



## OFFICE OF THE HON. DR BRAD PETTITT MLC MEMBER FOR SOUTH METROPOLITAN

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Hon Peter Foster MLC  
Committee Chair  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

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

Dear Chair

### **Petition 064 – Ban greyhound racing in WA**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee regarding the future of greyhound racing in Western Australia.

The social license for greyhound racing has been steadily reducing as more of the non-racing public realise the essential cruelty of the 'sport'.

The most recent figures available on racing greyhound injury and death continue to paint a picture of an industry built on animal suffering.

The 2020-21 Racing and Wagering WA annual report notes that there were 1,659 unique dogs racing that year and that 626 dogs recorded 899 injuries. These numbers are stark, with well over a third of racing greyhounds being injured over the course of the year. More than 10% of the dogs retired in the 2020-21 financial year were euthanised.

It is no surprise that greyhound racing is losing social license all over the world.

Greyhound racing causes an outsize amount of suffering for the direct benefit of relatively few owners and trainers. Just over \$10 million in winnings was received by greyhound owners in the 2019-20 financial year. The following year the state government put more than \$25 million into the industry. While Western Australia received nearly \$75 million in turnover on TAB betting in 2021, the current plan for the sale of the TAB will see WA lose this revenue yet continue to fund racing. Already this calendar year we have seen more than 60 dogs with bone fractures from racing in Western Australia.

It is time to remove real greyhound racing from the sale of the TAB and transition the owners, trainers, and animals away from the racing industry. The State Government has provided transition plans for other workers in industries such as coal mining and native forestry, where the lack of social license and changes to regulations have seen the closure of these industries. The State Government has a template for assisting people to transition away from a no-longer-needed industry. These skills and knowledge in planning and executing a transition can now be applied to greyhound racing.

A two-year transition period (like that required for the coal industry) has been proposed in the petition. Given that there were 19 professional owners in the 2019-20 year, this is not a huge cohort of people dependent on the industry for their livelihoods.

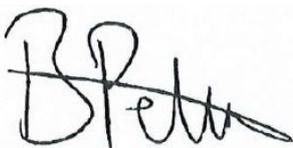
Transition needs to include assistance in re-skilling, assistance in rehoming the dogs and a small number of continuing breeders for the purposes of providing pet greyhounds.

I hope that the Committee will see the value in leveraging the upcoming changes to the gambling regime in Western Australia to end greyhound racing and to assist those currently involved in the industry to transition away from it.

Furthermore, sweetening the sale of the TAB includes the introduction of simulated racing in Western Australia, which uses strategies like keno to encourage players to continue to bet. The Greens continue to hold grave concerns about the addictive mechanisms at play in simulated racing and the social impacts of this kind of gambling becoming entrenched in Western Australia. We recognise that this legislation has already passed, but we will continue to advocate for more and better services to assist those who find themselves struggling with the addictive effects of simulated racing.

The other part of the sweetener was to exclude the purchaser of the TAB from the responsibility of continuing to fund the racing industry. Given the anticipated profits from simulated racing and the complete lack of reinvestment in the racing industry required from the yet-to-be-announced buyer of the TAB, this is an ideal moment to review whether there is any need for a greyhound racing industry in Western Australia. Once the TAB sale goes through, the government will be left with a steadily increasing bill to support and fund an industry. The cost of finalising greyhound racing compared to supporting and regulating it for an unknown length of time past the sale of the TAB is likely to be small.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BP Pettitt', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**Hon Dr Brad Pettitt MLC**

Member for South Metropolitan