

Greyhound grave 'just tip of iceberg'

By SAM RIGNEY
July 17, 2015, 9:30 p.m.



Picture shows greyhound bones found on a Keinbah property in the Hunter Valley. Picture: Jonathan Carroll

GREYHOUND mass graves and the unnecessary practice of killing unprofitable or slow dogs has the potential to cause even more damage to the industry than the live-baiting scandal, according to greyhound protection activists from the United States.

Carey Theil and Christine Dorchak from Grey2K USA Worldwide are in Australia to meet with animal activists, politicians and greyhound officials as part of a worldwide fact-finding mission.

The pair co-founded the non-profit organisation in 2001 and it is now the largest greyhound protection organisation in the US with 50,000 supporters.

The group lobby for stronger greyhound protection laws and have been instrumental in the closure of dozens of tracks and the sport being banned in 39 US states.

But while they say the job isn't done in America, the group is branching out in a bid to better regulate the sport internationally and support animal activist groups in Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Mr Theil, who has kept a close eye on allegations of greyhound mass graves in the Hunter, said the issue could hit the industry harder than the live-baiting revelations by ABC's Four Corners in February.

"...As damaging to the industry as the live-baiting scandal was, the coming controversy on wastage of dogs could be even more pronounced," Mr Theil said.

"I think the industry knows that and I don't think anyone believes that the alleged greyhound grave in the Hunter Valley is the only one out there. It's just the tip of the iceberg."

The Newcastle Herald has previously revealed that a week after Greyhound Racing NSW ruled there was no evidence of a mass greyhound grave at Keinbah Trial Track, property owner Natina Howard unearthed dozens of bones. The find came after a two-day inquiry into allegations of mass graves and animal mistreatment exonerated the previous owners of the track.

Since then, Greyhound NSW has appointed a leading barrister as an independent investigator to examine whether witnesses misled the inquiry.

"I think for the industry to call a few people, ask them 'did you do this?', take their word for it and then that be the end of it is outrageous," Mr Theil said. "The way in which they have mishandled that is really clear at this point."

Mr Theil said the industry appeared "out of touch with mainstream values on animal welfare" and the current scandal could lead to its downfall. "I think this is the Australian greyhound industry's last chance," he said. "The sport is going to end completely in the US, there is no doubt about that. I think the industry in this country acknowledges the situation it is in and I think it recognises that it must undertake fundamental changes to the way it operates."