

# RESPONSE TO PETITION

## Petition No. 98 of 2022

### House of Assembly

#### **The petitioners ask the House to:**

The inherent animal cruelty and suffering of greyhounds in the publicly-funded racing industry;

That opposition to the cruelty in the greyhound racing industry cuts across politics, and that greyhounds are rescued and re-homed by Tasmanians of all political affiliation;

That it is opposed by the majority of taxpayers and by the RSPCA; and

That as pet owners, we will use our purchasing power and influence to send a message to retailers, veterinary practitioners, pubs and all businesses supporting and enabling greyhound racing.

Your Petitioners therefore request that the House call on the government to end the taxpayer subsidy of the inherently cruel greyhound racing industry.

#### **GOVERNMENT POSITION:**

The Government accepts that people will have differing views on the racing industry in Tasmania.

The Government and the racing industry regard the welfare of animals as critically important. The majority of industry participants provide great care to their animals. The Government and the industry are investing more money than ever before into animal welfare - ensuring that racing animals are treated with dignity and care, before, during and after their racing days.

There has been great work undertaken on animal welfare and the government acknowledges that more needs to be done to meet community expectations and the Government remain committed to this.

Fewer greyhound litters are being bred, fewer greyhounds are being euthanised and more greyhounds are being rehomed than ever before. Strict welfare rules surrounding euthanasia of greyhounds have played an important role in driving euthanasia numbers down, especially over the last three years. Greyhound's euthanised or deceased in 2016/17 comprised 54% of the greyhounds no longer in the Industry that year. In 2021 that number is 17%. Greyhounds rehomed/breeding over the same period increased from 44% to 83%.

To ensure improved transparency regarding animal welfare, Tasracing provides information in their annual reports on track injuries, euthanasia rates, retirement and rehoming statistics. Greyhound welfare statistics are now updated monthly and provided on the Tasracing website.

Probity and integrity are critically important in the racing industry and underpins confidence in all three codes in the state – thoroughbred, harness, and greyhounds.

The review of the *Racing Regulation Act 2004* provides an opportunity to ensure Tasmania has a contemporary governance model for the industry and animal welfare.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has received and publicly released the independent review into Tasmania's *Racing Regulation Act 2004*. The Government notes, and supports in principal, the recommendations within the Report.

Up until the sale of Tote Tasmania in 2011, the Tasmanian racing industry was self-funded. It was clear when the sale of TOTE Tasmania was finalised, that the ongoing and future funding of the racing industry would rest with the State.

In 2020/21, Greyhound racing received \$5.2m in Code Funding along with other funding for welfare and track maintenance. This funding was used to deliver approximately \$9m of commercial revenue for the same period and generated \$53.2m in economic benefit.

## RESPONSE:

- Animal welfare is a high priority for the Government. The Government and the racing industry are investing more money than ever before into animal welfare - ensuring that racing animals are treated with dignity and care, before, during and after their racing days.
- The racing industry through Tasracing is funded by appropriations of \$27 million per annum by Deed of Agreement between Tasracing and the Government for the life of the Deed. The Deed was signed in 2009 and provides funding for a 20 year period (2029).
- The Government will continue to honour the deed that that was introduced in 2009.
- The Review of the *Racing Regulation Act 2004* recommends that it is in the best interests of the Tasmanian racing industry and the broader community that further integrity and welfare improvements are implemented, to ensure continued Government support for the conduct of racing in Tasmania, including the industry's social licence



Madeleine Ogilvie MP  
Minister for Racing

Date: July 2022

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