

**Mr PAUL BULLOCK**, FORMER CHAIR, GREYHOUND RACING TASMANIA, **Mr MAXWELL WALKER**, FORMER DEPUTY CHAIR, GREYHOUND RACING TASMANIA, AND **Ms DENISE FYSH**, CHAIR, HOBART GREYHOUND RACING CLUB, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Hall) - Thank you very much. I understand you are all appearing on behalf of the greyhound industry and I do not know whether any of you have given evidence before a parliamentary committee before. However, I will talk about privilege and restrictions on reporting so that you are clear on that. Everything you say to this committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. This is to allow you to speak freely. However, once you have left this committee room I must advise you not to specifically discuss your written or verbal evidence with anyone until the committee has made its report to the Legislative Council. You are free to speak generally about any issue to anyone but please do not refer specifically to anyone about the evidence you give to the committee until a report has been published on this.

I now invite you, whoever is the spokesperson, to talk and remind you to keep in the back of your minds all the time that we have specific terms of reference and that is the proposed sale of the TOTE Tasmania by the Government of Tasmania and any other matter incidental thereto.

**Mr BULLOCK** - Mr Chairman, first of all I would like to thank you very much for hearing us today because I was not available next week and to your secretary for fitting us in today. Thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - It is a pleasure.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I know some of the members, particularly Peter Gutwein. I have known Peter a long time, since he was a kid playing football. It is nice to see one familiar face here.

I will give a bit of the background because I don't reckon many people really know me. I started in racing in the early 1950s with my father working horses on St Marys Pass, which was gravel - the road from St Marys to Conara then was gravel, so it was a long time ago. Racing has always been part of my life. Unfortunately I did not have enough money to get into horses so I got into the next best thing, which was greyhounds. It was a pleasure to get involved with greyhound racing and the people in the industry. I owned, trained and bred for a period of 40 years and then I got involved in the administration in 1989 with the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club and was chairman in 1990. I then worked for the Racing Authority, as it was in those days when Michael Martin came from New Zealand, as the racing manager for greyhound racing. I looked after the Hobart club when they had their licence taken off them. I also took over Devonport when they handed theirs in. Mr Caylee became the chairman of the authority and we were worried about Devonport continuing. My suggestion to the authority at that time was to convert to a day meeting and get Sky Channel, if possible, and to race every week of the year if possible.

Around 1999 or 2000 I was elected to the greyhound council and I have been a member for the last nine years. Three of those years I was deputy chairman to my colleague, Max, and the last three years and when the council was wound up on 31 December 2008 I was chairman. One of the things that the council has done with the clubs - Denise is here today and is the chairman of Hobart - we have made sure that the clubs through the council are viable. Each club has received somewhere between \$76 000-\$80 000 a year to make sure they have made a profit at the end of the year.

When I went to the work meetings that the Director of Racing, Mr Murray, and the CEO of TOTE, Mr Coleman, presided over, along with John Lennon from his organisation, we were given a guarantee that TOTE would definitely not be sold. When the announcement came some seven days after the councils had been wound up, I am certain that people such as Bruce Freeland, Dick Bertram, Doug Martin - who were the instigators of the Tasmanian Totalisator Board which came into effect in 1973 - probably turned over in their graves.

For those who aren't racing minded, if they go back through the history of racing in New South Wales and Victoria, TAB was introduced to wipe the SP bookmaker in the local pub out of business, if possible. In New South Wales the result was enormous because they have a large population, and so has Victoria. The bookmakers, in my opinion - and I worked for two or three of them in Launceston over a period - were leeches. They took everything and put nothing back. Here we had an opportunity to have something for Tasmania that was going to put something back into racing. I can still remember the late Bruce Freeland saying at the time, 'This will really be good because we are going to appoint the Premier as one shareholder and the Treasurer as the other'. That has been the ploy ever since 1973. I believe that the Director of Racing and the CEO of TOTE either didn't know that the minister had intentions of selling TOTE or were accomplices for the workshops of getting rid of the councils to enable them to sell TOTE. I would say our code, and having spoken to the other two codes at recent meetings in Launceston in two previous weeks, it has got to the stage now that we don't trust the minister. That is a pretty defaming statement, I know, but we don't trust the minister.

One of the problems we have had with all of it is that there has been no consultation with the three codes, no consultation with racing and we have not seen a business plan. Anyone running a business usually has a business plan. This bloke just says sell. We might get \$30 million from somewhere and in today's economic climate we do not think that is on. So we are very disappointed, we have an industry where there are 3 000 people involved, we have a greyhound industry where we race three times a week and distribute probably \$40 000 a week in stake money and if we have not got that \$30 million, and it is no good saying we have a guarantee, because that money might not be there with the economic climate we have at the moment.

We are going to be up so and so in the boat. It will just be damn hopeless. We have got a milking cow in what is now TOTE Tasmania because of the change in the name sometime back but at the moment they are almost guaranteeing us an income for racing.

We do not wish to go to the Government of the day and say look we know you have got education and we know you have health and we know you have got roads and we know that you have got police et cetera, but we really want \$30 million.

Because the Government are likely to say to us sorry this year you can only have \$21 million. Or only \$18 million. With TOTE Tasmania we have got at least a guarantee at this stage of having enough money to do what we are doing at the moment.

The greyhound industry at this moment, and this is only from my point of view and I may be biased because I am the former chairman of the council, we have three clubs with \$200 000 each in their bank account, we have a council that gave the new racing board around about \$200 000 to do the job plus another \$55 000 for promotion.

I wish the new person replacing me at the Tasmanian Racing Board all the very best. He has a huge job in front of him to represent greyhound racing with very little knowledge of administration but very good on welfare. They have dropped him really in the soup because I do not think that the new board knows where they are going.

That is with all due respect to those seven people that have been appointed. I really believe that if we want to do our best we need to retain TOTE Tasmania. Otherwise I can see racing being shot in the foot. The spin-off from racing is huge.

We race three times a week which means people travel three times a week, they pull into service stations three times a week, there are a new set of tyres three times a week, there is a mechanic somewhere that needs to work on their car. It is a huge employer. We look after the farmers with disposal of stock et cetera.

If we have not got TOTE and we have not got the income to race for what we are racing for now people will drop out of the game. The other thing is that if there are less meetings, if trainers can only race once a week like the gallops do half the people in our industry will drop out simply because they need to be able to compete twice a week and by having three meetings a week there is a chance that you can race twice a week and get an income.

Otherwise we are dead in the water. If you people cannot see that maybe you should not do the job you are doing. I will pass over to my Deputy Chairman.

**CHAIR** - I might just ask you a question first. I hear what you are saying and I will be the devil's advocate first up. In other jurisdictions, that is in other States, TOTE has been privatised. In South Australia I understand it has been done rather poorly, in Victoria it is working quite well and it has opened up new opportunities. Now if the industry, such as yourselves, were enshrined in legislation some guarantees how would you view it then?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Mr Chairman, if you listen to the chairman of the thoroughbred breeders in Victoria, in 2012 they will be \$40 million to \$80 million worse off. And they have all the guarantees in the world.

**Mr BOOTH** - It is pokie guarantees, isn't it?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, it is pokies and Tattersalls who aren't allowed to have the licence anymore. If another body put their hand up and say, 'Yes, we want to take it over', the first thing people want is the money for their shareholders. It is not really good when you pick up the *Examiner* and you read that Tattersalls have made \$143 million profit and they are looking at buying TOTE Tasmania. When it has not been through Parliament, it has not been discussed with the industry, there is no business plan and you say, 'Please put your hand up and support it' it is not on!

**Mr BOOTH** - Thank you, Paul. I want to drill down into what you said that you were guaranteed at the meetings. Presumably that was the Hobart one on 26 September and Launceston on 1 October. Are they the meetings?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, and there was a follow-up meeting at Campbell Town which I could not go to but Max did go to and the guarantee was given again.

**Mr BOOTH** - In what form was that guarantee given?

**Mr BULLOCK** - It was given in writing. In the last handout that was given out at Campbell Town it was given out in writing that TOTE will not be sold.

**Mr BOOTH** - Do you have a copy of that which you can give the committee?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, but I am certain that the place and people who have put together a nice brochure for the MLCs have got it and will supply it at a later date, but it is available.

**Mr BOOTH** - Would the greyhound racing industry, in your view and the combined view perhaps here, have supported the industry restructure had you known that TOTE was going to be sold?

**Mr BULLOCK** - There is nothing wrong with change. Getting change right is the problem. Personally and I do not speak on a personal level, Kim, because we have not discussed it, I was quite pleased to not be involved anymore because I have just had a quadruple bypass and I was looking to lay down the tools. But we had a survey back in October that we put out to see how the industry felt. I do not have that with me today but the industry was 50/50 whether we should have the council or not. I do not think the majority of our code or the other two codes understood exactly what their code councils were doing and that is probably our fault rather than the industry's fault.

You are aware with the people you have dealt with in all codes, but we have a lot of people in each code that their education is not the greatest. Some of the kids who work as stable hands and kennel attendants et cetera, do not want to go to school. It is the only place they can find a niche in life. So therefore their education standard is not greatest and they say, what do we have these people for? It is like me saying, what do we have the Legislative Council for. I am pleased they are there but a lot of people are not.

*Laughter.*

**Mr WILKINSON** - Keep talking.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - The lower House shares your view.

**Mr BULLOCK** - They probably do, Peter. But, seriously, I have been involved in a couple of organisations, and Peter knows only too well that I started the Junior Football Association in Launceston back in 1973. I used to write a page, and this is digressing a bit, for the *Sunday Evening Express* and I had a cartoon drawn up by one of the guys. We had the kids in around playing with a big steel fence around with the parents outside and sometimes you feel the same about greyhound racing. I wish we could keep them out there and just race the dogs because you really struggle at times to understand the mentality of some people.

From my point of view, the council did its job. It was not always liked by everybody but we did our job to the best of our ability.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - You said that, under TOTE, you are guaranteed income each year. How does that work and what arrangements are currently in place?

**Mr BULLOCK** - We get 16.9 per cent of the profit and whatever else is dished out by Betfair. TOTE, of course, handle the Betfair money. Last year there was \$4.75 million of Betfair money distributed to the three codes and then they must have done a little bit better than people thought because we received another \$93 000, probably a couple of months into the season. We had a reduction previously because we thought the previous Premier, Mr Lennon, handled the money badly when he gave so much to the interdominion and just about robbed harness racing right throughout Australia. This made it very difficult, where at one carnival that was in South Australia they had to hold a whole lot of heats in Melbourne, otherwise they could not afford it.

The money that we have received every year has increased slightly. It has been by CPI. Last year I think we received \$48 000 from TOTE out of the TOTE profit, additional to what we had previously. We received another \$93 000 from the Betfair money which was additional. Then TOTE paid a \$125 000 bonus to each code. I can give you the figures for that because, unfortunately, the greyhound council in 2006 through freedom of information applied to get the actual figures from TOTE because they didn't want to give them to us. I can give you a copy of that today.

We have done our very best to pay out as much as possible. In the last 12 months we had paid out 79.81 per cent of our allocation. We had used about 20 per cent for administration. Everything that could possibly be pay out to the industry and the participants has been paid out. We have never had a problem with TOTE as such as they say, 'This is your lot'. We have to work with what we have. We have never been in a position to argue that we want a bigger share. We have told them on several occasions we want 19.6 per cent, or 20 per cent

if we can get it, but we have always finished up with around 16.9 per cent of the total pool. This year we will pay out about \$2 360 000, including our administration.

The clubs themselves - and Denise is very heavily involved with the Hobart club and is doing a very good job - with the administration of the money et cetera are in a situation where they get 3.55 per cent of TAB on-course and off-course turnover of a Thursday night. The clubs get somewhere between \$80 000 and \$90 000 because the council has always paid the salary of the racing manager, which is around \$56 000. He manages all three clubs and does all their bookwork, works with the accounts and makes absolutely certain that every dollar that is spent is accounted for.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - How many people are involved in dogs in the State?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I can't give an exact figure, Peter, but there are 600-odd involved registered, but of course we have a lot of hangers-on as well. There are a lot of people involved as silent partners in greyhounds, as they are in horses et cetera. We have a lot of people who help out at home who aren't registered. My guess would be there are somewhere between 700 and 1 000 people involved.

**Mr WILKINSON** - When you say 'involved', what do you mean?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Helping with training, cleaning kennels, cleaning yards. A lot of people are voluntary and help catch dogs. A lot of people go to maybe Brighton or the straight track at Mowbray - they can't go there any more because TOTE controls it - but we have always had people put their hand up to help out somewhere. Racing is a social industry and people forget that racing is really about bringing people together. The Launceston Cup carnival might not have been as good as it has been in the past but it gets people together and it is a day out. Greyhound racing is a very social industry. We just had the greyhound dinner at Mowbray in February and there were 190 people there. Getting 190 people to anything of a night socially is very difficult, as we all know. You have been involved in football, it has dropped off a bit to what it used to be. I have been involved in football with North Launceston and Beauty Point. It is not quite what it could be today but racing is very social. All three clubs have their social side of living in hand and care about it.

**Mr WALKER** - I have been involved since 1971, trying to train and breed dogs. In the late 1970s I became chairman of the Greyhound Owners, Trainers and Breeders Association. Back in those days it had a bit of punch, we conducted things for the Hobart Thousand. There was always a bit of feeling between the owners and trainers and the HGRC because if they blackballed you you couldn't become a member. They had a bit of power then. I left the Hobart area and went to Dover so I wasn't so involved with administration but I became involved in the late 1990s by becoming the Deputy Chairman of the Racing Council for three years. I came back on as chairman for three years and, at that time, I represented Tasmania on the Greyhounds Australasia which meant meeting every three months, overseas, in New Zealand or each of the other States and from time to time. I stepped down from that job and let Paul have a crack at it, and I have been the deputy chairman since that time.

I, like Paul, became involved with greyhound racing because, while I was always a bit of a punter, it was too costly for me to be involved in horses, and I thought I had given up football, which I didn't, but I needed the exercise for another 10 or 12 years. I have always taken the position of an underdog and I think that fits our situation very well because we have been the underdog in the three codes for quite a while.

One thing that Paul probably did not stress as much as he could have is the fact that we do not trust the administration. One of the reasons we do not trust them is the fact that back in 1999 Paul Lennon came to us and said, 'Look, get rid of your so-and-sos running this show and we will put some extra dollars in your pocket'. What was done was we dropped from 19.7 per cent to 16.9 per cent out of the total allocation. It went on from there.

**Mr GREEN** - When was that?

**Mr HARRISS** - In 1999.

**Mr WALKER** - We have been battling from that every since. When the Betfair money came around, we went from 16.9 per cent to 9 per cent for a time. When the big trots episode was on, we were duded again. We were able to prove our case, I thought, and they said, 'Oh well, yes, we can bridge you up to 19.7 per cent but it has to be new money. We can't take it off the other codes'. We have been told lies along the way.

Tony Murray said today that they had two meetings - we had three meetings. It was supposed to be consultation. The first two might have been. We had agreed to meet on a Friday, what happens? They want to put us on on a Thursday night when they know jolly well that people couldn't attend because they have their dogs to race on a Thursday night so two of us went to Campbell Town. Therese Kingston, who was my co-speaker at the time, asked Mr Murray, 'Why are we meeting on a Thursday night? We'd been promised a Friday when everyone could come'. His reply was, 'Well, I'm sorry, Therese, but most of them couldn't come on Friday', so he put it on Thursday night. She had the audacity to get up and ask, 'Who at this meeting can't attend tomorrow?'. There was one fellow out of the whole meeting.

We have been duded all the way through and so it is easy for us to understand why we think that we are getting shunted again. We do not believe Michael Aird for one minute. We were told on 15 December there would be no sale - this is members of TOTE, of course - and we find three weeks later, 'Oh, she's up for sale, fellas'. We cannot believe him for a minute.

I am happy to answer any questions.

**CHAIR** - Thanks. We might move on to Denise, if you want to have a few words and then we will ask questions.

**Ms FYSH** - I have only been in the administration of the club for about six years, but I would like to go back to the question that Mr Booth asked of whether we would have had the same thoughts to splitting racing and wagering had we known in the beginning, that TOTE was for sale. I know from my perspective we would not have supported it until a great deal of discussion was had on the sale of TOTE.

I believe that the industry was deceived by the Government during those workshops inasmuch as it seems obvious now that TOTE was going to be sold at the time of those workshops because the only way you could achieve the sale of TOTE was to separate wagering and racing. I believe that we were deceived that it was better for the industry should that be divided when in fact it was done so TOTE could be sold. Otherwise the announcement would not have been seven days after the new board started.

So I agree, and I think that the industry as a whole agrees that we have been deceived by this Government, that we have no trust in this Government and any guarantees that the Government at this point is going to say they will give, we have no trust in.

I think that there are a lot of areas that need to be brought forward. It cannot done because nothing has been discussed with the industry re the sale of TOTE. We have to look at our breeding, we have to look at our training facilities, we have to make sure that in the long term these things are going to be addressed; that enough money is there to make sure that the facilities can grow so that the industry across the three codes can grow. But until there is some discussion with the industry I do not think that the Government would ever get any support for the sale of TOTE Tasmania.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - I am aware that there is an agreement that when the Betfair fund exceeds \$5 million that the greyhound arm of racing will actually get up to that 19.7 per cent. Can you tell me what sort of agreement, is it a written agreement?

**Mr BULLOCK** - There is not an agreement in writing. We discussed it with the acting CEO of the new racing board, Mr Lottering, at the time, and Van Ransley who does not work there anymore. We discussed it with them and they said we will consider the 19.6 per cent. A lot of things that are done in racing are not exactly written all the time.

I am probably at fault but I have always taken peoples word on a handshake. Obviously it does not work a lot of the time. And after one person who is in this room was on ABC Radio at 10.45 a.m. I do not believe him either. Because he treated today as a joke. A great laughing point for Mr Best on radio. The sale of TOTE at 10.45 this morning.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - So there is not an actual written agreement?

**Mr WALKER** - There was an understanding given, Tania, that that would take place and as I said earlier it was to be on any new money not the allocation that would have gone back. So if TOTE makes a heap of money we were promised 19.7 per cent of the surplus of what they would have considered normal and anything from Betfair as well.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - But not what you would consider a formal agreement as well.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - In regard to any consultation since 7 January with your industry by the Government has any occurred?

**Mr BULLOCK** - None whatsoever.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - Has anybody spoken to you at all about any consultation coming forth?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Not from the Government's point of view. The three codes met in Launceston three weeks ago today and Chester Bullock and Joel Wallace from the pacing, Pam Cassidy and myself from greyhound racing and Mrs Wishaw from Armidale Stud had a meeting on the Friday. We had a follow-up meeting with five of the MLCs who live in the northern part of the State last Friday re the sale. And if you want their names I am quite happy to provide those. There was Don Wing -

**CHAIR** - We are aware of those.

**Mr BULLOCK** - We have had a couple of meetings. I was very impressed with Mrs Wishaw's soapbox in the *Examiner*. For those people who have not read it, there is a copy available here if you require it. That is it in a nutshell. The whole industry, it is not just greyhound racing, the whole racing industry is absolutely disgusted with the contempt that the Minister for Racing has shown towards the industry.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - May I ask you a question? You have said that you do not trust the minister -

**Mr BULLOCK** - I do not trust the minister, Peter, because not only has he lied and said TOTE will not be sold, but the people who are out there -

**CHAIR** - Order. Have to be careful about casting aspersions there in that regard.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I believe that the minister has lied. That is me. Sorry, I say it as I see it and I believe that the people who were working for him, the Director of Racing and the CEO of TOTE who done the workshops et cetera, if they knew TOTE was going to be sold, they lied. If they did not know, they were led astray by the minister.

**Mr BEST** - For fear of leading with the chin.

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, I am not.

**Mr BEST** - No, me, not you. I am interested and there is no double edge here. With your code, how often do you meet, just together, do not worry about the political aspect of it, just as a group to discuss issues?

**Mr BULLOCK** - We meet every month as a council right up until the end of December. Since then, as far a statewide thing goes, no, we have not. Gary Sutton from Devonport and Pam

Cassidy from Launceston were in Launceston with the MLCs. Denise, unfortunately, was not there and Denise's partner trains greyhounds and it is not easy to get everywhere you want to be at certain meetings. I reckon she has done it pretty hard to get here this morning.

**Mr BEST** - No, that is fine. I am interested, though, because we have heard quite a bit about the views of interest versus business and the social aspect you spoke quite in depth about. As a code you must have some policies about some of these issues that you have written down?

**Ms FYSH** - What issues?

**Mr BEST** - Issues about how you see, moving forward, how you see yourselves in terms of business and how you see the social aspect?

**Mr BULLOCK** - One of the things that happens, and Max and Denise are in the same position as I am, I go to two greyhound meeting a week most of the time. Over a period of nine years I think I know almost everybody in the industry by their first name and they all know me. If they have a concern they have usually come to me when I was deputy chairman of the council and expressed their opinion and I have taken it back to a meeting where it has been discussed with the council and the clubs. We have had club and council meeting in Campbell Town et cetera to get the feel of the industry. That is personal consultation. That is the best we can do and I think that is the way it should be done in this instance and it has not been done.

**Mr BEST** - Finally, what is the collective view that you take?

**Mr BULLOCK** - The collective view of greyhound racing is not to sell TOTE.

**Mr BEST** - Okay.

**Mr BULLOCK** - The other issue is, had we had some consultation and a business plan we may not think that way but we have had nothing.

**Mr GREEN** - It flows on pretty well from what was just said really because what we are talking about today is the potential sale of TOTE and knowing that sale of TOTE has to go through both Houses of Parliament. So, consultation with respect to business plans and all of the other things associated with that will have to satisfy members of Parliament prior to it being sold.

The issue that I want to put to you is whether or not, given that it is likely that a position to ensure that the industry is looked after financially into the future, would be legislated and if it was, would the code then be satisfied that the industry therefore would be looked after on into the future and could look to build on the existing infrastructure et cetera that you have?

**Mr BULLOCK** - My answer is that irrespective of what happens we are prepared to look at anything but, for God's sake, please present something. Talking to accountants is probably the right thing to do in a business to sell it if it is worth money. Knowing the fickle industry

of racing and the present Government we have, of which you are a member, we do not know.

**Mr GREEN** - It is fair enough for you to suggest that, and you have every right to do so, but I would say that from the Government's point of view we are taking industry very seriously and have always tried to ensure that the industry moves forward. If the sale of TOTE ensures that the industry has the opportunity to move forward, would the code be satisfied with that and focus on the issues associated with racing, et cetera, and doing all the other things that you enjoy doing?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I could not exactly answer for the industry.

**Ms FYSH** - It would also depend on how that was structured and where we sat within it, and what was available within that for future development of the racing industry. I would like to ask, was that decision to sell TOTE a knee-jerk decision that happened overnight because I just find it incredible that a government could do that? Is it good business practice to make a knee-jerk reaction overnight to sell TOTE Tasmania?

**Mr GREEN** - You are not asking me that question because I am not in a position to answer the question. What I am trying to put back to you is that if all of the things that you are concerned about with respect to the longevity of your particular code were satisfied as part of this process overall, would your code move on and concentrate on all of the things that you are good at, concentrating on running the greyhound meetings and so on?

**Ms FYSH** - I do not think we are going to have an option there. The alternative is what - that you will not sell TOTE?

**Mr GREEN** - We may not and we may not get the price, who knows?

**Mr WALKER** - What is the price?

**Mr GREEN** - I don't know.

**Ms FYSH** - Exactly. We do not seem to know a great deal except that the Government wants to sell it.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Am I right in saying that the real concern I can see over the last half hour is the lack of communication and that things were said which turned out to be not correct, that is that the Government was not selling then suddenly it was? I suppose it is a bit like being put on a plane and not knowing where you are going to. If you knew where you are going to you might say, 'Yes, I like that place, that's where I want to be', or, alternatively, 'No, I don't. We're going to get into trouble if we finish up landing there'.

**Ms FYSH** - But if you knew where you were going you may never have boarded the plane to begin with.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Yes, that is what I am saying.

**Mr BEST** - Sorry to interrupt, my question was really about the plane that you want to get on.

**Mr BULLOCK** - It would be absolutely lovely, Brenton, to have a look and say, 'Yes, we do' or 'No, we don't'. Seriously, most organisations that I have been wrapped up in do that first and then ask you for an answer, not say, 'We're going to do it' and then we have to argue about it.

**Mr BEST** - I take that point and I have that message loud and clear. What I am interested in is how you, as an organisation, see yourself moving forward. I hear what you have said, you do not want the sale of TOTE, but I am keen to know what strategies you see that will enhance, say, the interests, business end and the social end for yourselves. That is what I am keen to know about.

**Mr BULLOCK** - This is a difficult one. I think Craig Coleman, since he has been the CEO of TOTE, has done an outstanding job by getting the Betfair deal on-line with turnover, et cetera. I do not have a problem there. They are not bad people and I am not against them personally, but the whole issue is - and this is the bottom line all the time for me but it may not be for the other two people who are here because we have not been coerced to give you the one answer - there has been no consultation, there is no business plan, no-one wants to talk about it. It does not matter which politician you ring at home, 'Look, there's going to be a hearing in Hobart'. What is the problem? Let us talk about it because we will never get it fixed if we do not talk about it. What Jim says about communication is correct.

**Mr BOOTH** - What I am interested in is you have clearly said that you are opposed to the sale, is that because you think the culture of your industry will collapse, basically be ruined, if it proceeds? Is that the risk that in fact you will lose your industry as a result of the sale?

**Ms FYSH** - It is definitely a risk but until we see something on paper we do not know how big that risk is or where on the ladder the greyhound industry is going to sit. How far under the other two codes are we going to sit? South Australia is a glaring example of how to get it wrong. They have fought for 10 years to get back on their feet.

**Mr BOOTH** - Are there other intangible benefits that flow as a result of government ownership of TOTE at the moment that are not included in the stakes and bonuses and so forth, so whatever you provided to the industry that would be part of that like access to the training facilities, say, or facilities generally that might be taken away by a private operator or a charge imposed?

**Ms FYSH** - We are still trying to get our head around the new structure. We are very early into the new structure and trying to get our head around who now has responsibility for this trial track or that race track or where to go for particular funding. We are still trying to get our heads around this. On top of that, there is this. It is difficult to bring the two together.

**Mr BULLOCK** - There are a lot of issues in our industry that need attention. I believe, and according to some administrators, there is a problem with the Brighton training track that

part of it is going to be taken away for soccer. I do not think there is a lease to the place. I know that the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club still has not signed heads of agreement for Mowbray and they have been there since 2004, that is five years ago.

**Ms FYSH** - Hobart has not either.

**Mr BULLOCK** - These are all little administration issues that no-one seems to get to because they do not want to discuss it.

**Ms FYSH** - And no-one knows whose job it is.

**Mr BOOTH** - Is it a lot more than just the stakes?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, a lot more.

**Ms FYSH** - It goes a lot deeper.

**Mr BULLOCK** - The stakes are part of it and that is thing that concerns us with the sale of TOTE, but there is maintenance and track maintenance.

**Mr GREEN** - What about Sky Channel?

**Mr BULLOCK** - It is a huge problem, Bryan, because at the moment I think TOTE and Sky Channel have signed an agreement up to the end of June. There is some doubt about Hobart staying on Thursday nights because it has become first track of the pay packet when everything can come in for nothing. It is where Sky Channel and the two major players, Victoria and New South Wales, once again, can get a product in that is not costing them anything, race field legislation and fees for buying their product. Tas TOTE will have to buy from New South Wales and Victoria what they are going to bet on. It is a whole changing world. Mind you, some of this was created by Greyhound Racing Authority of New South Wales originally -

**Mr GREEN** - Does it have an impact on potential dividends?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, it does.

**Mr GREEN** - Changes on Sky can impact on your dividends overnight.

**Mr BULLOCK** - That's right.

**Ms FYSH** - Even down to how much time they allot you. If they do not give you a couple of minutes running into your race your turnover can be down \$10 000 or \$20 000 and you are talking a minute.

**Mr BULLOCK** - The other issue is that you are getting to is that if Hobart was taken off Thursday night and put on Tuesday morning there is going to be a huge downturn -

**Mr GREEN** - There is.

**Mr BULLOCK** - in TAB turnover. I understand that fully. I have discussed it with Sky Channel, I have discussed it with TOTE Tasmania.

**Mr GREEN** - Does Sky make those decisions or is it part of the -

**Mr BULLOCK** - I think Sky are dictating to the industry everywhere in Australia.

**Mr GREEN** - Yes.

**Mr BULLOCK** - The other issue with that is it is only New South Wales by Tabcorp. They always show the New South Wales races irrespective thereof and the rest are fill-ins. It is interesting to note that Victoria and New South Wales have the same number of programs on each occasion, the other States are just -

**Mr BEST** - I am interested in that you know a lot more about greyhound racing -

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, I do not.

**Mr BEST** - Where would be the top three or four places in the world for greyhound racing? Are we one of them?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Australia is one of them.

**Mr BEST** - How would you rate it if, as you said, Australia is one?

**Mr BULLOCK** - There is no doubt.

**Mr BEST** - What are the others?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Ireland, United Kingdom, America, Macau, Vietnam, Sweden and New Zealand. I went to New Zealand about 12 months ago and could not believe how far in front of us they are with stake money. The minimum stake in New Zealand is \$2 900 and they are there by default with their screening of a Sunday afternoon. No-one wanted to race Sunday afternoons so they did and their TAB turnover went up something like 78 per cent. Just as now everybody wants to get on Thursday nights and Sundays in Australia with Sky Channel, the little people are getting forced out of the game.

The other thing is, since the mines have folded in Western Australia, TAB turnover has gone down something like 43 per cent in the last two months and people in Western Australia were buying greyhounds from the eastern States, to race over there, that were miners and those miners have either lost their job or they have come back to the eastern States and some of those dogs have gone by the wayside.

**Mr BEST** - So out of that, just a quick answer. Where would be the most turnover or the most betting out of those places that you have named?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I think, population wise, probably the United Kingdom.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for presenting. You have done that with passion and I think we have heard it loud and clear. I must just remind you again, though, that what you have said in here is protected by parliamentary privilege. However, it is a different matter outside that door. Thank you very much to the three of you and we will keep going with our hearings.

**Mr BULLOCK** - Once again, Mr Chairman, thank you for hearing us today because I would not have been available next week.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**