

Industry Transition Plan for Greyhound Racing in Tasmania

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Across 19 recommendations, we propose:

- A structured and sustainable roadmap for exiting the greyhound industry
- A plan for industry transition and workforce planning
- Key changes required in relevant legislation

The 19 recommendations address:

- Funding
- Employment
- Animal Welfare
- Social and Community Factors

Executive Summary

The Tasmanian State Government recently announced it will ban greyhound racing in Tasmania by June 2029. A 2025 report by the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, Tasmania, notes that there is **widespread support for the banning of greyhound racing**. Due to intersecting economic and animal welfare concerns - as well as declining social license - we recommend a staged phase out of government funding in greyhound racing in Tasmania by June 2029. **This transition plan outlines a structured roadmap for exiting the industry**, drawing on successful models from other jurisdictions and tailored to Tasmania's unique context. Building upon a review of the available data of the Tasmanian industry and associated economic frameworks, the following report and recommendations provides a background to the transition plan. We consider the racing and betting industries, the Tasmanian labour market and employment opportunities across various industries. We also consider Tasmanian perceptions of the racing industry, and the correlated concerns about animal welfare associated with industry practices and its future. **The data concretely demonstrates that it is not sustainable to continue financial government support for greyhound racing activities.**

The recommendations propose a funding reform to phase out public subsidies for greyhound racing by June 2029 and **redirect existing and future funding to support a staged industry exit**, including rehoming efforts and retraining programs, as well as ceasing new infrastructure investments tied to greyhound racing. Recommendations include an **employment transition** including ceasing new work licenses related to greyhound racing and developing retraining and redeployment programs for the industry jobs, focusing on transferable skills in animal care, tourism, and recreation. Animal welfare enhancements direct towards ending racing-related breeding programs, promoting registration for greyhounds as pets, removing legislative exemptions for greyhounds, and **aligning their welfare protections with other dogs**. Included is a mandate for transparent reporting of racing-related measures, including injuries and deaths, as well as supporting adoption programs, and a prohibition for imports/exports of greyhounds for racing.

The recommendations include social and community considerations, including acknowledgement of the declining social license of greyhound racing and the community's shifting expectations, but also the recognition of the history and emotional ties some participants have to the industry. Suggestions include investing in alternative community activities to preserve social connection, especially in regional areas, and expanding gambling education and support services to address associated social harms.

The recommendations propose prioritising regional workforce planning, especially in the north-west where industry concentration is highest, ensuring regional equity in funding redistribution to offset job losses across Tasmania.

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Recommendations:

Funding:

1. Phase out committed public subsidies for greyhound racing in Tasmania by the end of the deed in June 2029.

Greyhound racing in Tasmania is heavily reliant on government funding which has low levels of public support. It is difficult to find reliable information on what amount of the current government deed is spent exclusively on greyhound racing. A thorough review of the TasRacing funding allocation for greyhound racing is needed to understand the greyhound racing component of TasRacing's expenses and support relative to the other racing codes. In order to phase out public subsidies for greyhound racing a clear understanding of what proportion of the deed funding is directed toward greyhound racing is needed and recommended.

There may be an incentive for TasRacing to redirect most of the government funding towards the other racing codes and away from greyhound racing. The next recommendation clarifies that:

2. Redirect current and future government funding allocated to greyhound racing by TasRacing towards supporting the industry exit in a staged manner.

This can include changes in the point of consumption tax¹, such as removing the current threshold. These funds can then be re-invested into a staged approach towards the industry exit.

3. Set a clear timeline for the discontinuation of greyhound racing in Tasmania (by June 2029) and provide a staged-approach plan.

The first steps in the plan should be associated with guaranteeing that the activity doesn't expand, to simplify the scaling down of the greyhound racing activity over the transition period. The next steps should prioritise supporting existing participants in the transition towards the industry exit.

This staged-approach plan should be carried out in consultation with stakeholders and led by the transition working group. We recognise that the staged approach may involve overlapping components, and that some components may take a longer period beyond the end of the deed period (June 2029).

Funding should be redirected to supporting initially greyhound breeders, owners, trainers, handlers, and greyhound dogs out of the activity. The structure and purpose of current clubs and organisations involved needs also to be dealt with, as well as assets and infrastructure. These decisions should be led by the expertise of the transition working group in open conversation with stakeholders.

4. Assess and build TasRacing capacity and capabilities to support the organisation throughout the transition period towards the exit of the greyhound racing industry.

¹ Tasmania's point of consumption tax on wagering requires betting operators offering betting services to Tasmanians to lodge monthly returns when net wagering revenue from Tasmanian bets exceeds the annual tax free threshold of \$150 000 (or \$75 000 for between 1 January to 30 June 2020 only).

We recognise that TasRacing was set-up in a framework that supports its current structure and government funding dependency, however we envisage that TasRacing requires support to re-structure itself in order to be sustainably viable in a transforming environment and to strategically position itself to be a successful organisation into the future.

5. Cease new infrastructure investments that risk locking Tasmania into long-term costs associated with banned greyhound racing activity. Commence consultation to explore selling greyhound racing infrastructure that is unused and can be re-purposed.

Explore the potential to develop existing sites which will become un-used, with considerations such as delivering median/high density residential development or other social and community infrastructure. For infrastructure that can't be re-purposed (such as some of the current tracks) explore the possibility to re-purpose their use for other community activities (for example to carry out non-betting sports or community events or activities by local groups).

6. Ensure that redirected funding towards the exit transition is proportionally distributed across the south, north, and north-west regions to offset job losses and maintain local economic activity, avoiding geographic inequality.

Employment:

7. Cease granting new work licenses for greyhound racing related activities.

8. Implement a transition plan to re-deploy the 200–600 jobs (162–486 FTEs) linked to the industry into alternative employment sectors.

Existing reports present conflicting measures of the number of people involved in the greyhound racing activity, including how many people depend on the industry as their main source of income. We recommend developing, in consultation with key industry stakeholders, retraining programs for licensed breeders, trainers, owners, handlers and supporting staff, focusing on transferable skills relevant to sports, animal care, and broader recreation and industries.

Identifying appropriate retraining for people involved in greyhound racing will involve stakeholder consultation, including mapping the primary skills of each role, and how that might be transferred into a comparable and/or suitable industry (i.e. tourism, contributing to increased animal welfare needs in rehoming, hospitality) creating a pathway for greyhound industry participants. The transition working group can explore the potential for targeted training programs.

9. Prioritise regional workforce planning, particularly in the north-west where greyhound participation is disproportionately concentrated.

Animal Welfare:

10. End greyhound breeding programs for the purposes of racing as soon as feasible and encourage registration of breeders for greyhounds as pets. Tighten breeding controls to reduce overbreeding and the subsequent burden on rehoming programs.

11. Strengthen greyhound welfare regulations by removing exemptions under dog welfare legislation and applying the same protections to greyhound as for other dogs.

Removing exemptions would bring the industry in line with contemporary community expectations, strengthen accountability, and close gaps in enforcement.

12. Reinforce mandatory reporting of all racing-related deaths and injuries to increase transparency during the transition period to the exit of the greyhound racing industry.

Mandatory reporting would ensure accurate, public data, enhance transparency, and rebuild community trust in oversight mechanisms, addressing one of the main criticisms undermining the industry's social licence.

13. Support adoption programs (e.g., GAP, Dogs Home of Tasmania) with sustainable funding, training, and community education campaigns.

Aim to involve greyhound racing participants into adoption and re-homing campaigns. Involving industry participants in rehoming initiatives would also increase accountability and help shift community perceptions of responsibility maintaining strong links between greyhounds and their owners and trainers. Part of this sustainable funding should come from the committed deed funding reallocated to supporting rehoming greyhounds.

14. Prohibit imports and exports of greyhound dogs into and out of Tasmania for racing purposes, with a caveat for allowing approved animal welfare initiatives to move greyhounds to other states in the rehoming process.

Social and Community Factors:

15. Acknowledge declining social licence.

Social license broadly refers to community support for an industry or activity. The statistics on greyhound racing are clear and increasing - the Tasmanian community does not support the industry, supports the ban, and does not approve of the government funding model. Declining social license is directed both at government support and at animal welfare concerns. In the Dog Welfare in Tasmania - Legislation Report (2025), the authors concluded from consultation that community expectations have significantly changed towards greyhounds being used for industry purposes, and that animal welfare is seen as needing to take priority over the industries that rely on the labour of dogs. Eslake (2025) report shows that greyhound racing in Tasmania is in decline and that it is heavily reliant on taxpayers' money. Research in New Zealand also shows declining political support for parties that support greyhound racing.

16. Acknowledge that for some people involved in greyhound racing, the connection to the industry is related to their heritage through intergenerational family participation, providing sense of belonging, social connection and emotional wellbeing to many participants. This has been evident in the media coverage in opposition to the proposed ban and needs to be considered in the exit transition and prohibition process.

17. Invest in alternative community activities that replace the social connection currently provided by racing clubs (through for example local sports, animal welfare

events, community hubs). Ideally work with the clubs to preserve social connection and find a new channel for social interaction.

Transitioning government support towards alternative community activities that offer connection, and belonging would preserve the social benefits of gatherings while avoiding the harms tied to gambling and animal welfare concerns. Partnering with existing clubs in this transition would respect local traditions and encourage smooth social adjustment.

18. Educate the public on gambling risks and expand problem gambling support services, recognising the high social costs tied to betting.

While no Tasmania-specific studies exist, broader evidence shows significant social costs related to gambling and betting. Community petitions and submissions highlight that these concerns are widely recognised through ongoing public engagement. Expanding education on gambling risks and strengthening support services would help mitigate these harms and align policy with community wellbeing priorities.

19. Leverage Tasmania's existing brand strengths in tourism, food and environment to demonstrate leadership in animal welfare. Develop public campaigns highlighting humane treatment of animals, informed by consultations and community engagement to reflect public sentiment. Demonstrate responsible fiscal funding directed to pressing issues that generate social wellbeing and positive animal welfare outcomes.

Rationale:

This section provides a rationale for each of the recommendations suggested based on research of public information and data available on greyhound racing in Tasmania and based on analyses of greyhound racing industry exit transitions in other jurisdictions.

Greyhound racing has been banned in most countries including South Africa, Scotland, Spain, Argentina, 44 states in the United States of America, and will be phased out in New Zealand by July 2026. The only countries where commercial greyhound racing legally takes place are Australia, Ireland and the UK, and as of now, the practice remains legal in only two states within the United States². Nevertheless, the industry is experiencing a marked global decline. Notably, one of the final jurisdictions to introduce greyhound racing, Macau, ceased operations in 2018. Domestically, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) implemented a ban on greyhound racing in 2018³.

There are currently two operational greyhound racing tracks in Tasmania⁴: the Hobart Greyhound Racing Club (Elwick Racecourse) in Dowsing Point Glenorchy, next to the Bowen Bridge, and the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club (Mowbray Racecourse) in Mowbray, Launceston. A third track in Devonport Showgrounds closed in 2022, and the Devonport club (North West Greyhound Racing Club) holds races in Hobart and Launceston, operating without a dedicated track. Tasmania hosted 159 greyhound race meetings during the 2023–24 racing season.⁵ Racing days in Hobart are typically Thursday evenings and in Launceston Monday nights.

TasRacing is Tasmania's Principal Racing Authority⁶, entrusted with the comprehensive development and promotion of the state's racing industry. As the governing body, it oversees greyhound racing and breeding, markets Tasmanian racing to audiences, funds racing clubs, provides stakes and prize money, manages racing venues, and ensures the operation of greyhound racing activities. Established in November 2008 through legislation in the Tasmanian State Parliament, TasRacing has been a state-owned company since July 2009. The Tasmanian Treasury report⁷ explains that TasRacing has two members, the Treasurer and the Minister for Racing, who hold shares in the company in trust for the Crown. TasRacing's core responsibilities, as agreed by the members' statement, are the ongoing development of racing and breeding industries in Tasmania and the promotion of Tasmanian racing to local, national and international wagering markets.

² Alex Lefkowitz (2023). The Global Race to End Dog Racing: An Analysis of Legal vs. Social Power. <https://publications.lawschool.cornell.edu/cilj/2023/08/24/the-global-race-to-end-dog-racing-an-analysis-of-legal-vs-social-power-vol-56-1/>. Viewed 30th July 2025.

³ RSPCA (2024b). Greyhound Racing in Tasmania, <https://www.rspcatas.org.au/event/greyhound-racing-in-tasmania/#:~:text=According%20to%20Racing%20Tasmania%20figures,social%20housing%2C%20or%20the%20environment>. Viewed 30th July 2025.

⁴ TasRacing (2023). Tasmanian race dates for 2023/24 released. Source: <https://tasracingcorporate.com.au/2023/06/05/tasmanian-race-dates-for-2023-24-released/>. Viewed 30th July 2025.

⁵ Eslake, S. (2025). The financing of greyhound racing in Tasmania. Source: <https://www.sauleslake.info/the-funding-of-greyhound-racing-in-tasmania/>. Viewed 1st August 2025.

⁶ Greyhound Australia, member of Greyhounds Australasia, is responsible for the national rules governing the greyhound racing industry in Australia. Greyhounds Australasia commenced a major project to review and modernise the national rules of greyhound racing; the proposed new Greyhounds Australasia Rules (GARs) recognise a need to adopt a consistent approach to the many proposed reforms and ensure the rules are simplified and easily understood by current and future participants. Tasracing is the Tasmanian member of Greyhounds Australasia.

⁷ Tasmania Government (2020). A Desktop Review of The Cost and Functions of TasRacing. Source: <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/Documents/Tasracing%20Review%20Report%202020%20FINAL.pdf>. Accessed 4th August 2025.

Funding:

The following recommendations are substantiated on the proceeding discussion.

1. Phase out committed public subsidies for greyhound racing in Tasmania by the end of the deed in June 2029.
2. Redirect current and future government funding allocated to greyhound racing by TasRacing towards supporting the industry exit in a staged manner.
3. Set a clear timeline for the discontinuation of greyhound racing in Tasmania (by June 2029) and provide a staged-approach plan.
4. Assess and build TasRacing capacity and capabilities to support the organisation throughout the transition period towards the exit of the greyhound racing industry.
5. Cease new infrastructure investments that risk locking Tasmania into long-term costs associated with banned greyhound racing activity. Commence consultation to explore selling greyhound racing infrastructure that is unused and can be re-purposed.
6. Ensure that redirected funding towards the exit transition is proportionally distributed across the south, north, and north-west regions to offset job losses and maintain local economic activity, avoiding geographic inequality.

TasRacing is funded by Tasmanian Government appropriations worth \$27 million a year over a 20-year period, indexed over the life of the deed. **Racing in Tasmania is heavily reliant on public funding.** The 2020 Treasury review found that government grants were TasRacing's main source of income, accounting for 64% of its total revenue in 2018–19⁸. Since 2009, the State Government has provided indexed annual grants to TasRacing, amounting to \$74.6 million over 15 years. Funding increased from \$3.5 million in 2010–11 to a projected \$7.5 million in 2024–25—an average annual growth rate of 5.6% (3.0% in real terms discounting for inflation)⁹, outpacing growth in education spending as highlighted by Eslake (2025). Racing code funding was reported to be \$37.3 million in the 2023/4 financial year¹⁰. While TasRacing raises some private revenue -- this was \$24.97 million in 2024, TasRacing's most recent financial reports clearly show that government funding is more than half of their funding, and it is all spent on TasRacing's expenses. In 2024, total expenses equalled \$71.43 million, higher than the total revenue of \$69.7 million. That is, for the 2023/4 financial year, TasRacing recorded a loss before tax, and no dividends were paid to members.

In general, purse revenue (the total amount of prize money available for distribution in a race or series of races) for the racing industries comes from these primary sources: racetrack pari-mutuel betting¹¹ (also named racefield fees or wagering, which can be both on-course or off-

⁸ Tasmania Government (2020). A Desktop Review of The Cost and Functions of TasRacing. Source: <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/Documents/Tasracing%20Review%20Report%202020%20-FINAL.pdf> . Accessed 4th August 2025.

⁹ Duggan, J. (2025). Tasmanian greyhound racing unprofitable and costing taxpayers, Saul Eslake review finds. Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-05-22/eslake-report-greyhound-racing-costs-tasmanian-taxpayers/105318084> . Accessed 4th August 2025.

¹⁰ <https://tasracing.com.au/documents/annual-reports> . Viewed 30th July 2025.

¹¹ Racetrack pari-mutuel betting in greyhound racing is a system where all bets of a particular type are pooled together, and the payout odds are calculated based on the total amount bet and the number of winning bets. In practical terms, all bets of the same type (e.g., win, place, show) are placed into a common pool; then the racetrack takes a percentage of the pool (called the "takeout") to cover expenses and profit. After the takeout, the remaining pool is divided among the winning bets. The odds and payouts are not fixed when the bet is placed—they depend on how much money is bet on each dog. If a dog is heavily favoured (many bets), the payout will be lower. If a dog is less favoured and wins, the payout is higher. Typically,

course), media rights, sponsorships, and prizemoney distributions. The total revenue available for distribution to participants in the racing industries is based on the dollars bet by customers at the tracks minus the winnings they receive from the games. This net revenue is then divided among three primary stakeholders: the licensed racing association (also called the licensee and racetrack operator), the state government, and the owners and breeders of dogs. The State Government hasn't however received any dividends from TasRacing since its creation.

The point of consumption (POC) tax funding, instated in 2020, represents 15% of the net wagering revenue from Tasmanian bets over the annual tax-free threshold of \$150 000. This tax is collected by the State Revenue Office like other taxes¹², and betting operators are required to register with the Commissioner for State Revenue. 80% of the net benefit of the total annual POC tax collected by the Tasmanian Government is distributed directly to TasRacing as grant funding to be used for investment in stakes, infrastructure and animal welfare (Treasury, 2020); this was \$7.05 million in 2024. Tasmania reported a **shortfall of POC revenue in the most recent financial year, due to a decrease in wagering revenue**.

Moreover, the Tasmanian Government has allocated \$32.5 million between 2020–21 and 2024–25 for racing infrastructure in the north and north-west, while greyhound racing clubs receive benefits from concessional land tax rates. In addition, the Government funding deed agreement allows for a \$40 million debt facility with TASCORP, of which Treasury will provide support in the form of principal and interest reimbursements, subject to certain conditions. The State Government incurs additional costs in running the TasRacing's recently established Racing Integrity Unit. This suggests the Government is a major supporter of racing, including greyhound racing, in Tasmania.

TasRacing private racing revenue was \$24.97 million in 2024. This revenue, along with the Government funding, are fully spent on business expenses including employee expenses, race-day expenses, sales and marketing, etc. In 2024, total expenses (from all racing codes) were \$71.4 million, while total revenue was \$69.7 million, of which \$37.3 was provided by the Government grant¹³. TasRacing reports show a loss before tax of \$1.2 million in the 2023/4 financial year primarily due to the decrease in targeted racefield revenue of \$2.83 million¹⁴.

Wagering activity has contracted sharply, with a 26% decline in the value of bets placed on greyhound races since 2021–22. Wagering, greyhound racing's primary revenue-generating activity, dropped from \$64.40 per dollar of funding in 2020–21 to \$36.52 in 2023–24. Greyhound racing's share of total wagering across the three codes fell from nearly 42% (2019–20 to 2021–22) to 37.5% in 2023–24¹⁵. **Breeders primarily receive their revenue from breeder development awards from the state's Thoroughbred Development Fund and the Greyhound Development Fund.**

Operating profit before tax for the Australian Gambling activities was \$212 million annually by June 2023, considerably smaller than in previous years¹⁶. Actually, operating profits for

odds change until betting closes, based on how people bet and payouts are based on actual betting behaviour, not predetermined odds.

¹² <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/liquor-and-gaming/gambling/community-information/gambling-data/point-of-consumption-tax-revenue> . Viewed 30 July 2025.

¹³ <https://tasracing.com.au/documents/annual-reports> . Viewed 30th July 2025.

¹⁴ <https://tasracing.com.au/documents/annual-reports> . Viewed 30th July 2025.

¹⁵ See Eslake (2025).

¹⁶ See ABS Australian industries, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/2022-23> . Viewed 23rd April 2025.

the year ending in June 2023 were 90.5% lower than in previous years and represented only 3.9% of the operating profits in the Arts and Recreation Services more broadly (historically representing on average around 44.5% of operating profits in Arts and Recreation Services in the previous years for the last decade). Operating profits before tax were on average \$1 945 million between 2007 and 2022, but saw a drop of 90.5% between June 2022 and June 2023, representing only 3.9% of all operating profit before tax in the Arts and Recreation Services.

In addition to recurrent public funding, as mentioned before, the Tasmanian Government has allocated \$32.5 million between 2020–21 and 2024–25 for racing infrastructure in the north and north-west, including discussions of providing a new greyhound track at Tapeta Park, Spreyton. Greyhound racing clubs also benefit from concessional land tax rates under s.38 of the Land Tax Act 2000, as well as travel and food subsidies.

TasRacing reports that “...A substantial portion of TasRacing’s revenues and expenses cannot be reasonably allocated to individual racing codes in a manner that would result in relevant and meaningful disclosures (...) primarily due to the existence of revenues and expenses that are common across all racing codes or not directly linked to any specific code...”. The Greyhound code share is estimated to be approximately \$8.1 million; which is more than the net benefit of the total annual POC tax collected by the Tasmanian Government returned to TasRacing as a dividend¹⁷. Eslake (2025) reports that per capita funding for greyhound racing in Tasmania (\$12.70 in 2023–24) significantly exceeds the national average (\$5.27), with only the Northern Territory providing more generous support.

Government funding and support is important for services that provide broader social benefits. **Government subsidies should support activities that provide broad and clear social benefits.** These types of social benefits are more evident in educational or health and wellbeing related activities, but **not so obvious in greyhound racing and betting.** Based on available data, the contribution to employment and the regional economy generated by greyhound racing appears quite small, even with current government support. Attendance, race participation, and wagering have all diminished significantly, suggesting waning public interest and economic viability. The trends discussed above underscore a broader decline in the popularity of greyhound racing.

TasRacing claims that their commercial revenue supports Tasmania's 14 racing clubs and sustains the broader industry, which, it claims employs over 6 400 people and contributes \$208 million to the Tasmanian economy annually, with 40% of that directly benefiting regional communities. In particular, according to IER (2023), greyhound racing generated \$59.7 million in value-added output (0.2% of GSP) in 2021–22. Moreover, IER (2023) claims that greyhound racing generated \$32.6 million in household income in 2021–22.

However, greyhound racing appears to be in decline in Tasmania across multiple indicators. Analysis by Eslake (2025) reveals significant reductions in key performance metrics. Attendance per \$1 000 of funding fell from 6.4 in 2011–12 to 4.0 in 2021–22, while race starters declined from 3.8 per \$1 000 of funding in 2008–09 to 1.6 in 2023–24. Wagering activity has contracted sharply, with a 26% decline in the value of bets placed on greyhound races since 2021–22—more than double the 11% decline observed in thoroughbred and harness racing. Employment supported by the industry also contracted, from 150 jobs per \$1 million of funding in 2011–12 to 82 in 2021–22. Between 2014 and 2018, Greyhounds Australasia recorded a 39% decrease in greyhound breeding across Australia, with Tasmania experiencing a more significant decline of 70% during the same timeframe.

¹⁷ <https://tasracing.com.au/documents/annual-reports> . Viewed 30th July 2025.

Economically, **greyhound racing appears to contribute minimally to Tasmania's output and employment.** In 2023–24, its share of Gross State Product (GSP) fell to 0.36%, down from 0.55% in 2020–21 and 2021–22—its lowest level since 2015–16, excluding the pandemic-affected year of 2019–20 (Eslake, 2025).

More broadly, the greyhound racing industry is classified under the Gambling Activities, in the Arts and Recreation services industry. Overall, the industry value added for Gambling Activities in Australia was estimated to be \$5 547 million (with the adjusted estimated around \$5 537) in 2023; representing 29% of the industry value added for Arts and Recreation Services¹⁸, compared to Sports and Recreation activities bringing in 49% of the industry value added.

Employment:

The following recommendations are substantiated on the proceeding discussion.

7. Cease granting new work licenses for greyhound racing related activities.
8. Implement a transition plan to re-deploy the 200–600 jobs (162–486 FTEs) linked to the industry into alternative employment sectors.
9. Prioritise regional workforce planning, particularly in the north-west where greyhound participation is disproportionately concentrated.

The number of people employed in the greyhound racing activity has been hard to ascertain, with inconsistent information found in different sources. Employment related to greyhound racing, including volunteers, was estimated to be around 915 participants by IER (2023)¹⁹ in 2021–22 (representing 0.16% of the Tasmanian population as indicated by Eslake (2025)). IER (2023) reports 639 full-or part-time jobs, or 486 full-time equivalent (FTE). Of these, 244 were in the south of the state, 100 in the north, and 142 in the north-west. Accounted are also 245 volunteers 'assisting breeders and trainers', and 31 volunteers at racing clubs. Of the 915 participants, 192 were in the south, 118 in the north and fully 605 in the north-west (a disproportionate concentration in the north-west).

Based on 2021 Census data, Eslake (2025) accounts for 209 Tasmanians employed in 'horse and dog racing activities' (as opposed to only greyhound racing) (ABS 2022) -- 117 full-time, 83 part-time, and 6 'away from work', equates to about 162 FTE jobs²⁰. Including 42 people employed in 'horse farming', and the 101 people employed in 'other gambling activities', Eslake (2025) calculates 352 employees across the Tasmanian racing industry (and not exclusively greyhound racing), which represents 0.13% of total employment in Tasmania (or about 273 FTEs). As Eslake (2025) points out, this is only over a quarter of IER's estimate of the number of FTE jobs in greyhound racing, which under Eslake's calculations are directly 'sustained' by all three racing codes; and less than 16% of IER's estimate of the total number of FTE jobs generated by racing. Back in 2020, the Tasmanian Treasury estimated that only

¹⁸ See ABS Australian industries, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/2022-23> . Viewed 23rd April 2025.

¹⁹ <https://ier.com.au/> IER is a private consulting business specialising in measuring the impact of events and evaluating social and economic importance of the sport, cultural and entertainment sectors. IER was commissioned by Tasracing to measure the impact of the racing industry in a few opportunities. These reports have been discredited on occasions: <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2025/08/30/tasmanias-greyhound-racing-pledge-sparks-national-debate> . Accessed 29 August 2025.

²⁰ See Charts 4 and 5 in Eslake (2025).

0.08% of the Tasmanian workforce was employed in racing related professions (including greyhound racing but also accounting for thoroughbred and harness) as their main industry of employment, not consistent with industry reports.

The greyhound racing industry, while accounted in the gambling activities subcategory of the Arts and Recreation Services industry category in Australia, is linked to the Sports and Recreation activities subcategory and other subcategories. For example, dog and horse racing officials (race stewards and handicappers) are classified as employed under the Sports Officials and Umpires, under Community and Personal Service Workers—Personal Service, Sports and Fitness Workers²¹. Similarly, betting clerks are classified under the Clerical and Administrative Workers—Other Accounting and related clerks²². An important consideration here is that these **skills are potentially transferrable across industries**.

Overall, greyhound racing (along with other racing codes) employs somewhere between 0.08%-0.16% of the Tasmanian population, with approximately 209-639 jobs, equivalent to somewhere between 162-486 FTEs based on the different reports reviewed. **An accurate understanding of the number of people employed in this activity is necessary** to justify public funding support and to support an industry transition into discontinuation of greyhound racing.

At the national level there isn't clarity on these figures either. By June 2023, the Arts and Recreation Services industry provided employment to 235 700 people in Australia, and 4 900 people in Tasmania. The Gambling Activities industry at the national level has been employing on average 33 847 employees across Australia per year. It has seen drops in annual employment in 2010, between 2014-2016, and between 2018-2020. By June 2023 it was employing 33 000 people across Australia²³. As Eslake (2025) points out, it is difficult to reconcile the greyhound industry's assertions that it 'sustained' 14 694 full-time equivalent jobs in 2022-23 (IER 2024:44), comparing also data from the 2021 Census showing that only 10 578 people were employed (whether full- or part-time) in dog and horse racing activities (ABS 2022: Table 9).

In general terms, and even at the national (and international) levels, the contribution of this activity into employment has been declining. Eslake (2025) argues that employment supported by the greyhound racing industry in Tasmania contracted, from 150 jobs per \$1 million of funding in 2011–12 to 82 in 2021–22. While determining the real number of people employed in the greyhound industry in Tasmania appears difficult and obscure, most estimates, while not consistent between each other, reflect a drop in employment in the industry over the recent period.

Annual wages and salaries from Gambling activities across Australia totalled \$2 340 million (representing 23% of wages and salaries in the Arts and Recreation Services industry) in June

²¹ See ABS: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/osca-occupation-standard-classification-australia/2024-version-1-0/browse-classification/4/46/462/4625/462531> . Accessed 30 April 2025. Same applies for Horse Racing Analyst. Accessed 30 April 2025.

²² See ABS <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/osca-occupation-standard-classification-australia/2024-version-1-0/browse-classification/5/54/549/5491/549131> . Accessed 30 April 2025.

²³ See ABS Australian industries, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/2022-23> . Viewed 23rd April 2025.

2023, compared to \$5 787 million coming from Sports and Recreation activities (representing 57% of wages and salaries in the Arts and Recreation Services industry)²⁴.

Thoroughbred and greyhound owners rely heavily on the winnings from races, which are known as ‘purses’. Purse revenue for the racing industries comes from three primary sources: racetrack pari-mutuel betting, racetrack Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs), and racetrack table games²⁵.

Animal Welfare:

The following recommendations are substantiated on the proceeding discussion.

10. End greyhound breeding programs for the purposes of racing as soon as feasible and encourage registration of breeders for greyhounds as pets. Tighten breeding controls to reduce overbreeding and the subsequent burden on rehoming programs.

11. Strengthen greyhound welfare regulations by removing exemptions under dog welfare legislation and applying the same protections to greyhound as for other dogs.

12. Reinforce mandatory reporting of all racing-related deaths and injuries to increase transparency during the transition period to the exit of the greyhound racing industry.

13. Support adoption programs (e.g., GAP, Dogs Home of Tasmania) with sustainable funding, training, and community education campaigns.

14. Prohibit imports and exports of greyhound dogs into and out of Tasmania for racing purposes, with a caveat for allowing approved animal welfare initiatives to move greyhounds to other states in the rehoming process.

In Tasmania, animal welfare is based on the Animal Welfare Act 1993 and the "Five Domains of Animal Welfare": nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state. These areas help ensure animals are well cared for. The Act also sets penalties for cruelty and neglect, highlighting the duties of animal owners and carers²⁶. Regarding dogs, the management of dogs and their welfare is achieved via the Animal Welfare (Dog) Regulations 2016 and the Dog Control Regulations 2021. These Regulations are underpinned by the Dog Control Act 2000²⁷. However, **greyhounds are currently exempt from the dog welfare regulations in Tasmania, as the respective standards and regulations for greyhounds exceed the facilities’ requirements**²⁸.

²⁴ See ABS Australian industries, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/2022-23> . Viewed 23rd April 2025.

²⁵ Pari-mutuel betting is a system where all bets of a particular type are pooled together. After the house (track or government) takes its cut (called the "takeout"), the remaining pool is divided among the winning bets. This system is commonly used in horse and greyhound racing. The handle is the total sum of money wagered, which can be broken down into: on-track handle (bets placed by people physically at the racetrack), and off-track handle (bets placed remotely -- e.g., online, at off-track betting facilities).

²⁶ Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (2024b). Tasmania's Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines. Source: <https://nre.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-welfare/legislation-standards-guidelines/animal-welfare-standards-guidelines> .

²⁷ Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, 2024b. Tasmania's Animal.

²⁸ TasRacing (2024b). Recommended Standards for The Care of Greyhounds. Source: https://46121003.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/46121003/12907777_45recommendedstandardsfor1.pdf .

The RSPCA (2015) has identified sixteen major areas of **serious animal welfare concern within the greyhound racing industry**, including: (1) Significant overbreeding and high wastage rates; (2) High euthanasia rates and low rehoming rates; (3) Injuries suffered by greyhounds; (4) Lack of industry transparency and accountability; (5) Insufficient socialisation of greyhounds; (6) Inadequate housing conditions and lack of environmental enrichment; (7) Enforceable standards for greyhounds; (8) Licensing and Inspection regime; (9) Education of participants; (10) Extending the racing career of greyhounds; (11) Administration of illicit drugs and other banned substances; (12) Illegal live baiting; (13) Use of animal skin lures; (14) The welfare of greyhounds in the possession of disqualified owner/trainer; (15) Export of Australian greyhounds; (16) Elements of self-regulation in the current framework.

A recent report²⁹ shows that 38 greyhounds were euthanised during the 2023–24 financial year in Tasmania, due to reasons including injury, age, and being unsuitable for rehoming. Four of these dogs were euthanised at the racetrack or within 14 days of sustaining a track injury. This is dissimilar to the most recent TasRacing Annual Report for 2024 which states that there were 43 euthanised and 21 deceased retired greyhound dogs in 2023/4 (page 14) and later states that there were 0 racing greyhounds euthanised in the financial year 2023/4 (page 21).

The reports released by the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhound (2021-2024)³⁰ show a notable shift in the total number of greyhound deaths across Australia between 2021 and 2024. In 2021, there were 181 recorded deaths, which slightly increased to 184 in 2022. However, 2023 marked a significant improvement with a sharp drop to 120 deaths, a 35% decrease from the previous year. Then 2024 saw a slight increase to 128, with the most recent value still higher compared to the figures in 2021 and 2022. This national pattern suggests that either regulatory measures, enforcement actions, or welfare initiatives may have had some effect, though the effectiveness varies considerably across states.

In their data, New South Wales demonstrated the most substantial improvement. Deaths dropped from 64 in 2021 to just 17 in 2024, suggesting 73% reduction. This consistent decline each year suggests successful policy changes or strong enforcement mechanisms. **Tasmania similarly showed dramatic progress, reducing deaths from 15 in 2021 to only 2 in 2024, an 87% decrease.** Australia's overall greyhound death toll has declined, especially after a major drop in 2023. However, the state-by-state breakdown reveals that success is uneven.

Recently, animal welfare advocates are demanding greater transparency from the greyhound racing industry, arguing that the reported euthanasia figures "fail to reflect the full extent of racing-related deaths". Right to information documents reveal that in Tasmania, greyhounds

²⁹ Casamitjana, J. (2024). High Racing Greyhound Mortality Rate Reported in Tasmania. Source: <https://veganfta.com/2024/06/20/high-racing-greyhound-mortality-rate-reported-in-tasmania/>.

³⁰ Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (2021). 2021 Australian track deaths and injuries. Source: <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/2021-australian-track-deaths-and-injuries/>. Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (2022). 2022 Australian track deaths and injuries. Source: <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/2022-australian-track-deaths-and-injuries/>. Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (2023). 2023 Australian track deaths and injuries. Source: <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/2023-australian-track-deaths-and-injuries/>. Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (2024). 2024 Australian track deaths and injuries. Source: <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/2024-australian-track-deaths-and-injuries/>.

euthanised due to conditions caused by overexertion are recorded under the "illness/age" deaths category (Rojahn, 2025)³¹.

Looking at greyhound injuries by state, reveals mixed patterns in the number of recorded greyhound injuries across Australian states from 2021 to 2024, with some states seeing increases and others showing signs of improvement. New South Wales consistently recorded the highest number of injuries, rising steadily from 3 074 in 2021 to 4 236 in 2024. Queensland followed a similar trajectory, with injuries increasing from 1 436 in 2021 to 1 865 in 2024, peaking in 2023. **Tasmania saw a drop from 367 injuries in 2021 to 282 in 2024, with a rise in 2023.**

The data on major greyhound injuries across Australian states from 2021 to 2024 reveals concerning upward trends in several jurisdictions, especially in high-volume racing states. New South Wales consistently recorded the highest number of major injuries, rising from 575 in 2021 to a peak of 944 in 2023 before slightly decreasing to 937 in 2024. **Tasmania showed the most consistent and encouraging trend, with a gradual decrease in major injuries from 48 in 2021 to 40 in 2024.**

Broadly, the life of the racing greyhound can be explained through “animal capital” (Stevens et al., 2022). **During its life course, a racing greyhound will be considered: an investment, a valued commodity, a labourer and a surplus, or waste (if they are not valued as breeding or racing dogs).** Greyhound overbreeding and excess of retired greyhounds (“waste”) is a serious current concern in the industry and community.

Through a relatively recent initiative, TasRacing offers industry participants a funding pool of \$100 000 in Racing Animal Welfare grant to support eligible Tasmanian organisations in delivering projects that enhance animal welfare across the local racing industry; especially designed for animals retiring from the track. In addition, TasRacing reports that ‘...under the rules of racing, all greyhounds retiring from the racing industry are required to be de-sexed. TasRacing funds the cost of this procedure, as well as providing a rebate for any dental work and vaccinations that may be required by each dog on retirement. These costs are covered by TasRacing, up to \$1 100 for each greyhound, and therefore do not have to be borne by any rehoming organisation...’.

The study on the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) in Australia and New Zealand found both the successes and ongoing challenges in rehoming retired racing greyhounds. While the programs have been largely effective in facilitating adoptions, outcomes vary across regions due to differences in resources, program structures, and regulatory oversight. A critical component of the adoption process is temperament testing, particularly to assess behaviour around small animals; however, inconsistencies in assessment methods pose risks to both adopters and animals. Many greyhounds also require significant socialization and training to transition successfully into pet life, with programs offering foster care and behavioural support showing more favourable outcomes. This study also found that public misconceptions, such as beliefs that greyhounds are aggressive or difficult to care for, remain a barrier to adoption, underscoring the importance of community education. Finally, there are still concerns about the racing industry’s reliance on adoption programs as a primary welfare

³¹ Madeleine Rojahn, “Greyhound welfare activists call for better transparency on 'racing-related deaths,’” <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-02-24/racing-greyhounds-euthanased-for-exertion-caused-illness/104705866> . Viewed 20 July 2025.

strategy, suggesting the need for broader reforms, including breeding restrictions and improved post-racing care obligations ³².

Social and Community Factors:

The following recommendations are substantiated on the proceeding discussion.

15. Acknowledge declining social licence.

16. Acknowledge that for some people involved in greyhound racing, the connection to the industry is related to their heritage through intergenerational family participation, providing sense of belonging, social connection and emotional wellbeing to many participants. This has been evident in the media coverage in opposition to the proposed ban and needs to be considered in the exit transition and prohibition process.

17. Invest in alternative community activities that replace the social connection currently provided by racing clubs (through for example local sports, animal welfare events, community hubs). Ideally work with the clubs to preserve social connection and find a new channel for social interaction.

18. Educate the public on gambling risks and expand problem gambling support services, recognising the high social costs tied to betting.

19. Leverage Tasmania's existing brand strengths in tourism, food and environment to demonstrate leadership in animal welfare. Develop public campaigns highlighting humane treatment of animals, informed by consultations and community engagement to reflect public sentiment. Demonstrate responsible fiscal funding directed to pressing issues that generate social wellbeing and positive animal welfare outcomes.

In a 2023 survey of 500 Tasmanians, 46% of respondents were 'strongly opposed' to the greyhound racing industry (Tasmanian Times, 2023). By comparison, 11% supported or 'strongly supported' the activity. In the same survey, 84% of respondents reported that they would be 'very unlikely' to attend a greyhound race in the next 12 months (Inglis 2023; Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds). While 500 respondents cannot represent the entire populace, as Eslake notes (2025), this is a higher sample proportion than is typically used in polling through organisations such as NewsPoll (p.6).

In December 2024, a group of 38 veterinary professionals in Tasmania urged the state government to cease funding greyhound racing by 2029 (CPG 2025). An online petition calling for an end to greyhound racing in Tasmania, with 4 997 signatures, was presented to the Legislative Council by Greens MLC Cassy O'Connor.

Moreover, 293 submissions on improving dog welfare were received and summarised in a 2025 consultation report for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Tasmania³³. The report notes that there was "widespread support amongst respondents for

³² Elliott, R., Toribio, J. A. L., & Wigney, D. (2010). The Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) in Australia and New Zealand: A survey of owners' experiences with their greyhounds one month after adoption. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 124(3-4), 121-135.

³³ Biosecurity Tasmania. (2025). 'Improving Dog Welfare Outcomes in Tasmania - Consultation Report', Department of Natural Resources and Environment, April 25.

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/Consultation%20Report%20on%20Improving%20Dog%20Welfare%20Outcomes%20in%20Tasmania.pdf>.

banning greyhound racing” (p. 72). Participants were asked about whether or not they thought that there should be welfare exemptions for working dogs and greyhounds - to which there was strong opposition. The report also states that there was “widespread concern that exemptions create loopholes that allow mistreatment and neglect” (p. 68)³⁴. Indeed, the report found that “many respondents” thought there should be additional welfare protections than for other dogs, and that enforcement of welfare should not be left to the industry to impose and regulate, nor to individuals within the industry.

On a national level, the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds reports that 58% of Australians polled claimed that they would be much less or somewhat less likely to support a political party that provided taxpayer subsidies for the industry; a consistent finding across both urban and rural respondents and across all states and territories. Most Australians (outside of South Australia) reported wanting greyhound racing to end, and a larger majority were opposed to governments subsidising the industry (69%).

Although these survey results do not directly represent concerns about animal welfare, a comprehensive study in New Zealand provides insight into the role that animal welfare and advocacy play in that jurisdiction. As the study demonstrates very similar sentiments overall toward the industry, arguably the results regarding animal welfare hold credit in speculating on Tasmanians’ perceptions of the impact of racing on greyhounds. This study examining attitudes toward commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand found that 72% of respondents expressed either a slightly or predominantly negative view of the industry³⁵. Critically, they also found that ending the industry would improve New Zealand’s reputation for animal welfare. When asked about the future of commercial greyhound racing, a majority, 60.4% (801 out of 1 327 respondents) indicated they would support a ban. In contrast, 8.2% (110 respondents) opposed a ban, while 31.3% (416 respondents) stated they needed more information before deciding. Support increased if a national referendum were to be held, with 74.8% (992 respondents) stating they would vote in favour of banning greyhound racing. Further responses underscored strong public sentiment: (a) 58.8% (780 respondents) said they would be disappointed if the government failed to implement a ban. (b) 68.3% (906 respondents) agreed that banning greyhound racing is the right decision. (c) 65.5% (869 respondents) believed that such a move would improve New Zealand’s reputation for animal welfare.

The study found that **social license was a key factor in perceptions of the future of the greyhound industry** (Cameron et al., 2024). Not only this, but they argued that the decline in attendance and participation was “largely driven by an eroding ‘social license’ due to high profile welfare issues and changing public attitudes towards animal welfare and the use of animals in entertainment” (p. 2). As Nelsen (2009) notes, social license can be defined “as a set of concepts, values, tools and practices that represent a way of viewing reality for industry and stakeholders” (p. 161). Central to social license is accountability and credibility in industry, and whether perceptions of stakeholders and the public of that industry can have material effects on the support of that industry to operate if support from the community is not granted or erodes. As Cameron et al describe: “...A social license is the implicit means by which a community approves or accepts an industry and indirectly its practices. Social licenses exist on a spectrum where the more trust an industry has, the stronger their social

³⁴ The survey was commissioned by GREY2K USA Worldwide and the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds. <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/greyhound-racing-survey/>.

³⁵ Cameron, K. E., Vaughan, A., McAninch, M. J., Briden, K., & Dale, A. (2024). Cross-sectional survey of public perception of commercial greyhound racing in New Zealand. *Animals*, 14(2), 207.

license; a social license may be withdrawn, accepted, or approved depending on the level of trust that industry instils in stakeholders. (Cameron et al 2024, p. 2)...”.

In greyhound racing, do declining attendance numbers on their own demonstrate an eroding social license? If read in conjunction with public perceptions of the industry, public perceptions appear to suggest that a lack of participation reflects broader trends around the industry’s operation, governance, and economic support from governments.

In their survey of New Zealanders, Cameron et al. (2024) also noted that there was a perceived **lack of transparency in industry practices** towards animal welfare. They found that the majority of people surveyed were also **unaware of the mainstream practices of greyhound racing**. This raises critical questions for the future of the industry – if people are unaware of governance structures and practices surrounding welfare but have also withdrawn support, what kind of information campaign could change this perception if welfare suggestions were adopted? Cameron et al. (2024) frame this as the **social license of the industry being “at risk due to a lack of transparency, poor data recording, and ongoing animal issues”** (p. 2). They conclude that it “is increasingly clear that social license is key to the future of greyhound racing” (p. 2).

The issue of lack of transparency can be seen not only in this report and Eslake (2025), but also in the Dog Welfare Legislation in Tasmania - Legislation Report (2025). The report outlines perceptions from the 293 submissions made on the welfare of dogs broadly, with participants being asked directly about the welfare of greyhounds participating in the industry. These perceptions included “poor housing conditions, euthanasia or underperforming dogs, and lack of adequate socialisation” (p. 68). Of these submissions, some also stated that they believed that exemptions for greyhounds and other working dogs did not meet contemporary community attitudes - in other words, pointing to an eroding social license. As the report’s authors summarise: “...Community expectations around animal welfare have changed significantly and exemptions do not reflect current best practices...” (p. 70). In the report’s summary on the call to ban greyhound racing, the authors note that participants have linked “financial incentives” and “neglect and abuse” as one leading to the other (p. 72). This raises a critical question about how it would be possible to implement better regulation and oversight, when community sentiment sees the use of dogs for financial gain as systematically linked to abuse. While there are suggestions for the future of the sector if it were to continue – “higher welfare standards, mandatory reporting, and stricter oversight” (p. 74) – it is not clear that implementing these recommendations would mitigate the clear support for a ban based on concerns predominantly about welfare. Learning from **Cameron et al. (2024) findings, not only is this sentiment increasing, but it can also be tied directly to political support.**

Media coverage has been relatively consistent in local press throughout 2025, primarily covering calls to ban the industry. Outside of sport coverage, the news coverage of the greyhound industry is now synonymous with calls to phase out or end greyhound racing. Media coverage is, as is typical, framed mostly around an event - for example, the release of a report or new data. In *The Mercury*, articles also have focused on the issue of greyhound adoption and the pressure put on animal welfare groups to rehome greyhounds.

An example of coverage about greyhound adoption can be seen in an article by Elise Kaine in *The Mercury* on April 18³⁶. In an interview with the Dogs Home of Tasmania, it is noted that darker greyhounds are harder to rehome than lighter colour dogs, and that the resources needed during the rehoming process for greyhounds “takes up valuable kennel space”. Mark Wild from the Dogs Home Tasmania also notes that adoption has slowed; when they first started receiving greyhounds to adopt out, they would be rehomed quickly, but this has slowed, and it is “hard” to get them adopted. In a March 23 article by Sue Bailey in *The Mercury*³⁷, former *ABC* broadcaster Peter Gee is profiled around having adopted a greyhound, and his thoughts on phasing out the industry. Gee highlights that while owners of currently racing dogs typically love their animals, that the welfare concerns are paramount to his opinion of the industry. It is critical to note from the comments made by the Dogs Home Tasmania that if the industry is to continue, more dogs will be bred, arguably requiring more dogs to be rehomed in the future - without adequate infrastructure.

One notable piece of national coverage was published in *Crikey* on May 22, 2025, written by Bernard Keane³⁸. The article frames the debate over the industry financially; that the Tasmanian taxpayer is “propping up a dying” industry. Critically, Keane frames the release of Eslake’s report around the unsustainability of the sector based on punter interest which is in decline while funding increases. He ends the article by arguing, “...lots of people like a variety of sports and cultural pursuits that get less funding from the government. There’s no reason to keep wasting taxpayer money on it.”

Racing gambling is most common in regional, rural and remote Australia, including many disadvantaged communities. Greyhound racing in Australia, and in Tasmania, is most popular in areas where it has become an **opportunity for social connection**.

Greyhound in Tasmania seems to fulfill two **main purposes: that of entertainment and betting and that of community social connection**. In Tasmania, greyhound racing increased in popularity following the legalising of betting on races by the Government of Premier Albert Ogilvie in 1932 (Alexander 2005: 108). This was followed by the opening of a track at White City in Launceston in February 1933, and at the TCA Ground in Hobart in January 1935. **Many clubs have managed to provide social benefits, such as community meetings and sporting facilities.** TasRacing claims that ‘...In fact, the **most sports- and community-focused clubs tend to be smaller and less reliant on gambling revenue...**’.

However, **public engagement in greyhound racing has waned**. According to IER report, total attendance declined from 26 700 in 2011–12 to 23,740 in 2022–23 (IER, 2023), representing a fall in participation from 5.2% to 4.1% of the Tasmanian population over the period. TasRacing data further indicates a 6.25% reduction in the number of races and an 11.25% decline in race starters since their peak in 2012–13.

The greyhound racing industry at the national level reports a national attendance of 611 427 at race meetings during the 2022–23 financial year (IER 2024: 44). However, this figure appears inconsistent with historical ABS data, which recorded 281 400 attendees at dog

³⁶ Kaine, E. (2025). ‘Dogs Home of Tasmania CEO Mark Wild Hosts Greyhound Exclusive High Tea’, *The Mercury* April 18. <https://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/dogs-home-of-tasmania-ceo-mark-wild-hosts-greyhound-exclusive-high-tea/news-story/3d24d19d0d9691ac061be068c6f0ffec>

³⁷ Bailey, S. (2025). ‘Peter Gee Becomes Ambassador for Campaign to End Taxpayer Funding of Greyhound Racing’, *The Mercury* March 23. <https://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/peter-gee-becomes-ambassador-for-campaign-to-end-taxpayer-funding-of-greyhound-racing/news-story/5d0e32f59d0c3f91650d2e3a30e68ff6>.

³⁸ Keane, B. (2025). ‘Tasmanian Taxpayers Spend Millions Propping Up Dying Greyhound ‘Industry’’, *Crikey* May 22. <https://www.crikey.com.au/2025/05/22/tasmanian-spend-millions-propping-up-dying-greyhound-industry/>.

racing events in 2009–10. As Eslake (2025) observes, it is difficult to credibly assert that attendance more than doubled—an increase of approximately 117%—over the intervening 13 years, particularly in light of broader trends indicating declining public interest in the sport.

While greyhound racing has been part of Tasmanian history for 150 years, behaviours, preferences and perspectives change. Tasmania is one of the states with strongest sustainability and environmental practices. TasRacing rightly points out that, “**Tasmania has natural beauty, rich agricultural heritage, produces and crafts high quality produce, and offers unique experiences**”. It is not clear that Tasmania is a touristic destination for greyhound racing, however. Tasmania has one of the highest pet ownership rates globally, with pets considered the members of many families³⁹. Under the Tasmanian Animal Welfare Act 1993, responsibility for the welfare of animals is shared by many people, not just the owner. Individuals may also be held accountable if they have animals on agistment or loan, are acting as a livestock carrier or livestock agent, or have animals in their care through any other means⁴⁰. A Roy Morgan Research found that a large majority of Australians place strong importance on animal welfare, with 98% considering it important and overwhelming support for legislative and institutional measures. Specifically, 94% support laws ensuring animals have a good quality of life, and 97% support laws protecting animals from cruelty. Public sentiment also favours stronger government involvement, with 80% supporting increased government action and 74% endorsing the creation of an independent body to oversee animal welfare. Additionally, 85% believe animal welfare laws should reflect both community expectations and the best-available science⁴¹.

There is no study or research done on the potential contribution to tourism income that greyhound racing may have in Tasmania. Similarly, there is no specific regional place where greyhound racing is part of the identity of the place. If anything, the costs associated with community negative perceptions of the greyhound industry reported in the media may reflect place identity in Tasmania.

Importantly, **social costs of greyhound racing include the impact of gambling and gambling addiction to individuals, families and the broader community.** Australia has one of the highest gambling losses in the world⁴². Pokies and betting account for three-quarters of total gambling losses. Gambling, including betting⁴³, is addictive and can be harmful. Gamblers can develop a clinical gambling addiction that leads to a loss of control of gambling spending and a significant risk of harm. Gambling addiction is recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) alongside alcohol and drug addiction. Gambling can lead to financial and mental distress, and escalate to job losses, bankruptcy, fraud, homelessness, relationship breakdown, family violence, and suicide. Gamblers, their families, the broader community and government pay the price for the harm generated by gambling.

While there is no clear understanding of the scale of problem gambling in the greyhound racing activities, and there are no studies of the effect of greyhound betting on human health

³⁹ RSPCA, 2024b, Greyhound Racing in Tasmania.

⁴⁰ Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (2024a). Animal welfare. Source: <https://nre.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-welfare>.

⁴¹ Australian Alliance for Animals (2022). Draft Animal Welfare Act Amendment Bill (Tasmania) Source: <https://www.allianceforanimals.org.au/ourwork/submission-draft-animal-welfare-act-amendment-bill-tasmania>.

⁴² Grattan Institute, “A better bet: How Australia should prevent gambling harm”, Aruna Sathanapally, Kate Griffiths, and Elizabeth Baldwin, September 2024. <https://grattan.edu.au/report/a-better-bet-how-australia-should-prevent-gambling-harm/>. Accessed 11 June 2025.

⁴³ Betting, or wagering, includes sports betting and racing betting.

and wellbeing, this is a dangerous cost with broader social repercussions that can't be omitted.

The evidence presented above on the perceptions of the activity complements the evidence previously presented showing falls in race attendance, drops in the total number of races, and dropping number of participating greyhounds ("starters"). Public interest – only 1% of Tasmanians reported attending a dog race in the past year, 84% said they were unlikely to attend, and 89% indicated they were unlikely to place a bet on a dog race – support public perceptions.

Continuing to invest public funding in an industry that is no longer aligned with public values, ethical standards, or economic prudence is increasingly untenable. Tasmania has an opportunity to lead by prioritising animal welfare, public sentiment, and responsible fiscal policy. Evidence has been gathered showing that the industry is decaying both financially and in popularity, even with government subsidization. Increasing regulation and policing to improve animal welfare will only make the costs of running the industry even higher, without necessarily increasing the revenue. Moreover, there is no indication that the social benefits generated by the industry exceed the social costs produced by it. It is therefore recommended that greyhound racing be discontinued in Tasmania by 2029.

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