

\$1.6m Wannon Park upgrade to proceed despite scandal



A \$1.6 million upgrade of greyhound racing facilities in Warrnambool will go ahead despite the fallout from the live-baiting scandal. File image: www.greenhounds.com.au

By Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he Warrnambool Greyhound Racing club is in line for a \$1.6 million upgrade that will still go ahead – at this stage – despite the fallout from the greyhound live-baiting scandal, *Bluestone Magazine* can reveal.

Bluestone has learned that **Greyhound Racing Victoria** (GRV) had agreed to fund a \$1.6 million upgrade of the Wannon Park facility, based at the Warrnambool showgrounds, well before the live-baiting scandal [was exposed by the ABC's Four Corners](#) program on February 16 and which led to widespread calls for the industry to be banned.

The shocking revelations of some Victorian greyhound trainers using live animals such as rabbits, possums and piglets to

train their dogs also prompted the resignation of the entire Greyhound Racing Victoria board and the loss of several major sponsors, including Bendigo Bank, Schweppes and Macro Meats.

Warrnambool Greyhound Racing club manager **Mike Cottee** did not respond to several requests for comment on whether the financial fallout for Greyhound Racing Victoria would impact on the upgrade plans, or if the Warrnambool club had lost any direct sponsorship.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [dropcap] spokesman for Greyhound Racing Victoria, however, said the upgrade was still going ahead "at this stage".

"The redevelopment is continuing as planned," he said.

"There has been no impact at this stage."

The spokesman could offer no further information on the timing of the redevelopment, but it is understood to have been scheduled for mid-2016, pending the outcome of lease negotiations over the site.

The entire Warrnambool showgrounds site, including Wannon Park, is owned by the State Government and leased back to various groups for a nominal fee.

The \$1.6 million upgrade is understood to include significant improvements to the Wannon function room and will be the first major redevelopment at the site since the track was reconfigured in 2008.

Wannon Park has operated at the site since 1978, when it replaced the former Botanic Park, where St Joseph's Primary School now stands opposite the Botanic Gardens.

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