



Hon David Templeman MLA
Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture & the Arts

Our ref: 66-09956
Your ref: Petition No 124

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Mr Swinbourn

Thank you for your correspondence dated 8 August 2019 regarding Petition No. 124 - Muzzling of Greyhounds.

The petition in question makes an application to the Legislative Council to recommend that the Government repeals section 33(1) of the *Dog Act 1976*, which requires a greyhound to be muzzled unless it is at premises occupied by its owner. The Committee has requested that I submit comments on the terms of the petition and the submission from the tabling Member, Hon Alison Xamon MLC.

As you are aware, the *Dog Act* and the *Dog Regulations 2013* are administered by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (the Department) and fall within my portfolio.

Current requirements

It has been a requirement for greyhounds to wear muzzles since the introduction of the *Dog Act* in 1976.

The rationale is that greyhounds are specifically bred and trained to encourage their instinct to chase things that move, and they also tend to be exceptionally fast, which means they can easily escape the control of their owner if not restrained.

It is acknowledged that individual greyhounds may be trained so that they pose no additional risk to the community, noting that the risk is not seen to be one of attack on humans but on cats and small dogs. For this reason, the Act was amended in 2013 to introduce an exemption for a greyhound to wear a muzzle in public if it has successfully completed a prescribed training program.

The *Dog Regulations 2013* prescribes the Greyhounds as Pets' (GAP) Program, administered by Racing and Wagering Western Australia, as the prescribed training program. The GAP Program includes a National Temperament Testing Assessment and is a rigorous behavioural program developed jointly by all official GAP programs around Australia. It was written by a qualified Animal Behaviourist, in conjunction with each State's GAP program, and draws upon the collective decades of experience of these organisations. It exposes the greyhound to other small animals and assesses its response before providing certification.

The current provisions aim to provide an appropriate balance between the interests of greyhound owners and the safety of other animals in the community.

Dog and Cat Act Review 2019

The Department recently undertook a review of the *Dog Amendment Act 2013* and *Cat Act 2011*.

Community consultation was undertaken from 12 May 2019 to 4 August 2019 and the Department is currently analysing the submissions received. The Department has indicated that a significant proportion of responses raised the issue of muzzling greyhounds. As part of the review, I will consider the views of the community and leading animal welfare agencies in making recommendations. I will also continue to monitor changes in other jurisdictions in relation to greyhound muzzling. A report on the review is being prepared for tabling in Parliament later this year.

I would like to submit that the Dog and Cat Act Review affords the Government an opportunity to reconsider the requirement for greyhound muzzling in Western Australia and make an informed decision on this matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the matters raised in Petition No. 124 – Muzzling of Greyhounds.

Yours sincerely



HON DAVID TEMPLEMAN MLA
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT;
HERITAGE, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

30 AUG 2019