

A DOG'S L I F E

Are we treating dogs as our best friends?
RSPCA Australia Animal Welfare Seminar 2016



25 November 2016 | Kwong Lee Dow building
University of Melbourne

RSPCA 

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Contents

Program	2
Speaker biographies and abstracts	3
Gary Humphries	3
Welcome and introduction – Have we, do we, and will we treat dogs as we should?	4
Jed Goodfellow and Georgia Sakrzewski	5
Are we there yet? Assessing the adequacy of legal reforms to stop puppy farms	6
Mia Cobb	7
Doglogbook – helping dogs get the best out of life	8
Jan Allen	9
Manymuk watu – a dog’s life in remote Indigenous communities	10
Rachele Lowe	11
Pedigree dogs – when aesthetics and welfare conflict	12
Deb Millikan	13
Dog training then, now and into the future	14
Karen Dawson	15
Through their eyes – the long-term impacts of being raised as a racing greyhound	16
Hugh Wirth Future Leader in Animal Welfare Award 2016	17
Participant list	18

Program

Friday 25 November 2016

University of Melbourne

09.30 – 10.00	<i>Registration</i>
10.00 – 10.20	Welcome and introduction – Have we, do we, and will we treat dogs as we should? Gary Humphries – Chair, RSPCA Australia
10.20 – 11.00	Are we there yet? Assessing the adequacy of legal reforms to stop puppy farms Jed Goodfellow – Senior Policy Officer, RSPCA Australia Georgia Sakrzewski – Senior Inspector of Prosecutions, RSPCA Queensland
11.00 – 11.10	DogLogBook – helping dogs get the best out of life Mia Cobb – Managing Director, Working Dog Alliance
11.10 – 11.40	<i>Morning tea</i>
11.40 – 12.10	Manymuk watu – a dog's life in remote Indigenous communities Jan Allen – One Health Program Manager, AMRRIC
12.10 – 12.20	Presentation of the Hugh Wirth Future Leader in Animal Welfare award Gary Humphries – Chair, RSPCA Australia Hugh Wirth AM – Patron, RSPCA Victoria
12.20 – 12.35	Hugh Wirth Future Leader in Animal Welfare Oration
12.35 – 13.45	<i>Lunch</i>
13.45 – 14.15	Pedigree dogs – when aesthetics and welfare conflict Rachele Lowe – Veterinary Surgeon and Director, Mosman Vet Hospital
14.15 – 14.45	Dog training then, now and into the future Deb Millikan – Board & Steering Committee Member, Pet Professional Guild
14.45 – 15.15	Through their eyes – the long-term impacts of being raised as a racing greyhound Karen Dawson – Veterinary Behaviour Consultant, Veterinary Specialist Services
15.15 – 15.55	Panel Jan Allen, Karen Dawson, Jed Goodfellow, Rachele Lowe and Deb Millikan
15.55 – 16.00	Wrap-up Gary Humphries – Chair, RSPCA Australia
16.00	<i>Afternoon tea</i>



Gary Humphries

Chair, RSPCA Australia

Gary Humphries was appointed Chair of the RSPCA Australia Board in 2015.

Gary is Deputy President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. He heads the Canberra Registry of the Tribunal.

Prior to that appointment, Gary enjoyed a long career in politics. He was a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory from 1989 to 2003, during which time he served in many ministerial roles, including Minister for Health, Education and the Arts, Treasurer and Attorney-General.

He was Chief Minister from 2000 to 2001.

From 2003 to 2013 he was the Liberal Senator for the ACT. During this period, he held various responsibilities in the Federal Opposition, including Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Families, Housing and Human Services and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Materiel.

He is presently chair of the Anzac Centenary Public Fund Board.

Gary has a long connection with the RSPCA. While in Parliament, he hosted the annual Hounds on the Hill, a popular event with Members of Parliament and Senators where dogs and puppies available for adoption from RSPCA ACT visited Parliament House, has been quizmaster at many RSPCA ACT trivia nights and was Co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of the RSPCA.

Gary is married with 2 adult sons and lives in Canberra.

Have we, do we, and will we treat dogs as we should?

Welcome and introduction

Welcome to the RSPCA Australia Animal Welfare Seminar for 2016.

This year, the Seminar examines our relationship with dogs and the different roles they play in our lives. Hopefully, the Seminar will get you thinking about concepts of dog welfare, our treatment of dogs in various contexts and, indeed, whether dogs gain from the relationship we have with them as much as we do.

The RSPCA's Animal Welfare Seminars have covered a broad range of animal welfare subjects. Each Seminar has focused on a hot topic of the day, and enabled a broad spectrum of views and opinions to be shared. Most, if not all, of these subjects still have great relevance in 2016. Certainly, the focus of this year's seminar on dogs is very timely and extremely relevant. The program promises to be informative as well as thought provoking with contemporary and controversial issues being covered by an array of passionate and compassionate speakers.



Jed Goodfellow

Senior Policy Officer, RSPCA Australia

Dr Jed Goodfellow is a Senior Policy Officer at RSPCA Australia with a focus on legislative and regulatory issues affecting animal welfare. He also lectures in Animal Law at Macquarie University and recently completed a PhD examining the animal welfare regulatory framework within the Australian agricultural sector.

Prior to undertaking his postgraduate research, Jed practised as a prosecutor for RSPCA South Australia, a solicitor for commercial law firm Clayton Utz, and worked as an Inspector for RSPCA Queensland.



Georgia Sakrzewski

Senior Inspector of Prosecutions, RSPCA Queensland

Georgia Sakrzewski is the Senior Inspector of Prosecutions for RSPCA Queensland. Her role is to coordinate prosecution cases and support the complainant inspectors from the stage of investigation through to the final court outcome. She has been a lead investigator in the joint RSPCA-Qld Police Service *Queensland Greyhound Live Baiting Inquiry Taskforce* since its inception in early 2015.

Georgia is a Registered Psychologist with a background in forensics, offender risk assessment and mental health.

Are we there yet? Assessing the adequacy of legal reforms to stop puppy farms

Abstract

'Farming' is a term traditionally associated with the production of food, but in recent years it has been applied to the breeding of dogs. With some popular designer cross breeds and pure breeds fetching up to \$3,000 and \$5,000 a puppy respectively, the commercial incentives of mass puppy production have never been stronger. During the early to mid-2000s, state RSPCA inspectorates started receiving increasing numbers of complaints about intensive dog breeding facilities. Due to the scale and severity of the problem, state governments have now started to enact legislation designed to expose and stamp out puppy farming activities. But have they been effective?

In terms of investigation and regulatory control, significant operational difficulties exist when dealing with puppy farms. Puppy farm operators are very good at concealing their location, with local residents often not being aware of their existence. Finding these cruel enterprises is difficult and relies upon good collaboration and coordination. Recent Queensland cases highlight the preparation involved in seizing animals from abominable conditions and how evidence is collected for prosecution as well as the work to rehabilitate and rehome these unfortunate dogs. It is hoped that the recently introduced Queensland Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) Bill 2016, will be effective in detecting puppy farms, discouraging their establishment and prosecuting operators.

As governments across Australia work to eliminate puppy farms it is essential that regulatory reforms are consistent and ensure that the pet trade is more transparent and accountable, as well as maintain minimum standards to ensure adequate care and protection of breeding animals. This requires changes to both animal management and animal welfare legislation.

The RSPCA promotes the following elements to achieve effective state-based legislation to combat puppy farms:

<i>Element</i>	<i>Implemented within</i>
Registration of dog breeders.	Animal management legislation
Compulsory microchipping of all dogs before 12 weeks of age and prior to sale or transfer.	Animal management legislation
Microchip information recorded must include microchip ID number of dog's mother and breeder registration number.	Animal management legislation
Breeder registration number must be displayed at the point of sale and in advertisements.	Animal management legislation
Mandatory standards for the conduct of dog breeding.	Animal welfare and management legislation
Power for courts to make interim ownership, costs and prohibition orders while legal proceedings are on foot.	Animal welfare and management legislation



Mia Cobb

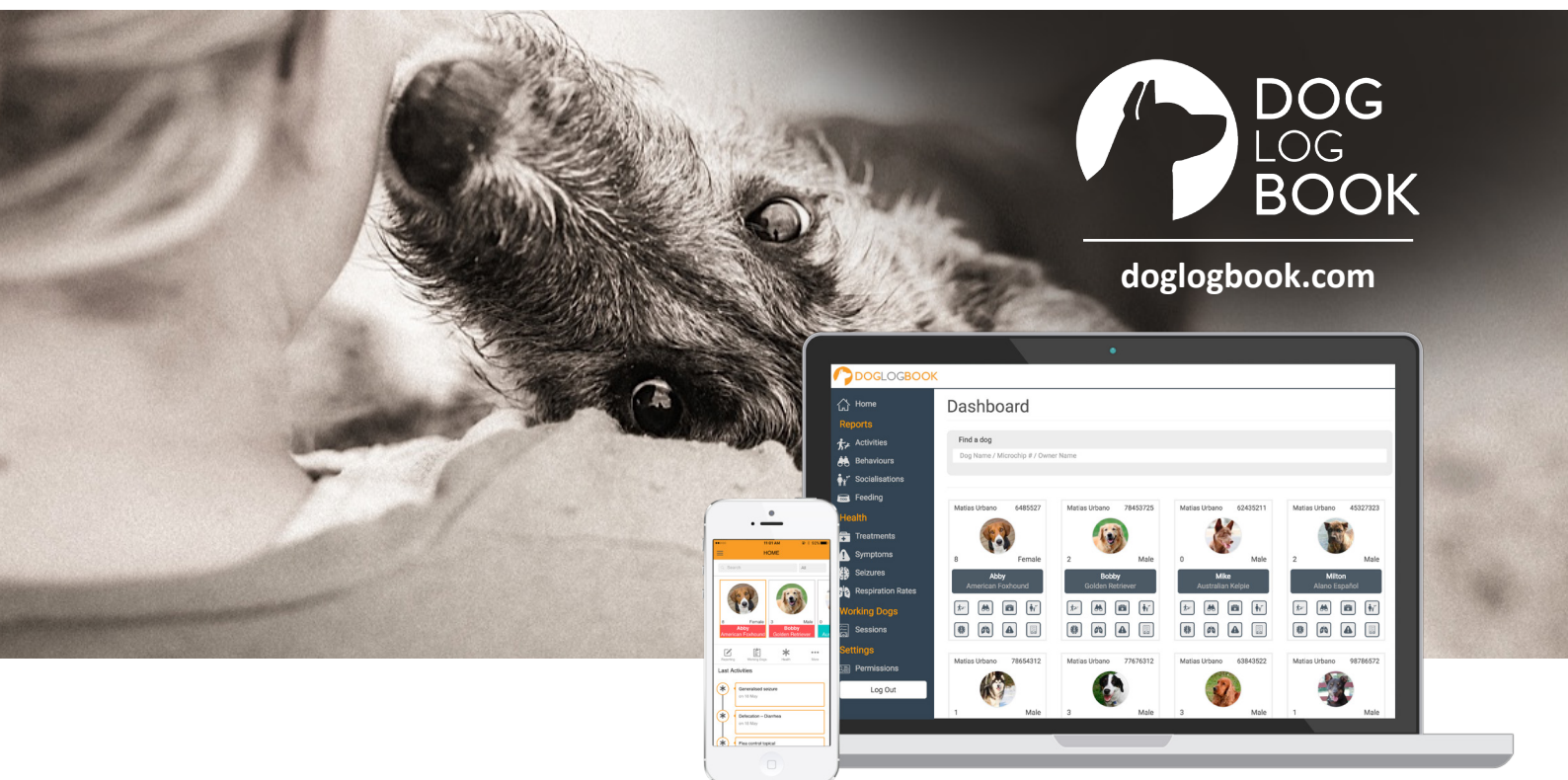
Managing Director, Working Dog Alliance

Mia Cobb is an animal welfare researcher and science communicator, who worked in animal shelter and working dog facilities for over a decade.

From 2007, Mia led the federal government Australian Animal Welfare Strategy's working group for dogs used in work and sport and in 2013, co-founded the Australian Working Dog Alliance, a non-profit organisation that aims to work with industry to improve the welfare of Australia's working and sporting dogs. She believes in helping scientific research escape academic journals, so established the popular canine science blog, *Do You Believe in Dog?*, also co-hosting the anthrozoology podcast, *Human Animal Science*.

Mia holds a Bachelor of Science with first class Honours, majoring in Animal Behaviour (Zoology) and is nearing completion of a PhD at Monash University, researching human attitudes, kennel management practices and the subsequent welfare, stress and work performance of kennelled guide dogs.

Recently, she has been development researcher and project manager for the new University of Sydney initiative, Doglogbook.



Doglogbook – helping dogs get the best out of life

Abstract

A world-first app – Doglogbook – was launched in September this year. It offers new ways to monitor and optimise your dog's wellbeing, with the opportunity to let your vet, trainer or animal behaviourist see into your dog's world, by sharing your dog's health, behaviour and daily activities.

Doglogbook has been designed by animal welfare scientists at the University of Sydney's Faculty of Veterinary Science to be a dog's new best friend, helping ensure optimal quality of life and happiness – from puppyhood socialisation, through to old age where it may assist with difficult end-of-life decisions.

For puppy owners, Doglogbook guides owners through the all-important socialisation period. The app is gamified to increase engagement and reward owners for seeking out novel experiences during the critical socialisation period. This feature can work well in conjunction with puppy preschool, or as a simple means of logging when a puppy has travelled, visited different types of environments and met a range of people and other animals.

Doglogbook also enables dog owners to log the activities that their dog undertakes in a usual day (e.g. eating, walking, playing with other dogs, etc.) and rate the enjoyment their dog gets from each activity. Owners can gather and review real data about their dog's happiness in life for the first time.

Carers can also log health-related issues (an example might be recording frequent urination) or problematic behaviours (such as barking or destroying things when owners are at work).

Owners and carers can share access to their dog's records to give veterinarians, animal behaviourists and trainers better insight into the dog's everyday health and behaviour between consultations, also helping to assess effectiveness of management strategies.

Doglogbook lets owners schedule and log routine health-related events, such as parasite control (a reminder will pop up on their smart phone when it's time for intestinal worming, for example) or a time-sensitive course of medication, to help remind owners precisely when doses are due.

A seizure log is included so owners of epileptic dogs can record seizures in real time (vets can access these outside of consultations to review frequency and type of seizures). The app also includes a cognitive decline checklist that may be filled-in monthly or fortnightly to help track older dogs over time. It provides a way to measure and optimise the quality of life for the full life cycle of the dogs we share our lives with.

Doglogbook can give your dog a happier and healthier life, and also help science along the way as users contribute to educating the next generation of veterinarians through their contributions as citizen scientists.



Jan Allen

One Health Program Manager, AMRRIC

Not a lover of tropical weather Jan Allen has surprised herself to be living in the tropics for the past 12 years – 2 years in Samoa as an Australian volunteer veterinarian, then as One Health Program Manager in the even more tropical Darwin.

Most of her working life Jan has worked as a veterinarian in small and mixed clinical practice. Diverse experiences in Samoa introduced Jan to the broader picture of animal health and management and similarly in remote Indigenous communities of Australia working with the not-for-profit Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC).

Manymuk watu – a dog’s life in remote Indigenous communities

Abstract

In Indigenous communities are dogs being treated as man’s best friend?

In most remote Indigenous communities there is no or limited access to veterinary services – this means dogs become overpopulated and as a consequence their nuisance factor increases. Dogs are perceived as a nuisance when they are no longer viewed as individuals but as an increasing and threatening population. With a large free-roaming dog population, competition for food increases, and dogs scavenge around schools and the shop spreading rubbish. They are a source of faecal contamination, night noise and endless puppies.

In these isolated communities with few services, community members frequently experience overcrowding in houses, social issues, low literacy, high unemployment, low life expectancy and many health issues. There is of course an overlay of many cultural obligations.

Dog overpopulation issues affecting community members and service workers are daily of high interest but frequently low priority for funding. Solving the dog issues is an ongoing process of collaboration.

AMRRIC has been working in this context for 12 years with achievements, challenges and a multitude of ideas and aspirations.

AMRRIC uses a One Health approach to coordinate veterinary and education programs in Indigenous communities. To implement a collaborative approach in animal management, we work from the ground up in many areas by: responding to requests for assistance, supporting Rangers, Environmental Health Workers and Animal Management Workers with training and resources, developing animal management plans, brokering collaborative agreements with local councils, local authorities and agencies, businesses and other stakeholders, coordinating vet programs and volunteers, supporting schools with education programs, working with community groups and the health workers developing appropriate messages and advocacy.

Reducing the nuisance factor ‘by humanely and sustainably managing dog populations’ increases the value of dogs as individuals – as companions, protectors, and hunters and man’s best friend!



Rachele Lowe

Veterinary Surgeon and Director, Mosman Vet Hospital

Rachele is a partner at Mosman Pets, a busy Sydney small animal practice, where she has worked for over 18 years.

Rachele was the resident TV Vet for Channel 7's Sunrise program and Today Tonight for some time and is now the resident vet on The Carousel online. She has also been a popular veterinary columnist for New Idea magazine and Urban Animal magazine. Her special interests include dentistry, orthopaedics, and animal behaviour.

In her spare time, Rachele has written and published a book on puppy care. She is currently writing her second book on canine behaviour.

Pedigree dogs – when aesthetics and welfare conflict

Abstract

Dog breeding is big business and breed trends come and go. Currently, the brachycephalic (short head) breeds such as French bulldogs, Pugs and Boston Terriers are very popular but unfortunately this has led to an influx of serious health and welfare issues associated with breeding practices. The combination of breed standards set by breeding organisations and consumer demand dictates the appearance of these breeds to the detriment of their health. Over time, the shape of the head has changed resulting in the nose being extremely short and in some cases reverted. Not only does the external appearance reveal abnormalities anatomically but internal structures such as elongation of the soft palate and narrowing of the trachea are affected by breeding selectively for the short nose trait. The resulting health condition is called Brachycephalic Airway Obstruction Syndrome (BOAS), which is now well recognised in these breeds and is characterised by snuffling, wheezing and snoring. This is a very serious welfare issue as it significantly reduces the ability to breathe, with affected dogs being unable to exercise or sleep normally. They experience a virtually constant state of breathlessness, which has both a physiological and psychological impact. Difficulty in breathing is also exacerbated by drinking and eating and obese dogs are at higher risk. In addition, the efficiency to reduce heat stress is diminished as these dogs have difficulty panting. Further effects include increase in respiratory and heart rates as these dogs struggle to breathe deeply which may result in collapse and urgent veterinary treatment including the provision of oxygen, managing body temperature and sometimes sedation is required.

To avoid complications arising from BOAS, many of these pups require early intervention to improve their ability to breathe normally. This involves corrective surgery which is best done as young as possible, usually at desexing. Several procedures may be required including widening of the nostrils and trimming of the soft palate. There are risks with these procedures including post-operative complications with some pups not surviving. Potential owners are not generally informed of these risks by breeders and insurance premiums are usually twice that of other breeds or mixed breeds.

The appearance and respiratory noises of these dogs have received acceptance by the public as being normal and characteristic of these breeds rather than aspects to be of concern. One study has shown that 60% of brachycephalic breed owners did not recognise the signs of abnormal breathing in their dogs. There is an urgent need to educate breeders and owners to change the breed standard and associated practices to selectively breed away from the short nose characteristic so that corrective surgery is not required and these dogs can live a happier and healthier life.



Deb Millikan

Board & Steering Committee Member, Pet Professional Guild

Deb Millikan Professional Canine Behavior Consultant – Accredited (PPAB PCBC-A)
Pet Professional Accreditation Board – www.credentialingboard.com

Diploma of Dog Training and Behavior Consulting (Dip DTBC)
Diploma of Animal Behavior Science and Technology (Dip ABST)
Companion Animal Sciences Institute – www.casinstitute.com

In 1999, with 20+ years of correction-based training behind her, Debra's thirst to know more led her to pursue the science that would result in her becoming the accomplished force-free trainer she is today.

Debra has been the Head Instructor of Canine Behavioural School (CBS) for the last 8 years, developing training programs for students and aspiring instructors.

Debra is a board member of the Pet Professional Guild, with responsibility for PPG Australia and PPG Singapore. She is also on the board of Doggone Safe, the Companion Animal Sciences Institute and the Association of Animal Behavior Professionals. She has received the Association of Pet Dog Trainers Trainer of the Year Award and the Susan Wilkins Achievement Award.

Dog training then, now and into the future

Abstract

Based on science that would not be considered valid today in terms of rigour and methodology, and undertaken nearly a century ago, dog training has, for too many years relied upon using harsh and even abusive methods. However, these punishment-based methods do work.

Is efficacy enough? From an ethical perspective, if science currently supports positive reinforcement (reward based) training to be the most efficacious dog training method, then as animal care professionals are we not morally bound to follow the science as it is presented? Best practice in all facets of the pet care industry should be a top priority. Today we have alternatives to the abuses of the past.

Defining, developing and maintaining best practice as animal care workers is vital. Using the latest in scientific research, humane hierarchies and standards of best practice have been developed by industry leaders such as Dr Susan Friedman, James O’Heare and the Pet Professional Guild. The RSPCA South Australia’s Lead by Example Campaign and Dr Marty Becker’s veterinary Fear Free Initiative embody ways of helping promote the use of science-based positive training with animals; reducing fear, building trust and treating animals with the respect they deserve – irrespective of species.

How our dogs are trained and by whom is beginning to be consumer driven. Many force-free trainers cannot meet the ever increasing demand, leading to limited access for ethical dog training. Means of educating leaders of corrective-based dog training facilities who are eager to learn new methods have been developed and have already had some influence. Education for individuals with an interest in force-free training is also available. In South Australia, Canine Behavioural School offers the Aspiring Instructors’ Course to those who truly wish to learn, seeking only their commitment to the force-free principle.

Given the science-based evidence clearly demonstrating the benefits of force-free training, there is an urgent need for a national push for this type of training. At the same time, in order to satisfy best practice and good ethical canine education, there needs also to be a push for trainers to be required to undertake formal education and assessment in force-free dog training methods. The good news is that prospective and current dog trainers can choose from several high quality, force-free dog training education programs in order to fulfil educational requirements and assessment.

Pet Professional Guild’s definition of force-free: No shock, No pain, No choke, No fear, No physical force, No compulsion based methods are employed to train or care for a pet.



Karen Dawson

Veterinary Behaviour Consultant, Veterinary Specialist Services

Dr Karen Dawson BSc BVSc Hons MANZCVS (Behaviour).

Dr Dawson has worked extensively in the field of greyhound behaviour, with a particular interest in the aetiology and impact of behavioural disorders on welfare, performance and retirement.

Karen contributed to the Working Dog Alliance Report *Review & Assessment of Best Practice Rearing, Socialisation, Education & Training Methods for Greyhounds in a Racing Context* which was produced for Greyhound Racing New South Wales in July 2015.

Karen is the primary instructor for the GRNSW Greenhounds muzzle exemption training module titled *Identify and Respond to Animal Behaviour – Greyhound*. She has undertaken behavioural assessments for the purpose of rehoming or muzzling exemption on hundreds of greyhounds and runs a private re-homing organisation, Greyhound Rehoming Centre, in conjunction with the Veterinary Specialist Centre in Brisbane.

Through their eyes – the long-term impacts of being raised as a racing greyhound

Abstract

Although not usually far from the welfare spotlight, the Australian greyhound racing industry has never been more under fire. In 2015, the ABC's *Four Corners* program aired footage of live animals such as piglets, rabbits and possums being used for the illegal and barbaric practice of live baiting of greyhounds. This raised valid concerns regarding animal welfare and widespread cheating which has resonated across every State in Australia.

At the core of live baiting, wastage and even the use of illicit substances, is an endemic lack of appropriate early socialisation. Arguably, this remains the most misunderstood and to date largely unaddressed aspect within the greyhound racing welfare debate. Yet it is one that has the most dramatic influence on the future fate of greyhounds for both racing and retirement.

Standard greyhound management and husbandry practices simply do not compare favourably with best practice now routine in other working dog industries. Whilst wastage represents one of the most significant threats to the sustainability of greyhound racing in Australia, the reality is that addressing it adequately would likely render the industry financially unviable. Thus even today, the focus is often redirected to other issues that can be addressed more economically and prominently.

A Senior Investigative Manager at Greyhound Racing Victoria recently cited the use of prohibited substances as the main issue the industry currently faces. Whilst not wishing to trivialise the issue of doping, although offering a potential economic advantage for the licensee, it is in fact a comparatively minor welfare issue for the dog. Furthermore, the practice only impacts a small percentage of the greyhound population when compared to other more widespread and significant welfare concerns. The introduction of enhanced swabbing regimes is easier and more economical than the widespread implementation of structured socialisation programmes.

The reasons for the currently unacceptable rates of attrition extend beyond the racetrack and pervade every aspect of the greyhounds' lifecycle, including:

- Pups being routinely reared in rural environments with inadequate socialisation, habituation, nutritional and veterinary care.
- Racing dogs being confined legally for up to 23 hours per day in a small kennel devoid of any environmental enrichment. They are often muzzled to prevent them tearing up bedding or wearing barking muzzles to prevent them expressing frustration at their surrounds.
- The involvement of unqualified persons in the diagnosis and treatment of injuries and ailments with irrational and painful treatments and many trainers managing injuries without veterinary input.
- The inability of regulators to guarantee live baiting will not occur

Although many greyhounds make wonderful pets, under the status quo the sad reality is that the majority will continue to struggle with the transition to pet life. Until the industry acknowledges the contribution of chronic stress to poor welfare, performance and wastage, it is unlikely to ever align with the expectations of the general public; the most significant external stakeholder of them all.



Dr Hugh Wirth AM

President, RSPCA Victoria

Dr Hugh J Wirth AM is one of Australia's best known animal welfare advocates.

Dr Wirth became a volunteer for RSPCA Victoria in the mid-1960s, was first elected to the RSPCA Victoria Board in March 1969 and was elected President of RSPCA Victoria in 1972, Dr Wirth held this position for 43 years until his retirement in 2015. Dr Wirth now continues his work in animal welfare and will proudly become a Patron of RSPCA Victoria in early 2016.

Dr Wirth was instrumental in the establishment in 1980 of RSPCA Australia, the federation of each of the RSPCA Societies and the development of national policies that guide the RSPCA movement.

Dr Wirth was President of RSPCA Australia for 22 years until 2006, is President of World Animal Protection Australasia and is on the international board of World Animal Protection.

Dr Wirth has had a regular radio show for 34 years.

Hugh Wirth Future Leader in Animal Welfare Award 2016

The Hugh Wirth Future Leader in Animal Welfare Award recognises the contribution, achievement and vision of a future leader in the field of animal welfare. The Awardee will present the Hugh Wirth Animal Welfare Oration, an original speech that sets out their vision for improving animal welfare in Australia and providing animals with 'a life worth living'.



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