



## Media release

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### Greyhound industry presents strong rebuttal to Premier

The greyhound racing industry has presented a strong rebuttal to the NSW Premier, the Hon Mike Baird MP, as its first significant move to challenge his decision to close the greyhound racing industry in NSW.

“We seek proper engagement with the Premier and the NSW Government to set expectations and a timeframe for the industry to present its plan and make the required changes,” said Brenton Scott, Executive Director, Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers’ Association (**GBOTA**).

“We believe this approach will allow the industry to prove that it is, and can be, viable and sustainable whilst being centrally focused on the total life cycle management of greyhounds in alignment with community expectations.”

The rebuttal has been presented to the Premier and NSW Government by a united group of industry bodies called the NSW Greyhound Racing Industry Alliance which includes the NSW GBOTA, all independent clubs and industry participants.

“The rebuttal identifies serious flaws in both the facts in the report and the entire construction of the investigation,” said Scott. “It indicates that the terms of reference were inappropriately narrow and biased.”

According to the rebuttal, the legality of basing a decision on the concept of ‘social licence’ – which is not defined and cannot be measured – is strongly challenged.

“It appears the Premier has based his decision on the industry’s supposed loss of ‘social licence’ and yet there is no legal application to the concept of a ‘social licence’,” said Scott.

“Another key issue of the rebuttal relates to the multiple instances where members of the industry and the public have been denied procedural fairness.

“This has significant implications, not the least of which is the potential for major damages claims against the NSW Government should the Premier call for a ban relying on the particular recommendation he has chosen from this flawed report.

“The rebuttal indicates that only one of the 80 recommendations has been granted any consideration and that it is clear that the report does not take into consideration the changes the industry has made in the last 16 months.

“This critical omission and the decision to totally ignore this evidence brings the Premier’s decision into question and is unfair and wrong.

“The claim by the Premier that the industry would not be sustainable, even if recommendations two to 80 were fully adopted, are false based on our life cycle management model (developed by KPMG) that shows we can, and will, operate sustainably if we are allowed to bring about the changes we want to make to meet the community’s animal welfare standards.

“All we ask is for is a fair go. The industry believes that it is only fair to be given the opportunity to prove that it is adaptable and capable of change,” explained Scott.

Should the greyhound industry not be successful in defending its right to operate, the decision has further implications which could all too easily affect horse racing, harness racing, show jumping, horse riding, dog obedience trials and even a farmer’s ability to use sheep dogs.

“The Alliance believes the implication of the Premier’s decision for the agricultural sector and the power that this decision could deliver the ban will have far reaching legal consequences which will impact on the agricultural sector’s ability to operate,” said Scott.

The Alliance is also suggesting that the proposed ban exposes the NSW Government (and taxpayers) to damages claims that could encompass over 15,000 people who participate in the industry.

“Imagine the total cost of damages for affected people when you account for those losing or not being able to take up work,” said Scott. “The people of NSW are in effect being asked to consider the implications of this on the basis that the Government is closing an entire industry based on a report that is flawed.”

#ENDS

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## **Key Facts about the Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry**

### **The Report is flawed**

The Report is flawed because it says the greyhound racing industry cannot change. That's wrong.

**FACT: The number of greyhounds born in NSW has fallen by 46 per cent in the 12 months to the end of June 2016. (Source: OzChase Data, Greyhound Australasia National Data Repository)**

**FACT: Fewer greyhounds born mean fewer greyhounds requiring homes beyond racing.**

**FACT: Commissioner McHugh confirmed in his report (Item 11.32) "... data was not sufficiently robust to allow the Commission to determine the precise number of greyhounds that are destroyed each year in this State."**

**FACT: Commissioner McHugh's calculations on wastage are a guess. Regulatory tracking of a greyhound's lifecycle was not undertaken before October 2015.**

**FACT: Only since October 2015 has the industry quantified and tracked all greyhounds in NSW through total lifecycle management.**

The Report says (Item 1.72) that over 21 per cent of greyhounds who compete are injured.

**FACT: Actual race track injuries have only been measured by Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW) since November 2015**

**FACT: Between January 1 and March 1, 2016, the injury incidence rate reported by GRNSW was 2.7%. The injury rate during the period was 11.2%. (Source: GRNSW, [www.grnsw.com.au](http://www.grnsw.com.au) April 2016)**

The Report quotes "Ernie" (Item 1.5) to support euthanasia estimates.

**FACT: "Ernie" is American and gave his statement more than 10 years ago in a Canadian report by the University of Toronto. (Source: Michael Atkinson and Kevin Young, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 2005, p350)**

The Report (Item 1.53) relies on a single testimony that “about 10 to 20 per cent of trainers” engaged in live baiting.

**FACT: In NSW only two people have been jailed for live baiting, one is awaiting trial, two are being actively investigated by GRNSW and eight cases could not proceed due to illegally attained footage. There were 4400 registered training participants in NSW as of 1 July 2015.**

**FACT: Only 14 industry participants were included in the 69 witnesses who testified to the commission. The figure of 10-20 per cent of participants engaged in live baiting was offered by one witness who sought to justify his own unacceptable actions. Just 14 participants out of 4400 registered training (Trainer/Owner-Trainer/Attendant) participants appeared before the Commission.**

The Report dismisses the industry’s economic and social (Item 1.119) contribution to NSW.

**FACT: Greyhound racing contributes over \$335 million gross to NSW and more than \$30 million in state taxes. (Source: IER Size and Scope Report, 2014).**

**FACT: Greyhound racing in NSW sustains approximately 1700 full time equivalent jobs, with more than 1000 being in regional areas (Source: IER Size and Scope Report, 2014).**

**FACT: Greyhound racing in NSW attracts almost 15,000 participants, with more than 10,000 living outside the Sydney basin (Source: IER Size and Scope Report, 2014).**

**FACT: NSW greyhound racing track facilities are used by local citizens, clubs, charities and community organisations on a daily basis**

Additionally:

**FACT: The Terms of Reference were narrow and focussed on closing the industry**

**FACT: The industry has been denied “natural justice”**

**FACT: Every other Australian state is reforming and improving greyhound racing.  
Why can’t the NSW industry be given a fair go to reform and improve?**

**FACT: The evidence of specialist vets was overlooked during the Inquiry.**

The NSW greyhound racing industry has changed, is changing and the change is sustainable.

Banning our industry and sport would be a disaster for regional and outer-metropolitan communities.

The NSW greyhound industry has a plan for a sustainable industry which works for people, our regional towns and cities. It ensures animal welfare is at the focus of every decision we make.