

Greyhound campaigner claims she was booted out of race meeting



The founders of an American anti-greyhound racing lobby are in New Zealand on a fact finding mission

The head of the United States' largest greyhound protection organisation claims she was unceremoniously booted out of a race meeting in south Auckland.

"I don't want to make a big deal about it, but it was a full court press," GREY2K USA Christine Dorchak said.

Dorchak and Carey Thiel from GREY2K USA visited a greyhound race meeting at Manukau Stadium on Sunday while on a fact finding trip to New Zealand.



GREY2K USA president Christine Dorchak with her rescue greyhound Zoe

Dorchak said their group was surrounded by "an angry mob" of officials as soon as they arrived.

"We were only there to observe the races and see the environment. This went on for 20 minutes and then we were asked to leave."

"It was disappointing because we were trying to learn more about the situation first hand."

A spokesman for the Auckland Greyhound Racing Club declined to comment.

Greyhound Racing New Zealand animal welfare manager Greg Kerr said he had spoken with Auckland officials.

Just two people met with the lobby group, he said.

"There was a fairly respectful meeting but then one of the group jumped on the victory dais and yelled 'ban greyhound racing'. At that point they were asked to leave."

GREY2K USA was founded in February 2001 by Dorchak and Thiel.

Dorchak said her aim was to find out more about the New Zealand greyhound racing industry.

"It's a big dark secret."

Dorchak said she feared many healthy dogs were destroyed in New Zealand.

It supported adoption efforts however this was not the full answer because of the numbers of animals involved.

"They make the most wonderful pets, they're like a giant cat, just wonderful to have around."

In 2012 it was reported three greyhound racing dogs had died on New Zealand tracks in the space of a week.

The same year, a TV show broadcast shocking images of dead greyhounds that had been disposed of in an offal pit after their racing days were over.

This year champion Australian greyhound Sweet returned a positive test for caffeine after winning both the heat and final of the \$80,000 Duke Of Edinburgh Silver Collar in Auckland.

Also this year revelations about live rabbits, possums and piglets being chased and eaten alive by greyhounds in Australia led to promises of greater vigilance by New Zealand officials.

Greyhound Protection League of New Zealand spokeswoman Lynn Charlton said the industry had to be held to account.

"It is an industry where cheaters prosper, the gambling public are ripped off as dogs are given drugs to win or lose races, where live baiting occurs."

Greyhound Racing New Zealand general manager Jim Leach said it had nothing to fear from the GREY2K USA visit.

"We are certainly very vigilant, especially with what was going on in Australia."

An independent body regularly inspected greyhound racing operators. Among the things they looked for was evidence of small animals that may have been used in live baiting.

"If we knew anyone was involved in that sort of thing we'd come down on them like a ton of bricks," Leach said.