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Tasmania has a chance to join the rest of the world

In the space of two days in March this year, two parliaments on opposite sides of the Irish Sea voted to outlaw greyhound racing.

Scotland passed its prohibition on March 18 by 70 votes to 27. Wales followed the next day, 39 to 10. In each case, after looking at the evidence and listening to their communities, politicians realised that watching dogs run around in circles for people to bet on was not a "sport". This type of exploitation cannot be reformed so as to somehow spare fragile greyhounds from the inherent and real risk of serious injury and death every time they are released

The world is walking away from greyhound racing. It is time to finish the job, writes **Christine Dorchak**

from their cages to race. Like bear baiting and cock fighting, greyhound gambling belongs in our shameful past.

Last month's UK votes are part of a shift that has been building for more than a decade, on every continent and in every country where greyhound racing has ever operated. The industry's survival now depends not

on public support, which it has lost almost everywhere, but on the willingness of a shrinking number of governments to look the other way and keep propping it up.

In the US, where commercial greyhound racing was born and once attracted billions of dollars in wagering, the industry has collapsed. It still persists in the single state of

West Virginia, but is entirely dependent on a statutory trust fund that delivers up to \$22m a year in handouts to greyhound breeders.



Christine Dorchak

Thankfully, 44 states have now outlawed this Depression-era form of gambling and just two tracks remain. The Greyhound Protection Act, the US's bipartisan federal bill to outlaw dog racing nationwide, was just overwhelmingly approved by the

House Committee on Agriculture, as part of its must-pass Farm Bill. Importantly, the measure also bars US gamblers from betting on foreign races and blocks US dogs from being exported to race elsewhere.

Across the world, the trend is unmistakable. In New Zealand, the government announced in 2024 that greyhound racing would be phased out entirely by mid-2026, citing consistent and repeating animal welfare issues that years of warnings had failed to fix. In India, the Animal Welfare Board declared greyhound racing illegal under existing law. The Republic of Vietnam ordered its last track to close in 2023. South Africa,

and put the cruelty of greyhound racing in the past

Jamaica and the Philippines refused to legalise tracks in the first place.

Mark Ruskell, the Scottish Green MP, whose Members Bill resulted in Scotland's new law, put it plainly in a recent interview with ABC Radio Tasmania. There is, he said, a global consensus emerging and no jurisdiction wants to be the last protector of cruelty to dogs. He is right. Right now it's a race between Australia, Ireland and the UK to see which country will hold the dubious distinction as the last place in the world to tolerate an antiquated and unpopular activity that harms dogs and costs host jurisdictions millions each year in government subsidies.

The arguments unleashed by the racing industry are remarkably consistent from country to country. They warn of job losses. They claim reform is working. They insist the dogs are well treated. And in every jurisdiction that has examined the evidence seriously, those arguments fail. In 2024, the last two US tracks reported 487 greyhound injuries, including 162 broken bones and 13 deaths. In Tasmania, the pattern has been the same, with animals bred in numbers the tracks cannot sustain, raced until they break, and then discarded when no longer profitable. In the first three months of 2026 alone, more than 40 greyhounds have

been injured on Tasmanian tracks, with seven dogs dead on and off the track, and those numbers would have been higher had the industry not been forced to cancel racing due to a deadly outbreak in the kennels of "kennel cough".

Here are the facts. The industry has lost its social license and the community simply doesn't want it anymore. In Scotland, two-thirds of the public backed the ban. In Tasmania, 74 per cent of the population supports ending greyhound racing, with just 14 per cent opposed. In Queensland, two-thirds of the electorate oppose dog racing. Wherever the question is

asked, the answer is the same.

Which brings us to what happens when Tasmania's Legislative Council votes on legislation that would make Tasmania the first Australian state to outlaw greyhound racing. A Tasmanian ban would not end greyhound racing in Australia. But it would do something arguably more powerful. It would prove it can be done.

From my vantage point in the US where I have spent 25 years working to save greyhounds from an industry that treats them like disposable gambling chips, I have witnessed the global momentum build with a mixture of pride and impatience.

Pride, because every legislative victory is a victory for the dogs. Impatience, because the suffering continues wherever the industry survives.

Legislative Councillors now have the opportunity to put Tasmania on the right side of history and vote in support of the overwhelming view of the communities that elected them. Let's all take this path together and walk forward to a day when dog racing is no more.

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