



Submission by the
Royal New Zealand Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Inc.
on the
Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing
Industry) Amendment Bill

9 January 2025



Executive Summary

- SPCA strongly supports the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing Industry) Amendment Bill and the legislative closure of commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand.
- SPCA supports the Bill's three-stage framework and the fixed end date of 1 August 2026, which provides certainty while allowing time for a managed transition that prioritises greyhound welfare.
- **Part 1 – Immediate amendments following Royal assent**
 - SPCA supports the establishment of the Greyhound Racing Transition Agency and the transfer of Greyhound Racing New Zealand's assets, liabilities, rights, and responsibilities to that Agency.
 - Greyhounds currently in the racing system exist solely because of the commercial industry. We consider it fair and just that industry funds and assets are prioritised for the care, rehabilitation, traceability, and rehoming of greyhounds, before consideration of compensation to industry participants.
 - Safeguards are needed to prevent increased injury in the lead up to the ban, including closing loopholes allowing dogs awaiting rehoming to return to racing.
 - SPCA supports the Racing Integrity Board's proposed amendment to allow transitional jurisdiction over integrity matters arising before 1 August 2026.
- **Part 2 – Amendments commencing 1 August 2026**
 - SPCA supports the removal of greyhound racing as a permitted racing code. This provides certainty, prevents re-establishment of the code, and ensures remaining greyhounds are managed under welfare-focused arrangements.
 - SPCA recommends clarity around what constitutes a greyhound being "successfully rehomed" and enhanced scrutiny and verification requirements for all rehoming pathways, particularly private placements.
 - SPCA recommends the Bill explicitly prohibit the export of greyhounds for racing in overseas jurisdictions.
- **Part 3 – Disestablishment by Order in Council**
 - Before the Agency is wound up, there must be assurance that all adoptable greyhounds have been rehomed and that no unresolved welfare or integrity matters remain.
 - SPCA supports disestablishment only once welfare outcomes are fully achieved.
- With targeted amendments, SPCA considers the Bill capable of delivering a world-leading, transparent and welfare-focused transition away from commercial greyhound racing.



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Introduction

The following submission is made on behalf of The Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (trading as SPCA).

SPCA is the preeminent animal welfare and advocacy organisation in New Zealand. The Society has been in existence for over 150 years with a supporter base representing more than 100,000 New Zealanders across the nation.

The organisation includes 28 Animal Welfare Centres across New Zealand and approximately 60 inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

SPCA has a long history of engagement with the greyhound racing industry, including presence of an SPCA representative on the Greyhound Racing New Zealand Health and Welfare Committee from 2016 to 2020, the MOU between SPCA, Racing Integrity Board (RIB), and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) in relation to enforcement of welfare in the racing codes, and ongoing engagement with the Ministerial Advisory Committee established in December 2024 to advise on the wind-down of the commercial greyhound racing industry.

SPCA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the consultation for the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing Industry) Amendment Bill.

Background

This submission first summarises background information supporting the Government's decision to ban commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand. It then provides specific feedback on the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing Industry) Amendment Bill.



SPCA supports a ban on commercial greyhound racing

SPCA does not take calls for industry bans lightly. As an animal welfare organisation, we consider that it is acceptable to use animals for human purposes provided they have a Good Life, with opportunities for positive welfare. Where our organisation advocates for changes to the way animals are used, SPCA typically engages directly with stakeholders to improve animal welfare outcomes while the activity continues. We do so successfully in other similar contexts; for example, we work successfully with the rodeo industry and the thoroughbred and harness racing codes.

After years of engagement with GRNZ aimed at improving welfare outcomes, SPCA concluded in late 2020 that a ban on commercial greyhound racing was necessary. This change in our organisational position followed the deaths of five greyhounds within five weeks and GRNZ's decision to stop reporting to Ministers on progress against the Hansen Report recommendations.¹ SPCA and the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee opposed GRNZ's decision, concerns echoed by Hon Meka Whaitiri and Hon Grant Robertson in their respective ministerial roles.^{2,3}

SPCA has worked with Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ) for years to improve the welfare of dogs within the industry, including sitting on the industry Health and Welfare Committee (2016–2020) and providing submissions on GRNZ policies, procedures, welfare standards, and rules of racing. We also offer to meet to openly discuss welfare improvements and share the expertise of our animal welfare scientists.

¹ Kerr-Lazenby, M. (2020). *SPCA joins calls for greyhound racing to be banned after five deaths in five weeks*. RNZ. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/300155515/spca-joins-calls-for-greyhound-racing-to-be-banned-after-five-deaths-in-five-weeks>

² National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. (2021, 11 June). *Submission to the independent review of greyhound racing and greyhound welfare in New Zealand* (NAWAC greyhound racing submission). NAWAC. <https://www.nawac.org.nz/assets/NAWAC-documents/NAWAC-greyhound-racing-Submission-June-2021.pdf>

³ Robertson, G. & Whaitiri, M. (2021, 2 September). *Greyhound racing industry formally on notice*. Beehive.govt.nz. <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/greyhound-racing-industry-formally-notice>



However, the greyhound racing industry has a long history of dismissing or diminishing welfare concerns; for example, dismissing concerns about greyhounds testing positive for illegal substances by implying that all dogs in New Zealand are at risk of methamphetamine contamination or downplaying serious incidents of cruelty or neglect.^{4,5} GRNZ has also claimed that *“racing greyhounds are the most regulated animals in New Zealand.”*⁶ However, while different animal use sectors are governed under different legal frameworks, sectors such as research/testing, and farmed animals, operate under more prescriptive welfare requirements and independent oversight compared with the self-regulated industry codes that govern greyhound racing.

These repeated attempts to minimise or rationalise systemic problems, alongside multiple damning reports, led SPCA to conclude that the industry is beyond reform and the only way to protect greyhound welfare is through a ban on commercial racing.

Serious injuries and deaths show industry reform is not working

Since being placed ‘on notice’ by then Minister of Racing, Grant Robertson, in September 2021, the industry has continued to experience high numbers of race-related serious injuries, deaths, and euthanasia, despite intensified oversight by RIB and changes intended to improve track safety.

The 2024/25 season recorded the highest number of race-related deaths (16 race-related deaths or euthanasia) since the industry was placed on notice (previous seasons: 2021/22 = 9 deaths; 2022/23 = 3 deaths; 2023/24 = 13 deaths). Early data from the 2025/26 season (red line)

⁴ Glenda Hughes (former GRNZ Chief Executive) told Newshub: *“I think all dogs in New Zealand are now at risk of methamphetamine contamination.”* (17 June 2022). Chris Lynch, *Christchurch greyhound test positive for methamphetamine*. <https://www.chrislynchmedia.com/greyhounds-test-positive-for-methamphetamine-9pxar-dr663/>

⁵ Glenda Hughes (former GRNZ Chief Executive) told Newshub: *“It’s a family of people and what we do have is we do have some problem children.”* (5 May 2022).

⁶ GRNZ (June 2022). *Submission to the Petitions Committee regarding the petition of Aaron Cross and the Greyhound Protection League of New Zealand to ban commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand*. https://www3.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/53SCPET_EVI_101334_PET2905/greyhound-racing-new-zealand-petition-of-aaron-cross



indicates a cumulative race-related death trajectory similar to the 2024/25 season and above the average of the previous four racing seasons (columns, Figure 1).

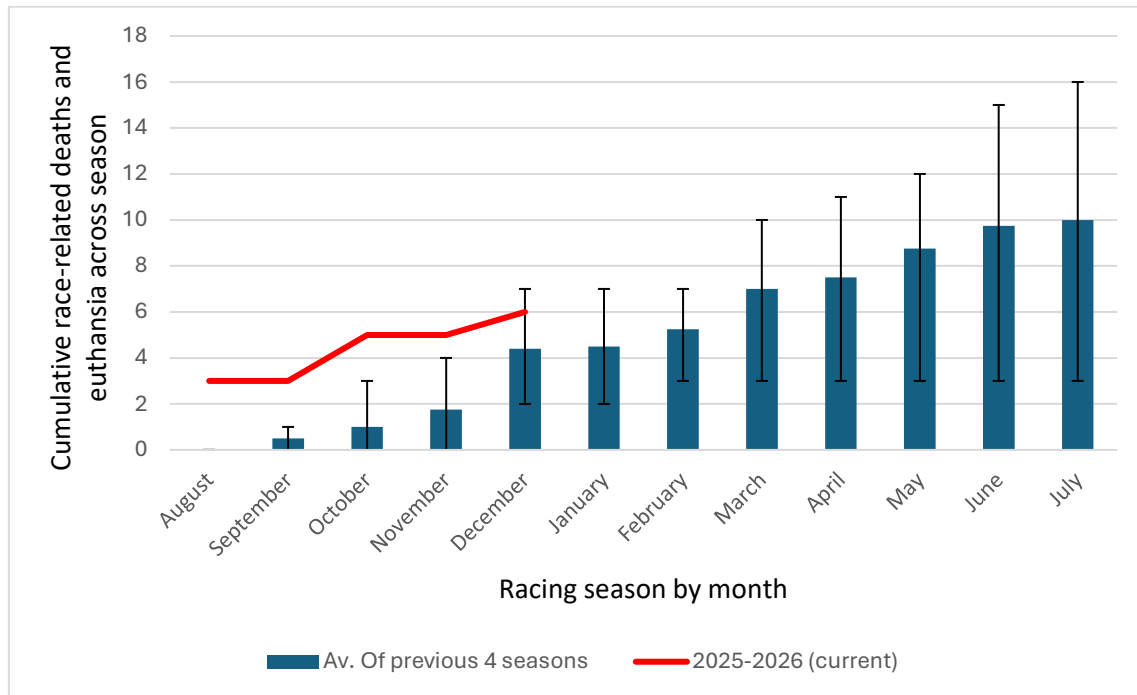


Figure 1. Cumulative race-related deaths and euthanasia by month across the racing season. Red line shows current season in comparison to average of previous four seasons (columns). Error bars (black lines) show the minimum and maximum values across the previous four seasons.

As part of the requirements to monitor progress during the “on notice” period, GRNZ approved key performance indicators (KPIs) from 2022 to drive measurable reductions in serious harm to dogs during racing. The RIB advised that, “GRNZ must view the current KPIs as a minimum standard and seek to exceed these commitments wherever possible”.⁷ Despite these measures, serious race-day injuries have persisted, and GRNZ has had limited success in meeting their injury reduction targets. GRNZ failed to meet the KPIs in every quarter of the 2024/25 season

⁷ Racing Integrity Board (12 December 2022). *Greyhound Review Final Report*. [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Racing-Greyhound-Review/\\$file/Greyhound-Review-Final-Report-12-December-2022.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Racing-Greyhound-Review/$file/Greyhound-Review-Final-Report-12-December-2022.pdf)



and the first quarter of the 2025/26 season, even after the targets were revised to make them more achievable (Table 1).

Table 1. Serious injury rate per quarter in comparison to GRNZ-approved KPI for injury reduction; Category D+E includes serious injuries with 22+ days off racing and race-related deaths and euthanasia; Category F includes catastrophic injuries, comprising all Category E incidents and the most severe Category D injuries (43+ days off racing); * indicates rolling average of injuries. Data sourced from RIB quarterly reporting.⁸

Season	Quarter	Category D + E injury per 1,000 starters	KPI	KPI Met?	Category F injury per 1,000 starters	KPI	KPI Met?
2023/24	Q1-4	6.57	≤5.97	✗	2.83	≤2.07	✗
2024/25	Q1	7.15	<5.97	✗	3.16	≤2.07	✗
	Q2	7.20*	<6.32	✗	3.32*	<2.14	✗
	Q3	7.18*		✗	3.33*		✗
	Q4	7.46*		✗	3.32*		✗
2025/26	Q1	7.07*	<6.14	✗	3.07*	<2.08	✗

The RIB's summary for the 2024/25 season compared injury rates to the prior season and found no statistically significant improvement.⁹ This evidence indicates that, despite recent interventions intended to reduce injury rates below those seen in previous seasons, greyhounds continue to suffer similar or higher rates of avoidable injuries and deaths as a result of racing.

⁸ Racing Integrity Board's Quarterly Ministerial Briefings. <https://racingintegrityboard.org.nz/about-us/publications>

⁹ Racing Integrity Board (September 2025). *Briefing for the Minister of Racing*. Pg 10. <https://racingintegrityboard.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/202508-RIB-QUARTER-4-MINISTERIAL-BRIEFING-Greyhound-Review-FINAL.pdf>



Slow introduction of straight track races

Attempts to mitigate injury risk through track design further illustrate the limits of industry-led reform.

Most injuries occur on the first bend, and straight-track races eliminate this particular risk (Palmer et al., 2021). Straight track racing was a recommendation of the 2017 Hansen Report, but the first straight track in New Zealand was not operational until seven years later (July 2024).¹⁰ As a result, GRNZ failed to meet their KPI for straight track racing for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 seasons but finally met this KPI by the conclusion of last season. GRNZ does not publicly report injury rates by track, limiting the ability for stakeholders to assess the impacts of straight track racing on injury reduction. However, in a recent letter to SPCA, RIB listed the number and incidence of Category E & F injuries by racetrack for seasons 2024/25 and Q1 2025/26, revealing that these are markedly lower for New Zealand's only straight track.¹¹ This suggests earlier introduction and greater promotion of straight track racing could have reduced the number of dogs who have been injured.

Transparency concerns continue

Transparency was one of the core concerns raised in the WHK Report (2013), the Hansen Report (2017) and the Robertson Review (2021). Sir Bruce Robertson was clear that this needed to be addressed for the industry to survive:

- *"[GRNZ] has made its job harder by unnecessarily obfuscating information and pushing back against those with an interest."*

¹⁰ GRNZ (July 2024). *Tote racing at Wanganui Straight Track commences on Wednesday*. <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU2407/S00225/tote-racing-at-wanganui-straight-track-commences-on-wednesday.htm>

¹¹ Eliot Forbes (Chief Executive, RIB), Letter to Dr Arnja Dale (Chief Scientific Officer at SPCA NZ). (11 September 2025).



- *“It is in the interest of GRNZ to embrace the scrutiny as an opportunity to show progress and be transparent, ground-breaking, and the leading voice for animals that it often claims to be”.*

The approach by industry to scrutiny is reflected in ongoing transparency issues. Despite repeated recommendations from independent inquiries, it is SPCA’s opinion that GRNZ has continued to resist collaborative engagement, avoided full disclosure of data, and restructured committees with external membership in ways that limit meaningful oversight.

GRNZ claims that their quarterly reports to the Minister are shared on their website, however, to date none have been uploaded since the October 2024 report.¹²

Unlike other industries, GRNZ has repeatedly resisted opportunities for collaborative and transparent welfare improvements. For example, after no meetings of the Health and Welfare Committee between 2020 and 2022, meetings resumed without the SPCA representative. SPCA received no notice of the removal of their representative nor that meetings had resumed, raising transparency concerns. GRNZ has claimed that SPCA is “fully debriefed” on committee meetings, however GRNZ has given only one high-level online meeting in March 2022 with no access to papers, data, or minutes.^{13,14} SPCA agreed with RIB and the Petition Select Committee that this did not meet Sir Robertson’s recommendation for *‘a Health and Welfare Committee with **full participation of all relevant stakeholders** and the ability to implement and effect change as required’*.¹⁵

¹² GRNZ Stakeholder Information. Accessed on 24 December 2025. <https://www.grnz.co.nz/news/Stakeholder-Information.aspx>

¹³ George, Z. & Kerr Lazenby, M. (25 March 2022). *SPCA gone from greyhound racing welfare committee as deaths in industry continue*. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/racing/300547772/spca-gone-from-greyhound-racing-welfare-committee-as-deaths-in-industry-continue>

¹⁴ Greyhound Racing New Zealand (June 2022). *Submission to the Petitions Committee regarding the petition of Aaron Cross and the Greyhound Protection League of New Zealand to ban commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand*. https://www3.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/53SCPET_EVI_101334_PET2905/046f12817efc3ada5c103dd6ae1b71ca9af5744d

¹⁵ Petition Select Committee (November 2022). *Report of the Petitions Committee*. <https://petitions.parliament.nz/8c0a6916-a034-492e-ac3a-a627f95f012b>



We are aware that previous RIB CEO, requested multiple times that GRNZ reconsider SPCA sitting on the committee and SPCA has proposed compromises to enable meaningful debriefs, but GRNZ has chosen not to engage further.

Industry progress is slow and reliant on intensive oversight

SPCA acknowledges that the industry has made progress in some areas since being placed on notice in 2021. However, we question if this would have occurred without high levels of scrutiny and extensive ongoing monitoring from RIB during the period between the industry being placed on notice in 2021 and the Government's announcement of a decision in 2024. This including RIB contracting an independent auditing company to conduct in depth, welfare-focused audits (now replaced with in-house, scaled back traceability inspections). When reflecting on progress during the on-notice period, the RIB reported, *"If animal welfare was at the heart of decisions being made by the GRNZ board, more progress would have been made"*.¹⁶

While the industry once again claims that all issues are a thing of the past¹⁷, serious race-day injuries and deaths persist, and transparency remains limited.

SPCA acknowledges that there are people within the greyhound racing industry who genuinely care about their dogs and have over the years advocated for changes to improve welfare and address systemic issues, which could have helped to maintain the industry's social license. Unfortunately, in SPCA's view, GRNZ has shown little appetite for engaging meaningfully with stakeholders, has been slow to implement recommendations, failed to take action to address the behaviour of repeat offenders, and has actively contributed to the erosion of social license.

¹⁶ Racing Integrity Board (12 December 2022). *Greyhound Review Final Report*. [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Racing-Greyhound-Review/\\$file/Greyhound-Review-Final-Report-12-December-2022.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Racing-Greyhound-Review/$file/Greyhound-Review-Final-Report-12-December-2022.pdf)

¹⁷ Edwards, J. (former chair of GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee). (11 April 2021). *Fear not; greyhounds are protected and cared for*. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/300273399/fear-not-greyhounds-are-protected-and-cared-for>



Social license has been lost

Social license was identified by the Government as a key factor in deciding the future of commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand (Cameron et al., 2024). The social license of an industry or activity can be observed through public opinions (for example, surveys). To better understand social license for greyhound racing, SPCA commissioned independent surveys of public opinion in 2022 and 2024. Respondents were weighted against census data to ensure results reflected a robust, representative sample of the views of New Zealanders. The findings of the first survey have been published as a scientific article in a peer-reviewed journal (Cameron et al., 2024). These surveys found that the majority of the New Zealand public hold a negative view of the industry.

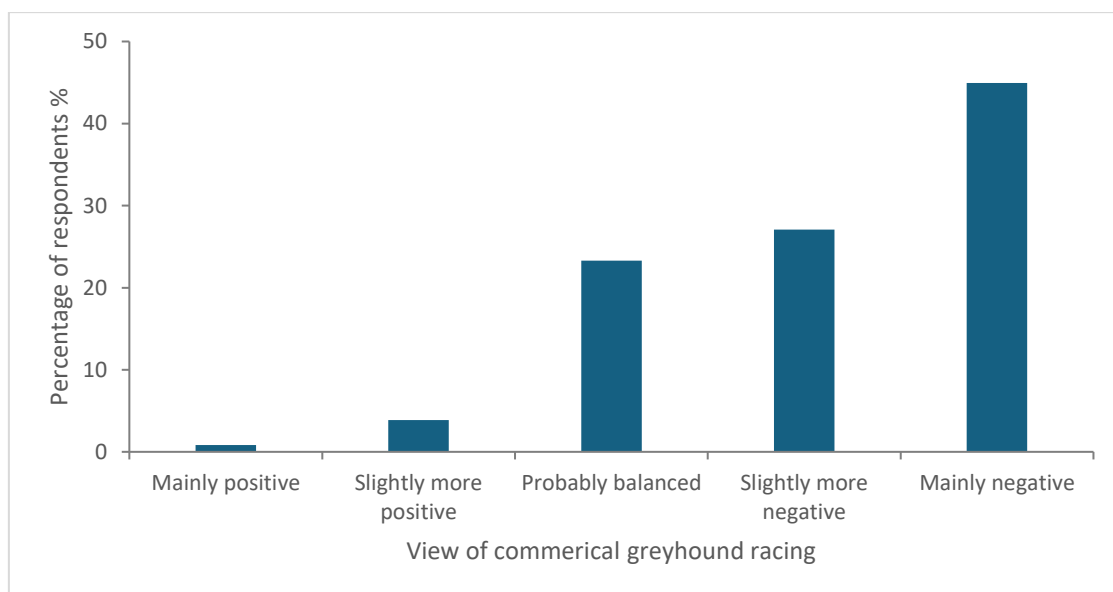


Figure 2. Survey Question: *Some people think there are positives to commercial greyhound racing while others think there are negatives. On balance, do you think there are more positive or negative aspects?* (n = 1,327); graph adapted from Cameron et al., 2024.

Some proponents of racing claim that the public have been misled by anti-racing campaigns using outdated data or misinformation. However, many of the most damning findings have come from government-commissioned or independent inquiries, not advocacy groups. Further,



the industry's own data reveals that serious injuries and race-related deaths have not decreased since the industry was placed on notice.

Ongoing public concern points to recognition of the inherent danger of greyhound racing and the industry culture in responding to raising welfare concerns rather than a temporary perception issue. Public concern is compounded by the industry's tendency to minimise welfare issues and shift blame. Such patterns contribute to a structural legitimacy problem and reinforce the need for legislative intervention. SPCA considers that the loss of social licence, together with credible evidence of harm, provides a legitimate basis for legislative action to ban commercial greyhound racing.

Greyhound racing is in decline globally and New Zealand is not alone in progressing a ban on commercial greyhound racing. Since New Zealand's ban was announced in December 2024, Wales, Scotland and Tasmania governments have announced their intention to introduce bans on greyhound racing in their jurisdictions. These announcements enjoy strong public support and support from animal welfare organisations internationally (see [Appendices](#) for letters of support from RSPCA England & Wales and RSPCA Australia). New Zealand has an opportunity to be world leading in setting out a framework for responsible, welfare-focused closure of commercial greyhound racing.

Submission

SPCA strongly supports the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing Industry) Amendment Bill and the proposed three-stage process for closing the commercial greyhound racing industry.

SPCA strongly supports the legislative closure of commercial greyhound racing and the removal of greyhound racing as a permitted form of racing under the Racing Industry Act 2020. This reflects longstanding and well documented animal welfare concerns associated with the industry and aligns with public expectations for the humane treatment of animals.



The fixed end date of 1 August 2026 provides certainty while allowing time for transition planning and implementation. Both the greyhound racing industry and those seeking an end to greyhound racing, have consistently called for certainty since the industry was placed ‘on notice’ in 2021. A clear and fixed end date is critical for effective planning, animal welfare outcomes, and fair transition arrangements.

Delaying closure would carry significant negative consequences. Prolonged uncertainty risks erosion of industry assets that could otherwise be directed towards rehoming dogs and supporting affected workers to transition into alternative employment. It would also require continued investment in track safety upgrades for a declining industry, diverting resources away from dog welfare and rehoming efforts. Just as importantly, delay would undermine momentum, weakening coordination across rehoming organisations, adopters, and support services at a time when focus and clarity are most needed.

Rehoming the estimated 1,500 greyhounds in the industry at closure date is achievable with appropriate planning and resourcing. SPCA supports a fixed end date of 1 August 2026 because it provides the certainty required to plan and implement a structured transition, while allowing sufficient time to responsibly rehome dogs and support industry participants through change.

SPCA acknowledges that the closure of an entire racing code presents practical and ethical challenges. However, we consider that a planned, time-limited wind-down period, with clear statutory oversight, is ethically and practically preferable to allowing indefinite, predictable harm to continue. With appropriate safeguards, the short-term risks associated with transition can be responsibly managed in a way that prioritises greyhound welfare.



Part One: Amendments that commence on day after Royal assent

Industry responsibility for greyhound welfare and use of industry assets

SPCA is aware that representatives of the greyhound racing industry have sought compensation in connection with the closure of commercial greyhound racing. We are also aware that Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ) has recently increased stakes across races. SPCA is concerned that GRNZ may continue to increase prize money and stakes in the period leading up to the ban on commercial greyhound racing. Any such escalation risks significantly reducing the pool of industry funds available to meet the costs of greyhound care, rehabilitation, and rehoming, and to support a fair and orderly transition for people currently employed in, or economically dependent on, the industry.

Greyhounds currently within the racing and rehoming systems exist solely because of the commercial greyhound racing industry. SPCA therefore considers it ethically and practically appropriate that industry-derived funds and assets are prioritised first and foremost for the care, rehabilitation, and rehoming of these dogs, before any increase in discretionary industry spending or consideration is given to compensation for industry participants.

SPCA notes that Part 1 of the Bill establishes the Greyhound Racing Transition Agency and provides for the transfer of Greyhound Racing New Zealand's assets, liabilities, rights, and ongoing responsibilities to that Agency. SPCA strongly supports this approach. However, it is critical that the exercise of powers and functions under Part 1 is guided by a clear welfare-first principle and safeguards against the depletion of assets prior to transfer.

Industry-derived funds, properties, and other assets transferred under Part 1 should be used to:

- provide for the day-to-day care, veterinary treatment, and behavioural support of greyhounds during the wind-down period;
- support and scale up rehoming programmes, including partnerships with animal welfare organisations;
- ensure robust traceability systems and post-adoption support where required; and



- manage contingencies where rehoming placements break down.

SPCA is concerned that increased stakes or other pre-closure financial commitments could undermine the ability of the Transition Agency to meet these obligations and could also limit the availability of funds to support a fair transition for industry participants. SPCA considers that any compensation or financial arrangements for industry participants should not diminish the resources available to meet these obligations. Any framework for the distribution or application of assets under Part 1 of the Bill should make clear that the welfare needs of greyhounds take precedence over commercial or proprietary interests.

Explicitly recognising these priorities within the framework for the distribution and use of assets under Part 1 would help prevent asset erosion, reinforce public confidence in the transition, and ensure alignment with New Zealand's legal recognition of animals as sentient beings.

Protecting welfare during the wind-down period

SPCA supports the intent of Part 1 of the Bill to establish a framework that operates immediately following Royal assent. This early commencement is critical to protecting greyhound welfare during the wind-down period, when risks of poor practice, reduced compliance, or loss of accountability may increase as racing approaches its end.

A dedicated statutory body with clear responsibility for rehoming, traceability, and oversight is essential to avoid fragmented accountability as the industry winds down. SPCA strongly supports the dissolution of Greyhound Racing New Zealand (GRNZ) and establishment of the Greyhound Racing Transition Agency to oversee the transition period. The main purpose of GRNZ is to develop and promote greyhound racing, SPCA agrees with the position of the Ministerial Advisory Committee that the objectives and governance arrangements of GRNZ are not appropriate for an entity that will be required to manage the industry's closure.¹⁸

¹⁸ Ministerial Advisory Committee. (May 2025). *Interim report of the Greyhound Racing Ministerial Advisory Committee*. [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Greyhound-Racing-2025/\\$file/Interim-Report-of-the-Greyhound-Racing-Ministerial-Committee-May-2025.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Greyhound-Racing-2025/$file/Interim-Report-of-the-Greyhound-Racing-Ministerial-Committee-May-2025.pdf)



We also acknowledge that enforcement and integrity functions must remain robust during this period. As racing nears its end, suspensions from racing will lose both practical meaning and deterrent effect. SPCA therefore supports a transition from suspensions to increased financial penalties for rule breaches, ensuring continued deterrence and accountability.

SPCA further supports:

- ensuring that welfare related breaches continue to have meaningful consequences until racing ceases; and
- referrals to SPCA Inspectorate, where appropriate, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between SPCA, MPI, and the Racing Integrity Board (RIB).

Injury risk reduction

SPCA advocates that the proposed Bill should be amended to explicitly state that no welfare compromises will be tolerated to maintain race numbers during the wind-down period.

As the end of racing approaches and the population of racing greyhounds declines, there is a risk that greyhounds may be raced more frequently, continue racing beyond when they would normally be retired due to injury or age, or move from the rehoming waiting list to return to race until the close of racing.¹⁹

Following the Government's announcement on 10 December 2024, GRNZ introduced seven dog sprint fields (except finals) to reduce risk of collisions.²⁰ Unfortunately, Ed Rennell (current GRNZ CEO) disregarded queries from Licensed Persons (industry participants) about why this initiative

¹⁹ GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee meeting minutes. (October 2024). <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Animal%20Health%20Welfare%20Committee%20minutes/2024%2010%2030%20AHC%20Minutes.pdf>

²⁰ GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee meeting minutes. (February 2025). <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Animal%20Health%20Welfare%20Committee%20minutes/2025%2002%2026%20AHC%20Minutes.pdf>



to reduce injuries excluded finals, and determined that finals races should continue to have eight dogs.²¹

The risk of serious injury is higher in greyhounds returning after injury or prolonged rest. Research shows greyhounds injured in their previous race were 2.3 times more likely to sustain a forelimb fracture in subsequent starts (Gibson et al., 2024). The risk of fracture also increases with age due to microdamage accumulation and bone demineralisation, and duration of racing has been associated with a 400% increase in serious tarsal injuries after 12 months (Larratt, 2023; Palmer et al., 2021).

To reduce the risk of serious injuries SPCA recommends:

- limit field sizes to 7 dogs, including for finals races;
- a mandatory retirement age of 40 months old;
- trigger automatic retirement after defined injury thresholds (e.g. more than one fracture, recurrent soft-tissue injury), severe or repeated cramping or hypoxia, or failure to complete more than one satisfactory trial; and
- prohibit dogs in rehoming pathways from returning to racing.

Traceability

Traceability is fundamental to responsible rehoming. SPCA strongly supports the Bill's emphasis on maintaining systems to trace greyhounds until they are successfully rehomed, but considers that additional scrutiny is required, particularly in relation to private rehoming.

²¹ GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee meeting minutes (September 2025) <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Animal%20Health%20Welfare%20Committee%20minutes/2025%2009%2010%20AHWC%20Minutes.pdf>



SPCA notes that a December 2024 RIB decision identified significant anomalies in records relating to eight greyhounds reportedly privately rehomed by Big Time Kennels, where the ultimate fate of the dogs remains uncertain.²² Identified issues included:

- identical phone number prefixes purportedly belonging to unrelated individuals across New Zealand;
- multiple greyhounds allegedly rehomed to the same individuals;
- inability to contact any listed phone numbers;
- missing email addresses;
- incomplete or vague physical addresses; and
- absence of official veterinary documentation, including desexing certificates.

SPCA also notes that RIB has recently commenced an investigation into a licensed person following a kennel inspection that identified irregularities concerning the status of two greyhounds privately rehomed during the 2023/24 season²³.

These cases illustrate and reinforce the need for:

- a clear definition of “successfully rehomed”;
- robust verification of rehoming details;
- mandatory veterinary records; and
- clear consequences for providing false or misleading information.

²² Racing Integrity Board. (6 December 2024). *Non Raceday Inquiry – Written Decision dated 6 December 2024 – Lisa Cole*

<https://racingintegrityboard.org.nz/decisions/non-raceday-inquiry-written-decision-dated-6-december-2024-lisa-cole>

²³ Racing Integrity Board. (27 November 2025). *Briefing for Minister of Racing*. <https://racingintegrityboard.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/202511-RIB-QUARTER-1-MINISTERIAL-BRIEFING-Greyhound-Review-FINAL.pdf>



Desexing and continuation of the greyhound breed

SPCA is aware of concerns that greyhounds may disappear as a breed following the ban on commercial racing. SPCA does not consider this claim credible.

Greyhounds pre-date commercial racing by several thousand years and exist globally as companion and show dogs. Only four countries worldwide (excluding New Zealand) continue to operate a commercial greyhound racing industry, yet greyhounds remain popular pets internationally due to their calm, gentle, and adaptable nature. The continuation of the breed is therefore not dependent on the existence of a commercial racing industry.

SPCA notes the current GRNZ rehoming policy requires greyhounds to be desexed before entering the Great Mates rehoming programme. We also note GRNZ has reported that some licensed persons have expressed interest in preserving the greyhound breed after racing ends, including exploring breeding greyhounds specifically as companion animals or show dogs²⁴.

SPCA supports the continuation of the greyhound breed outside the racing industry but considers that this must occur in a responsible and welfare-focused manner. SPCA therefore advocates that all greyhounds should be desexed once they leave the racing industry, with exemptions applying only to Dogs NZ-registered breeders who intend to produce greyhounds specifically for companionship or showing.

SPCA has consistently advocated for an end to breeding greyhounds for racing since the industry was placed on notice in 2021, to minimise the number of greyhounds requiring rehoming in the event of a ban. Despite this, GRNZ continued to encourage breeding and discussed incentives to increase breeding numbers as recently as October 2024²⁵. The most recent RIB report notes that three litters were whelped in Q1 of the 2025/26 racing season, demonstrating that breeding has

²⁴ GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee meeting minutes. (September 2025). <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Animal%20Health%20Welfare%20Committee%20minutes/2025%2009%2010%20AHWC%20Minutes.pdf>

²⁵ GRNZ Health and Welfare Committee meeting minutes. (October 2024). <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Animal%20Health%20Welfare%20Committee%20minutes/2024%2010%2003%20AHWC%20Minutes.pdf>



continued since the ban announcement²⁶. This underscores the need for clear and enforceable legislative direction to prevent ongoing oversupply during the transition period, consistent with approaches proposed in overseas jurisdictions such as Tasmania, where draft legislation includes explicit measures to prevent continued breeding following a decision to end commercial greyhound racing.²⁷

Many breeds have successfully transitioned away from their original working or racing roles. Whippets, for example, were once predominantly bred for racing but are now widely bred as family companions. This demonstrates that the end of commercial racing does not equate to the end of a breed.

Part 2: Amendments commencing on 1 August 2026

SPCA supports Part 2 of the Bill, which removes greyhound racing from the Racing Industry Act 2020 and formally ends commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand from 1 August 2026.

Removing all references to greyhound racing:

- prevents any future reestablishment of the code under racing legislation;
- provides certainty for regulators, participants, and the public; and
- ensures that remaining greyhounds are transitioned solely under welfare focused arrangements.

SPCA emphasises that, at this stage, welfare oversight must not diminish. Greyhounds may still be in the process of rehoming, and the Transition Agency must retain responsibility for overseeing their care, traceability, and protection.

²⁶ Racing Integrity Board (November 2025). *Briefing for the Minister of Racing*. [202511-RIB-QUARTER-1-MINISTERIAL-BRIEFING-Greyhound-Review-FINAL.pdf](#)

²⁷ Tasmanian Government (2025). *Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phase Out Reform) Bill 2025* (leaflet). <https://nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/Greyhound%20Racing%20Legislation%20-%20information%20sheet.pdf>



SPCA also recommends that the Bill explicitly prohibit the export of greyhounds for racing in overseas jurisdictions, to ensure that animal welfare harms are not displaced offshore. Comparable provisions have been proposed in draft Australian and United States legislation.^{28,29}

Continued integrity oversight

SPCA supports the amendment proposed by the RIB to include a new section 53S, providing RIB with limited, transitional jurisdiction over integrity matters arising before 1 August 2026.

Inclusion of such a provision would:

- allow active investigations, drug testing, and hearings already underway to be concluded;
- prevent respondents from deliberately delaying proceedings in an attempt to avoid enforcement; and
- preserve public confidence in the integrity of the regulatory system during the wind-down.

Without a clear sunset clause, there is a real risk that unresolved integrity matters may lapse, undermining both accountability and welfare outcomes.

Part 3: Amendments commencing by Order in Council

SPCA acknowledges the intent of Part 3 to disestablish the Greyhound Racing Transition Agency once its functions are complete. However, SPCA stresses that disestablishment must be outcomes driven.

²⁸ Customs Legislation Amendment (Commercial Greyhound Export and Import Prohibition) Bill 2021 (Australia). (Bill – not enacted)

²⁹ Greyhound Protection Act of 2025 H.R. 5017, 119th Cong. (2025–2026), introduced 22 Aug. 2025 (referred to House Committee on Agriculture). <https://nunn.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Greyhound-Protection-Act.pdf>



GRNZ estimates that there will be an approximately 1,500 greyhounds requiring rehoming at the end of racing (1 August 2026).³⁰ GRNZ rehomes between 650-700 dogs annually via the Great Mates programme. At the current greyhound rehoming rates, it would take 2 years to rehome all dogs. However, the Ministerial Advisory Committee has recommended scaling up rehoming efforts to accelerate the time taken to rehome all adoptable greyhounds from the industry.³¹

SPCA supports the efforts of the greyhound rehoming partners to rehome greyhounds. We particularly applaud the efforts of Greyhounds as Pets NZ to scale up rehoming since the ban announcement through innovative and impactful marketing campaigns showcasing greyhounds as pets, including New Zealand Fashion Week and the Simpson's Santa's Little Helper rehoming campaigns to showcase the qualities of greyhounds that make them excellent pets.^{32,33}

While the current GRNZ rehoming policy prohibits SPCA or other animal shelters from rehoming greyhounds³⁴, SPCA remains committed to assisting with rehoming. SPCA encourages a review of policies and procedures following the dissolution of GRNZ to ensure rehoming can be scaled up responsibly and effectively.

Before the Agency is wound up, there must be assurance that:

- all adoptable greyhounds have been safely and permanently rehomed;
- no outstanding welfare or integrity matters remain unresolved; and
- responsibility for any residual issues is clearly assigned.

SPCA supports the use of an Order in Council to allow flexibility but recommends clear reporting to Parliament confirming that welfare objectives have been fully met before the Agency is disestablished.

³⁰ GRNZ (2025) *Annual Report*. <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/2025%20GRNZ%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

³¹ Ministerial Advisory Committee. (May 2025). *Interim report of the Greyhound Racing Ministerial Advisory Committee*. [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Greyhound-Racing-2025/\\$file/Interim-Report-of-the-Greyhound-Racing-Ministerial-Committee-May-2025.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Greyhound-Racing-2025/$file/Interim-Report-of-the-Greyhound-Racing-Ministerial-Committee-May-2025.pdf)

³² NZ Herald (2025). [New Zealand Fashion Week Gives The Catwalk To Dogs With Retired Greyhounds In Bespoke Designs - NZ Herald](#)

³³ The Post (2025) [The Simpsons' Santa's Little Helper joins race to rehome 2000 greyhounds | The Post](#)

³⁴ GRNZ (15 December 2025) *GRNZ Rehoming Policy*. <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/1.%20Updated%20Forms%202022/Rehoming%20Policy%20v2%20Dec-2025.pdf>



Conclusion

SPCA appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing Industry) Amendment Bill. Our organisation strongly supports the closure of commercial greyhound racing and commends the Government for bringing forward this Bill. With targeted amendments to strengthen definitions, protections, independence, and transparency, the Bill can deliver a transition that genuinely prioritises animal welfare and ensures that no greyhound is left unprotected as the industry winds down. SPCA considers this Bill an opportunity to set a world-leading standard for welfare-centred industry closure in New Zealand.

Our organisation would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Select Committee to speak to this submission.



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Appendix 1 – RSPCA England & Wales letter of support



RSPCA
Parkside, Chart Way
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Tel: 0300 1230 100
rspca.org.uk

12th December 2025

Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing Industry) Amendment Bill

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) (England and Wales) is the largest and oldest animal welfare organisation in the world. We strongly support the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing Industry) Amendment Bill and stand alongside the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals New Zealand (SPCA NZ) in calling for an end to this industry.

The RSPCA (England and Wales) have worked with the greyhound racing industry in Great Britain for several decades to try to improve conditions for dogs involved in the sport. While this engagement resulted in some improvements to dog welfare, progress to safeguard greyhounds has been too slow and major welfare issues affecting greyhounds have not been tackled. The issues include:

- Serious challenges for greyhound physical and mental health at all stages of their racing career. For example, rearing and housing and husbandry practices.
- The inherent danger of greyhound racing. Data from the licensed sector in Great Britain shows that over 5,300 greyhounds died and over 35,000 injuries were recorded as a result of greyhound racing between 2017 and 2024.
- The absence of a sustainable and consistent source of income which has grossly impacted any meaningful change.
- Disjointed and ineffective regulation within the sector and across the different nations within which racing takes place.
- The rehoming burden placed on the rescue and rehoming sector by the industry.
- A lack of transparency regarding industry practices and enforcement of regulatory standards, including records of racetrack injuries to greyhounds and checks for banned substances.

The RSPCA (England and Wales) is steadfast in their belief that the only way to safeguard greyhound welfare and to avoid unnecessary and preventable deaths is to phase out greyhound racing. Across the world, the industry is in decline and exists legally in only a small number of locations. Prohibiting greyhound racing in New Zealand is one of several countries to recently follow this trend including Wales who, in February 2025, announced their intention to prohibit greyhound racing with similar legislation being considered in Scotland.

We welcome and commend the decision by the New Zealand Government to introduce legislation prohibiting greyhound racing and securing a future where a good life for each and every greyhound is possible.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Schultz-Jagow

Director of Policy, Prevention and Campaigns.

RSPCA (England and Wales).

RSPCA ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS



Royal Patron: HM King Charles III

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The RSPCA helps animals in England and Wales. Registered charity no. 219099. The RSPCA only exists with the support of public donations.



Appendix 2 – RSPCA Australia letter of support



17th December 2025

Committee Secretariat
Primary Production Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington, New Zealand

Dear Committee Members,

Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing) Amendment Bill

RSPCA Australia acknowledges the support of SPCA NZ and other animal advocacy groups for the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing) Amendment Bill. We understand that the New Zealand government has acted in response to the commercial racing industry in New Zealand failing to meet acceptable animal welfare standards and community expectations for the care of racing greyhounds. There are many significant inherent animal welfare issues with greyhound racing that the industry appears incapable of resolving and that strengthened regulatory change is not a solution to safeguarding greyhound welfare.

It is essential that the transition towards the end of greyhound racing in New Zealand prioritises and ensures sufficient resources to safeguard the welfare of all greyhounds owned and managed by industry participants during this period. Every dog must be accorded the highest standard of care and must be accounted for with all suitable dogs being rehomed appropriately. Rehoming must be well coordinated with a central database comprising details of every dog being publicly accessible for accountability and transparency. If industry participants are permitted to rehome dogs, it is critical that third party checks are conducted 6 months after rehoming to verify the condition and treatment of these greyhounds. All dogs must be desexed prior to rehoming except for those who are registered by Dogs NZ for companion animal breeding. Furthermore, requirements must be implemented to ensure that no greyhounds are exported for racing or for breeding for racing. Companion desexed greyhounds must only be permitted to be exported to Australia through well-established reputable rehoming groups. Long distance transport to other countries should not be permitted due to risks of compromised welfare and death during transit.

In terms of overseeing the transition process, RSPCA Australia supports the establishment of a Greyhound Racing Transition Agency. Furthermore, it is not appropriate for Greyhound Racing New Zealand to take control of the transition given their continued strong opposition to this.

In addition to ensuring the welfare of greyhounds during this transition, RSPCA Australia also acknowledges the importance of providing appropriate support to industry participants who will be affected.

RSPCA Australia

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As you may be aware, earlier this year, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff, Premier announced that Tasmania will phase out greyhound racing by mid-2029. RSPCA Tasmania will be supporting the transition process to help ensure that greyhound welfare is safeguarded. It is paramount that welfare and adoption groups are involved to assist with oversight and to achieve effective collaboration to rehome all suitable dogs.

You may be aware that RSPCA Australia supports the work of SPCA NZ in helping to ensure a smooth transition as possible that will protect the welfare of greyhounds during the wind down period and after the cessation of the sport.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Mussell".

Richard Mussell
CEO RSPCA Australia