4 Tweed Heads
FRIENDS of the Hound have released a petition against a proposed greyhound racing track at South Murwillumbah. Secretary Lisa White believed there were economic, social and ethical issues surrounding the development that had not been explored by the Tweed Shire Council.

“Our concerns focus mainly on the significant welfare issues for greyhounds due to a poorly regulated commercial racing and betting industry that exploits mass numbers of these animals and generates a mass wastage every year,” Ms White said.

“There are also economic and social implications, with little or no benefit to the community at large, and we therefore request that the proposed development of a greyhound track at Murwillumbah be rejected.”

The petition had attracted more than 800 signatures yesterday afternoon, just one day after its release.

Many of the signatures were from overseas.

“There is a huge focus on animal welfare around the world, with the plight of greyhounds gaining much attention internationally, nationally and locally, as greyhound racing faces a global decline,” Ms White said.

“The petition has spread like wildfire overseas and here in Australia.”

The Friends of the Hound had also identified gambling as a concerning trend in the Tweed community.

“Despite this, punters have a myriad of sports for betting opportunities.

“It is time that the government, industry bodies and minority of participants realised that masses of Australians and people around the world believe that greyhound racing is no longer a viable Aussie pastime.”

A spokesperson for the Tweed Shire Council announced that ethical concerns surrounding the proposed racing track had not been explored at this stage of the proposal.

“The ethics of the proposal is not dealt with by the planning department, they purely look at whether it fits into our planning regulations,” he said.

Ethical concerns had to be brought to the attention of councillors who may then bring the matter forward.

“It’s at the discretion of the Director of Planning and Regulations to bring it to the elected members of council if it becomes a highly contentious issue,” the spokesperson said.

“It’s to streamline the process so developments can go through smoothly.”

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Online: tweednews.com.au
SMS: 0428 634 025 (type TWEE followed by a space then your comment)
I AM writing regarding your February 1, 2011 article, "Racetrack goes to the dogs".

Kudos to Friends of the Hound and to Lisa White for releasing the petition against greyhound racing which addresses Tweed Shire Council's failure to explore ethical concerns prior to setting forth its South Murwillumbah proposal.

As your article points out, there has been a dramatic cultural shift as people cannot imagine their pets enduring the cruelty inherent in greyhound racing. Greyhound racing is cruel and inhumane.

Greyhounds live lives of confinement in sub-standard conditions.

While racing, they suffer and die from injuries such as broken limbs, broken necks, seizures and cardiac arrest. Short-term investments, the greyhounds are valued only as long as they generate a profit.

Their post-racing fate falls to volunteer groups who work tirelessly to rescue and place for adoption as many greyhounds as they can. Nonetheless, many greyhounds are euthanized every year, as the number retired from racing exceeds the number of adoptive homes.

Dogs play an important role in our lives and deserve to be protected from individuals and industries that cause them harm.

I have personally adopted beloved retired greyhounds since 1997, and I am a member of the board of directors of GREY2K USA, a national non-profit organization that works to end the cruelty of dog racing.

Caryn Wood
Board of Directors. GREY2K USA
Greyhound racing track bid opposed

Murray Simpson

Greyhound racing on the Tweed may go the way of the dinosaurs if an application to build a new track in Murwillumbah fails to be approved.

But at least one animal welfare group is determined the new venture will not go ahead.

Soaring overheads at long-time Tweed institution Border Park have forced the owners, the Tweed Heads Coursing Club, to find an alternative venue.

‘Otherwise there are grave doubts about the club’s future,’ said Coursing Club secretary Stephen McGrath.

‘Overheads have gone through the roof – we’re getting our water from Queensland – so we’ve had the Border Park site on the market for the past 18 months.’

Mr McGrath said they are pinning their hopes on building a new track on industrial land in Lundberg Drive in South Murwillumbah’s Wardrop Valley Road industrial area.

A formal application has been lodged by planning consultants City Planners of Surfers Paradise on behalf for developers Landsolve.

Landsolve, a subsidiary of Equititrust, has in turn lodged the development application on behalf of the coursing club, said Landsolve project manager Alisa Gilmore.

But the $5.6 million project at Murwillumbah has hit a storm of protest from Friends of the Hound, an animal welfare group dedicated to re-homing greyhounds no longer fit for racing.

‘Our principle objection is the wanton wastage of dogs,’ said group secretary Lisa White of Stokers Siding.

‘Every year some 20,000 dogs are put down – either pups that don’t prove up to scratch for racing or older dogs that are past their prime. They don’t get a chance to see out their natural lives.’

Ms White said her organisation had a number of dogs awaiting a home.

‘But we can’t cope with the volume being generated by the racing industry.’

A petition circulated by Friends of the Hound has attracted at least 800 signatures.

However, the race track applicants say the Murwillumbah site is a good compromise.

City Planner director Col Little said it was off the floodplain yet still close to a high population density. The facility would provide a track, clubhouse, judging box, car parking and kennels for dogs.

Mr Little said he could not comment on the ethical issues raised by Friends of the Hound.

‘Whether it’s greyhound racing or cockroach racing that’s a completely separate issue. No doubt there will always be people who will object.’
Dog racing upgrade set to benefit region

GREYHOUND Racing New South Wales (GRNSW) has dismissed claims by the Friends of the Hound that a proposed $5.6 million greyhound racing facility at South Murwillumbah would not deliver economic or social benefit to the region.

GRNSW chief executive Brent Hogan said Tweed Heads is classified as one of the fastest-growing greyhound racing regions in the state.

“For the 2010 financial year the direct economic contribution of greyhound racing in the Richmond Tweed region is estimated to be $9.5 million,” Mr Hogan said.

“In addition to the significant direct economic contribution in dollar terms, total employment attributable to greyhound racing in the Richmond Tweed region is estimated to be 108 full-time equivalent jobs.”

Mr Hogan said the GRNSW had a Greyhound and Animal Welfare Policy and had always been concerned with greyhounds’ wellbeing.

“Through Greyhounds As Pets, our team is working closely with many different groups, including those in the Tweed Heads region, to improve the welfare of greyhounds,” he said.

Mr Hogan said the proposed track would have economic and social benefits.

“The tracks provide a venue that can be used by the community for a diverse range of activities when races are not being held, as well as essential facilities for the sport’s participants.”
IN early 1927, Australian newspapers reported a new sporting craze known as tin hare racing had arrived in Sydney.

This new sport was in response to a recent proclamation that the killing of live hares in the running of greyhounds was not allowed and was now considered to be an act of cruelty.

When once a hapless hare was released and tried to outrun the pursuing pack of greyhounds, a mechanical hare would now circle the track ahead of the dogs.

Greyhounds were being trained for the races to be conducted by Sydney’s Greyhound Coursing Association and bookies were anticipating a big roll-up of punters if they were allowed to operate at the track.

The inaugural meeting of mechanical hare racing took place in Sydney on May 28 where for the first time the public watched as dogs were released from their kennels to chase a tin hare estimated to maintain a speed of 60 miles an hour and controlled by a switch on the side of the track.

The Sydney night coursing meetings conducted by the association became popular once betting was proclaimed as being legal. At a meeting conducted in July, a crowd of more than 20,000 attended, causing traffic chaos around the racecourse.

Betting at dog races caused uproar within the churches. At a meeting held in August of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, it was stated that before the tin hare made its appearance, a coursing meeting was fortunate to have an attendance of 2000 but now there was an attendance of 30,000 every Saturday night. The meeting decided to send a deputation to the NSW Attorney-General to ask that betting be banned.

Religious bodies were not alone in their denunciation of betting on tin hare racing. The Mothers’ Union, Women’s Christian Temperance Union and municipal councils and local government bodies around Australia called for betting on the sport to be made illegal, citing cases of young boys found betting on the race course and men gambling away their wages. The aldermen of Waratah Council near Newcastle were emphatic that tin hares would not be allowed in their district, stating that tin hares was a pastime that bred parasites, was a symbol of all that was disgusting and degrading and that gambling was crippling the morals of Australia.

In September, 1927, a decision was made to allow only two mechanical hare courses in Sydney within 10 miles of the GPO. One at Epping racecourse would be conducted by the Greyhound Coursing Association and the...
other, to be formed by the Australian Coursing Club, would course at the old Rosebery racecourse. Elsewhere the sport was creating interest. The Humane Coursing Association Ltd was soon established in Brisbane and shares were quickly taken up.

Protests against the sport continued and controversy raged over whether betting was legal or illegal. In June, 1928, the NSW Full and High Courts declared that betting on greyhound racing after mechanical hares was illegal with the result that attendance at coursing events dropped dramatically.

In October, 1931, an unpopular government bill to legalise coursing was introduced by Premier Lang into the NSW Legislative Assembly and pushed through. It came into force in November. The Australasian Coursing Club at Mascot, which received a rush of 100 applications for bookmakers licences and the Greyhound Coursing Association at Harold Park, wasted no time in preparing to open.

The first greyhound race meeting on the Tweed was a seven race program conducted in Murwillumbah. A crowd estimated at 2000 attended the inaugural meeting of the Tweed River Greyhound Racing Club at the Murwillumbah Showground on Saturday night, December 21, 1935. The second meeting was held on the Murwillumbah Showground on Friday night, December 27.

By November, 1935, a company known as the Tweed Heads Greyhound Coursing Club had arrangements underway at Tweed Heads to secure a lease of the Tweed Heads Recreation Ground in order to conduct tin hare racing on Saturday nights. Despite protests being made by Rev S Russell-Scott of St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Tweed Heads, the plans went ahead.

By June, 1936, all equipment and appliances including a tote installation and lighting, had been thoroughly tested and no expense had been spared in the layout of the track claimed to be one of the best in the state. The oval track with two straight sides provided a 500 yard course with an 80 yard finishing straight. Dress trial races drew large crowds and a crowd estimated at 2000 attended the opening meeting of the Tweed Heads Coursing Club held on Tuesday night, August 11, 1936. The nine event program was conducted without a hitch.

Following the success of greyhound racing on the Tweed, the Murwillumbah Hospital Coursing Club was constituted at a meeting held on October 21, 1936, with H L Anthony elected as president. A coursing licence was applied for immediately.

In the face of increased coursing competition, the coursing club at Tweed Heads stated that it would make some contribution to Tweed District Hospital and other charitable organisations.

START OF SOMETHING BIG: The coursing track at the Recreation Ground, Tweed Heads, in 1939.

EARLY DAYS: Murwillumbah Showground, pictured during an equestrian event at the annual show, was used as a greyhound track in the 1930s.


NIGHT MOVES: I'm A Jalepeno shows the way at the Border Park Raceway.

Photo: CRYSTAL SPENCER d125121
Friends barking mad over track proposal

By ELLISHA PUGLIA
ellisha.puglia@tweednews.com.au

TWEED Shire Council is reviewing public submissions for a proposed $5.6 million greyhound racing facility in Murwillumbah.

The proposed facility would provide a greyhound track, clubhouse, judging box, car parking and kennels for dogs, but Friends of the Hound secretary Lisa White said there would be many issues surrounding the proposed development.

“Our concerns focus mainly on significant welfare issues for greyhounds due to a poorly regulated commercial racing and betting industry that exploits mass numbers of these animals and generates a mass wastage every year,” Ms White said.

“There are also economic and social implications, with little or no benefit to the community at large, and we therefore request that the proposed development of a greyhound track at Murwillumbah be rejected.”

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Mr Hogan said the GRNSW had a Greyhound and Animal Welfare Policy and had always been concerned with greyhounds’ wellbeing.

“GRNSW has always seen the well being of greyhounds as a priority, not just throughout their racing years but across their complete lifecycle,” he said. “Through Greyhounds As Pets, our team is working closely with many different groups, including those in the Tweed Heads region, to improve the welfare of greyhounds,” he said.

Mr Hogan said the proposed track would have economic and social benefits.

“The tracks provide a venue that can be used by the community for a diverse range of activities when races are not being held, as well as essential facilities for the sport’s participants.”

What do you think?
Send a letter to the editor or have your say online at www.tweednews.com.au

Race advocates say the dog track would have many economic advantages but Friends of the Hound disagree.
LONG-TIME Murwillumbah greyhound enthusiast Cyril Boylett has urged townspeople to welcome a plan for a modern greyhound track as great news for small business, tourism and the community — and to “forget about the mindless noise made by negative souls.”

Mr Boylett, of Byangum, who has been involved with greyhounds for 30 years, says a development application for a track and complex near the Murwillumbah airfield, replacing the old grass complex at Tweed Heads, is bound to be approved.

His comments coincide with revelations from Greyhound Racing NSW that the industry pumped $9.5 million into the Richmond/Tweed economy last financial year, amid claims by opponents the industry is cruel and promotes gambling.

Mr Boylett said he and other trainers were devoted to their greyhounds. He said opponents were “just attempting another shot at the Tweed Shire Council because of a misguided view the council will try to get away with something.”

However, he said one warning by an opponent that locals should “lock up their cats” was advice he fully endorsed.

“Regularly in the mornings on my property I’m collecting dead or injured birds, or the feathers of birds,” Mr Boylett said. “I have a strong opinion that this is the work of stray cats I see roaming around. My animals are all locked away and only let out under supervision.”

Mr Boylett said the economic contribution of greyhound racing was more pronounced in regional areas where the sport formed an important part of the social fabric in the community.

He said it provided a range of social benefits and played an important role in many NSW communities, where local clubs were often the focal point for social interaction.
Mur’bah man backs plans for track, says opponents are ‘negative souls’

Greyhound owner hits at critics

By Peter Caton

LONG-time Murwillumbah greyhound enthusiast Cyril Boylett has urged townsmen to welcome a plan for a modern greyhound track as great news for small business, tourism and the community and to “forget about the mindless noise made by negative souls”.

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His comments coincide with revelations from the Greyhound Racing NSW that the industry pumped $9.5million into the Richmond-Tweed economy last financial year, while opponents claim the industry is both cruel and promotes gambling.

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“W What DO YOU THINK

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Objections hound plan for new dog racing track

By NIKKI TODD
todd n@gcb.newsltd.com.au

THE greyhound industry has been forced to defend its track record following objections to a proposal to build a new facility at Murwillumbah.

A private consortium, Landsolve Pty Ltd, has lodged a $5.6 million proposal to build a new racing track and grandstand in the industrial area at Lundberg Dve, Murwillumbah South, to cater for the area’s growing greyhound industry.

The development application, lodged with Tweed Shire Council on December 23, brings an end to speculation over the future of Border Park racecourse at Tweed Heads, which has long been advertised for sale.

The Murwillumbah track, should it gain approval, is expected to attract punters from southeast Queensland where recent track closures have forced supporters south of the border to tracks at Tweed Heads, Casino and Lismore.

In documents lodged with council, the applicant draws from a report by Access Economics, which estimated the greyhound industry to have directly injected $9.5 million into the Tweed-Richmond region in the 2010 financial year, including $1.2 million from the Tweed area.

This equated to 108 full-time jobs, including the 86 active trainers in the region.

But the application has upset local animal activist group Friends of the Hound, which has established a petition to oppose the new track.

Secretary Lisa White said her work with the group over the past eight years had developed her “extremely poor regard” for the greyhound industry.

“I, personally, cannot abide the destruction of thousands upon thousands of healthy young greyhounds as a result of mass exploitation from a racing and betting industry,” Ms White said.

“And I do not want a new greyhound racing facility built in my own back yard.”

Tweed Heads Coursing Club manager Stephen McGrath and greyhound trainer Colin Walker, whose club is expected to move to the new track at Murwillumbah should it be approved, said the industry would not tolerate the mistreatment of animals.

“If they have evidence, that person will and should be dealt with. There are strict rules that govern the industry.”

Public submissions to the development application closed on February 3.
Activist calls for end to dog racing

By Peter Caton

A WOMAN who has spent the past eight years saving greyhounds that can no longer race says dog racing is dying out worldwide and is a cruel sport that should not be continued here.

Friends of the Hound secretary Lisa White pleaded with Tweed Shire councillors at Thursday’s community access meeting to reject a development application for a new greyhound racing complex near the Murwillumbah airfield, to replace Broder Park, Tweed Heads.

“The sport of dog racing is collapsing around the world,” she said.

“Greyhound racing and the associated carnage of these dogs is seen as unnecessary and unacceptable.”

Ms White, who has been involved in the greyhound “rescue and re-homing” group for eight years, told the councillors she had received a call every week from a greyhound owner in Queensland or NSW wanting to find a home for a dog which could no longer race. She said outrage in the community was growing against the “massive number of dogs bred and subsequently destroyed.”

WHAT DO YOU THINK

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Dog racing facing global decline

IN response to “Greyhound owner hits at critics” (TDN 10/2) this “negative soul” would like to reiterate that the opposition to the proposed new greyhound track in Murwillumbah centres around the enormous number of dogs that are bred and subsequently destroyed for this racing and betting industry.

There is an appalling mass wastage and, with the huge focus on animal welfare around the world, the plight of greyhounds, a breed of one of the world’s most favoured companion animals, is gaining much attention and examination.

Does the monetary contribution justify the breeding and killing of thousands upon thousands of dogs each year?

Mr Boylet is one of the caring local trainers who has worked in closely with the local volunteer greyhound rescue group. Friends of the Hound has rehomed over 20 of his dogs. He would be well aware of the wastage that occurs as a negative consequence of the industry he supports. “You can’t keep them all.”

Greyhound racing is facing a global decline.

The ethical treatment of animals is a major issue around the world.

There is a changing culture where modern society no longer finds the mass breeding and destruction of dogs for racing and gambling necessary or acceptable.

L. White
Murwillumbah