

Companies

Tabcorp — all words but very little action when it comes to “zero tolerance” of animal cruelty

Tabcorp says it's a leader in working with the animal racing industries to prevent cruelty. But when pressed for details, it comes up short.

BERNARD KEANE NOV 02, 2020 7



Gambling company Tabcorp, which profits from the horse and dog racing industries, likes to claim it's all for animal welfare — indeed, that it's a leader.

“We have zero tolerance for animal cruelty and we've got to take a leadership position in the industry,” chair Paula Dwyer said last year, in response to yet more evidence of [horse torture and slaughter](#).

In fact, the company goes further in its [corporate governance statement](#). “As a participant in the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing industries through the offering of wagering products, Tabcorp expects the highest standards of animal welfare

and integrity and has zero tolerance to animal cruelty, in racing and in society in general. Tabcorp is committed to working in partnership with racing industries to ensure the welfare of animals is prioritised.”

If Tabcorp told its investors it's working in partnership with racing industries, then it must surely be true — the company wouldn't mislead investors.

So welfare group Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (CPG) asked Tabcorp for details of what, exactly, Tabcorp does to ensure the welfare of animals is prioritised, and how it works in partnership with industry. At first, Tabcorp only offered the same pabulum as in its public statements. But when pressed, a [spokesperson cited several “examples”](#):

- it “receives updates” and “asks about” animal welfare from racing governing bodies
- its Sky Racing broadcasts “promotes animal welfare and initiatives such as greyhound adoption” and it has sponsored greyhound adoption. “Our social media channels have also been used to promote animal welfare.”
- the company “has promoted the greyhound adoption program among its employees”
- and the company says it is “currently in discussions with greyhound racing bodies to support new initiatives that promote animal welfare”.

So, in summary, asking the industries that systematically abuse horses and dogs if the animals are being treated OK, some ads and tweets about greyhound adoption and having some “discussions”. Doesn't sound like much of a “partnership” to prioritise animal welfare, and it evidently isn't having much impact on the ground, given the NSW racing industry is [still slaughtering racehorses](#).

As CPG has pointed out, if Tabcorp wanted to actually do what it tells investors it's doing, it could easily do it by demanding six-dog races (as per the UK) which significantly reduce the death and injury rate for dogs compared to eight-dog races. But that, of course, would reduce Tabcorp's revenue.

It could even do things that [didn't cost it money](#), like demand genuine whole-of-life tracking of dogs so that the racing industry is prevented from selling the dogs to third parties to be butchered.

Meantime [this year's death toll](#) from greyhound racing stands at 167 dogs, with nearly 1100 sustaining major injuries.

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