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THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER 2026.

The Committee met at 9.00 a.m.

CHAIR (Ms Johnston) - Thank you and welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing and Transition. And thank you very much Commissioner for your attendance today. As you'd be aware, we have the full Committee here today. We have Tania Rattray joining us online, Cassy O'Connor, Dean Winter, myself, Kristie Johnston, Marcus Vermey and Meg Webb. I know you've appeared before us a number of times, but for today's purposes could you please state your name and capacity in which you are appearing before the Committee.

Mr CARROLL - My full name, Sean Michael Carroll and I'm the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner (Commissioner).

CHAIR - Thank you and can I get you to confirm that you have received and read the guide sent to you by the Committee Secretary.

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I have, thank you.

CHAIR - As you would 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 parliamentary proceedings, and today's hearing is a public hearing in the public and media may be present or watching online. Should you wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, then you need to make that request to the Committee at the time and, of course, we'd give that consideration. We are going to invite you again to make the statutory declaration, please.

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 begin by making a short opening statement.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you very much. Chair and Members of the Joint Standing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I want to begin by making clear the capacity in which I've prepared and submitted the draft Greyhound Transition Plan to the Minister for Racing.

In August 2025 I was requested by the Premier and then-Minister for Racing to develop a Transition Plan to phase out greyhound racing by June 30 2029. The Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments Bill subsequently contemplates the development of the Plan and the approval of such Plan by the Minister for Racing. My role in preparing the draft Transition Plan should therefore not be interpreted as an expression of my support or advocacy for the Government's policy decision to phase out greyhound racing in Tasmania.

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The policy decision to phase out the industry is a decision for Government and ultimately for the Parliament. It is not a policy position that I've been asked to determine, nor is it a position that I've adopted in preparing this Plan. My responsibility, as has been requested by the Government, is to develop a framework that, if the Bill is passed, provides a responsible and orderly transition and closure of greyhound racing by 30 June 2029.

It is a draft Plan which is predicated on and dependent on the passage of the Bill and subsequent approval by the Minister for Racing. The draft Transition Plan has been developed to address the consequences and practical requirements of the proposed transition. Its purpose is to support an orderly, transparent and humane process with appropriate safeguards for greyhounds, industry participants and the integrity of racing regulation. The Plan places three matters at its core: the welfare and future circumstances of greyhound racing participants, the welfare of greyhounds and the maintenance of appropriate integrity and regulatory standards throughout the transition period.

As such, the Plan requires appropriate planning for the greyhounds currently within the racing system, robust rehoming and welfare arrangements, appropriate support for participants who are impacted by the closure, continued integrity, oversight, clear governance and accountability, and a transition process that provides certainty wherever that can be reasonably achieved. It is equally important that the people who have participated and support greyhound racing for many years are treated fairly and respectfully throughout the process, recognising their contributions over many years.

The draft Transition Plan is intended to provide that framework. The draft Transition Plan that was submitted to the Minister in August 2026 should be subject to appropriate scrutiny, feedback and, where necessary, refinement. I welcome constructive feedback from this Committee, industry participants, animal welfare organisations and the broader Tasmanian community. Given the draft Transition Plan is now with the Minister for consideration and view, responsibility for receiving his feedback rests with the Minister.

My office will continue to provide the information and assistance as required in my capacity as a Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner.

Chair, my responsibility has been to prepare this draft Transition Plan that addresses the practical welfare, integrity and governance issues arising during the transition, independently of Government and Tasracing. While this is the case, and as I previously admitted, in order to achieve a properly regulated and orderly phase-out of greyhound racing in Tasmania, as is the Government's policy, such a phase-out must be conducted responsibly, transparently and humanely, with the highest possible standards of animal welfare and proper regard for the people whose lives, businesses and livelihoods will be affected. That has been the guiding principle of the work of my office and the Greyhound Transition Working Group and the intended purpose of the draft Transition Plan. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Commissioner. If I can go to you at the start, when we've spoken previously, you've given us updated figures on the industry in terms of audits of the greyhounds and participants in the industry. I know within the draft Transition Plan, you reference the second audit, which I think was conducted February-March of this year [2026]. You've recently conducted a new audit, I think in August this year [2026].

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

CHAIR - Are you able to give updated figures on that as a bit of a background for the context of which the transition will work?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. At this stage - the audit was conducted in August-September [2026]. The total number of greyhounds in Tasmania, or registered greyhounds, was 1120. That's a total increase of about 100 from the previous audit. The number of - if you want to actually call them racing or active greyhounds - was, I haven't got the exact number in front of me, 950 or approximately. The number of greyhounds that weren't racing, but not retired, had decreased significantly, which is probably what we had predicted earlier on, that greyhounds were being kept longer, given the position that's stated within the Bill.

CHAIR - In terms of that change in number, you indicate it's about 100 more registered greyhounds than the audit in February-March [2026] indicated. Does that materially impact on the arrangements that you've put in place in terms of the draft arrangements and the Transition Plan in terms of the projection of numbers and decline over the period?

Mr CARROLL - At this stage it won't have a significant impact. As you would have seen, the draft Transition Plan, it proposes a reduction of greyhound racing 25 per cent year on year. That number is flexible throughout the racing calendar year, so it's not an instant reduction at the commencement of the racing calendar - that's smoothed over the 12 months of the racing calendar. So, having spoken to Tasracing CEO, the racing calendar can be quite easily adjusted with a couple of month's notice.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. I've got a couple of questions.

Mr CARROLL - Sorry, I can provide to you, if you like, the exact numbers of the three audits.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We'll take that.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm interested in the Transition Plan and around the consultation process, Commissioner. Can you give us some understanding of what was involved in that consultation process, who was consulted and how were they consulted?

Mr CARROLL - As you'd be aware, upon the announcement of the policy by the Government and my request to develop the Transition Plan I put together a Working Group that was made up of various stakeholders within the community and that included the RSPCA, for as far as animal welfare groups is concerned, we had a respected member of the community on that Group to bring to the group the community comments that had been given to her. We had members of Tasracing. As you're well aware, we had invited members of the greyhound community to come onto the Working Group - that increased from one member to two members over the period of the 12 months. Ultimately, they declined that invitation and said they wouldn't take part until - and if - the Bill was passed. However, as I've said before to this Committee previously, I have attended numerous greyhound meetings over the period of the time and spoken to members of the greyhound community. As far as the various stakeholder groups within the community, there was consultation that would come into the Working Group and, as a result of that, the Transition Plan was developed.

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Ms RATTRAY - What about the feedback process then? How is that going to unfold? This is out in the public arena now. Are you calling for submissions? What's the process?

Mr CARROLL - As I said earlier, the feedback now belongs with the Minister and all feedback is received from the Minister. That will be then collated and provided to my office for consideration. Once that feedback is received, we'll address that and give consideration to any amendments that are required in the Transition Plan.

Ms RATTRAY - Anyone interested in providing feedback does that directly to the Minister?

Mr CARROLL - To the Minister's office, that's correct.

Ms RATTRAY - To that office, so effectively the Government is taking the lead on this. Is that fair to say?

Mr CARROLL - Not at all. What I would say is that to provide one central location and at the end date, you know, I'm responsible for developing the Transition Plan and I provide that to the Minister. To make sure that there's an awareness to the Parliament through the Minister, of the feedback that's received, that feedback will be collated and then provided to my office for consideration.

Ms RATTRAY - Do you have a timeframe? This is my final question, Chair, in regard to the Transition Plan itself, not the contents. Do you have a timeframe in mind for that, given that you're doing that work or your Working Group team and yourself are doing that work?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, as I said, I think the exact date that the Transition Plan was made public was in mid-September [2026]. I haven't got the exact date in front of me at the moment, but I can provide it for if you like. I think that consideration was given to, at the time, allowing feedback to be received by the end of October [2026].

Mr WINTER - In terms of the, perhaps I missed it, in terms of the feedback going through the Minister, was that decision made by you or by the Minister?

Mr CARROLL - There was discussion between ourselves, the Minister and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE) as to where it would actually be centralised and we felt that the Minister's office was the best location for that.

Mr WINTER - So, that was your suggestion? When you say 'we', collectively?

Mr CARROLL - There was a discussion. I can't remember who raised it, but that was the ultimate decision.

Mr WINTER - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Hello, Commissioner, and thanks for coming in again to talk to us. I wanted to go to the retirements and rehoming section of your draft Plan and just give you the opportunity to talk through how you envisage the transition working for rehoming organisations, given that, obviously, Greyhounds As Pets (GAP) does a great job and they receive the lion's share of any funding that's available for rehoming. How do you as

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Commissioner see other organisations like the RSPCA and the Dogs' Home fitting into this picture, given that they'll be essential to the rehoming task - and how they might be funded or what's being thought of there?

Mr CARROLL - Thank you for the question. The Plan has been, as I said, predicated on the passing of the bill and, without stating the obvious, it is essential that the Plan is read in its entirety as to the implications as to the delays that we may face if there is a delay in decreasing the greyhound population as far as the policy of the Government is concerned. That will have significant implications in the number of greyhounds that we're required to rehome by June 30, 2029. If I look at the number of greyhounds that have come in and out of the industry over the past three or four years and, without going to specifics, what we can say is that approximately there's probably 250 to 300 greyhounds that come into the industry every year and go out of the industry, and that's through breeding but also from interstate greyhounds coming in. Up until this time the rehoming services that have been available - whether they be through GAP, through owners and trainers taking ownership of retired greyhounds or whether they be going to other rehoming centres - the community has been able to cope with those numbers that are going out of the industry. The Plan that has been developed ensures that those numbers will be constant throughout the period until through into 2029, so we won't have a bulging number of greyhounds that go to any particular rehoming centre.

What I have done though is look at options for emergency rehoming and we've looked at particular emergency kennels, the Dogs' Home being one of them, that can take on board a number of greyhounds at any one time should that be required. We've made provision in our initial budget assessment to the Government and there are funds that are set aside to accommodate that. We've gone out to RSPCA, Dogs' Home and other rehoming programs to get a cost as a daily rate as to what that's required. We've taken that on board and as you would have seen that, unfortunately, and once again, it's purely a decision for Parliament as to when the bill is passed, but if there is a delay, that cost increases because of the number of greyhounds that are going to be required to be rehomed at any one given time.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. That goes to your latest audit result too, where we've seen an increase in the number of registered greyhounds. To your knowledge, is that from an increase in breeding or imports? How do you think there has been that shift in a relatively short period of months?

Mr CARROLL - As I have said to this Committee before, that we have seen an increase in breeding from previous years, especially since the announcement of the Bill and the prohibition that was put on breeding. I've spoken to a lot of greyhound participants as to the reasons why there's concerns that if the Bill is passed, there will be a shortage of greyhounds to race up until June 30, 2029, so people are breeding greyhounds. As I said before, it appears, and whilst this is a very small dataset of one audit at this stage, that participants are hanging onto their greyhounds longer to allow them to continue to race. That flies in the face of the proposal in the Bill that greyhounds, at an age of six years, will be retired because of the greater risk of injury and so forth. There are a potential number of reasons for the increase in numbers. I don't want to assume what they may or may not be, but it was something that I think that I'd said to this Committee that we predicted would occur.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. We recently visited the Greyhounds As Pets to walk through the operation, meet the staff, and meet the dogs. You said earlier that the community is sort of able to cope with the number of greyhounds that come out the end of the other side

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of the industry, and I'd sort of challenge that because there's a backlog there. GAP is full of dogs all waiting for a home. Now we've got an increased number of greyhounds that at some point will be looking for a home. There's a capacity issue here already, and I know it's only a draft Transition Plan, but there's not a lot of detail in there about how you deal with what's going to be the need for a significant increase in capacity before rehoming.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you for the question. Let me start by saying I think that GAP does a wonderful job in rehoming greyhounds and there's no doubt that over the last few years that we've seen the capacity of greyhounds entering GAP has increased and that is the reason that there's been investment into the GAP facility to increase the number of kennels that they have to accommodate that.

Without dismissing your question too much, the concern that I have is that the issue that we may face, and these are the reasons I've spoken to RSPCA Victoria and rehoming organisations in other states is that Tasmania has a lot smaller population than other states and there will be only a certain number of greyhounds that can be taken into the community. That will have an impact on other breeds of dogs and the adoption of other breeds of dogs from places like the Dogs' Home.

That is why the Transition Plan has been written the way it has, to have a progressive introduction of those dogs over the next two and a half years should the Bill be passed.

Am I concerned about the excessive number of greyhounds that we may have that will lead into rehoming if the Bill is delayed or there's no Bill? Yes, I am. At this stage we have very limited number of rehoming options in Tasmania and some have closed over the last couple of years. We have spoken to quite a number of organisations that were interested in rehoming. A lot of those didn't want to be included in the Transition Plan because of the community debate that was going on about greyhounds at this stage, and I respect that, and that's why that information isn't placed in the Transition Plan at this stage. It's been the biggest issue that we've been looking at since we started developing the Transition Plan as to how we could adequately rehome these greyhounds by June 30, 2029.

Mr WINTER - In the draft Transition Plan, just following on from Ms O'Connor's questions, there was discussion about an expression of interest process for people looking to adopt greyhounds.

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - I'm not sure if you've answered this already, but can you tell us how many people have expressed interest?

Mr CARROLL - At that stage, I think we had a dozen people that have written into our office to express interest.

Mr WINTER - How has that been advertised?

Mr CARROLL - We put it in all the newspapers throughout Tasmania - took out half-page advertisements.

Mr WINTER - This is for people to adopt the greyhounds?

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Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - Okay, that seems unusual - it seems a bit lower than I would have expected.

Mr CARROLL - It was a lot lower than I thought. I was surprised by the lack of numbers and the uptake. I thought it would have been quite higher. As to how I answered the questions from Ms O'Connor before, the concern that I have is that having such a condensed period of time to rehome a significant number of greyhounds that we may reach saturation point for the number of greyhounds that will go into the community.

Mr WINTER - Sure, thanks for that. The Plan outlines within the Transition Plan itself, it says this can't happen unless we have a Bill to -

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

Mr WINTER - and you also talked earlier about the impacts of any delay. Do you have a view on when the bill needs to be dealt with in Parliament?

Mr CARROLL - I think I've said before that, as I said, and I need to clarify this because people have misquoted me, that it's not my position to support the Bill. I don't have a position either way, but if the Bill is to proceed, then the transition of greyhounds needs to happen as soon as it can, because my concern is if I look at both from an animal welfare point of view, a participant welfare point of view and a budgetary point of view, the longer the Bill is delayed then there's going to be impacts on all three of those areas.

Mr WINTER - I guess to my line of thinking around this is that this time last year [2025] when we were talking about this, might have pretty similar timing, you talked about it being essential that the bill passed in the last calendar year [2025] and the Bill was drafted in a way that the breeding restrictions started on the 1st of January this year [2026]. At what point does it get to where you need to start reconsidering some of the timeframes around this, around that 30th of June 2029. So, obviously, you started with a four-year timeframe, it's already condensed to more like a three-year timeframe. So, when do you need the Bill to be dealt with in order to -

Mr CARROLL - When the Bill's dealt with is not a decision for me. I've said numerous times that the concerns that I have regarding those three key areas and the cost and budget associated, this needs to be taken into account for all Tasmanians. From that point of view, as soon as - if that policy position continues on through legislation, that needs to be enacted as soon as possible.

Mr WINTER - You talked about your concern if there was a further delay, but you also mentioned - or if there was no Bill at all - has the Government given you any clarity on whether they intend to continue to pursue phase-out of greyhound racing, even without legislation?

Mr CARROLL - No, they haven't.

Mr WINTER - Is that your expectation that they will continue to be seeking it without -

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Mr CARROLL - That's a question for the Government. I don't know.

Ms O'CONNOR - They have made that pretty clear.

Mr WINTER - so, the transition timeframes commence this financial year [2026-27] under the draft Plan, but Tasracing has already outlined its schedule for this year and they've actually increased the number of greyhound racing, albeit by one meet, yet the draft Transition talks about reducing numbers this year. So, can you explain - I think you mentioned it briefly in answer to one of Ms O'Connor's questions - but can you explain what the process would be for Tasracing to start reducing race meets?

Mr CARROLL - So, you'll see in the plan that there's reporting conditions on Tasracing to my office and discussions that were held around race meetings and finances regarding race meetings. Having had discussions with the CEO of Tasracing, he's assured me, different to thoroughbred racing, that the leading times that greyhounds require for racing isn't as lengthy as it would be for thoroughbreds and so there could be amendments made to the racing calendar within a two- or three-month window quite easily.

Mr WINTER - In terms of that transition funding - it's a very long document, I think it's 21.1 - you talk about in the Plan about using some of - about reallocating some of the funding from greyhound racing in order to pay for some of the phase-out and other components. Can you talk a little bit about how that would work? Actually, it might've been Mr Sellenger's part of the report.¹

Mr CARROLL - Yes. No, we speak about potentially looking at the savings and, once again, that's from the responsibility that falls on Tasracing to report into my office as to the savings that are made from an operational cost point of view.

Mr WINTER - Isn't it true that - I mean, when I read the Tasracing submission, for example, to this Committee, they talk about how the revenue drop and the cost drop are about the same and they don't find any savings from shutting down greyhound racing. So, how is it you're going to uncover savings if Tasracing's saying there are none?

Mr CARROLL - On the figures that were provided to me that there would be - it's an unknown quantity, if I put it that way. We don't know the impact on wagering as far as race-field fees are concerned that will come into effect as far as the phase-out is concerned. But what we do know is obviously there'll be quite a significant reduction in manpower that's required and operational costs as far as less race meetings are concerned. There'll be a reduction in the number of rebates that are paid out to participants for travel costs from the North West region. So, I'm not talking tens of millions of dollars, Mr Winter.

We're trying to ensure - and as I said before, it's important to read the Transition Plan in its entirety to see how they all link into one another - that the impacts that the proposed Bill has will have less significant impact, if I put it that way, and that's probably not the right term, as to those three key areas I mentioned before as soon as the Transition Plan comes into effect. The cost will significantly increase as to rehoming costs and we won't recover those amount of costs as far as race reductions is concerned. I'm predicating this at this stage, as I said, on the

¹ Annexure 4, Greyhound Transition & Racing Feasibility Study: Cessation of Tasmanian Greyhound Racing, Alignsport, July 2026, contained in the draft Greyhound Racing Transition Plan, 1 August 2026, <https://nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/Draft%20Greyhound%20Racing%20Transition%20Plan.pdf>

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Transition Plan coming into effect as soon as possible - it will reduce the cost. It's not going to be - to get back to your question - a significant amount of savings that we will recover, but it will actually go towards assisting in the cost of the Transition Plan.

Mr WINTER - It's good to hear it acknowledged that there's not going to be a significant amount of savings from shutting down greyhound racing, and I have to say I agree.

CHAIR - I've got a question on that line, if I may, just on that transition and that modelling in terms of how that happens over a decline in races over a period of time and how that links to financial assistance for participants for travel and all those kind of things at the moment. Do you have a view or information about how that happens with relation to the three meets? So, do we end up by April 2029 with just a Hobart? I mean, obviously we can't hold as many races over that period of time, so we'd be looking at maybe losing Launceston and it just being Hobart at the end or Launceston and not Hobart. How do you see that transitioning in terms of being able to manage it and support participants still participating up until June 2029? And where will that be and how does that flow into assistance in terms of exiting the industry?

Mr CARROLL - Well, I don't think there's been a final decision as to be made. Clearly there'll be a reduction of one race meeting as the races reduce. There may be a reduction in the number of races per race meeting. We've looked at different models that will accommodate both the greyhound racing industry, the participants, but also ensuring that we're not putting extra pressure on the number of greyhounds. So, what we don't want to do is -

CHAIR - Racing dogs to death.

Mr CARROLL - have too many races for the decreasing number of greyhounds.

As far as the location is concerned, that hasn't even been the discussion at this stage; we haven't got into that detail and nor should we. Once again, through the conversations that I've had with Mr Jenkins [CEO of Tasracing] that, as I said before, the number of greyhound meetings can be reduced within a two-month, three-month time period. It would be unfair to actually state at this stage where it's proposed those race meetings are. That will require a bigger discussion between Tasracing and the particular clubs involved as to where they're going to be held.

CHAIR - Around that, I mean, we're already seeing that some of the race meets are struggling to have full races, some have a lot of one particular participant in a particular race, particularly when it comes to the Masters races. So, how will that be managed in terms of integrity and ensuring that as we're declining in the number of participants, the number of racing dogs, that there's still the integrity framework within those existing races as we particularly get out to [20]29, I suppose?

Mr CARROLL - What I should say in answer to your question, the number of racing animals that take part in any one particular race is a concern across the three racing codes. That's not just an issue within greyhound racing and something that I'm certainly aware of. The discussions I've had with greyhound racing, and primarily my job, is to ensure there's greater confidence within the community that people will take part in racing. One of the areas that we're looking at, and I know it was raised previously, with a number of racing animals that a participant had within one particular race - I've made a recommendation to Tasracing as to the number of greyhounds, for example, that one trainer can have in one particular race. I'm

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expecting they'll adopt that recommendation. That's similar to the equine codes, that have limits on the number of animals that can race in one particular race. I'm confident that we've got safeguards that are going to be put in place. My big concern, as I said, is making sure that we don't have over-racing for greyhounds that increases the risk of injury.

CHAIR - Absolutely. Thank you.

Ms RATTRAY - I know, Commissioner, you talked about your concerns about the number of greyhounds being bred. Is there any reason why there can't be a restriction now on the number of greyhounds being bred? I mean, does it need legislation to do that or can that be something that you could recommend and that the code could take on board?

Mr CARROLL - It's not my position to pre-empt what will occur out of this Parliament in relation to the Bill. As I said, in answer to Mr Winter's question, I have no idea what's going to occur on the outcome of the Bill. If the Bill doesn't pass, I don't know what the Government's position will be in relation to the policy that they announced last year [2025]. So, from that point of view I would have thought, and it's only my personal position, that it would be unfair at this stage to put a restriction on the breeding of greyhounds if greyhound racing is to continue as business as usual if the Bill doesn't pass.

Ms RATTRAY - Even if you're looking at it from a welfare perspective, I mean, there are 'x' amount of litters that can be bred. People have to work out who might be able to breed this year or whatever. You still don't see a positive out of that?

Mr CARROLL - Once again, the greyhounds are bred not only for racing in this state, but also other states. I think at this stage my personal belief is that it would be unfair to put those restrictions on until we know what's going to occur because it's not my position to prevent someone from doing a lawful activity whilst it's still a lawful activity. If it does become unlawful, then clearly restrictions need to be put in place. But, as I said, some breeders will sell their greyhound pups to other states as they're entitled to and so I don't think at this stage that we should be putting a restriction on.

We've seen greyhound numbers, whelping numbers, in the last five or six years decrease significantly. There are a range of reasons as to why that occurred. We've seen an uplift, as I said, in the number of litters that have been whelped since the announcement, given the gestation period. So, yes, that is concerning as to if the Bill is passed and how we deal with those, but once again I'm trying to have a balanced view on this - that if the Bill isn't passed, and as I said, that's not my decision, that's one for Parliament, as to - and the decision made that greyhound racing continues as normal, then those people are entitled to breed those number of greyhounds.

Ms WEBB - I understand why you might not choose to unilaterally bring in new rules about breeding in the absence of the Bill yet to be passed, but if the Bill doesn't pass, for example, can you remind us under your legislation, is the Minister in a position to direct you to make such rules as those or to go into that space?

Mr CARROLL - No, the Minister wouldn't direct me to. He can ask me to look at it, those issues, and in fairness, and I hope that I've displayed this in the 20 months that I've been in the role, our office has been prepared to take feedback from any person as to the way in which the racing industry operates, as we should, because I'm there as a representative of the

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Tasmanian public to ensure that all racing prospers throughout the community. I've had a lot of discussions with a lot of people about changes to the Rules of Racing across the three racing codes. Every Rule of Racing that's proposed comes through my office and I provide feedback on that, and I can make recommendations to Tasracing as to the introduction of local rules as I'm proposing in the draft Transition Plan.

I would think that, once again, it's not my position to pre-empt what will occur if the Bill doesn't pass, but there'll be certainly some discussions had as to what the next steps are once we learn what they are.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Commissioner, we now know in terms of registered trainers, there are about 125 registered trainers in Tasmania. This is information that came back to us through the Estimates process. About a quarter of that 125 registered trainers don't have a dog registered to them at present. One trainer alone, and that is Anthony Bullock, of course, is responsible for more than one in 10 greyhounds who are racing. Most of the greyhounds are registered to just 10 trainers. Is there any update on the trainer data and do you have any information to share with us about your early exit discussions with industry participants? That is the program of working with participants to leave early through a compensated scheme of some sort.

Mr CARROLL - I'll provide the Committee this list of trainers and number of greyhounds.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is that something that is on the public record? Are you happy to have it on the public record or is it just for our information?

Mr CARROLL - Just for your information.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

Mr CARROLL - What I would say to that is as those that have an interest in any form of racing, the number of racing animals and any one trainer can fluctuate greatly at any one point of time. We've seen Mr Bullock, that has the most number of dogs; his numbers have fluctuated by up to 20 to 30 dogs over a couple-of-month period depending on the number of owners that -

Ms O'CONNOR - Always pretty high, though, with respect.

Mr CARROLL - Those numbers there - in some ways you're quite right. As you'll see there and I've tried to make it as easy to read as I can, but the top 26 trainers at this stage have 10 dogs or more and then that drops away after the number 26 trainer. That obviously suggests there are a lot of hobbyists and families involved in greyhound racing.

To your answer as far as the voluntary exit scheme's concerned, I don't want to breach the confidence of those that have taken part. There have been a lot of people that have formally registered their expression. There have been a lot of people that have informally registered their interest in taking part, and I don't want to put a number on that.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, that's fair. At this point, that's fair.

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Mr WINTER - Can you do it just on the formally one, though? I understand informally, but can you tell us how many formally have expressed?

Mr CARROLL - I'd rather not.

Mr WINTER - I don't want to interrupt Cassy's question, but I can come back to it.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, these are confidential conversations that you've -

Mr CARROLL - Correct. When you look at the number of - what I don't want to do is - your assessment is quite correct in that the number, on the data that I have, is that we have 103 trainers at the moment that have a racing greyhound of any number. If I suggested to this Committee - and let's pick a number - if I said there was 20 people that had formally, that's a very high percentage. So, then what occurs is that people will start asking questions at race meetings of other participants: 'Have you registered an expression of interest' and so forth. I'm not prepared to do that and put those people in those positions.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yeah, fair enough.

Mr CARROLL - We have received a number of expressions of interest. I'm not going to put a number on that. I respect the confidentiality of that process. If participants choose to go and speak to other people about their involvement in the process, that's up to them, but I won't be actually declaring that.

Ms O'CONNOR - But just to be clear, there's been not insignificant interest in the voluntary exit program that's being offered?

Mr CARROLL - No, there's been interest in that program.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yeah. So, there's been reasonably significant interest in the program.

Mr CARROLL - To be fair to some of those people as well, some people have expressed interest and then decided not to continue any further conversations about that. At this stage, it's only been an initial discussion as to what that may look like as far as any financial assistance is concerned.

Ms O'CONNOR - I've just got one more question.

CHAIR - And then we'll move on to - is it the same area?

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, no, it goes back to the earlier questions. It's about the Code of Practice, which I just want to ask a question about before we go to Dean, if possible. The industry for the first time has a Code of Practice for greyhound welfare which came out a few months back. I presume that your office had some input into the Code of Practice, but it still, for example, provides that greyhound enclosures are to be a minimum of 1.2 metres wide, 1.8 metres high, to a total area of 3.5 square metres, which, conveniently, is about the size of current kennels. Can you foresee any adjustments or updating to the greyhound Code of Practice regardless of what happens with the Bill, given that this document is primarily produced by Tasracing on behalf of the industry?

Mr CARROLL - Firstly, you are right, it is a Tasracing document. You may or may not be aware that after the equine Code of Practice that one of the recommendations that I made was that the greyhound Code of Practice be developed. I'm quite pleased that it has been developed. My office did provide feedback as far as that code of practice is concerned and, once again, and I've been on public record, thank Dr Kate Savage, who's my independent vet, for providing that advice. We looked at the Code of Practices from other greyhound industries, not only in Australia but around the world, and our office is satisfied with the code of practice. But as I've said with the equine Code of Practice, it's a document that is a living document and should be assessed on a continual basis, and that will be the case. If we feel as though there's any amendments that need to be made to that, then through our office we would make a recommendation to Tasracing to make an amendment. But ultimately, it is a Tasracing document and they are responsible for assessing and updating the document on an annual basis.

Ms O'CONNOR - I don't think it captures the Five Domains of animal welfare, to be fair, but that's a discussion probably for another day.

Mr CARROLL - Certainly.

Mr WINTER - Back onto the voluntary exit scheme. So, you said, correct me if I'm wrong, but the expression of interest in the voluntary exit scheme is not insignificant. Are you talking formally or informally or both?

Mr CARROLL - Both.

Mr WINTER - So, can you explain to me the rationale behind why you can't say the number of people, given you've said it's not insignificant, there's 125? You've used the example of people might start asking questions. You've already said it's not insignificant. Why can't you tell us the number?

Mr CARROLL - Because, as I said, the greyhound community is a small community, and I don't want to insinuate or have people ask questions of each other as to whether they've entered into the industry.

Mr WINTER - Do you realise you've already said it's not insignificant so they would already be asking those questions?

Mr CARROLL - I've answered the question, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - But I'm trying to understand how this program is actually working. To me, it's important that we understand how many people have actually expressed an interest and I'm not following any logic that says that people are going to be more or less inclined to ask each other if they've expressed interest whether it's simply you saying it's not insignificant or you're giving us the number.

Mr CARROLL - That's your opinion. You're entitled to it.

CHAIR - Commissioner, is that something maybe you might be prepared to provide the Committee *in camera*, the information around that? Just the number, if it was confidential? If that's what Mr Winter is seeking -

PUBLIC

Mr WINTER - I'd prefer it than not getting it at all, of course.

CHAIR - I understand the Commissioner's concerned about the ramifications on welfare of participants and things like that. You've expressed that quite clearly. But is that something you'd be able to provide *in camera* to the Committee?

Mr CARROLL - *In camera* I'll give you an indication.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you.

Mr WINTER - Sure. In terms of the voluntary exit scheme, so, if my memory serves, it was announced in May or June this year [2026] - around that time. Can you give us an update on whether that policy is complete, whether you've got a funding model that you're actually able to offer to people who have indicated interest?

Mr CARROLL - I think the Government has indicated that there is money that's been set aside in the budget. I think it was \$4.8 million that the Government had mentioned, at the moment, and whilst there hasn't been any form of conversations, there's been a Deed that's being prepared by NRE for those discussions that we'll have with certain conditions -

Mr WINTER - A Deed specifically for the voluntary exit scheme?

Mr CARROLL - the voluntary exit scheme. There'll be conditions that are set in the Deed. That's a discussion that you can have with NRE and the Minister.

Mr WINTER - Sure. In your evidence in July of this year [2026], you noted the decision to develop a voluntary exit scheme by the 31st of December 2026 had come from the Minister's office, but then I asked you about that \$4.8 million transition package allocated in the state budget and I asked who was responsible for coordinating it, and you said, 'I don't know I haven't had those discussions yet as far as that's concerned so I can't answer that question'. You've gone into a little bit there, can you explain a little bit further what's progressed since July in terms of the development of the policy? What's been your involvement in the development of that?

Mr CARROLL - Of the voluntary exit scheme?

Mr WINTER - Yeah.

Mr CARROLL - The voluntary exit scheme at this stage is we've asked for expressions of interest, there have been initial discussions as to the expectations of what people may receive for voluntary exit that is concerned. We've done an assessment as to the criteria that those people have regarding voluntary exit. You'll see they're aligned to the Tiers that are detailed in the Transition Plan. The end result as to what that financial assistance would look like will depend on the end pool of money that's available. There's a model there that's in the Transition Plan that I believe is effective. Once again, the end sum will be predetermined by the end number that is, if you like, the total pool that's available. I don't know what that total pool is at this stage.

Mr WINTER - Is it the intention that this voluntary exit scheme will be funded from that \$4.8 million in the Tasmanian budget?

Mr CARROLL - I assume so. It is not a question for me.

Mr WINTER - Yes, sure, anything you can't answer today you can expect we'll be asking the Minister on Monday, but there is sometimes for us, anyway, a little grey between who's doing what.

In terms of that, it was announced in May or June and the participants need to have signed up by the 31st of December, why is it that there is still not a Deed and is that prohibited to people from actually being able to access the scheme?

Mr CARROLL - No, not at all. In fact, there are a number of conversations that needed to be held to gain an understanding of the expectation of participants as to what they would receive in a voluntary early exit package.

Mr WINTER - Does that mean there's a draft model that you're able to - are you having discussions about what they would receive?

Mr CARROLL - No, as I said, there's no draft. I can say that I've worked through figures from looking at a pool of \$5 million and incrementing by \$1 million upwards as to what potentially could be received. There hasn't been a number that's been given to me and that's why I think that the model that we produced in the Transition Plan is effective regardless of what the pool is. That may or may not satisfy the participants as to what that number is, but the requirements of a person entering into the voluntary exit scheme are actually being developed in the Deed at the moment and that's in draft. As I said, that would be a question for the Minister and the NRE as to what those requirements are.

Mr WINTER - Are participants being given a figure that they might receive if they entered into an agreement?

Mr CARROLL - There's been discussions and, once again, I don't want to go into the confidential discussions. There have been numbers that have been provided to me as to what those expectations are. Once again, there have been discussions held as to what those numbers may be, but, once again, they're just preliminary discussions. They could be any number, but that will depend on what the pool is.

Mr WINTER - When are you expecting, because we're now into October and it finishes in December, when do you expect that there would be a Deed in place and you'd be making offers to people?

Mr CARROLL - I would expect in the next couple of weeks.

Mr WINTER - Thanks, I have got heaps more, but I understand.

CHAIR - If I may go to the financial assistance scheme that's outlined in pages 52, 53, 54, 55 and 56 of the Plan, and based on the data that we've just heard in relation to the trainer data, particularly where we have, I think, 103 trainers, the top 26 have 10 dogs or more, sorry, 125 registered trainers, my apologies, and you've got a tiered system there, particularly for the trainer exit program, it's fair to say that the vast majority of those looking to get assistance from this particular scheme will be in hobbyist Tier 4 category.

PUBLIC

The way it's worded in the Transition Plan, it would assume that people will be rehoming their dogs. Can I be really clear that when we're talking about hobbyists who might have one, two - and some even have none - dogs, no-one will be required to give up their dogs and so therefore they wouldn't be seeking financial redress or assistance under the exit payment for rehoming their dogs, is that correct?

Mr CARROLL - I need to be very clear that when we say rehomed ultimately the owners or trainers may choose to keep the dog -

CHAIR - Can rehome them themselves, yes, exactly.

Mr CARROLL - but they then need to go through the rehoming process and then be registered as a council pet to those people.

CHAIR - Yes. No-one's being forced to give their dog to somebody else?

Mr CARROLL - Not at all.

CHAIR - If they want to keep their dog because they have one or two dogs -

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

CHAIR - they go through a process of retiring those dogs and then they become pets as registered pets through their regular council. When you're looking at the modelling, I suppose for the financial assistance scheme, it's heavily focused therefore, in terms of the sheer numbers around those hobbyists and the needs of those hobbyists in terms of transitions, notably that there are 10 or so who would be either Tier 1 or Tier 2 participants. A lot of your attention will be on the transition for those hobbyists to one or two dogs transitioning from racing dogs to pet dogs. Is that correct?

Mr CARROLL - Each dog will be treated the same way whether it's Mr Bullock that's got 80-odd dogs or whether it's someone that's got one dog, that dog will be treated the same way and be required to go through a rehoming process. As long as, as I said, that dog goes through the proper rehoming process, it ends up as a registered council pet, there's no reasons why any participant couldn't keep their greyhound at the end of the day.

CHAIR - Excellent, so I will make that very clear. We have had some concerns in the community that people would have their dogs forcibly taken off them. There's a transition process and so people can still [have them] remain as pets.

Mr VERMEY - That was part of my question actually, thank you, Commissioner. If the Deed, doesn't get through, the Bill doesn't get through and the funding is withdrawn, what will the concerns be for the industry and how will it cope in your opinion?

Mr CARROLL - There needs to be significant regulation with any area of uncertainty that we're facing. If the industry is defunded, there's a lot of uncertainty as to what will occur as to a greyhound industry in Tasmania and how they'll be run and how they'll be regulated. So, if I purely start for an integrity point of view and the oversight that will take place that wouldn't be funded by Government, there's a lot of uncertainty as to how that will take place. I

suppose I shouldn't be here to try and, at this stage, assume what will take place as far as if there was a non-government funded greyhound industry and how that would be regulated.

Clearly there's levers within, or requirements within, the various Acts that control racing at the moment as to who should be the governing body of all racing codes in any state. At this stage, Tasracing is. How that would work if there was no Government funding, I haven't turned my mind to that at this stage as far as that's concerned. I'm very concerned that if you have an unregulated industry, that it exposes itself to high integrity risks, but also significant animal welfare issues. I've been on the record right from the start that that's my greatest concern.

Ms RATTRAY - A couple of questions, Commissioner, around the financial assistance package, and you talked about the fact that you've had some conversations. It's pretty widely known across the code that there's been figures from \$2000 to one particular participant to \$300,000 to another participant. So, how are those figures being put out into the community for those participants to consider, if you haven't actually addressed your mind to what the quantum of available funds are?

Mr CARROLL - What I would say to that is there's been - the first question people normally ask is: how much am I going to get? I give a range as to what that expectation may be based, as I said before, on various pools that may be available, as far as that is concerned. A lot of people will come back and say 'No, I want this amount of money'. I'm not about, as I said before, to go in and to breach any conversation I've had with any participant. At this stage, no-one has actually been offered a figure to leave at this stage, despite what any person may have told you or other people. There have been figures that have been mentioned as potentially being available, depending on what the pool is. Once again -

Ms RATTRAY - Right. Okay. So, I am correct, though? I am correct in saying that there had been a range of figures between \$2000 and \$300,000 discussed?

Mr CARROLL - no, that's not correct.

Ms RATTRAY - Even though the person told me directly?

Mr CARROLL - That's not correct.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay. Alright. Well, that's interesting because I've heard that directly. But anyway, that's fine. Moving on, I'm interested in whether you have a view around what's happened in South Australia more recently and whether you've had a look at what's transpired there or is that not on your focus right at this time?

Mr CARROLL - No, I've spoken to Mr [Sal] Perna on a number of occasions, who is the Greyhound [Industry Reform] Inspector over there, in relation to what's occurring. I think if you read his report, his report was to do an assessment of the recommendations that were made by the Ashton Report and then assess whether the greyhound industry had met the threshold of the requirements of the recommendations. I think it was 78 recommendations in total that were made through the Ashton Report; 73 were met.

He makes the observation - I don't know whether you've read the report or not - but the five recommendations that weren't met were to do with animal welfare concerns. He essentially suggests - if I can summarise greatly, and I don't want to disrespect the report because it's a

very good report - that greyhound racing could continue with greater oversight of the industry and suggests they adopt a model similar to what has been in Victoria and Tasmania now, with an Independent Commissioner overseeing, firstly, greyhound racing for the first two years, then looking at expanding that to harness racing and thoroughbred racing.

What he does say is it's not his position to address the issue of social licence and he hasn't addressed the issue of social licence and the increased requirements of the community and racing on the greyhound industry, and that's a position for government. As I said, it's a very good report that Mr Perna has written, but ultimately, he hands that decision over to the South Australian Government to make that decision, which they have.

Ms RATTRAY - Which they have. Right. Thank you, appreciate that. Just my final question that I have around the funding for participants, the financial assistance package: would it be fair to say that given that it's somewhat unknown what the quantum available is - I mean, we've talked about \$4.8 million, \$5.5 million, whatever that might look like - that, effectively, it's going to be driven by the budget of those funds and not really participant needs? Do you think that would be a fair assumption? You'll only have an 'x' amount of money to distribute, so it won't necessarily be on the needs; it'll be on what's available with the funding that Government provides?

Ms O'CONNOR - On their claimed needs.

Mr CARROLL - With all due respect, Ms Rattray, it's not my position to determine what the individual needs are of each participant. I'm sure, as you can appreciate, when you're developing a model that covers a large cohort of individuals that it's not a one-size-fits-all as far as the requirements is concerned. What the financial assistance package does do, as I said, it has four Tiers for trainers, three Tiers for breeders. There is a hardship fund that is also available, but there's also - and as you probably would have noticed - is that there will be a Financial Assistance Panel that will ultimately determine what each person gets, which I'm the non-voting Chair of that particular Panel. So, if a person feels as though that they should be given consideration for an increased amount, they can appear before a Panel and they would have to provide evidence as to the reasons why and what their needs are. So, I disagree with your assessment that it doesn't actually address individual needs. There are opportunities for those participants to appear before the Panel to actually detail what their circumstances are and what their needs are.

Ms RATTRAY - Is the Panel made up of members of the Working Group?

Mr CARROLL - No, it's not.

Ms RATTRAY - Is that what you're saying it will be?

Mr CARROLL - No, it's not.

Ms RATTRAY - It's different Panel members?

Mr CARROLL - Correct. That's correct.

Ms RATTRAY - Can we have some indication of who makes up that Panel?

Mr CARROLL - At this stage it's proposed and, once again, perhaps I'll say that *in camera* to you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just going back to South Australia, and just so the record's really clear: yes, it's true that the five recommendations that the industry didn't meet related to animal welfare, but there is still a parliamentary inquiry underway in South Australia into the industry following the submission of a massive public submission calling for the industry to be shut down, so the Malinauskas Government pre-empted that parliamentary inquiry. I just want to get that on the record, Commissioner.

Just going to the draft Transition Plan - it's the draft version 1 as at August 2026. Do you want to step us through the timeline, if you'd like, particularly I think it's important that we understand that given that the Bill's going to come back at some point before too long. So, what's the next iteration that we're likely to see of this, and when would you expect? Sorry about that. I note that it's a huge body of work and it's really thorough and well put together. I'm not suggesting it's inadequate, but it says draft version 1 and you've asked for public feedback, so I'm just trying to understand where to from here.

Mr CARROLL - Look, as I said in my opening statement - and I should say on the public record, I'd like to thank the Working Group and my office for all the work they've done in developing the Transition Plan. I'm very proud of the document. I think that it's a very thorough document, but it's very easy to read, and probably that's the biggest feedback we've had for this state, is that it's a very easy-to-read document and it flows quite well. As I said, I'd like to thank the Working Group and my team for the hard work they've done in preparing this document.

I would expect that any feedback that is received through the Minister's office will flow back to our office sometime towards the end of October. We'll then make an assessment on that and update the document as we believe it should. There will be feedback from both ends of the spectrum that will come in and we'll have to assess that and determine what's relevant, what's not relevant and what should go in. We will also have to take into account, once again, and whilst there's a Bill before Parliament, this is our living document and if there are any last-minute amendments to the Bill, it'll have to take into consideration that. Without trying to evade the question, it's a very difficult question to answer as far as we would hope that we would have an updated document if there's a requirement to that, sometime in November.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

CHAIR - Can I just ask as an aside to that. Let's assume the bill passes and the document is implemented. It's a dynamic document so there will need to be updates occurring throughout that transition process depending on the way the profile of the industry declining and that kind of thing, so that will still continue in the same process?

Mr CARROLL - As you'll see in the Transition Plan and as was determined prior to this Plan, the Working Group will continue through to the end of transition. Transition just doesn't finish on 30 June 2029. There'll be a period after, if the Bill is passed, that there will be required to oversee rehoming of those last 100 to 200 greyhounds.

CHAIR - Sorry, Cassy.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's okay. That was a good question. Commissioner, I'm wondering if you've noticed any animal welfare trend changes or if you have any insights on the current situation in relation to animal welfare standards within the industry, because we track injuries and deaths, the Greens do; there's more than 100 injuries, some of them very, very significant since the 1st of January this year [2026] - multiple euthanasia's and deaths, it doesn't seem to us like the industry has changed much at all in that regard, but do you have any observations to share about animal welfare matters?

Mr CARROLL - It's a big question, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, part of our current workplan is to dig more deeply into the animal warfare aspects of the industry because at least one Committee Member thinks there aren't any.

Mr CARROLL - I would say, before I go direct to your question, as the Independent Commissioner that's come in, what I would say is that the accountability and requirement and standards of participants in Tasmanian racing has probably never been higher. The oversight and accountability that's been put in place over the past 20 months and, you know, it's been a, I wouldn't say a difficult transition, but certainly we've had to navigate our way through Tasracing taking in the Office of Racing Integrity (ORI) staff and then working out what that best model of integrity oversight within Tasracing's business looks like. I think we are getting to a stage where we believe that we're addressing the issue proactively on a daily basis. It's not optimal at this stage. If I look at the Tasracing Integrity Unit, there's no doubt that at this stage that they could do with more staffing and budget requirements to address the areas of animal welfare and integrity investigations.

I know that doesn't address your question, but what I'm saying is that the bar has now been set at a higher rate than it was two years ago as far as the standard of animal welfare in Tasmanian racing.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, you'd hope so, because Parliament passed the Racing Integrity and Regulation Bill and here you are as Commissioner and you've definitely changed things.

Mr CARROLL - I think we're seeing that on the ground though.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm really glad you're in that role, and there is that role. I'm sure it's true when you say that oversight and accountability have never been higher, but the rate of injuries and deaths of greyhounds on track, or as a result of on track injuries, has never changed, really, in any substantial way. Well, there's my question. I mean, if you've got data to disprove that, Mr Winter, go right ahead.

Mr CARROLL - The issue of injury, or ultimate death, to any racing animal is something that is a concern. What we have seen is that, yes, there has been a slight increase in the number of injuries that have been sustained. But what I would also say is that that has come about because there's now greater accountability on those participants to record injuries with Tasracing. So, once again, Tasracing has been quite proactive in actually recording the number of injuries. That hadn't occurred before. So, yes, we're going to see that increase.

What I think you should feel comfortable in is that if there are any concerns with track conditions - and I'll use the Launceston track with the 278-metre start box area, that racing's

been suspended for that because of the concerns - that was raised by the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club to Tasracing and my office. So, if there are concerns that there are conditions that would contribute to injury or death, then they'll be dealt with immediately as far as that's concerned.

In answer to your question, yes, we've seen an increase. Is that due to any specific reason within racing? What I would say, it's like any sport: we're seeing our athletes, and our animals, getting bigger and stronger and faster and the risk of injury increases because of that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Sorry, but you don't think it's got - and I'll dispute you calling it a sport, it's an industry -

Mr CARROLL - No, I'm saying sport in general.

Ms O'CONNOR - Right. But you don't think it's got anything to do, potentially, with dogs being run harder, more often, that sort of thing?

Mr CARROLL - I think there are certain safeguards that are in place with a number of race meetings that a dog can take part in within the Rules of Racing that provide those safeguards. What I would say is that, as I said - and when I say other sports, I'm talking about AFL, cricket and rugby and things like that where our athletes are getting bigger and faster and stronger and susceptible to more injury because of that. Our racing animals are getting bigger, faster and stronger, so we have to make sure that we're continually monitoring that to ensure that those safeguards are in place. If that means that we have to address the amount that a racing animal races within a certain period of time, then that's what we have to do. But what I would say is that I think that the recorded increase of injuries is because of the better recording now that's being done by Tasracing.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. So, the extension of that is dogs are being injured and then subsequently, off track, some have been euthanised, or like Memphis Rains, injured on track here and sent to Melbourne and her life was snuffed out with a broken ankle - a dog's right hock - her hock was fractured. What are you seeing, as Commissioner, in terms of euthanasia rates and practices?

Mr CARROLL - I think that the euthanasia rates that we've had probably haven't been anything dissimilar to previous years.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, they're not coming down?

Mr CARROLL - No, they're not coming down. But what I would say once again is that there's more accurate recording by Tasracing and responsibility on the participants now to go through a process of approval for euthanasia that wasn't in place before and the Racing Integrity Officer at Tasracing has to approve every dog that's euthanised - racing dog in Tasmania. So, we have more accurate records than we would have had beforehand. To that position, I think we're - and once again, because of this, and I think regardless of what the outcome is of this Bill, we now have a Traceability Officer at Tasracing that is keeping accurate records of the movement and the lifespan of a greyhound from birth to death, and that's a positive.

PUBLIC

As I said before, and I'm not trying to avoid answering the question, but I think you'll see that there'll be an uplift in those injuries and recorded deaths of greyhounds away from the track because we've got better record keeping and we now have a Traceability Officer in place.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. On that, and my final question, do you have data that you can provide to the Committee on contemporary injury and euthanasia rates?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I can provide that to the Committee.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, so you'll take that on notice?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I will.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you very much, Commissioner.

Mr WINTER - How many complaints have you received - I don't mind if it's last financial year or racing year or however - in terms of a comparison between thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing codes?

Mr CARROLL - I can provide that. I'll take that on notice, Mr Winter, and I'll provide -

Mr WINTER - I'd really appreciate it. Do you have any reflections on the level of complaints you've had?

Mr CARROLL - We've seen complaints increase, and that's a good thing. Once again, I'm not trying to avoid the question or sensationalise the number; my annual report's being finalised and I don't have a copy here but, as I said, I'm more than happy to provide that number. But I would expect to see the number of complaints increase because people are now aware of a centralised complaints framework that's in place where people can come to and the complaint will be dealt with within the framework itself and the time period, which wasn't in place previously when ORI was concerned.

Mr WINTER - I agree with you; the new legislation is much better than the old legislation. It's good to hear the Greens have changed their position on that as well, Commissioner. You also talked about, I think the quote was, 'The quality of participants has never been higher'. Are you able to talk a little bit to that in terms of what you're seeing around the participants and their engagement with the animals and the industry?

Mr CARROLL - I can't remember the context in which I may or may not have said that. The quality assurance to participants has never been higher as far as the standards that participants need to meet. There's still a significant improvement that we can make across all three racing codes, and I think that's what we've seen in the two Codes of Practices' that are being developed. There's a bigger piece of work that needs to be done sitting behind that as far as education is concerned to our participants to get them to a standard in which I think that ultimately we would all be comfortable. Have we met that threshold yet? No, we haven't and we've still got a long way to go.

What I have seen is that when I go to race meetings, and I'll be going to Launceston on Monday, that the engagement with the participants certainly has never been higher as far as their concerns and the issues that they're facing, and I think they now have a centralised point

that they can come to. I think that's changed significantly since when I first started, as to the awareness as to the benefits that our - which is a result of the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act* that this Parliament passed, that that's having a significant impact on the benefits of the racing industry in Tasmania.

Mr WINTER - You mentioned in an earlier answer around the 278-metre starters box - it's 278, isn't it?

Mr CARROLL - I think so.

Mr WINTER - 278 at Launceston. Can you give the Committee an understanding of what's required in order for racing to - what work needs to happen and what sign off needs to happen in order for racing to restart from that box?

Mr CARROLL - There's been a lot of discussion as to what the impact or what the fault is, if you like, that was causing those significant injuries. I'm not a track expert, Mr Winter, so -

Mr WINTER - No, me either.

Mr CARROLL - it's not up for me to determine that. What I should say is - and I congratulate the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club for bringing that to my attention to start with - when it occurred was that we were aware that it was their belief because of where the location of where the starting box and the condition of the track was contributing to injuries that I suspended racing from that box immediately.

Mr WINTER - I think it speaks to their passion for the industry and the dogs that they self-identified the problem. I was at the track last Monday night. In speaking to participants there seems to be some frustration that despite the rectification works that they've done and they now, at least the ones I spoke to, feel that it's ready to be raced on again. There's some uncertainty around the process to get it signed off to restart. Can you explain to the Committee what that is?

Mr CARROLL - What I've said is that, once again, there was obviously a report that was provided at the start to say what rectification work was considered and that I said that I would lift the suspension on racing when I was provided with a track expert's report that had signed off on the track saying there was no greater risk to a racing greyhound compared to any other starting box or area of the track. I haven't been provided that report or that sign-off from a track expert.

Mr WINTER - So, the process is they have got to provide you with a report that satisfies that criteria?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, and that's been detailed ad nauseam to the Club itself.

Mr WINTER - I appreciate it. I've got other questions, but it's a different train, so if you want to go to someone else.

CHAIR - Thank you. We go back again to the financial assistance scheme and I'm really keen to sort of myth-bust some falsehoods in the community about the profile of the industry and the participants in the industry. Clearly the data that you're showing after audits is that it's

heavily concentrated in a handful of participants who are what would be a Tier 1 or a Tier 2, high financial dependency, moderate financial dependency in terms of trainers in particular. Certainly, there are a lot of hobbyists. That would obviously flow through then to retraining and opportunities for exiting the industry and what might life look like for those 10 or so trainers exiting the industry if they're not moving interstate, if they're staying within Tasmania.

Can you explain to the Committee a bit about the participant retraining aspects of the Transition Plan you've talked about in the Transition Plan about Skills Tasmania being engaged to work with the industry? How's that going to play out? We're talking about a very small number of participants who if they choose, again, they might choose to move interstate to another jurisdiction that still allows greyhound training, but they choose to stay here. What might that look like in terms of opportunities for them to learn new skills and engage in a different industry?

Mr CARROLL - Yes and thank you for the question. We're unsure of the number of participants that would seek any transition retraining, and to be fair, it was probably the most difficult area that we needed to cover. There are a number of options that are available to participants that wish to take place and work in another industry. Having said that, as you said before, the number that rely purely on greyhound racing for income is a very small number.

CHAIR - Yes. We're talking probably less than 10?

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

We have in our submission to the Government, as far as proposed allocation of budget, put a budget line in there for transition retraining and, as you said, you mentioned a couple of options there. There are also Government-funded areas that people could go into that could seek avenues for retraining. I don't have specifics as to the areas that are required for each of those, and there will probably be discussions that will be held with participants that should choose. What we thought was important that we highlight in the Transition Plan that that's an option for participants to go into and there's an allocated budget that's set aside for that retraining. There are some participants that might want to get into another racing code, for example, and I've had that discussion with a couple of participants.

CHAIR - There would be transferable skills.

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

CHAIR - Obviously, we're talking about a very small cohort of people who would be likely to take up a retraining scheme or some way of participating in that and the vast majority as we say are low to hobbyist Tier in terms of financial impact. They obviously wouldn't be availing themselves of retraining opportunities.

Mr CARROLL - No, they're not, but certainly I would think that the Financial Assistance Panel would be prepared to listen to anyone that put forward a submission to take on board retraining. As I said, there are avenues that a participant can go down that are government-funded retraining programs and ones that would require some financial assistance to do that.

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CHAIR - In terms of financial assistance, too, obviously the trainer category, we know that there are a small number of people who are highly financially dependent on training as an activity for their income. For breeders, not so much. Is that fair to say? Or would there be a crossover between trainer and breeders, and we're talking about the same cohort of people?

Mr CARROLL - There certainly are - a crossover between trainers and breeders. I've got a list here for you of the breeders that are mentioned that you'll see provide breeding numbers dating back to - this is from FY24 as far as that's concerned. Some of those do operate in syndicate groups. For example, there's one group of four breeders that operate in one syndicate as far as that's concerned.

CHAIR - So, how does a syndicate, then, be affected by the scheme in terms of -

Mr CARROLL - They can apply as one syndicate.

CHAIR - As one syndicate? So, rather than individually, they apply as a syndicate?

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

CHAIR - Thank you. Just to try and understand, when we're talking about those in Tier 1 for a breeder's exit payment, in high financial dependency, they would be eligible as a high-dependent if that was your sole income, not necessarily a training income?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

CHAIR - So, the fact that you might participate in training as well as breeding, you would be considered under which particular category?

Mr CARROLL - You could be considered for both, but there would be a cap on the total amount that you would receive.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Sensibly, what we've got in the draft Transition Plan is a focus on the core participants in the industry and how the financial arrangements, the model, how that might look around them. There'd be, I guess, an identifiable sort of external to the industry but connected to its Tier of financial impacts that would happen as well. Have you done mapping of that? So, other sorts of businesses or industries or community members that might work into or connect into the industry that would be impacted by the wind-down of the industry?

Mr CARROLL - No, we haven't, is probably the easy answer for you.

Ms WEBB - Nice short answer. Excellent. Is that expected to be done at any stage? Or, in your view, whose responsibility is it to do that sort of mapping work or develop an understanding about those impacts?

Mr CARROLL - We haven't been asked to do that work. The feasibility study that you have seen focused on the industry itself. That would be something that - that's probably a question for the Government and not for me.

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Ms WEBB - Yeah, I agree, it is because, again, there'd be a lot of assertions, potentially, about what that space might look like and then there'd be some reality about it. I think it's important for us to have an understanding about that.

CHAIR - If I may continue in terms of the process and the financial assistance, particularly around owners in terms of rehoming. Obviously to rehome a greyhound, there's a number of requirements: desexing, they need to ideally meet their muzzling requirements and all those kind of things, teeth, all those things. Will those assistances that are currently available, particularly around desexing and dental, still be available to trainers/owners who want to utilise those schemes to be able to exit with their greyhounds?

Mr CARROLL - Ultimately, that's a decision for Tasracing, but I believe they will still carry through until cessation arrives.

CHAIR - So, the per-greyhound exit payment, the eligibility requirements are that they've met the requirements to successfully rehome their greyhound. That would only be on completion of those other things - dental, desexing all those other things? That'd be after those payments have been made?

Mr CARROLL - That's right.

CHAIR - Excellent. That might be a question for the Minister then, to ask about the continuation of that particular scheme.

Mr WINTER - Just on that, I assume you've been following the New Zealand transition. Have you been across the cost of transition in New Zealand? Can you talk a little bit to how those costs might compare to a cost in Tasmania?

Mr CARROLL - We spoke to both the head of the oversight body and then also the CEO of the transition program two weeks ago. It's fair to say that there's significant cost associated with the way in which they went about the cessation of greyhounds. Their model was that they would continue business as usual up until a certain date with no transition at all. My understanding was the cost was \$64 million and that, essentially, is providing a subsidy to all the trainers and owners to maintain their greyhounds until they can appropriately be rehomed.

Mr WINTER - So, a different model? Okay.

Mr CARROLL - My position was that wasn't a model that I wanted to go down as far as both animal welfare and costs are concerned.

CHAIR - Obviously, it's such a high amount because it's a hard stop, and so the industry continued on as normal. If there had of been a decline over time, that means that you can manage the profile of transition costs over a period of time. Is that what you're suggesting? So, the model that we're proposing here in Tasmania allows for natural exiting, retirement and the usual process of greyhounds exiting the industry without necessarily incurring a cost?

Mr CARROLL - Yeah. You'll see in the feasibility study that the cost of rehoming will increase substantially if there's a delay in the passing of the Bill, and that's a significant

increase. The position of the New Zealand Government was that they would have, I think it was an 18-month -

CHAIR - Very short period of time.

Mr CARROLL - period of time. That was their decision, that suited their needs at the time. I'm only working to what, as I said, the dates that I've been provided by the Government as to what we can. As I said, I sat down for many, many days and nights working through various modelling as to what it would look like as to having the right amount of greyhounds as of 30 June [2029] that we could rehome, but making sure that every greyhound at that stage could be rehomed adequately through that period.

CHAIR - So, it's fair to say then, to compare the costs of ending greyhound racing in New Zealand to what we're proposing here in Tasmania is like comparing apple and oranges; they're not comparable because they are entirely different models of winding up an industry?

Mr CARROLL - That is ultimately why they're apples and oranges. If the decision was made that we would just draw a line through a date - 30 June 2029, it's quite conceivable that we would be looking at \$40 million in rehoming costs.

CHAIR - But we're not undertaking that; we've got a Transition Plan that's strategic and managed, so it's not the same model as what New Zealand has done?

Mr CARROLL - That's what the modelling is working out.

Mr WINTER - Commissioner, you said earlier that no-one has been offered a figure in terms of the voluntary exit scheme. Is that correct?

Mr CARROLL - That's right.

Mr WINTER - Okay. Can you confirm that participation in the voluntary exit scheme for greyhound racing is purely voluntary?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

Mr WINTER - Is it correct that participant involvement in the scheme begins with an expression of interest provided to your office?

Mr CARROLL - There's been various ways in which discussions have been held. As I said, I've had discussions with people at the track as to whether they're interested and people have written in.

Mr WINTER - So, the voluntary exit scheme can occur even if people have not filled out the required form?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. There are people that have been concerned about having any involvement in that scheme and even to writing a form in.

Mr WINTER - Can you confirm that licensed trainer Anthony Bullock has never submitted a written or expressed any verbal expectation or interest in the scheme?

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Mr CARROLL - I won't confirm or deny any - I've said that before, Mr Winter. I'm not going to speak about any person that I've spoken to regarding any confidential conversations I've had. If they want to speak to other people about it, that's entirely up to them.

Mr WINTER - Okay. I won't speak for Ms Rattray but I suspect she's talking about the same participant in her question. Commissioner, there's been a large amount of discussion - as I said, I was at the track last Monday, about a -

Mr CARROLL - And I think it's unfair that you're raising an individual in a public forum.

Mr WINTER - Well, I'll get to that. There's a large amount of discussion within the industry that Mr Bullock's been offered \$300,000 to leave the industry. Is that correct?

Mr CARROLL - No.

Mr WINTER - He hasn't been offered \$300,000 to leave the industry?

Mr CARROLL - That's right. Nobody's been offered any amount of money at this stage, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - On or about 15 July 2026, did you place a telephone call to Mr Bullock at approximately 10 a.m.?

Mr CARROLL - I haven't got my phone records in front of me.

Mr WINTER - During that telephone call, I assume you agree that you've made a telephone call to Mr Bullock.

Mr CARROLL - I've had a number of conversations with Mr Bullock.

Mr WINTER - I understand you have. Did you say words to the effect of, 'I have hundreds of thousands of dollars sitting on my desk waiting for you to exit the industry'.

Mr CARROLL - No.

Mr WINTER - On or about 4 August 2026, did you leave a voicemail on Mr Bullock's phone stating, 'Anthony, Sean Carroll. I'm waiting to see you, mate. Anyway, give me a call.'?

Mr CARROLL - Probably.

Mr WINTER - On 18 August 2026, at the Hobart greyhound track near the 461-metre start box, did you personally approach Mr Bullock and say, 'You need to look at this offer. I have a cheque on my desk that starts with a three.'?

Mr CARROLL - I can't recall the exact detail of the conversation- is there anything behind this, Mr Winter?

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Mr WINTER - There is, yeah. I really want to get to what's happening with the voluntary exit scheme, Mr Carroll. Did you have a conversation with him on 18 August?

Mr CARROLL - I could have had it on that date.

Mr WINTER - You've had conversations with him at the 461-metre box?

Mr CARROLL - What I would say, Mr Winter, is I'm not going to disclose any details of conversations I've had with anyone about the voluntary exit scheme.

Mr WINTER - On 28 August 2026, did you leave a voicemail on his phone saying, 'Anthony, Sean Carroll. I need to finalise this report if you're interested in the voluntary exit scheme.'?

Mr CARROLL - I can't recall the detail of conversation I've had. I've had conversations with Mr Bullock about a large number of matters, Mr Winter, as you can imagine.

Mr WINTER - On 14 September 2026, during a phone call when Mr Bullock stated that \$300,000 was not enough, did you reply, 'That's all they're prepared to offer.'?

Mr CARROLL - No, I can't recall that.

Mr WINTER - Are you saying you've never discussed a \$300,000 exit payment with Mr Bullock?

Mr CARROLL - Once again, Mr Winter, as I said before, I'm not going to discuss any conversations I've had with any person about, around the voluntary exit scheme.

Mr WINTER - But earlier in your evidence, you said that no one had received offers like this.

Mr CARROLL - No one's received an offer at the moment that they can accept.

Mr WINTER - That they can accept?

Mr CARROLL - That's right.

Mr WINTER - Has anyone been offered verbally a figure or given an indication?

Mr CARROLL - Figures have been mentioned, as I said earlier, Mr Winter, to a number of people.

Mr WINTER - It sounds like there has been a figure of \$300,000.

Mr CARROLL - Mr Winter, I'll repeat again, I'm not going to state whether any figure has been discussed with any participant.

Mr WINTER - That was by my count, according to the statutory declaration that Mr Bullock's provided to me - and I'm happy to provide you a copy now if you like, that's the sixth time that you've approached Mr Bullock on what was apparently a voluntary exit scheme to accept - given Mr Bullock has filled out no paperwork, he hasn't expressed an interest in

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exiting the industry, that you have continued to pursue him on an exit that he's given no indication he's interested in.

Mr CARROLL - Once again, Mr Winter, you're not understanding what I'm saying. I'm not going to discuss the contents of any conversations I've had with any person regarding the voluntary exit scheme.

Ms WEBB - It's clear to me, you've answered a number of times, yes.

Mr WINTER - In terms of your functions -

Mr CARROLL - I think I've answered the question, Mr Winter.

CHAIR - We have a question from Ms Rattray. Tania, you haven't got the camera on. I hadn't noticed that you had your hand up. I'm assuming it's on the same line of questioning, but I just wanted to check in with you because we have got limited time left.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. Interesting conversation there.

CHAIR - We can't see you. Are you able to put your camera on, Tania?

Ms RATTRAY - I had a cup of coffee. I didn't think you'd want me seen drinking that. Interesting conversation. Somebody's not quite being totally honest with us, and we'll work through that at another time, Chair. I trust that I probably think I know the answer to my own question. In regard to the mental health and psychological toll on industry participants, can you give me some indication of what might be available, moving forward, should this process continue to unfold? I know that there's been some positive reaction for the current counselling services that are available, but I'm interested in after the fact, if you like. What happens there for support for people, particularly more experienced members of our community, if I can call them those.

Mr CARROLL - Can you provide me what you mean by more experienced members of our community?

Ms RATTRAY - Perhaps the older people in the industry currently that might not look to be repurposing their future in another industry, might not look to be owning a harness horse or something like that?

Mr CARROLL - To start with, as far as your first part of your question about participant welfare, as you'd be aware, and as I've mentioned previously to this Committee, that upon the announcement of the Government's policy position, we made clear to all participants that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services that were offered by Tasracing would be extended from two free services to an extra four sessions for them that our office is going to fund.

As you'd be aware, in May this year [2026], our office and Tasracing engaged Positive Solutions to attend various race meetings from the 26th of May for an initial four-week period to assess the benefit of face-to-face opportunities to meet with counsellors. In June Rural Alice and Well (RAW) was engaged to support this initiative following feedback from participants. Since this time, RAW and Positive Solutions have regularly attended race meetings in the North

and South of the state, alternating race days and service providers so as to provide various avenues for participants to access their preferred support provider. To date, RAW and Positive Solutions have attended 20 race meetings at both Hobart and Launceston, these services have been made available.

These services, at this stage, have been confirmed through to December and allocated race meetings for the subsequent months are communicated to the race clubs each month so they can inform their members. In November, planning will take place with the service providers for race meetings from January to June [2027] to ensure these services remain available to participants. Those services have been included in the transition budget, and it's estimated those costs will be in the vicinity of about \$160,000 through the transition period. As far as any assistance that an individual requires, regardless of their age or their experience, those individuals can make a submission to the Financial Assistance Panel as to what their requirements, as I said before, to ensure that their needs are addressed and met, if required.

Ms RATTRAY - But what about the post - \$160,000 is a considerable amount of money. What happens well into the future? How long is this going to be put in place for? I mean, they won't be going to race meetings, but would they do one-on-one visits with people? Is that what's proposed if there are no more race meetings?

Mr CARROLL - It's certainly proposed. As I said, the assistance to participants will be provided throughout the transition but also for a period of time after the transition. It's not proposed, Ms Rattray, that once June 30 [2029] arrives that the assistance ceases. In fact we would, or I would, envisage that the majority of work that would be required for the Financial Assistance Panel and what's required to assist the greyhound participants will certainly increase at that period around cessation and the 12 months after it.

CHAIR - I have one more question, if I can, about the cessation of greyhound racing on 30 June 2029. What happens in relation to the regulation of those greyhounds that are still registered to race at that point in time, so the 100 or 200 dogs that we might have at 30 June 2029? Who has carriage of oversight in terms of welfare and the operation of the greyhound racing rules for those dogs that will need to transition after 1 July? Will that be your office? And how does that work in terms of interaction with the racing regulations? Obviously, the *Dog Control Act 2000* will take significant heavy lifting, but how does that work in terms of those dogs that are still registered at 30 June 2029 midnight?

Mr CARROLL - Tasracing will still have oversight of that and any issues that have previously been dealt with or, sorry, not dealt with, but raised or managed prior to that will be carried over by Tasracing. Clearly, as you said before, the *Dog Control Act 2000* will then take effect, and there'll be oversight from Biosecurity Tasmania and other agencies that will come to effect.

CHAIR - And so, in terms of the transition for rehoming of those dogs after 30 June 2029, that's something that your office and Tasracing will still have oversight of, for those dogs in terms of the exiting of that, because they may still be eligible for financial assistance, whether it be through desexing, dental work or, indeed, through the participants themselves exiting? So, there will still be some oversight from your office post 1 July [2029]?

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

CHAIR - Have you got a view in terms of how long that wind-up period might take, and the expectation around that? Are we talking six months, are we talking a year for those 100, 200 dogs to completely exit the industry and those participants to no longer be engaged in greyhound racing activities?

Mr CARROLL - We're anticipating at this stage that it'll be 12 months post June 30 2029 that the Transition Plan will still be required. The staff that I've put in place at Tasracing will continue in those roles until then.

Mr WINTER - I want to try and get to the bottom of this around the voluntary exit scheme. You've said that no one has been offered a figure that they can accept. As I said, when I was at the track on Monday night, people were happy to tell me that a number of people were saying they had been given figures. What is actually occurring here in terms of participants being told numbers or otherwise?

Mr CARROLL - Mr Winter, as I said before, I won't discuss individual cases. There has been no formal offer made to anyone at this stage as to a figure. Figures have been discussed with various participants. That's a confidential process that I'm not going to breach. But at this stage, once again, as I had said earlier, we were gathering that information, collating the information and then making an assessment, assessing what that would look like. At this stage, I can't even tell you what the detail, as I said before, of those requirements are as far as what the Deed's concerned because there hasn't been a finalised Deed. I'm not aware what the pool is at the moment.

Once again, what I can say, in the conversations that I've had with each participant, is that when they would come back and say that, 'We're after amount 'x' -', I cannot give them any guarantees that will be what the amount they will or wouldn't receive depending on what the pool is.

Mr WINTER - So, there's no Deed and there's no finalised funding pool. How are people being given these figures? On what basis are the figures being developed?

Mr CARROLL - Once again, as I said to you earlier, when we were looking at the modelling that's mentioned in the financial assistance package, I looked at various amounts that might be available in the pool. The first question I ask is what their expectation is and they give a number. That might be out of the realms of even the largest pool that I may be assuming that might come through to be available for financial assistance, and so -

Mr WINTER - Do you accept that it's at best undesirable that you'd be discussing figures with participants without a Deed or a policy underpinning these numbers?

Mr CARROLL - Not at all, Mr Winter, because what I'm doing is listening to people's expectations and expression of interest. I'm a bit unsure as to where you're taking this.

Mr WINTER - Well, I'm finding it difficult to square what you're doing with what your role is. I've got the functions of the Commissioner here in front of me and there's nowhere in the legislation that dictates what you actually do that would see a Commissioner going and having discussions with participants about how much money they would receive to exit the industry. It feels to me, according to the legislation, that you're acting well outside of that.

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Mr CARROLL - I disagree. I was requested by the Government to develop a voluntary exit scheme, and that would include assessing what the expectations are of the industry.

Mr WINTER - The functions of the Commissioner are actually set out in the legislation. I was lucky enough to be a part of that Bill, and I think it is a very good Bill, but it's quite specific in terms of what your functions are. Can you tell me what part of the functions you are relying on when you go and have discussions with industry members about exiting?

Mr CARROLL - The Act also says that any other duties that's requested of the Commissioner.

Mr WINTER - It says, 'such other functions as are prescribed'.

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - So, that's what you're relying on?

Mr CARROLL - I received in writing a request from the Government to develop a voluntary exit scheme in line with the Transition Plan and, from my point of view, that's not outside the remit of my duties. Listening to the expectations of the participants and providing it to the Government as well would fall within that.

Mr WINTER - I mean, the expectations are really around integrity, and the functions and things, particularly in one particular code where we've been so poorly let down. There was no expectation, certainly in the House where I was involved in debate, that this would be what the Commissioner would actually be doing. It's not specified either.

Ms WEBB - I think it's a pretty presumptuous thing to speak on behalf of the Parliament, Mr Winter, about what our assumptions were.

Mr WINTER - I didn't pretend to speak on behalf of the Parliament.

Mr CARROLL - Mr Winter, when I accepted this job, I didn't think that I'd be dealing with the Transition Plan. As I said before, I have no position on whether greyhounds should be phased out or not. What I do accept is that my role plays an important part in ensuring that the welfare of both participants and animals are maintained in developing this Transition Plan, and seeing it operationalised. That includes ensuring the welfare of participants, the mental wellbeing as far as a voluntary exit scheme's concerned. I don't see how you think that isn't included in my remit, ensuring the welfare of those participants.

Mr WINTER - In terms of further discussion with Mr Bullock, you then went on to discuss, during one of those conversations, around a pending investigation on Dewana Craig. Is that correct?

Mr CARROLL - Once again, Mr Winter, I've told you before, I'm not going to discuss any conversations I have with people around the voluntary exit scheme. I certainly wouldn't discuss with you any conversations I've had with any participant around any other investigation that may be going on.

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Ms WEBB - And if we are talking about a remit, I don't think it's a remit of this Committee to be looking at that, either.

Mr WINTER - In terms of what, sorry?

Ms WEBB - In terms of remit, if we're going to talk about who's got what remit here, I don't know that that's the remit of this Committee.

CHAIR - I understand that. Meg, you have a question? We have four minutes left.

Mr WINTER - I'm talking about the voluntary exit scheme, if that's okay. Is that all right with you, Ms Webb?

Ms WEBB - It didn't sound like that's what you're asking about.

Mr WINTER - I was in that same conversation around the voluntary exit scheme that the Commissioner -

Mr CARROLL - You're talking about an investigation. I'm not going to answer any questions about an investigation, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Well, in that same conversation, is it correct that you also raised Dewana Craig?

Mr CARROLL - I told you Mr Winter, I'm not going detail. If you want to speak to Mr Bullock, or any person about a conversation, that's up to them to disclose what's taken place, but I'm not going to discuss that.

CHAIR - Meg, I think you have a question?

Ms WEBB - Just probably to try and clarify a little bit around this. We've got the Government has requested that you establish a voluntary exit scheme; you've deemed that to be within your legislated role and have been undertaking that. What I'm imagining, from what you've described about the process, and perhaps you can confirm if this is the case: you've been having to have those interactions with participants in a range of ways to help accommodate people's levels of comfort about formality or informality, or having things in writing or not in writing. So, you've undertaken that in a range of ways?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct, yes.

Ms WEBB - What I'm imagining is, you've asked them about their expectations. That's what you've described. I would have thought, and perhaps you could confirm if this is true, they would have wanted to have conversations about specific amounts. Would that be the case? They've mostly been pretty interested to know what the amounts might be?

Mr CARROLL - As I said earlier in my evidence, that's the first question they ask.

Ms WEBB - Yes, that's right. So, you've developed up a model from what you've described for us today, that you've said, 'Okay, let's imagine the pool is 'x', let's imagine it's 'y',

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let's imagine it's 'z.' Then you've developed some theoretical amounts based on that model, and those are things you may have discussed with people?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, that is a broad description of the conversations I've had, without breaching their confidence.

Ms WEBB - And that's exactly what participants in the industry would have expected of these exploratory conversations, from your point of view?

Mr CARROLL - As I've said, the participants have been driving these conversations as to what they could be expected to receive.

Ms WEBB - So, quite possibly, if you'd been refusing to have conversations about theoretical potential amounts, we might have been at this table putting questions to you now saying, 'Why haven't you been telling people specific amounts?'

Mr CARROLL - I would have thought that the process of what financial assistance may look like would be a more drawn-out process and would impact the wellbeing of those participants.

Ms WEBB - Greater clarity provides more confidence, I presume?

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

CHAIR - We have come to the end of our time allotted for the hearing today. Thank you very much for appearing before us, and your willingness to always come before us and give us updates. I really do appreciate it. Also, I acknowledge the enormous body of work that's gone into the draft Transition Plan. It's a significant body of work and it is very easy to read, as you said. I am, for one, very grateful and I'm sure there are many in the community, that it's been drafted so. Thank you for that body of work.

Just before we conclude today, again, just to remind you that what you've 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 are just repeating what you said to us here today. Do you understand that?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I do.

CHAIR - Excellent. Thank you very much for your time, I really do appreciate you appearing before us today and the information you provided. I think you have one more table there. I understand that these are provided in confidence to us, and so they won't be published. Thank you very much for that. We appreciate that and we will end the broadcast there.

The witness withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 11.01 a.m.