

Overbreeding leads to surplus greyhounds being destroyed as ‘wastage’ inquiry told

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Marie Hogg, *The Daily Telegraph*

THE state’s billion-dollar greyhound racing industry faces extinction if animal welfare and self-regulation concerns are not addressed, an independent inquiry into the sport has heard.

In an opening address which also told of greyhounds being destroyed as “wastage” due to overbreeding, commissioner Michael McHugh told the Special Commission of Inquiry into the sport of dire warnings about its future.

“The animal welfare and integrity issues by themselves ... raise a question as to the continued viability, and appropriateness, of the sport,” Mr McHugh said.

“It will be one of this commission’s tasks to make a recommendation concerning whether greyhound racing in this state should continue.”



Greyhound pups are often destroyed simply because they aren't fast enough. Picture: Peter Lorimer

The commission was established to investigate the greyhound racing industry in NSW after horrific images of racing dogs mauling live “bait” animals emerged in an investigation by the ABC’s Four Corners program in February.

The NSW government dismissed the entire greyhound racing board, expelling 10 trainers and dozens of “blooded” dogs from the sport, following the revelations.

The commission has flagged major structural issues in the governance of the industry, including substantial self-regulation threatening the integrity of Greyhound Racing NSW.

In addition to live baiting, profound concerns were raised for the welfare of the dogs over unregulated breeding practices.

“Overbreeding of greyhounds, intended to produce high-quality dogs for racing ... results in extremely high rates of what is sometimes called ‘wastage’,” Mr McHugh said.

“It is likely that a significant number are put down for no reason other than that they are considered unsuitable for racing.”

Mr McHugh also said that a significant number of dogs were being destroyed after their retirement from the sport. “Re-homing programs cannot keep pace with the number of greyhounds who are withdrawn from racing each year,” he said.



The inquiry will investigate all aspects of the greyhound industry.

In evaluating the sport’s continuation the commission is also expected to review existing legislation for the greyhound racing industry in NSW and current practices of greyhound breeders, trainers and those involved in the operation of training facilities.

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The inquiry is expected to give a final report on the future of the industry in September.