

**Letter to the Editor – Mr Bernard Keane, crikey.com.au**

**In response to ['Gone are the dogs: governments have totally abandoned their promises on greyhound welfare'](#)**

As the Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission (the Commission) I would like the opportunity to correct the record in relation to Mr Keane's article published on 17 January 2020, titled 'Gone are the dogs: governments have totally abandoned their promises on greyhound welfare'.

By way of background the Commission opened its doors for business on 1 July 2018 and is responsible for the efficient and effective oversight of the greyhound racing industry in NSW. Under the *Greyhound Racing Act 2017* the Commission's objectives are to promote and protect the welfare of greyhounds; to safeguard the integrity of greyhound racing and betting; and to maintain public confidence in the greyhound racing industry.

Over the past 18 months the Commission has rolled out a number of welfare and integrity programs and worked on the implementation of policy reforms as outlined in the Government's response to the Greyhound Industry Review Panel.

In relation to specific issues raised in the article, I offer the following comments.

Firstly, in relation to comment '....but it turns out that the body charged with protecting the welfare of greyhounds in NSW think dogs' lives end when their trainers dispose of them', that statement is not correct. Under law the Commission has regulatory oversight of all greyhounds in the possession of NSW greyhound participants. This includes retired greyhounds kept by industry participants. When greyhounds are sold, retired, or given away to members of the public who are not industry participants, the Commission has no lawful right to intervene in any way in relation to those dogs.

In relation to concerns expressed in the article about greyhounds potentially vanishing after being rehomed by participants to third parties I offer the following comments. The Commission is currently in the process of becoming an authorised body that can directly register greyhounds on the Compliance Animals Register. This will enable the Commission, when participants are rehoming their greyhounds directly to members of the community, to check the legitimacy of that transfer to ensure the greyhound is indeed going to a real person with a real address and an intended real home as a pet.

In addition, the Commission's Rehoming Policy places important (and enforceable) obligations on greyhound participants in relation to the rehoming of their greyhounds. Breaches of these obligations can (and will) be dealt with by way of disciplinary action – that can include heavy penalties and exclusion from the industry. The Commission will pursue any participant who knowingly rehomes their greyhound to a third party, knowing that party intends to euthanise the dog and/or any instance where a greyhound disappears or has been euthanised in breach of Commission policies.

The Commission has and will continue to work proactively with participants in circumstances where participants are having trouble finding a home for their dogs to achieve that outcome.

As part of the Commission's 'Tracking of Registered Greyhounds' program, only recently has the Commission completed its checking of the whereabouts of the first litters of pups registered with the Commission, with whereabouts confirmed.

The Commission is further developing systems and processes to enable the rapid detection of breaches of reporting requirements by participants and is exploring the use to technology that will enable real time, automatic feeds of micro-chip, other identity data and 'proof of life' of greyhounds to the Commission's business systems.

In relation to track related injuries, the Commission last year introduced a Race Injury Review Panel that examines in detail every instance of a serious or catastrophic injury on NSW tracks. This new initiative is intended to better understand underlying causes of track injuries and to provide information to track managers that will assist with the remediation of track related issues, such as surfaces and the position of starting boxes. An industry rebate scheme also now exists to provide financial support for veterinary costs associated with injuries, to ensure all greyhounds with recoverable injuries get the necessary treatment they deserve.

And only this week did the Commission release, in draft form for wide public consultation, a new Code of Practice for the Welfare of Greyhounds, to strengthen and upgrade animal welfare standards and practices in the industry in NSW.

The above information is just a snapshot of the work of the Commission. The Commission has 60 members of staff deeply committed to ensuring the Commission carries out its role effectively, in support of the welfare and integrity outcomes the community expects of this industry.

I hope this information provides confidence to your readers that the Commission is on the job. You can do your part by giving consideration to adopting a greyhound -they are fabulous animals.

**Judy Lind**

Chief Executive Officer

NSW Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission

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