

**GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY — LIVE BAITING**

*Motion*

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston)** [7.00 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the Barnett government to undertake an investigation into greyhound racing to ensure that —

- (1) there is no live baiting in Western Australia;
- (2) all animal welfare within the greyhound racing industry is maintained; and
- (3) appropriate safeguards are put in place to eliminate any future live baiting in Western Australia.

I will be talking about an investigation into greyhound racing to ensure that there is no live baiting in Western Australia, all animal welfare within the greyhound racing industry is maintained and appropriate safeguards are put in place to eliminate any future live baiting in WA. However, before I get into that side of it, we must remember that there are 2 000 participants in the WA Greyhound Racing Association and the industry was worth approximately \$71.6 million in 2012. In 2014, the Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association conducted 3 582 races at 306 meetings, with 27 605 racing opportunities for 1 813 individual greyhounds. That is a remarkable number of dogs that are specially bred and highly trained animals. However, what concerns me is the *Four Corners* vision of live baiting. It is absolutely appalling. It sickened me to see that and what was happening there. The facilities, such as the tin sheds, were not up to standard. We would not normally put a finely tuned animal over the training track in the vision that I saw. The track had divots full of water. It was a clay base. It was something that I had never seen anywhere. People who say they respect and love their animals would never put their dogs through training on that track. The outrage was felt Australia-wide and inquiries are still going on. The resignations, from the board down, in the racing industry on the east coast have impacted right the way through.

I have no evidence of live baiting in Western Australia, although there has been some talk that it may have happened. Of course, there are always a few people in every industry who try to outsmart the rest, whether that is in gallops, trotting or greyhound racing. Even in soccer and football, people try to skew the result. To think that people would try to gain an unfair advantage through live baiting is just beyond me. It is just beyond me that those animals were pulled around by a human being while the other dog was tugging at the other end of the bait, tied to lures, so that when they caught the lure they were able to tear the animal apart and get the blood running. I do not know whether there is any proof whatsoever that live baiting makes a dog run faster because most times they are at their absolute limits.

[Quorum formed.]

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I will see how quickly I can drive them out again!

On a more serious note, we saw what happened in the industry when—I would not say corruption—a blind eye was turned to animal welfare issues. Those members who were here at the time of the Gallop government will remember that that government introduced the bill that led to the Animal Welfare Act 2002—something that was well received. At the same time, a petition on the issue of animal welfare was presented to the house by, I think, the member for Rockingham with—someone might correct me if I am wrong—over 20 000 or 30 000 signatures. Animal welfare is a major issue within the community, and we have to get out there and make sure that the community has faith in, and that there is security within, the greyhound industry. That is very important; otherwise the industry may as well be shut down. It probably should be shut down if no thought is given to the welfare of the animals. It is very important.

As I look around my town and hear the gossip, I believe that some inducement was given to people to come forward if they knew about live baiting in the greyhound industry. I have not heard of that inducement being taken up. I hope that is indicative of what is happening in the industry. In saying that, Racing and Wagering Western Australia has certainly been on the front foot and has worked very hard in the industry. The major steward for greyhound racing, the general manager racing integrity, Denis Borovica, has certainly been on the front foot. However, that does not mean that we should not still be looking at other ways to ensure that the industry is 100 per cent squeaky clean—it should be 100 per cent, not 99 per cent, clean. The industry should be nothing other than 100 per cent clean, because if it is not, it will bring itself down. To be honest, I should not be standing here; the industry should be standing up and saying that it is 100 per cent clean. It should not be RWWA or other groups around the place such as the RSPCA; the industry itself should be saying that it is clean, because if it does not, it will be absolutely soiling its own nest. That is very important for the welfare of the animals.

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Some of the other integrity that comes to the fore is that RWWA has a welfare policy and works very hard at homing retired greyhounds. I know that several members of this house own retired greyhounds. At times there is an oversupply and then dogs are retired. It is very difficult to house them all, but if the work is done to ensure that there is some integrity within the industry, that is well and good. These days we see a lot more greyhounds being walked as pets, and that is a tick for the industry itself. I think that what happened in the greyhound industry on the east coast shows that we should have an independent inquiry and an animal welfare group to oversee groups such as RWWA from time to time, so that they keep their integrity, as the Corruption and Crime Commission does with other government departments, looking at the bigger picture. We could have an oversight body that would ensure that RWWA or people involved in greyhound racing are not too close to the action. Some of the stewards on the east coast were too close to see what was going on and they allowed, perhaps not deliberately, things to go on, or they turned a blind eye. That sort of thing will destroy the industry. I will keep saying this: it will destroy the greyhound racing industry or any other racing industry, such as horseracing, if we do not look after it. We have to work on this. The motion says that there should be an investigation so that we are 100 per cent sure that there are no problems within our industry. I have not heard about live baiting occurring anywhere recently. Some people are saying that it occurs but they are not able to produce the evidence. That is vital. It is all right to say that they have heard about it, they think it happens and it might be going on, but we need a proper inquiry to ensure that those “might haves”, “could have beens” or “I hears” are looked into to ensure that the industry is aboveboard.

I move on to the greyhound industry and the welfare of animals. People have different views about the welfare of animals. It is unfortunate when an animal is severely hurt, but sometimes it is far better to euthanase that animal—as much as it hurts. It is far better for the animal to be removed from the scene so they do not have to suffer from the injuries that they received, through no fault of their own, whether as a result of a track fall or a training gallop. In some people’s eyes, euthanasia is wrong, but I believe it is the best way to look at it. Although my pet dog was not a racing dog, it got to a stage where he had to go. Even though it breaks your heart, it is far better for the animal if it is put down. Sometimes I wonder whether we will be strong enough to debate euthanasia in this house. I do not think it will happen for a while, but we can look at it in the same terms: we do not like to see people suffer. We do not like our animals to suffer, yet we are allowed to euthanase animals.

I move forward. I believe we should expand the animal welfare group so that we have not only an oversight body and a specific industry group to look at greyhounds, but also a group that looks at animal welfare in a broader sense. At the moment, it is spread across many different areas. If we ring a ranger, he will tell us to phone the RSPCA and then the RSPCA tells us to ring the Department of Agriculture and Food. We go around in circles. That happens with issues relating to all animals. It is very difficult to get someone to make those hard decisions. In some cases the police are the last people to come along and then a major inquiry occurs if we need to shoot an animal and put it out of its misery after a car crash or something like that. I am looking at the bigger picture in the greyhound industry. We need to put funding towards an animal welfare group. Yes, we already put money into the RSPCA. I do not have a problem with that. The view that I have heard from many people is that the RSPCA tends to have a narrow focus. I am not saying that. I am saying that an animal welfare group can oversee all the bodies to ensure that animal welfare is at the forefront when we consider greyhound racing and the issue of live baiting. The industry is worthy of keeping going. Having Racing and Wagering Western Australia in an oversight role has been good, and it is good to see that it reacted very quickly and changed some of the rules. I will read one out —

- 1) A person who:
  - (a) uses in connection with greyhound racing or training any species of bird or animal which is alive, whether as a lure or to excite a greyhound,
- ...
- shall be disqualified for a period of not less than ten (10) years and shall also be fined not less than \$50,000.

That is good, but it is only applicable to the greyhound industry. We must broaden it and make sure that other people are caught by it. In recent times I have noticed in the court system that magistrates have been very tough on people who have not played within the animal welfare rules. There was a story on television last night about a guy who tried to drown a lovely silky terrier. It is very upsetting that those sorts of things still exist in today’s society.

Within the structure I would like to see, the TAB should be part of funding a certain amount of the overall welfare system. Many of the issues that will come before it will involve the gallops or the pacing industry, as well as greyhounds. I do not see any problem with the TAB contributing to that. I thank some of my colleagues who have suggested and supported that idea along the way. We should not go out there and spend a huge amount of money to put another layer of red tape in the way. I am not suggesting that at all, but we need an oversight body to see whether people are doing their jobs, similar to the Corruption and Crime Commission. If reports

come in, that group will get on to animal welfare, whether it be the RSPCA, a local shire ranger who has turned a blind eye, government authorities or racing authorities. I do not have a problem; it is a bigger picture. We should not be seen to be just singling out one small part.

As we mature in the industry, we must take all steps available to us. As we change our processes of bringing this to light, we should be part of the system that says that we will not tolerate this at all. We must have a body that will oversee that. I am not being critical of RWWA as such, but I want to see somebody checking the checker. We hear criticisms of WA Police when it does its own internal investigations, because there is nobody from outside involved. Those sorts of criticisms are directed at government and government ministers. Without absolutely choking the place down, there is room for working within those groups in saying that we can do this better. It was absolutely appalling to see what was on that *Four Corners* program, and I hope we do not see it again. If we do, it means that we in this house have failed in our duty to not only the welfare of those animals but also society. We have not been good enough to wipe out a barbaric action. It is nothing other than that. The people who may have used these practices should hang their heads in shame; it is a practice whose time has passed.

Some people support the rehabilitation of the dogs. It is a new system. In many of the shows that we see in the country now, there is always a stall with half a dozen greyhounds lying there. They are very gentle animals. People pick them up as pets and domesticate them. They domesticate very quickly, which is surprising to me because they are animals bred to chase.

I know there is not a lot of time and quite a few other members want to speak. I am asking for both sides of the house to support this motion because I think only good can come of it. It has been very good to see other members from both sides of politics asking what this is about. It is not just about beating the drum; it is about improving the system and making sure we do not see the same things happen in Western Australia that have happened on the other side of Australia. It is about making sure that every animal is treated fairly when they are in that situation. The tin sheds and the training tracks that I saw on that footage belonged in a 1950s *Smiley* movie. It was a step back in time. I was of the opinion, like many others, that those animals were housed cleanly, with good bedding, getting nice runs and the whole lot. That was not the case in the footage that was shown on *Four Corners*. To see a dog cowering on a concrete floor in the corner of its pen with one lump of rag is just not on. Today's world is well past that. If that industry across Australia, including Western Australia, continues in that vein, I do not think it has a future. I am asking that we support an overview brought in by the government and we look at all issues in Western Australia to make sure that there is not even one iota of mistreatment of any animal. We must stop people using live baiting with the thought of getting an unfair advantage in the racing game. Members here tonight may think this is just a political play. I am not here for the political play; I am here to make sure that animals, not only the chasers but other animals such as kittens or pigs, are looked after in welfare across WA.

**MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands)** [7.23 pm]: I would like to comment on what I consider to be an essential motion for this house to debate. I am very proud that WA Labor has moved this motion tonight and that there are a number of speakers. I am sure there are some on the government side who, if we had the time, would want to contribute to this debate as well. Having said how proud I am that we are having this debate, I am sad that there even has to be a debate on this issue at all. As the member for Collie–Preston said, when light gets shone in places where we do not necessarily like to look, the level of cruelty that exists in our community is quite astonishing. Many of us like to think these things do not happen and, like the member for Collie–Preston, tonight I will relate an incident of live baiting that I was made aware of several weeks ago. I applaud the work of *Four Corners*, which consistently turns out high-quality exposés into what are incredibly damaging and emotionally fraught topics. Remember, *Four Corners* broke the story on the live export debacle several years ago, which had massive ramifications and pushed major reforms to that sector. This exposé by *Four Corners*, supported by the work of Animals Australia and Animal Liberation, has done a similar thing for this industry.

I am not an expert on greyhounds or greyhound racing, although I have colleagues who have them as pets and who have far more experience of them than I do. I do, however, have a lifetime of experience in working extraordinarily closely with a number of other animals, some of which are involved in the horseracing industry. The house will be aware of my commitment to improving the welfare of animals in our community, and it is from that perspective that I approach this subject. I want to put on the record a few facts that have come to light since that *Four Corners* program. There are 20 000 greyhound pups bred every year in Australia, and of course not all of them are suited to racing. It is quite different from the horseracing industry—I am looking at my colleague the member for South Perth—in that it does not cost a lot of money to keep a greyhound. Some of the ongoing expenses that the horseracing industry has to meet are simply not there, so that automatically increases the appeal of greyhound racing to people who like racing, gambling and the racing industry. They are able to get into greyhound racing in a fairly low-cost way, and in many respects that might be part of the issue we are facing. It is a pretty low-cost industry to get involved in, unlike horseracing. Because of that, there is not the same level of scrutiny in the greyhound racing industry. I am pleased to say that the horseracing and pacing

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industry in Western Australia has taken some remarkable steps towards trying to regulate what goes on, and it has also spent a lot of time and energy on funding adoption and rehoming programs for racehorses. The greyhound racing industry has not been quite so quick to respond, and I think that *Four Corners* program sent shivers down the spines of most Australians who watched it.

Of the 20 000 dogs that are bred for greyhound racing, 18 000 healthy dogs are killed every year. It begs the question: why breed 20 000 in the first place, if 18 000 are going to be killed? Of those, 8 000 are puppies and young dogs that never make it to the track, and the other 10 000 are dogs that are what is termed “retired” from racing because they are too slow to win. Those dogs are often euthanased or killed by other means; euthanasia tends to involve a vet expense, and I am not saying that everyone goes to that expense. If we want to use an economic term that I loathe and detest using, though it will appeal to some, the “churn” rate in this industry is, in my view, completely unacceptable in this century in a developed country like Australia, and certainly the state of Western Australia. I do not think people want to see that kind of overbreeding and destruction of otherwise healthy young dogs.

I know the ABC covered a story on, I think, the *7.30 Report* a couple of years ago about the practice of “bleeding” dogs that were not fast enough for the track; I know it was very prevalent in the horseracing industry as well. The veterinarians involved who were interviewed on that episode of the *7.30 Report* said that it broke their hearts and that they hated Mondays because greyhound trainers would bring them dogs that simply were not fast enough for the track, but were otherwise completely healthy, alert, bright-eyed and lovely animals, and they would be forced to euthanase these dogs, but to bleed them out before they killed them. They used the blood to inject into other dogs to build their systems. That practice is abhorrent, but that is what the *7.30 Report* reported on, only a couple of years ago. There are very many nasty edges to this industry. Any time we put animals and mankind together and involve dollars in the middle of it, we are going to have problems; that is the nature of the creatures, unfortunately.

The practice of bleeding was featured on the ABC’s *7.30 Report* a couple of years ago, and quite frankly it did not even cause a stir. I think I might have been the only person in Australia who saw the program!

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** I saw it.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** The member did? It did not raise a big brouhaha and nobody went out screaming from the rooftops, asking for the sport to clean up its act or to take steps to fix this problem. It took *Four Corners*, and a very horrific program, to do that.

In the racing life of greyhounds, the dogs often sustain serious injuries, such as broken hocks and legs, and head trauma. Up to 200 dogs are reported injured during official races each week in Australia. Some die from cardiac arrest due to extreme physical intensity. On many occasions, the injuries are considered uneconomical to treat, so the owners or trainers will have the dogs killed. On average, five dogs are killed during official races each week in Australia as a result of greyhound racing. That is another statistic that we should not be proud of.

The member for Collie–Preston mentioned that he saw in the *Four Corners* program the condition of the pens or kennels that are used for these dogs. Many of these dogs live their lives only to be released to race or train. They are not socialised. They are pretty much ignored, except when they are used as a racing animal. Information from rescue groups indicates that many of these dogs are underfed, possibly because they are kept on a restricted diet to keep them at a lean racing weight. That is the case with racehorses, too.

Retirement for a greyhound in the racing industry is, as I said, basically euthanasia, unless the dog is lucky enough to be adopted to a home. I will talk about that in a moment. The natural lifespan of a greyhound is between 12 and 14 years. I wonder whether anyone would like to guess what the average lifespan of a greyhound is in this industry. They should live to between 12 and 14 years, but they die at the age of five, because they are killed. That is, again, an appalling statistic. Nine out of 10 dogs born into the greyhound industry never get to live a full life. Although some former racing dogs go into breeding programs, even they are likely to be killed at the age of five or six. As I have said, other dogs that are perfectly healthy are given to veterinarians for the practice of bleeding, or to university facilities, where they may be killed for teaching purposes.

I want to talk now about the live baiting issue. The RSPCA in Western Australia has put out a \$10 000 reward for anyone who can come up with proof or can say they have seen this practice. I want to tell a little story. I have been in correspondence with a veterinary nurse who is from down near Mundijong, in the member for Wagin’s neck of the woods. She is retired now, so I feel confident talking about her. After the *Four Corners* story broke, she emailed me and told me her story, which was that in 2002 or 2003—it was a while ago—she was at the Mundijong markets on the weekend. A lot of live animals are sold at those markets. There was a man at the markets who was selling a bunch of baby bunnies. What do we call a bunch of baby bunnies—a brace, is it?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** A waste of space!

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Thank you, member for Mandurah!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I'm not fond of rabbits!

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Someone was selling a litter of six baby rabbits at the Mundijong markets, and this veterinary nurse was watching as a client of the veterinary practice that she worked at—a greyhound trainer from that neck of the woods—approached the person who was selling the rabbits and went to pick them up. So she walked over and stood behind him and used his name and said, “I hope you're not taking them home for live bait”, and he said, “If you don't want to know, don't ask.” Using the camera on her phone, she took photographs of him buying the bunnies. She also took photographs of the car and everything else she saw. She told me that she sent the photographs to the officials who run the Cannington track, not to Racing and Wagering.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** There was no Racing and Wagering WA in 2002.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** There you go. She sent them to the Cannington track. That would be why the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor say there have never been any cases prosecuted for this.

That afternoon, acting on this information, including these photographs, they visited the trainer's property. When they arrived, only two bunnies remained. The others had vanished. Because they did not see the trainer use the bunnies as live bait, they could not ban him from the industry. But what they could do was fine him, so they fined him substantially for using live bait. That was maybe 10 years ago. After happening once, one would be a mug to think that it did not happen again. It happens. I have grown up in the horse and horseracing industry—it happens. I have seen some shameful things. I am trained as an international steward to look at equality and fairness in the sport, including things like doping and abuse. I have an international qualification. I know what people do with animals when left unsupervised or when the industry is left to regulate itself.

In January 2015, Western Australian trainer Linda Britton was suspended for 18 months after pleading guilty to doping dogs with anabolic steroids. Just days later, the industry in WA awarded her the title of WA's number one greyhound trainer. Members might like to think about that for a minute and ask themselves whether they think that is justified. Is that an industry looking after its own interests? That is an industry that is highly vulnerable. It is highly vulnerable now, and it will be even more vulnerable in the future as demands around animal welfare increase and as people's social morality increases. This industry is putting itself at risk.

I mentioned the greyhound adoption program—GAP. Another great group, Greyhound Angels, has gone through the accreditation training. A friend of mine has a fabulous business called Houndstooth Studio, which photographs animals. Last week, she photographed three dogs that had just been taken off the track. They had been off the track for less than two weeks. They were in her studio in Mt Hawthorn. There were also day-old chickens, tiny fluff balls, as well as tiny bunnies and other little baby animals. She photographed the three dogs individually in the studio. I have the pictures of these dogs just lying. There is a little chick jumping up and down on one's head, pecking at its nose, jumping on its body and running up and down its back. The others have the bunny snuggled up next to it, asleep. I am sorry, but these are not dogs that are naturally aggressive. The government recently passed the Dog Amendment Bill that will stop greyhounds having to wear muzzles in public once they have had the right training and are properly managed. Greyhounds are not aggressive dogs. They are not dogs to be frightened of. These are sleeping, quiet, gentle creatures until they encounter human beings. Things change slightly then.

Altogether, rescue groups rehome about 10 per cent of the 20 000 dogs that are born into the industry. That is another bad figure. The Australian greyhound racing industry exports hundreds of greyhounds to supply racing industries in other countries. Most of them will be killed after their racing days. One of the biggest markets is Macau. Its Canidrome racetrack does not allow any dogs to be adopted out. In 2014, Greyhounds Australasia adopted a policy opposing the export of greyhounds to Macau, Vietnam and other countries that do not have animal welfare laws, but breeders, owners and trainers still export dogs to these countries.

Australia is one of only eight countries in the world with a commercial greyhound racing industry, and Australia has by far the biggest. Internationally, the industry is in decline. In the United States, greyhound racing is illegal in 39 states. Forty-nine tracks have closed since 2001 and gambling on greyhound racing has dramatically reduced. As somebody who has forever recognised the problems with and opposed gambling, there is a whole other issue that relates to the whole industry of racing, gaming and wagering. I understand that is not the topic for discussion tonight, but I think that an industry that is affiliated directly with gambling and making money, and with a low-cost entry and a pretty low-cost exit, is an extremely vulnerable industry.

I end my contribution by endorsing what I have heard from the member for Collie-Preston tonight. Nothing is more clear to me after years of working in this area than that the independence of oversight required to keep an industry safe in this time is absolutely paramount. We cannot leave this in the hands of those who directly benefit from greyhounds, racehorses, or performance horses in my discipline. As a state and community of people who care about this—I know the government cares about this too—we really need to put the welfare of these vulnerable creatures into the hands of an independent body that can give the government and community advice on what is happening. That protects the industry from what we have seen in the past few years: the

practices of abuse, and the horror of the abuse being finally revealed to the community. An independent office of animal welfare or similar could sit alongside the administration of the act, which can be done by the Department of Commerce, consumer protection or police or, as it was, local government, but at the moment we have a completely compromised situation because animal welfare is currently under the purview of the Department of Agriculture and Food.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** The mission of the Department of Agriculture and Food should be to maximise the commercial benefits from our agribusiness. It is a no-brainer. That is what it should do.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** What about people who use dogs for hunting feral animals in forests in the same capacity?

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** I have not thought about that, but anyone who trains an animal—in this case a dog—for attack, I think, should be treated very harshly, because they are definitely encouraging cruelty and going against the Animal Welfare Act and preventing the animal from experiencing the safety and wellbeing it deserves. They should be treated harshly.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** Do you think we should outlaw hunting dogs?

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Hunting dogs? Not personally. Is the member talking about golden retrievers that fetch things, or water dogs?

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** No, I meant those dogs that they use for pig hunting.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** I have not thought about it, really. I think any dog could be trained to attack, and I think we have seen that. We had lengthy debates in this house during the passage of the Dog Amendment Bill in which we aired all these views about the very, very narrow genetic code that separates a greyhound from a chihuahua, and how very hard it is to prove that a dog is one particular breed versus another, and about the problems with pink skin and almond eyes. A dalmatian has pink skin, but they are not necessarily known for their attack mentality.

It is quite confusing. I would not be prepared to make that kind of a statement, but people who teach an animal to hunt another animal under very, very bad conditions and illegally should be dealt with harshly. The Animal Welfare Act has provisions to do this; it is just not being enforced at that level. The act is there and it should be enforced, but it has not been.

As a final plug for the solution that the member for Collie–Preston has put forward, an independent office of animal welfare would help the industry retain a semblance of honour. It would at least allow the industry to show that it is concerned about the way that animals are treated and it would mean transparency in what will be a very fraught business to be involved in in the future.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [7.45 pm]: I want to make a brief contribution on this motion and endorse it. I will read the motion —

That this house calls on the Barnett government to undertake an investigation into greyhound racing to ensure that —

- (1) there is no live baiting Western Australia;
- (2) all animal welfare within the greyhound racing industry is maintained; and
- (3) appropriate safeguards are put in place to eliminate any future live baiting in Western Australia.

I have spoken in this place on a number of occasions in support of the government investing in the upgrade and relocation of the Cannington greyhound track. It is important to my community. I have spoken before about the number of spectators in the greyhound industry. About 4 500 people attend the Perth Cup. It is a slightly smaller event, but a significant number of people come to the New Year's Eve event at Cannington. They are the two biggest dog crowds in Australia. There are about 85 casual jobs, as well as the full-time jobs, involved in the greyhound track, and that is very important to the community that I represent.

It is unacceptable to think that there would be any live baiting involved in the industry in Western Australia. As far as we know, currently there is no evidence of live baiting in Western Australia, but if that is being done, it is totally and utterly unacceptable and it needs to be completely and utterly removed from the industry. I get no direct personal benefit from the greyhound industry. As I have said previously, I attend the Perth Cup each year. Before I came to Parliament, I went to dog race meetings as entertainment and to fundraise for different community groups that I was involved with in the south eastern corridor. But it is totally unacceptable to all right thinking people that there would be live baiting or any other cruel practice such as that.

I endorse the views of the member for Collie–Preston that holding an inquiry such as this is important. We have seen the turmoil created in the industry in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales from the failure of the industry itself to regulate properly. We must make sure that nothing like that happens here, because, clearly, if

something like that happened here, it would be devastating to the industry. People who support the industry should support an inquiry. People who support the industry should support a proper level of animal welfare being overseen by an outside body. I think the proposal by the member for Collie–Preston, the shadow Minister for Racing and Gaming, that there be an independent body funded by the industry to ensure that animal welfare is properly regulated is a great idea.

I have had contact with people in the industry who wanted to ring me and congratulate me for standing up for the Cannington track, and I was happy to do that because it is an important facility in my community. Equally, I am proud to stand in this place today and demand proper accountability for animal welfare in the industry. I very strongly endorse the motion. I think it is appropriate. I think it is in the interests of the industry itself to ensure that there are proper standards. The world is a different place from the past. Greyhounds are magnificent animals. There are pictures of greyhounds on the walls of the tombs in ancient Egypt. They are a beast that has been living with humans for a long time. They have co-adapted with humans, so it is appropriate that only the highest standards of animal welfare apply in this industry. I note the member for Maylands' comments about the low cost of entry into the industry. That is one of the good things about the industry. Participants do not have to be rich people from Mosman Park, or from South Perth, member for South Perth! It is not like the horse racing industry; it is a working-class industry and that is great. That is one of the reasons the industry was able to keep the track at Cannington.

I look forward to continuing my support for the greyhound racing track at Cannington. I was at the Perth Cup the other night. This year we did not win, although the last time I was there, two years ago, I did win. If the greyhound track is to remain at Cannington and the greyhound racing industry in Western Australia is to continue to be successful, it will occur only if the animal welfare standards are maintained and this resolution is part of that process. I strongly support the motion.

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale)** [7.50 pm]: I also rise to speak to the motion. It is often said that we can judge how civil a society is by the way it treats its young, its old and its animals. Generally, we can say that Australia is a civilised society when it comes to the treatment of animals. Many people in this chamber love dogs or other animals and they hold a special place in the life of their families. Of course, when money is involved, sometimes the temptation to exploit animals for financial gain comes into play. There is no doubt that the *Four Corners* documentary of a few weeks back clearly showed that. When I raised this issue in my response to the Premier's Statement, the Leader of the National Party mentioned that we would want to be confident that in Western Australia the practice of live baiting does not take place. The industry is telling us that it is not taking place but, as the Leader of the National Party said, we want to be confident that it is not taking place. As the member for Collie–Preston, the member for Maylands and the member for Cannington have stated, it is in the industry's best interest to seek an independent inquiry. I may have missed this but I have not heard the new Minister for Racing and Gaming announce an inquiry or even indicate that he is contemplating an inquiry. I find that very disappointing. His leader, the Leader of the National Party, interjected on my contribution to this issue, and said that we would want to be confident, which seemed to imply that an inquiry should take place.

The content of the *Four Corners* documentary was appalling. I am confident that everyone in this house and the other house would be appalled by what was shown. How could anyone condone the treatment inflicted on the animals used as live bait? How could anyone consider that to be acceptable behaviour in a civilised society? No-one would agree that it is acceptable behaviour. As we know, some people believe it is acceptable behaviour and they are the ones who have engaged in it. As representatives of the community, I am sure we can agree that it should not be taking place in Western Australia. We hope it is not taking place, but we have no proof of that, although that does not mean it is not taking place. An inquiry was held last year in New South Wales into the greyhound racing industry and no mention at all was made of live baiting. We would not have known that live baiting was taking place. However, the *Four Corners* special, which was assisted by Animals Australia investigator Lyn White, a former South Australian police officer, was able to show that the practice of live baiting was taking place at two tracks in New South Wales. I therefore do not think that we can be confident, just because the industry in Western Australia is telling us that this practice is not taking place, that it is not taking place. I dearly hope it is not, but we need an independent inquiry. The minister for gaming may be the new boy on the block as far as being the minister is concerned, but this is one of the first actions he should be taking. I trust that the former minister for gaming, who is sitting there —

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** The former Minister for Racing and Gaming!

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The former Minister for Racing and Gaming, sorry—would have considered an inquiry as the appropriate measure. I hope so anyway. However, whatever his views may be, he is not now the minister responsible. The current minister, who is in the other place, should be calling for an inquiry. I am actually very disappointed by his silence on the matter. It is absolutely disgraceful. How can we have any confidence in the industry when the minister responsible has not taken some action or made some positive response in regard to the *Four Corners* special? It is appalling behaviour—absolutely appalling!

Also, the issue of live baiting gives the greyhounds an unfair advantage. If we look at the issue of gambling, it is basically like doping in sport.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Assuming that it works.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Assuming that it works. It is a form of unfair advantage. The practice is unlawful, it is against the rules of racing and it is also a criminal offence. Surely an inquiry should be taking place. The member for Collie–Preston also mentioned the issue of animal welfare in general. The member for Maylands has been advocating for a number of years that we really need to consider the whole issue of animal welfare in Western Australia. It is a complex issue, but I think the time has come when we need to look at establishing an independent office of animal welfare that has a regulatory function in regard to animal welfare in Western Australia. In any case, there should not be self-regulation of the greyhound industry in Western Australia. When large sums of money, especially from gambling, are involved, we cannot have confidence that unacceptable practices contrary to the spirit of the sport of greyhound racing and to the laws of Western Australia are not being carried out. I strongly believe that we need that independence to take place, and the Minister for Racing and Gaming should be on the front foot and at least have a conversation about the issue. Not even a conversation is taking place at the ministerial level with the industry as far as I am aware. He may be holding some discussions, but he has made no public statement as far as I am aware. The RSPCA was appalled, of course, by the documentary. There has not been any evidence of live baiting in South Australia, but there have been allegations of it. The RSPCA in South Australia stated —

“Self-regulation from our perspective is never a good thing and is generally not seen to be effective, particularly when you have people making a living off the back of animals.”

That is a very crucial point that we must consider. When an income is to be made, when money is to be made and when gambling is at stake, we have to have confidence that the industry is clean. From a personal point of view, I do not support the greyhound industry because I think it is not a proper practice for animals. That is a personal point of view and many people in Western Australia would disagree with me, but if we are going to have a greyhound industry, it must be regulated properly. It should be regulated by the government, which should set up an independent regulatory office to have the industry properly overseen and regulated. It should not be self-regulated, because that *Four Corners* special should be a catalyst for at least a debate in Western Australia. We are told by the industry that it is not happening and that seems to be the end of the matter. That surely cannot be the end of the matter. We need an independent inquiry to tell us once and for all whether the practices that we saw in the *Four Corners* special are taking place in Western Australia.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.