



Mike Baird
Premier of NSW

Troy Grant
Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Racing

MEDIA RELEASE

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GREYHOUND RACING TO BE SHUT DOWN IN NSW

NSW will become the first Australian state to shut down greyhound racing after a Special Commission of Inquiry found overwhelming evidence of systemic animal cruelty, including mass greyhound killings and live baiting.

Premier Mike Baird and Deputy Premier and Minister for Racing Troy Grant announced today that the NSW Government is acting to protect animal welfare as a priority, and is planning for an orderly industry shutdown as of 1 July 2017.

Mr Baird and Mr Grant released the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW, which found that between 48,000 and 68,000 greyhounds – or at least half of all greyhounds bred to race – were killed in the past 12 years because they were deemed uncompetitive.

The report states up to 20 per cent of trainers engage in live baiting and 180 greyhounds a year sustain “catastrophic injuries” during races, such as skull fractures and broken backs that resulted in their immediate deaths.

Inquiry Commissioner Michael McHugh has recommended Parliament considers whether the industry had lost its “social licence” to operate and should be shut down. If the industry continued, his alternative recommendation is extensive reform including tighter regulation, but Mr McHugh stated there was a “very real risk” that practices such as live baiting would continue.

“As a humane and responsible Government, we are left with no acceptable course of action except to close this industry down,” Mr Baird said. “This is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the appalling revelations in Mr McHugh’s report and his considered view that any other measures are unlikely to protect animals from further cruelty.”

Mr Baird said the Government will announce a detailed industry shutdown plan during the second half of 2016 following consultation with stakeholders in industry and animal welfare organisations.

The transition plan will set a path for the winding down of the industry as of 1 July 2017, and will include:

- A welfare plan for existing greyhounds, including opportunities for re-homing;
- An adjustment package for industry participants; and
- A transition arrangement for existing Greyhound Racing NSW assets that will ensure they are used for open public space, alternative sporting facilities or other community use.

Mr Grant said he asked Mr McHugh to leave no stone unturned and thanked him for delivering a comprehensive report that shone a light on sickening animal mistreatment.

“NSW is the first Australian state to ban greyhound racing but, as Mr McHugh notes, we are

following in the footsteps of so many jurisdictions across the United States and the world which have banned greyhound racing to protect animal welfare,” Mr Grant said.

The Government will prepare and consult on legislation to be presented to Parliament to cease the industry’s operation and to appoint an administrator for Greyhound Racing NSW.

A summary of key findings and observations of the inquiry are attached and the Commission of Inquiry’s report is available at: <http://www.greyhoundracinginquiry.justice.nsw.gov.au/>