



# 'Slow' Australian greyhounds being exported to Macau, China to go on 'death row'

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**Hundreds of Australian greyhounds deemed too slow for Australian racing by their trainers and owners have been exported to Asia, in breach of racing rules, where they are languishing in shocking conditions.**

The greyhound regulator is so concerned about the welfare of the dogs that it has lobbied the Federal Government for almost a decade to end the trade, but the calls have fallen on deaf ears.

An exclusive six-month investigation by 7.30, combined with evidence gathered by Animals Australia in Macau, China and Vietnam, has identified dozens of Australian trainers and owners who have exported their dogs to Asia.

While not illegal, the export of greyhounds without the required passport is against the rules of racing.

Penalties include fines and disqualification from the sport.

Animals Australia campaign director Lyn White said that conditions for greyhounds in Macau are abhorrent.

"For those dogs it's a death sentence, it's a straight out death sentence," Ms White told 7.30.

"The conditions are awful, it's prison-like, barren cells, and in fact it really is like being exported to another country and put on death row."

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Australian dogs are racing around the clock at the former Portuguese colony's dilapidated track known as the Canidrome, and are regularly sustaining injuries, with a disturbing 100 per cent euthanasia rate.

The Australian greyhounds are flown to Hong Kong and then ferried to Macau, where they are locked inside the Canidrome facility.

The facility is located in the middle of one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

As many as 800 dogs are housed at the Canidrome, with racing held five nights a week on a track that is too hard.

Monthly shipments of up to 30 Australian greyhounds help to replace the underperforming dogs that are regularly euthanased at the facility.

7.30 has discovered other greyhounds are auctioned off weekly at over-inflated prices to unknown Asian investors.

The Canidrome track began an adoption program for unwanted dogs in 2012, but according to animal activists in Macau the program has only saved four greyhounds.

Albano Martins, who runs Macau's leading animal welfare groups, Anima, said the adoption program is a sham and that the Australian dogs that end up at the Canidrome are not protected by any animal welfare laws.

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**PHOTO:** Covertly recorded vision shows a greyhound languishing at Macau's Canidrome race track. (Supplied: Animals Australia) 

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"How can Australia export animals to Macau knowing that Macau has no animal welfare laws for protecting them?" Mr Martens said.

"They know that the animals are killed on average one per day, only because the animals are not competitive, and there is no adoption program for them."

"Even after four years of fighting against the ban they were not able to put more than four animals for adoption."

## Australia 'reluctant to act on industry'

Mr Martins said he has written to the Australian consulate in Hong Kong and urged them to end the export of Australian animals to Macau.

"What I want the people in Australia to know is that young animals go to Macau and they are killed with no choice to be adopted," Mr Martins said.

"I also want the Australian people to tell the Government that that is a shame. I am a Western guy and I feel ashamed with such a situation."

Greyhounds Australasia (GA) and Animals Australia have both repeatedly lobbied the Federal Government and Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce to legislate against the trade, but the Minister has not acted.

Greyhounds Australasia chief executive Scott Parker declined to be interviewed by 7.30 but in statement called on the Federal Government to end the live export of Australian greyhounds.

"The Government's reluctance to act on industry and community concerns risks adverse welfare outcomes for exported greyhounds and threatens Australia's standing as a strong advocate for animal welfare," Mr Parker said.

"GA remains committed to seeking a Federal Government regulatory solution that improves greyhound welfare outcomes and acknowledges the support of RSPCA Australia and other animal welfare groups in achieving that outcome."

## Multiple Australian suppliers involved in export

In June last year the industry's peak body, Greyhounds Australasia, was so concerned about the welfare of dogs exported to Macau that it stopped issuing what are known as "greyhound passports" for dogs destined for the Asian city.

Under national racing rules, greyhound owners and trainers must get a passport for their dogs before they are shipped overseas.

Trainers and owners caught breaching the export rule face fines and disqualification from the sport.

But 7.30 has discovered that the flow of dogs to Macau has continued unabated.

In a covertly recorded interview with Animals Australia investigators, the Canidrome's chief vet Dr Wu Sung Hu detailed how the dogs are sourced from Australian brokers.

"We have four suppliers from Australia and we buy the dogs from them monthly," Dr Wu told the investigators, who were posing as prospective suppliers to the track.

"In Australia [if your dogs] don't run quick enough and you can't keep feed[ing] them, so you sell those dogs through those brokers.

The Government's reluctance to act on industry and community concerns risks adverse welfare outcomes for exported greyhounds and threatens Australia's standing as a strong advocate for animal welfare

Greyhounds Australasia chief executive Scott Parker



**PHOTO:** Animals Australia covertly recorded this interview with Canidrome's chief vet, Dr Wu Sung Hu. (Supplied: Animals Australia)

"They buy those dogs and sell [them] to Macau."

In a disturbing twist, Dr Wu also told investigators he had recently visited Australia and had witnessed the illegal practice of live baiting occurring in Perth.

In a statement to 7.30, a spokesman for Mr Joyce said the Government did not believe that adopting the regulators system of imposing greyhound passports would have any effect on animal welfare.

**Topics:** federal-government, animal-welfare, animals, sport, china, australia, hong-kong, vietnam

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