

Racing Ministers tax comments "Naive".

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Racing critics are pouring scorn on Racing Minister Nathan Guys comments about revenue lost offshore to overseas bookmakers.

"It's a bit rich to talk of lost taxation opportunities when literally the entire industry is already tax-free and piggybacking on the efforts of regular taxpayers, and has been for decades" Said Aaron Cross, spokesperson for the Greyhound Protection League.

"We began our campaign for racing industry transparency due to the industries appalling animal welfare record. Now that we've discovered a significant tax rort hiding in plain sight, we feel morally compelled to point out to New Zealanders that the racing industry is taking advantage of not just it's animals, but everyday taxpayers too."

The New Zealand Racing Board is a tax-exempt entity, as are the 3 racing associations, Thoroughbred, Harness and Greyhound Racing. Along with this around 150 racing clubs across New Zealand aren't required to contribute to the tax take while at the same time enjoying the perks of accessing pub charity funding, and taxpayer funds via the 'Racing Safety Fund'.

"Pub charity is often a revolving door to recycle money back into the racing industry, and this safety fund doesn't appear to be doing anything to stop animals being injured and culled at race events."

"You've got to hand it to them, the racing industry work every trick in the book"

"Every aspect of the racing industry at upper levels has been given a free pass by the taxman. This is an industry with turnover exceeding \$2 billion dollars annually, and profits exceeding \$100 million. Given the state of our economy, we should be turning on the tax tap and not subsidizing the lifestyles of those in the racing industry, while the rest of us pay for the public services that those individuals enjoy the benefits of."

In context to the Racing Safety Fund, Mr Cross says that an industry generating this level of income should not be subsidized by tax revenue.

"Why does an industry generating this amount of money need an additional \$1Million every year from the taxpayer in order to maintain it's facilities? in practice these are rarely safety measures. Is it a case of the clubs not reaching into their own pockets when it comes to "safety" ? Such a rort might have been appropriate in the olden days, but today's government's overall attitude towards racing industry tax compliance is not fiscally responsible the way it currently is. To be blaming offshore betting agencies is

really just the Minister trying to pull the wool over the public's eyes. If he was serious he'd be looking at the taxation opportunities of the racing industry, not pandering to it's stakeholders."

Despite professional gamblers being required to declare and pay taxes, professional horse and greyhound trainers are not required to due to fifty year old legislation. This also applies to the ACC component of self employed revenue, leaving a shortfall to be covered by others.

"50 years ago the government decided that racing was just a hobby and prizemoney should not be taxed. I hate to break it to the Minister but things have changed since then. Attitudes towards how we use animals have changed, and our economy has been suffering for a long time. The racing industry of today is an entirely different beast. It's time the racing industry paid tax like everyone else does."

The Greyhound Protection League have been following a petition through parliament that seeks transparency and accuracy of record keeping of the numbers of greyhounds culled and injured in the racing industry. To date Greyhound Racing New Zealand has been refusing to reveal this information, opting to dumb down it's publicly available records, to the frustration of welfare advocates and punters alike.

In late March Dr John Helstrom of NAWAC spoke before the Government Administration Select Committee, praising the work of the Greyhound Protection League for triggering massive industry welfare reform.

"What NAWAC and the select committee have said, proves beyond doubt that our welfare protection movement is entirely justified. Dog racing is a pointless activity that brings great harm to greyhounds. There's plenty of less harmful opportunities for Kiwis to have a punt on, and due to the harm caused to greyhounds, the days of dog racing are thankfully moving closer by the day, to extinction."

NAWAC's admission that the Greyhound racing industry were "hoping to reach adoption rates of 50% in the next few years" speaks volumes of this industries shocking death toll and tells the true story of an industry that relies on gross overbreeding and disposal of greyhounds to function."

Current GPLNZ analytics point to an industry that is breeding on average 884 greyhounds every year, importing 288 yet is only rehoming around 300, leaving nearly 900 greyhounds going missing every year.

"Attitudes have changed, and this if this industry has any will to survive, it needs to modernize. A big part of that is meeting public taxation expectations. No one likes paying taxes, but it's reality. It's time the government imposed taxes at every level of this industry. The country desperately needs it, and theres no justification whatsoever to keep sustaining this welfare mentality."

"Some like to bash people for being on benefits, but how exactly is the racing industry earning big and not paying any tax any different?"

"It's no wonder the Auckland trotting club are planning on building apartments and a shopping mall. Not having tax obligations must really free a business up to expand."

"It's time the government saw the racing industry as a source of taxable income, not a welfare program that consequently brings great harm to animals."