



## PETITION WITH OVER 11,000 LOCAL SIGNATURES CALLING FOR A BAN ON GREYHOUND RACING TO BE PRESENTED TO W.A. PARLIAMENT WEDNESDAY 12TH MAY

This coming Wednesday, local greyhound advocacy group Free the Hounds, will be presenting a petition with over 11,000 local signatures to Greens MLC Alison Xamon who'll be tabling the petition the following morning. A group of dog lovers and their pet greyhounds will protest outside of Parliament House to coincide with the petition handover.

WA Parliament will only accept petitions with hand-written original signatures, no online or electronic, making it extremely difficult to collect large numbers of signatures. "Collecting over 11,000 signatures in under 1 year is an extraordinary achievement given many of our events were cancelled and supporting businesses were unable to display the petition due to COVID restrictions" said Free the Hounds President, Alanna Christiansen.

This petition demonstrates community attitudes towards greyhound racing and a growing opposition to it. It is clear from Free the Hounds' community outreach activities that greyhound racing has lost its social licence and the wider WA community supports an end to greyhound racing.

Free the Hounds has been actively campaigning for an end to greyhound racing in WA since 2015. "Our position is greyhound racing is outdated, inhumane and unsustainable," said Ms Christiansen.

Racing and Wagering WA's most recent annual report shows 101 greyhounds in the WA racing industry died in the 2019-20 financial year\*, including 10 who died right at the track in 2020.

The report also shows a total of 855 injuries were sustained on WA tracks during this period\* including 96 fractured bones in 2020. These figures represent a 10% increase in injuries from the previous year.

"The rate and severity of these injuries are specific to racing and so the only way to eliminate the risk is to ban greyhound racing altogether. These injuries can cause extreme pain and discomfort to the dog, treatment can involve major surgery and a lengthy rehabilitation, and there are often long-term health implications. Some dogs continue to be euthanised due to the severity of their injuries or die under anaesthetic during surgery to fix them. Racing injuries are just one of many welfare concerns Free the Hounds and the WA community has regarding the treatment of greyhounds within the racing industry.

"Gambling revenue should never be a justification for the mistreatment of these gentle dogs" said Ms Christiansen.

Greyhound racing is already banned in the ACT and Free the Hounds believes WA will be the next jurisdiction to outlaw the practice. "The popularity of greyhound racing in Australia has been steadily declining – and even more so here in WA. With animal welfare becoming a higher priority for more and more members of the community, now is the time to ban this barbaric industry," said Ms Christiansen.

Media invited to attend: Parliament House, 12pm, Wednesday 12th May 2021

\* Racing and Wagering WA's 2019-20 financial year is 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020

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