

Allegations prompt inquiry into greyhound industry

Natalie O'Brien

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A parliamentary inquiry has been set up to scrutinise allegations of industry mismanagement, inappropriate distribution of TAB funds and widespread mistreatment of dogs in the state's \$50 million-a-year greyhound racing industry.

Greens MP John Kaye successfully moved a motion in the Parliament on Tuesday to establish the inquiry, saying it was clear that the industry was in a state of crisis.

"The greyhound industry in NSW is no stranger to controversy. Animal welfare scandals, shonky management practices and allegations of criminal involvement have caused considerable community concern in recent years," he said. "A parliamentary inquiry will shine much-needed light on the greyhound racing code, which has been plagued by claims of mismanagement and animal mistreatment."

Dr Kaye said the inquiry was essential to "address the public loss of confidence in the industry's management and turn around the shocking animal welfare record that sees too many dogs injured and destroyed each year".

Last year Fairfax Media exposed allegations of race-fixing, drug use, money laundering and alleged criminal activity within the greyhound racing industry, despite reforms that had been aimed at cleaning up the sport. Stakeholders raised concerns that the industry had returned to its murky past because of poor transparency and independent oversight.

Past corrupt practices were the subject of an inquiry into the sport in 2000 by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, which led to six people being charged and the jailing of former chief steward Rodney Potter.

The former Labor government introduced changes to the industry in 2009 and Greyhound Racing NSW was set up as an autonomous and non-government body.

But industry stakeholders say that meant there was no independent outside oversight and GRNSW had become a private company.

Concerns were also raised by David Landa, a former NSW ombudsman and former chief magistrate of the NSW Local Courts, who resigned last year as the integrity auditor for Greyhound Racing NSW, criticising the role as compromised and unworkable.

Mr Landa had been appointed to oversee all aspects of drug testing and control, stewards, registration as well as provide an independent office to investigate and resolve complaints within the industry. But he told Fairfax Media last year that failings in the legislation made his position as an independent overseer "simply not possible".

The welfare of the dogs has also been a major concern with reports that more than 3000 dogs are being destroyed each year, and that dogs are underfed, inappropriately confined in small pens and fed performance-enhancing drugs.