

8 September 2017

Hon. Matthew Swinbourn MLC  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Legislative Council Western Australia  
18-32 Parliament Place  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

By email: [lcco@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:lcco@parliament.wa.gov.au)

Dear Chairman

**Petition No. 001 - Oppose greyhound racing**

Thank you for your invitation to provide comments on the above.

The 3066 signatories to the petition are requesting that the Legislative Council recommends that the Government bans greyhound racing, prohibits the export of greyhounds and supports greyhound adoption programs.

Given the extensive and significant findings of animal cruelty and poor animal welfare outcomes, the RSPCA does not support greyhound racing. Animal welfare issues that appear to be systemic in the industry include over-breeding and 'wastage' (the killing of otherwise healthy animals), sub-standard housing and general care, doping, live baiting and a high rate of injuries. The lack of transparency regarding these issues is also a significant concern.

Serious animal welfare issues have been documented in multiple State Government Inquiries into greyhound racing, including in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania. The reform process in Victoria is ongoing. Unfortunately, WA is lagging behind, but on the basis of findings in other States, we would support the prohibition of the export of greyhounds to race inter-State. Although we understand that overseas export of greyhounds is under Commonwealth jurisdiction, the petitioners' request in this regard is also consistent with the RSPCA's stated position on the export of greyhounds from Australia to race overseas.

The petitioners' final request for support for greyhound adoption programs is also well founded. The WA greyhound industry receives millions in State Government support and individual greyhound trainers profit financially, yet the substantial financial costs associated with the care and rehabilitation of former racing greyhounds falls largely to grass-roots volunteer groups. This is a particularly significant burden because former racing greyhounds often require ongoing specialist care for physical and behavioural issues associated with industry practices.

In the interim, if greyhound racing is to continue in WA, urgent changes are required, including mandatory and enforceable minimum standards, regulation by an independent body, formal processes to address over-breeding and wastage, a traceability system to track animals from birth to death and mandatory disclosure of this information.

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It is a positive step that Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWWA) announced an automatic ban for anyone caught live baiting and has published a Code of Practice for the Keeping of Greyhounds within the Western Australian Racing Industry (2016). However, the code has numerous limitations:

1. The code has no legal standing.
2. Compliance with the code is not regulated by an independent body.
3. The content of the Code is severely lacking in minimum standards to address the aforementioned animal welfare issues, including over-breeding and wastage, substandard housing and general care.
4. The preface of the code states that *“The code was developed with input from RSPCA WA whose welfare officers assisted with review and development of this code through a RWWA-RSPCA WA working party”*. Unfortunately, this working party dissolved prior to finalisation of the code due to fundamental disagreements regarding the welfare of greyhounds and lack of transparency in relation to over-breeding and wastage.

As inferred in the petition, Australia is one of only eight countries in the world where commercial greyhound racing still operates. It is time for leadership and positive change. RSPCA WA therefore supports the requests in ‘Petition No. 001 - Oppose greyhound racing’.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynne Bradshaw', written in a cursive style.

**Lynne Bradshaw**  
**President**