



Hon Steve Dickson MP
Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

Our Ref: CTS 13780/14
Your Ref: 10.4 Petitions

22 JUN 2014

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 4 June 2014 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 2272-14 (tabled petition) and 2234-14 (e-petition) lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Principal Petitioner, Ms Rebecca Russo.

The Petitions request that the House oppose the construction of a new greyhound racing facility at Cronulla Park on social, economic and animal welfare grounds in favour of a more inclusive, multi-use facility for the community.

The Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board, which trades as Racing Queensland (RQ), is established under the *Racing Act 2002*, as the control body for three codes of racing – thoroughbred, harness and greyhounds – and is responsible for the management of the codes.

As part of its election commitments in 2012, this Government confirmed a \$110 million Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme, which was set aside for RQ to prioritise the industry's infrastructure needs for the future.

Earlier this year, I announced approval of an application from RQ for the development of a new \$12 million stand-alone greyhound racing facility at Cronulla Park, Logan, as a replacement venue for the Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club which was required to relinquish a site at Parklands on the Gold Coast to enable the Commonwealth Games athletes' village to be constructed. This followed a lengthy assessment process undertaken by RQ and the Queensland Greyhound Racing Board to determine the most suitable site for a greyhound facility in south-east Queensland.

The Queensland racing industry is a recognised leader in the treatment and care of registered racing animals. Licensed participants and greyhounds for greyhound racing are subject to Rules of Racing developed by Greyhounds Australasia and RQ.

These rules contain extensive provisions about the appropriate treatment of racing animals and include a mandatory minimum standard for the housing and care of greyhounds. In addition to these measures, RQ's commitment to greyhound welfare is demonstrated through its Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) initiative, which aims to provide homes for greyhounds once their racing careers have finished. RQ recently advised that GAP is an important part of its plans for the greyhound industry and it is currently considering plans to expand its future program to ensure that more greyhounds can be re-homed in the community.

Furthermore, greyhound breeders, like breeders of all other dogs, must also abide by the Queensland Government's animal welfare legislation and the requirements of their local government.

The development of a new greyhound facility in Logan will create employment opportunities in the area through construction and ongoing maintenance of the facility. I note the petitioners' concerns about gambling in the community, however, it is pointed out that avenues currently exist for people to gamble on numerous betting mediums in the area, on greyhounds and other forms of racing, sports and Lotto, through TAB outlets, clubs and online via gambling websites. Given attendance figures at race meetings in recent times, it would seem that race meetings and racing facilities are generally attended and utilised by industry participants, with gambling on the product taking place primarily away from the course.

The petitioners also reference health concerns and physical inactivity amongst the Logan community, suggesting that the Cronulla Park site could be utilised for a more inclusive, multi-use facility. I note that the Cronulla Park site was previously administered by the Logan City Council as trustee under the *Land Act 1994*. However, the Logan City Council has been supportive of the greyhound facility development and, consequently, transferred the land to the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing to be used for this purpose.

Queensland's racing industry employs 30,000 people and supports 130 community-based clubs. This Government does not condone behaviour which puts that effort at risk and it has demonstrated this commitment by implementing new management structures for the industry including the establishment of the Queensland All-Codes Racing Industry Board, three code-specific boards and the position of Racing Integrity Commissioner.

I hope this information has been of assistance to you. Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Ms Johanna de Winter, Chief of Staff in my office, on telephone (07) 3719 7110.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Dickson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Dickson MP
Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing