

2015/19: Should greyhound racing in Australia be banned?

What they said...

'This shows how vital greyhound racing is to Victoria and the many people who work in or enjoy this wonderful industry'
Then Premier of Victoria and Racing Minister, Dr Denis Napthine, commenting on a 2014 report on the social and economic value of greyhound racing to Victoria

'When you're euthanasing these dogs, they're not old dogs, they're completely healthy, and most of them are still standing there wagging their tails and licking your face while you're actually euthanasing them'
Veterinary nurse Victoria Luxton-Bain

The issue at a glance

On September 28, 2015, Stephen Rushton SC counsel assisting the New South Wales Special Commission of Inquiry into Greyhound Racing called for the greyhound racing industry to be shut down if it cannot maintain animal welfare standards.

On October 2, 2015, the new head of greyhound racing in New South Wales, Paul Newson, stated he was 'incredulous' at the poor leadership and lack of regulation in the sport when he took over following the live baiting scandal. The live baiting scandal was precipitated by an ABC Four Corners' report on animal welfare abuses within the Australian greyhound racing industry. The report was titled 'Making a Killing' and was televised on February 16, 2015. It detailed abuses in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

A number of animal welfare groups have called for the banning of greyhound racing in Australia. Others have argued that it should only be allowed to continue if it can be substantially reformed.

Background

Commercial greyhound racing is characterized by several criteria, including legalized gambling, the existence of a regulatory structure, the physical presence of racetracks, whether the host state or subdivision shares in any gambling proceeds, fees charged by host locations, the use of professional racing kennels, the number of dogs participating in races, the existence of an official racing code, and membership in a greyhound racing federation or trade association.

The Australian Greyhound Racing Association (AGRA) is divided into many state governing bodies, which regulate greyhound welfare and living conditions. Some racing authorities in Australia partly finance some of the Greyhound Adoption Groups, which house dozens of greyhounds a month.

Each Australian State and Territory has a governing greyhound racing body. Greyhound Racing New South Wales (GRNSW) and Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) are the two largest authorities, governing over 40 racetracks.

The Queensland Greyhound Racing Authority (QGRA), Western Australian Greyhound Racing Authority (WAGRA), Tasmanian Greyhound Racing Authority (TGRA), Greyhound Racing South Australia (GRSA), Northern Territory Racing Authority, and the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club (CGRC), all contribute to the running and monitoring of greyhound racing in Australia as it continues to grow.

Major greyhound racing venues include Wentworth Park in Sydney, Cannington Park in Perth, Angle Park in Adelaide, Albion Park in Brisbane and Sandown Park in Melbourne.

Many adoption programs have been set up throughout Australia known as Greyhound Adoption Program or Greyhounds As Pets, GAP. They generally work with their Greyhound Racing Administration. Greyhounds are checked for parasites, malnourishment, or any other medical conditions by an on-course vet before being able to compete.

Greyhounds are usually bought and sold as puppies just after having been whelped or as racing dogs that have been fully trained via word of mouth on the track or via the few greyhound trading and sales platforms. In Australia the buying and selling of greyhounds is controlled and regulated by the states and territories.

Live baiting

The greyhound industry and the law provide harsh penalties for the use of live baits in training. Nevertheless, accusations of live baiting in the Australian greyhound industry have arisen from time to time.

Some greyhound trainers believe that greyhounds will chase better, and hence have a greater chance of winning the race, if they have chased and caught a live animal during training. The live bait animal is either attached to the mechanical lure, dragged in front of the greyhound, or thrown to it. The greyhound will often maim or kill the bait animal, resulting in a savage and painful death.

A 2015 television investigation revealed widespread use of small live animals as bait, to train greyhounds to chase and kill. On 16 February 2015, Four Corners exposed live baiting on training tracks in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The program included graphic surveillance footage, filmed by pro-animal activists, which showed various small animals being tied to mechanical lures where they were chased, caught and savaged by greyhounds for up to 30 minutes. Some animals had babies taken from them and brutally killed. The program also included interviews with many leading greyhound trainers and administrators who denied the practice of live baiting; some of them were subsequently shown to be involved in the live baiting.

As a result, many in the industry have called for a complete overhaul of greyhound racing's controlling bodies in

Australia.

Australia is only one of eight countries in the world where greyhound racing is still legal.

Internet information

On October 30, 2015, Radio @UE talkback host Stuart Bocking conducted an interview with Scott Parker the head of Greyhounds Australasia in which Parker requests that the greyhound racing industry Australia-wide be given an opportunity to show it can change.

A recording of the interview can be accessed at <http://www.2ue.com.au/news/please-give-us-a-chance-to-change-20151020-gkdiy2.html>

On October 23, 2015, the ABC released a photograph of greyhound trainer, John Cauchi, using a rabbit on a leash to entice and excite a greyhound he was breaking in.

The photograph can be accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-23/john-cauchi2c-greyhound-trainer/6880458>

On October 17, 2015, The Sydney Morning Herald published an extensive comment and analysis on the Australian greyhound racing industry titled 'Underdogs: the sad fate of greyhounds'

The article examines many of the abuses associated with the industry and the efforts of some of those campaigners trying to prevent them.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.smh.com.au/good-weekend/underdogs-the-sad-fate-of-greyhounds-20151001-gjyzex.html>

On October 9, 2015, the ABC current affairs program for children, Behind the News, televised a report on greyhound adoption programs.

A full transcript of this program can be accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s3603133.htm>

On October 5, 2015, The Jimboomba Times published a call from a greyhound rescue volunteer that greyhound racing be banned in Australia.

The full text of this report can be accessed at <http://www.jimboombatimes.com.au/story/3398201/dog-racing-should-stop/>

On October 1, 2015, Radio National's PM program conducted an interview with the former head of Greyhound Racing New South Wales, Brent Hogan, in which he denied having knowledge of the live baiting which a recent investigation had shown to be widespread in his state.

A full recording and a transcript of the interview can be found at <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2015/s4323472.htm>

On September 29, 2015, The Daily Telegraph published an editorial titled 'Judgment day for greyhound racing'. The editorial expresses doubt that the greyhound racing industry is capable of reform and then argues what actions would need to be taken if such reform were to be achieved.

The full text of this comment <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/judgment-day-for-greyhound-racing/story-fni0cwl5-1227547900868?sv=dc4efc4ca107b9ee5dd00317c0d7bd32>

On September 28, 2015, Greens NSW MP John Kaye posted a page on his Internet site calling for the banning of the greyhound racing industry. The site includes a Greens' petition to end greyhound racing.

The site can be accessed at <http://www.johnkaye.org.au/greyhound-racing-one-step-closer-to-end-game/>

On September 28, 2015, The New Daily published a report by Jonathan Colangelo titled 'NSW live baiting "widespread"'

The full report can be accessed at <http://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2015/09/28/ninety-per-cent-greyhound-trainers-live-bait-inquiry-hears/>

On September 7, 2015, Radio National's PM program broadcast a report on a new greyhound track proposed for the low socio-economic region of Logan, south of Brisbane, is facing increasing opposition from local residents.

A recording and a full transcript of the report can be accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2015/s4307774.htm>

On April 6, 2015, The News Mail published an opinion piece by Crystal Jones titled 'It's time to give up and walk away from greyhound racing'. The comment emphasises the cruelty involved in the industry.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.news-mail.com.au/news/its-time-give-and-walk-away-greyhound-racing/2597752/>

On February 17, 2015, The Conversation published a comment by Clive Phillips, Professor of Animal Welfare, the Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics, the University of Queensland Professor Phillips outlined the current problems within the greyhound racing industry and appears to have little hope that the necessary reforms will be put in place. He calls on Australians to boycott the supposed sport.

The full text of this article can be found at <https://theconversation.com/greyhound-racing-in-disgrace-as-riches-push-trainers-to-barbarity-37652>

On May 13, 2014, Rapt in Racing published a report titled 'GRV Shows The Way Again!' It details a report lauding the social and economic value of greyhound racing to Victoria. It includes comments from the then premier, Denis Napthine. The full text of the report can be accessed at http://www.raptinracing.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2881&Itemid=1

On February 7, 2011, The Dogs published the findings of a report detailing the economic and social value of greyhound racing to New South Wales.

The full text of this report can be accessed at <http://www.thedogs.com.au/NewsArticle.aspx?NewsId=2173>

The animal welfare group, Animals Australia, has a section of its Internet site given over to the animal abuse issues associated with greyhound racing.

This can be accessed at <http://www.animalsaustralia.org/issues/greyhound-racing.php>

Arguments supporting the banning of greyhound racing in Australia

1. There is an unacceptable level of wastage in the greyhound industry

Opponents of greyhound racing note that the industry has a severe problem with an oversupply of dogs which are then euthanased. Inez Hamilton-Smith from Gone are the Dogs explains, 'Greyhounds are seen as commodities and their value relies on their ability to run fast... It is perfectly legal to breed large numbers of greyhounds, in order to try and to get a fast one and then dispose of the rest.'

In an editorial published in the Sydney Morning Herald on October 10, 2015, it was stated, 'Most greyhounds bred specifically for racing are destroyed as healthy pups. It is legal to kill up to 100 dogs at a time in NSW, providing it is done "humanely".'

The animal welfare group, Animals Australia, has stated, 'Every year in Australia, around 20,000 greyhound pups are bred in the hope of finding a quick runner. But not every dog is suited to racing. And like a lottery ticket that has failed to pay out, most dogs who don't make the grade are discarded.'

Animals Australia has given a figure for the number of dogs which are disposed of because they are either not fast enough or are surplus to requirements. The lobby group states, 'An estimated 18,000 healthy dogs are killed in the greyhound industry each year - 8,000 pups and young dogs never even make it to the track, and another 10,000 dogs who are "retired" from racing - simply because they are too slow to win.'

It has been claimed that economic pressures to secure winning dogs and the ease of breeding greyhounds means there will always be an oversupply that will simply be killed.

The Sydney Morning Herald editorial explains, 'The average litter size is 6.5 puppies with the gestation period of bitches just 63 days. For horses it is one foal at a time with a gestation of at least 330 days. So there is a relative incentive to kill many more race-bred dogs than horses. It is much cheaper to maintain a dog until it has been trialled, too. As such the greyhound business model encourages the killing of slow dogs because it's cheap enough to breed more in the hope of striking a winner.'

Animals Australia has further noted, 'Whilst a greyhound's natural lifespan would be 12 to 14 years, very few of these dogs will live to that age. The vast majority will be killed once they have served their (racing) purpose.'

Nine out of 10 dogs born into the greyhound industry never get to live out a full life.'

Veterinary nurse Victoria Luxton-Bain has stated, 'When you're euthanasing these dogs, they're not old dogs, they're completely healthy, and most of them are still standing there wagging their tails and licking your face while you're actually euthanasing them.'

Animals Australia claims that even those animals that are not immediately put down when their racing lives are over are unlikely to live out their full lifespan. The lobby group notes, 'Some ex-racers go into breeding programs, but even they will then likely be killed at age 5-6 years. Other, perfectly healthy dogs are given to university veterinary faculties where they may be killed for use in teaching and training.'

2. Many dogs are treated cruelly

It is claimed that many greyhounds are treated cruelly and further that the sport is so stressful for animals that even those owners and trainers who treat their animals well cannot protect them from unacceptable hazards. Critics claim that the practical and economic necessities of the industry mean that dogs will inevitably be mistreated.

Lisa White, President of Friends of the Hound, a group committed to re-homing dogs, has stated, 'Unfortunately the economic viability of this commercial racing industry requires that profits be valued above the welfare of the dogs.'

The animal welfare group, Animals Australia, has stated, 'The greyhounds who do make it to the track are put at significant risk of sustaining serious injuries, such as broken hocks or legs, or head trauma, during training and racing. Up to 200 dogs are reported injured during official races each week. Some even die from cardiac arrest due to the extreme physical intensity of racing.'

It has further been noted that greyhounds frequently have miserable lives when not actually racing. Animals Australia has noted, 'Off the track their lives may not be much better - oftentimes being kept in tiny barren pens or kennels for the majority of their lives, only released to train or race. Racing greyhounds are not commonly kept as companion animals.' In August, 2015, Independent member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich stated, 'Greyhound racing relies on animal cruelty... There have been exposés of trainers administering performance enhancement drugs to dogs, including cocaine, caffeine and anabolic steroids. Racing dogs do not live a happy life when they are not racing; they are not companion animals and are often housed in deplorable conditions in tiny barren pens or kennels, released only to train or race.'

There are reports that they are underfed to maintain a low racing weight.'

There have also been allegations of even worse instances of animal abuse inflicted on greyhounds in order to enhance their performance on the track or to dispose of them when these measures proved ineffective. Queensland has conducted an inquiry into its greyhound racing industry, the report from which was released on June 1, 2015. Reporting on the release of the report, The Courier Mail noted allegations that 'dogs [have been] shot, hanged or electrocuted because they can't run fast enough.'

3. The use of live baiting is widespread

It has further been claimed that not only are many greyhounds cruelly treated, other animals are abused because they are used as live bait during greyhound training sessions in order to have the dogs run faster.

The Four Corners report televised in February 2015 revealed that seventy interstate greyhound trainers, including some leading identities, were implicated in this training method, in which live animals are tied to mechanical lures and the dogs encouraged to chase and kill them.

During an Special Commission of Inquiry conducted in June 2015 into greyhound racing in New South Wales, two very well-known New South Wales trainers - Wayne Smith and Adam Wallace - testified that they regularly used live-baiting to blood their greyhounds at three properties in Western Sydney. Both also claimed such practices were used by 90 per cent of trainers.

Wayne Smith, who has trained greyhounds for 30 years admitted he had baited his greyhound puppies as young as three months old with live rabbits in his own backyard. He also acknowledged that he knew, when he dropped his dogs off at Bruce Carr's Londonderry property, they would be participating in live baiting. He further admitted that he knew how to string up a rabbit around its waist and dangle it the perfect distance from a hunting greyhound.

Mr Smith claimed that he felt compelled to use living baiting because everyone else in the industry was doing so. He stated, 'I'm doing it because everyone else is doing it.'

A greyhound trainer, operating out of Wollongong, has stated, '...it has been the norm for as long as I can remember, blooding the dogs, you've got to blood the dogs.'

4. The regulatory system governing the industry has failed

It has been claimed that the widespread reports of cruelty and live-baiting within the greyhound industry in Australia demonstrate that the self-regulation of the industry has not been effective.

It has been claimed that in a commercially-driven industry self-regulation is bound to fail. In a submission put to the Tasmanian Government on June 10, 2015, the Friends of the Hound Greyhound Adoption Group stated, 'In an organisation dependent on commercial gain and profitable outcomes, regulatory functions are compromised due to a conflict of interest with commercial performance... The Greyhound racing industry should not have been permitted to self-govern and should not have had the responsibility of regulatory control.'

The Friends of the Hound further stated, 'There has been an obvious lack of transparency or disclosure in recording and supplying accurate data about the animals that are the core product of this industry.'

This problem appears to be Australia-wide as, even after the public furore that greeted the evidence of live baiting and animal cruelty shown in the Four Corners program, Greyhound Racing South Australia (GRSA) has refused to release its figures on the annual number of greyhounds euthanased in that state. On December 4, 2015, a GRSA spokesperson stated, 'GRSA will not publicly disclose the information...as it distracts from the broader dialogue and commitment to programs to support re-homing...'

South Australia's RSPCA chief executive officer, Tim Vasudeva, responded by stating '[I]t should not be optional for the greyhound industry to decide whether the community is informed or uninformed about the welfare of greyhounds bred and used for racing.'

It has been claimed that not only has the regulatory system governing greyhound racing in Australia been inefficient, it has sometimes actively colluded in covering up abuses.

Internal emails, obtained by the ABC under Freedom of Information laws, revealed then-Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW) chief executive Brent Hogan was strategising with staffers several days before the February 2015 Four Corners program revealing abuse in the industry was due to air. Mr Hogan's aim appeared to be how to minimise the scandal and retain the favour of the New South Wales Government.

It has also been alleged that some staffers of Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW) informed greyhound owners or trainers of impending inspections by the RSPCA so they would not be caught performing abusive acts.

One staffer stated, 'Problem was that last time we [GRNSW and RSPCA] had a joint raid of a trial track, the Intel was good. Only problem [was] our participants were tipped off. Trust is a two-way street.'

5. Greyhound racing is losing popularity and the industry is struggling

The future of greyhound racing in Australia is uncertain. Before the Four Corners' revelations and the abuse discovered through state investigations, greyhound racing already sat at the bottom of the top ten spectator sports in Australia. It is anticipated that increased public knowledge of the animal abuse common within the industry will only lead to a further decline in patronage.

After the televising of the Four Corners' report, city and country greyhound clubs around the nation were immediately contacted by sponsors indicating they would not continue existing arrangements.

As an indication of the waning popularity of greyhound racing and popular opposition to it a new greyhound track proposed for the low socio-economic region of Logan, south of Brisbane, is facing increasing opposition from local

residents. Janet Scott has organised a petition, and more than 13,000 residents have signed in protest against the move. Ms Scott has stated, 'There's so much more that can be done, rather than just to exploit animals and people for gambling.'

Local businessman Graeme Palmer has stated, 'I don't want my grandkids to be seeing this, I don't want to tell my grandkids what that is. I want to drive past here and see something wholesome here.'

Australian Christian Lobby director Wendy Francis has stated, 'Cronulla Park should not be developed as a greyhound racing track, and there's honestly at least three good reasons. The first reason is we've become more and more aware over the past twelve months, while we've waited, of the animal cruelty in this sport; also southeast Queensland do not need another gambling facility, we're already putting in a huge complex now in Brisbane, and the third reason is that the Logan people simply don't want it.'

Arguments against the banning of greyhound racing in Australia

1. Greyhound racing is a popular sport

Greyhound racing is well attended in Australia and has experienced some recent periods of growth. Australia's greyhound industry is the third biggest in the world, and each year Australians wager about \$3 billion on the sport. In the year 2009-10, 281,000 people attended greyhound racing events and greyhound racing was among the top ten ranked sports for Australia in terms of total attendances. Greyhound racing ranks above basketball, netball, hockey, indoor soccer, lawn bowls, equestrian activities including polo, cycling/BMXing, touch football, boxing and indoor cricket. The Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) 2013/14 annual report indicated that attendances had risen by six percent over the previous year.

GRV Chairman Peter Caillard has stated that the organization has been focusing on key areas to improve the sport and is proud of the results that have been achieved.

Mr Caillard has claimed, 'We have been experiencing a surge in the popularity of greyhound racing over the past few years and recognize our responsibility to invest this money into areas of significant importance to the longevity of the sport such as; greyhound welfare, integrity assurances, corporate governance and infrastructure upgrades.'

Mr Caillard further stated, 'Prize money has increased significantly with a further increase of \$4 million, adding to the \$8 million increase in 2012/13. We will continue to identify ways to provide these positive financial returns to our membership base into the future.'

The same point has been made on the TAB.com.au site, the agency that manages much of the legal betting in Australia. The site states, 'Greyhound racing has gained popularity in recent years, with punters liking the fact the races are quick and the turnaround between each race isn't too long. Another big incentive for punters to bet on greyhound racing is the relatively quicker payouts they offer in relation to thoroughbred and harness racing.'

Greyhound Racing Australia's Internet site similarly states, 'In 1990 group status greyhound races were developed, and since then the popularity and position of greyhound racing with the Australian public and punters has increased exceptionally, as many more people discover the skill, entertainment and enjoyment of betting on the greyhound races.'

2. The greyhound industry is economically and socially important

New South Wales is the principal greyhound breeding state in Australia and a recent report on its economic and social value to that state suggests its importance.

Greyhound racing contributed more than \$144 million to the economy and communities of New South Wales during the 2009-10 financial year, according to an Access Economics report.

The report analysed the economic and social contribution of greyhound racing in NSW considering both the direct contribution (\$92.3 million) of the sport to Gross State Product and employment, as well as the indirect contribution (\$51.9 million) through flow-on impacts to other industries such as support services and dog food suppliers.

In New South Wales between 2009 and 2010 over 13,000 participants were involved in: owning, breeding and training greyhounds; organising the tracks and race meetings; and, administering the sport (often on a volunteer basis).

Volunteering plays a large role in the industry and during 2009-10 the unpaid time invested by trainers in the sport was conservatively estimated to be worth \$40 million. In addition to this, the sport is estimated to employ 1,561 people as full time equivalents, either directly or indirectly.

The economic contribution of greyhound racing was more pronounced in regional areas where the sport forms an important part of the social fabric in the community. The sport provides a range of social benefits and plays an important role in many communities across New South Wales, where the local club can often be a focal point for social interaction. For example, greyhound racing tracks provide a venue that can be used by the broader community for a diverse range of activities when races are not being held. Further, greyhound tracks provide essential facilities for the sports' participants to educate and exercise their racing animals.

The then chief executive of Greyhound Racing New South Wales, Brent Hogan stated, 'Over 45% of the sport's direct economic contribution was provided outside of our major cities. In addition, over 65% of breeding activity, 62% of racing dogs and 60% of trainers in NSW were located in regional areas, providing significant flow on benefits to communities across the state.'

Similar claims have been made with regard to greyhound racing's importance in Victoria. Greyhound racing industry generates more than \$315 million for the Victorian economy

In May 2014 then Premier of Victoria and Racing Minister, Dr Denis Napthine, released a comprehensive study showing the continued growing social and economic importance of the racing industry across the state.

Dr Napthine stated, 'The greyhound racing industry...generates more than \$315 million annually for the Victorian

economy representing a 61 per cent increase over the past eight years.'

The report further highlighted the impact of the greyhound industry on job creation, helping sustain 3,015 full time equivalent jobs - an almost doubling since 2006.

It also identified more than 19,939 people participating in the greyhound industry as an employee, volunteer or participant.

Dr Napthine summarised the importance of greyhound racing industry to Victoria, stating, 'This shows how vital greyhound racing is to Victoria and the many people who work in or enjoy this wonderful industry.'

3. Many dogs will have to be put down if racing is banned

It has been claimed that a large number of dogs will be killed if greyhound racing is banned.

Critics of the industry point to the thousands of dogs that are euthanased annually because they either do not race well or are surplus to requirements. However, if the industry were banned, most of the dogs currently racing would have to be put down.

The Greens, who are seeking a ban of the sport, have claimed that they would establish a Greyhound Racing Transition Task Force charged with the responsibility of working with animal welfare groups to ensure the long term welfare of dogs exiting the racing industry.

Critics of banning claim that such a task force would never be able to place more than a small percentage of the total number of working greyhounds in Australia. Currently, greyhound adoption groups are able to place no more than one in ten of the dogs seeking homes.

The industry's Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) operates in most states but rehomes only a relatively small number of ex-racing dogs - around 1,000 nationally each year. The longest established GAP in Victoria rehomed 536 greyhounds in 2014, and the other states significantly fewer. Other rescue groups also rehome greyhounds, but together those efforts still amount to only 10 per cent of dogs born the industry living out a natural lifespan.

Some trainers have already threatened that if live baiting ceased many greyhounds would have to be put down because they would no longer run fast enough to be economically viable.

Paul Newson, the current acting head of Greyhound Racing New South Wales has stated that some trainers have approached him and warned him that 'if (live baiting) wasn't allowed, x amount of greyhounds would be euthanased.'

Defenders of the industry argue that the death toll would obviously be enormous if all dogs currently racing were made redundant through a total ban of the industry.

4. Cruelty within the industry is not widespread

It has been claimed that inhumane practices within greyhound racing are not common. In an article published in The Age on February 17, 2015, a number of trainers were quoted anonymously, giving their opinions about cruelty within the industry. Most denied that it was a prominent feature of the sport. One was quoted as saying, 'The trouble is too many people believe the tree huggers and the animal libbers and they always paint the worst picture they can, always...(They say) because there's a few bad apples in the barrel, it's across the whole industry, well it's not.'

Western Australian greyhound trainers and officials have been particularly outspoken in claiming that such live baiting as occurs in the greyhound industry is found among the eastern states, not in the west.

Denis Borovica, the general manager of Racing and Gaming WA stated in February 2015 that there had never been any complaints about live baiting in Western Australia.

Mr Borovica stated, 'Our industry is a lot smaller than it is in the eastern states and we have three tracks where predominantly the training takes place. And they are well regulated venues.'

In June, 2015, Victorian racing integrity commissioner Sal Perna stated his belief that although the practice is unlikely to be confined to one property or group, it is not widespread. Mr Perna claimed, 'My sense is that it's isolated in pockets either relating to particular parts of the state or to particular people.'

In October, 2015, Brent Hogan, the former head of Greyhound Racing New South Wales, told a Special Commission of Inquiry that he had no basis on which to believe that live baiting was being used in any systemic way to train dogs.

Brent Hogan stated that although a small number of cases were referred to the RSPCA there was no evidence that this indicated a much larger problem.

5. The industry is regulated and the regulations are being tightened

Currently, self-regulated bodies have the responsibility to inspect greyhound tracks and training methods if they believe a race dog is being trained in a corrupt, fraudulent, negligent or improper manner. This includes using live animals as bait instead of a stuffed animal.

Those responsible for live-animal baiting face a 10-year ban from the sport, in accordance with Greyhound Racing Victoria's own Animal Welfare Penalty Guidelines. Live baiting is also a criminal offence; it is punishable under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA) and can attract a jail term of up to two years and a fine of more than \$30,000.

Since the report went to air, there have been various calls for more stringent greyhound racing regulations and a number of states, including New South Wales, the state with the largest greyhound racing industry have begun or concluded inquiries.

The Victorian government has commissioned Australian Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Mark Schipp to undertake a broad investigation into the greyhound racing and training industry and pledged \$3 million to strengthen Greyhound Racing Victoria's investigation capacity. Sal Perna, Victoria's inaugural Racing Integrity Commissioner, will also conduct an

independent probe.

A number of states have already agreed to an end to the self-regulation of the industry, while Australian Racing Greyhound also wants to see a life ban on those found guilty of live-animal baiting.

Further implications

There are those who are concerned that the greyhound industry in Australia is beyond effective reform. Stephen Rushton SC told the New South Wales Special Commission into Greyhound Racing, 'What is needed is concrete and credible measures which demonstrate that this industry can adopt, has adopted, and will maintain animal welfare standards which are consistent with the expectations of 21st century Australians...That may not be possible. I doubt that it is possible.'

One of the major reservations that has been expressed about the industry's capacity to reform is that self-regulation is incompatible with trainers' desire to generate a larger income stream. According to this argument, while those in the industry, including trainers, largely monitor their own conduct, there is insufficient incentive for them to turn away from cruel but profitable practices.

It has been suggested that after the Four Corners' revelations and the inquiries that followed it, the industry is likely to respond by keeping its abusive practices even further away from the public eye.

On February 17, 2015, The Conversation published a comment by Clive Phillips, Professor of Animal Welfare, Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics at the University of Queensland. Professor Phillips stated, 'After this masterful expos [the Four Corners' report], access to greyhound training grounds will become practically off-limits to visitors. Access was probably legally off-limits already - training facilities are privately owned and the Four Corners program did not detail exactly how the cameras were installed by Animals Australia and Animal Liberation Queensland to capture the damning secret footage. Fences will be erected and the industry will attempt to protect itself against people that it will dub as extremists.'

In response to fears of increased secrecy within the industry, critics of its current practices have argued that it can no longer be self-regulating. They argue that there are only two acceptable options from this point - either greyhound racing is banned throughout Australia or a well-funded and properly manned system of external regulation must be put in place. It has been noted that one of the additional limitations of the system currently operating is that the different self-regulatory bodies have such a small staff that it is virtually impossible for inspectors to perform their duties adequately. The head of Greyhound Racing South Australia (GRSA), Matt Corby, has noted that GRSA has only 1.5 staff members to inspect the state's 300 trainers, and it probably needed to double its investment in integrity processes. Mr Corby further stated that there were limits to the investigative powers of the industry. GRSA has approached the RSPCA and the Government about bringing external investigative bodies into the regulatory regime.

It would appear that the only hope the greyhound racing industry has of avoiding a complete banning of the sport is if effective, external regulation of its practices is implemented. The industry relies on state government funding if it is to continue to operate. It is hard to imagine any government being willing to continue to sponsor an industry which has been associated with the sort of cruelty and animal abuse proven against the greyhound racing industry.

Newspaper items used in the compilation of this issue outline

AGE, August 31, 2015, page 2, news item by R Willingham, 'New cruelty laws target greyhound industry'.

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