



Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC
Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food;
Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development; Jobs and Trade

Our ref: 64-03793/2
Your ref: Petition No 1 (A631902)

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

Dear Mr Swinbourn

**ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATION RELATING TO PETITION NO 001- OPPOSE
GREYHOUND RACING**

Thank you for your letter dated 13 September 2017 regarding animal welfare issues and the Western Australian greyhound racing industry.

I am informed that the Minister for Racing and Gaming, the Hon Paul Papalia MLA has already responded to the request of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs (the Committee) for comments in relation to Petition 001, which aims to ban greyhound racing in Western Australia (WA). I understand that the Committee seeks additional information on the greyhound racing industry with respect to animal welfare.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is the department principally assisting me, as Minister for Agriculture and Food, in the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (the Act). The Act defines acts of cruelty and provides powers to prosecute such matters. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DPIRD and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals WA (RSPCA), the RSPCA is the primary responder to reports of cruelty in animals, including investigation and prosecution of cases of cruelty in the greyhound industry. Under the MOU, the RSPCA maintains a 24-hour telephone number for receiving reports of cruelty.

The licensing provisions of Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA) include requirements for those who own, train, breed and keep greyhounds. These and other RWWA initiatives aim to improve the management and care of greyhounds in WA. Nonetheless, concerns about greyhound racing continue to circulate.

Some common issues of public concern in relation to greyhound racing are not offences under the Act. For example, the euthanasia of a healthy greyhound is regrettable but,

providing the euthanasia is performed in a humane manner, is not an offence under the Act. To assist the Committee in its deliberations, I attach a summary of common concerns about greyhound racing and the situation in WA.

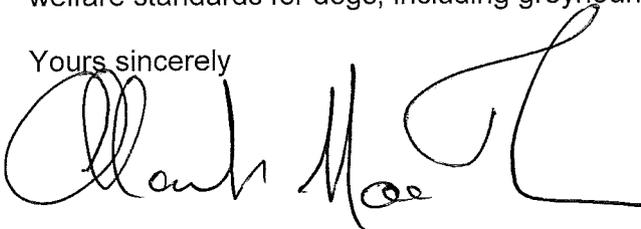
Responsibility for the regulation of greyhound racing in the State lies with the Minister for Racing and Gaming. However, since taking office, I have taken steps to strengthen animal welfare in the State and I expect that some of the changes to be made will help improve the welfare of greyhounds.

As a priority, I am proposing amendments to the Act to give effect to standards for the safety, health and welfare of animals (this represents a broadening of the current provisions, which mainly focus on the prevention of cruelty).

Under proposed amendments to the Act, specifically designated animal welfare inspectors would be given additional powers of entry to non-residential places and vehicles. Under the existing Act, inspectors who wish to enter a place without the owner/occupier's consent must have reasonable grounds to suspect cruelty. Under the amended Act, specifically designated inspectors would have the power to enter places, including facilities where greyhounds are trained, for the purpose of verifying compliance with the Act and regulations, official directions and court orders. The goal of expanding the inspectors' powers in this way is to strengthen their ability to monitor compliance with the Act.

I also draw to the Committee's attention to the work of this Department in the development of dog welfare standards. The standards will apply to all dogs kept in WA, including greyhounds. Once we have amended the Act and passed implementing regulations on the safety, health and welfare of animals, as mentioned above, it will be possible to enforce welfare standards for dogs, including greyhounds.

Yours sincerely



**HON ALANNAH MACTIERNAN MLC
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT; AGRICULTURE AND FOOD;
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT,
JOBS AND TRADE**

26 OCT 2017

Attachment: Concerns about Greyhound Racing and Situation in Western Australia.



Department of
**Primary Industries and
 Regional Development**

CONCERNS ABOUT GREYHOUND RACING AND SITUATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Live baiting

- In response to a 2015 investigative report on the greyhound industry in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, attention was drawn to the use of live animals as bait to train greyhounds.
- Live baiting would be considered as cruelty under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (the Act).
- Live baiting is prohibited by the Racing and Wagering Authority Western Australia (RWWA)
- An extensive investigation into the WA greyhound industry was launched in February 2015 by RWWA Stewards and Investigators in co-operation with Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals WA (RSPCA) officers. No evidence identifying the use of live baiting in WA was found.
- To date the RSPCA has not received any substantial evidence on live-baiting in WA despite a \$10,000 reward. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is not aware of any current prosecutions by the RSPCA relating to the WA greyhound racing industry.

The Disposal of Surplus and Retired Greyhounds

- The humane euthanasia of a healthy dog is not an act of cruelty under the Act.
- Figures tabled in the Western Australian Parliament on 8 November 2016 by the Minister for Racing and Gaming showed that 560 greyhounds were re-homed in October 2015 - October 2016. In the same period, 371 dogs were euthanased due to injury or unsuitability for rehoming.

The Export of Greyhounds

- The export of greyhounds to Macau, China and Vietnam for racing has been raised as an animal welfare concern.
- The export of greyhounds and other animals is not covered by the Act. This matter is the responsibility of the federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Injuries Suffered by Greyhounds

- The RSPCA has raised concerns about the injury of greyhounds resulting from poor track preparation, particularly in rural areas. One hundred and eighty seven of the 371 greyhounds, euthanased in October 2015 - 2016 were reported as 'injured'.
- Evidence of poor management leading to injury, pain or distress could be prosecuted under the Act. No prosecutions have been undertaken to date.