



# AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF GREYHOUND BREEDERS, OWNERS & TRAINERS ASSOCIATIONS

[www.greyhound.org.au](http://www.greyhound.org.au)

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### GREYHOUND RACING BAN IN NEW SOUTH WALES

The AFGBOTA finds it difficult to understand the decision of the New South Wales Government to introduce a bill to shut down greyhound racing in NSW.

I, and my executive, always believed that democracy meant government by the people, for the people, of the people, leading to a society of equal rights and privileges.

The draconian and contemptuous decision of the NSW Government now suggests that those days are now lost.

We have seen an unparalleled campaign of deceit, misinformation and arrogance from a government never given a mandate for this decision. The proposed closure will fragment and destroy communities, and send thousands of participants and their families into despair.

The Deputy Premier Troy Grant, whose constituency of Dubbo is in the heart of greyhound racing, stated that compensation packages would be made available for the industry, yet the bill before Parliament has no such allowance. The government refused to add this amendment, and will leave greyhound participants and many businesses in ruins.

This shows a pattern by the NSW Government of misleading the NSW public. It is clear that the decision was made with little or no thought to the devastating implications to participants, the industry supporting those participants, and the many thousands of greyhounds who will have no future.

What was most damning of the decision was the inability of the NSW Government to follow a process of considered consultation with the industry, general public and all elected officials. Any decision this great needs a measured and concise process that ticks all boxes to ensure that the right outcome was made for New South Wales and ultimately attained unilateral support.

This was not a decision one person could or should make, particularly when the report handed down by the Special Commission has been shown to be based on

flimsy information, often provided by vested interests. It was also a component of the Commission's final report that the industry be given an opportunity to reform, with 79 recommendations and requirements to ensure that reform was achieved. This option was ignored unilaterally by the Premier.

The AFGBOTA believes the Special Commission findings should be tested to ensure that all legal processes have been followed, and the right information provided by people respected by both Government and the industry. Unfortunately, the same pattern has arisen where the NSW Government don't want their decision or the document they have relied on to be tested, so the bill is rushed through the Upper House, under the veil of supporting animal welfare.

NSW Greyhound participants have rights. They have the right to question evidence supplied in the Special Commission, and they have the right to provide alternative evidence, that may contradict, or prove wrong any findings in the report.

The Premier, Mike Baird and the NSW Government have dismissed these rights, and ignored due process.

Mr Baird, has used the harshest words such as barbaric, widespread, and slaughter, words that are only used sparingly in society, but more representative when describing terrorists. The NSW Government is comparing greyhound participants to terrorists, not to reflect the truth, but to scare the community.

What we have seen from Government is the grasping of every straw, including the misleading of its own constituents, to force through this legislation. They and the Special Commission have quoted numbers for wastage, not because they have the facts, but assumptions based on breeding numbers within a twelve-year period. No one knows the drivers behind the numbers being quoted, not the NSW Government, nor the Special Commission.

The drivers that make up those numbers, are comprised of the following:

- Greyhounds lost to environment or natural causes;
- Greyhounds exported interstate, and internationally;
- Greyhounds retired through the GAP program;
- Greyhounds handed over to private rehoming organisations;
- Greyhounds rehomed by participants, or kept as pets;
- Greyhounds kept as stud dogs, or breeding females.

The average life cycle of a greyhound is 10-11 years, so the conclusion by the special commission is flawed, as 90% of greyhounds born in the first 2-3 years of the time period covered, would have passed due to average life expectancy.

This continues the pattern used to mislead the people of NSW.

The Premier has also used the United States as an example, claiming greyhound racing is banned in 38 states. This is untrue, and easily proven to be untrue.

The Secretary/Treasurer of America's National Greyhound Association, Mr Gary Guccione, has confirmed that greyhound racing is not illegal in any State in America. Wagering on greyhound racing is banned in a number of States but the sport itself is permitted. This has to do with the Thoroughbred Industry in these states not wanting their betting turnover compromised.

As recently as April, Texas Racing Commission officials confirmed that greyhound racing is returning to Texas. So in fact, the NSW Government will be the first to ban greyhound racing anywhere in the world.

Mr Baird has also stated that greyhound racing is dying around the world, including

in Australia. The facts are there are 24 countries that conduct greyhound racing.

The NSW Government has put out stories that greyhound racing is only legal in 8 countries in the world, this again is untrue. There are only 8 countries with legalised gambling on greyhound racing, while in Australia, greyhound racing is the fastest growing sport/industry of the three racing codes.

Greyhound racing in Australia is the only racing code that continues to grow its product Australia wide. Roy Morgan research recently stated that betting on greyhound racing was the most popular choice for people aged between 18 and 35, and that this was representative of more than 600,000 Australians annually. So much for a dying industry, Mr Baird.

The NSW Government also failed to acknowledge that China has more than 3 million of its middle class involved in greyhound racing, yet the legislation specifically prohibits the export of greyhounds to China. China has several race tracks, is importing greyhounds for breeding and racing, and it is likely the sport will explode when betting is expected to be legalised within five years. The opportunity for trade, tourism and the creation of jobs hasn't been acknowledged by the Racing Minister or the Premier.

One of the last condemning mistruths by Mr Baird's Government is the advertising that greyhounds only have a lifespan of 18 months. This is again untrue. Most greyhounds don't start racing until they are 20 months of age, and over a three-year period, 79.6% of greyhounds born were named (Statistics taken from Greyhounds Australasia 2012-2014). If a greyhound is named, then the intention is to race or keep for breeding.

Why are the people of NSW being misled by the NSW Government with advertising, knowing that these allegations are false, and misleading?

Those elected representatives of the Liberal/National Coalition appear to be in a state of cognitive dissonance. Some have expressed their opposition to the bill. But when it comes to doing the right thing, they are ignored by the Premier and Deputy Premier and forced to support the decision.

The NSW Government wants to hold the greyhound industry to such high standards, higher than any other animal racing code or animal industry in Australia. They are so high, they believe they are unachievable, hence their quickness to close down the sport.

But like many of the arguments they've used to justify their decision making, they are again wrong. In the United States, they are successfully rehoming 95-98% of greyhounds annually.

Either the NSW Government haven't researched the issue properly, or whoever is advising them is misleading them.

Democracy no longer exists in NSW, it has been replaced by greed, arrogance and contempt.

The AFGBOTA supports a future holistic and sustainable operating framework for the greyhound industry that is ethical, is committed to the highest possible levels of animal welfare and has broad community credibility.

Fundamental to achieving these aims is a nation-wide tracking system that ensures the industry is able to account for, and be responsible for, all greyhounds on a whole of life basis.

The AFGBOTA supports such a system being in place and notes that all other controlling authorities and state governments throughout Australia share this commitment.

The greyhound racing industry is embracing its responsibilities and the need for change with transparency and deep commitment. This commitment is acknowledged through our 'Zero Tolerance' policy to any form of animal cruelty, and the high standards set in our Code of Ethics.

It will ensure there is a tight correlation between breeding levels and racing demand, it will undertake ongoing research to improve 'breeding to racing' ratios and it will intensify its efforts to improve adoption rates with these initiatives taking place simultaneously with stronger, independent regulation.

Importantly, the work has commenced. The AFGBOTA in partnership with Greyhounds Australasia and all State Regulatory Bodies have led the way in implementing change in a strategic and methodical manner. This is highlighted by the engagement of KPMG to design a scenario based model that identifies the impact of change on the Australian greyhound racing industry sustainability.

The AFGBOTA accepts that the greyhound industry has a community obligation to hold itself to account with regard to the reform agenda. We are committed to this nationally, as we are to all greyhound racing participants in NSW.

For now, we will continue to fight this decision alongside our member association the NSW GBOTA, the clubs and all greyhound participants who are prepared to take this decision to the highest court in the land.

Yours sincerely

Mr Brenton Wilson

President  
AFGBOTA