

Otago Daily Times

Wednesday, 5 October 2016

Protest against greyhound racing

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579

6

Sport (/sport) > Racing (/sport/racing)



A small group of protesters stand outside Forbury Park raceway yesterday. Photos by Gerard O'Brien.

A small group of protesters stood outside Forbury Park raceway yesterday objecting to what was going on inside.

The protesters, who numbered fewer than a dozen at one stage, were staging a protest against greyhound racing and its existence in New Zealand. A 14-race meeting took place at Forbury Park yesterday.

The demonstration is the first of a series of protests against greyhound racing planned across the country this week.

Greyhound Protection League of New Zealand spokeswoman Emily Robertson, of Dunedin, said thousands of greyhounds were being bred solely for a purpose of racing and then being destroyed.

She said the industry might well employ many people but that was no justification to keep it going.

She would rather see the sport banned than have dogs bred and exploited.

Killing animals for such a trivial reason as entertainment or sport was completely unacceptable in this day and age.

She said it was about time the industry came under scrutiny. Greyhound racing had been banned in New South Wales and there were suggestions it would be banned in Australian Capital Territory.

Otago Greyhound Racing Club president John Guthrie declined comment and referred all questions to Greyhound Racing New Zealand chief executive Phil Holden.

Holden said the protesters had every right to protest but the greyhound industry in New Zealand had been around a very long time and had a well-won reputation around animal welfare.

"Animal welfare is at the forefront of everything we do. We have zero tolerance to anyone in the industry who mistreats animals," Holden said.

He said Australian states were looking across the Tasman for guidance about standards on animal welfare.

The sport had a well-established integrity unit which clamped down on any mistreatment of animals.

He was aware more protests would be staged at the end of the week but was comfortable in what greyhound racing was doing.



Greyhound Protection League of New Zealand spokeswoman Emily Robertson.