



ANIMA pledges to find greyhounds new homes if racetrack is closed



2015/07/24



Macau Society for the Protection of Animals (ANIMA) President Albano Martins said Thursday that once the Yat Yuen Canidrome is closed, his group had a plan to work with its international counterparts to find the about 700 greyhounds new homes.

ANIMA held an International Roundtable on Greyhounds at the Grand Coloane hotel, with representatives of animal rights groups from Australia, the mainland, Taiwan, the UK and the US. Paul Littlefair of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) said the roundtable presented an opportunity to examine the “wastefulness and pointlessness” of exporting greyhounds to Macau for racing after which they are ultimately put down.

Christine Dorchak, president of GREY2K USA, said her organisation was ready to work with ANIMA on the adoption of greyhounds, adding that her group had helped close 28 dog tracks in the US since 2001.

Martins said his association had received numerous requests for greyhound adoptions from around the world.

“ANIMA is committed to save as many [greyhounds] as we can,” said Martins, who added that he planned to expand his group’s kennels to take in the greyhounds before they get adopted – provided that the canidrome stops operating.

Lyn White, CEO of Animals Australia, presented a video showing how

greyhounds are treated and trained for racing. She said that the government and the public should consider "severing all ties with the Australian greyhound industry".

Macau's greyhounds are imported from Australia.

"In recent months, the Australian greyhound industry has been exposed and shamed for criminal behaviour involving horrific cruelty to animals during its training methods," said White, adding the industry was routinely using "live animals such as possums, piglets, kittens and rabbits to tie them to lures and for greyhound trainers to let their greyhounds chase and kill these defenceless animals in a horrific way."

White said that the greyhounds were victims at the hands of their trainers who simply want to win races and make profits. White said she believed that greyhounds exported to Macau were trained in a similar way. She added that the industry was considered a national disgrace in Australia and many of those involved in it were facing criminal charges.

"We felt that it was very important for us to bring the vision of these practices to Macau, to allow the people of Macau to make an informed decision, as to whether this is an industry that they wish in any way to be associated with," she said.

Martins reiterated his association's position that the government should not renew the concession of the local racetrack once it expires at the end of the year, citing financial reasons and cruelty to greyhounds.

"We are trying very hard to convince the government... that there is no way we can keep 50 years of that disgrace continue," said Martins, adding that ANIMA was not alone in opposing the industry.

Martins said that the greyhound racetrack should be shut down because it is not financially viable. He claimed that its annual takings were equal to just three hours of revenue made by gaming operators.

He also said that since the racetrack is located in the northern district, a densely populated area, the plot should be used in a way to benefit residents in the neighbourhood. "Why protect the interests of three, four, maybe 10 guys against the community in [one of] the most... populated areas in the world?" Martins asked.

Asked about the issue of horse racing in Macau and the future of the Macau Jockey Club, Martins said that financially it was equally non-profitable and said ANIMA would urge the government not to extend its concession, calling it a "secret business" and alleged that retired horses are treated miserably.

"They have no bedding, they [stable hands] cut some newspapers and put them onto the floor for them [horses] to sleep... and they cut the air-con to those animals," he said. (macaunews/macaupost)