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THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2026.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION

Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 Inquiry

The committee met at 9.33 a.m.

CHAIR (Ms Johnston) - Welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Thank you very much for your attendance. We're convening today to have the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 inquiry.

I'm the Chair, Kristie Johnston, Independent member for Clark; with me are the Independent member for Nelson, Meg Webb; the Labor member for Franklin, Dean Winter; and the Greens member for Hobart, Cassy O'Connor. We have apologies from Tania Rattray, who can't join us today.

If you could please state your name and the capacity in which you appear before the committee. Perhaps, Minister, if you can introduce them, please.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, thank you very much, Chair. To my right I have Deidre Wilson, Acting Chief Operations Officer; I have Stephen Hall, Principal Adviser, Legal Services at Biosecurity Tasmania, and lead drafting instructor of the Nill; to my left, I have Luke Gaetani, Chief of Staff to me; and Anita Yan, Deputy Chief Operations Officer.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Can I confirm they've all received and read the guide sent to you by the committee secretary? Yes? Nods all there.

This hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament. This protection is not accorded to your statements that may be defamatory if repeated or referred to by you outside of parliamentary proceedings.

This hearing is public and we are broadcasting. The public and media may be present. Should you wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make this request to the committee at the time.

Before you, you have the statutory declaration - Minister, you don't need to do that - but can I ask others who are presenting evidence today to make that declaration, please?

Ms DEIDRE WILSON, ACTING CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT (NRE), **Ms ANITA YAN**, DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT (NRE), AND **Mr STEPHEN HALL**, PRINCIPAL ADVISER - LEGAL SERVICES, BIOSECURITY TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, TOOK THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

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CHAIR - Thank you very much. Minister, I note that you haven't made a submission to the inquiry. I invite you to make an opening statement.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'm here to further discuss the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025.

As the committee is aware, the Bill was supported by the House of Assembly and successfully passed the Chamber on 4 December last year [2025]. Its passage reflects the Parliament's recognition of the need for a clear, structured and humane approach to phasing out greyhound racing in Tasmania. The Government remains focused on ensuring the transition is orderly, compassionate and respectful of both the people and the animals involved.

The Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner and the transition working group continue to play a central role, with strong engagement across stakeholders. I also want to reaffirm the Government's ongoing commitment to the broader racing industry. I recognise this is a complex and emotional change for many in the community, and I appreciate the committee's careful consideration of the legislation.

My intention today is to assist with any details the committee requires in the detailed examination of the Bill. I have with me representatives from the Department of Primary Industries and Water who can also assist the committee in the examination of the Bill. Chair, I welcome any questions.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Minister. As I said, we do note that we didn't receive a submission from you, but you're here to speak about the content of the bill. You did present to this committee prior to the Bill being debated in the Upper House, so we do have that information. I will open it up for questions. Perhaps, I will go to the member for -

Ms WEBB - Sure. I think most of what we're going to be doing in asking questions is digging into particular parts of the Bill, looking at what we've heard from other submissions and testing things with you.

One thing I will go to straight off the bat is the part of the Bill that deals with a closure plan. In the Bill, it's clause 10, which looks to insert schedule 8 - I'm looking at page 15 of the Bill. That's section 3 of schedule 8 being inserted: Greyhound racing closure plan. Some of the concerns are around a lack of clarity that's here in relation to the plan. I want to test with you in relation to putting this into the legislation like this; is there any reason that you haven't, and are you receptive to there being more detail provided in the Bill? Redrafting this section so that it would include, for example, a legislated requirement to consult, just as a clear statement that that will be included in the development of the plan. Are you alright?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Ms WEBB - I'm just going to ask about a few different elements and test your receptivity to including them, potentially, in an amended Bill. Putting in there a requirement to consult, putting in there a non-exhaustive list of elements that would be expected to be in that plan. Listing out elements without saying 'only these things', saying the expectation is 'at least these things' would be in a plan because it's not currently there, and whether there is a receptivity to it being tabled in Parliament, potentially even disallowable in Parliament, knowing that

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disallowance is an extremely high bar to meet. The likelihood of disallowance is incredibly low, but it's a statement that says the Parliament takes responsibility for that plan in its completeness. Those elements being included; I'd like your thoughts on that.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. I will pass to Stephen, who will - or Deidre - to provide some detail to your questions.

Ms WILSON - Thank you. First of all, in terms of the drafting of the Bill, the greyhound racing closure plan was kept at a high level deliberately. That's to allow for the plan to be developed post the introduction of the Bill based on consultation. There is already on the public record the Commissioner's [Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner] terms of reference for the greyhound reference - greyhound working group, apologies - which is really critical. If you constrain a plan, there is a risk that the plan will not be appropriate for the particular circumstances that we need to manage through this process -

Ms WEBB - Just to be really clear, Minister: I'd like to actually press this a little bit more because I'm not asking for there to be legislative constraint here. What I've asked you about is three things: a receptivity to there being a specific statement about consultation occurring as part of the development, so it provides confidence for people to see that it's a legislated expectation that consultation occurs with the development of the plan; a list of basic elements that there would be no disagreement about being in the plan, being a non-exhaustive list, so it doesn't exclude other things. That could just be a very short non-exhaustive list, but indicative to people; and whether it could be legislated that it's tabled in Parliament. Those are the three things. It doesn't constrain the plan. It just is about how the plan is developed and accountability around it.

Ms HOWLETT - The Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner is sitting in front of you tomorrow and he has his working group from various - we have the RSPCA on the working group, there's community, there are vets, there are also people from the code, I believe. They will be consulting as far as that part of the Bill. He will be able to take questions from you tomorrow.

Ms WEBB - But this is your - let's just be really clear: it's going to be a long hour if we get tied up with this. We're examining the Bill. This is a part of the Bill that describes the closure plan being developed. It's your decision what's here in this Bill. I'm asking you, are you receptive to there being slightly more detail here legislated that would give reassurance and confidence to people who've raised issues? Those three elements I've already spoken to: that there's just an explicit statement of consultation, that there are some elements non-exhaustively listed, and that there be a legislative requirement that it's tabled in Parliament. Would you take that under consideration as something that addresses some concerns raised without actually constraining virtually anything about what's intended anyway, what you're saying the Commissioner's doing anyway?

Ms WILSON - Thank you. The Bill was drafted based on Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) advice. It's based on ensuring that the Commissioner has the capacity to develop an appropriate plan. It has to be approved by the Minister, and then the plan has to be publicly released. The Joint Select Committee [on Greyhound Racing Transition], as I understand it, was set up to review the transition plan and that is the element and the mechanism the Government has set up to ensure that there is some oversight by the Parliament for review of the transition plan.

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In terms of the particular matters that you're raising, we would need to seek OPC advice. It's really important to note that any amendment could have unintended consequences without fully understanding what is proposed. The second thing is that there is capacity under the Bill to develop regulations that could go to detail if it was required to be put in legislation. I think that that's -

Ms WEBB - It might be tricky for you to provide a response fully right here in the moment. What's likely, potentially, is the Committee could actually seek a response from you after you've had time to consider those things about the inclusion of those matters and whether there's a receptivity to it.

Mr HALL - The one potential legal complication that might arise from changing the status of the plan - is it a plan or is it actually subordinate legislation? You mentioned should Parliament have the ability to disallow? Well, that's traditionally something that occurs in relation to regulations or subordinate legislation. As it stands now, it's a strategic plan; it's designed to be flexible to ensure that - and any change of parliamentary oversight or involvement in that plan might actually have an unintended consequence as far as the flexibility and things like that.

Ms WEBB - Tabling in Parliament wouldn't put the same constraint on but disallowance might -

Mr HALL - I'm not saying this is actually - but that is one of the issues that we need to -

CHAIR - Perhaps if the Minister takes that on notice and gets further advice about what that might mean - provide a response back if that's okay, Minister, if you can note that that's been taken on advice.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. We do understand that its technical - considerations.

Mr WINTER - Thank you. Minister, the annual report from the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner outlines on page 16 that there's a racing industry health check going on. It says that it's to continue strengthening the Tasmanian racing industry and culture and commenced that health check in May 2025. Can you tell the committee whether that report has been completed, whether you've received or seen the report?

Ms HOWLETT - That question isn't relevant to the actual Bill in front of us, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Well, it's relevant to this Bill, the contention from some of our submitters is that, in fact, the Bill will decimate and destroy the entire racing industry. I know you haven't seen the submissions yet because of the rush of this committee, but what's really important as part of this is that we understand the implications on the rest of the industry. I'm asking you whether that report's been completed, whether you've received it and what it says.

Ms O'CONNOR - Which industry? Are you talking about thoroughbreds, harness, greyhounds?

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Ms HOWLETT - Yes, I don't see how that has any relevance to the Bill that we're discussing today. The Commissioner will be appearing in front of you tomorrow, so you can certainly ask him that question.

Mr WINTER - Has the report been received by yourself?

Ms HOWLETT - No, it's not our report.

Mr WINTER - Have you received the report?

Ms HOWLETT - That's his report. I've had a verbal briefing but it's his report and you can ask him those questions tomorrow.

Mr WINTER - You've been briefed on the report. It hasn't been released publicly and yet it's about the fundamentals of racing in Tasmania. Can you outline to the committee what the report says and what risks it outlines to the industry?

Ms HOWLETT - It's the Commissioner's report. You can discuss it with him tomorrow, and it doesn't have any relevance to the Bill that we're looking at in front of us today.

Mr WINTER - It is very relevant to the submitters. I know you haven't seen the submissions yet because - and that's not your fault, that's actually a process issue on our side of things. Given the central nature of the report and the report to proper consideration of the circumstances facing the entire racing community, that's all three codes, why is the report not being released publicly?

Ms HOWLETT - That is a question for the Commissioner.

CHAIR - We might move on because the Minister has made it clear you need to ask those questions of the Commissioner tomorrow.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Minister, as a consequence of the delay of the transition Bill, those provisions which were due to come into effect on 1 January this year [2026] obviously are not. In part 4, section 8 of the Bill, there's the prohibition on the breeding of greyhounds. We've received some evidence through commentary on social media that some industry participants, as a consequence of the delay, are moving towards more breeding of greyhounds. Do you have any more information on that? Is it of concern to you that the consequence of the delay means that there are more dogs being bred, which means that there are more dogs that will be exploited and more dogs at the end that will need to be rehomed?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. I believe an audit was done yesterday and I believe that there has been a slight increase on the numbers. The Commissioner would have those exact numbers for you. What is concerning is that the longer this is delayed, the more animal welfare issues there will be. Obviously, that will put a huge emphasis on the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) facility and rehoming facilities as well. There has been an increase, but, the final number of the audit, the Commissioner will be able to give to you tomorrow.

Ms O'CONNOR - Presumably, the greater the delay -

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Ms HOWLETT - The more their numbers will increase. That's right.

Ms O'CONNOR - The more the risk of more dogs being bred into the industry.

Thank you. I want to talk to you about some of the adverse animal welfare outcomes that have happened even since 1 January [2026]. I'm referring to a dog called Memphis Rains, which, on 8 January [2026] at Elwick, suffered a fractured right hock and was stood down for 90 days in the stewards report. That dog was then sent to Victoria and 24 hours later it was listed as dead.

Do you have any information or insights into what happened to Memphis Rains, for example? Obviously, it's something we can ask Tasracing later. But does it sort of reveal to you some of the risks that the longer this industry goes on, the longer this Bill is delayed, the more you will have dogs being killed and injured? We also don't have the capacity to prevent dogs that are being raced here from being sent back interstate to be killed.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, Dr Lenz [Chief Animal Welfare Officer & Regulatory Veterinarian, Tasracing] would have the details on that injury and what occurred on the track. I can't provide any more details on that because I've not seen the report. But, I believe Tasracing is sitting in front of the committee today.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just briefly on the Bill: since the delay, have you been briefed by the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner with an update on the industry, at this point?

Ms HOWLETT - I believe he is consulting with his working group. I've been advised that there will be a code representative on the group, so that is a positive step that they are now willing to consult with the Racing Integrity Commissioner. I was only advised of that earlier this morning. I'm not sure who that representative is, but he will be able to provide more details on that.

CHAIR - Thank you. I have questions. I will come down the line; I'm making sure everyone gets a fair opportunity. Minister, Tasracing's submission - and I appreciate you might not have had the opportunity to see it, I will pass it over, it is a two-page submission - is going online and it should be up online, I think, as of now?

Ms HOWLETT - I've not seen it, sorry.

CHAIR - It's being worked on at the moment. It raises some concerns about the exporting of dogs, in particular the exporting of dogs overseas. It notes that the proposed legislation also refers to the prospect of criminal proceedings being available for breeding and racing greyhounds should they be sold interstate, but raises concerns about those dogs exported overseas. Could you give the committee some information about the distinction between those two and why the legislation has been drafted in that way, and any protections that are being put in place to avoid the situation where dogs are exported overseas?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, certainly. Just one moment.

CHAIR - And what was considered in the drafting process in relation to that?

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Ms HOWLETT - Obviously, as soon as the Bill passes through the other House - I'm assuming that it does - then the importation will not be allowed of greyhounds to other jurisdictions.

Ms O'CONNOR - What about the export?

CHAIR - Exporting is a particular concern of Tasracing? Does that include overseas as well?

Ms WILSON - Can I ask a clarification question because I haven't read this. Are they talking about through the transition period or post?

Ms O'CONNOR - Post. The Bill, as unamended, they elevate a risk potential if the Bill is not amended to explicitly prohibit the export of dogs that are bred as companion animals.

Mr HALL - There are constraints on interstate law about exporting, whether it is to other states. That's one of the reasons why the Bill amends the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* to prohibit the supply of a greyhound for the purpose of racing. The supply that's prohibited would be someone in Tasmania and from Tasmania and if it was able to be proved that the supply was for a dog to be raced interstate, overseas, in Tasmania - it doesn't matter where - that's prohibited.

The very act of supply, which may encompass someone intending to export or whatever, it doesn't matter, that's prohibited. That's how the Bill deals with that particular issue.

CHAIR - So effectively, the concern is raised by Tasracing. It doesn't matter which jurisdiction the dog is exported to, it's about the intent of the person who's in Tasmania at the time. Is that correct?

Mr HALL - If you possess, breed, train, do anything with a dog with the intent of supplying that dog, selling it, giving it, whatever, so that it can be raced somewhere, that's the offence.

Ms WEBB - I am going to follow up in some similar areas. I'm interested in concerns put to us in submissions that shifting things across to the *Dog Control Act 2000* after the transition and that restriction to breeding just for domestic pets only doesn't contain sufficient protections in relation to such a specialised breed. In fact, welfare arrangements, which are quite comprehensive within an industry context and under the current legislative framework, fall away and that may leave greyhounds, after that when they're only covered by the *Dog Control Act 2000*, to have fewer welfare protections than they currently have. For example, dangerous crossbreeding and things like that might happen. Can you speak to those concerns and how we're dealing with that within this legislation, or if it's not being dealt with in this legislation, how it will be dealt with?

Ms WILSON - Thank you for the question. As you're aware, the framework within this Bill is to amend other pieces of legislation, so it's really important to note that we are amending the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* as well as the *Dog Control Act 2000*. Those acts already have frameworks that deal with animal welfare, particularly the *Animal Welfare Act 2000*. So all those provisions will apply to the care and control of greyhounds.

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There is also currently a process in play to review the Animal Welfare (Dogs) Regulations 2016 which have specific provisions currently pertaining to greyhounds, and that process is continuing. There was an issues paper released and then there will be an outcome from that.

To say that because an industry is not in play that has rules around the industry which are then removed means that there is a gap in terms of animal welfare is -

Ms O'CONNOR - Untrue. They will be treated, won't they, protected in the same way as every other dog under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*?

Ms WILSON - is a misunderstanding of how the framework will work post the changes. There are more than adequate controls under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and under the *Dog Welfare Act 2000* to ensure that the pet greyhounds are appropriately managed and if there were incidents of mismanagement of those dogs, there is a capacity for criminal offences.

Mr HALL - That's right. That's why the amendments through this Bill of the *Dog Control Act 2000* for the provisions that relate to greyhounds don't completely remove those provisions; they just simply relax some of the requirements around muzzling because it does recognise that greyhounds as a breed are in a special situation and have special requirements. That will continue under the *Dog Control Act 2000* and we can also make specific regulations under the Animal Welfare (Dogs) Regulations 2016 that are specific to greyhounds, if that's needed.

Ms WEBB - For the post transition period?

Mr HALL - Post transition, that's right.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Winter?

Mr WINTER - I want to explain for those who might be watching, the Minister's in an unfortunate position not of her own making - of our making, the committee's making - in that she hasn't seen the submission that I'm about to ask for. That's a choice made by the committee without me present, where the committee decided to hold this hearing and chose who would be -

Ms O'CONNOR - Get over it. Really, you're just here to run interference for the industry constantly.

Mr WINTER - Where the committee decided that it would organise these hearings before it actually published the submission. So I'm going to ask the question but -

CHAIR - Mr Winter, can you ask your question, please? It's not unusual for committees to do that.

Mr WINTER - I'm going to ask the question, but in fairness to the Minister, she has not seen the submission until today. Minister, the Tasracing submission is quite explosive. It says:

If the proposed greyhound phase-out legislation allows the breeding of greyhounds for pets or for non-greyhound racing purposes,

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End quote - because it does. It goes on to say:

This will create a serious and foreseeable risk that dogs will be exported overseas, including to high-risk jurisdictions such as China.

Minister, was Tasracing actually consulted about this Bill, and did it raise this concern with you or your Department during the drafting of the Bill?

Ms WILSON - Thank you. I appreciate while we haven't seen the submission, I believe we've actually answered the question. The Bill is carefully -

Mr WINTER - I asked you about Tasracing. Were they consulted as part of the drafting?

Ms WILSON - Tasracing was on the working group. They were briefed on the day that the Bill was tabled. I can assure you that we have a good relationship with Tasracing, as does the commissioner, and if specific issues are raised, we would always look at that. I can understand why people looking at the Bill might go to what I might call a scenario and think, well, that scenario could happen. What we're saying is that the Bill under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* actually was - sorry, the proposed amendments to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* were carefully crafted to take into account the issue of supply for racing.

Mr WINTER - The question is -

Ms WILSON - It's about the intent of the person and if they are intending to supply for a purpose, that's unlawful.

Mr WINTER - You're taking up a lot of time. Was Tasracing given an opportunity to provide feedback to the draft Bill before it was tabled?

Ms WILSON - Tasracing is on the commissioner's greyhound working group.

Mr WINTER - Yes or no? Was Tasracing able to provide feedback to the draft Bill?

Ms WILSON - I believe I've said what I can.

CHAIR - We'll move on. I think it's pretty clear.

Ms WEBB - It's pretty clear.

Mr WINTER - No, hang on. No, Chair, this is -

Ms WILSON - I believe I did answer the question.

Ms WEBB - No, the working group isn't about the development of the Bill. It's a pretty clear question, Minister, that you should just answer yes or no and then we can move on. Was Tasracing consulted in the development of the Bill? Yes or no?

Mr WINTER - Did Tasracing have an opportunity to see the draft Bill before it was tabled?

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Ms O'CONNOR - Was Tasracing on the working group, and was the working group consulted during the development of the Bill?

Ms HOWLETT – Yes.

Mr WINTER - Can I be really specific about the question? Was Tasracing given a copy of the draft Bill to provide feedback on before it was tabled, and during that, did they raise this concern that's in their submission?

Ms HOWLETT - The question has been answered.

Mr WINTER - I'm sorry, but it has not.

Ms WILSON - The department briefed Tasracing on the morning of the submission -

Mr WINTER - Did they get a copy of the draft Bill in order to provide feedback on it?

Ms WEBB - I think the answer is no, I'm pretty sure, Mr Winter.

CHAIR - I think it might be, but we have limited -

Mr WINTER - Well, can I get that answer from the actual witness?

CHAIR - I think we can draw conclusion from the answers.

Mr WINTER - It's yes or no.

Ms WEBB – It's quite exposing that their answer isn't being provided, so.

Ms WILSON - I need to just check our records.

Ms WEBB - We can ask Tasracing anyway.

CHAIR - We can also ask the Commissioner. It seems to me that the answer is the working group received it. We will ask the Commissioner.

Mr WINTER - Chair, I've had one kind of answer, and on this same issue. The issue raised by Tasracing here is that:

Permitting breeding in these circumstances would create a clear and exploitable loophole effectively enabling the export of greyhounds under the guise of companion animal placement. The consequences of this would include:

- severe animal welfare outcomes with no capacity for oversight once dogs leave Australia;
- reputational damage to the industry and to government, particularly in the context of the publicly stated phase-out;

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- regulatory failure, exposing authorities to criticism that risks were known and ignored, undermining the integrity and intent of the phase-out legislation itself.

These are critical issues raised by Tasracing, the GBE tasked with oversight of this industry. Was this information provided to NRE or to you, Minister, before the Bill was tabled, and what was your response?

Ms HOWLETT - It's the first time I've seen the letter, honourable member.

Mr HALL - That issue was very prominent in the drafting of the Bill. It was raised through the Commissioner, and it was certainly a big concern. That's reflected in the actual provision that deals with it, which is -

Ms O'CONNOR - Part 2, clause 5.

Mr HALL - In the Bill it's page 8. The offence is an amendment to the *Animal Welfare Act*:

- (5) A person must not -
- (a) sell or supply a dog to another person; or
 - (b) offer a dog for sale or supply to another person; or
 - (c) breed, acquire or keep a dog, for sale or supply to another person -

if the person knows, or ought reasonably to know, that the other person intends to cause or permit the dog to participate in a greyhound race or a commercial dog race.

That's not limited to Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - With a penalty of up to six months in prison for breaching that.

Mr WINTER - How do you actually police this issue?

Mr HALL - All offences come down to a matter of evidence. The test here is they know or they reasonably ought to know. If you were prosecuting someone under this offence, you would need to provide evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt that any reasonable person in that situation would have known this dog was going to be raced in Victoria, China, wherever. If you can do that, they are guilty of an offence under this provision.

Ms WILSON - Whilst this might be a new issue to the committee that's been raised, this is not a new issue to us. It was - whether it was raised, however it was raised, this was definitely a question that we did genuinely consider in the drafting. I have full confidence in the drafting of the Bill.

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Yes, it does come down to a matter of fact, but most criminal prosecutions come down to a matter of fact, as does *mens rea*, which is the intent of the person. It's really quite important to understand that we did consider this. I appreciate that it has been raised for the committee, because it gives us an opportunity to address it, to answer the question that's been raised and to reassure you that it was considered in the drafting, and we have full confidence in the drafting of the Bill.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just to get absolute clarity on that - I mean, it seems to me a bit unfortunate that Tasracing doesn't seem to have stepped back and read the Bill as a whole, but that's just my observation.

Given that provision on page 8, part 2, clause 5 is very clear, it would seem very clear that should a person seek to supply a dog that's been bred as a companion animal following the passage of the act, should it happen, seek to supply that dog interstate or overseas for the purposes of racing, they face a penalty of up to six months in prison. Can you just absolutely confirm that this is the provision that would prohibit the export of dogs for exploitation interstate or overseas subsequent to the passage of this Bill?

Mr HALL - Yes. It's predicated on pretty much - this is really as far as you can take a provision like that, as far as regulating and export or anything like -

Ms O'CONNOR - We don't do Customs at a state level.

Mr HALL - No, there's a constitution -

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right. Minister, if we could just go now to something just slightly beyond the scope of the Bill, but it's obviously integrally connected, and that is negotiations around the expiry of the racing deed. Obviously, that deed has supplied tens of millions of dollars to greyhound racing since it was first signed in 2009. Are you able to give the committee an update on negotiations of the deed? Can you confirm that it's the Government's intention not to re-sign greyhound racing into the deed subsequent to its expiry on 30 June 2029?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member, for your question. We remain focused on the passage of this Bill through the Upper House, and we're working and developing an industry-wide strategy that will obviously shape the future of racing to 2050.

Ms O'CONNOR - 'Racing' - you mean thoroughbred and harness?

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. As far as the proposed deed is concerned, if this Bill passes the Legislative Council, there won't be any funding for greyhound racing.

Ms O'CONNOR - What if it doesn't?

Ms HOWLETT - Look, our focus - that's a hypothetical question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, it's not.

Ms HOWLETT - Our focus right now is on the passage of this Bill going through the Upper House.

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Ms O'CONNOR - So, is it the Government's proposition that it's open potentially to continuing funding for greyhound racing, despite the commitment made by the Premier, which has significant public support?

Ms HOWLETT - Our main focus at the moment is to get the Bill through the Legislative Council, and we can't look at hypotheticals at the moment of if it doesn't pass.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. If we just go to the question of compensation, the New Zealand model, for example, compensates participants, I think, on a per dog basis. We've got industry participants here who, it's been agreed at the table this morning, some of whom are breeding up. What is the Government's current position on how a compensation arrangement might work for the industry? We can all acknowledge it should be just and equitable and allow for a dignified exit, but what's the model that the Government's currently examining?

Ms HOWLETT - The Racing Integrity Commissioner and his working group are in consultation and are working through what compensation will look like.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you agree it's less than desirable, just from a public purse point of view, to have a compensation model that compensates people per dog, given that that would be rewarding bad behaviour for some participants because they have gone and bred up following the delay on this Bill?

Ms HOWLETT - Absolutely. That is what the Commissioner and the working group will work through. How that compensation looks I'm not sure, because they're working through that, but part 4, section 3 of the Bill states that the Commissioner is to prepare and submit to the Minister a draft plan for the closure as soon as practical, and that plan will detail compensation and other financial incentives to support greyhound racing participants in the transition.

Ms O'CONNOR - Presumably now that you've confirmed an industry participant from the code is sitting on that, the Commissioner's working group, there will be some capacity for the industry itself to feed into what it regards as a just transitional arrangement financially?

Ms HOWLETT - Absolutely, and that's a really good outcome that there is a code member sitting on that working group.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR - Minister, can I ask in relation again to the greyhound racing closure plan - on section 10 it outlines - on page 15 of the Bill - the process for preparing the draft plan and submitting it to the Minister. The Minister may amend it, then it's approved. But as I understand it, the closure plan is a document which outlines all those things around the transition and then potentially compensation arrangements, welfare arrangements, all those kinds of things that need to happen. I'm imagining that this is going to be a moving feast over a period of time as, you know, life happens.

Is there a capacity for the Commissioner to come back and recommend an amendment to that closure plan, for instance, if circumstances of industry participants change or something comes up that's unexpected or unforeseen? And what's the process that's worked through that

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in terms of changes to that closure plan? Should there be a welfare concern for participants or for animals in particular that hasn't been recognised before in the original closure plan?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. That's a really good question, and I assume that the Commissioner will be able to speak to that, but I would have thought that under the powers that I have and under the subclause that we may be able to exercise more than one in respect of the draft closure Bill [sic plan]. I'm certain that this committee will be able to have an input to the Commissioner as well on that plan.

CHAIR - So, in the context of that question that was taken on notice from Ms Webb earlier, are you able to provide advice about what that might look like if it was to be in a disallowable instrument or some other kind of mechanism, what that might look in the context. If you can incorporate any changes that you might make to a closure plan, enter Ms Webb's question, and take that on notice if that's possible.

Ms HOWLETT - I need to seek some advice from OPC.

Ms WEBB - Just in terms of saying we're going to send you a more detailed question to respond to after.

CHAIR - You could take that on notice, it's a complicated - but I suppose it's relating to how those iterations or closure plan might be impacted depending on the mechanism that that closure plan is developed and approved.

Ms HOWLETT - I won't have that until 30 June [2026] in a draft form.

Ms WEBB - Not the closure plan itself -

CHAIR - The mechanism.

Ms WEBB - We have questions about it. I was going to follow up on that. For example - and again, you will be able to respond to these questions on notice - but if there is going to be an expected ability to make changes to a closure plan once it has been approved, then that should probably be acknowledged in here. If we're going to the trouble of legislating the process by which the closure plan is to be initially developed - and of course, it acknowledges that it can go back and forth a bit between the Minister and the Commissioner and that's fine - but if there's also the expectation that further revisions could be made, that should probably be acknowledged in the way this is drafted too. I'm going to suggest that that's taken on notice and responded to.

You mentioned before in response to the question about compensation, you presented it as an - of course - agreed outcome that there would be compensation addressed in the closure plan. Now, for the confidence of people affected by this, that's what my question about could you include some key basic elements that are expected to be in the closure plan, non-exhaustively in this legislation, so that people can clearly see that that is the intention.

Compensation would be one of those very basic elements that we could all agree we're expecting to see in the compensation plan. It doesn't constrain what that looks like; it doesn't constrain the Commissioner developing a model for that, as he's going to; it doesn't lock us into anything other than it will be in the plan. Something about compensation will be in the plan.

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That's what I'm getting at when I'm asking you to respond to - include in here, some key non-exhaustive elements that gives confidence to people and helps settle people's anxieties about what this might be.

Ms WILSON - I appreciate what you're saying and I appreciate the opportunity to take the questions on notice so we can get advice. I think that's really important, particularly considering the five elements of what you've suggested. One thing, in terms of the racing closure plan, is the racing closure plan, which is adopted by the Minister, can have embedded in it a review mechanism. One of the benefits of having a provision such as this is that it enables the Minister to sign off in a relatively quick time for the plan to indicate how revisions will be made. That provides maximum ability to tailor. The other point I would make is that -

Ms WEBB - That could be part of the non-exhaustive list developments of the plan then; we could say it will deal with how future revisions might be made.

Ms WILSON - We do have the capacity to create regulations, as we've indicated. But, as noted, we will wait for the questions.

Mr WINTER - Minister, have any problems been identified by, or raised with, NRE Tasmania with the Bill since it was tabled? If so, what are they, and has NRE flagged any required amendments?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member.

Ms WILSON - There were some issues raised by some external stakeholders involved with lure coursing. We've provided information on that, and the Minister may go to that. We don't believe that amendments to the Bill are required to deal with the issues that they've raised. The working group has raised an issue around destruction versus euthanasia in the Bill -

Mr HALL - Terminology.

Ms WILSON - In the terminology. Once again, we don't consider a change can be made, and I can explain why to both of those. I would have to check my records to see if there's anything else that has been raised. There was a letter that was sent to us by the Australasian -

Ms O'CONNOR - The dog club, about racing dogs that are not greyhounds.

Ms HOWLETT - I'm happy to table this, if you wish.

CHAIR - Yes, can you just outline for those people on the broadcast what it is.

Ms HOWLETT - Absolutely. So, it's about lure coursing. It's a letter to Mr Parry [Mr Griff Parry, Lure Coursing Tasmania]. Based on the advice from NRE Tas, I'm pleased to confirm that lure coursing and sprint dog racing not involved in greyhound racing are expected to be impacted by the Bill.

Mr HALL - Not expected to be impacted.

Ms HOWLETT - Sprint dog racing not involving greyhounds are not expected to be impacted by the Bill. If the Bill is passed from 1 July 2029, it will be an offence under the

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Animal Welfare Act 1993 to race greyhounds in any way, including time trials, with or without a lure, or to raise any other dog breed in a way that replicates current greyhound racing. It will also be an offence to keep a dog for racing or to keep, sell, breed or acquire any dog that is intended to be used in greyhound and commercial racing, but I'm happy to table that.

CHAIR - Thank you. You did raise the issue around destruction and euthanasia. Perhaps if we can touch on that. That was a point that was raised.

Mr WINTER - Greyhounds Tasmania has argued that the legislation should have been subject to a regulatory impact statement given -

CHAIR - Sorry, Mr Winter, I've just asked them to clarify: they had said that there was an issue raised in a response to a question you asked about destruction and euthanasia.

Mr WINTER - Yes, there were three issues.

CHAIR - Yes. Can we just get a response to that question, if that's alright?

Mr WINTER - It was my question.

CHAIR - I wanted to make sure we got an answer to that one.

Mr HALL - In relation to the terminology, destruction versus -

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr HALL - We've certainly looked at that issue. It was raised by a number of different - during the initial - the limited amount of consultation leading up to the drafting of the Bill, on the Bill itself. The reason why we didn't go - that change was not made in relation to the term 'destruction' was because it's the term used in the *Dog Control Act 2000*. If we used a different term in this Bill which amends the *Dog Control Act 2000*, it creates a legal inconsistency and creates doubt about whether we're talking about the same terminology. Essentially, it created a legal uncertainty. The safest option was to retain that term of destruction.

CHAIR - Thank you for making that clear.

Mr WINTER - I just noticed the time. I've got a question from Ms Rattray, who was unable to be here today given the rush to hold these hearings. She's asked me to ask a couple of questions.

Minister, why is industry stakeholder compensation not included in the Bill, and does the Government intend to bring forward an amendment to address compensation and the value of the proposed compensation?

Ms HOWLETT - Look, as I stated before, honourable member, as far as compensation, that is part of what the Commissioner is working through with the working group. He will work through as to what that compensation looks like.

Mr WINTER - So there's no - specifically around the amendment, you're not considering an amendment to incorporate compensation as part of this?

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Ms WILSON - Through you, Minister: I think that the intention was to put it into the transition plan. We are working through an orderly transition which is staged. The capacity to address issues in the transition plan is really important because it will involve the Commissioner, the working group and consultation. That's our best-practice approach to ensure that matters are appropriately dealt with and that advice is provided to the Minister based on the transition plan. There could be unexpected or - I think that I've used the word before - unintended consequences if you put in a legislative mechanism as compared to a more flexible but still-legislated transition plan.

Ms HOWLETT - I'd also like to add - as I stated earlier, in a brief conversation that I had this morning, I was advised that the industry is still formulating its representative on the Commissioner's working group. It's not confirmed yet as to who that person is, but at least it looks like someone is prepared to go on the working group.

CHAIR - Thank you. We are running out of time. I've got one quick question. Did you have any other questions from Ms Rattray?

Mr WINTER - I'll actually ask it in Tasracing.

Ms O'CONNOR - The Government has made a commitment not only to consult through the working group, but also to a fair compensation arrangement; is that fair to say?

Ms HOWLETT - The Commissioner, as I said, will work through that with the working group as to what that compensation looks like.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's your expectation as Minister that there would be a fair compensation arrangement?

Ms HOWLETT - We will wait to get feedback from the working group and participants and -

Ms O'CONNOR - But you would say that there is an expectation from the industry that there be just transition and compensation?

Ms HOWLETT - What that looks like, I don't know.

Ms O'CONNOR - Finally, you were talking before about the Bill needing to go through - or that it would be your desire that it goes through unamended. I'm not sure that that's going to be possible because you will need to amend the dates, would you not, because there are two parts of the Bill that have provisions that would have come into effect on 1 January this year [2026]. Obviously, they can't, so is it the Government's intention to amend the dates in the Bill?

Ms HOWLETT - I'm advised that there are two ways that we could potentially deal with that. There's an option via regulation as well.

Mr HALL - The date in there for 1 January this year [2026] was mainly in relation to dogs that were pregnant before that day. They would not be affected by the breeding ban. There was that date; there was also the ability to make a regulation which also included the exception, so it could be done that way as well without - even if that date wasn't amended, there is the

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ability to make a regulation after the Bill is passed which expands the exemption for that breeding ban.

Ms O'CONNOR - Would it be the Government's expectation, should the Bill pass, that there will be some retrospectivity, given that a number of parts of the Bill came into effect on 1 January [2026]?

Mr HALL - I wouldn't want to prejudge what the regulation would look like, but for example, if there needed to be a regulation to avoid hardship or avoid an unintended impact - like someone who was breeding after 1 January [2026] on the belief that the Bill may not pass, and then the Bill passes and suddenly their dog is illegal, the regulation could be made to validate or protect that sort of situation for that person.

Ms O'CONNOR - It seems a slightly clunky way of doing it rather than just changing the dates to -

Ms HOWLETT - Amend it and change the date even.

Mr HALL - Well, yes. What I'm saying is there is a mechanism there to cover that, if you didn't amend the Bill. It wouldn't be that there is just a zero-sum situation at the moment.

Ms WILSON - Is it alright if I just go back to a question that you posed from Ms Rattray earlier, which was - the question I believe was about whether we should - the Bill should have gone through a regulatory impact statement?

Mr WINTER - I started on another question.

Ms WILSON - You did; would you like me to -

Mr WINTER - I would love to. I'd love to know.

Ms WILSON - We took advice from Treasury and we were - and that's -- we were not - Treasury's advice was that they - that we did not need to undertake a regulatory impact statement.

Ms O'CONNOR - Why? Do you remember what reason they gave, just for clarity for the committee?

Mr HALL - No reason was given. Typically, regulatory impact statements are required for subordinate legislation; this is the main Bill. One of the reasons is it will be debated in Parliament, unlike regulations.

Ms WILSON - And there's the capacity for the transition plan to consider the orderly transition.

CHAIR - Minister, we only have four minutes left on this particular hearing. I know that there are lots of other questions, and perhaps before - I might give a question to Ms Webb - would it be okay if we were to draft a number of questions and put them to you in writing and seek a response from you in writing to a number of questions? I think there are a lot of questions raised, and we appreciate that you haven't had a chance to read the submissions.

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They are now almost all available online. We have a number of questions that we haven't simply been able to get to in the timeframe that we have for you. If that's okay, if we write to you further?

Ms HOWLETT - Happy to do so.

Ms WEBB - My questions may well just be better placed there, rather than rushed now, because they're about specific little instances, like how dual ownership of breeding bitches or stud dogs is going to be dealt with in this, and some of those sort of particularities which we might get bogged down in in the last couple of minutes. I'm happy to pass them on as questions on notice and send them through for response. Quite frankly, we may well have to get the Minister back if we need to flesh things out, having received those responses.

CHAIR - That's right. Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Minister, have you received any proposals, reports or advice to consolidate Tasmania's race clubs into a single race club model?

Ms HOWLETT - I don't believe that is a relevant question to the Bill.

Mr WINTER - Minister, you were happy to answer questions about the deed that isn't relevant to the Bill. I'm just asking a pretty simple question, which is pertinent to the significant change that you're currently taking this industry through. So, have you received any advice, reports or proposals to consolidate Tasmania's race clubs into a single entity?

Ms HOWLETT - I'm here to discuss the Bill.

Mr WINTER - So, the answer is yes. What's your view on that proposal -

Ms HOWLETT - It's not. It's not included - this question isn't in the Bill.

Mr WINTER - So, do you want to -

Ms HOWLETT - I haven't received anything -

Mr WINTER - This is a concern that's been going through the racing industry, particularly over the last month. You're not prepared to rule out a consolidation of those race clubs into a single entity?

Ms HOWLETT - This is not relevant to the Bill.

CHAIR - I might move on. We have one more minute. Ms O'Connor, do you have a final question?

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm fine for now, thanks. Unless no one else has a question.

CHAIR - Ms Webb?

Ms WEBB - The only question I have is going to have technical elements, and I don't want to rush it in the last couple of minutes.

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Mr WINTER - I want to go to the deed back in early November [2025], I think it was 7 November [2025], when you presented - you said it was between four and six months we would see a deed. What progress has been made? Is the Government considering dropping the total amount of funding because of only two codes, or are you considering maintaining that level of funding at around \$37 million and indexed up?

Ms HOWLETT - Look, we're still working on the details of the deed - an industry-wide deed and that's still being worked on with Treasury.

Mr WINTER - There's an expectation by some that there won't actually be a drop in the total amount provided through a new deed and it will just go to two codes instead of three. Is that the direction the Government's going through?

Ms O'CONNOR - Snouts in the trough. I mean, seriously, are you suggesting it's a good idea?

Mr WINTER - That's the expectation from some is.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thoroughbred and harness racing get all the money that's sopped up

CHAIR - Hang on, we might let the Minister answer the question.

Ms HOWLETT - The deed is still being worked through.

Mr WINTER - Is that expectation from them unreasonable, in your view?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, the deed is still being worked through with Treasury and with Tasracing.

Mr WINTER - It's a pretty simple question, are you expecting a drop in the funding or?

CHAIR - Mr Winter, it is 10.30, so the time has expired. I want to thank everyone for your appearances today. I remind you all that what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that that privilege is not attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said to us today. Do you understand that?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your attendance today. We will stop the broadcast.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee suspended at 10.30 a.m.

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The committee resumed at 10.45 a.m.

CHAIR - Welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Thank you very much for your attendance today, Mr Jenkins. We are convened today as a Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 Inquiry. For the record, the committee members that we have here with us today are the Independent member for Nelson, Meg Webb, myself as Chair, Independent member for Clark, Mr Winter, who is the Labor member for Franklin, and the Greens member for Hobart, Cassy O'Connor.

If you wouldn't mind stating your name and the capacity in which you're appearing before the committee, please?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Ms Johnston. I'm Andrew Jenkins, CEO of Tasracing.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Mr Jenkins. Can I confirm that you've received and read the guide sent to you by the committee secretary?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, yes.

CHAIR - Excellent. As you will be aware, this hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom, without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. This protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside parliamentary proceedings.

This hearing is public. We are recording at the moment. The public and media may also be present. Should you wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make this request to the committee at the time.

Before we start, you have a declaration in front of you. Would you mind making that, please?

Mr ANDREW JENKINS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TASRACING, WAS CALLED, TOOK THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Mr Jenkins. Would you like to make an opening statement before we begin?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Ms Johnston, for the opportunity to represent today at the committee. Tasracing's key consideration, as per our submission, is in relation to the potential for recreational breeding of greyhounds. Of course, there will be a number of submissions that are made from other parties, including our industry participants. As we see the current legislation, and as articulated in our submission, we would like to draw to the committee's attention our concerns in relation to recreational breeding and some of the flow-on animal welfare impacts of same, including potential for export to countries and jurisdictions where we do have animal welfare concerns in relation to the future of those dogs.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Your submission does flag the issue you just raised. I'm wondering how thoroughly you examined the Bill, Mr Jenkins? We've had the Minister in here

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and NRE people who helped to draft the Bill, and they said this issue was raised during the development of the Bill.

I will take you to part 2, clause 5, which is the amendments to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* that makes it an offence punishable by up to six months in prison for: selling or supplying a dog to another person; offering a dog for sale or supply to another person; breeding, acquiring, or keeping a dog for sale or supply to another person, if the person knows, or ought reasonably to know, that the other person intends to cause or permit the dog to participate in a greyhound race or a commercial dog race.

Doesn't that clause very effectively ameliorate any concerns of Tasracing?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Ms O'Connor. Yes, you're quite right. Our representation is to ideally ensure that that amendment is continued in the legislation and isn't removed.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. So, you would agree that part 2, clause 5 of the Bill, as it was passed by the House of Assembly, to the greatest extent that the state of Tasmania can, because we don't have customs regulation powers, would make it very difficult for a person to supply a dog that has been bred as a companion animal to race interstate or overseas?

Mr JENKINS - Yes.

Mr WINTER - Thank you for being here with us, Mr Jenkins. I want to ask you about the report - which we believe exists - that was commissioned by the Racing Integrity Commissioner - an industry health check undertaken by Mr Ben Sellenger. Have you seen the report, received the report, or been briefed on the report?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Mr Winter. I have had a verbal briefing on what was a relatively late-stage draft of the report prepared by Mr Sellenger for the Commissioner. I understand that that report was briefed to my board late last year [2025]. I can't remember the exact board meeting month, but I haven't been in receipt of the final copy of the report.

Mr WINTER - Is there a final copy?

Mr JENKINS - I believe so, but it was prepared for the Commissioner, so -

Mr WINTER - Is it strange to you, as the CEO of Tasracing tasked with the running of racing, that you've not received a health check which assesses the health of the industry that you're responsible for running?

Mr JENKINS - Thanks, Mr Winter. I thought I would have seen a copy of the report, but again, as I understand, it was commissioned by Mr Carroll, as the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner. Whether I will be provided with a copy of that in due course, I don't know.

Ms O'CONNOR - You could ask.

Mr JENKINS - I could.

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Mr WINTER - When you were briefed on it, is it true to say that part of the recommendations is to consolidate race clubs from single race clubs, to having a consolidated single race club across the state?

Mr JENKINS - Not as I recall. The briefing as I say, verbally, that I received from Mr Sellenger spoke to a number of different options in terms of what the industry structure may look like. Whether that be a consolidated club, whether it be a number of clubs as we exist -

Mr WINTER - So, that's one of the options - a consolidated club?

Mr JENKINS - As I recall, yes.

Mr WINTER - Yes. In terms of the way this moves from here, is this being considered as part of the proposed change from a tri-code model to a dual-code model? Or is this something separate?

Mr JENKINS - It would be a separate matter again. I haven't specifically seen the final version of the report, so I can't comment as to whether it contemplates a dual-code structure or otherwise.

CHAIR - I wanted to be really clear for the record. When I read your submission, I was a little bit confused as to what was the intent of the submission - just following on for clarity from Ms O'Connor's question.

What you're telling us here today is that the concerns that Tasracing raised around the exportation of dogs to overseas for racing purposes, bred in Tasmania for domestic pet purposes, is ameliorated by, as much as possibly can, as we say in Tasmania, by the provisions in the Bill, particularly under clause 4 where a person must not sell or supply another dog to a person, et cetera. So, that concern is effectively being - it's a very real concern, obviously, because we know that that's occurred, as you pointed out, in other jurisdictions where they've been sold off to the Chinese market. However, as much as possible, Tasracing's concerns have been addressed by the Bill?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, that's right. Again, our intention being to reiterate the importance of that -

CHAIR - Of that particular -

Mr JENKINS - Yes, exactly right.

Ms O'CONNOR - You just didn't reference those clauses in your submission?

Mr JENKINS - No. Thank you, Ms O'Connor. Apologies.

CHAIR - Okay, thank you. Just want to make that really clear, so I understood the intention.

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Ms WEBB - Are there any other concerns you have of either what's in the Bill that you think should be considered for amendment, or things that you want to highlight and point to being absolutely essential that must not be changed or amended?

Mr JENKINS - Not beyond our submission. Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is it possible - do you have available to you, Mr Jenkins, any up-to-date data on deaths on track - since 1 January this year [2026]- injuries, imported dogs. I'm particularly interested to know what information Tasracing is receiving about industry participants who may, as a result of the delay to the Bill, have decided to breed another litter. Have you got that data available?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Ms O'Connor. We do. I'm sure as you're aware, we report on a regular basis via our website. It's an ongoing process of gathering and releasing data. I'm happy to take on notice if that's appropriate by a committee, I'm not sure on policies. We can certainly happily provide you with the latest figures in relation to on-track injuries, importing and whelping numbers.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. We will put that on notice. If I could point you to the fate of a less than four-year-old dog called Memphis Raines. On 8 January this year [2026] at Elwick, it fractured its hock - which is the dog's ankle - and the stewards' report says that it was to be stood down for 90 days. Within 24 hours, that dog had been shipped back to Victoria and killed. Do you have any further information on what happened to Memphis Raines; why a decision was made to euthanise a dog that had simply fractured its ankle and which the stewards thought could be okay to race again in 90 days?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Ms O'Connor. I do recall the dog and the incident. I may need to take on notice further detail, but I understand yes, the dog was taken by its owner back to Melbourne and we understand that it was put down by a vet.

Ms O'CONNOR - You would agree that that's a risk here, while the industry continues? That dogs, which it might be harder to justify the destruction of in Tasmania, are being sent back and decisions made by their owners or trainers, presumably on the basis of cost as much as anything else - that is, the cost of the vet's bill, the cost to feed the dog while it's not racing? Would you agree there's a risk here of Tasracing not having line of sight to the fate of dogs that are injured here, for example?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you for the question. That is a reasonable and foreseeable risk. Through our chief racing integrity officer and our chief veterinary officer and animal welfare officer, we, as far as we possibly and reasonably can, will aim to have line of sight of the movement and care of all our greyhounds, whether they be injured or otherwise. It can be a difficult set of circumstances where ultimately the owner is responsible for the dog. As I understand in this circumstance, the owner did elect to return the dog to Melbourne and the dog, yes, was euthanised by a vet.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Did Tasracing - because it created some public - well, the story was in the media - it created some public reaction at the time that a dog could be sent back to Victoria and be destroyed because it had a broken ankle. Did Tasracing make any further follow-up inquiries about what happened to Memphis Rains subsequent to the stewards determining that it should be stood down from racing for 90 days while it recovered?

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Mr JENKINS - I understand, yes, through our integrity unit, but I would need to check our records and understand what correspondence and communication took place with the owner. I understand that yes, we did make inquiries.

Ms O'CONNOR - Last question - there's been another death, a dog called Hellyer Dougie, which fell approaching the catching pen and broke its front legs and was destroyed on the track. Have there been any other deaths that haven't been elevated publicly yet, to your knowledge?

Mr JENKINS - Not that I'm aware of, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Would you know?

Mr JENKINS - Again, I would checked the reports once they become available.

Ms O'CONNOR - Over the course of the weekend, which I understand was a big greyhound racing weekend, was it? There haven't been any further deaths to those two that I've identified, as far as you know?

Mr JENKINS - Not as far as I'm aware. I would need to check my records, but no, not as far as I'm aware.

Mr WINTER - Mr Jenkins, one of the concerns that's been raised, particularly from industry participants, is the impact of moving from a tri-code model to a two-code model here, and the economic viability of the other two codes without greyhounds. What work is Tasracing doing around its viability as a dual-code organisation? Can you take us through the economic and financial impacts on the business, but also on the broader industry?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Mr Winter. You're quite right, the implications of removal of one of our codes, being greyhounds, is a substantial impact and set of considerations for the industry, and for Tasracing as the principal racing and administrative body. We are undertaking both internally through our CFO [Chief Financial Officer] team and via Mr Sellenger - we have engaged him to undertake a specific piece of consultancy for us regarding detailed modelling and feasibility for what the industry might look like over -

Mr WINTER - Which is separate to the Commissioner's -

Mr JENKINS - Quite right. It's a separate body of work, that's right.

Mr WINTER - When are you expecting that work to be completed?

Mr JENKINS -It will be over the coming weeks, actually. Mr Sellenger's work is well underway and I expect that we will see a draft report, which will be tabled to the board, potentially at the March board meeting.

Mr WINTER - Is that work feeding into those discussions - because presumably you're involved in the discussions around the deed at the moment - is that work feeding into the considerations of the new deed?

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Mr JENKINS - It will, that's right. We are engaging actively with the review committee or body constituted by the NRE and Treasury in relation to what funding for racing may look like beyond 2029 at the expiration of the current deed. Via that engagement, we will be feeding in our feasibility and our modelling to that group for consideration, yes.

Mr WINTER - You know the finances and economics of Tasmanian racing better than anyone, except maybe your CFO. What's the expectation from Tasracing's board about the amount of funding that's going to be required from 2029 onwards? Are we looking at a similar amount of money or are we looking at a reduction in total that you'll be requesting?

Ms O'CONNOR - That's not a decision for Mr Jenkins. That's a Government policy decision.

Mr JENKINS - I would expect, Mr Winter, that our submission will be for funding in the order of what is currently in place. What's often -

Ms O'CONNOR - Sorry, just to be clear, do you think the harness and thoroughbred codes should have the greyhound money?

Mr WINTER - Chair, do we - is this okay or -

CHAIR - Clarification.

Ms O'CONNOR - If that's the answer, well -

CHAIR - Sorry, just a clarification: you're expecting that you'd be in the vicinity of what you currently receive, and that's your submission that you expect Tasracing to be making?

Mr JENKINS - I would expect so, yes. Obviously, it's not finalised yet, Chair, but based on our early thinking, yes, it would be in the order of what is currently being received. As you would appreciate, there are a number of costs that, simply by removing one code, it doesn't mean that a third of our organisation or a third of our infrastructure and other costs are removed.

Mr WINTER - Yes, you've still got to run an integrity unit, and you've got a whole bunch of things. One of the other aspects that's come out of this is the potential divestment of assets by Tasracing as a result of the closure of one of the codes. What are those assets that Tasracing is considering divesting itself of?

Mr JENKINS - I'm not sure that we are. As you will appreciate, Mr Winter, many of our facilities are in fact leased, and if I refer to our current greyhound racing tracks at both Elwick and Mowbray, they're tri-code facilities, again, as you would appreciate.

In terms of the greyhound infrastructure, there isn't necessarily a significant amount that is repurposable. You've got a lure, you've got starting boxes, you've got lights. We're yet to form definitive views on what we do with that infrastructure, whether we do try to repurpose it or sell it and, if so, do we look to utilise that land? Don't know, at this point in time.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any further questions?

Mr WINTER - I've got heaps more, but -

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CHAIR - We have an apology from Ms Rattray, another committee member. I know you noted that she wanted a particular question raised for Tasracing. I'll just check if Ms O'Connor has any further questions.

Ms O'CONNOR - I always have further questions.

CHAIR - I'm sure you do, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is Tasracing a participant in negotiations around the re-signing of the deed which expires on 30 June 2029?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, Ms O'Connor, as I've indicated, we're a participant. We're not a formal member of the review committee. But we are - as you would expect, we are actively engaging with that group and providing our feasibility study and our information toward what funding may look like beyond 30 June 2029, yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Is your advice based on an understanding of the Government's policy, that is, that greyhound racing would be phased out and therefore the funds that were allocated to greyhound racing - well, there's a question mark over them, obviously, but is your advice based on an acceptance of the Government's policy?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, it is. As we sit here today, Ms O'Connor, we are preparing, in effect, two models. Until the legislation moves through the Legislative Council, it's incumbent upon us to plan for both. But, in principle, yes, we are accepting of the Government's policy. Our primary modelling and submissions will be on the basis that we're assuming that the greyhound code is phased out as planned in the legislation, yes. The Bill, sorry.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. The Commissioner for Racing Integrity has established a working group?

Mr JENKINS - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you able to flesh out to the committee a little bit the nature of the interactions that you have with the Racing Integrity Commissioner during this transition period? Particularly we're interested in exploring what consultative mechanisms are in place, where the commissioner is obtaining advice from and that sort of thing.

Mr JENKINS - Thanks, Ms O'Connor. Look, it's probably more a question for the Commissioner, but I'm happy to comment to the extent that I can.

Ms O'CONNOR - We'd like to get both sides. Flesh out the evidence.

Mr JENKINS - Understood. Yes, the [Tasmanian Racing] Integrity Commissioner has established a working group to facilitate the execution of the Bill and the proposed phase-out of greyhound racing. There is a number of parties who sit on that working group, including ourselves, RSPCA Tasmania, and others. I have the opportunity to request attendance if I wish to, and I've attended a couple of the Commissioner's working groups. We've implemented an ongoing project manager who's designated and has a substantive seat on that committee along with my Chief Operating Officer. Our Chief Veterinary Officer also has the ability to request an invitation and attendance.

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Ms O'CONNOR - Have you, or anyone from Tasracing, provided advice to the Commissioner, through that working group, on any potential compensation structure and arrangements?

Mr JENKINS - We haven't as yet, Ms O'Connor. We have raised financial support compensation as a potential issue that the Commissioner's working group may wish to consider, but at this point, no, we haven't formalised any models or options.

Ms O'CONNOR - Other than possibly expressing an expectation that there would be some kind of fair compensation arrangement in place, potentially?

Mr JENKINS - That's pretty much it. As I say, we've noted it as an issue that the working group should have on their agenda in due course.

Ms O'CONNOR - We were just informed by the Minister this morning that, thankfully, a member of the greyhound racing code will now be sitting on that working group, because, as we know, for a long time they were resistant to that because they saw it as putting up the white flag.

Mr JENKINS - Yes. We're entirely supportive of that. We have actively encouraged our participants to engage to the fullest extent that they're able to with that working group. We believe it's in their interest to do so. It's in the interest of our greyhounds for them to do so. But, you're quite right, Ms O'Connor, in principle, they did have some concerns early on that they didn't want to be seen to support the process - and we respect that.

Ms O'CONNOR - One final quick question, if I might, Chair? We [the Tasmanian Greens] wrote to the Racing Integrity Commissioner following the decision to delay the Bill to inquire how the commissioner might use his existing statutory powers to have some real oversight on integrity and animal welfare within that code during this period. Have any extra resources been allocated by Tasracing in order to fulfil that need, if you like, to make sure that they are a really strong oversight of integrity and animal welfare in the greyhound racing industry during this period?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, absolutely, Ms O'Connor. We have been working very closely with Mr Carroll and his team. In fact, we have appointed - I think it's four traceability and animal welfare officers. You may also be aware that we have conducted an initial statewide audit across all greyhounds - that was some six months ago now. We are right in the middle, at the moment, of our second round of that audit.

So, the short answer is, yes, absolutely. We have a heightened focus on traceability and ensuring the ongoing welfare of our existing cohort of greyhounds and, indeed, those litters being whelped at the moment.

Ms O'CONNOR - When will that second audit be complete?

Mr JENKINS - That's a good question. I know that we're in the middle of it. I would suggest it would be 10 to 14 days.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Thanks, Chair.

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CHAIR - Is that something you can provide to the committee once the audit is completed, just so we have a current understanding of the environment? That'd be really useful, thank you.

Mr JENKINS - Yes, of course. Most welcome.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Mr WINTER - I had two questions from Ms Rattray: is it correct that the greyhound code participants applying for any or all licences are required to provide a current police check? If so, will this become the same requirement for all racing code participants?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, Mr Winter. That's my understanding, that greyhound-licenced persons do need to provide a police check. As it stands, no we don't have the intention of bringing that same requirement across the equine codes. It may be something that's considered in due course, but it's not in train at the moment.

Mr WINTER - What's the rationale - it may predate your time - for having the requirement only for greyhound trainers or participants, but not for the other two codes?

Mr JENKINS - Look, it's a good question. You're quite right, it does indeed predate me. It may, in fact, jump back to a national Greyhounds Australasia rule. I'm happy to have a look and come back to you.

Mr WINTER - Appreciate it, thank you. This may be picked up in one of the earlier questions you've taken on notice, but I will ask it anyway: can you outline the number of litters - no, actually it won't be. Can you outline the number of litters of greyhound pups in the last two years, 2024 and 2025?

Mr JENKINS - Those figures are in our annual report, which is publicly available, of course.

Mr WINTER - I will pass that on to Ms Rattray.

Mr JENKINS - Thank you kindly.

Mr WINTER - I wanted to go back to the general economics, finances around this, particularly around that modelling that you're doing on the compensation - sorry, the work you're doing on compensation; is that included in that work that Mr Sellenger is doing, the compensation question, or are you dealing with that separately?

Mr JENKINS - As I understand it, we will deal with that separately via - more than likely the Commissioner's working group. It's something, of course, that's noted - I expect will be noted in the work that Mr Sellenger is undertaking for us, but the detail is yet to be developed in terms of what compensation might look like.

Mr WINTER - So compensation is being led by the Commissioner and the working group, not by Tasracing? That question is being dealt with by them?

Ms O'CONNOR - Tasracing's part of the working group.

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Mr WINTER - Yes, but I want to know who's responsible so that we can hold them to account. The responsible entity is the Commissioner who is being informed by the working group to develop the compensation arrangements; is that correct?

Mr JENKINS -Yes. The Commissioner is tasked with leading the phase-out. I would expect included in that scope would be consideration of economic support, compensation, yes.

Mr WINTER - A compensation package could be quite substantial here. Is the funding for that expected to come from Tasracing, or separately from Government?

Mr JENKINS - I certainly hope not; we don't have it. It's a Government policy. It would be a matter for the Government to consider and, again, via Mr Carroll's working group.

Mr WINTER - Have you received or seen any estimate on the total amount of compensation?

Mr JENKINS - Not as yet, no.

Mr WINTER - What are the sorts of things that you believe might need to be considered as part of compensation? We're talking about, I assume, physical assets, cages, vehicles -

Ms O'CONNOR - Income earned, that sort of thing.

Mr WINTER - things like that. What do you think needs to be considered as part of this process?

Mr JENKINS - Look, all of the above, everything that you've mentioned, Mr Winter. There's also breeding stock as well and value associated with those dogs. There are straws of frozen semen that potentially have value attributed to those. There is a number of factors and considerations that I expect our participants will be putting forward to be considered. Whether it be infrastructure, whether it be income derived, a number of our trainers are professionals, so there will be a substantial impact on their employment and lifestyle post greyhound racing.

Mr WINTER - I wanted to ask a general question here: you're obviously tasked with - and it's in the statement of expectations from your Ministers - is about growing racing, supporting racing, backing in the racing industry. That's summing up a fairly long, nine-page document.

Ms O'CONNOR - There's also animal welfare expectations within that.

Mr WINTER - I want to ask about the position that Tasracing has been put [in] here in that it is, on the one hand, tasked in a directive from your Ministers to grow racing, on the other hand, you're now tasked with the role of shutting a third of your industry down - or actually more than a third of your industry down, about 40 per cent of your revenue.

What impact has that had on Tasracing, its workforce, in terms of its ongoing activities? The support available to your staff - I know it is available to participants, but what sort of support is available to the staff who presumably have a great affection for the code?

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Mr JENKINS - Yes, very much so, Mr Winter. My management team and I have worked diligently to communicate as openly as we possibly can, not only with participants, but indeed with our own staff in relation to potential implications of closing the greyhound code. We have people who work in the racing team in the greyhound code, and we've spent quite a bit of time making sure that they're aware of what's likely to be coming up, making sure that they know that they have support available to them and, importantly, making sure that they know that there are other opportunities beyond working in the greyhound team within Tasracing.

We've also spent time communicating with and working with our Greyhounds as Pets (GAP) program. We have a number of staff based at Mangalore and, as you would appreciate, they're facing uncertainty and concern around, well, 'what does my employment and my career look like post greyhound racing?' To the fullest extent possible we are, as I say, communicating, explaining, sharing information and making sure that they know that we're here to support them. They also have access to our employee assistance program if they wish to avail themselves of that.

Mr WINTER - Are you able to provide the committee with - I'm not sure whether you'd have it already - your wagering data for the first six months of this financial year? Obviously not now, on notice, but it would be interesting to see whether there's been an impact from the announcement on - or do you know if there has been any impact on turnover as a result of this?

Mr JENKINS - There has not been an adverse impact on turnover. In fact, greyhounds year-on-year have increased in turnover in Tassie racing.

Ms O'CONNOR - Since when, though? Because they did decline.

Mr JENKINS - Since - I'm going year-on-year.

Ms O'CONNOR - Since when? Because there was a decline in wagering revenue.

Mr JENKINS - There was post-COVID, that's right.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, we're still in COVID, but yes.

Mr JENKINS - Now what we're seeing is a normalisation. We think we're now at a pretty stable turnover on product.

Mr WINTER - You're talking about the first six months of this year compared with the first six months of last financial years?

Mr JENKINS - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. I want some clarity: Mr Winter said that 40 per cent of Tasracing's revenue comes from greyhounds -

Mr WINTER - Turnover, I should have said.

Ms O'CONNOR - Turnover, is that correct? Is that in the annual report? I haven't checked that particular stat. Is it correct that 40 per cent of wagering turnover to Tasracing comes from greyhounds?

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Mr JENKINS - Roughly? Yes, that's 35 to 40 per cent.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr JENKINS - Thoroughbreds are the largest code, followed closely by greyhounds, and then it drops off to around about a third, \$125 million for harness. Yes, certainly thoroughbreds and greyhounds are the most significant.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you. I asked you earlier about dogs that have been deceased or destroyed this year. There is another one, Canya Breakout. I don't know if you know about this dog, but it was listed as deceased on 26 January this year [2026] after winning a race the previous week in Launceston. That's now the third confirmed death in a few - where are we, the first five weeks of 2026: three dead dogs. Are you able to provide any information to the committee on how that dog could win a race in a previous week and then be listed as deceased a week later?

Mr JENKINS - No. I would need to take that on notice, Ms O'Connor. I'm sure that we would have appropriate reports either by the stewards or our Chief Veterinary Officer. I'm familiar with the name, but I would need to provide you with further detail, if I may.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. What's the test, if you like, that is used by Tasracing or the chief vet in determining whether a dog should be destroyed?

Mr JENKINS - It's really more a question for my Chief Veterinary Officer, but fundamentally the welfare of the animal, of the greyhound, is paramount in our decision-making. I know that if Dr Lenz were here today, fundamentally his view is that if a dog is injured and if the injury is repairable, then the injury should always be repaired.

Indeed, we have a greyhound rebate recovery scheme that's intended to provide our participants with financial support and ensuring that, wherever we possibly can, or wherever participants possibly can, there is no financial implication or disincentive to treat the dog and rehabilitate it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. When you say 'repairable', is it repairable to a racing standard -

Mr JENKINS - Not necessarily.

Ms O'CONNOR - or repairable to a dog that may not race again, and may have a limp but hasn't been euthanised, like Memphis Raines was in Victoria on the basis of a fractured ankle?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, that's right. It's not necessarily about rehabilitating the dog to race, but provided the dog can reasonably be expected to have a quality of life and be mobile, then absolutely. Our firm view would be that dogs in that circumstance should always be treated towards domestic rehabilitation.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Can I ask you about euthanasia rates at GAP, the Greyhound Adoption Program? We've asked questions - certainly the Greens have - about GAP's throughput policy, which I understand changed when Dr Martin Lenz came down from

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being chief vet in Queensland. Do you have any information on euthanasia rates at GAP and have they increased?

Mr JENKINS - I do, and no, the approach of all at GAP, including the manager, staff, and indeed Dr Lenz, is that euthanasia is always the last and non-preferred option. There will be circumstances where, as with any breed of dog, a given greyhound or greyhounds are not appropriate or not able to be rehomed, they're dangerous and we can't put them in a domestic environment, so -

Ms O'CONNOR - Have those rates increased, dogs that have been judged to be unsuitable?

Mr JENKINS - Not to my knowledge. I believe there were - again, in our annual report - two dogs that were deemed non-rehomable in the most recent reporting period, but no, I'm not aware that those rates have increased.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just finally, have the number of dogs that are being dropped off at GAP increased? Has there been any change to the number of dogs that GAP is taking in?

Mr JENKINS - No, because GAP is always full. We've recently doubled our kennel size and population out at the facility. To answer your question, therefore, yes, there are more dogs in the program because it's twice as big.

Ms O'CONNOR - More capacity.

Mr JENKINS - That's right, but there's always a waiting list of dogs that have retired from racing and are ready to move into the program. We deliberately run it at maximum capacity on a rolling basis.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr JENKINS - You're welcome.

CHAIR - Can I ask, in relation to the rebates we were talking about beforehand for surgeries and things like that: is it your expectation that those will remain in place throughout a transition phase, dogs injured on track right up until 30 June 2029 would be eligible for those particular rebates and provisions -

Mr JENKINS - Absolutely.

CHAIR - that includes things for breeding at the moment?

Mr JENKINS - I missed that, sorry.

CHAIR - Tests in relation to breeding and things like that, where there are rebates in relation to testing - for breeding - for particular diseases, they would remain available whilst breeding is still allowed?

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Mr JENKINS - Sorry. I understand the question. At this stage we don't have any plans to reduce or alter current incentives and rebates that are intended to drive enhanced animal welfare outcomes, so yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. I note that we have just another five minutes. Mr Winter, do you have a final question?

Mr WINTER - Yes. During GBE hearings last year, I asked you for a copy of the financial modelling that has been done in relation to the net impact of greyhound, harness and thoroughbred racing. This isn't your fault, because it hasn't been tabled in the House yet, which means that I can see it, but I am not allowed to share it with anyone. I might not even be allowed to, unless you're on Committee A with me. I was wondering if you could take on notice and provide this committee with that same evidence of the financial modelling that you did as part of the net impact of greyhound racing, harness and thoroughbred racing to Tasracing's net financial result.

Mr JENKINS - Yes, of course, happy to.

Mr WINTER - Thank you very much.

CHAIR - If there are no further questions, thank you very much, Mr Jenkins, for your attendance today. I do appreciate it. I remind you again that what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege is not attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said to us here today. Do you understand that?

Mr JENKINS - I do.

CHAIR - Excellent, thank you very much.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee adjourned at 11.26 a.m.