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THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION

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

The committee met at 9.00 a.m.

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

To introduce you to the members of the committee, I know you were here just before Christmas, but we will introduce you to the same members again. On my left, we have Cassy O'Connor; I'm Chair, Kristie Johnston; Dean Winter; Tania Rattray; and Meg Webb.

Please state your name and the capacity in which you are appearing before the committee. We might start down the line - Luke, if it's okay with you. Thank you.

Mr GATEHOUSE - I, Luke Gatehouse, solemnly promise and declare that the evidence given by me to this committee -

CHAIR - Sorry, Luke, just your title and who you're appearing for. We will do that a bit later on.

Mr GATEHOUSE - I'm the strategic adviser to Greyhounds Tasmania, which is the three clubs down here - given to me by this committee, shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing -

CHAIR - We will do that bit in a minute. I just need your name.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Way ahead.

CHAIR - I know you're very eager to do the declaration. So, Luke, you're representing Greyhounds Tasmania as a strategic consultant?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes.

CHAIR - Righto.

Ms ROBINS - I'm Claire Robins, I'm representing the Hobart Greyhound Racing Club and I'm the Vice Chairman.

Mr ENGLUND - G'day, I'm Ben Englund, Chair, North West Greyhound Racing Club.

Mr CLARK - Ben Clark, Greyhounds Tasmania.

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Mr NEWSON - John Newson, Chair, Launceston Greyhound Racing Club.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Can I confirm that you have received and read the guide sent to you by the committee secretary?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. As you'd be aware this hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in a 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 and we are being recorded. The public and media may be present. Should you wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make the request to the committee at the time.

Now this is the time to make the statutory declaration. So, Luke we will start with you and we will do it again.

Mr LUKE GATEHOUSE, GREYHOUNDS TASMANIA, **Mr BEN CHARLES CLARK**, GREYHOUNDS TASMANIA, **Mr JOHN SYDNEY NEWSON**, LAUNCESTON GREYHOUND RACING CLUB, **Ms CLAIRE LOUISE ROBINS**, HOBART GREYHOUND RACING CLUB, AND **Mr BENJAMIN JOHN ENGLUND**, NORTH WEST GREYHOUND RACING CLUB, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Now, as I said just before we started the recording, obviously the submissions are up online. We do note that some submissions that you've made are personal submissions; you've made submissions on behalf of the club and, of course, there is Greyhounds Tasmania's submission. When we go to write our report, we try to make sure that we credit the evidence where it's due, so we reference to submissions or oral evidence that we've heard as the committee.

When you're speaking, if you could just make it clear if you're speaking either to your personal submission, on behalf of the club, or on behalf of Greyhounds Tasmania. That just helps us make sure we credit appropriately and accurately the content in our report, if that's okay. Does anyone wish to make an opening statement?

Mr ENGLUND - Yes, please. I think we all want to make a bit of a statement, but I will go first, if that's okay.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. My name is Ben Englund and I'm a long-term owner, trainer, breeder and currently the Chair of the North West Greyhound Racing Club.

I oppose the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 on the grounds that it will harm greyhound welfare, unfairly penalise industry participants and dismantle a highly regulated industry without adequate safeguards or compensation.

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Greyhound racing in Tasmania already operates under one of the most stringent animal welfare and integrity frameworks in Australia, including lifetime traceability, veterinary oversight, compliance audits and enforceable standards. Removing greyhounds from this regulated system and classifying them solely as domestic pets risks creating welfare gaps rather than improving outcomes.

The Bill provides no statutory compensation or asset protection, despite decades of lawful investment in kennels, breeding programs, dogs, vehicles and specialist equipment. A legislative phase-out would flood local and interstate markets with unusable assets, drastically reducing their value and imposing uncompensated financial losses on their participants.

I have specific concerns about provisions that criminalise greyhound racing and prohibit breeding for racing, which are viewed as disproportionate, inconsistent with welfare objectives and dismissive of measurable improvements achieved in the industry over many years. The Bill highlights risks associated with transitioning a large number of greyhounds into an unregulated environment, including overwhelming rehoming capacity, lack of owner expertise, health and behavioural challenges, and loss of lifetime traceability. Broader impacts include loss of regional economic activity, erosion of community clubs, reduced availability of greyhounds as veterinary blood donors, and significant mental health consequences for participants facing sudden loss of livelihood and identity.

On 17 July 2025, I sought and received on behalf of the industry a letter of support from the Premier of Tasmania, Jeremy Rockliff, which stated in part:

I know that the racing community and, more broadly, the Tasmanian community wants a racing industry that is fair, humane, and sustainable across all three codes, including greyhound racing. The Government is committed to support the longevity and sustainability of the racing industry, which, as you know, generates close to \$208,000,000 in economic activity for Tasmania, and which involves more than 6400 people. We will continue to back Tasmania's racing community and the vital jobs in regional Tasmania and the families and other small businesses it supports.

The subsequent announcement on 10 August 2025 that greyhound racing would be phased out came as a shock to participants. It created immediate uncertainty and distress for owners, trainers, breeders, and associated small businesses who had invested in the industry in good faith. The decision appeared abrupt, politically expedient, and unsupported by any real evidence demonstrating that abolition was necessary to protect animal welfare.

Tasmania's greyhound welfare outcomes are strong, improving, and nationally competitive. The reforms undertaken by the industry from 2016 to 2025 show measurable progress, and that greyhound racing in Tasmania is one of the safest jurisdictions in the country. To claim the phasing-out reform Bill is in the best interests of animal welfare simply isn't backed by any real evidence. Greyhound racing is a net economic contributor to Tasmania and a critical pillar of the state's broader racing economy. Tasracing provides approximately \$7.4 million annually to the greyhound code, generating an estimated \$60 million return in economic benefit, largely in regional communities.

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Greyhound racing is a high-performing wagering product, consistently generating strong turnover relative to its funding share. Tasracing's annual reports show that from 2012-13 through to 2024-25, wagering is up \$130 million in that period. A proposed phase-out will reduce revenue, increase costs, damage regional economies, and destabilise the three-code system. On economic grounds alone, abolition is not supported by any real evidence. The proposed ban is nothing more than a political betrayal and is one which the industry and its participants reject.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ben. Would anyone else like to make another statement?

Ms ROBINS - Yes, I'm next. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm speaking to the Hobart Greyhound Racing Club's submission, not my personal submission.

The Hobart Greyhound Racing Club's submission sets out our strong and unequivocal opposition to the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025. Our position is not ideological, is grounded in law, welfare, governance, and the foreseeable human consequence as the Bill is currently drafted.

At its core, this Bill does not regulate or reform greyhound racing. It criminalises a long-standing, heavily regulated industry without a lawful or coherent transition framework. In doing so, it dismantles established welfare systems, destabilises communities, and exposes participants, clubs, and the state itself to serious legal risk.

First, our submission addresses the community and human impact. Greyhound racing is not just an activity - it is a community. Participants include families, retirees, volunteers, regional workers, and small business owners - people whose livelihoods, identity, and social connection are tied to this sport. The Bill does not give consideration to predictable consequences of sudden industry abolition, loss of income, social isolation, and deterioration in mental health. Legislation that ignores foreseeable human harm is neither responsible or humane.

Secondly, and critically, our submission explains that the Bill creates animal welfare risk rather than resolving it. Welfare outcomes are strongest in regulated environments, with veterinary oversight, funded rehoming programs, enforceable standards and coordinated accountability. Abolishing the industry removes these structures overnight. Responsibility for large numbers of animals does not disappear; it fragments. Funding is withdrawn, rehoming capacity is undermined. That is not an improvement to welfare. It is a foreseeable risk to it.

Third, our submission addresses serious legal and constitutional defects. The Bill extinguishes recognised property interests in animals, genetic material, infrastructure and contracts without providing just terms or lawful compensation. It introduces vague and unforeseeable criminal offences, and it is silent on critical matters such as frozen genetic material and interstate co-ownership, exposing participants to inevitable criminal liability.

Fourth, our submission addresses that the Bill creates interstate conflict and national economic disruption. Tasmania does not operate in isolation; greyhound racing is a part of the national ecosystem. The Bill disrupts breeding and racing supply chains, reduces wagering turnover and undermines national rehoming capacity and creates conflict of laws issues for participants whose conduct remains lawful elsewhere in Australia.

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Finally, the submission from the Hobart Greyhound Racing Club (HGRC) raises concerns about governance, ministerial responsibility and democratic trust. This Bill proceeds in direct contradiction to explicit pre-election assertions given to the industry participants. Under Westminster principles, such reversals require transparency and explanation. None of that has been provided. Legislation born from reputed promises lacks moral authority and risks eroding confidence in democratic institutions.

In conclusion, our submission does not ask Parliament to ignore welfare concerns. It asks Parliament to legislate responsibly because once an industry, a community and the systems that support them are extinguished, they cannot easily be restored. For these reasons, the Hobart Greyhound Racing Club respectfully submits that this Bill should be rejected in its entirety.

CHAIR - Thank you, Claire. Anyone else?

Mr CLARK - Yes, I will go, thank you. This is a personal opinion. We're here to speak about the greyhound racing legislation before us and outlined the very economic and community consequences that this Bill in its current form will, and would, create. Over the past weeks, we've heard a great deal about process. What we haven't heard is the information that should have been central to any responsible decision-making.

Tasracing made it clear again yesterday that they still required the entire deed funding to operate. That means the core financial commitments do not disappear under this Bill. There are no net savings. The Government continues to work within what it calls an 'existing funding envelope'. Yet the economics simply do not support that assumption.

For trainers, owners, breeders and suppliers, this is not an abstract budget line; it's their livelihoods: feed, transport, veterinary care, property maintenance, the entire supply chain that keeps regional communities going. All of this is directly affected, and not in small ways. These impacts extend beyond individual trainers and families, local businesses and the broader community who rely on the economic activity generated by this great industry.

The racing industry health check is a perfect example of the problem at the heart of this legislation. The report has been sitting on someone's desk for months - if it exists. We're told it does. Why hasn't it been released? Why wasn't it available before decisions were made? Any new racing integrity Commissioner [Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner] would expect such a document to be transparent and on the table before legislation of significance is introduced. Instead, we've been asked to trust the process that has not delivered the information that led us here.

To ask Parliament to pass this Bill on these circumstances, frankly, is unreasonable. We should remember the last time Parliament was told, 'just trust us', the process, we later learned we'd been misled, betrayed. This cannot happen again. What circumstances have changed? We have been told the entire shift took place in the space of three weeks - three weeks. Yet when you drill it down to detail, two explanations keep reappearing: either the Government is out of money; lack of trust by the Government, and neither is there accountable foundation for legislation that restructures the entire racing code in every community connected to it.

The Bill before us resembles a patchwork: amendments bolted together in a way that leaves practical, economic and legal gaps wide open. It is our responsibility to ensure that we're not passing a flawed or incomplete framework, especially when the consequences fall so

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heavily on regional families and small businesses. This debate is not about emotion; it's about evidence. Welfare data shows long-term improvement – as Ben spoke about. Injury trends can be compared across jurisdictions nationwide. We have the material that should inform a serious policy conversation, yet the Government has chosen not to release this very report that would help us understand the economic and cross-code impacts.

While the House debates legislation with consequences for thousands of people, the community is left wondering how a decision of this scale could be made without that information. They deserve better than uncertainty. They deserve a process that is transparent and grounded with facts. I urge the House to recognise that the human, economic and community effects of this Bill are real. They extend far beyond racetracks; they reach farms, feed suppliers, transport operators, small businesses and, most importantly, all families.

Before Parliament votes on a Bill that reshapes the entire industry, we must have the full evidence. That includes the racing health check report. That includes a realistic economic assessment, and includes the honesty to admit that this process so far has not been providing to Parliament, or the Tasmanian community, with what they need and deserve. Thank you.

Mr NEWSON - I would like to have a brief introduction of the Bill put forward by our club's submission. I will give a brief outline on it: the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club (LGRC) Committee welcomes this opportunity to provide a submission regarding the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill. It is the collective view of the LGRC committee that this Bill is fundamentally flawed, shoddily drafted, dangerously detached from the complex operational realities of the industry it seeks to dismantle, in its current form.

The legislation fails on three critical fronts: systemic ignorance - the ignorance that it ignores the three-code independence at the Mowbray Racing Centre, effectively ensuring the financial destabilisation of the thoroughbred and harness codes alongside the greyhound industry. Welfare paradox: it offers no genuine protection for specialised animals. It purports to say that instead of replacing a rigorous, regulated framework with the legislative vacuum - and the human cost. It provides no security or consideration for the hundreds of Tasmanians whose livelihoods, social cohesion and mental wellbeing are likely to be linked to this sport. Given these deficiencies, the LGRC urges the committee to recommend that the Bill be rejected. Thank you.

Mr GATEHOUSE - I have a couple of things to add on, speaking on behalf of Greyhounds Tasmania. I have four issues I would like to address:

Firstly, is the breeding. We've had a lot of comment, some of it ill-informed, on breeding issues. Now, dogs don't just breed at the drop of a hat. It is a biological process. It is Mother Nature at work. You can't force it. The process occurs when a female greyhound is fertile, which is once every six to 12 months. There's a 63-day gestation period after the service before the pups are born, which means any dog that has been serviced post 1 January [2026] is yet to give birth, so there's been no spike in litters on the ground. The greyhounds may have been serviced in January [2026] and the figure is no different to January last year [2025].

The figures so far to this year in terms of services, because there's a lag between obviously service and litters on the ground, is pretty much the same as last year. There's been no spike. It

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will be very interesting, when the Commissioner comes, because I believe he was the one who quoted the increase in breeding activity to be able to provide that evidence to you.

There were two dogs serviced in January 2026: two. There was this narrative that we needed to pass legislation last year [2025] so that the breeding ban could start on 1 January [2026]. No-one's jumped for joy. The industry hasn't jumped for joy. They haven't run out and made their female greyhounds come on season so they could have them serviced; Mother Nature takes its course. They make a decision to breed with a female responsibly, with a pink card. We can go down that path if you wish to explore the breeding process at some stage, but calling a stable breeding cycle in Tasmania a massive spike, it's not just a mistake, it's deliberate fiction.

Ms O'CONNOR - Who said that, a massive spike? I've never heard that term used.

CHAIR - We might just let Mr Gatehouse finish and we will go to questions, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Sure.

Mr GATEHOUSE - We could probably go back to the transcript of the Minister yesterday, and I'm happy to do that afterwards. It may not have been 'a massive spike'.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thanks.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes, I withdraw. Increase in breeding, but it's not.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just got to be honest at the table, that's all.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes. I apologise, Cassy.

Now when we talk about animal welfare, and please feel free to interject as you do: I don't question that animal welfare issues are a genuine concern for many who support banning greyhound racing. What I do question is the level of understanding of the circumstances that we're dealing with in our industry. Terrible accidents and random acts of violence are in our media every day. There's tragedy every day, there's life, there's death every day. What we do is we try to regulate and mitigate the risks to our society through rules, through laws, through regulations. It's what we've been doing in greyhound racing.

The last Tasmanian inquiry [Joint Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in Tasmania] was held and reported in 2016. There have been many, many recommendations come out of that committee. Much of that has been implemented by the code, and as the boys have said earlier, there's been a constant improvement in terms of on-track activity. The stats say 2.34 per cent injury rate; so that can be anything from a one-day stand-down for a toenail through to a broken bone - 2.34 per cent.

On-track euthanasia is 0.17 per 10,000 starters. Now, that has decreased from 2015-16 where there were about 16, down to two last year. Most injuries were recovered from and catastrophic injuries - and we feel it - and we get offended by people who deny that we don't feel it when one of our dogs is injured on the track, because we do. We really want people to

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understand the level of commitment that we have to these animals. There is a distinction between animal welfare and animal activism.

Next point: economics. Obviously, the evidence from Tasracing yesterday - they will be putting in their submission. Obviously, that can be knocked back by Treasury, but they have said that they will be putting a submission for the same amount of deed funding, when the funding deed is finally finished, supposedly on 30 June this year [2026].

Ms O'CONNOR - 2029 is when it finishes.

Mr GATEHOUSE - No, but –

Mr WINTER - Chair, is it okay if we -

Ms O'CONNOR - But it's just correcting a mistake.

Ms WEBB - Let the statement go without interruption; correct it with questions later.

Ms O'CONNOR - Sure.

Mr GATEHOUSE - The funding deed ends in 2029, but the Minister has said that they wish to finalise the negotiations for the new funding deed by 30 June this year [2026]. It was going to be 31 December last year [2025] and that was pushed back. They are facts.

We've been asked to trust the process, and I won't repeat that again. Let's just say we don't trust the process because we trusted someone, we trusted their word, and we're here today.

I would also like to take the opportunity to talk about some points from Mr [Saul] Eslake's report. We want to put on record that Mr Eslake is a distinguished economist, and we highly respect his views across a range of economic industries and reports that he has done. Sometimes the Government takes what he says as advice; sometimes they don't. Sometimes the Government listens to the Auditor-General; and sometimes the Government says that's just his opinion.

However, there is a legitimate debate that can be had between economists, and I won't go down the path of debating economists because I'm not one. However, as I've said, where you start an analysis and where you finish an analysis is where you can find your trends. In the Eslake report, the trend was started after what is known as the 'sugar hit' of wagering, which occurred during lockdowns across the country. There was a massive wagering boom. Whether you like wagering or not, it was because racing was the only show left in town in most places in the world. People were in lockdown and they did two things: they drank more and they punted more. We had a big spike, and that was across all three codes of racing. Since then, there's been a normalisation.

You could say from that peak there has been a downtrend, and you could say there's been a declining trend. You put the starting point back to 2011-12 and look at the trend line from there and tell me that it's a declining industry. The last two halves - you have the financial year 2024-25, greyhound racing wagering turnover was up, the other two codes down. In the first six months of this year, the evidence yesterday, wagering turnover on greyhounds: up. It's where you start and where you finish.

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My final point is on the legislative review program. In our submission, we talked about having an impact statement prepared. I watched yesterday and the Department representative said they went to Treasury, and they didn't have to because it was subordinate legislation. I don't - that's not correct?

Ms O'CONNOR - No. They said because it's legislation. It's not subordinate legislation. It's not regulation, which is when you do a regulatory impact statement.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes. You do under the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1992*. However, I'm no lawyer, I'm no economist, but I am a person who likes to read things. Tasmania's Department of Treasury has a Legislation Review Program [LRP]. Reading from that, the LRP deals with primary legislation and promotes the adoption of regulatory impact analysis as a key element of policy development for new and amending legislation. Primary legislation, when I did statutory interpretation, is acts of Parliament. I would suggest that we may need to review whether we actually have met the standards of the Legislative Review Program, but I will leave that up to the committee.

CHAIR - Thank you. We have just used half-an-hour of our time, so I'm aware that we only have an hour left of questions and I'm sure committee members have a lot of questions.

I will start off, and at the outset I want to note that across all submissions - both personal, club, and Greyhound Racing Tasmania's submission - it is very clear that you all oppose the Bill in its entirety. However, this committee is looking at the provisions of the Bill and looking at particular clauses of the Bill and wanting to understand there.

Your submissions have highlighted some concerns around compensation requirements. I'm just looking at the Greyhounds Tasmania submission, for instance, which is replicated, I think, across all the club submissions and individual submissions.

You talk about the fact that if Parliament insists on ending the industry - so if the Bill is passed - it must provide a comprehensive compensation framework, and it outlined a number of dot points which you believe should be included in the Bill. I'm not sure who to ask the question to, whether it's Greyhounds Tasmania. I'm not sure what Greyhounds Tasmania is, whether it's an incorporated association, or whether I ask a club directly. I will let you decide who wants to answer this.

In the Bill under the greyhound racing closure plan, that is where you would expect to see, I would imagine, provisions around compensation and the kinds of matters that you would like to see included in the Bill. What would you like to see, perhaps, in that clause? Is that the appropriate place you would like to see that clarified? Somewhere else within the Bill? Can you perhaps speak to those matters around compensation and how you would like that articulated in a Bill?

Mr ENGLUND - I can speak about that, if you like.

CHAIR - Sorry, you're speaking on behalf of -

Mr ENGLUND - North West Greyhound Racing Club.

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Transitional arrangements and compensation and asset devaluation - although the Bill establishes a transition period, it contains no statutory compensation framework that we can see. Now, we've been asked, as we've heard by the hearings yesterday, to trust the Government. We simply cannot.

CHAIR - So, is your submission then to us, if trust is an issue, you'd like to see something more explicit under the provisions around the closure plan that perhaps, as we heard yesterday, I think in a question from Ms Webb, articulate some of those things? The high-level matters that need to be included in the closure plan, whether it be compensation, welfare arrangements, transitional processes, those kinds of things? Is that something that the clubs would like to see explicitly in the Bill?

Mr ENGLUND - I'm not sure how we can take that seriously, though.

CHAIR - Well, if it was in the Bill, it becomes part of the legislation.

Mr ENGLUND - Yes, but we've been written to before.

Ms O'CONNOR - But that's not an act of Parliament.

Mr WINTER - Sorry, can we just hear from the witness?

CHAIR - I'm just trying to explain and understand the concerns. You don't want to see that particular provision in the Bill? Or you would like to, but you just have concerns about the trust in the matter?

Mr CLARK - I would think that compensation is part of it - it's not just about the dog. It's about the infrastructure, it's about what all of us sitting here watching today, it's the trailer - I spoke about the maintenance, you know. Whether you're a small operation, it costs - your running costs are about \$3000 a week, right up to the big operations that are double, triple that. That goes into the community. It's not just about the compensation for the dog. It's about the processes that all stick behind it. To actually sit down and work through that with people that are writing it, is what we need. It's not just about the dog; it's about everything else.

CHAIR - Your submissions outline a number of things, not just the animal itself, but as you say, infrastructure and club infrastructure. My question was: would you like to see the broader issue of compensation - and noting that there is a number of things that might include - included explicitly in the Bill? Is that something that you are advocating for, noting that you generally oppose the Bill, but would you like to see that particular aspect in the Bill?

Mr ENGLUND - It's very hard to estimate what that compensation looks like at this stage, because no economic impact statements have been done. If there is a report on it, we would implore people to release it so we can properly understand what that framework looks like.

Ms WEBB - Can I just follow up, Kristie on that?

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, hang on, I've just got a question I think that the committee needs to establish.

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CHAIR - We'll go to Ms O'Connor and then I'll come back down the line.

Ms O'CONNOR - My question's to Mr Gatehouse. Greyhounds Tasmania was established shortly after the Premier announced there'd be a phase-out of greyhound racing. Why isn't it an incorporated body? Why aren't you, for example, registered on the lobbyists register? Who pays your salary?

Mr GATEHOUSE - That's a fair question. Thank you very much. I don't know what it's got to do with the legislation, however.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, it does, because you're here advocating purportedly to represent the Tasmanian greyhound racing industry against the legislation, so it'd be good to understand who's paying for you.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Well, it's actually commercial-in-confidence who's paying for me.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh, is that right?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Well, it is to me. Anyway, Greyhounds Tasmania - we, as clubs, didn't have on our radar that someone was going to go and do a deal to secure government - one of those things that was served up on the platter was greyhound racing, because we had a commitment that greyhound racing was a secure industry in this state. Since 10 August [2025], the greyhound industry in this state has been on the back foot, because there's been this awful rush to push through a piece of legislation. I came on with the clubs and I'm paid by the clubs.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I just clarify -

Mr GATEHOUSE - No, let me finish.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, actually you're not answering the question.

CHAIR - Let Mr Gatehouse speak and then we'll get the clarification.

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you paid by the Tasmanian clubs or is there also money from interstate gambling clubs that are helping to fund your consultancy fees?

Mr GATEHOUSE - I am being funded - I am paid, my invoices go to the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, that's the answer to the first question. Do you know why Greyhounds Tasmania is not incorporated and why you aren't on the lobbyists register?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes, I do. Firstly, because of the rush of this legislation and the fact that we've been on the back foot the whole time. When I joined with the clubs in late August [2025], we set about developing the incorporation of the association of the three clubs, called Greyhounds Tasmania. We have been working through a process of developing the constitution for the three committees into a Greyhounds Tasmania constitution. To consult that through properly doesn't happen overnight, and we had a very, very quick timeline to get it through.

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That application was submitted a couple of weeks ago, Claire?

Ms ROBINS - Yes.

Mr GATEHOUSE - The application for incorporation approved by the three committees' constitution is with the Department now. In terms of me -

Ms O'CONNOR - The lobbyist register - given that you're trying to influence government policy and lobbying members of Parliament.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Greyhounds Tasmania is going to be registered as a not-for-profit association - the three clubs are not-for-profit incorporated associations. We don't have deductible gift status, and if you look at the exemptions from the lobbyists register, anyone representing those organisations doesn't have to be on the register.

CHAIR - Okay. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - I want to follow up on the matter of compensation being in this piece of legislation, because when I read your submissions, you raise the issue that you want to see legislative compensation. So, a first way to achieve that is, with this piece of legislation that's coming through, the clause that says there must be a closure plan developed, and it outlines how that's developed. That could be somewhere in this Bill, where we could insert a reference to compensation. Basically, that could be done in a really straightforward way - like, that clause could have added into it a short - and not exhaustive, it could be other things as well - but a short list of things we expect to see in the closure plan. In that list could be a compensation plan or fair compensation. So that's one option for potentially adding compensation, and the concept of it and a commitment to it, into this legislation.

Is that something that you are interested to see in this legislation is the gist of the question. We're looking to see, when your submission says you want to see legislative compensation, we're looking to see how that could be achieved in a way that you feel is appropriate in this Bill.

Mr GATEHOUSE - We're not legislators, so that's where we are coming from.

Ms WEBB - That's fine, it's totally fine. And it wouldn't include all the detail, the amounts and all that sort of thing, but at this stage of things, locks it in as an expected part, and a legislated part, of the closure plan. That is one option; we're just testing that idea. In the hearing yesterday, we tested that idea with the Minister and the Department and I am testing it with you today.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Our concern is really about the economics. We may have this compensation requirement in the Bill, but if the state's got no money, we are going to be pretty far down the pecking order when it comes to having a fight for compensation. So, we can put it in there, you can say that, but if you can't write the cheque, it's immaterial.

Ms WEBB - Sure. So, on that basis, when you ask for legislated compensation, legislation that requires compensation, do you have something else in mind, then? Or is any form that it might be put into legislation, is that still going to be iffy to you and doubtful because you're going to feel there's that uncertainty there?

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Mr GATEHOUSE - Again, that's for the Government. It's their legislation. The role of the two Houses of government [sic] is to make and pass, or reject, legislation. It's not our role - our role is as stakeholders is to say, 'well if you're going to do it, think a bit more about it. Don't just do it and try to rush it through'.

Ms WEBB - Look, that's what the committee is attempting to do. When I read your submissions, with an open mind about how we could improve this legislation based on what you're presenting in your submissions, that's where my mind is going. That's why I am asking the question.

Mr GATEHOUSE - So, my advice, if I was advising you - which I don't tend to do, but I will provide a statement - is that you should refer that back to the people who drafted the legislation for them to consider it and put it back up again, if you can do that. I don't think it's up to you, as an MLC, to have to rewrite, but -

Ms WEBB - Well, in fact, this committee -

Ms O'CONNOR - It often is. That's what Parliament's about.

Ms WEBB - Just to be really clear - sorry, Chair, you might want to explain this - but the role of the committee is, when we report on this we can make specific recommendations back to the Government and the Parliament about amendments to this Bill. This process can result in us, as a committee, making specific recommendations about new things to include, amendments to make, things to take out. So, this committee is turning its mind to that very thing right now, about how could we potentially improve this Bill or change this Bill - and it's based on what we're hearing here. The more we can interact with you about it, the better.

CHAIR - Further, we can ask questions of the Government. As you noticed, we had the Minister here yesterday. We will continue to put questions on notice to the Government so that we can ask - I know Ms Webb had a question on notice regarding this particular issue - to ask them to provide written advice back. Our report will be informative to the amendments of the Upper House when they consider the Bill. So, any recommendations around amendments are quite powerful for this particular committee. That's why we're asking the question.

I think you've finished on that line of questioning, have you? I'll move on to Ms Rattray.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you very much. A question, if I might, to Mr Gatehouse, if he wants to provide a response - entirely up to you - around the working group. I understand that there's been some reaching out by the code to have two members on the working group, because I would expect that there would certainly be some discussions certainly about some of the matters that we've already spoken about at the table in regard to compensation and how that might work and what that might look like. I'd be really appreciative of an update. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to be here yesterday to ask the Minister directly, but we do have Mr Carroll later today, so I'm happy to ask the question again, but I'd be interested in your response.

Mr GATEHOUSE - The Commissioner and I have very open lines of communication.

Ms RATTRAY - But that's not being two members of the working group.

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Mr GATEHOUSE - No. I'm saying we have open lines of communication. My committee, which is made up of reps of the three clubs who go back and consult with their three clubs - because the Commissioner reached out and said, 'Would you like to have a rep now?'

Ms RATTRAY - A rep?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes. Then we went back and said, 'Look, we would, respectfully, request two reps - one with a breeding angle and one with an owner/trainer sort of angle, given the gravity and the impact that this committee [the working group] may have on the industry.' That was declined. The latest -

Ms RATTRAY - Has it been recently declined?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Again? From the initial decline to again being declined?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes. The Commissioner, when I declined, he said, 'How about we just go with one, and if the legislation passes I'll reconsider having two on there.' I took that back to the committee and obviously, there's a bit of distrust everywhere in the room. They advise me and, you know, it's not my decision - it's a decision of the clubs to say, 'Look, it's two. We want two, and we don't really understand why we can't have two there.'

Ms RATTRAY - Right, okay.

Mr GATEHOUSE - That's all. We do have a positive relationship and we wish to maintain that, but we can disagree on stuff.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. I will ask that question, when I get a chance, to the Commissioner.

A second question, if I might, Chair. In regard to the issues that have been raised about the potential conflict with section 92 of the Australian Constitution - and I absolutely acknowledge that you are volunteers in your organisations, you're probably wearing three or four hats on many occasions. Has there been any reaching out or any understanding of that potential conflict with the Australian Constitution around trade between states? Given that if this legislation passes, then there is no opportunity to breed dogs in Tasmania and perhaps send them to the mainland for racing like there is in the Australian Capital Territory, where they are able to breed and then race in other jurisdictions. I'm just interested. I haven't taken any legal advice, but I'm sure the committee will before their report is presented to Parliament, so some understanding?

Mr CLARK - Thanks for the question, Tania. It will have a massive impact - that cease of breeding, the part of that legislation, the movement of the dogs. A lot of trainers who have three or four of their own dogs but they have multiple dogs, they train for interstate. They come down for decade-long Hobart 1000, for instance - people plan out, it's not just ad hoc.

Ms RATTRAY - Launceston Cup.

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Mr CLARK - Launceston Cup. What a great night that was the other night. One of the biggest crowds you've ever seen. So that would affect - Ben's a trainer as well, local. The amount of dogs that do come in and out through long-term partnerships from all over Australia. 'Blah, blah, blah, here's my dog, set it up for these this next three or four months', and then the dog will go back, and it rotates more than what everyone sitting around this table would probably know. That was a massive blow, let alone the breeding.

Ms RATTRAY - Right, but you haven't actually had any legal opinion around that part of the Australian Constitution?

Mr GATEHOUSE - The legal opinion.

Ms RATTRAY - There's probably about five different views.

Ms O'CONNOR - Short answer is probably no. There are plenty of constitutional experts around to ask.

Mr GATEHOUSE - There are plenty of constitutional experts and the advice is it's 'How long's a piece of string?' and it would be up to the courts to decide when a particular case was put forward.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you got advice?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Legal advice? You've commissioned advice from a constitutional expert?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - That this Bill would be in breach of section 92 of the Constitution?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Not that it would be in breach; it could be in breach.

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you prepared to provide that advice to the committee?

Mr GATEHOUSE - I don't believe so, no.

Ms O'CONNOR - Does it really exist?

Mr GATEHOUSE - It's privileged.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh, okay.

CHAIR - Mr Winter. Oh, sorry.

Ms RATTRAY - No, that's fine, as long as you will come back to me, Chair. Seeing as I missed out on yesterday, I might get an extra question.

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CHAIR - I reckon we might be able to facilitate that. We're just going along the line. Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Yes, thanks. I just want to say, genuinely, that reading - the submissions have been really thoughtful. I know that sitting in Parliament and writing submissions is not something you do every day. The commitment that you've made to the industry to represent them here today is really powerful.

I also want to acknowledge that Mr Gatehouse has come in at a time when the greyhound industry here didn't have a voice, didn't have a single voice and didn't have the political expertise to run a campaign like this. To hear the questioning around why it's not incorporated yet? I mean, this whole thing has been a complete rush, and you've been put in a very difficult position, and I think you've handled yourself very well today, and particularly through your submissions.

I wanted to go to the compensation question and the trust issue that Mr Englund, you spoke about. There seems to be a move - in listening to some of the conversation here over the last 24 hours, around the idea that we could add an amendment into the Bill around the word compensation, perhaps that would satisfy people. If it was just a simple case of words around compensation being in there - I mean, how could you trust this Government to adequately compensate you, given, Mr Englund, what you said about the letter you got from the Premier. What issues would that have for you if there weren't specifics around the level of compensation that you might receive?

Mr ENGLUND - Yes, thanks Dean. Well, the first mistake we made was trust Jeremy Rockliff, first and foremost. Everyone's seen the letter and everyone reacted to that letter accordingly. We have zero trust in any process going forward. Whether it's written or not, very hard for the clubs to - very hard for me to go back to my community now and say, 'Oh listen, trust these guys, they're going to look after us'. We've had trust issues for a number of years now through the Devonport closure.

Year after year after year. 'You guys are out of the [Devonport] Showgrounds,' with supposedly a 23-year lease to run, with no exit plan. Two or three venues we tried to get going - to get up off the ground. Told all the way along to 'Trust us, trust us, trust us, you'll be fine'. We're out of trust; we've tipped it all out of the bin.

Mr WINTER - Your club that you represent; you were thrown out of the Devonport Showgrounds. You were promised a new track the first time, then you were promised another new track, and then it was only 12 months ago, I think, that you were promised a track in the middle of Spreyton. By my count that's four consecutive broken promises made to your club and then you're now being asked to accept that a couple of words in the legislation would lead to compensation.

In your view - and perhaps I can open this to not just you Ben, but others - we heard yesterday - I don't want to put words in his mouth - but from Tasracing that work really hadn't commenced on the compensation question; we heard that that perhaps will come under the remit of the [Tasmanian Racing] Integrity Commissioner and his working group. What level of work would be required to adequately understand the level of compensation? What sort of things would need to be incorporated, and how long would it take to actually work out the level of compensation you might be required to receive?

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Mr ENGLUND - It's a large body of work. You're not just talking about trainers. You're talking about breeders, owners, rarers, whelpers. If the industry is abolished, you're talking about the flow-on effects that affect all the small businesses that supply the industry. That's a huge body of work. None of it's been undertaken, and if it has we haven't seen it for whatever reason. It's not something that can be rushed through in a couple of months. This has been pushed and pushed and pushed to try to catch us off-guard. We've been chasing our tail ever since the announcement.

As you can appreciate, prior to the announcement, we were very comfortable. Very comfortable. Doing what we do. Since that announcement, we've been chasing our tail ever since.

Mr WINTER - Have you ever received any contact from Jeremy Rockliff or the Government about the letter that he sent and then the change in position? Did they ever formally correspond with you? How did you find out about the broken promise?

Mr ENGLUND - No, we haven't had any formal correspondence with the Government or the Minister. It was just a single letter that he sent to me on behalf of all Liberal candidates. I reached out to him on, on behalf of the industry, signed by all three clubs and representatives. There's been no contact since.

Mr WINTER - He didn't have the decency to explain himself or even let you know about the decision?

Ms O'CONNOR - It's not really relevant to our terms of reference. You're just trying to score political points, Dean.

Mr CLARK - We've just been hung out to dry. We all know what's going on. We had the Launceston Cup the other night, we've had other stuff. The Minister for Racing obviously cares about the industry or whatever she portrays. You don't see her at greyhound code racing. Where's your support?

CHAIR - Thank you very much. I will move on to a question that I have in relation to your submission and the provisions in the Bill. A number of your submissions raise concern about, what I think you say are concerns around administrative barriers, some uncertainty around ownership in terms of interstate ownership and ownership here. Can you perhaps elaborate on what your particular concerns are and which provisions of the Bill you're most concerned about that create that uncertainty around dual ownership where one owner is in the state and one owner's interstate?

Mr CLARK - That's one thing that needs clarifying. Say, for instance, I own a dog with Luke. If the dogs not allowed to move out of the state and I want to no longer be part of that dog, how does the dog move to Luke to go and race? So if you've got split-ownership -

CHAIR - Split-ownership, so one person's interstate, one person's here.

Mr CLARK - Yes, one person's in Tasmania, and the Tasmanian wants to remove itself from the racing because it's finished with it and that dog's got longevity left in its racing

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career - where's the black and white? What happens with that dog and that ownership? Which gets transferred?

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, you can't export it. It's black and white.

Mr CLARK - That's what I mean. That's what our concern is.

CHAIR - Is that what you're suggesting needs to be clarified in terms of compensation? In terms of the owner on the mainland, for instance, are you suggesting that there needs to be compensation for that?

Mr CLARK - I think compensation's getting raised a fair bit where there's so much before compensation. Compensation to me, this is my personal opinion, is that it's been raised, but there's so much before compensation. Compensation to me is like, it's done.

CHAIR - I still don't understand what the concerns are that you're particularly raising because we need to understand the questions to ask the Government in terms of their drafting reasons and why things are drafted in a particular way. Under the provisions of the Bill, it would be unlawful to own a dog for the purposes of racing -

Mr CLARK - Correct.

CHAIR - And you can't export a dog for the purposes of racing. That's quite clear under that. Where your concerns are with dual ownership - the Bill relates to people within our jurisdiction. It doesn't relate to the owner on the mainland. Your concern is that that creates an uncertainty, a legal uncertainty, about who owns that particular greyhound. One solution would be the person in Tasmania no longer owns that greyhound if that greyhound is racing.

Mr CLARK - And that dog can then be transferred to the mainland. But that opens up all sorts of legal disputes.

Ms ROBINS - For example, there's a stud dog that's two-thirds owned by two Tasmanian participants and the dog resides in Victoria, and the other third of that owner is a Victorian resident. What happens with the legalities around the owner of that specific dog? There's nothing black or white about - it's majority-owned by Tasmania. Does that dog then have to get transported back from Victoria where he's legally allowed to stand at stud, to come back into the state and retire as a stud? Or is there going to be compensation for the Tasmanian owners to relinquish their ownership rights to the Victorian participant?

CHAIR - To make it really clear, it sounds to me that the question is whether the ownership should be relinquished and the compensation around that.

Mr CLARK - And who values that.

Ms ROBINS - And who values that.

Mr CLARK - And how is it valued. And who values that.

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CHAIR - Okay, it comes back to that conversation - so to understand your submission correctly: it's not necessarily the issue about ownership; it's about not having future ownership in something that is partly owned by someone who is interstate.

Mr CLARK – It's a loss of trade.

Ms ROBINS - And if that dog does have to come back to the state. How is that going to be managed if a Victorian owner doesn't want to relinquish his rights, if that dog then has to come back to the state because of the majority ownership.

CHAIR - I don't want to put words to your mouth, but we are trying to understand what we can recommend back to the Chamber. You're not particularly concerned with the provisions around ownership. That's clear that ownership would be unlawful for purposes of racing. It is the issue of the practicalities about how that might be compensated where there are multiple owners across multiple jurisdictions.

Mr CLARK – Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - A number of you in your presentations this morning talked about concerns that the Bill would harm greyhound welfare. The Launceston Greyhound Racing Club submission says that the Bill offers no genuine protection for the specialised animals it purports to save and describes the situation that greyhounds would be should the Bill be passed as a legislative vacuum. That's not true though, is it? Because the Bill effectively would bring greyhounds under the same protections under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* as any dog. It's not true to describe the situation greyhounds would be in should the Bill be passed as a legislative vacuum, is it?

Mr ENGLUND - We believe taking greyhounds out of a highly regulated environment and placing them in a less regulated environment is a welfare issue to the dogs, themselves.

Ms O'CONNOR - Let's talk about some of those welfare issues. Since 1 January this year [2026], as far as we know, there have been three dog deaths on track. Memphis Rains, fractured hock, sent back to Victoria after being stood down for 90 days and euthanased. Hellyer Dougie fell approaching the catching pen, broke their front legs and euthanased on track. A mysterious death at Launceston Greyhound Racing Club following the win by Canya Breakout on 19 January [2026] where the dog, less than a week later, was listed as deceased.

We have three deaths since 1 January [2026] and more than 40 injuries on and off track. That is not an outstanding animal welfare record by any measure. I'm particularly interested to understand whether there's knowledge from the Launceston Greyhound Racing representatives what happened to Canya Breakout because the dog was fine as far as we know when it left the track.

Mr ENGLUND - We are not really here to talk about specific cases, but what we can suggest is ask the Commissioner.

Ms O'CONNOR - Why not?

Ms WEBB - That's not what the committee's about, for a start.

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Mr CLARK – That’s for Tasracing or ORI [Office of Racing Integrity].

Mr ENGLUND - What we can suggest is ask the Commissioner.

CHAIR – We might go to the issue of animal welfare.

Mr WINTER - These witnesses are not responsible for introducing legislation.

CHAIR - I appreciate that, Mr Winter. Excuse me, Ms O'Connor has asked a question around animal welfare. If people who are presenting to us today have made submissions around the vacuum around animal welfare there is a genuine concern that they have.

Ms WEBB – Not specific examples though Chair.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is not unreasonable to ask for specific examples because someone has to put the identities of these dogs on the table because that's ultimately what we are talking about.

Mr WINTER – We have the [Tasmanian Racing] Integrity Commissioner coming in for an hour.

CHAIR - I understand that.

Mr ENGLUND - We are not here to discuss, specifically, cases.

Ms O'CONNOR - Let's step back - three deaths since 1 January [2026], more than 40 injuries on and off the track - we are in the second week in February. Do you regard that as a strong animal welfare track record?

Mr ENGLUND - We are not here to speak on behalf of the integrity unit.

Mr CLARK - One of those dogs was in Victoria though wasn't it?

Ms O'CONNOR - I beg your pardon. No, you are here to speak on behalf of the industry.

Mr GATEHOUSE - One of those dogs was in Victoria, wasn't it?

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right, it was sent back to Victoria and euthanised with a broken ankle.

Mr CLARK - That's out of us.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, I understand, but it is legitimate to ask industry participants here today if you talk about animal welfare concerns, about the data around animal welfare issues on and off the track –

Mr GATEHOUSE – and the data says -

Ms O'CONNOR - Let me finish the question.

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Mr GATEHOUSE - It is a long question.

CHAIR – Could you please ask the question, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thanks, I ask the questions here. The issue here is you've raised animal welfare concerns. I have pointed you to the data of dogs dying and being injured, and now you don't want to answer questions about that.

Mr ENGLUND - All I can say is the data suggests that over the last five years, injuries have trended down to a level that is nearly among the best in the country. That's all I can suggest to you.

Ms O'CONNOR - What about the three deaths in the first five -

Mr ENGLUND - I'm not here to talk specifics.

Ms O'CONNOR - You don't want to talk about specifics?

Mr ENGLUND - I just said to you that we have –

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm not asking you about any individual dog.

Mr CLARK - We don't know the specifics; that's -

Mr ENGLUND - The data that we have provided shows you -

Mr WINTER - Chair, Ms O'Connor is totally disorderly for the entire time.

CHAIR - Thank you. Okay. Sorry, excuse me, I'm chairing this particular committee. I'm trying to make sure that everyone has a fair hearing. I'm trying to make sure that we refer back to the submissions. Ms O'Connor has been asking questions -

Ms O'CONNOR - I have, too.

CHAIR - that were specifically raised in the submissions from all the clubs around animal welfare concerns, and the concern -

Ms O'CONNOR - Completely reasonable questions.

CHAIR - if I want to rephrase the submission that an animal welfare standard would be less under this particular Bill than what is currently in the regulated racing industry, so they are fair questions. I believe we have had a response, and I don't think they are yours - to respond to your questions –

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, the question is - well, thank you.

CHAIR - We might move on.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, alright. I will be back.

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CHAIR - I'm sure. I think it's quite telling that we haven't had that response. I will move on to Ms Webb.

Ms O'CONNOR – we haven't had a response.

Ms WEBB - I am happy to go through. Most of the things I've flagged, we've touched on to some extent already, that I am interested to ask these folks. I know, particularly the member for McIntyre who wasn't here yesterday, probably has some more questions.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. While we're talking about injuries, and I appreciate that some of the information may well have been discussed yesterday, and I haven't read the transcript. On the 80 per cent of the injuries that are minor, and I think, Mr Gatehouse, you suggested that it might have been a toenail is one example of minor, again, I've worked out that there's about 12,500 starters per year. Is that about right?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes, last year there were just under 12,000.

Ms RATTRAY - Right, just under 12,000, because not every race has a full complement.

Mr GATEHOUSE - That's correct. It's an average of about 7.4.

Ms RATTRAY - Ten races, 52 weeks a year.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Three times a week.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay. Of the 80 per cent of injuries that are minor, can I have a couple of other examples of what minor is, because - or whoever, John, I know you're the expert.

Mr NEWSON - Well, expert - a minor injury - could be just a -

Ms RATTRAY - Experienced, then. Experienced.

Mr NEWSON - A minor injury could come down to just an abrasion which is gained through contact with another dog during the race, and it's called in by the vet to check it out. The dog could pull up lame; maybe it's torn a - bit of muscle soreness. They are only relatively up to 10 - most of those injuries are only from - stand-down periods from one to 10 days. After the 10 days, the dog is fine, more like a sportsman or footballer pulling up after a hard game of football. These are elite athletes, these dogs. Slight contact at 60 k's an hour doesn't take long to do a minor injury.

Ms RATTRAY - I think Ben wants to add something.

Mr CLARK - Sorry to butt in, John. The three clubs, along with Tasracing and the welfare - Martin Lenz and all them, over the course of the last two years, roughly, we've been asking for our injuries to be broken down, so the minimised ones, the one-day stand-downs, the late scratching: that's not an injury. It could be for various reasons.

Mr NEWSON - Seasonal.

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Mr CLARK - Seasonal: come on season. There are so many of these, what we call 1 per centers - that get listed in the statement of 40 injuries already. We've asked for that over the course of several years to have a full breakdown so everyone can see. That would explain it.

Ms RATTRAY - Can I confirm that on Tasmania's injury rate dashboard for 2020 through to 2025, injuries per 1000 starters in 2020-21: 30.43, and 2024-25: down to 22.37, a reduction of over 25 per cent?

Ms O'CONNOR - Is that the on-track injuries, honourable member?

Mr GATEHOUSE - They are reported injuries via the vet and stewards reports.

Mr CLARK - We sit second.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. I just think that's important -

Mr CLARK - Yes. Definitely.

Ms RATTRAY - to have on the public record, Chair, for those who want to get a better understanding of what injuries look like.

Ms O'CONNOR - Talk about the major injuries too.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes. Well, it says that more than 99 per cent of all injuries recover and catastrophic outcomes are now extremely rare. That's just some data. Sadly, if those ones that were identified by the honourable member for Hobart have happened, then I sympathise with those owners who have had that.

Ms O'CONNOR - With the owners? I sympathise with the dogs.

CHAIR - Have you got another question, Ms Rattray, before I move to Mr Winter?

Ms RATTRAY - Please come back to me.

Mr WINTER - Chair, I want to ask Ms Robins about her submission. In the submission she talks about the misrepresentation of welfare outcomes. It says the parliamentary record has relied heavily on emotionally charged but poorly contextualised statements. On 10 December an MLC referred to '41 dogs euthanised' on retirement, and dismissed the explanations as excuses, but then you go on to say that four of those dogs were actually yours. I was hoping you could explain to the committee your submission and why the statement in Parliament was incorrect.

Ms ROBINS - My four dogs, Ruby Bailey, Mori Baba, Amicitia and Daddo Said, all had in the space of - since October 2020 to July last year [2025], all had serious, life-threatening illnesses. They were not excuses. They are documented medical conditions which I can provide documentation on, but I don't want to, because that's my private business. They were not excuses. I want to know why it is acceptable for people who are said to be making these decisions to consider such conditions as excuses, when making those decisions for each of

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those four dogs was based on what was best for them. It was based on their quality of life. When did longevity become a measure of welfare?

Mr WINTER - Like most dog owners I know, whether they're greyhound owners or just owners of a pet, obviously you love your dogs and you're going to make the right decision for them. In terms of the reporting, though, you've just named up four dogs that have turned up in reporting despite them being - the circumstance was that they were retired; is that correct?

Ms ROBINS - Yes, they were all retired. They - Alice was 12-and-a-half. Mori had just celebrated his 14th birthday five days prior to his passing, and Paddy and Staggs were litter siblings who died 22 hours apart, from GDV [Gastric Dilation – Volvulus], which is where their stomach twists. GDV is considered one of the only serious, real-life medical emergencies where time is critical. They died 22 hours apart. Their quality-of-life outcomes were not great. I could have proceeded with the \$12,000 surgery through the AES [Animal Emergency Service], but I looked at their quality of life thereafter and what quality of life they would have going forward as pets, and what impact that surgery could have on those dogs, as I did with Alice.

Alice was having grand mal seizures lasting in excess of 20 minutes. Now, I know a lot of people in this room on the other side of the table have dogs. I woke up - the first time she had a seizure, it was 3 o'clock in the morning, Alice slept on my bed every night she resided at my house - to her fitting, and it was horrible. We've all seen movies where someone has a seizure, but this was a dog shaking, not responding, and it lasted 20 minutes in the middle of the night. I screamed to my housemate. She came in and she'd never seen it before and it was one of the most confronting things I had ever seen. We did the right thing. We took her to the vet. We got the blood work. It pointed that there could be cancer somewhere, but they also said if she has another one in eight weeks time, we've got a problem.

She lasted eight weeks and two days without having another seizure. The second one was worse: much, much worse. She was coming out of those seizures not recognising faces, trying to throw herself out windows, just had no idea where she was, totally delusional. We took her back to the vet, did more tests and then we discussed the quality of life and doing quality-of-life assessments. We tried her on phenobarbital; that wasn't working. Alice was running out of options. This dog had been with me through everything.

Mr WINTER - You've just outlined - how did it make you feel when the death of those four dogs that you loved -

Ms ROBINS - Were deemed excuses?

Mr WINTER - And were deemed excuses.

Ms ROBINS - I was shattered. I was absolutely shattered.

Mr WINTER - But used by a member of Parliament. It was Ms O'Connor, as I understand it.

Ms ROBINS - I don't mind these dogs being named in any record as long as the facts are right, but these weren't excuses. Alice had another seizure the night before I took her to the vet

to be put to sleep. That following morning she had no control over her bowel or her bladder or her back legs. What quality of life would she have had if I had just put up with it?

CHAIR - If I may go back to the issue - it was mentioned in all submissions - around the welfare vacuum, as you've described it, with the dismantling of the system. You identify that under the current system, under the racing regulations that there are mandatory veterinary checks, whole-of-life tracking, injury reporting and steward oversight, which is removed if racing doesn't occur. Do you recognise that those are only in place, though, because racing occurs and, therefore, if there's not racing then the provisions of the Bill would be reliant on the *Dog Control Act 2000* and the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*- and there are welfare provisions under those?

What do you want to see improve the Bill, or in the Bill, that would satisfy you in terms of welfare standards, because the particular things you mentioned in your submissions are there because the dogs are raced? They relate to racing, not necessarily to the overall welfare of any dog, whether it be a greyhound or any other dog. Those welfare systems and provisions are there because of racing. Is there something that you would like to see included in the Bill around animal welfare that you think is missing from the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* or from the *Dog Control Act 2000* that you think needs to be included?

Mr NEWSON - I'd say that euthanasia of greyhounds - at the moment, under the racing condition you cannot legally - you cannot euthanase a dog unless there's quite extreme circumstances, but what sort of control do you have if these dogs are just put as pets? There's no control over it - I could take my own dog and get him euthanased by a vet for any particular reason. It seems funny that once these greyhounds - at the moment, as they are deemed a racing animal, they cannot be lawfully put down without a really good excuse. As they become pets, they could be just - I don't know, we've got a greyhound that we've retired, someone's adopted him and he doesn't suit our circumstances, we will go and get the dog put down. Is there really protection for these dogs when they are rehomed after -

CHAIR - So to the act - sorry to interrupt you - the act makes some amendments to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and *Dog Control Act 2000* in terms of protection of greyhounds transitioning as pets; is that something you would like to see to be put in?

Mr NEWSON - Something like that could probably - because there's really no control over a dog that is classed as a pet. You can - if I'm just sick of that dog -

CHAIR - Well, you require a vet to agree to euthanise a dog.

Mr NEWSON - Yes, to do it, but not necessarily. I could actually euthanase a pet dog myself. I could put a dog down. I've got a farm. If I had a dog break its leg I would probably legally euthanase it myself. I have a gun licence; I can legally -

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm not sure that's legal. I'm not sure about that.

CHAIR - We might park that. We're not legal experts here.

Mr NEWSON - No. I'm not saying - I am sure -

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CHAIR - What you're suggesting - sorry, I don't want to put words in your mouth - but what you'd like to see is the strengthening of animal welfare provisions?

Mr NEWSON - Strengthening of it, yes.

Mr CLARK - That's exactly right.

CHAIR - So, this is an opportunity - because the Bill does touch on amendments to both the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and the *Dog Control Act 2000* - this is an opportunity to strengthen, obviously for greyhounds, but also for all other dogs -

Mr CLARK - Yes, strengthen it from the care they're receiving now and the processes they go through: race day vet checks, C5s [C5 vaccination], everything, right through to that act for the rehoming purposes.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you.

Mr GATEHOUSE - The other issue, sorry, is in relation to unregulated breeding. We operate in a very highly regulated breeding environment now, where you need a pink card, which is basically a passport for permission to breed a registered female greyhound to a registered male greyhound.

Ms RATTRAY - Under a police check?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes, I think we all have police checks these days.

Mr NEWSON - Yes, all police checks.

Ms RATTRAY - All greyhound code participants are required.

Mr NEWSON - Yes, owners, trainers, breeders all have police checks.

Ms ROBINS - So, when we apply for a licence -

Ms O'CONNOR - Anthony Bullock has a police check? That's interesting. I wonder what it says.

Mr CLARK - Why wouldn't he have one in the system?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes, anyway -

CHAIR - Sorry. The issue around -

Mr GATEHOUSE - The issue is we go to an environment away from that regulated breeding where you need permission, so were saying, okay, no race dogs, but we've got these things called greyhound pets that someone is going to decide to start breeding with. There is no control over the breeding of that pet greyhound. You could get a greyhound crossbred with whatever the person chose to crossbreed that greyhound with. Now -

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Can I just seek clarification, because we're one of the few jurisdictions that still allows greyhound racing across the world. Many, many jurisdictions have stopped it. Can you explain to us what your concern is with the crossbreeding of greyhounds in particular? I understand from a racing perspective you need pure bloodlines for racing and there's value, I understand that, but what is the issue with that across the globe?

Mr GATEHOUSE - My concern is the potential unintended consequences of a greyhound, which is a very fast animal -

Ms O'CONNOR - Like a whippet.

Mr GATEHOUSE - A big whippet, which is much faster than a whippet, that has a strong natural prey drive -

Ms O'CONNOR - Like a whippet.

CHAIR - We will let Mr Gatehouse finish.

Ms O'CONNOR - They're not - it's not unique to greyhounds is what I'm saying.

Mr CLARK - You had a crack at him jumping in before; now you're jumping on him now.

CHAIR - I will ask Mr Gatehouse to finish his response. I've asked a question about - can you please explain what the concern is?

Mr GATEHOUSE - I'm trying, thank you, Chair.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Chair. Is it possible to ask Ms O'Connor to stop interjecting.

CHAIR - I have asked everyone to stop interjecting. Again, I ask Mr Gatehouse to answer the question. Thank you Mr Gatehouse.

Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes, I may have to collect my thoughts for a moment, but thank you, Chair, for your patience. We have the like-a-whippet greyhound, but bigger, faster, stronger. If it's crossbred with a particular breed of dog, there is potential for outcomes for a really good hunting dog. There is potential for outcomes for a really good attack dog of some description. I'm really worried that you're going to have a breed of dog which is like a big RoboCop dog because we have this refined regulated breeding that won't be there anymore.

CHAIR - Just a follow up, is there any evidence of that occurring in any other jurisdiction that currently bans greyhound racing?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Not that I'm aware of, but I haven't done the research.

CHAIR - You're concerned that this might particularly happen in Tasmania?

PUBLIC

Mr GATEHOUSE - No, I'm just saying it's an unintended consequence of unregulated breeding, which is what we've seen everywhere. Labradoodles, for example, may ring a bell down here in terms of unintended consequences of crossbreeding.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, thank you. Just on the labradoodles, that was less about the crossbreeding and more about the fact that they were on a puppy farm and they were living in appalling conditions. If anyone was going to breed greyhounds here as companion animals under our legislation, under existing statutes, they'd have to register as a breeder.

There was a question from Ms Rattray about minor injuries and I noticed that participants at the table were happy to talk about minor injuries. Let's talk about some of the major injuries - greyhounds are fine-boned super-fast animal - experience on track - you'd have to concede that some of these dogs like Hellyer Dougie, for example, catastrophically injured - broke both front legs, euthanased on track. We have evidence of ruptured necks of greyhounds that crash at high speed. Why the comfort talking about the minor injuries, the toenails, and the discomfort and unwillingness to talk about major injuries and death?

Mr ENGLUND - We don't have comfort talking about any injuries because we don't want them to happen. The specific category that you're talking about is very, very, very small, 0.02 per cent of starters. Now we are happy to work with the integrity unit and Tasracing to continually improve tracks', practices, but we're talking about such a minute level.

Ms O'CONNOR - Three deaths in five weeks.

Mr ENGLUND - Like I said, we're not here to talk specifics, but the numbers are trending in a positive way.

Ms O'CONNOR - You were talking about specific numbers before, but you don't want to talk about the specific number of deaths.

Ms ROBINS - It's also sometimes we don't know the full extent of the serious nature of those injuries when they're at the vet - at the on-course vet we don't have X-rays. We did ask for portable X-ray machines, but Tasracing denied it some time ago. Once they go off to a third-party vet, we then understand more about the severity of the injury. Sometimes referrals are sent to the mainland, sometimes things aren't detected because this state doesn't have an MRI scan for animals.

The full circumstances play out not immediately when that report is written, but over time when the dog gets to their local vet, or when there's information come back from the mainland vet. It just comes back to the quality of life the animal will have, should they be able to fix the animal. We don't know the exact and immediate specifics of each and every single death that has occurred on our tracks.

Mr ENGLUND - We are not veterinarians and we do not stand in the way of their professional opinion.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. In Mr Englund's opening statement he referred to the fact that greyhounds are veterinary blood donors, and it's been a long-standing practice of taking dogs to be euthanased to be drained of their blood.

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Mr ENGLUND - No I didn't say that in my submission.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, but that has been a long-standing practice. Evidence came before the parliamentary inquiry that that is what happens. But can I just go to the issue of greyhounds as a universal blood donor? I went down a rabbit hole last night to look at what kind of dogs can be blood donors. Any dog can donate blood, but the dogs that have a particular blood type, the dog erythrocyte antigen 1.1 negative include greyhounds, boxers, Irish wolfhounds, whippets, German shepherds, Dobermans and pitbulls. The point I'm trying to make here is to say that the end of greyhound racing may lead to issues with blood donations for dogs that need it is a bit of a straw man, isn't it?

Mr ENGLUND - I don't think a vet would be comfortable in taking blood from a pitbull.

Ms O'CONNOR - Why not, if it's a particular blood type? Do you think it's going to infect the other dog with aggression or something?

Mr ENGLUND - This is why greyhounds are such good animals for that - because of their calm nature.

Mr CLARK - How many in your area where you do it? How many other dogs come in? I think the vet wants you all the time, doesn't he?

Mr ENGLUND - We get a call; we're there within half an hour. We've saved dozens and dozens of dogs.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, and good on you. But also, there is a number of breeds that fulfil that clinically important purpose of providing a universal blood type.

Mr ENGLUND - It's specifically race-fit greyhounds that are the most useful because of their high packed cell volume.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, no - we just need some clarity on this because it's come up as an issue from time to time - industry participants saying, 'We've got to keep the industry going because these dogs provide universal blood type as donors for vets'. It is not true, though, that only greyhounds provide that universal blood type, is it?

Mr GATEHOUSE - You may have to call Dr Lenz, I would say, on that one. Really.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, I've been to numerous veterinary research sites. I'm pretty confident in the information that I have. I'm just trying to get to the bottom of whether or not it's a true statement and I don't believe it is.

Mr CLARK - Well, I think all them dogs - how many of them other breeds do go and give blood?

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh, I don't know. That's not the question. The question is -

Mr CLARK - I'm just trying to - we're trying to answer it by saying Ben takes his dogs - the industry takes their dogs - because the vets ring.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - Presumably the vets will still take that blood from companion greyhounds too.

CHAIR - We're running very short of time. Thank you very much, we have another -

Mr ENGLUND - We are utilised because the greyhounds are vaccinated, they're regularly vet checked, they're fit, they're healthy. This is why we are asked to go in.

CHAIR - Thank you, Mr Englund. We only have eight minutes left. I'm aware that Ms Webb is happy for Ms Rattray to ask a question, given that she wasn't able to attend yesterday.

Ms RATTRAY - In regard to the breeding of new litters and - I know it from yesterday's evidence that I received via text message last night that in 2024, 160 pups were bred, and in 2025, 89. I think from memory, Mr Gatehouse, you said you're aware of two -

Mr GATEHOUSE - Services, so far this year.

Ms RATTRAY - Services, could be 20.

Mr GATEHOUSE - You don't know.

Ms RATTRAY - You don't know?

Mr GATEHOUSE - Because they won't be born until March.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm just interested if somebody wants to give me some thoughts about the sustainability of the code moving forward, if this continues, given 2029, if the Bill passes. Do you have a view about what sort of sustainability that the code might have? Will people just say, 'No point anymore,' and just completely give up? Do you have some sense of that in amongst your network?

Mr ENGLUND - I think a sense of - people are getting tired of fighting for their industry. They just want to get on with what they want to do. You can see as breeding numbers have been trending down steadily because of -

Ms RATTRAY - Quite significantly, really.

Mr ENGLUND - Yes, because of the lack of confidence. No new funding deed that was promised 12 months ago to be completed. The no new Devonport facility was a major -

Ms RATTRAY - Continuing to rely on payments to bring animals from the north-west to race.

Mr ENGLUND - Yes. Doubling and tripling our time on the road just to simply do what we normally did of a Saturday morning. I think all these things stacking up and the constant 'Trust us, trust us, trust us,' rhetoric that they've been - that the Government's been giving us is starting to take a toll on participants. We need confidence in the regulatory body; we need confidence in the Government to continue to invest in the, in the industry.

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Ms RATTRAY - If this Bill was defeated in the Legislative Council, do you see that some of that confidence would return?

Mr ENGLUND - Oh, absolutely, definitely, absolutely.

CHAIR - As a follow up on that question because it's quite pertinent, I think, to the sustainability question you've asked Ms Rattray: if this Bill didn't pass and the Government continued with their policy of defunding greyhound racing, what would that mean to the industry? So, you'd still be regulated under all the racing regulations, the act would still apply to you, there still would be a lawful industry, but it'd be an unfunded - or Government unfunded - industry. What does that mean to your participants?

Mr ENGLUND - That's a question for Tasracing on economics, of what the code would look like. We can't say what it would look like without any funding.

CHAIR - So, there would be no compensation. The framework that's in the Bill at the moment - I take from your submissions that you're not happy with the framework in the Bill - but there is something as opposed to nothing. What would that look like if there was nothing for you?

Mr GATEHOUSE - If there was nothing for us, it would take - I think it's \$7.6 million, give or take a couple of hundred-thousand that is provided to the greyhound code under the funding deed which was done in 2009 and went through Parliament in 2011. When the Government sold the TOTE they took the lump sum upfront and then the government contracted with the racing industry. In other jurisdictions, when the TOTEs were privatised, the Government sold the TOTE but didn't take the whole capital injection and had the TOTE contract with the principal racing authority, which, in this case, would have been Tasracing. That wasn't done in that case. I believe that there was discussion in Parliament about what might happen down the track. This is where we are now.

I believe - this is me personally - that racing does need to cut its cloth more. There is a contract with the Government at the moment that runs to 2029. If the business does push to a more commercial model, they could, in greyhound racing, cut their own cloth. Take 7.6 [million dollars] out, ensure that any of the regulatory issues are covered through Tasracing, which is funded by Government, then the greyhound industry could stand on its own two feet. However, if you took that 7.6 [million dollars] out and - as Tasracing said yesterday - didn't give it to Tasracing, which is a net gain of zero, Tasracing would struggle. The greyhound industry could, but having no greyhound industry, what is the cost to Tasmania in terms of economics? That's the part that is debated by the economists.

CHAIR - I want to be really clear: your submission is then that if the Government no longer funded [the] greyhound racing industry, it stood alone either as privately funded or however it might operate, that there would be confidence in the industry to continue on racing at current levels and that wouldn't impact on your participants?

Mr GATEHOUSE - As long as the regulatory functions of racing were covered by Tasracing.

Ms RATTRAY - Which they would be funded to do so in, whatever form.

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Mr GATEHOUSE - Yes. As long as the appropriate amounts of commercial revenue were passed on to the greyhound racing code, which in terms of wagering turnover on greyhound racing in this state is 40 per cent - or 39.6 per cent - of the race field fees for this state, which is give or take, \$8 million.

Mr WINTER - One of the key arguments for the Bill has been that the Tasmanian budget, which is under enormous stress and trouble, will save money. Yesterday we heard an extraordinary statement from the CEO of Tasracing saying that it would actually cost the same amount to run two codes as it does three codes, meaning that we lose the economics from a third code. Do members want to take us through, in practical terms, what that economic downturn from losing greyhounds might do in regional communities - particularly from the south, north and north-west - very briefly about the impact and flow on that the committee should be aware of in Parliament.

CHAIR – Very briefly.

Mr ENGLUND - Oh, massive. I touched on it in my opening statement: \$60 million worth of economic contribution to the regional areas.

Mr GATEHOUSE - And what about in Wynyard, where -

Ms O'CONNOR - Where's that sourced from? Where's that information sourced from?

Mr ENGLUND - We estimate that amongst the trainers and owners that are in Wynyard alone, we spend somewhere between \$350,000 to \$400,000 every year. You take that out of a small community like Wynyard, you've got more pressure on.

CHAIR - Okay. We are out of time. I will end it there. I'm sure, if you are able to - if there's any questions that we have following up on this, if members might want to put that in writing to you just for clarity. If that's okay if we did that later on, just to make sure we have a complete report.

Before we conclude, I thank you again for your appearance. 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?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Excellent. Thank you very much.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee suspended at 10.31 a.m.

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The committee resumed at 10.45 a.m.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Thank you very much for your attendance.

We're sitting today as a Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 inquiry. It's quite the mouthful. I know you came to see us before Christmas. As you're aware, we have Ms O'Connor; myself, Kristie Johnston, as Chair; Dean Winter; Tania Rattray; and Meg Webb as members on the committee today.

If you could please state your name and the capacity in which you're appearing before the committee for the record, please.

Ms DAWKINS - Andrea Dawkins, CEO, RSPCA Tasmania.

Mr WILD - Mark Wild, CEO, Dogs' Homes of Tasmania.

CHAIR - Can I confirm that you have received and read the guide sent to you by the committee secretary?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - As you'd be aware from that guide, 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, and we are being broadcast online. 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. You both have some statutory declarations to make there. If you wouldn't mind making those now, please.

Ms ANDREA DAWKINS, CEO, RSPCA TASMANIA, AND **Mr MARK WILD**, CEO, DOGS' HOMES OF TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Would you like to make a short opening statement?

Ms DAWKINS - Absolutely. As you would all be aware, Australia's lagging when it comes to animal welfare reform, specifically around greyhound racing. Hellyer Dougie, the dog who died after racing in Tasmania this year [2026], would be the first, if they were here and if somebody who loved them was here to speak about them, to be able to attest to that fact. The number of animals that have been injured on racing tracks this year [2026] already is beyond the pale. We should have acted on this much, much sooner. This delay is only hurting animals, especially because more animals are being bred while this delay is occurring.

I've been working with international and national colleagues, with SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] New Zealand, with RSPCA UK, who all support my submission here today and the submission I made in favour of this legislation and they wanted this known today. We are a part of a global push - and a strong global push - one of the

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strongest animal welfare brands, the strongest globally, and we are 100 per cent behind this legislation.

The RSPCA does not support breed-specific legislation, which is why the amendments to the *Dog Control Act 2000*, we believe, are entirely appropriate. All dogs should be treated the same, whether that comes to a dangerous dog assignment or a breed-specific piece of legislation, the same way greyhounds have been treated in Tasmania in the past. We believe it's entirely appropriate that this legislation, if enacted by 30 June 2029, would see an end to that, because all dogs should be treated the same.

When I was here last time, Mr Winter asked me about greyhounds in the community, and I put that question on notice, or the answer to that question on notice. The reason I struggle with that is because we don't keep records of greyhounds. Once they become pets, they just become dogs like any other dog in the community, and that's entirely appropriate, because they are.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Andrea. Mark?

Mr WILD - Thanks, Kristie. Our submission was really coming from the point of view of our experience with greyhounds. Rehoming greyhounds is time-consuming and intensive work, basically. It involves addressing longstanding health issues, building basic skills, and then trying to match dogs with foster carers and then families who can support them for the long term. It's work that can't be rushed. So, from our perspective, time is the most critical factor. Early commencement of the transition will enable staged, humane rehoming, and reduce the likelihood of unmanaged exits from the industry and late-stage surges in dog numbers.

We're ready to work. We don't shy away from the fact that rehoming the number of dogs within the industry within the timeframe is a challenge. It's ambitious, but we stand ready to help deliver on that transition. We also believe that this transition needs to be coordinated across the industry, across all participants within the industry and all the rehoming organisations, so that there's a coordinated response to this rehoming effort.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Mark. If I may begin, Andrea, where you talked about breed-specific legislation and your concern about that in particular, we heard from industry participants in their evidence to us today and also in their submissions, that they're concerned that this Bill would create a welfare vacuum, as they call it. In terms of - they say there are protections in place for greyhounds because they race, so things like stewards, track monitoring, life monitoring and veterinary checks on track and things like that. They're concerned that if we if took that away, because the industry wouldn't exist anymore, that there'd be a vacuum.

You operate specifically in the welfare space. Do you see that there would be a vacuum created in terms of animal welfare for greyhounds in particular? Is that a concern that they would then be treated, as you say, like any other dog?

Ms DAWKINS - Absolutely not. The reason that there are more strict regulations and rules around racing greyhounds is because it's such a high-risk activity. Of course there needs to be extra eyes on dogs in the racing industry. Apart from the millions of dollars that flow through the government coffers, through taxpayers, to the industry, those animals are in such high-risk activities that there needs to be stronger legislation.

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Once animals come into the community - the RSPCA is funded appropriately at the moment, for the first time, I'd say, in our 150-year history - we've got eight inspectors on the road at any given day. We are constantly pushing to improve animal welfare legislation. We've got four amendments before the Minister going through the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) at the moment. It's our job - it's my job - to ensure that I advocate for the best possible animal welfare laws, and then our inspectors' rules - our inspectors are there, to make sure that those rules are enacted.

There's also another part of that which, of course, is that community advocacy piece, where we've now got inspectors going into classrooms to talk to students, because we know the best way to get change is to tell young people with open minds who then go back and tell their parents, 'We're not quite doing this right.'

The RSPCA, along with the other organisations that we work with, we really care about education, and we want to make sure that legislation is appropriate, is moving forward and is enacted.

CHAIR - Mark, did you have anything to add to that particular? No? Thank you.

Ms WEBB - I was going to go to that same question, really, about whether there's a downgrade in welfare arrangements, post transition, for the greyhounds, because that was a point that was being made strongly by industry stakeholders.

Do you anticipate that there are any further matters to consider around welfare that should be specifically thought of for greyhounds post transition period, when they are into the pool of general dogs and treated as domestic pets in that way? Given any of their characteristics, should there be any consideration of anything further specifically being put in place for them?

CHAIR - I want to apologise for the sound there. We have some construction work happening behind us. So apologies if you can't hear properly, but we'll try to speak up, for the broadcast in particular.

Ms DAWKINS - You may be aware right now that greyhounds are exempt from dog regs. That means that RSPCA inspectors can't run random checks, which we do for every other breeder. We don't have that capacity - we have no power of entry. We're not authorised to do that. Once that changes, we can start to visit more greyhound trainers and make sure they are acting appropriately through the laws. There's nothing that occurs now that won't occur when the breed-specific legislation is removed.

Ms RATTRAY - Given that the welfare act - the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* - is 33 years old, and you said you've got four amendments that are being considered at the moment, can you give us some indication of what they are, and whether that could - those amendments, if they are successful and pass, will enhance welfare for greyhounds that may transition?

Ms DAWKINS - Not for greyhounds specifically. We're looking more at what's holding us up. There are matters before courts that we've spoken about earlier today that become adjourned and re-adjourned, that keep animals in pens. We also can't - for example, we can't desex an animal in our care. We're having really complicated conversations at the moment about - now that the *Cat Management Act 2009* has been enacted, how that sits with the *Animal*

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Welfare Act 1993 around animals that have been seized by our inspectors, because we can't put an entire animal into a foster home. These are some of the things that we're considering. We have to keep them in a pen when we'd want them to be in a home while they're waiting for that long period, because unless it's life-saving surgery, the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* doesn't allow for that to occur.

I think a number of people have brought up in Parliament that it's time for a new *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, and the RSPCA is certainly behind that. While we wait for that - and maybe sentence will be included in that as it should be - we continue to push for changes to the act that will help our inspectors do their job and keep animals in a better, more comfortable place while they wait their day in court.

Ms RATTRAY - You don't see any unintended consequences as it stands?

Ms DAWKINS - No unintended consequences.

Ms RATTRAY - My second question is around the euthanasia rates. Is it possible to have those? Obviously, you don't separate greyhounds from dogs, but can we have your euthanasia rates? I've got some here, but I'd rather hear them from you.

Mr WILD - I will take that on notice.

Ms RATTRAY - In 2022-23, there were 500 per 3,056 dogs. You can say yes or no.

Mr WILD - That sounds fair.

Ms RATTRAY - In 2023-24, a 19.8 per cent euthanasia rate: 619 from 3,123 dogs. Sounds fair?

Mr WILD - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - At the RSPCA, approximately 25 per cent of intake?

Ms DAWKINS - They're all feral cats.

Ms RATTRAY - No dogs?

Ms DAWKINS - Two greyhounds since we've been running our greyhound adoption program. Two greyhounds have been euthanised due to behavioural issues. Most of the animals that we euthanise unfortunately are wild cats, which kind of got a chilling effect on whether we work under the *Cat Management Act 2009* because we don't want our data to increase when it's actually an environmental issue. We're trying to help landowners, farmers, people who are trying to run productive farms when they've got a whole lot of feral cats on their property. Almost all those animals are cats.

Ms RATTRAY - Right. Do you see any issue with the transition of a greyhound in a really structured environment, heading into a free-for-all, if you like, with a with a lot of other dogs?

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Ms DAWKINS – They are, actually - because they're institutionalised - I've stood and watched the animal intakes of the big thick-headed dogs who have done it tough in the community and then the greyhounds that come out of the industry and into our pens. Because they're institutionalised, they just trot in. It breaks my heart how easily they walk into a pen because that's what they're used to. When you take them out of that pen and you bring them into a home - and I discussed this last time - you've got to teach them how to walk on the floorboards or what a couch is -

Ms O'CONNOR - Up the stairs.

Ms DAWKINS - Up the stairs, those sorts of things. It's a calamitous, amusing thing to train a greyhound to be a dog. We've all done it and it's very successful. It certainly happened very successfully in my house and in all the animals that we've rehomed, apart from those two.

Ms RATTRAY - Is the Dogs' Home the same experience, or do you have a different experience?

Mr WILD - Similar experience. We find that in terms of rehoming greyhounds, the best way for us to rehome them is to get them out in the community into foster care. Our push is really to try to get as many dogs, not just greyhounds I should say, out into foster care. Out of the shelter environment. Some dogs handle the shelter environment very well. Some dogs don't handle it quite so well because there are lots of other dogs, there are always lots of things going on and some of them don't handle that scenario too well. Definitely, the push is more for a foster care model in terms of us as an organisation. I think other rehoming organisations would have a similar approach.

Ms RATTRAY - Of those numbers that I quoted, and you somewhat agreed with, do you have any understanding of what number of greyhounds there were amongst those numbers?

Mr WILD - There would be very few greyhounds, but I'd have to take that on notice to give you an exact number. Generally, that would be a very low number.

Ms RATTRAY - If you would, that would be great. Thank you, Chair.

Mr WINTER - You mentioned, Mark, in your opening statement about rehoming and the huge amount of work if this Bill went through. The question to both you is, what sort of discussions have you had so far with Government or Tasracing and the [Tasmanian Racing] Integrity Commissioner around the costs and the support that you would need to undertake that work?

Ms DAWKINS - Mark and I have a slightly different view on this because I was looking at it from the perspective of let's get these dogs out. What I asked in my submission was for all that work, including dental, plus \$500 per dog. That \$500 would get us started and then we'd start working on -

Mr WINTER - Sorry, that's not the submission to this committee.

Ms DAWKINS - No, it's to the Commissioner.

Mr WINTER - Okay, sure. So, \$500 per dog, plus dental.

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Ms DAWKINS - Dental was the big one for us because it can be up to \$2,000 and that can be very chilling for somebody who wants to adopt an animal. It's more than it is for any other dogs.

Mr WINTER - That's comprehensive - the cost is \$500 plus dental. It sounds like, Mark, you might have a slightly different view.

Mr WILD - In the wash, it probably all comes out pretty similar, but our figures are around \$3,500 per dog. We operate on a cost basis of about \$70 per dog, per day, and, on average, greyhounds are with us for about 50 days.

Mr WINTER - That's a pretty big difference.

Mr WILD - Yes.

Mr WINTER - It might be really obvious to you guys why that's different, but is it okay for you to explain to the committee about the difference?

Ms DAWKINS - Because I believe I could mount a community fundraising campaign. I didn't want the cost to prohibit the passing of this legislation. It puts all the responsibility onto my shoulders and onto the RSPCA's shoulders, but it worked with the labradoodles - there was no way that was ever going to be funded by anyone but the community. I'd be hoping to build on that model and that success to be able to do the same.

Mr WINTER - Do you agree with Mark's assessment, then, of the costs?

Ms DAWKINS - Absolutely.

Mr WINTER - It's around three-and-a-half, is the cost, but also -

Ms DAWKINS - At least.

Mr WINTER - Community support of around \$3000 per dog, plus with the subsidy from the Government.

Ms DAWKINS - Exactly.

Ms O'CONNOR - A quick follow-up question on some evidence you just gave, Ms Dawkins. Why is it that ex-industry greyhounds have such bad teeth?

Ms DAWKINS - Because their diet is poor; they're not fed an appropriately balanced diet. There's a lot of raw food; there's not a lot of bones or anything that would help with their dental; and they don't see the vet until they absolutely have to, until the racing industry ensures that they do, now. But the dogs that came through our greyhound adoption program prior to very recently, none of them had their dental done, so we had to pay for that out of our fundraising.

Ms RATTRAY - But it has improved?

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Ms DAWKINS - I've seen one dog that has come through our program that has had its dental done since this process started.

Ms O'CONNOR - Isn't it true that industry participants can attain Government assistance for veterinary and work, but rehoming organisations who are left to deal with, for want of a better term, 'waste product' of this industry have to find the funds themselves, at this point?

Ms DAWKINS - Absolutely. There's no pathway for us to be able to obtain those funds. That's what makes me feel like so much of this is so cynical because the greyhounds that are being surrendered to us, we're desperate for them because we want them to come into safety. The owners and trainers could have accessed these funds but chose not to and surrendered the animals to us anyway. I just don't understand it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Right. You also, in your opening statement, referenced a dog called Hellyer Dougie, who fell approaching the catching pen at a recent race, broke their front legs, and was euthanised. Was that a matter that the RSPCA had any involvement or engagement with?

Ms DAWKINS - No, it wasn't referred to us from the industry. I think that's because the animal was Victorian. There's some confusion about when it was euthanised - whether it was done here or upon return to Victoria - and it has not been referred to us.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, there's no confusion about Memphis Rains, for example, which fractured its right hock, as I understand it - which is the dog's version of an ankle - and was stood down by stewards for 90 days, then it ends up in Victoria and was listed as deceased.

Ms DAWKINS - Oh, that's that dog. Yes, exactly.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. I'm trying to find out, on behalf of all the people who are worried about this industry, what happened to a dog called Canya Breakout, which won at the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club on 19 January [2026], and then was listed as deceased. Do you have any knowledge of that dog?

Ms DAWKINS - I do not.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. I had some struggles getting information out of industry participants about the rates of deaths and injuries. Even just from 1 July [sic] we have three confirmed deaths and more than 40 injuries on and off track. Do you have any information to share about your understanding of deaths and injuries, or is that something that all happens out-of-house, internal to the greyhound racing industry?

Ms DAWKINS - That's exactly right. As I've explained before, the way that the legislation works, a package of evidence would need to be reported to the RSPCA through our channels in order for that investigation to begin. We've not received one package of information from the industry, from Tasracing, from TasRIC, since the inception of this institution.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Mr Gatehouse claimed this morning that because we've raised concerns about industry participants breeding-up dogs during this transition period, Mr Gatehouse said there hasn't been any significant spike in breeding, and in fact claims that

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two dogs were impregnated, for want of a better term, in January of this year [2026]. What's your understanding of what's happening with breeding?

Ms DAWKINS - I think that would be a question for the Commissioner, but that's certainly not what we've been told.

Ms O'CONNOR - Been told by people in the industry?

Ms RATTRAY - By whom?

Ms DAWKINS - That's what we've been hearing in the transition group.

Ms O'CONNOR - In the transition working group that you're working on with the Integrity Commissioner?

Ms DAWKINS - Absolutely. It would be a question for him, and I think he's next. I'd be asking that of him because that's not my information to share.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you.

Ms RATTRAY - Even though the figures have already reduced from 2024, from 160 puppies down to 2025, 89: is that not something that you've heard through your working group?

Ms DAWKINS - I think it's a question for Tasracing because of course they're the ones that are conducting the inspections and registering all the breeding dogs. But that's not what we've heard; we've heard there's been a spike this year [2026].

CHAIR - Thank you. Can I go to the issue around the closure plan? We've heard submissions around and a suggestion that perhaps there needs to be some greater clarity around what that closure plan might look like and what things it might consider in the legislation itself. Would you be eager to see greater articulation of the kinds of things you would expect to see in a closure plan?

For instance, the industry might be interested in seeing compensation listed specifically as a matter for consideration in the closure plan. I'm assuming that you might be interested in seeing funding for rehoming or welfare provisions to be considered in a closure plan? Is that something you would like to see in the Bill? Would that provide you with greater certainty in terms of the issues that you're facing, should this Bill progress? Or are you comfortable that the provision as it is at the moment considers your needs in any closure plan and what the Commissioner might do?

Ms DAWKINS - Well, I think that there's a lot of talent on the phase-out transition group. I think that that transition plan, that's exactly what it's working on, to ensure that it is a just transition that - I mean, that term has been used a lot since this is - the inception of this discussion and to make sure that the participants feel as if they have been acknowledged. This was always going to be difficult for them. I'm not here to speak for them, but I can assure you that in that transition group it is the highest priority to ensure that they are taken care of.

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I think the transition plan - I think that in some ways our work comes after that because that's how it's sort of seen in the hierarchy, that the people come first and then we take care of the animals. Sometimes that concerns me, but I understand that's the world that we live in.

Mr WILD - Certainly from the Dogs' Home's point of view, we'd love to see more detail in terms of what that closure looks like and what the transition looks like. Like I mentioned before, this is going to be a massive effort to rehome 1000 dogs in four years. The more detail we've got, the more prepared we can be. I mentioned we will lean heavily - and Andrea mentioned as well - we will leave lean heavily on the community to be able to achieve this. Definitely the more detail, the more planned and the more structured we can be.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - One of the things - largely I understand, and certainly your submissions make clear, you're supportive of the Bill and want to see it promptly brought back to Parliament and ideally from your point of view passed. You're supportive of the elements that are in there and that's laid out in variety of submissions from your organisations and others like you. Is there anything - given that we are in this situation now, though, of examining the Bill and we will be preparing a report back to Parliament, which may and can include things like suggested or recommended amendments that this committee makes back to Parliament.

Is there anything that you've identified where you see the opportunity to improve or add something that isn't there currently, that now, given this extra time and consideration, could be looked at?

Ms DAWKINS - Well, there were some conversations around some of the language, the use of the word 'destruction' rather than 'euthanasia', those kinds of things. For me, I mean, that could be taken care of if we talk about sentience and we amend or improve the legislation, the overarching act, the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*. It's trivial, I think, in this instance; it's more important that we're able to pass - that Parliament is able to pass this legislation and then those kinds of things could be dealt with at a future time.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, we were told - just to follow up on that - we were told yesterday that the use of the term 'destruction' is consistent with the *Dog Control Act*, and so a decision was made to keep the language consistent. I'd argue that it's probably a more accurate term because it's not always a mercy killing for these dogs. Sometimes it's an expediency killing, as I think happened to Memphis Rains in Victoria. Take that as a comment.

Ms RATTRAY - Question - obviously your two organisations would have a key role in any rehoming should the transition continue. I'm just wondering what sort of conversations you've had with the Brightside Animal Sanctuary and representatives of the Hobart Dog Walking Club. I understood they were to be here today.

CHAIR - My apologies. I should have mentioned to committee members that they're not here, unfortunately, today.

Ms RATTRAY - It's not just going to be, if you like, left to your two organisations to manage the transition and the rehoming. Is there a communication happening amongst that? I don't expect you to speak directly for them, but I'm somewhat surprised that they're not represented.

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Ms DAWKINS - Yes. Look, I wasn't sure that Brightside was still taking any community surrenders. If they are, that's fantastic. I certainly have a great working relationship with them. They really helped us out with the labradoodles, but I haven't had any day-to-day communications. I do work with the North East Animal Sanctuary Tasmania; we assess their greyhounds for muzzling. We both have great relationships with the community, but it will be Dogs' Homes of Tasmania that takes on the larger amount of the animals once GAP is full and their foster carers are full. Then it will be the RSPCA, once we've built our new kennels, and they've got more capacity.

Mr WILD - We certainly have networks of, I guess, like-minded organisations like ourselves, like the Hobart Dog Walking Club and Let Greyhounds Run Free, some of these organisations that are very community-based, they're obviously very passionate about the cause as well. We work very closely with them. Other rehoming organisations we do work with from time to time: Brightside is an example.

Ms RATTRAY - They all work under animal welfare regulations - as you do - to make sure that the dogs are well cared for.

Mr WILD - Yes. Some of those others I mentioned before, foster care is a big avenue for us, for dogs, particularly for greyhounds. Those networks help us to get dogs in foster placements and those sorts of things as well. It's about mobilising community resources, I suppose.

Mr WINTER - I've got a question but, Ms O'Connor, if you've got one that -

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Mr Winter. Just to follow on from the discussion about this massive rehoming task. What are the mechanisms for rehoming? We've had evidence given to us at various times and perhaps other committees, but also in Estimates about, for example, dogs going on to Gumtree or dogs being sort of, you know, backyard handovers and that sort of thing. It would be a bit harder with the traceability, but what are all the known mechanisms for rehoming the dogs, and what's your understanding, even though there's an audit that I think is a week or two off, of what the numbers are going to be like in order to explore all those mechanisms for rehoming?

Ms DAWKINS - I think the numbers are really up in the air at the moment because of the active breeding that we've been hearing about. I would imagine it's over 1000, maybe 1200. It needs to be stepped; there's no doubt about that. It's got to be a managed intake, which means that the races would need to reduce in time. There are clearly some ways to make that work. As far as where the animals are going now: some are given away, just given away to anybody. We're often finding animals that are coming through our greyhound adoption program that have never been retired. This happens to us a lot.

Then we have to end up retiring greyhounds from the industry, so we can get to the next step, which is rehome the animal. We're taking care of the participants who are being paid to do this. We're taking care of their paperwork. The animals haven't had all of the vet work that they could have had done, done. We can't access that funding either. It's like every time, every way it gets sliced and diced, we're at the bottom of that pile because we speak for the animals that can't speak for themselves. They can be given away, they can be on Gumtree, they can be surrendered to the Dogs' Homes or to ourselves. They can be surrendered to another animal

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welfare organisation, they can just be put to foster care with a friend. They're the ways that we know that animals are being moved around the community at the moment, but often, when it comes to us, without the appropriate paperwork having been conducted.

Ms O'CONNOR - You were talking earlier about - well, you talked in the previous time you gave evidence about perhaps needing to work with the RSPCA in Victoria and other jurisdictions. Is that part of the planning for rehoming?

Ms DAWKINS - Absolutely. That's really how I arrived at the \$500. My initial thoughts were, I don't want a dog to leave Tasmania. I think we need to control it. This is an 'us problem' and an 'us challenge' to solve, but then I spoke to the CEO at RSPCA Victoria. They've done some testing, as I probably said last time - 150 people applied for 10 greyhounds in RSPCA Vic late last year. It's looking very promising that 10 dogs at a time could go there.

Ms O'CONNOR - People are starting to understand what a beautiful pet they make, aren't they?

Ms DAWKINS - Of course they are, and with the work that's being conducted in Western Australia and South Australia now, there's a real push for there to be a tipping point with greyhound racing in Australia, as there has been everywhere else in the world.

Ms WEBB - Can I have a really quick last thing? I want to come back to the different views we've heard about whether the deadline issue about 1 January [2026] and the Bill looming has caused a spike in any sort of breeding activity. When you say you've heard that that's the case, do you mean that in this period of time, right now, there are people who are facilitating impregnation of dogs? In about 63 days since the beginning of the year [2026], you're expecting to see litters of puppies in excess of what we normally expect to see? Is that what you're suggesting?

Ms DAWKINS - That's my understanding, and it's come to me in a couple of different ways. I mean it just - it feels like kind of industry gossip, but I've heard from two different perspectives: one, to put more animals into the community so there are more dogs racing; two, to ensure more reparations for people who have greyhounds, so that they breed more dogs now, so they're getting a bigger payout package. That's what I've heard. I cannot give you any evidence for either, but I really hope it's not true.

Ms WEBB - Do they have to report pregnancies?

Ms DAWKINS - Yes. It's all reported through Tasracing.

Ms WEBB - Right, so we should have reports of that, then?

Ms DAWKINS - That is coming through, yes.

CHAIR - Our time has come to an end very quickly. I did mention before we started the hearing that if there are any further questions the committee might have arising out of other evidence we hear, we might write to you, if that's alright, and put those questions on notice. Thank you once again for your appearance here today.

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I remind you that what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege and once you leave the table, you need to be aware the privilege is not attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you've said to us here today. Do you understand that? Beautiful. Thank you.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee suspended at 11.17 a.m.

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The Committee resumed at 11.30 a.m.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Thank you very much, Commissioner, for your attendance today. We are sitting today as a Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 Inquiry. As you'd be aware from your attendance previously, our members of the committee are Cassy O'Connor, Kristie Johnston, Dean Winter, Tania Rattray and Meg Webb.

Commissioner, if you wouldn't mind stating for the record your name and the capacity in which you appear before the committee today, please.

Mr CARROLL - My name is Sean Carroll and I'm Tasmania's Racing Integrity Commissioner.

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

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I have.

CHAIR - Thank you. As you be aware from that particular guide, 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 the parliamentary proceedings. This hearing is a public hearing. We are recording online and the public and media may be present. Should you wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you need to make that request to the committee at the time. Would you mind taking the statutory declaration that's before you at the end of the table.

Mr SEAN MICHAEL CARROLL, TASMANIAN RACING INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Would you like to make a short opening statement?

Mr CARROLL - Thank you, Chair. It might take a few minutes. I ask for your patience. Chair and members of the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I appear before you in my capacity as Tasmania's Racing Integrity Commissioner, with statutory responsibility for the integrity of racing, the enforcement of standards, the protection of animal welfare, monitoring the administration of racing and, most importantly, ensuring the public confidence in the racing system by all.

I want to begin by acknowledging the human dimension of this issue. Behind every kennel, every track and every dog are people: trainers, breeders, families and volunteers, many of whom have devoted decades to this industry. For many, greyhound racing is not merely an occupation, it is deeply held identity and a community built on tradition and care for animals. It is precisely because of that reality that this issue demands clarity, honesty and leadership.

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The Bill before Parliament is not a judgment on individuals. It is a response to systemic pressures that have reached a point where incremental reform is no longer sufficient. It provides a lawful, structured and orderly pathway for transition, rather than leaving the industry, participants and animals exposed to unmitigated risk. Following the announcement of the proposed transition on 10 August 2025, I identified two principal risks: animal welfare and participant welfare. I will address animal welfare first.

The most significant challenge we now face is the overpopulation of greyhounds in Tasmania. Enhanced auditing data collection undertaken through the Tasracing greyhound working group revealed a substantially higher number of greyhounds entering the system than previously understood. The evidence is clear: the industry is approaching and, in some areas, has reached a tipping point where the number of greyhounds exceeds the system's capacity in responsibly managing and rehoming and supporting them.

When scale exceeds capacity, even well-intentioned participants are placed under unsustainable pressure. Resources become stretched; kennels become crowded; rehoming pathways become congested; and the ability to safeguard animal welfare is progressively diminished. This is not a failure of individual commitment; it's a structural reality. If legislative intervention does not occur, the trajectory is predictable: more greyhounds will enter the Tasmanian system than can be responsibly managed; more animals will be exposed to the potential of injury, neglect or face uncertain futures; greater strain will be placed on trainers, volunteers and welfare organisations; and compliance with the rules of racing will become increasingly difficult to maintain.

As systems expand beyond their regulatory and operational capacity, oversight becomes stretched, standards become uneven, and public confidence erodes. This is not theatrical. This is an observable observation. There will also be significant and escalating pressure on Tasracing and its staff, who carry the burden of enforcement, monitoring and compliance. That dimension of the issue has often been under-recognised, but it is real and material. The remaining social licence under which greyhound racing continues to operate is in place until 30 June 2029, however, will remain increasingly fragile. The Bill before Parliament addresses many of these issues and mitigates these risks.

Regarding participant welfare, I've spoken directly with many participants who are distressed by the Government's decision and uncertain about the future. The overwhelming majority are responsible, committed and deeply invested in their animals and their industry. In recognition of this, I established a statewide participant welfare framework to provide confidential counselling support services delivered by independent and accredited providers.

These services will complement existing Tasracing EAP (Employee Assistance Program) support services where I will fund additional services to ensure meaningful access to assistance. This is not symbolic; it's a necessary response to the human impact of the structural change. I'm not here to advocate for the Government's policy decision; my role is to assess risk, integrity and enforceability.

From that perspective, incremental reform is no longer adequate. We cannot rely solely on voluntary compliance or internal regulation to address systemic risk. We cannot continue to expand an industry without the capacity to protect animal welfare, and we cannot ignore the widening gap between community expectations and industry practice.

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For these reasons, the phase-out legislation is necessary. However, legislation alone is not sufficient. A strong, detailed and enforceable transition plan is essential. The bill proposes that I'd be responsible for developing that plan consistent with my statutory mandate to uphold integrity, enforceable standards and ensure fairness.

The legislation provides the integrity authority with powers and a framework required to design, implement and enforce that transition plan. Without legislative authority, binding requirements cannot be imposed with certainty. Coordination across regulators, industry and welfare bodies will be fragmented, and enforcement mechanisms will be vulnerable to challenge or inconsistent.

In practical terms, without legislation, any transition plan would be difficult to design, difficult to implement and difficult to enforce. That would leave participants, animals and the broader community exposed to unmanaged risk.

I want to be clear that I recognise the personal, financial and emotional investment participants have made in this industry. Many have acted in good faith and with genuine care for their animals. But the choice before Parliament is not between tradition and reform; it is between managed transition and unmanaged decline.

If we do not act, pressures that are rising from overpopulation, declining compliance and diminishing public confidence will continue to escalate without a framework to manage them. The legislation provides certainty, structure and accountability. It enables the development of a transition plan that protects animal welfare, provides clarity to participants and preserves dignity in the process of change.

Since the announcement of the Government's decision, uncertainty with the industry has intensified. In some cases, heightened emotion has contributed to conduct that has fallen outside the accepted standards and at times breached the rules of racing and the law.

The proposed legislation and transition framework offer a pathway out of uncertainty. It provides certainty for participants, assurance for the community, protection for animal welfare and stability for Tasmania's regulatory framework. From the perspective of integrity, enforceability and risk management, the conclusion is clear: the legislation is not only desirable: it's necessary.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Commissioner. Before I go to Ms Rattray, you mentioned a number of times, I forget how many times it was now, risk is a major factor and consideration in the work that you're doing at the moment. You talked about the opportunity, if the legislation goes through, to have a managed approach to the ending of the industry, or if it doesn't, an unmanaged decline in the industry and the risks.

Can you talk a bit more about what that might look like: an unmanaged decline in the industry? How would that be - the Government's policy intent is to end greyhound racing funding: how would that look in practical terms, what an unmanaged decline of the industry might look like?

Mr CARROLL - I will reiterate: I'm not here to defend the position of the Government or the decision made to phase out greyhound racing. My job is to put in place a transition plan that manages those risks. I don't know the position of the Government if the legislation doesn't

PUBLIC

proceed and what position they will take if it purely relies on rules of racing and a written transition plan that has no legislative framework.

The way in which participants would look at the rules of racing, the perception to those start to diminish and the reliance that Tasracing, as the enforceable body, would have, that power would also start to diminish because the pressures of any penalties would diminish as the phase-out became closer to 30 June 2029. The clarity that the legislation provides, but also - I don't hide behind this - the penalties that are attached to breaching that legislation, provides a greater deterrent to address those risks I speak about.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you, Commissioner. In regard to the audit that's being undertaken, I'd be interested if the committee is able to receive a copy of the current figures that you have in regard to specific numbers.

Mr CARROLL - Yes, by all means. What I would say to that is, as you're aware from the last time I appeared, the first thing that we did through Tasracing was conduct a statewide audit of greyhounds. I think from memory the number was 1035 greyhounds that we had in Tasmania.

What I am aware, and the audit still has a short period to go, I think we're at 1023, so the number will be quite similar in regards to the last - sort of. At this stage, that doesn't take into account the pups that may or may not be whelped in the next few months.

Ms RATTRAY - Speaking of the numbers of pups that have been whelped: we heard in some previous evidence to the committee that through your working group there have been allegations of a spike in litters being whelped. So, (a) I'm interested if you could confirm that; and (b) given that the numbers that were received yesterday were litters of 160 in 2024 and 89 in 2025, and then this morning we heard that the industry, the code itself, is aware of two litters since 1 January 2026, obviously, we don't know what the number of those pups will be, can you give me some understanding of where that spike of numbers being whelped comes from through your working group committee evidence?

Mr CARROLL - What I can say is that, and I can go further back, that in 2019 there were 248 pups whelped. In 2020 there were 203.

Mr WINTER - Can you go fairly slowly on this?

Mr CARROLL - In 2019 there were 248. In 2020 there were 203. In 2021 there were 283. In 2022 there were 294. In 2023 there were 210. In 2024 there were 110. I don't have the figures finalised for 2025 yet, so I can't give you those, but they were -

Ms RATTRAY - They obviously came from Tasracing yesterday. They come from Tasracing: 89 in 2025.

Mr CARROLL - I was told it was similar to 2024. What we've seen is that -

Mr WINTER - Are they calendar years or financial years?

Mr CARROLL - Calendar years. What I've seen to date is that we've had 19 pups that have been born in the last two months. We've had 15 registered services in the last four months.

PUBLIC

Comparative to that - and these are numbers that I got off Tasracing - in the four months before that, there were two, and that's since the announcement of the transition. If I go off that, and some of you may or may not have seen, whilst we take on board and deal with data, we also deal with other evidence before us. There was a lot of messaging that was going on through social media after the postponement of the Bill going through the Upper House to this committee, rightly so, that breeders should go out and breed as many as they can for the reasons they've said to continue bloodlines, for potential compensation, but to ensure that numbers don't diminish.

We take that with a grain of salt. What we're dealing with is the reality of the numbers that are coming through. As I've said, on the numbers that I've been given for the numbers of mating services, they've been 15 compared to two since the announcement was made. We haven't seen those pups being whelped yet.

Ms WEBB - That's the fourth quarter of last year [2025], is that the period you're talking about?

Mr CARROLL - No, I'm just talking about the last four months, including January.

Ms WEBB - Okay, into this year [2026].

Mr WINTER - The evidence we heard earlier was that there were two services in January.

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - There were two?

Mr CARROLL - Two litters whelped?

Mr WINTER - Yes.

Mr CARROLL - That's correct. We would expect more. Our audit doesn't take those into account at this stage because they haven't been -

Mr WINTER - You don't disagree with the industry evidence earlier that there were two in January?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct. But, as I said before, we'd expect a lot more, given that the number of services that have taken place in the months leading up to that. I think it's a 63-day gestation period for greyhounds.

Ms O'CONNOR - The industry says there's been no spike in breeding.

Mr CARROLL - All I can go on is the data that I've been provided by Tasracing. We haven't seen the results of those services yet come through.

Ms O'CONNOR - Will they be in the audit?

PUBLIC

Mr CARROLL - No, those details won't be audited. I'm happy to provide you the list of services that I got from Tasracing. We're trying to gather as much information so we can make informed decisions. The audit is purely on greyhounds that exist within Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - Named greyhounds.

Mr CARROLL - We also look at un-microchipped greyhounds as well.

Ms RATTRAY - When do you understand that that audit will be available?

Mr CARROLL - The audit period I think finishes in two weeks' time and we would get an audit report from Tasracing within a week or so after that.

Ms RATTRAY - Then that will be made available?

Mr CARROLL - Yes that's fine.

Ms RATTRAY - In regard to your working group, and I asked this question of Mr Gatehouse this morning because I understood that there had been a request from the code to participate in the working group and -

Mr CARROLL - No, that's not correct.

Ms RATTRAY - That's not correct? Can you give me some indication of -

Mr CARROLL - What had occurred was, as I've done with the committee here, as you would know, since the working group was told, there's been a standing invitation for someone from the industry to come on the working group. As you would be aware, there's been a refusal to participate by the participants in that working group since then.

There was an open letter that was sent to me. I didn't receive a letter - in fact, I'm not in the Facebook page that it was posted on - that said that all racing participants should refuse the invitation from the Commissioner to come on the working group. I understand, as I said, the reasons behind that and the emotional investment as far as that's concerned.

Needless to say, I would continue to liaise with Mr Gatehouse. Mr Gatehouse and I have a very good relationship.

Ms RATTRAY - That was confirmed this morning.

Mr CARROLL - Yes. We speak openly. I communicate to him the detail of what takes place in our working group meetings. If there's anything that they would like to present at the working group meetings, I provide them the communicate that goes out prior on my website - I provide it to this committee as well - as to the detail of the conversations that have taken place.

In January this year [2026], I emailed them again, said, 'Here's a copy of the communicate and we reiterate the standing invitation for someone to come on to the working group', as far as that's concerned. I've got all that in the emails that I have.

PUBLIC

Ms RATTRAY - There's never been a request to have two members?

Mr CARROLL - I will get to that. They came back and said, 'We would like two members to come on to the working group'.

Ms RATTRAY - Do you think that's unreasonable? Really, in considering it?

Mr CARROLL - On the surface, in some ways it's not. But if I look at the last two people you had give evidence here, when we formed the working group, we were inundated with requests from people from animal welfare parties to come onto the working group, including the Dogs' Home and the RSPCA. I had to sit down and determine the make-up of that working group. There were significant nominations from members of the community who wanted to come onto the working group. I'm also aware of the emotional investment that comes from the greyhound participants.

What I said to Mr Gatehouse was - and I asked him to explain that, and he did - as to the areas they would want to cover off - trainers and owners and breeding - and I said, 'I'm quite happy for you to have a representation of your industry on the working group'. I would suspect - and I take him on his word - that they've got their own working group, as Tasracing does, and they meet to discuss the issues that they want to bring into our working group before the meetings. They're discussed, and then they take that information back to their own working groups so they can work on operation. I would expect the same from the greyhound industry.

If there are specific issues of breeding that come up - because the second person would be from breeding - I said, there's an invitation for that person to come and present. If your member of the working group says, 'We want to discuss breeding at this', then we will extend an invitation. It's the same with Andrew Jenkins. Andrew Jenkins has a standing invitation to come to the working group meetings as the CEO of Tasracing. If there are issues that we think are going to impact significantly on the administration of Tasracing, Andrew will get invited to come to the working group.

It was a cordial conversation between myself and Mr Gatehouse. I took that to the working group, and asked them, 'This is the submission from Greyhounds Tasmania'. They said, 'We think that's a reasonable situation, given the structure of the working group and the fact that we need to maintain a cordial meeting where emotions are extracted from the meeting'. And that if there are issues of breeding, or any subject where I require a subject matter expert, as the terms of reference say - and I've got a copy of the terms of reference that I can give to you - that I require any further information, then I can invite any person to come in and provide information to the working group.

Greyhounds Tasmania came back and said, 'No, they're steadfast that they want two people because they're uncertain of the legislation'. I said, 'How about we put one person on now and, depending on the legislation when it comes, we can revisit the fact of a second person coming in'. I cannot understate the efforts that have been made to try to communicate with the greyhound participants, to have them involved with the working group. I understand the emotional investment that the greyhound participants have; I have sympathy with them. But as you've heard over the last few days, their input is vital but needs to be unemotional so we can extract the information that we need as far as that's concerned. That's important.

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Ms WEBB - I'd like to talk to you about the part of the legislation relating to the closure plan. One of the things I'm turning my mind to - based on what I've been reading in submissions, primarily from the industry, raising concerns about various matters, I've been wondering about whether there's some - at least some further confidence and clarity that could be provided if there were potential amendments made to this section about the closure plan. I wanted to test some of them with you to see whether you felt there was an issue with contemplating some of the things that I'm wondering about, if that's okay.

For a start, at the moment it's very plain that the section that relates to it basically just says you are, as the Commissioner, to develop a draft plan. It goes to the Minister. There may be some back-and-forth between you about the draft because the Minister may require you to make some changes or further work on it. At some point, then, the Minister approves the plan and there's a plan in place, which you are to implement. That's really as plain as it is, as it's laid out in the section.

Is there any issue, in your mind, if we were to think about including into that section some very straightforward expectations about that plan, which wouldn't aim to limit it or to particularly prescribe content of it, but were to give confidence about broadly what might be in it? For example, if this legislation, in this section, was to say, in a plain way, that consultation will be undertaken in the development of this plan - straight: not how, not when, not what, just that it will be undertaken and that, for example, has a list in there - a non-exhaustive, basic list that the plan will cover these elements. That might be something like compensation, it might be animal welfare, it might be - broad terms like that. A non-exhaustive list, so it doesn't constrain what else can be in it, but it provides, at least on paper, confidence about the plan, and, potentially, an element that said the plan will be tabled in Parliament so that there's public visibility and parliamentary authority about that, in that sense.

Those are some things I'm wondering about. They don't change anything practically about what's going to happen, I don't think, but on paper they're providing some confidence. Is any of that difficult for you to contemplate thinking that it's worthwhile or would assist in that confidence?

Mr CARROLL - Let me answer it this way. Everything you've just said is quite reasonable, and something that we've already considered. There will be significant consultation that will be undertaken through the development of the transition plan, not just with the Minister's office but this committee. In fact, correct me if I'm wrong, but part of the reason that I come in here briefing you is to update you and seek feedback with what is going to go into the transition plan. Essentially, you're here to hold me to account, which I'm pleased with, and that should give confidence to the greater greyhound community and the public, as far as that's concerned.

We have already developed, if you like, a skeleton for the transition plan as to topics that we need to cover off. Everything that's been discussed in the submissions that have been made to this committee, whether in writing or verbally, are already considered in the draft. Well, it's not a draft, it's a skeleton at this stage because we actually can't populate the areas covered off in the transition plan until we have certainty either through legislation of what we're facing post legislation.

Ms WEBB - That's why I'm asking these questions. It's not because I doubt that those things are happening. I understand it all comes down to this passing. The Upper House

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members are really integral in passing this legislation, and providing confidence that concerns of industry are potentially being addressed by it is important. What I'm testing is: would there be an issue, in your mind, with their legislation being amended to include those things I mentioned that don't materially change what will happen or how it will happen, but on paper, in a Bill that goes through our Chamber, specify some basic elements?

Mr CARROLL - As I said before, I have no issue with the areas you've said that need to be covered off. How that is enshrined is not a decision for me, as neither was what was contained in the legislation. As I said, I'm happy to be held account through myself and the working group as to what we do, what's in the transition plan, even to the extent of if there are directions or suggestions as to the consultation that needs to be undertaken, I'm happy to take that on board. I don't underestimate the impact that this has on all of Tasmania, not just the greyhound participants, so any information that I can obtain, or guidance or direction, I'm happy to take that on board. How that's enshrined, I will leave that up to the legislators to determine.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. That's useful to know that it's not necessarily a problem to contemplate putting it in there.

The other thing around the plan as it's in the Bill at the moment - which I described earlier pretty plainly about how it's going to be developed and then you'll have the responsibility of implementing it - there's nothing then about further review or revision or changes down the track. It has been raised in some submissions and in some discussions that it wouldn't be unexpected that we might have to do some adding, some changing, some reviewing elements of it as things play out over time. Do you think that there needs to be, given that this legislation states how it will be developed and then it will be signed off by the Minister and then if its silent about anything after that. There's a version then that's the version that's been signed off by the Minister. Do you think there needs to be some acknowledgement in this legislation that further revisions may occur, but that would occur according to the same process legislated?

Mr CARROLL - I would expect that there is potential that there could be amendments to the transition plan. I can't sit here and judge them as to what's occurred as far as legislation is concerned. There could be amendments that are required to the legislation as we approach 30 June 2029. We could get more information as we head down the path towards 30 June 2029 that requires further legislation post-30 June 2029, or direction to either the participants, the community or myself to look at issues that need to be addressed that haven't been considered at this stage. They might not be known for two to three years. What you're saying is not unreasonable. I would expect, as I said, that there is potential for potential amendments in the transition plan as time progresses.

Ms O'CONNOR - Commissioner, you have a skeleton document there that you referred to earlier which is, I gather, the bones of a transition plan. I understand it's very preliminary work that you'd be doing, but can you share anything with the committee about what you identify as elements of the plan. That would be great if you could that.

Mr CARROLL - Look, I'm happy to give you a copy of this plan. It is purely just a skeleton where the working group workshopped the areas from each area that we considered need to be addressed within the transition plan.

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Ms O'CONNOR - Are you comfortable to speak to that, though? I'm sure everyone would love to see it, but also just to have an understanding for people who may be watching -

Mr WINTER – Or have you got a secret document.

Mr CARROLL - It's hardly a secret document, Mr Winter. What I would say is that I suppose I'm conscious of the fact that I don't want to cause concern, alert anyone to areas that people may feel unnecessary or that we haven't covered off as to areas that we've put in this document at this stage.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's a nascent, living document?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, correct. I'm happy to give you a copy -

Ms O'CONNOR - What can you share about what's in it?

Mr CARROLL - What I would say is that, and I suppose if I look at key areas - our strategic pillars, if you like, at this stage are: animal welfare; people; clubs; facilities; regions; regulatory matters; fiscal considerations; engagement with racing participants and the general public; legislative framework - it goes on - greyhound racing in Tasmania; modelling of greyhound racing through to 30 June 2029; feasibility and impact; incentive and compensation schemes; governance; local rules; traceability of greyhounds; licencing and regulation; the Tasracing Integrity Unit; the Chief Vet and Animal Welfare Officer; track standards; participant wellbeing support; vocational training for participants; animal welfare; standards; codes; policies; breeding; injuries; recovery; retirement; rehoming; euthanasia; deaths; legacy; budget; publication of the transition plan; the Parliamentary Joint standing Committee [on Greyhound Racing Transition]; approval and review of the transition plan -

Ms O'CONNOR - What would be the mechanism for that?

Mr CARROLL - That we would, given the question that was asked before - and we acknowledge that it's silent as to any amendments to - and I'm only talking about the transition plan - that if we sought to make an amendment to the transition plan post it being finalised, that we would go to the Minister. I would also come to this committee and raise those issues as to any amendment that needed to be made, or take on feedback of any consideration of anyone from this committee.

Ms O'CONNOR - There'd be members of this committee - I mean, I'm sure everyone would like to understand: what is the process for finalising the transition plan, as far as you understand it?

Mr CARROLL - At this stage my understanding is that we would develop the transition plan and provide a copy in draft to the Minister. The date that we're working to at this stage is 30 June.

Ms O'CONNOR - This year [2026]?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. As far as that's concerned. There will be consultation after that draft with various stakeholder groups that we would expect. We would present this transition

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plan to this committee. Once we're satisfied that it's final, we would give it to the Minister for final approval.

Ms O'CONNOR - One of the matters you referenced earlier in relation to the breeding of dogs was perhaps a perception among some industry participants that there could be compensation relating to the number of dogs that they have, for example, which I understand is the New Zealand model. What's the thinking on that and would you agree that it's important that we discourage the excess breeding of greyhounds during this period?

Mr CARROLL - I think I've made my position well known. It is that the control of more dogs in Tasmania is a concern first and foremost for the number of dogs that are required to be rehomed throughout the transition period. I'm unsure - I know the Dogs' Home and the RSPCA were in before. The reality is, as we currently sit, we will struggle to rehome the number of dogs that we presently have in Tasmania. Efforts have been made to reach out to other states as to what that may look like and what assistance we may need. There is a significant cost associated with rehoming each dog. The issue of compensation regarding the number of each dog that each person has is certainly something that we acknowledge.

At the moment, the issue of compensation, regarding any matter, hasn't been one that we've really discussed in depth as to what that will look like. We're waiting to see what happens as far as the legislation that's passed. There's a feasibility study that's currently being conducted by Tasracing as to the impact of the greyhound transition, so we will wait to see what is contained in that report. I know that there's been some thought that's been conducted through my office, that's not correct. That's a Tasracing issue.

Ms O'CONNOR - Where's the industry health check work which Mr Winter was asking questions about yesterday?

Mr CARROLL - I'm glad someone has raised it.

Mr WINTER - I haven't had a crack yet.

CHAIR - We're getting to you.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, no, but I mean - I'm giving you the opportunity to follow up on it. It's all tied in, isn't it?

Mr CARROLL - No, it's not. The industry health check - and I'm glad you raised that. There's a common misconception that the industry health check that was conducted - or that commenced last year [2025] - and it's mentioned - and there was some that suggested we were trying to hide that and we certainly weren't trying - it's in my annual report that the health check was being conducted. It wasn't a physical report that was being developed as far as the health check is concerned, and that's why it was deemed a health check. I engaged the services of Mr Sellenger to - who is a well-known racing administrator - and he looked at essentially key areas of financial analysis and benchmarking, structural and operational view, breeding industry health, trainer health and owner health. They were the -

Mr WINTER - Can you go through those again? Financial -

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Mr CARROLL - Analysis and benchmarking, structural and operational review, breeding industry health, trainer health and owner health. It wasn't, as I said, a detailed examination as to what was taking place in the industry. It provided me an overview, for my own benefit -

Ms O'CONNOR - At a point in time.

Mr CARROLL - So I could determine what areas I - I was new to Tasmanian racing, and I had to get a grasp on the industry as quickly as I could to determine what were the key areas that I needed to address. It didn't look at integrity matters - because I had enough data there that I could deal with integrity matters - animal welfare or social licence.

Mr Sellenger conducted interviews and relied on open-source information, so it wasn't an examination of data from specific areas or groups, and provided me with a recommendation of 10 key areas that needed further investigation. As a result of that, I spoke to Tasracing, they decided they will engage Mr Sellenger on their own to conduct four pieces of work. That will have reports that look at the issues of the structure of Tasracing - I'm generalising because I don't know the contract details that Mr Sellenger has with Tasracing - feasibility, financial and impact statement regarding the greyhound transition - or the impact on racing from greyhounds going out. I would say that I'm funding that piece of work.

Mr WINTER - That's the bit that Mr Jenkins referenced yesterday, is it?

Mr CARROLL - There's a greater piece of funding that I'm providing Tasracing across the board.

Mr WINTER - So I can clarify, you're talking about the same piece of work that Mr Jenkins was talking about in terms of the viability of the industry going forward without greyhounds, is that correct? Or is it separate?

Mr CARROLL - I call it a feasibility study. I don't know the terms that Tasracing are using for that piece of work.

Mr WINTER - Have you seen Mr Jenkins [evidence]? You might not have actually seen his evidence yesterday, which is fine. That's fine. I will come back to it. Apologies.

Mr CARROLL - Club operations and development of a strategic plan. Any suggestion that the health check that I conducted, as I said, had any connection to the decision that was made as far as the greyhound transition is totally wrong. In fact, there was no connection specifically to the greyhound industry or the health check. As I said, it was at those key five areas. There's been no report produced as far as that's concerned. We were quite transparent. Mr Winter might recall I offered to provide him a briefing on it back in September last year [2025]. I offered to provide Mr Luke Edmunds MLC a briefing on it prior to when he was racing [shadow] minister. There's been no suggestion that that piece of work was a secret or anything like that.

Mr WINTER - The confusion may stem from a few things. One is that I think it was the Minister yesterday who referred to it as 'briefed about a draft report'. But you're saying there is no draft report?

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Mr CARROLL - There's no draft report as such.

Mr WINTER - Is there any physical - is there a presentation or is there any physical evidence of work being done?

Mr CARROLL - We did a couple of slides as such. As I said - and I mentioned to you, when we had our [Microsoft] Teams meeting, 'Did you want to see those?' and you said, 'No, that's okay', and so forth, and that's fine. But there's no physical report. It was very high view on those key areas: number of trainers, how wagering had declined and so forth; the age demographic of trainers across the whole industry, across the three racing codes and so forth. It wasn't specific to one group.

Mr WINTER - Mr Jenkins in his evidence yesterday said there was an option put on the table through that report to consolidate all race clubs into a single race club. Is that correct?

Mr CARROLL - No.

Mr WINTER - Where's this idea come from then?

Mr CARROLL - Look, and once again, I'm glad you raised that point because there's been discussion - I think, in fairness to Mr Sellenger and the discussions I've had with him even on the weekend at the Hobart Cup - this issue of the expense required to run all the racing clubs was certainly discussed as an issue that racing needs to address. That was, I suppose, one of the recommendations as to look at the operational costs of clubs and what does that look like moving forward. That's the part of the work Mr Sellenger's doing on behalf of Tasracing, not through my office. He's in discussions now, as I understand, with all the racing clubs and so forth and Tasracing.

It was purely to do with how much money it costs to run the industry. Nothing to do with, at that stage was - and I don't want to go off track from this particular topic of the greyhound transition, but do we look at shared services agreement across the clubs? A lot of people in the industry said, 'Does that mean we're going to merge the clubs?' I don't know.

Mr WINTER - The reason for concern is that under the new legislation, Tasracing actually has the power to wind up clubs and strip their assets and take them back into Tasracing.

Mr CARROLL - That's not my concern.

Mr WINTER - Yes, that's the context. I want to move on because there's lots of really important -

Mr CARROLL - I hope that clarifies the health check for you, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Yes, I might come back later if we can. There's just some really important stuff from your opening statement around breeding. Your opening statement took a very different position on the state of the industry than what we'd heard, particularly [from] the Government things: the Premier said about greyhound racing is that it's a declining industry. In your opening statement - I hope I've written down what you said correctly - you said the number of greyhounds exceeds capacity, you talked about crowded kennels, and there being an influx of new numbers of dogs.

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Mr CARROLL - I don't think I said that, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Which bit was inaccurate? Do you want to put it clearly so that I'm not -

Mr CARROLL - What we've seen, as I mentioned earlier, we've seen a decline in the number of dogs that are being bred over that stage. They're dogs that have been recorded. The audit that was clearly conducted in September last year [2025] identified more dogs than the industry thought were first contained [within]. I said: without clarity, as far as legislation provides, we will see an increase in those numbers and -

Mr WINTER - Why would we see an increase in numbers?

Mr CARROLL - The evidence that we've had, as I said before, in the number of services that have taken place over the last four months -

Mr WINTER - I'm looking at the numbers from Greyhounds Australasia: November [2025], four services; December [2025], two; January [2026], two. That doesn't seem to correspond. Am I looking at the information incorrectly?

Mr CARROLL - I'm getting information from Tasracing, directly. What I would say -

Mr WINTER - It doesn't appear - I'm not seeing what you're saying reflected in the data that I'm looking at.

Mr CARROLL - What we've also found - and not wanting to be too critical - this is a reason that my office is funding Tasracing for a traceability officer to actually get some realistic ideas and numbers as to what's going on in Tasmania - is that there's a great discrepancy between the numbers that actually exist and the numbers that are recorded at a national level.

CHAIR - Perhaps underreporting, for whatever reason, is maybe the reason the data's not quite matching up.

Mr CARROLL - I'm not making accusations against anyone, but the national records are reliant on those that are entered by participants. They're not always entered in a timely fashion, and sometimes not at all. The data that I get is data that we're achieving ourselves or obtaining ourselves and getting that from Tasracing in real time. As I said, the numbers that I've got is that over the past four months there have been 15 services that have taken place.

Mr WINTER - Are you able to table those - whatever data - or even take on notice and perhaps compare that period of time against previous years, so we can see the data and satisfy ourselves?

Ms O'CONNOR - Should we ask Tasracing for that?

Mr CARROLL - You should ask Tasracing for that, because I'm getting my data from Tasracing.

Mr WINTER - Yes. Okay.

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Ms WEBB - I have a really stupid clarifying question, probably: but does the servicing always end up being a litter?

Mr CARROLL - Not necessarily, no. I'm glad you asked that question.

Ms WEBB - We might have 15, but we might end up with a smaller number of litters -

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

Ms WEBB - and then we will end up with a certain number of pups out of those litters after 63 days of gestation? We're in flux in terms of how many pups are going to actually eventuate from those 15 services during that four-month period.

Mr CARROLL - I'm not an expert on breeding numbers.

Ms WEBB - More so than I am.

Mr WINTER - The numbers I'm looking at show that in the first six months of this financial year [2025-26], there were 60 pups produced in Tasmania, which is pretty much in line with the previous years - in 2024. Over time, we've actually seen a decline in the number of greyhounds being bred, as evidenced earlier. The evidence we heard from the North West Greyhound Racing Club was that the lack of certainty is actually driving the number of litters and the number of dogs down because of the lack of certainty around racetracks, around integrity, and around the future of the industry. I'm just not seeing the evidence, and I'd love if we can find it later, the evidence to support the idea that there's been a spike in breeding so far.

I want to talk about this issue of compensation as well. We heard earlier from the RSPCA and the Dogs' Homes that there's been some work done, and RSPCA referenced a submission that they'd made to you or to the working group around rehoming costs where they'd outlined what the costs of rehoming -

Mr CARROLL - It wasn't a submission; it was a budget request. To clarify that so I can assist you: once again, we're very conscious of how much this whole project will cost. As I would have done to the greyhound participants, to each working group member I said, 'Can you please go away and speak to your individual working groups and come back to me and actually give me an idea of what you see the costs associated with your subject matter, that they're actually involved in, so then we can then do an assessment as a working group and then make a budget bid to the Treasury, as far as that's concerned'. They provided me some numbers in relation - it wasn't a submission as to say, 'These are the issues and this is how much it's going to cost'.

Mr WINTER - That's a cost of around - if there's 1000 dogs - \$3.5 million. That's a component of what it's going to cost, but the far greater cost is going to be the compensation payments, I would have thought. What's the process for understanding the compensation costs from here? From the other evidence, it doesn't seem like there's a clear direction from Government about what compensation will actually be available to participants.

Mr CARROLL - Those people wouldn't have been aware of the work that's currently being undertaken by Tasracing as far as the feasibility study and the impact that will have on

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the racing industry. We will wait to see what those results provide. Part of the development of the plan - and our plan looks at compensation and specific areas that it may have to target.

As I said, this is very much just in draft; this is not finalised in any stretch of the imagination. We've got incentive and compensation schemes; feasibility study; industry consultation and investigation; determine area of scope of compensation to be addressed and approvals required. Who's eligible: individuals, families, business breeders, et cetera. Who falls within scope: greyhounds, infrastructure, equipment, breeding greyhounds, straws, income, rehoming, et cetera. Application to whom: cut-off dates; application dates; new licence holders aware of impending phase-out. When could it commence; what budget applications required; who determines compensation suitability and amounts?

They're all areas that we're taking into consideration. A lot of those areas we can't determine until we actually get the legislation, or we know where we sit as far as the legislation is concerned. It would be remiss of me to actually formulate a solid plan on compensation until I know what I'm actually dealing with as far as it's concerned. That will include the feasibility study that's taking place at the moment.

Mr WINTER - I think, conversely, the problem for some legislators and for the participants is going to be that they don't have certainty on the compensation payment before they make the decision. The compensation, the amount, may influence their decision. I think there's a fundamental problem here that we're not dealing with the compensation question as part of this.

Mr CARROLL - I disagree with that, Mr Winter. I think the compensation issue is separate to the decision regarding the phase-out of greyhounds.

Mr WINTER - We can agree to disagree, I reckon. The idea -

Mr CARROLL - It might be an outcome of the decision -

Mr WINTER - I might not get another right crack at this, so on Mr Sellenger, are you able to table the slides from the presentation that Mr Sellenger provided? Are you able to provide on notice the presentation or any other documents associated?

Mr CARROLL - That has nothing to do with greyhounds. You're asking me questions about greyhounds.

Mr WINTER - I will explain the rationale behind why I ask this: a lot of the submissions have raised concerns about the broader industry and the impact of this Bill going through on the broader industry. The contention is that if you shut down greyhound racing, you're actually going to shut down the other two as well -

Ms O'CONNOR - Straw man. It's a massive straw man.

Mr CARROLL - Mr Winter, what I would say is - and I extended this invitation to you once before - if you would like me to talk to you about the health check, I'm more than happy. It has nothing to do with the greyhound transition. I'm giving that evidence under oath.

Mr WINTER - Yes. I believe you.

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Mr CARROLL - What I would say is, if you want to speak to me later on, and ask me to give you a talk about - as I did with the Minister's office; I offered the same to Mr Edmunds and it was knocked back. If you would like that invitation, please contact me and I'd extend that to you.

CHAIR - We will try to stick to our terms of reference because the Commissioner has said it's not relevant to greyhounds.

Mr CARROLL - What I would say is that it has nothing to do with the greyhound industry whatsoever.

CHAIR - We will move on, because we are almost out of time.

Ms RATTRAY - In the Bil itself - I'm interested whether your working group or you have addressed your mind to the fact that there will be an opportunity to breed greyhounds for pets.

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - There's been some suggestion that while the rehoming of the current number of greyhounds, should the code transition out of racing, will already be a challenge - and you've said it yourself this morning, I think - a challenge for the rehoming organisations that we have in Tasmania, because you're not exactly sure what the numbers might be.

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Would it be best to change the legislation that there'd be no breeding of greyhounds for pets until after 2029, if that's the date, because everyone loves a puppy, but they might not be interested in an 18-month-old or two-year-old or whatever. Is there any thought around that? Is that something that your working group has considered?

Mr CARROLL - The reality is that it's not my position to determine what a social -

Ms RATTRAY - But you have an interest in the welfare, though -

Mr CARROLL - Of course.

Ms RATTRAY - of the greyhounds that are already here or may be here.

Mr CARROLL - What I would say to that is - and having had discussions with rehoming programs such as the Dogs' Homes - and stress that the number of racing greyhounds that are currently operating that have to be rehomed, that are older dogs and not a puppy as you said, that that's going to impact all breeds. If we increase the number of greyhounds that we have, not just greyhounds, that will impact the adoption or rehoming of all breeds, and I'm very conscious of that. Let's not just forget about the greyhound issue, the flow-on effect that this is going to have on rehoming of all breeds through the Dogs' Homes and other adoption programs.

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I'm not going to sit here and say that the breeding of greyhounds that a person would want to have as a family pet should be prohibited; I don't think that's my role. I think the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* provides suitable coverage as far as how a person maintains and looks after any dog in a pet situation. I'd be reluctant to say that we should be prohibiting the breeding of greyhounds as pets from today, or whenever that day is.

Ms RATTRAY - It's not something that your working group has considered?

Mr CARROLL - Not at this stage, no.

Ms WEBB - I'm happy for others to go ahead, if they've got more urgent ones, because I've probably got peripheral things really.

Ms O'CONNOR - A quick question on a submission that we were presented with by Tasracing, which we had an opportunity to ask Tasracing about yesterday. They, in quite alarmist language, raised some concerns around the Bill's prohibition on the breeding of greyhounds, and indicated that it opened those dogs to a risk of being exported to jurisdictions interstate where there's racing, or to places like China where there's an underground racing industry.

We then questioned Tasracing about the provision in the act, the specific provision in section 2, part 2, clauses (4) and (5), which make it a criminal offence, effectively, to breed a dog for the purposes of supplying it to an industry interstate or overseas. Have you seen the Tasracing submission, and do you have any thoughts on what I regard as quite spurious claims about risk to dogs?

Mr CARROLL - I think Mr Winter asked me this question last time I appeared before this committee, as to the issue of exporting greyhounds as pets that may go onto racing. I'm sure you can check the transcript or *Hansard* for my answer, but it hasn't changed in that, should a greyhound be exported and end up racing, then an investigation could take place as to whether there was some nefarious reason for the exportation of that greyhound, which then would lead to a breach of the legislation and would become a criminal offence. I think Mr Jenkins said -

Ms O'CONNOR - He did backpedal frantically when he was challenged on it.

Mr CARROLL - I'm not going to say he backpedalled. Clearly, I think his position was that he was satisfied that the legislation addressed the issue that was raised. I'd agree with that assessment and don't see any concerns there.

Ms WEBB - This may have been addressed in some of your earlier answers, but some peripheral matters - well, not peripheral, but some matters that have come up in some of the submissions relate to if there's any uncertainty about what will happen with interstate dual ownership of dogs. If you've got Tasmanian people with dual ownership but interstate and the dog's located interstate, is that going to be allowed or not allowed? How will that be resolved under the arrangements? Do you feel that the Bill addresses that sufficiently, or are you anticipating that those sorts of matters, nuanced matters, will be dealt with in regs under the Bill?

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Mr CARROLL - Yes, I do. I think the Bill is quite clear in what it sets out to do. I think it provides clarity. Will there be an outlier case that could be addressed? Potentially. I don't know. I think it's pretty clear as to what the Bill is trying to achieve and the position of ownership regarding greyhounds in Tasmania. If there are issues that need to be addressed, they can be addressed through regulations.

Mr WINTER - If the Bill passes, when would you expect the compensation package to be available, or at least to be known by industry about what it looks like?

Mr CARROLL - I have no idea Mr Winter. I can't give you an answer to that. There's a lot of consultation that will need to take place as to -

Mr WINTER - Who makes the decision, then? Is that for your working group, or for you, for Tasracing, the Minister? Who, in the end, signs off on the compensation?

Mr CARROLL - Treasury would sign off on what compensation looks like. I'm not sitting here saying that I'm going to make that decision as to -

Mr WINTER - Well, they do decide the quantum of funds available, I presume, so it's a decision at a ministerial level.

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask a follow-up on that. It's a sequencing question. A transition plan is obviously already well in the works and, should the legislation pass, obviously it describes how that rolls out. Do you see a compensation plan, or however it's framed, as being done concurrently with the transition plan? Or would the transition plan be important to complete and have established first, and within that, it would point to then the development of compensation arrangements and what the compensation plan might look like. You know, are they one-step, two-step, or is it a concurrent process?

Mr CARROLL - I think it would be a step program, to be fair. I think it would be unfair on the participants to actually determine what a compensation plan will or won't look like right now. In fact, my initial thought is - and certainly, there'll be a lot of discussions held with people far more important than me as far as this is concerned - it would be dangerous to actually lock in what any compensation plan may or may not look like right now, until we actually avail ourselves with all the evidence and impacted areas and parties that may be required to be addressed in any compensation plan.

That may take two, three years. I make no apology for that. I think the issue of compensation is one that needs to be addressed, but it needs to be addressed in a manner that is well-researched. We may have some concept and idea of what it may look like even after the feasibility study, but what I don't want to occur is that we're retrofitting compensation plans four or five years down the track regarding this matter. I think the reality is that compensation will form part of the transition plan. What that looks like I can't say at this stage.

Ms WEBB - Conversation will be in the transition plan but not in its complexity and as a final product? It will be referenced in terms of a process?

Mr CARROLL - Correct, yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr CARROLL - Oh, it's already got more than a couple of lines.

Ms WEBB - It's definitely going to be one of the areas that's probably most challenging for industry, isn't it? In the sense that, to some degree, all they have now is the assurance, the commitment that just transition and compensation are going to be dealt with, but it's going to be down the track and the detail of it won't be available till down the track. I can understand how industry feels unsettled about that.

Mr CARROLL - I can understand that but -

Ms WEBB - I understand the opposite - it can't be brought forward.

Mr CARROLL - No. It would be remiss on the Tasmanian community to do that.

Ms WEBB - Do you think there's anything further that could be done at this stage to add more comfort to the confidence the industry can have about how that will be dealt with appropriately down the track?

Mr CARROLL - I will say this again - and I understand the emotion in dealing with this issue from the greyhound participants - but, certainly I would encourage them to be at the table as far as our working group is concerned, to raise their concerns and raise these issues, even if for whatever reason there's a further adjournment of the Bill going to the Upper House, so they can put the issues that they're facing and the concerns they have through their own working group, to our working group. It's imperative, as I said, that they have a seat at the table and bring these issues to the fore.

CHAIR - Just adding further to that - can I just - you're envisaging a compensation plan program that might be staged. I imagine that as we transition throughout the four years and potentially after 30 June 2029, there may be iterations of people exiting, of changes in the industry, changes of racing structure, all those kinds of things that may need or may require compensation at a staged kind of approach. That's included in your thought process in developing it?

Mr CARROLL - Of course. If I use New Zealand for example, they provided assistance or compensation package to large trainers that wanted to relocate to Australia, to Queensland, to race greyhounds there. If there was a request or a proposal that was put forward from a trainer here in Tasmania that wanted to relocate to a state that had racing, that's something that obviously we'd address and consider at the time. Yes, it would be a staged approach.

CHAIR - Mr Winter, I think you've got one final question. We are over time, if you could be very short, then we will -

Mr WINTER - In your communique from your last working group meeting you listed budget; you detailed you're working on a budget submission to Government. What's the level of funding you're going to require to undertake your work?

Mr CARROLL - I have no idea. I couldn't even give you a ballpark at this stage.

PUBLIC

Mr WINTER - Thanks.

Mr CARROLL - I'm waiting for those members of the working group to get back to me.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We might end there. Actually, we have gone a little overtime, so thank you for bearing with us. I'm sure that if there are any further questions, the committee will write to you and put those in writing to you.

Again, thank you for your appearance. What you have said to us today is protected by parliamentary privilege, as you're aware, but once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments that you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you've said here today. Do you understand that?

Mr CARROLL -Yes, I do.

CHAIR - Thank you.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee adjourned at 12.38 p.m.