

22 April 2014

The Honourable Barnaby Joyce
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
P.O Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Joyce,

We write regarding the export of greyhounds from Australia to Macau.

Many animal protection societies and thousands of individuals from around the world have expressed deep concern for the welfare of Australian greyhounds sent to Macau's Canidrome dog track, and called on the Australian Government to ban the export of greyhounds to Macau.

It has now come to our attention that the Australian greyhound racing industry itself deems the situation in Macau unacceptable. Greyhounds Australasia, Australia's peak greyhound racing industry body, has suspended the issuing of greyhound passports for export to Macau, effective March 2013. We welcome this decision and applaud the industry for its progressive position.

However, as the suspension by Greyhounds Australasia is not legally binding, greyhound exports from Australia to Macau have not at all ceased. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to support Greyhounds Australasia's obvious desire to no longer be associated with the cruelty inflicted on greyhounds at the Canidrome, by not issuing any further export permits for Macau.

As you know, Australia has the right to suspend or ban the export of greyhounds to specific countries under Article XX "General Exceptions" of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Specifically, GATT Article XX(b) authorises Member States to deviate from their WTO commitments for trade liberalisation where "necessary to protect human, animal, or plant life or health."ⁱ

In fact, when Irish greyhound breeders petitioned the government to begin importing greyhounds to China for racing, the Department of Agriculture issued a refusal, stating that the proposal "does not provide sufficient assurance that adequate provision would be made to safeguard the health and welfare of greyhounds in China at the end of their racing life."ⁱⁱ

According to Macau's own government officials, thirty greyhounds are destroyed there each month and every imported greyhound is dead within three years. Some are put down when they are injured, but most are killed because they can't run fast enough to win.ⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, Macau has no anti-cruelty laws to protect animals and the Canidrome offers no working adoption program for retired greyhounds.

Clearly, even the Australian greyhound racing industry is recognising that Macau does not meet acceptable humane standards. However, it cannot prevent greyhounds from export to Macau without your official assistance.

Therefore we sincerely hope that the Commonwealth will support the racing industry's own efforts to protect dogs by placing a moratorium on greyhound exports to Macau.

We look forward to your response and thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



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ⁱ See, e.g. World Trade Organization, UNDERSTANDING THE WTO (2011), Chapter 4;
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/understanding_e.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Gordon Deegan, *Animal welfare concerns stall greyhound board's China plan*, The Independent, March 30, 2012 available at <http://tinyurl.com/ny5dnv4>.

ⁱⁱⁱ *The dogs who run for their lives*, Irish Daily Mail, 7 May 2011.