommendation for this reform to proceed now.**

The muzzling regime is cruel and unnecessary. Greyhounds pose no threat whatever to humans. As family pets, experience has demonstrated their gentle and affectionate nature towards people, including children. Muzzling places a serious constraint on greyhounds' capacity to socialise like other dogs. It can also convey a false image of them as dangerous, with potentially negative impact on their prospects for adoption.

On a personal note, our interest in this issue stems from adopting Grace, an ex-racing greyhound from Victoria (via RSPCA and Mangalore Kennels), in September 2010. Sadly she died from cancer in March 2014. Like other greyhounds, she proved, loyal, obedient and affectionate. Our other dog of a totally different breed (Alaskan Malamute) was her greatest mate.

In conversations with GAP, they indicated willingness, once the legislation passes, to train greyhounds adopted from other backgrounds. Sadly this could not happen in Grace's lifetime.

Philip and Inna Eldridge

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