

Legislative Assembly Hansard – 10 February 2021 – Proof

**GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY**

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (19:26): As The Greens member for Ballina and in line with Greens NSW's strong opposition to greyhound racing and its exploitation and cruelty, and our concerns about gambling and the use of public money to support such practices and industries, I voice my intention to collaborate with informed and experienced organisations like Animal Liberation and the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds to oppose a proposed development for a new greyhound racing track in the Tweed region.

The greyhound industry cannot be reformed. It will never recover from the public exposures that demonstrated clearly the systemic and inherent cruelty entrenched in the industry. The member for Tweed spoke out against the cruelty to animals in the greyhound industry. This is not coming from The Nationals; this is coming from an outdated and out-of-touch, small sector of the community. Frequently the greyhound industry has been plagued with accusations of wrongdoing. It has been steeped in serious allegations of mismanagement, inappropriate distribution of TAB funds, widespread mistreatment of dogs, allegations of race fixing, drug use, money laundering and alleged criminal activity. As we know, the catalyst for significant and sweeping government scrutiny and change was the ABC *Four Corners* program *Making a Killing* in February 2015.

As I have said in this place before, the community has moved in a different direction. My grandparents liked to bet on the greyhound races. It was a very different world. Unfortunately, the economies of scale and increasing competition in the gambling space have meant that the industry is deeply flawed. Certainly from the perspective of the North Coast, Greyhound Racing NSW is not showing any real, genuine commitment to reform.

The industry is no longer mum-and-dad trainers. Even if we thought the proposed new tracks in the Tweed would represent a new era and a new style of racing, we would be sadly disappointed because the design of the tracks is curved, which we know causes more deaths and injuries. This is happening despite the fact that the independent study into optimal track design for greyhound racing conducted by the University of Technology Sydney strongly recommended that the industry move away from curved tracks. I say to those proponents: Why are they doing that? We know it comes down to profits before the welfare of their dogs. That is a very sad state of affairs.

The history of greyhound racing in New South Wales provides a sobering reminder of a deeply entrenched culture with issues that span animal cruelty, gambling, secrecy and a real failure to bring the industry into the twenty-first century. In the current New South Wales climate of heightened public concern, national surveys show how many Australians are deeply concerned about animal welfare—whether in the beef industry or across a whole range of animal welfare issues. The average Australian believes animals are sentient beings. The majority of Australians believe that and the majority of Australians do not support any industry that involves cruelty to animals. It is time that the relevant Minister and the Premier of this State confirm what is the future of greyhound racing in New South Wales.

The greyhound racing industry and those who participate in and profit from the exploitation of greyhounds through racing and breeding continue to commodify those dogs as commercial objects. That is simply out of step with the community. The greyhounds' welfare is sacrificed and people are very concerned. The industry does not have a social licence. I encourage the proponents of the industry in the Tweed to axe it now. There is a concerted campaign against it and the broader community does not support it. Together with my Greens colleagues and collaborating organisations, we will vigorously oppose the proposed Tweed greyhound track and we call on all compassionate members of both Houses of our Parliament to do likewise.

