

END GOVERNMENT FUNDED GREYHOUND RACING IN TASMANIA by 2029

Greyhound racing in Tasmania is scandal ridden, inhumane, unpopular, outdated, declining and of disputed economic value.

When the existing funding deed expires in 2029, taxpayer funding to the greyhound racing sector should not be renewed.

Greyhound racing is cruel and inhumane.

- Greyhound racing puts dogs in deliberate harm's way for entertainment and gambling dollars. It pits light boned dogs against each other, bunched in packs at up to 72 km/h. Demonstrably, shattered limbs, broken backs and ruptured necks are unavoidable.
- The industry is now planning to build a lethal \$38 million plus 'oval' shaped harness and dog race track in the North West. This is despite university research¹, funded by the industry itself, proving that oval tracks injure more dogs than straight tracks.
- The industry cannot responsibly deal with its own "waste product". Our small island community cannot provide enough homes for all the healthy young dogs routinely discarded at an average age of 4. On last available figures 277 pups per year were bred in Tasmania and there were 843 dogs in training.² At any given time charity run refuges and the industry's own GAP scheme have many 'surplus' greyhounds that take months to be re-homed - if they can be re-homed at all.
- **Tasmania's outdated and minimal 'recommended' welfare standards for greyhounds (last updated in 2015) are not even mandatory.** Many greyhounds endure squalid, miserable conditions. Tasmanians were shocked when they saw evidence of this on TV [in drone footage](#) taken at the premises of 3 separate, major trainers.
- **The RSPCA, the nation's most respected animal charity**, and the government's own animal welfare partner, staunchly opposes dog racing because it cannot be conducted humanely.³

Greyhound racing is outdated

Our statewide, robust EMRS poll conducted this month shows greyhound racing in Tasmania is not supported by the majority of the community. Three in five (62 per cent) oppose it, 46 per cent STRONGLY oppose it.

¹ "Identifying optimal greyhound track design for greyhound safety and welfare Phase I Report Jan 2016 to 31 Dec 2016", University of Technology Sydney, available at <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/UTS-Track-Design-Phase-I-Report-FINAL-20170605.pdf>

² <https://tasracingcorporate.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/TASRACING-FINAL-2021-LR.pdf>

³ <https://www.rspca.org.au/take-action/greyhound-racing>

Significantly 79 per cent oppose the taxpayer subsidy.

It is undemocratic and unacceptable to expect so many Tasmanians to subsidise the unpopular entertainment preferences of so few.

- Record-breaking petition. An e-petition to the Tasmanian Parliament in 2022 calling for an end to public funding of dog racing attracted a record number of signatures (13,500 plus). This is equal to 2.5% of the state's population and surpassed the previous record (in support of the VAD petition) The petition was supported by mainstream groups such as the RSPCA, the Dogs Homes of Tasmania and community dog walking and welfare associations.⁴
- **In 2018, the ACT became the first Australian jurisdiction to ban dog racing.** Increasingly, Australia is an outlier as the home of half the world's remaining commercial greyhound racing tracks. Only seven countries now permit dog racing. Of 116 tracks remaining globally, 65 are in Australia. The new NZ Prime Minister has said he favours an end to greyhound racing.
- **Dog racing is very poorly attended.** The EMRS poll shows only 1 per cent attended a greyhound race in previous year. Only 4 per cent are likely to place a bet on a greyhound race; 89 per cent say they are very unlikely to do so.
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- The industry's own figures show the industry is in decline, particularly in Tasmania. Greyhounds Australasia logged a 39 per cent reduction in the number of greyhounds bred in Australia between 2014 and 2018, with a 70 per cent drop in Tasmania over the same period.⁵

Limited Economic Value

Tasmania provides a much larger per capita subsidy to the racing industry (\$58.68) than any other state or territory. Government funding to greyhound racing in 22/23 was \$6.5 million.⁶

A 2021 Tasmanian Treasury desk top review of TasRacing was damning. It suggests racing industry job numbers are generally very inflated - and so is the industry's economic contribution.

For example, on page 26, Treasury says:

"Put simply, if a multiplier effect was included for all existing industries in Tasmania when estimating their economic contribution to the State, the combined effect would be that Tasmania's economy would be two or three times its current size."

Dog racing is the most marginal of the codes. It wouldn't be missed. Any 'lost' revenue would likely flow to the other sectors.

⁴ <https://haepetitions.parliament.tas.gov.au/haepet/Home/PetitionDetails/98>

⁵ <https://australianracinggreyhound.com/news/greyhounds-australasia-mysteries/108756/>

⁶ 2020/21 Treasury Review of Tas Racing. See executive summary, page 4 and page 11 in particular re size of the subsidy and disproportion re expenditure in other states.
<https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/Documents/Tasracing%20Review%20Report%202020%20-FINAL.pdf>

Independent analysis, conducted by economist Sebastian Broadhurst, also casts doubt on job numbers and economic 'contribution'.⁷

The funding deed opportunity

The 20 year funding deed was engineered by then Labor Premier Paul Lennon after the sale of the TAB (which used to provide funding to the industry). As a trade-off, the Premier committed to guaranteed funding for the industry until 2029.

Greyhound racing is cruel and inhumane, outdated and of limited economic value. If it wishes to continue to operate, it should stand on its own financial feet and when the existing funding Deed expires in 2029, taxpayer funding to greyhound racing should not be renewed.

WHO WE ARE

We are a partnership of about a dozen organisations and individuals. We joined forces at the end of 2021 because of shared concerns about greyhound welfare in the Tasmanian racing industry. The RSPCA Tasmania, Dogs Homes of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Dog Walking Clubs are among our most prominent supporters.

MORE INFORMATION: Contact Deb Fleming 0417418942.

⁷ "Economic Misinformation Used to Mislead Public Debate", Sebastian Broadhurst, May 2023 <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/industry-economic-misinformation/>