

Mr R Vos  
General Manager  
West Tamar Council  
PO Box 16  
Riverside TAS 7250

Via email: [wtc@wtc.tas.gov.au](mailto:wtc@wtc.tas.gov.au)

**Re: Planning Application Number 2022005**

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the retrospective application by Anthony Bullock for a planning approval for the kennels and associated infrastructure for his greyhound training facility at 2616 West Tamar Highway, Exeter.

There have been numerous complaints over many years about this operation, with regular interventions by RSPCA animal cruelty inspectors and other regulatory bodies, including the Office of Racing Integrity and the Environmental Protection Agency. We were therefore most concerned to learn that it has been operating over an extended period without the appropriate planning and licencing approvals.

We object most strongly to the application and believe that, in its current form, it should be refused.

Our grounds for this submission are outlined below. We recognise that the Council has no jurisdiction over animal welfare concerns, so our grounds for objection have been limited to matters within the Council's remit.

**Retrospectivity**

- As we understand it, the planning scheme makes no provision for a retrospective planning application or approval. Councils have some leeway in considering and retrospectively approving minor works, especially where the failure to comply with planning requirements is either inadvertent or of little substantive impact.
- However, this is not such a situation. The infrastructure on this property has been constructed over many years. Even if the owner did not understand the required planning process at the initial time of construction, there is no way that he would not have been aware of the need for planning approval at some time since.
- Approval of this application under these circumstances would effectively be rewarding bad behaviour.

**Compliance with the planning scheme**

- Proposed waste disposal provisions are neither adequate nor fit for purpose.
  - The application proposes to deal with excrement from the dogs by bagging and disposal by 'putting in a hole at the bottom of the property which is then covered when required'. The composter is designed to take 52.5 kg of dog faeces per week.

One greyhound produces approximately 300 grams of faeces on average per day. With 100 greyhounds on site would generate 210kg of excrement per week. It is therefore clear that the system is not designed to compost such a large volume of waste.

- Insufficient detail is provided to make any assessment of what is to be done with washdown water which will contain large quantities of urea, faeces and other contaminants.
- The expert report indicates that the existing septic trench is capable of dealing with up to 200 litres/day of effluent generated from the primary kennel and the staff toilet. There is no reference to identify which is the primary kennel; and no information to indicate whether the septic tank and trench also service the requirements of the residence.
- The composting area is located at a significant distance from the kennel blocks. There is no indication of where excrement will be held whilst awaiting transport to the compost area, or how frequently waste will be removed to the area.
- There is no detail in the application as to how the composting facility itself will be managed. Conservatively, it can be expected that in excess of 200kgs of excrement will be generated each week – that's around 1 tonne every month.

We are also aware of offal pits on the site which include horse, cattle and greyhound viscera, skin, bone, full carcasses, and vet waste which may include toxic chemicals. There is no mention as to whether this material is to be composted in the same area or, if not, what will be done with this material.

Composting of sensitive materials on such a large scale requires expert management and potentially specialised equipment.

- The analysis in the expert report is inadequate. The investigation indicated that only one borehole was drilled, with a hand-held auger, to a depth of just 1.2m, stopping at 1.2m due to the clay layer which prevented further drilling at this specific location. One single borehole sample is inadequate for a property of this size, and for a waste load of the size which will be generated.
- The proposed management of waste water and effluent on the site is manifestly inadequate. This will create an unacceptable environmental risk and potentially impact on neighbouring properties.
- The findings of the noise study are questionable. We understand that dogs on this site are often constrained by the use of barking muzzles. These cruel devices not only prevent dogs from barking, but also from drinking controlling body temperature by panting. The devices are currently being phased out in Tasmania and will not be permitted for use from 2024. It is therefore unrealistic to expect that noise levels indicated in the report will be maintained whilst housing 100 young dogs in cages without the use of these devices.
- We are aware that the current situation has arisen as a result of discovery that the owner has been operating this greyhound training and breeding facility for many years without a kennel licence, as required under the Dog Control Act 2000, the Dog Control Regulations 2010, and Council's own Dog Management Policy.
- The fact that the owner has not met even these basic legal requirement does not inspire confidence in his willingness to abide by any conditions put on this application should it be approved.

### **Incomplete or misleading documentation within the application**

- The application indicates that there is a cost of \$100,000 – but there is no information as to what that applies to. Is it the overall cost of the current infrastructure? Does it include works to ensure compliance with planning requirements such as effluent disposal etc?
- The application indicates there are 73 kennels on the property. There is conflicting information as to whether there are 8 or 9 kennel blocks. The plan on page 3 of 9 shows nine numbered kennel blocks. Yet the elevation drawings include details of blocks 1-8 but make no mention of kennel block 9.
- From diagrams included in the application, it can be inferred that there are 42 kennels in kennels 3-8. There is no detail in the documentation as to the number of kennel enclosures in the buildings identified as Kennel 1, Kennel 2, and Kennel 9.
- It would appear that the details as to existing infrastructure shown in the application are not complete. We are aware that there are 4 kennels each 4500m x 1400m in size on the property. Yet the details in the application state that the smallest size kennel is 900mm x 2000mm and the largest is 1200mm x 2400mm.
- The application makes reference to the fact that the RSPCA and the Office of Racing Integrity have both inspected this facility. This is correct. However, the inference that an inspection equates to approval is certainly not correct.

### **Submission**

Under these circumstances, we believe Council should therefore refuse this application, and request the owner to submit a new and compliant application. This should then be assessed against the current planning scheme, rather than any planning requirements which would have applied at the time the kennels were illegally constructed.

Should further information be required, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely



**Jan Davis**

**Chief Executive Officer**

*29<sup>th</sup> September 2022*