

## Activists urge Australia to ban export of greyhounds to Macau Canidrome

Wednesday, 22 January, 2014, 6:13pm  
News › Hong Kong ANIMAL WELFARE

**Olivia Rosenman** [olivia.rosenman@scmp.com](mailto:olivia.rosenman@scmp.com)

Animal welfare activists have slammed the Australian government for refusing to consider banning the export of hundreds of greyhounds every year to Macau's Yat Yuen Canidrome, a greyhound racing track notorious for inhumane conditions and brutal extermination policies.

The government has ignored repeated calls from animal welfare organisations, members of parliament and members of the public to stop the exports. The Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, said on Wednesday that he was aware of long-running campaigns to ban the trade but that "once exported dogs reach their destination they come under the jurisdiction of the importing country".

Past investigations have revealed inhumane living conditions, a disregard for dogs' welfare, and numerous exterminations at the Macau Canidrome, the only greyhound racing track in Asia.

International lobby group Grey2k published a report in 2012 that revealed that more than 300 dogs had been injured over a ten week period. Another 13 were found suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea.



A 2011 investigation by the *South China Morning Post* [revealed that in 2010 dogs were](#)

[exterminated at a rate of around 30 each month, or one dog almost every day](#) [2]. According to the investigation, 383 dogs imported from Australia were killed by lethal injection because they were regarded as underperforming.

In late December, Grey2K obtained documents from the Australian government under the Freedom of Information act that confirmed the extent of the exports, revealing that almost 150 greyhounds had been exported to Macau directly or via Hong Kong in just four months. The organisation had been asked to limit their information request to just a few months due to the volume of paperwork.

The group also penned an open letter to Barnaby Joyce [requesting his support for banning exports of greyhounds to Macau](#) [3].

The Hong Kong government has provided information more readily. According to figures obtained from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, last year a total of 190 greyhounds were exported to Macau from Australia via Hong Kong. In 2012, the number of dogs was 378.

Dr. John Kaye, Greens member of the New South Wales Legislative Council, has accused the government of washing their hands of the welfare of dogs exported to Macau.

“The Canidrome is notorious, yet Australian greyhound authorities have refused to use their capacity to starve Macau of its main source of greyhounds to pressure the industry to clean up its act”, said Dr. Kaye in a statement on his website.

Greyhound Freedom, a Sydney-based advocacy group, is organising a rally for early February in which they will demand the government stop the export to Macau’s Canidrome.

“The thing that concerns us is that we know there’s no animal welfare law and there’s nothing to protect them in the way that they are killed or in their minimum standards of care. We think Australia has to get out now, we don’t want to be part of it,” said organiser Inez Hamilton-Smith.

A petition at the online platform Change.org [entitled "Ban the export of greyhounds from Australia to racetracks overseas"](#) [4] has collected more than 21,000 signatures since it was posted on December 23, the day after the export numbers were revealed to the Australian public.

Greyhounds Australasia, an advocacy group representing Australia’s greyhound industry, announced a formal review into greyhound exports in 2012 but the results of the review have been withheld, despite repeated calls for their release to the public. The group did not respond to the *Post*’s repeated requests for comment in time for publication.

Macau does not have any laws to protect animals. In September last year, the government drafted an animal protection law, suggesting it would be implemented within the year. There have been no updates about the law’s progress. The government did not respond to the *Post*’s request for further information.

The Canidrome has recently begun a dog adoption scheme. Information posted on its website claims the company has formed a team to evaluate suitable retired greyhounds and train them as pets. The Canidrome did not respond to the *Post*'s request for further information.

According to Albano Martins, director of the Macau Society for the Protection of Animals (ANIMA), the adoption programme is a fraud. "It is very clear to us that this is a fake adoption programme to calm the Macau authorities and the Australian government," said Martins.

The Canidrome, owned by gambling magnate Stanley Ho Hung-sun, has seen a steady decline in revenue in recent years. The most recent figures from the Macau Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau show a 48.5 per cent drop in betting income since 2010.

A coalition of animal protection groups, including ANIMA, has approved a recommendation to the Macau government to close the track when the concession expires in December next year.

**Topics:** Greyhound Racing

**More on this:** [50 years in operation for Macau's canidrome for greyhound races](#) [5]  
[Owners angry as Macau Canidrome fails to stop euthanising retired dogs](#) [6]  
[Canidrome to 'close within three years'](#) [7]  
[Call to shut down Macau greyhound racecourse](#) [8]  
['10 dogs injured' at every Canidrome race meeting](#) [9]

---

**Source URL (retrieved on Jan 23rd 2014, 2:09am):** <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1411142/activists-urge-australia-ban-export-greyhounds-macau-canidrome>

**Links:**

[1] <https://www.scmp.com/sites/default/files/2014/01/22/greyhound2.jpg>

[2] <http://www.scmp.com/article/969755/gillard-urged-halt-greyhound-sales-macau>

[3] <http://www.grey2kusa.org/pdf/LTJOYCE.pdf>

[4] <http://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/barnaby-joyce-minister-for-agriculture-ban-the-export-of-greyhounds-from-australia-to-racetracks-overseas>

[5] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1300975/50-years-operation-macaus-canidrome-greyhound-races>

[6] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1106419/owners-angry-macau-canidrome-fails-stop-euthanising-retired-dogs>

[7] <http://www.scmp.com/article/1000232/canidrome-close-within-three-years>

[8] <http://www.scmp.com/article/992443/call-shut-down-macau-greyhound-racecourse>

[9] <http://www.scmp.com/article/990239/10-dogs-injured-every-canidrome-race-meeting>