



Due by 12th June, 2015

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Signed

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Submission to the Inquiry into The Greyhound Racing Industry in Tasmania

1. Preamble: An inevitable outcome of the greyhound racing industry is that it uses animals to support gaming by exploiting their natural behaviour - running speed - which then becomes the essential basis of their worth. This inevitably results in an industry view that the dogs are disposable they do not present with sufficient speed for the generation of profits. The sentient nature of racing greyhounds is grossly overshadowed by the industry's use of them, inevitably generating ethical and welfare issues.

1.1 Over recent months following the expose of live baiting aired by ABC's Four Corners in February, it has become increasingly clear that the Tasmanian community is horrified by the cruel treatment of greyhounds in the industry. Although there was no direct evidence of such cruel practices in Tasmania, I quote from the recently released Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry report for Queensland's Greyhound Industry: "it would be naïve in the extreme, to conclude that the practice is not widespread."

2. The Animal Justice Party Position is that there should be a ban on greyhound racing in Tasmania and all other states. The AJP position is that commercial greyhound racing is inherently cruel. It involves systemic animal welfare problems including overbreeding and high injury rates. The racing industry is also unable to ensure the lifetime care for all greyhounds who have been purposely bred for racing, cannot be eliminated.

3. The Issues and Recommendations: If greyhound racing is to be allowed to continue in Tasmania, it is the position of the AJP that the following need attention:

3.1 Self-Regulation is an Abject Failure

Recent evidence has made it clear that a significant number of greyhound trainers, including highly successful and respected trainers have been involved in live baiting- in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. Given logic and anecdotal reports, and given that the industries exist with the same structure in the different states and territories, it is simply not believable that live baiting would not also be taking place in Tasmania. If the members of the board are actually not aware of this practice taking place, or if they say they are not aware of it, they are not doing their job. It is the position of the AJP that the existing structure of the industry, which includes one arm of the body being responsible for monitoring and policing, and another arm of the same body being responsible for promoting the industry suffers from a serious conflict of interest. It has been revealed to be a spectacular failure.

3.2 It is recommended that the integrity and commercial arms of the industry be separated so that an independent body is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the industry.

4. Excessive sacrifice of life in this industry is enormous, unethical, and completely unjustifiable given that greyhound racing contributes no significant benefit to society.

4.1 Estimates are that around 20,000 dogs are bred annually in Australia, purely for greyhound racing. Of these, around 40% are not named and are non-traceable thereafter. What happens to these dogs?

4.2 Because the numbers of dogs bred is large and rehoming capacity is limited, the Greyhound Racing Industry is responsible for reckless overbreeding and eventual and inevitable loss of life. There is a callous disposal of young, healthy dogs who are otherwise capable of living as long as 12 to 15 years. This is the fate of as many as 17,000 young, healthy dogs.

5. Breeding and Breeding Incentives: Given the irresponsible overbreeding, breeding incentives are illogical and unethical. They should be stopped immediately.

5.1 It is recommended that a legislated limit be placed on the total number of greyhounds allowed to be bred in Tasmania or imported into Tasmania for racing. This should be accompanied by mandatory recording and reporting of independently verified breeding numbers.

6. The fate of dogs exiting the industry: Estimates indicate that only very small numbers of racing dogs are rehomed, and even fewer of among those who are born but don't make it to the racetrack. Dogs that do make it to the racetrack are *retired* (many are killed) at the young age of 2 to 4 years or earlier if they are injured while racing. Estimates are that approximately 12,000 greyhounds are 'retired' from racing in Australia each year. Of these, only between 10 and 15% will go onto breeding or will be rehomed. The remainder are killed. Only 10% (2,000) of pups born each year will live out their natural life, majority through rehoming.

6.1 Rehoming: It is unfathomable that a multi-million dollar greyhound racing industry is capable of rehoming only a very small proportion of greyhounds bred for racing through their GAP program. This reveals either a lack of will and/or ability by the GAP to ensure the welfare of its dogs. This reinforces that the Tasmania racing industry should not be entrusted with a regulatory function of ensuring the welfare of animals in greyhound racing.

6.2 Legislation must ensure proper socialization of greyhounds during rearing to increase their potential for homing as a companion animal.

6.3 Inhumane Killing: Of particular concern are reports of the inhumane killing of young and healthy dogs, which include drowning, being shot, and being bludgeoned to death. A small number are relinquished to vets for euthanasia, others to vets schools for use as cadavers, and still others to vet hospitals to be bled (used as blood banks) before being killed.

6.4 There must be prohibition of the killing of greyhounds except when euthanasia is for humane reasons upon the advice of an independent veterinarian. Moreover, when performed, it must be by a veterinarian by lethal injection.

6.5 The Industry's Duty of Care: It is recommended that a legislative requirement be put in place for the industry to take full responsibility for the welfare of every animal bred for the industry, including those that are not named for racing. This should include the requirement to find homes for every greyhound except for greyhounds deemed unfit as a companion animal by an independent veterinarian or animal behavior expert. Other solutions, but not euthanasia, must be in place for these animals.

7. Lack of Transparency: Statistics are not reliably collected nor reported by the industry. There is no traceable information on the breeding and fate of greyhounds who are not named. There is also limited and unreliable data collected on dogs who do race with regard to their injuries/death, retirement/rehoming.

7.1 There should be lifetime tracking of all greyhounds born, irrespective of whether or not they are named.

7.2 The AJP proposes that a central database be established, that is accessible to the authorities and made available to the public upon request. The database should track dogs from birth to death. It should also detail all injuries, and euthanasia so that dogs cannot simply go missing.

7.3 It is further recommended that there must be legislated identification and lifetime registration requirements for all greyhounds bred for the industry.

8. Cruelty on the Track:

8.1 Injuries: A large number of racing greyhounds are injured on the track and a significant number die or are killed as a result of racing injuries. On average, between 4 to 5 dogs are killed every week on the racetrack at official meetings. Up to 200 dogs in some states will be injured each week during racing. Many more thousands are 'scratched' each year before races as a consequence of injury.

8.2 Statistics for 2013 in Victoria alone, indicate that there were 84 dogs euthanized as result of racing injuries, 82 suffered fractures but were not killed and 3023 were injured. 8.2 RSPCA estimates are that as many as 600 dogs may be injured each month throughout Australia, on racetracks.

8.3 In the 2014 NSW parliamentary report, data collected by animal welfare groups over a two-year period revealed 36,689 injuries and 970 deaths on the track mostly due to fractures and damage to ligaments, tendons, or muscles. Although the numbers are smaller in Tasmania, given that the industry is generally smaller, any death or injury of a dog simply for the purpose of gambling is not ethically justified.

8.4 *Heat stress:* Racing is extremely physiologically stressful for the dogs, especially during hot weather. This is a significant welfare issue both on the racetrack and also during transport to and from the racetrack. The fact that dogs are raced on days that exceed 30 degree temperature, introduces another significant welfare issue.

9. *Illegal Practices and Corruption:* Greyhound racing provides powerful incentives for industry participants, in particular trainers, to use performance enhancing and illegal substances, and to engage in illegal practices including live baiting. Live-baiting is a serious animal cruelty offence. There is indication that the practice is widespread. The fact that deliberate and repeated animal cruelty is predictive of other criminal behavior including human aggression is a concern. People who engage in such behavior must be brought to justice since they are cultivating a culture of violence and aggression (e.g. minors seen to witnessing and even taking part in the live baiting).

9.1 There has been repeated evidence of the administration of illegal substances to racing greyhounds. These practices as well as live baiting have been shown to be widespread. Illegal substances used have included anabolic steroids, performance enhancing hormones, cocaine, amphetamines, and Viagra. These substances are injurious to the health of the dogs. They lead to suffering and potential death of the dogs to which they are administered. These practices also render races unfair. Moreover, the possession of such drugs is an offence under criminal law and prohibited drugs legislation.

9.2 It is recommended that deterrent measures be instituted including random unannounced and frequent intense monitoring and inspections of industry participants and their facilities.

9.3 Breaches must attract severe penalties that will be valid and effective deterrents, including a lifetime ban and pay back of race winnings. Fines that are small in comparison to potential winnings and short-term suspensions have proven to be ineffective.

10. Quality of Life Issues and Care of the dogs:

10.1 *Female dogs:* A prohibition must be put in place on the use of steroids to prevent estrus in female greyhounds.

10.2 *Breeding bitches:* The welfare of breeding bitches should be protected through specific restrictions being imposed on the number of litters allowed per bitch. A bitch should not be mated before 1 year old and should not have more than 1 litter per year. She should also have no more than 6 litters in total.

10.3 *Minimum standards:* It is recommended that there be legislated minimum standards for all greyhound facilities, including facilities for breeding and training.

10.4 *Breeding and quality of life standards* are another area of concern. The majority of greyhounds are bred in intensive puppy farm conditions. When not on the racetrack, those dogs who meet the criteria for racing, endure as many as 23 hours of every day confined in small crates or other enclosures.

10.5 Most dogs lead a life of deprivation. They do not receive environmental enrichment and some are not even protected from the seasonal elements of heat and cold. Most codes provide only a very minimum standard of care. For example, dogs are required to have 2 periods of 10 minutes of exercise per day or are allowed to walk on rotary walkers or walking machines when not confined to their small kennels (2.4 to 3sqm).

10.6 There is also a lack of socialisation. This causes a range of problems for successful rehoming including fearfulness, destructiveness, and toileting problems.

11. State Government Subsidies: The Tasmanian and other state government should not be contributing millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to this industry, which has been exposed as being endemically cruel and corrupt. With more than 70% of taxpayers opposing this industry, governments have no ethical ground upon which to do this.

11.1 The AJP position is that the subsidies should be stopped immediately. Breeding incentives (as per above) and appearance fee subsidies should also be stopped.

12. Conclusion

12.1 All the 'five freedoms' that animals should experience; viz: freedom from hunger and thirst; from discomfort; from pain, injury and disease; to express normal behaviour; and from fear and distress are affronted in one way or another by the greyhound racing industry.

12.2 It is a poor reflection of modern Australian moral and ethical standards that the 'sport' of greyhound racing continues to exist despite the evidence of inherent cruelty, and massive loss (waste) of life.

12.3 The greyhound racing industry is self-regulated with very little accountability, transparency and responsibility for its actions regarding breeding, training, usage, injuries and *discarding* of greyhounds. The industry Greyhound Adoption Program is given significant amounts of money but rehomes fewer dogs than volunteer-based charity group with very limited funding. In essence, the industry does very little to re-home these gentle creatures, leaving many of the unfunded welfare groups to pick up the pieces.

12.4 Given the many and insurmountable welfare and ethical issues associated with the Greyhound Racing Industry, and based on the evidence of endemic corruption within the Industry, it is the position of the Animal Justice Party that the industry should be phased out over a reasonably speedy period of time to an eventual total shutdown.

END