

PUBLIC

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2026.

The Committee met at 9.01 a.m.

Department of Treasury and Finance

CHAIR (Ms Johnston) - Welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition and thank you very much for your attendance. I will introduce the members: Dean Winter; Meg Webb; myself, Kristie Johnston; Cassy O'Connor and Marcus Vermey. We have an apology from Tania Rattray. If you could please state your name and the capacity in which you're appearing before the committee.

Mr SWAIN - Gary Swain, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Mr BURGESS - Dean Burgess, Deputy Secretary of Economic Financial Policy division.

Mr WILSON - Sam Wilson, Assistant Director, Shareholder Policy and Markets branch.

CHAIR - Thank you. Can I confirm you've received and read the guide sent to you by the Committee Secretary, which I'm sure you have received a number of times. As you would be aware, but just for the record, this hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament. This protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside parliamentary proceedings. This hearing is a public hearing and the public and media may be present, and should you wish any aspects of your evidence be heard in private, you must make this request to the Committee at the time.

Mr GARY JOHN SWAIN, SECRETARY, **Mr DEAN ANTHONY BURGESS**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL POLICY, and **Mr SAMUEL PETER WILSON**, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, SHAREHOLDER POLICY AND MARKETS, DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE, WERE CALLED, TOOK THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you. Would you like to begin by making statements at all?

Mr SWAIN - I will make a very brief statement just about perhaps the work that we're doing in relation to the funding deed. Very briefly, we're looking at the structure of that arrangement in terms of the incentives it creates, the terms and conditions, the reporting arrangements. We're not having a look at the policy issues of whether greyhound racing should or shouldn't continue. We're not having a look at the social licence associated with, or not associated with, greyhound licensing and we're not looking at quantum. That will go to budget committee in due course. The report from the work Treasury is doing is due at the end of this month. It hasn't yet been shared in any way with ministers. We will try and respect that, while hopefully being able to answer your questions usefully, but not getting ahead of our briefings of the Treasurer.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Thank you very much for that. I might begin and then I will pass on to other members.

Mr SWAIN - Sorry, Chair, just one thing: you were able to accommodate a request to change the timing of this, which I wanted to thank you for.

CHAIR - You're welcome. No problem at all. You have indicated that some work will be due the end of the month. Do you have a timeframe in terms of finalisation of the deed arrangements that you're aware of, working towards, or components of that work?

Mr BURGESS - Yes. The review is basically set up in the knowledge that a number of the agreements are due to expire in 2007, 2009. So, the objective is to provide advice on the framework for the future arrangements ahead of those arrangements expiring, so it gives plenty of lead time.

CHAIR - Any particular milestones that you're working towards, having work prepared and ready before, obviously not leaving to the last minute?

Mr BURGESS - The main milestone we've got is the one the Secretary mentioned, which is advice to the Government at the end of the month. It's really then a matter for the government to determine what they do after that.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just a quick clarification and then I'm happy to move on to Mr Winter. Can we just confirm that the advice the Treasury is giving on the framework of the future arrangement has within it the Government's policy, which is to phase out greyhound racing?

Mr SWAIN - Yes. it does. The terms of reference, just to answer that a little bit more fulsomely, were originally set, I think, in May '25 [2025], so before the election commitments were made. They were subsequently amended leading into the end of last calendar year to pick up, within the context of the Government's policy position, to phase out greyhound racing.

Mr WINTER - Thanks. Moving on from those, or continuing on with those questions, you will provide your advice by the end of this month; are you able to explain to the Committee the process from that point and what input Treasury will have from there?

Mr SWAIN - I think that will depend on Ministers, really. We have a reporting date and then it's with Government for consideration. I expect that we will, in that report, make some recommendations and I expect the recommendations to come back with implementation tasks for both Treasury and NRE.

Mr WINTER - Commonly, including me - I've done it as well - talked about the deed. But there's three deeds, aren't there. Are you able to explain for the Committee about the three separate deeds? What each one of them does?

Mr WILSON - There's the main - what we call the main funding deed, which is the 20-year funding deed which was entered into in 2009 as part of reforms to the wagering and racing industries. At the time the racing and wagering functions of TOTE Tasmania were split. Tasracing was set up as a result of that, and the Government entered into the 20-year funding deed to provide funding certainty to the racing industry in the context of TOTE Tasmania's

wagering business being sold. That's what we call the main funding deed; that expires 30 June 2029.

The primary other funding deed is the point of consumption tax sharing arrangement. That was entered into around 2020, I think, when the Government introduced the point of consumption (POC) tax and agreed to share, at the time, 80 per cent of that tax revenue with the racing industry. It's since been separated or de-linked from the Government's point of consumption tax revenue and now the payments to Tasracing are simply indexed; that currently expires 30 June 2027. There is a third deed, which is to assist with the implementation of Tasracing's new integrity functions. That expires 30 June 2029 as well.

Mr WINTER - That's fairly recent then, that one?

Mr WILSON - That is very recent.

Mr WINTER - And that's also in 2027?

Mr WILSON - That is very recent, yes. That was following the reforms a couple of years ago.

Ms WEBB: It's 2029.

Mr WINTER - Oh, 2029 for that one. So the second one was - the primary point of consumption was 2027. So two of them on the 30th of June 2029 and one in 2027.

Mr WILSON - Yes.

Mr WINTER - In terms of that change in treatment around the point of consumption tax, you said, I think, correct me if I'm wrong, that originally it was around 80 per cent but now it's being indexed; if it's not 80 per cent at the moment, what's the current rate that's being returned back to racing?

Mr WILSON - So it was 80 per cent when the Government chose to implement indexation. It was 80 per cent at that point. The payments to Tasracing are now simply indexed.

Mr SWAIN - I'm not sure what the percentage is.

Mr WILSON - It would still be around the 80 per cent, but the - our POC tax revenue hasn't grown by indexation. It might be 79, 80, 81 per cent, that kind of thing.

Mr WINTER - Is that something you can take on notice for us?

Mr SWAIN - Yes, we could.

Mr WILSON - Yes. We would have that data.

CHAIR - Sorry, I might be a little bit slow, but just to understand that: so it was linked, 80 per cent of the consumption tax and it's been de-linked to that, so no matter how much consumption tax is raised, they still get 80 per cent plus indexation; is that right?

Mr SWAIN - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr SWAIN - I think it was mainly an administrative thing. It was simpler to administer. I don't think there was any great policy driver for it.

CHAIR - Because, obviously, consumption tax goes up and down depending on demand?

Mr SWAIN - That gives industry a bit more certainty as a set quantum and is easier to calculate, but I wouldn't expect it will vary massively.

CHAIR - At the point it was de-linked, as you cycle through, was that at a point of a high or a low in terms of over a 10-year period in terms of consumption?

Mr SWAIN - I don't know, sorry. I don't know.

Mr WINTER - The work you're doing - are you reviewing all three? Is the work you're doing on all three deeds at the moment, or just the main deed?

Mr SWAIN - Yes, three. One of the issues that's under consideration is the opportunity for consolidation of funding.

Mr WINTER - Consolidating all three into a single deed?

Mr SWAIN - It's a consideration, yes. Thinking about creating incentives, the right incentives and reporting arrangements, that will probably be easier to execute under a single deed than it would be under three which then need to talk to each other and contemplate each other. That will be up for the government to decide at the end of the day, but we will have a look at that issue.

Mr WINTER - Chair, I have tonnes of questions, but I will let others have some too.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Are you working with Tasracing in developing the advice on the new deed?

Mr BURGESS - The review is being run internally to Government. So there's a committee which is chaired by myself and with representation from NRE. We have consulted with Tasracing, but they're effectively considered a stakeholder, and we're consulting with other industry groups later this week as well, but they're not internal to the review, if you like.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, has Tasracing made a submission to the review? Does the submission - I'm trying to understand if Tasracing accepts the reality of the Government's policy, which it hasn't shown many signs of doing so to date, and whether or not Tasracing is engaging in good faith in developing advice on the new deed.

Mr BURGESS - I think, I can say that we've been engaging with Tasracing quite closely, and they've been providing a lot of data for us, and they've been cooperating with the review to date. Anything else you'd like to add, Sam, or?

Mr WILSON - Yes, certainly engaging with us in good faith. They did provide a submission to the Government, which was a trigger for this review, and I think that's been discussed in previous forums. They've provided a submission - the Government saying that the funding deeds are expiring and putting forward a case for future long-term agreement.

Ms O'CONNOR - But to Tasracing's mind, that future long-term agreement still includes greyhound racing, as I understand it.

Mr WILSON - That was well before.

Ms O'CONNOR - That was previously, okay, thank you.

I just want to ask the Secretary if there's been any updated work. Treasury and Finance did a really excellent report on Tasracing Pty Ltd, a desktop review of the costs and functions of Tasracing. It's now about a four-year-old report, but it goes into the financial structures of Tasracing and examines each of the codes, and it finds that Tasracing, relative to other jurisdictions, receives a much higher level of government funding, and also that the three codes here, per capita, receive a much higher level of public funding than they do in other jurisdictions. Is there any work being done to update, if you like, the Government's understanding of the financial viability of Tasracing, and the impacts on the budget of Tasracing?

Mr SWAIN - I might start, and hand it to perhaps Dean to begin with.

So, I think that works being built on, and we are looking at comparisons to other jurisdictions as part of the structural review. So, the short answer is yes, and the revenue and expenses of the industry have been considered broadly. So, yes, we're building on that work, I think is the short answer.

Mr BURGESS - So, we're going right into the cost structures, and the flow of funding, which is another important element of the industry, and as well we're sort of building on some other work that was done around economic impacts of the industry as well.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

Mr SWAIN - I think it would be fair to say, I mean, mechanically it's obvious, the budget context is obviously more challenging than it was when that original piece of work was done -

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Mr SWAIN - So, there is a fiscal overlay on all of this.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. Are you able to detail, because it's to the average reader the funding of racing in Tasmania is quite opaque, and to sort of pull apart the funding for each code can be a bit difficult. According to Saul Eslake, around \$75 million or more has been given towards greyhound racing since 2009. Is there any more detail you can share with us, on a contemporary understanding of the amount of funding from Government through the deed that greyhound racing as a code has received, for example, in the past year or so?

Mr WILSON - You're right, it is hard to follow the funding flows directly to each code. The main funding deed is largely untied funding. It is a pool of funding that's provided to Tasracing each year, and Tasracing then determines how it passes that on to industry. It's mostly through prize money, and then that flows through to industry through prize money. So, that's one of the things that we've identified is that it can be difficult to determine exactly where money goes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. In the past year or so, is it plus-or-minus \$8 million towards greyhound racing?

Mr WILSON - So, what we do have is the prize money, paid by Tasracing to the greyhound code. That is one measure, I mean it's probably the best measure of what funding has been provided to the code, but it is difficult to trace that to the government funding because Tasracing has government funding as a revenue source, but it also has its own commercial revenue that is pulled into its total revenue pool and from there it allocates funding to the three codes. So, it's quite difficult to say, 'Okay, that funding paid to the greyhound code is all government money,' if that makes sense. It's all government funding.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

Mr SWAIN - So, my understanding is the history of that was it was kind of dealt with in the formation of the board, and the board had a representative of each code on it. So, I suspect that was a very difficult issue to resolve when they set up the deed, but I am speculating. I don't know that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr SWAIN - When I said we're not looking at quantum, we are looking at things like how does this funding compare to other arrangements? Does it have the level of reporting and transparency that you might expect to see?

Ms O'CONNOR - I think that's a rhetorical question. Happy to move on.

Mr WINTER - I wanted to ask about receiving an RTI back in May around the treatment of the deed by Treasury, and I just wanted to get to the bottom of what happened. From what I can see, there was a 2018 Liberal Party election commitment regarding the funding for racing that centred on removing the efficiency dividend. Then, according to the RTI, whilst that was paid for, I think, five years, Treasury discovered that the amending deed had never been signed and then decided to undo that. Is that something you can explain the background history of what actually happened?

Mr SWAIN - I don't have that detail, but Sam?

Mr WILSON - I do. Treasury doesn't have the authority to cut funding to Tasracing. Treasury was asked by the Treasurer, in the context of budget repair, 'What are some options available for efficiencies from Tasracing?' Treasury provided advice to the Treasurer and the Treasurer made that decision.

Mr WINTER - When was this?

PUBLIC

Mr WILSON - I don't know specifically. I'd have to take that on notice.

Mr WINTER - Sure. That's fine. Was this Treasurer Abetz, though? Or are we talking about Treasurer Barnett?

Mr WILSON - No. I think it might have even been Mr Ferguson.

Mr WINTER - Treasurer Ferguson. Okay, sure. So, the RTI shows that then-Racing Minister Archer hadn't actually signed the amending deed, so that was used as a reason why the 1 per cent efficiency dividend would be put back on. Is that correct?

Mr WILSON - I'd have to look into that. I'm aware the decision was made by the Treasurer following advice on options from Treasury. The specific history of when it was reinstated, I'll have to double check.

Mr WINTER - Sure. The RTI goes in and shows, which some of it you won't be familiar with, which is correspondence between Tasracing and the then-Minister's office around Tasracing being quite unhappy with this. Are you able to tell us the amount that was saved by changing the treatment of the policy?

Mr WILSON - I'd have to take that on notice, sorry. I don't have that with me.

Mr WINTER - Okay, sure.

Ms WEBB - Just a clarifying follow-up, if I may: would it be the case that if the Racing Minister had signed that amended deed that it wouldn't have been an option, or it would've been a more difficult option for Treasury to present to the Treasurer as a saving?

Mr WILSON - I suspect so, yeah. The funding deed between the Government and Tasracing can be varied by agreement with both parties, I believe, so that would have been -

Mr WINTER - But in this case there was no need to because you found that the former Racing Minister hadn't signed it and so therefore there was no need for an amendment. Is that correct?

Mr WILSON - That's my understanding, yep.

Mr WINTER - Sure. So, in summary, since 2018 in that election, Treasury have been paying the indexation on the racing deed in line with the variation in their policy. Then on the 10th of July - sorry, I've found the date - 10th of July 2024 - so, you're right, it would have been Treasurer Ferguson.

Mr SWAIN - Treasurer Ferguson.

Mr WINTER - That's right - received advice from Treasury the variation was not signed by the Minister in 2018, and that being the case, Treasury intend to pay indexation for the 2025 original indexation CPI less 1 per cent. That impacted Tasracing by, that year, \$360,000 for that particular year and presumably that's continuing. Are you able to provide - maybe this is on notice - but are you able to provide the net saving to the budget for the other years up to 2029 as well?

PUBLIC

Mr WILSON - Yeah, we can look at it.

Mr WINTER - Thank you. Is there - it seems, I guess, a strange thing to do. It might have been before your time, Mr Swain, was it?

Mr SWAIN - No, it was the first six months for me.

Mr WINTER - Sure. It's a little unusual, I guess, to see an election policy delivered for five years and then, after five years, pulled apart and to my knowledge it's never -

Ms O'CONNOR - It's not that unusual.

Mr WINTER - Yeah, okay.

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

Mr WINTER - Is there - what was the communication with industry around the decision on this?

Mr SWAIN - I think that would have come through the racing industry and the relevant portfolio Department, so that's, I think, a Racing Minister, NRE question.

Mr WINTER - Sure.

Ms WEBB - If I could follow up on that because I'm trying to get my head around it. It's the first I've heard of it, so I want to be clear in my mind about it. So, for a five-year period the arrangements were under an agreement that had actually not been signed, as it transpired?

Mr SWAIN - I need to check that because I think what we're discussing is a policy change by Treasurer Mr Ferguson, which would've - which doesn't sound like it transacted post the budget passing into an amendment to the deed in the way it should have, as opposed to it hadn't been in place for five years, but I really need to check the history of that.

Ms WEBB - If it had been a policy decision but not a change to the deed, which clearly it wasn't because they didn't sign it, -

Mr SWAIN - What I would've expected to -

Ms WEBB - could it have been given effect to just as a policy decision for those five years then, or was that a mistake for five years, essentially, that we had a financial arrangement between the Government and Tasracing that actually wasn't authorised?

Mr SWAIN - Well, that's the bit that is not gelling for me. If it was Minister Mr Ferguson making a decision in mid-2024, then that budget would have needed to pass and then that would have been transacted through an amendment to the deed. It sounds like it didn't come into being as opposed to it wasn't in place for a five-year period after the policy decision had been made.

Ms WEBB - But we're talking about a policy decision that was made from an election promise in 2018, I think was the question?

PUBLIC

Mr WINTER - Yeah, have a read of the RTI if you like.

Ms WEBB - I'm just trying to get my head around it. So, it was an election promise in 2018?

Mr SWAIN - But there are lots of election promises that take some time to transact into the budget and only when the budget passes do, they then get implemented. I'm just guessing I would need to check the history of that. I mean, there's lots of election promises that don't immediately transact through an election or the coming of Government. It's through the budget process they transact into being.

Ms WEBB - Yes, but it would have been the 2018-19 Budget or maybe even the 2019-20 Budget that this election promise would have been brought into effect if it was going to be and it sounds like it was brought into effect, in terms of the funding.

Mr WINTER - It looks like they received the money for six years.

Ms WEBB - So, it was brought into a budget -

Ms O'CONNOR - They did pretty well then.

Ms WEBB - for a period of years?

Mr SWAIN - Well, I don't know that. I mean, there are election commitments that are made that take some years before they're implemented, so I just have to check the history of that.

Ms O'CONNOR - I want to go back to the timing. There's obviously a bill that's sitting before the Legislative Council that's been delayed but could be brought back at any time and to have some clarity around where the deed is heading, I think would be helpful to the Legislative Council when it does debate that bill. We have advice going to the Treasurer at the end of August with recommendations in it and then there'll be a process but, presumably, and correct me if I'm wrong, there'd be some allocation in next year's State Budget, would there, if there's a new deed and new financial arrangements around that? So, should we expect to see some kind of new deed potentially before the end of the year? Is that your understanding or not?

Mr SWAIN - That's not my understanding. I'd expect our advice to go to the Treasurer and I presume it's going to the minister as well. Then Government needs to make some policy decisions. When they transact that, again, is part of that decision-making process. So, they could wait for the existing deeds to expire and then do it as a consolidation after that, or they could seek to vary by agreement before then. That's a policy decision in itself.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, yes, of course, but I can't imagine the Government would sit on a new deed for three years or so before -

Mr SWAIN - Well there are deeds in place right now.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - No, that's right, but the big deed, the big racing deed expires, as we know, on 30 June 2029 and I mean the industry, if no-one else, obviously would like some certainty, so, okay.

Is the advice that Treasury and Finance is providing to the minister - we've just heard it will go to the Racing minister as well - include any advice on potential transition costs of implementing the Government's policy?

Mr BURGESS - No. That's the responsibility of the Racing Integrity Commissioner.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Just mechanically, would a new deed be drafted through Crown Law? Is that the way it would go?

Mr SWAIN - Yes, so, I would imagine that our advice would come up and there would also be work and advice from the Integrity Commissioner and those two things would inform the government's decision-making going forward.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. On page 11 of your earlier work on Tasracing, it goes through the per capita funding by jurisdiction of each of the racing entities and Tasracing sits at - this is in the year up to 2019 - \$58.68 per capita. The closest is the Northern Territory at \$47.33 per capita and the next closest is Queensland at a bit under \$13 per capita. So, it's substantially higher public subsidy that goes to Tasracing. Does Treasury have any information on where that per capita funding sits today? Is it about the same?

Mr WILSON - We have looked at it.

Ms O'CONNOR - To Tasracing?

Mr WILSON - The updated per capita?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. Do you have that available?

Mr WILSON - I can find it. Broadly, those findings haven't changed. The key point that you highlighted there that, per capita, Tasracing receives a lot more than other jurisdictions is still true.

Ms O'CONNOR - And that understanding would inform the advice that Treasury gives to the Treasurer and the Racing minister in the context of a very constrained budget?

Mr SWAIN - Because one of the things we're looking at is that comparison to other jurisdictions.

Mr BURGESS - So, while we're not recommending a number in terms of the funding, we are setting out quite clearly, I think, the context within which you would consider that number. In terms of funding received to date, economic benefits -

Mr SWAIN - Jurisdictional comparisons.

Mr BURGESS - Yep.

Ms O'CONNOR - How do you test the economic benefits, because we have different stories depending on who you speak to? The industry and Tasracing employ a consultancy called IER, which gives them the results they want, and then you have Saul Eslake looking at the industry and coming to a very different and informed expert view. So, how does Treasury examine the economic benefits of greyhound racing?

Mr BURGESS - As an economist, I'm not surprised by having different views on economic matters, but what we've done is we looked at the work that Tasracing did. It's important to realise what that is, which is an economic -

Ms O'CONNOR - Cost-benefit -

Mr BURGESS - contributions study.

Ms O'CONNOR - Contributions. No costs, that's right.

Mr BURGESS - So it basically shows what would be the impact on the economy if you just remove the industry. Whereas the approach we've taken, I think, more accurately reflects the Government's decision that it has in front of itself, which is about what to do with the funding. Treasury has a computable general equilibrium model capacity now, which is effectively a model of the economy, which is a dynamic model, and the scenarios that we've run in on our advice, or we're running in our advice, is if you ratchet down government funding by set amounts, what is the impact on the economy over time. The difference between that approach is it shows, that the first approach shows there's no response within the economy, just the industry just disappears - where what our modelling shows is, if you cut - reduce funding or change funding, how does that flow through the economy, because you'll get people - some people might be impacted and other people are moved to different activities and the economy adapts. We're doing that work as part of this.

Mr SWAIN - So that CGE model was developed and used in the financial sustainability report and it's something we're using more frequently now that we have that capacity. If you like, it links some of the economic and accounting advice in Treasury and allows us to look at shocks to the economy in one form or another through a common model. So, because the problem - I'm not buying into the specific comment, but it is possible to identify an economic model which will give you the answer, an answer to support your case if that's what you're calling for.

Ms O'CONNOR - Of course. That's a whole sort of army of consultants rely on that truth.

Mr SWAIN - There's also an efficiency measure that the CGE model took a bit of effort to set up, and cost a little bit to set up, and it's not efficient for every Department to do that separately. So, we're now encouraging agencies to work through Treasury for that modelling.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Can I just quickly check, I'm happy to move on, Chair. To date, has that modelling shown any shock to the economy, as you described it, from removing the funding for greyhound racing?

Mr BURGESS - We've only looked at scenarios that involve total funding changes -

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

Mr BURGESS - And then, because it's hard enough to sort of get down to that granularity in the model on an industry-wide basis. It's almost impossible to do it just for greyhounds, but I think it's fair to say that the impacts we're seeing now would be described as manageable for the economy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

CHAIR - Can I just go back to the issue around the timing of de-consideration, and back to the consideration of consolidation of those deeds. Obviously with one expiring at the end of this financial year, is the view that you're looking to extend that to align with 2029, so that there's an opportunity at 30 June 2029 to have a consolidated deed, rather than separate ones, or what's the consideration?

Mr SWAIN - No. The point I was trying to make before was, I mean, the deeds could theoretically run their course, but the previous point is quite right. Industry will be looking for surety as soon as possible. So, it's open to the Government to deal with it in this next Budget. But I'm just saying that that's a decision of itself that we can't prescribe; that's a decision for the Government.

CHAIR - It could, by agreement to the parties, obviously, bring a consolidated agreement to deal with all those three agreements in one, to commence 1 July 2027?

Mr SWAIN - Well, the Government could make a decision, weighing up our advice and any advice and input from the transition work that's also occurring, make a decision that's then reflected in the next Budget, and then is subsequently transacted through amendments to agreements, or amalgamation of agreements, but it's open to the government to do that or not do that.

Mr WINTER - In terms of the process we're now going through, I guess it seems a difficult one because on the one hand, there's no certainty around the future of the legislation and how it might turn out, but you're also being asked to provide advice into a process of what the funding work looks like for a racing industry where we're not actually sure how it's going to look. Can you speak at all to how we're going to - is it possible that a deed gets signed without certainty about the future of greyhound racing here, and if so, how would that actually work?

Ms O'CONNOR - Political question.

Mr SWAIN - Yes, I think that's very hard for me to answer. All I can say is that the terms of reference we're operating under requires us to take into account the planned closure. So if that doesn't pass through the parliament, that might require a review of any advice we've given, but we are progressing the work on a basis that that policy position is progressed.

Mr WINTER - So, it leaves the obvious question of what happens if the legislation doesn't get through, but I do agree with Ms O'Connor on that; it's not really a question for you.

In terms of that work that you're undertaking at the moment, the level of funding under the current deed - Tasracing has put in a submission to this committee, which outlines that it's

seeking, I think, it's \$73 million by year 20 of the deed in total revenue from the Tasmanian budget. Is that in line with your thinking, it seems like an extraordinary amount for them to ask for to run two codes.

Mr SWAIN - I won't - I mean, that's a matter - the budget process, now that I've been through four, is an exercise that involves heavy rationing. A lot of people have expectations, they're not always, well, they're rarely fully met.

Ms O'CONNOR - Plenty of ambit claims, too. Well, I'm happy to keep asking questions if Mr Winter has run out. Just off the back of that, Tasracing has put in a request for \$73 million in funding and has said to this Committee, in fact, that they would expect to see no impact on their funding even if greyhound racing ended, if I recall correctly. Is it Treasury's understanding - and I'm just going now to page 12 of your previous report:

When comparing state government funding as a percentage of total revenue, at 64 per cent, Tasracing has by far the highest percentage when compared to its interstate counterparts.

[...]

While it is acknowledged that Tasmania has a very different racing industry to Victoria for example, largely due to the difference in population and size of racing events in the two states, this is a significant difference in government funding.

Has Treasury done any work on what it would regard as an appropriate and sustainable level of funding for Tasracing following the enactment of a new deed that removed the greyhound code?

Mr BURGESS - Again, if I might - we haven't actually, as I said, we're not targeting a particular level of funding. What I think is fair to say that we are looking at is what arrangements or conditions can be attached to the funding to achieve a couple of outcomes, which is, one, incentivise Tasracing to operate commercially and efficiently, and also to clearly demonstrate to the community what it's getting for its money.

Ms O'CONNOR - Where the value lies.

Mr BURGESS - Yeah, because I think our work to date has shown that both of those matters are somewhat opaque with the current funding arrangements.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right. So, Tasracing's submission to government on funding, has that been also presented to Treasury and Finance? And has Treasury provided advice back to government on that submission?

Mr WILSON - Forms the context to our review.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's contextual to the review -

Mr BURGESS - Certainly with Saul Eslake's work - we're looking at that as well in the context to the reviews.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh, so Saul Eslake's work on the greyhound code is also informing the work on the deed?

Mr WILSON - As a contextual piece.

Mr WILSON - Yeah, we make the point that the environment for the racing industry is highly uncertain. There's been a number of government reviews and external reviews in the industry.

Ms O'CONNOR - Big shift in public opinion.

Mr WILSON - Yeah, it's a significant public policy decision, is what we're trying to say.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, Treasury hasn't provided advice to Government on Tasracing's ambit claim for \$73 million going forward?

Mr SWAIN - No, we haven't provided specific advice on that. But I'm mindful that, I think, the Government has said that it will not be directly funding greyhound racing.

Ms O'CONNOR - So has the Labor Party, too, if it wins the next election, which is positive - small positive.

Mr SWAIN - So, we will, I think in the advice, say that needs to be specifically interpreted and here are the ways you could interpret it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can you just flesh that out a bit, thanks?

Mr SWAIN - Well, no funding could mean that you don't have any prize money; or no funding could mean that you don't - you look at the net cost of greyhound racing. There's different things that no funding could actually mean. We will try and flesh those out and say to Government, 'This is what you've stated your policy is. Now, it could mean this or it could mean that. Specifically, what do you want?'

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. So, it's been put to us that even if the legislation doesn't pass and the deed defunds greyhound racing, that the industry could stand on its own two feet here. Has there been any examination of that kind of scenario or proposition by Treasury? I mean, we don't - I don't - believe that, of course.

Mr WILSON - It's really hard to say because it would depend on the extent of activity in the greyhound industry.

Ms O'CONNOR - Tasracing could, for example, have a fee-for-service arrangement where it charged for its stewards' time on the track. Are they the sort of things that are in Treasury's advice?

Mr BURGESS - It's not really in scope from the review.

Ms JOHNSTON - Can I just apply on from that?

Ms O'CONNOR - Hang on, I think we've just got a bit more information.

Mr WILSON - I was just going to say, we do say that it is hard to define and that we are aligned with the Government's policy that it will be completely phased out by 30 June 2029. That provides a much clearer and more well-defined financial impact. The point that we make is that if the greyhound industry continued, it's really unclear at this stage, because it would depend on the extent of activity as well as, like you say, any additional sort of revenue-raising arrangements from Tasracing.

Mr SWAIN - If I could, as a general comment: I think Treasury's advice would be that any funding provided through the budget should be for a specific purpose and should not be -

Ms O'CONNOR - Left to Tasracing to decide how to disperse it.

Mr WINTER - Chair, are we able to listen to the witness, or -

Ms WEBB - I would rather hear the answer expressed through Mr Swain, if that's okay.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, sorry, I'm being policed at the table. I was just trying to be helpful, Mr Swain.

Mr SWAIN - That was what I was going to say, though, in this case. So, if a business is getting a payment from the government to do a specific thing, that thing should be identified and reported on, would be Treasury's standard position, as opposed to the circumstance where you might have an electricity business which is operating under a charter or a statement of expectation and it's commercially securing revenue through the sales of goods and services, in which case it will be operating under a broader framework to manage expenses to that revenue, as opposed to it's getting, effectively, a payment to do a thing from the budget.

Ms O'CONNOR - Right. Thank you.

Mr SWAIN - A better analogy might be Tas Irrigation. Where Tas Irrigation might be funded for specific irrigation projects, they're not given a bucket of money to say, you choose which of these five you want to do; they're funded for specific things.

CHAIR - Further to that then, funding for a specific purpose, it's really important that you understand the cost components of the business of Tasracing. I think from what I'm hearing that the general opaqueness about what it costs for commercial operations as opposed to regulatory operations, broadly, but also across each individual code in its application, is that where your work is trying to take you to, so that when decisions are made about the deed you have a greater understanding, a granular understanding, of what the unit costs are for each of those activities, and Government can then, on a policy basis, decide we're funding X component, not Y component, and be more directed with its funding decisions -

Mr SWAIN - Yes. So -

Ms JOHNSTON - whereas at the moment it's broadly providing for the commercial and regulatory purposes of Tasracing.

Mr SWAIN - I think, going to Mr Winter's earlier comment, even if the phase-out of greyhound racing was not on the table, wasn't even being considered, we would have a range of - we would express a range of views in relation to the funding of Tasracing, which is along the lines of what you're saying, that there should be clarity about what you're funding and the reporting around that.

CHAIR - Perhaps when the initial deed was entered into, many years ago, that wasn't a priority in terms of that kind of accountability, in terms of funding. It was more as a compensation, an immediate compensation for the loss of TOTE.

Mr BURGESS - Yes. I think that's a really important contextual -

CHAIR - Whereas we're taking a journey to try and understand what's the actual cost of this business and its return, and then how do we hold a GBE accountable for expenditure for Government.

Mr SWAIN - I think that's right. I imagine it would have been a seismic change to the industry at that time, and they were trying to provide some confidence that that significant change would have been manageable. I suspect it would have been very difficult to be too precise about funding allocations at that time, because I suspect there wasn't a common industry view.

CHAIR - Given it's been such a long time, are you a little surprised that Tasracing aren't as mature in their costs understanding as what perhaps they should be at this point in time. I find it a little astounding that it's all very opaque. They've been operating under these agreements for some time now and they can't articulate what the cost of regulation might be, or the commercial unit costs and the code costs. I find it all very opaque.

Mr BURGESS - My view on that would be is that reflects the nature of the funding they've been receiving. They haven't been required to identify separate costs. They're not required to identify, necessarily, what that funding is to deliver, so -

CHAIR - So, it's more of a function of that they haven't been required by previous shareholder expectations.

Mr BURGESS - I think that's one of the issues we're looking at is what conditions you can attach to the funding to deliver incentives upon Tasracing to deliver outcomes that the Government wants it to deliver.

CHAIR - I suppose as a business, though, you would expect you'd understand, even if you're not required to by your funder, you'd understand what your business is and your business costs. I mean any private business would want to understand that.

Mr WILSON - Yes. Can I just add, Chair: I'm not suggesting Tasracing don't understand their costs. What we're suggesting is that the funding arrangements aren't linked to specific outcomes or objectives - how many races, for example, or how many people you support within the industry; it's more untied funding.

CHAIR - I'm sure there's plenty of community service organisations that would like a funding deed like that.

Ms WEBB - Oh my lordy, yes.

Mr WINTER - I've listened to some of the evidence around incentives. It's a bit difficult, as they're limited in what they can say, but trying to understand what incentives might actually mean and what the specific payments might mean as well, because where it's not Tas Irrigation, it's something quite different; are you able to expand a little bit at all on what incentives might actually mean?

Mr SWAIN - I might leave the incentives one to Dean. He might have a comment on that, but on the specific payment, for example, the Government could form a view that there are specific challenges that should be prioritised in terms of their capital stock. They might say, we're giving you this money to upgrade this facility because we have a specific concern about the ongoing viability of that facility, or the Government might say, we would like to see some centralisation of activity; there's a whole range of things the Government could do in the context of a business that isn't fully self-funding. If it were fully self-funding, you'd be in a more standard GBE SOC arrangement where you'd say, that would normally be a matter for the board under broad strategic oversight from shareholder Ministers, but not specific direction. In a context where the funding for those facilities is coming from Government, the Government could choose to be much more directive.

Mr WINTER - Is Treasury being provided with a copy of the Alliance Sport and Media optimisation report that was commissioned by Tasracing?

Mr SWAIN - I don't know the answer to that.

Mr WILSON - No. We have the IER report.

Mr WINTER - That's fine. If you haven't, I won't ask about it. That's okay.

Ms O'CONNOR - Page 25 of your previous work talks about the IER report's assessment of racing industry economic contribution, and there's a claim in there that the industry - and that's the three codes, directly and indirectly, supports just under 1000 full-time equivalent jobs in Tasmania, but the 2016 ABS census data of the total workforce in Tasmania points to 181 people deriving their main income from the racing industry, and that is again across the three codes. Does Treasury have an up-to-date understanding of the employment impact? I'm happy for you just to talk about the three codes, even.

Mr BURGESS - We would probably have to take that on notice. I haven't got it at the top of my head.

Mr WILSON - No, we don't have it at the top of our head, but we've certainly updated.

Ms O'CONNOR - You have updated this information?

Mr WILSON - In our advice to Government there will be updated information along those lines.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, and I'm not going ask you to share that with us now because you haven't shared it with the minister, but that would be informed by - obviously you have the IER report. As you said, there'll be more recent ABS data. There's Saul Eslake's work, and -

Mr BURGESS - And our own modelling.

Ms O'CONNOR - And your own modelling: and how do you model outside those data sources to understand the job or the employment impacts of racing?

Mr BURGESS - Well again, getting back to my earlier comments, we haven't focused so much on what is the total employment in the industry. The question we see in front of the government is what level of funding will they provide going forward, and therefore we've looked at scenarios that if you change that level of funding, what impact does that have on the economy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, and that's that model you were talking about before where you input it, but it would have - at some point Government will have a clearer understanding on the basis of all data sources and Treasury's analysis, what the employment impact is of the racing industries in Tasmania?

Mr BURGESS - Yes.

Mr SWAIN - That CGE model does assume labour moves between sectors. So, that's one of the issues with model selection in economics, you can have a model that says this sector employs 1000 people, but it may not tell you that if that funding was halved, that yes, there'll be a downturn in that sector, but some of that downturn will be absorbed by dynamic effects through other sectors where the labour is picked up. So, the CGE modelling is seeking to address that more dynamic effect at a state level. It is more challenged at a regional level - is my understanding.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. And, is some of the work - so, the Racing Integrity Commissioner has done some quite thorough and detailed assessment of participants in the greyhound industry and that's from trainers to owners to volunteers. That work presumably will also inform Treasury's advice because it's the most complete picture, I think, we've seen to date of the number of industry participants in greyhound racing. For example, most of the dogs are owned by only 10 trainers.

Mr BURGESS - Again, that's probably outside the scope of the review, though. The review assumes that greyhound racing will be phased out in line with the Government's policy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, but you would be working with the Racing Integrity Commissioner as another stakeholder obviously in that process.

Mr BURGESS - Yes, I left him off my list, but yes, we've had a number of discussions with him.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you.

Mr WINTER - I've got one more. I'm not sure if you can answer this question, but you've talked about Tasracing almost being a stakeholder in this process: is there any ability for racing

PUBLIC

participants outside of Tasracing, for example, the clubs or peak groups that represent thoroughbreds, harness or otherwise to make representations into the process that's going on?

Mr SWAIN - Do you want to handle that one?

Mr WILSON - Yes, that's happening this week.

Mr WINTER - Okay, can you take us through what's happening?

Mr WILSON - So, we're meeting with representatives from the harness code and the thoroughbred code separately. I think the thoroughbred code has representatives from breeders, so we're meeting with them to hear their views on the importance of the funding deed to them. The participants supported by the racing industry, and there's a few other little bits and bobs, but really it's just to understand from them, their views on the funding arrangement, to make sure that we've heard those views.

Mr WINTER - So that's Treasury doing, as part of your process, to inform your advice that goes to the Treasurer.

Mr WILSON - Yes.

Mr BURGESS - I think what will be really important for us is: what are the characteristics of the funding that are really important to their industry, or their particular part of the industry. Whether that's duration of the deed or the notice they need before a new deed is entered into, or other areas of certainty or uncertainty that are important to them. So, that's what we're trying to obtain with those discussions.

Mr WINTER - I guess there's - in terms of specifics, for example, the breeding loan is a really good example of that, where we have a thoroughbred breeding sector at the moment that is directly funded through things like additional prize money for horses that were bred in Tasmania. One of the main issues, I suspect I'll raise with you though, is around funding certainty, and certainty around the deed. It's difficult for them to sell horses in an environment where there's no certainty past 2029. Do you have a view around when this deed needs to be secured, so that there is some certainty for this industry?

Mr SWAIN - In advance of that, but I wouldn't want to be specific. I mean, I think the industry would like certainty as soon as possible, is clearly the issue. I mean just going to the question of duration, I suspect - I mean coming off this arrangement, which is a very long-term deed, the industry will be very keen on a long-term replacement, I would think. There's an obvious trade-off in the budget for doing that, as you would understand. I mean every recipient of funding from - for funding would like a longer duration, but the longer one party has, by definition, reduces the capacity for other parties to get long-term certainty. So, I think the duration issue will be, definitely something we'll hear about from those stakeholder groups.

Mr WILSON - Absolutely.

Mr WINTER - One of the other pieces of information that's been submitted to us through Tasracing's evidence, and I've got what I think is a draft of their submission to you, is around the difference between race-field fees and prize money across each code. It outlines that thoroughbred racing was losing over \$20 million a year, harness racing almost \$20 million,

and greyhound racing around \$3 million. Is that - have you interrogated that data and do you agree with the data that they've submitted?

Mr WILSON - We certainly looked at that. We haven't done a detailed audit of Tasracing's numbers. There is a degree of reliance on the data that's presented to us.

Ms O'CONNOR - Be careful. We had a finding in our last report that Tasracing's data is unreliable.

Mr WINTER - Sorry, Chair, this is - just consistent, really.

Ms O'CONNOR - What? I've been sitting here quietly while you've been scratching around to find questions.

CHAIR - We have only got about three minutes, we will continue.

Mr WILSON - That's right. The equine codes present a much larger net cost to Tasracing than greyhounds.

Mr WINTER - Yeah, is there, in terms of the methodology they've used - I know you haven't audited it - but, is there any better way to do it in your view? Because it does seem like an interesting question.

Mr WILSON - Obviously, we certainly check it and run it through, is this logical, does the methodology seem appropriate? And it does. It's the going - we haven't gone into Tasracing and gone, 'Show us your books.' That kind of thing. But we do run a strategic lens over it.

Mr WINTER - I mean, the data that they presented to us shows that greyhound racing is, yes, losing around \$3 million a year, but significantly less than the other two codes. How does that move into your thinking when you're considering what the future of a deed might look like without the code that is the most commercial of the three?

Mr WILSON - What we have looked at is, what is the net impact on Tasracing in a two-code environment and it presents some choices for Government. If the Government doesn't want there to be a flow-on impact on the equine codes, then you'd be looking at reducing the funding amount by the net cost of the greyhounds. If you reduced it by, say, prize money, that would create a funding gap, all else being equal, that may flow on to the equine codes.

Mr WINTER - There's an economies-of-scale issue, I guess, here. I'm just wondering, obviously moving from having three codes to two, in any organisation you're going to have diseconomies-of-scale or an economies-of-scale issue. Can you speak at all to that in terms of your thinking around how that should be treated in a new deed environment?

Mr WILSON - Yes, so, we pointed out that those things would need to be looked at and Tasracing is currently undertaking several strategic reviews, I believe, to plan for that environment. I think that's a moving piece at the moment. But, yes, there will be exit costs, probably, some transition costs and, like you say, potential rationalisation of races -

Mr WINTER - Have you done the work on that transition costs piece? Is Treasury doing any work to assist Government in terms of the transition cost or compensation cost?

Mr SWAIN - No. So, on a matter of - a broad comment on compensation, if a policy decision is taken with several years for adjustment, particularly in a space like this with animal welfare, we would be very conscious of precedent across other sectors and industries. So, I am just differentiating between transition and compensation.

In terms of economies of scale, yes, we're mindful of those, but we think there will be some, but they will be more at the margin. You're not going to need two-thirds of a CFO, you're still going to need a CFO, but in the scheme of the total cost of the sector, one-third of a CFO's wage is not a big cost driver.

Just going back to your query before, which I don't think we quite answered, around incentives. An example of the incentives would be making sure that we don't have funding to Tasracing that creates an incentive for one level of activity that is different from, say, the incentives that are at play on the clubs, who then might want a different level of activity. If the clubs - for example, I think at the moment it's still true that they keep the race-field wagering and revenues from food and beverage; they may want more events than Tasracing wants from a prize money -

Mr WINTER - That's happening right now, yes.

Mr SWAIN - That's the kind of thing around incentives. I think the level of activity and race-field fees are going to probably dwarf those economy-of-scale impacts, although we will look at them. I don't think they're going to be the primary kind of driver.

Mr WINTER - Thank you.

CHAIR - Our time is just up now. Just one final question just around the length - potential length of a future deed: obviously it's extraordinary to have such a long deed in the first place. I think it's most unprecedented to have such a long -

Ms WEBB - Not when it comes to other gambling areas, but there you go.

CHAIR - Gambling is probably the unique area that this does.

Ms WEBB - We pander to gambling as much as we can, it looks like.

CHAIR - That's right. I think the comment is fair that community organisations would dearly love to have something more than 12 months, would be certain. Have you got a view about what is the appropriate length or comparison to other arrangements, notably not gambling industry, but other funding arrangements that - is it a five-year, 10-year term, two-year term?

Mr BURGESS - I think we're probably in the realms of - we're still formulating advice on that and we will have to present that to Government, and it will be a matter, I think, of balancing legitimate desire from industry for certainty against flexibility for the budget. I'd like to add that a lot of private-sector companies out there are making long-term investments in hotels and businesses without the same level of revenue certainty.

CHAIR - Certainty - community organisations are delivering services without same level of certainty, that's for sure.

PUBLIC

Thank you very much for your time. I really do appreciate it. What you have said here to us today is protected by parliamentary privilege, as you're aware. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you've said to us here today. Do you understand that?

Mr SWAIN - Yes. We do. Thank you very much.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for your time.

The witnesses withdrew.

The Committee suspended at 10.03 a.m.

PUBLIC

The Committee resumed at 10.07 a.m.

Minister for Racing Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

CHAIR - Welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Thank you very much for your attendance today, Minister and Department. We have Marcus Vermey; Cassy O'Connor; myself, Kristie Johnston, Meg Webb; and Dean Winter, members of the Committee. We do have an apology from Tania Rattray today. If you could please state your name and the capacity in which you are appearing before the Committee, please.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. Roger Jaensch, Minister for Racing. I have with me at the table Deidre Wilson, Deputy Secretary for Strategy and Business Services with NRE, and Anita Yan, General Manager, Business Services with NRE.

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

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - I do know that we have sworn you in before, but we will do it nonetheless, just because it's a slightly different inquiry and work plan that we're undertaking. As you're aware by the Committee Secretary guide that's been sent to you, 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 you by you outside the parliamentary proceedings. This hearing is a public hearing and public and media may be present. Should you wish any aspects of your evidence today to be heard in private, then you need to make the request of the Committee at the time. As I said beforehand, I know you have appeared before us and we know, Minister, you don't need to make the declaration, but we will do it again because it is a different sort of workstream that we're working towards, if you wouldn't mind.

Ms **DEIDRE WILSON**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, and Ms **ANITA YAN**, GENERAL MANAGER, BUSINESS SERVICES STRATEGY AND BUSINESS SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, TOOK THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you. Minister, would you like to begin by making an opening statement?

Mr JAENSCH - I would. Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to come before this Committee as the new Minister for Racing. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's work in examining the transition out of greyhound racing in Tasmania. I acknowledge the work already undertaken by this Committee, the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner and the former Minister for racing in progressing this important reform, as well as the contributions made by industry participants and animal welfare organisations to the discussion.

The Government remains committed to the phase-out of greyhound racing in Tasmania by 30 June 2029. Our commitment is to ensure the transition is responsible and orderly with a focus on both animal welfare outcomes and the wellbeing of those affected by the change. The matters currently being examined by this Committee, including the financial, economic and animal welfare impacts of the transition, are being actively considered by the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner as part of development of the greyhound racing transition plan.

The Committee is also examining the future of the Tasracing funding deed, and I can confirm that the review of the funding deed is well progressed and includes consideration of the financial implications of the greyhound racing phase-out, as you would have discussed with Treasury prior to my arrival here today. I'm advised that both the draft greyhound racing transition plan and the Tasracing funding deed review are expected to be provided to Government by the end of August. Both documents will play an important role in informing the Government's next steps in relation to these matters. I recognise that this is a significant matter for many Tasmanians and that there are strongly held views across the community. I appreciate the Committee's continuing scrutiny of these matters and welcome the opportunity to assist with questions today.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Minister. As you'd be aware, Minister, New Zealand ended greyhound racing on the weekend and we are one of the very few jurisdictions left around the world that continues to race greyhounds. Your submission to us in this inquiry speaks to some of our jurisdictional analysis, that we're looking at different mechanisms for transitioning and ending greyhound racing, and also to some of the other inquiries that have been undertaken in other Australian jurisdictions; can you perhaps expand, maybe through your officers, around some of the work that NRE and your Government are doing to understand how other jurisdictions are progressing through their transition to end greyhound racing, such as New Zealand, or who are investigating and inquiring into welfare matters in other jurisdictions such as South Australia and Western Australia, for instance.

Mr JAENSCH - I will pass to department representatives in a moment on that, but we are aware of and watching progress with these issues in other states and other jurisdictions around the world. We are aware of where Wales and Scotland have gone, and in 44 states of the United States of America, places like Vietnam where there are no tracks operating at the moment, where also, even in Australia, the ACT is ahead of us. I understand a Labor MP from Queensland has recently proposed that her state government consider this as an election policy for them next time. So, there is movement.

We are learning from what has been done elsewhere but we are focused on Tasmanians, Tasmanian participants in the industry, Tasmanian dogs and their welfare, and also the particular opportunities that our geography presents as well, say, compared to somewhere like ACT, which has a border which is an imaginary line, our state is more able to be dealt with separately. We need to make full use of that, I think. From the reading I have done on other jurisdictions, including New Zealand, what we're contemplating here and what we're proposing in the transition plan that's being developed and has been discussed at some length, is a more orderly and planned transition rather than a hard end with significant costs and with significant adjustment borne by the participants themselves.

I think that the opportunity presents here not only to do the right thing in terms of animal welfare, the right thing by Tasmanians who are participants in the industry and need to be able to make decisions and changes in their lives and their businesses, but I expect others will be

watching us to see how we deliver a transition plan, which will be quite a unique thing in the history of this issue and how it's been dealt with, particularly in countries closest and most similar to ours. I'd ask if Ms Wilson has anything to add.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. I think that the critical thing was that we looked at other jurisdictions, particularly the Commissioner, in terms of some lessons learned in development of the model that the Government has put forward for the bill. The Commissioner continues to actively engage with the New Zealand industry to understand what steps they're taking so that he can feed that into the transition plan.

Mr VERMEY - Minister, leading on to that and obviously it's very topical, and coming into this Tasracing, what connection have you had with the greyhound industry yourself, going out and meeting them and understanding them?

Mr JAENSCH - Before 17 June, very little. Since then, I've been doing my best to get up to speed with the process around delivering on the government's policy decision, the process of the development and the debate of legislation to date. I've looked at the submissions and the contributions in the debate in parliament, in both Houses so far to understand what questions have been asked and where people's interests lie in this, representing all aspects of the debate.

I've obviously had briefings from our department and from the Commissioner, from Tasracing, but I've also met as many participants as I can so far. I want to be sure that when I'm speaking publicly and in forums like here, when I'm talking about participants and when I'm talking about dogs and I'm talking about racers, that I've met them, that I have a picture in my mind of the people and the settings that we're talking about. I need that for my own knowledge. I think I need that to be credible and to have integrity in how I manage these issues through, and I'm very grateful that there have been people who I've known for quite some time who are involved with greyhounds who have invited me to their properties to meet their dogs. I've been invited to racing clubs and events and have been to watch the full process of a greyhound racing event, in a couple of locations now, up north and down here at Elwick.

Through the kennelling process, the vet checks and the weigh-ins, the way that the animals are prepared for the race, and securely kennelled away prior to the race - the security around that. I've watched them being taken out and introduced to the lure to be loaded into their boxes. I've watched the races - been undertaken. I've met the lure drivers. I've met the people who look after the ambulance. And then I've watched the other end of the race when the catchers have done their job, and the dogs are being taken through for their post-race drink and cool down and checking over. I've spoken with the stewards about their reviews of footage, and the things they've observed, and with the vets themselves around what they're looking for, and the swab processes afterwards.

So, it's been fascinating. I'm very glad to have had the opportunity to do that. And in between all those things, I've sat and had a beer and a bowl of chips with some people who are in the industry who have been prepared to sit down and talk to me about their involvement, what they get out of it, and also for them, what the transition and the ban means for them. I haven't interrogated them; I've made myself available to them, and I've been very grateful for the number of people who have spoken openly, honestly, and emotionally with me about their experience of the debate so far, their frustration around the uncertainty that they're in at the moment. But they didn't need to talk to me, and they did, and I'm very grateful for that because

now when I'm here speaking with you, and making decisions in my role, I can picture the people who this is about, and the situations that we're addressing.

So, I'll continue to make myself available to anybody who has something to share with me to help ensure that we're making good decisions as Government, and that I can answer people's questions as we go through the next stages, through Parliament and delivery of our transition plan.

Ms O'CONNOR - Follow-up question: I'm glad, Minister, that although you went to Mowbray and Elwick and engaged with industry participants, you didn't witness any of the multiple injuries and deaths that happened on track here, and so far, this year, more than 100 injuries, a couple of dozen dead dogs, also.

Have you made the time to date to go out to see GAP, where there are dogs languishing and waiting for homes and couches, and some of them have been there for months. Have you spoken to the RSPCA, which also has to clean up the debris from this industry? Dogs' Home of Tasmania also rehomes ex-industry greyhounds, and we can acknowledge the mental anguish of industry participants, but it's important also, isn't it, to acknowledge that people who care about the welfare of greyhounds are also mentally anguished about what happens to these dogs on the track.

Mr JAENSCH - No, thank you. I haven't as yet been to GAP, RSPCA or the Dogs' Home. I certainly intend to, to understand that end of the cycle, because that is increasingly going to be the focus of how the transition works, and works smoothly, and how we manage the capacity of that system to take in dogs, and provide a service on the way through to adoption and forever homes for those animals. As I said, I think that's part of where we're going. I've been needing to catch up to where we are, in terms of knowing the participants and the critical matters ahead of us right now. I have met a number of non-racing greyhound owners, and met their animals, and heard of their love of their animals. I've also asked, and been asked, by racing participants, around the options for rehoming that we're looking at, and heard some of their feedback around the different programs and providers of fostering, rehoming and other services as well, because it's important to have that feedback. Again, there's various views out there and I need to make sure that, as we go forward, not only do we have capacity in the rehoming system, so that we don't have bottlenecks and we don't have lots of animals caught in -

Ms O'CONNOR - Which we do now, even.

Mr JAENSCH - We do, and we need to manage - and this is why having an orderly transition plan is so critical and having as much time to do that before 30 June 2029 is critical, so that we can manage that through without - avoiding bottlenecks that aren't good for animals and also avoiding situations which become very costly because we haven't planned around them. So, I think we need to have a range of solutions when it comes to the greyhound rehoming processes and to be able to manage the capacity of that system to do its job in a way that is beneficial to the animals.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, and perhaps fund an adoption promotion program as part of your transition work; but I did only say I wanted one question at this point, so I'm happy to -

Mr JAENSCH - You would have seen that the Commissioner has sort of put out a call for registrations of interest from people who might want to over coming years.

Ms O'CONNOR - You will need more than that, though.

Mr JAENSCH - Oh, we will.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's a big promotional and advertising campaign that's required - anyway, happy to move on.

Mr JAENSCH - And we might be able to run that in such a way that the Commissioner seeks that interest and provides a mechanism for people to register, but that organisations, who are enablers of that, can work through their normal - as an extension of their normal promotion and networks to get that message out.

Mr WINTER - Thanks for being with us, Minister. You have been out to the track and met people and find them to be really genuine, really nice people that genuinely love their animals. The question that they ask me, and I assume they've asked you, is: why is the Government doing this, why is this Government shutting our industry down? I've asked that question to other ministers in your role; can you explain to them and to the Committee the policy rationale behind shutting down greyhound racing?

Mr JAENSCH - Now, this is a conversation I expected to have here, and it's one, you're right, I've had out at the tracks as well. What I will say to you is what I've said to other people who asked me that question: I'm the Minister responsible for delivering this commitment and I'm not re-prosecuting or renegotiating that. I've got a job to do. I believe in the job, and I will do it to the best of my ability for all concerned. Just in terms of we're in a Parliamentary Committee: this is a policy decision that the government of the day has taken and has prepared legislation. It's debated it in one House and there has been a vote, and I don't intend to reflect on or pull apart a debate that's completed in one House and yet to happen in another. So, I need to honour the normal rules and Standing Orders there, regarding matters that are currently before the Parliament or votes that have already been taken. That being said, I agree with you, the people I've met who are in this industry, I believe that they're good at what they do, they love their dogs, their sport -

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you met Anthony Bullock?

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Chair, I'm just -

Mr JAENSCH - I'm going to speak to - about the people who I've met and who have spoken to me, and I haven't met everybody; but the people I've met and I've spoken to, they love what they do. They take great care and pride in it. This is, to me, not about the people who I've met so far, and I'm sure there are others who I'm yet to meet who might make a different impression on me. What's at the heart of this is that regardless of the care that people might have for their dogs and their love of racing, the sport, the entertainment of -

Ms O'CONNOR - It's not a sport.

Mr JAENSCH - racing animals is inherently risky and dangerous to the wellbeing and the lives of the animals involved, and we've formed a view that those risks are no longer acceptable in the community, and that the community's view is that the Government that uses their funds shouldn't be enabling and paying for that to continue. They would rather see their resources used to transition out and for us not to have greyhound racing anymore. Now that's

not a reflection on the individuals that I've met. It's a reflection of the community's views of what's acceptable, that the state is funding and enabling a form of entertainment that risks the welfare and the lives of animals.

Mr WINTER - Thank you for that answer. You've said that in your view, greyhound racing is inherently risky and dangerous to greyhound lives, that the risks are not acceptable and that the government shouldn't fund or enable that to continue. Can you explain why it's only greyhounds but the government's not shutting down thoroughbred and harness racing, given that those same risks exist for the other two codes?

Ms O'CONNOR - No, they don't.

Mr JAENSCH - I think the risks are quite different, and I think that the sentiment towards greyhound racing is quite consistent, across countries like ours, some of whom have taken steps further and earlier than we have to close down this industry, and again we are in the middle of a process regarding a Bill which has been voted on in our House. I'm not here to re-prosecute that from the first principles. We are where we are, and our House, and I believe, our community has spoken and we're responding to that; and I want to follow this through so that we can provide clarity and certainty and that smooth, orderly transition that we've promised as soon as possible.

Mr WINTER - You've said that the risks are quite different, but unfortunately horses die on racetracks; they get injured. If we went through the injury rate at this Committee, you'd find that there'd be probably 100 injuries in horseracing as well as greyhound racing. I'm trying to understand the difference here, because the arguments you made against greyhound racing are easily applied to the other two codes, so why is it only greyhound racing?

Mr JAENSCH - We're here talking about greyhound racing and the transition plan that the Government has committed to provide and follow through. We're not here to talk about the other codes, but I understand that the circumstances are quite different. I think the community's views are quite clear that greyhound racing in particular carries risks to the welfare of animals that the community is no longer prepared to accept, and particularly for it to be enabled and funded from the public purse.

CHAIR - Can I ask, Minister: you've talked a number of times about the importance of an orderly transition and obviously we're contrasting that with New Zealand and, without casting any disrespect on our New Zealand counterparts, it was a relatively fast transition period for a jurisdiction that has far more greyhounds than what we do have here in Tasmania, and there have been some challenges, particularly around in rehoming and the costs associated with rehoming in New Zealand, where trainers are effectively paid per day to keep their dogs.

The Commissioner, in talking through what he's hoping to achieve in a transition plan, is trying to achieve a slower, measured approach till we get to 30 June 2029 and we don't have 1000 dogs like we do now. In racing we have far less than that and it declines over a period of time. How important is it, in terms of the Government's participation in funding that transition and that planning - and I know that Government money has been provided in the Budget around the administration of a transition plan - to ensure that it is a measured approach and it is considered and staged, but also dynamic because it will need to adjust in terms of people's responses to change?

Mr JAENSCH - That's right. Thank you. You are talking about the architecture of the transition, which will be laid out in more detail in the transition plan that the Commissioner will present by the end of the month, as I understand it and I expect, and there will be detailed briefings in this room and lots of others as well. A lot of these more detailed questions can be answered then. That's what that work's for.

One of the reasons for the importance of the staged transition is that we have an endpoint identified, which is at the end of the current deed.

We've got up till that time, we've got the time between now and then to have an orderly transition so that we don't have shocks and we don't have people left stranded, left hanging.

In my reading of the profile of the industry, and my own discussions and visits with people, we have a very diverse range of people and circumstances that we're dealing with. Everything from quite large businesses dedicated to breeding and training and racing through to people who have this as a hobby on the side that they don't do with the expectation of great winnings or earnings, but it's their social thing and their passion. Some rely on it for their livelihood. Some for another aspect of their life.

People need to be able to choose their own timing and exit. We don't want to force everybody to make a decision at the same time about this. What we do need is the ability to enable them to do that and to give them the opportunity to make good decisions with reasonable choices, even if they aren't their preferred choices necessarily to exit or transition in a way that is best for them and their family, given their circumstances, and we can't guess at what they all will be.

That's why not only is there a support scheme being devised which will aim to meet the needs of a range of different tiers of participation in the industry. The Government has also promoted an early exit option for those who are, for whatever reason, can't or don't want to wait any longer for the full scheme to take effect, but they have an opportunity or they want certainty right now for them and their dogs and their families or their business to either take it elsewhere or to leave and just to be out of Tasmanian greyhound racing.

That's fairest for everyone that we give this relatively small number of participants the best chance to take the best option for them as soon as possible but not pushing them to a date necessarily before 30 June 2029.

The other thing that a staged transition gives us is a way to monitor and manage, like we were talking about before with rehoming, the orderly process of moving animals through the system. The bill that we've proposed does change things because it stops the breeding of animals for dog racing.

As I understand it, racing greyhounds have a two- to three-year career in racing at the end of which they're retired. So, every year there is a cohort leaving. If we stop there being a cohort of recruitment and we continue to have cohorts leaving, and we have exit from Tasmania for some of those racing greyhounds that may be sold interstate or may be taken with their trainer/owner interstate if they choose to relocate, then we are gradually reducing the number of animals in the system, and we have the opportunity to reconfigure the racing calendar and the arrangements for racing, while it is still legal, so that we continue to have integrity, we continue to have a competitive commercial wagering environment. We continue to have fields

of greyhounds that can run in proper races, but that might contract over the period of transition over time.

This is where Tasmania as a jurisdiction, even compared to New Zealand and possibly ACT, is also an advantage where there are a relatively small number of participants and dogs involved. We have the ability to know where they all are, to be able to manage through these stages, so that there aren't shocks and bottlenecks, so that everyone gets to choose the options to exit that are best for them, and we can't do that all if we just let this finish at a date and then deal with the fallout afterwards.

Ms O'CONNOR – Minister, the available data just puts Mr Winter's statement about the relative risks of horse racing and dog racing in some context. Of course, horses are injured on track, but at least they have a human being to guide them around dangerous corners. The Greens obtained, through right to information, the footage of races that Tasracing removed from public view. It showed multiple instances of dogs being injured on track, of injured dogs with broken legs trying to finish races. The feedback we got to our offices about it was that people were horrified when they saw what actually happens on these tracks. Have you seen that footage?

Mr JAENSCH - I have seen some of it, yes, that's been shared in the media.

Ms O'CONNOR - How did it make you feel, as Minister?

Mr JAENSCH - Well, as a human, you don't like seeing dogs suffering or injured. Nobody does, I think that's one of the reasons why that footage is not kept in publicly available forms - we don't routinely view and promote footage of suffering. It's just not what we do as humans.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh, well, every night on the news we do - every night on the news we do, but I take your point. Minister, have you received a copy of the Tasracing Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Greyhound Welfare?

Mr JAENSCH - I do not believe that I have at my office, and, in fact, I was in the process of making an inquiry as to whether that was complete or not.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, it's been going through a final, as I understand it, consultation process, and perhaps we can go to your Secretary just for some -

Mr JAENSCH - I think Tasracing was preparing that with Anna. I'm happy for Ms Wilson to -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, the question is: for the first time we have some guidance to industry from Tasracing about how to house and exercise these dogs, and the minimum requirement is a kennel that's 1.2 metres wide by 1.8 metres tall to a square meterage of about 3.5 square metres. Further on, in this code of practice for animal welfare, it sets a minimum requirement of half-an-hour out of the kennels every day for racing greyhounds. So, we're talking about animals that are kept in very confined spaces for 23.5 hours a day. What influence do you as Minister, or does NRE have, in terms of having a good look at this code of practice for animal welfare, which I would argue does not meet community expectations, and trying to make sure that it does, at least, you know, for as long as greyhound racing here continues up to 2029?

Mr JAENSCH - As I said, I'm - unless we're talking about a different document, I understand that there's - I'm awaiting delivery of that to me to review. It's important that we've got standards in place that can be upheld during the transition for the remaining period. It's also important that - and this is an issue that's been raised by the industry with me - if there are new requirements, and they're facing a transition period to wind out, how they manage compliance, which might mean rebuilding aspects of their kennels, et cetera, to meet technical standards, only to then be exiting the industry soon after this. This is one of the difficult things that we're going to have to manage through, to ensure the welfare of animals as we exit this industry, and to have reasonableness in that. Now, I don't think that the standards, or them not being in place now, means that there are no rules and no expectations around the way that greyhounds are kept now. These provide a clearer set of guidelines and some more specific standards for them to comply with.

Ms O'CONNOR - We wouldn't treat our own dogs like this, would we? Lock them in a cage for 23.5 hours a day and then twice a week or so take them out on a track and make them run around an unsafe track at risk of their own wellbeing and lives.

Mr JAENSCH - I don't want to sort of go into your characterisation of that. What we need to have is animal welfare standards for the industry as we go through the transition. We've also got to recognise that the transition to compliance with new standards will be part of the complex process that our participants are facing, and we're going to have to manage that process with them.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you had a conversation with the CEO of Tasracing, Mr Jenkins, about the Government's determination to enact the phase-out policy?

Mr JAENSCH - No. It's the government's policy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you told Mr Jenkins that again? Because I'm not sure he hears it.

Mr JAENSCH - Well, no, it's the Government's policy and Tasracing is a Government-owned entity, so -

Ms O'CONNOR - Is there going to be any change, for example, to the Ministerial statement of expectations to Tasracing to ensure that they accept and work to give effect to the Government's policy?

Mr JAENSCH - We would need to be clear that the statement of expectations is up to date and relevant with Government policy.

Mr WINTER - Minister, sort of in line with that, you've got a bill from 2024 that your Government introduced and successfully got through Parliament that actually requires Tasracing to promote and to regulate greyhound racing amongst all three codes. How do you expect Tasracing to navigate this situation where your Government has, on the one hand, enacted legislation that tells them that they are to promote and regulate greyhound racing, and on the other hand, you're telling them to do the opposite?

Mr JAENSCH - Until greyhound racing finishes, we've got greyhound racing and there are roles for a range of participants in it that they need to uphold. We can introduce new standards and rules as we go as part of continuous improvement, but also specifically as part of the transition arrangements. Tasracing is one of the components of this industry which needs to go through that change process, and there will be steps for them to take to comply with the changes that are introduced in the Bill, as well as the changes that are introduced through Government policy.

Mr WINTER - Your Government announced in the first half of this year that if the legislation wouldn't go through, it would simply defund greyhound racing and through - you haven't been here, obviously - but through previous hearings we've been trying to get to the bottom of what that actually means. I think Treasury alluded to some questions about that as well. Can you explain what defunding greyhound racing would actually mean? Does that mean that the Government intends to withdraw regulatory oversight without legislative change?

Ms O'CONNOR - It's also Labor's policy to defund greyhound racing.

Mr JAENSCH - Well, maybe. I don't know.

Mr WINTER - Or does -

Ms O'CONNOR - They said they'd let industry stand on its own two feet.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Chair.

CHAIR - Let Mr Winter ask the question.

Mr WINTER - Is it okay, Chair, if I ask without interruption? Really appreciate it, thanks. So, that's one thing it could be; the other one is does defunding simply restrict code funding while maintaining the Government's regulatory function? Are you able to explain what the policy actually means?

Mr JAENSCH - Our policy is to end greyhound racing in Tasmania by 30 June 2029.

Mr WINTER - Sorry, I'm talking specifically about the defunding part.

Mr JAENSCH - That's what we have a plan for and to do it through an orderly transition. That's what the legislation is for. That's what the Bill is for. That's what the Racing Integrity Commissioner is working on with the transition. It's a matter that's being examined in the context of the review of the Tasracing deed as well. That is the plan that we are focused on and that's our policy. We're not doing a plan for every other possible outcome because that's an infinite range of possibilities. What we're looking at is: here's what we believe meets the community's expectations, the commitment that the Government has given; we're focusing all our energy on doing that well, in a way that leads to outcomes for animal welfare and a fair transition out of the industry for participants. That's what we have a plan for. We don't have a plan for options B, C and D. This is our plan.

Mr WINTER - That's quite at odds with what the Premier said, though. He announced that if - in the event that the legislation doesn't pass and, in fact, the moment you don't have the numbers. There's two things, firstly, he said that the Bill wouldn't come back on until he knew

that the Bill would pass, and earlier than that, he said that if the Bill didn't pass, he would simply defund greyhound racing. I'm asking what that actually means. Does that mean you withdraw all regulatory function or does it mean you'll simply decrease the amount of funding?

Mr JAENSCH - What I'm saying is not at odds with what the Premier said. What you're asking is how will that work and what are the details of it. Our plan is around transition, and the Premier has said what the intention would be longer term if that didn't succeed. We don't have a detailed plan for how we go if we fail with the Bill. We're focusing on the proposition that's in front of us now and one of the things that has come through very clearly to me, particularly since I've been engaging with participants, and this is a matter you've raised yourself, is how important it is to provide people with certainty as soon as possible - for them, their families, their community, their animals that they love as well.

My job is to provide a certain and clear path for people in the greyhound industry and those who care about greyhounds and get that underway as soon as possible. There are a lot of resources going into designing the best possible way of doing that, supported by legislation which gives it legal effect to happen. Now, this is the recipe for certainty for everybody involved. We've had a lot of engagement with people around what that's going to take. We're going to have another round of conversations when the detail of the transition plan is released. I am solely focused on delivering that certainty and that fairness and that outcome for animal welfare and a fair transition for participants in the industry as soon as possible. I know that you've said that you care about that too. The way to provide that certainty is to support this Bill.

Mr WINTER - You alluded in your answer that I'd asked you for detail; I'm not asking you for detail about their defunding. I'm just trying to understand at a very broad and high level what it actually means.

Mr JAENSCH - You're asking how it will work. I don't have answers for you because -

Mr WINTER - I haven't even asked the question yet.

Mr JAENSCH - I haven't been asked to develop a plan for that; I've been asked to deliver this transition out of greyhound racing in Tasmania.

Mr WINTER - Does defunding mean that you withdraw regulatory oversight or not?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm not getting drawn into a discussion about something that is not our intention to deliver.

Mr WINTER - Could it be that the Premier just said this at a press conference and no one really knows?

Mr JAENSCH - The Premier has laid out - an answer to a question he was given there. I support the Premier and his answers absolutely. What I'm not doing is diverting myself from the transition out of greyhounds to come up with another plan, which is to be able to answer your questions. No, we are offering a certain smooth, compassionate animal welfare focused transition out of greyhound racing by 30 June 2029. That's the job and that's what I'm focused on.

Mr WINTER - The Premier did announce that he would defund the greyhound racing and that appears at odds -

Mr JAENSCH - I don't think he announced that he would defund greyhound racing. You're characterising it in a different way, you're sort of doing the 'what if' stuff.

Mr WINTER - You are obviously not going to answer that question, so I'll go to the next part. Has the Government sought advice about the lawfulness of defunding greyhound racing should the legislation not pass? If so, can you give us some detail on what that advice is?

Mr JAENSCH - This is going to how much work have we done on alternatives to our current policy. At the moment all of our efforts are on delivering the policy that we have promised Tasmanians, greyhounds and people who have greyhounds.

Mr WINTER - Can you confirm you've sought advice?

Mr JAENSCH - We're focused on the work that's in front of us.

Mr WINTER - Can you confirm you've sought the advice?

Mr JAENSCH - We're focused on the work that's in front of us and we'll take advice on any matters where legal advice is required.

CHAIR - Can I go to the issue around the deed funding? Obviously, we've had Treasury here this morning talking to us about their analysis they're doing in preparation for yourself, Minister, and also for the Treasurer in terms of the economic impact and you said earlier today that the industry is very broad, that there are a lot of participants who might only have one dog racing, two dogs racing right up to the other end of the scale where we have very commercial enterprises. The data that we have from the Commissioner presented to us shows that 10 trainers, for instance, have 40 per cent of the dogs in the industry, so it's very concentrated at one end. Have you received advice from your department in terms of the economic impact of those 10 particular trainers and what might happen if they were to exit the industry voluntarily, early or at different stages of a transition to 2029 and what that might mean?

Mr JAENSCH - Economic impact on?

CHAIR - On the community more broadly, the Tasmanian economy.

Mr JAENSCH - Obviously, you've heard from Treasury this morning about the process they're doing - they're undertaking, regarding review of the Tasracing deed and that will necessarily take account of the economic and other dimensions of that. I understand the Commissioner has also commissioned some advice to assist him with the development of the transition plan around the feasibility of, and the effects of the change to the greyhound racing code as part of the industry and the economy as well. I don't have that detailed analysis available to me just yet. I'll be briefed on it possibly before you are, but it will all be information which is in, I expect to the extent that it can be, in the public realm as context to all of these decisions.

CHAIR - I suppose it's common sense and it would be fair to say, if you agree, Minister, that for a large percentage of those participants in the industry, an ending of greyhound racing

would materially not change - in terms of economic impact of activity within the racing code, make a significant change. A lot of those participants that we see on the data might have only one dog, two dogs or no dogs racing, there's a lot that have none registered to race. What we will see, though, is a change if those top 10 that have 40 per cent of the dogs, decide to exit, change their arrangements, reduce the number of their dogs. So, for the vast majority of participants in the industry - they'll still be able to keep their dogs. We're not forcibly removing dogs from anybody. In terms of the process, the transition process, we're talking about 10 participants out of an industry, who will see significant impact in terms of commercial operation.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. Again, it's a very small cohort overall and they're all quite different to each other. We don't want to suppose too much, but you're right, there's a concentration of participation, share of prize-winning, number of employees, et cetera, to a small number with larger numbers of dogs, a far greater number of people with far fewer dogs - for whom, and many of them have expressed to me that it costs them to be a participant, particularly if they're travelling long distances and all the rest. They devote a lot of their life and interest to it, and money, but they're not in it for the winnings or the earnings, it's a social activity and a cultural one as much as anything for them and it performs an important part of their life. We have to recognise that as well, and in terms of the transition we have to have those people in mind.

But, what you've said is right, early exit of a few larger players will dramatically change the scene as - I spoke in a previous answer about how we would need to adjust the racing calendar and the governance and the wagering environment around it to ensure that, while there were still greyhounds legally racing, that they were doing so under a properly regulated and fair wagering environment with all of the requisite standards being observed, even if there was an exodus of a large number of participants early.

CHAIR - As you realise, the Government provides significant funding at the moment to the industry and, as you said quite accurately, there are a number of participants who don't make any money at all. In fact, they probably lose money, in terms of the upkeep of the dogs -

Mr JAENSCH - It costs them to be involved, yes.

CHAIR - and it costs to them to be involved. But, there are a number of participants, and again it is very concentrated in that 10 participants in particular, who make a significant amount of money off the back of Government subsidies to this industry. Are you aware of how much some of those key trainers, hall-of-famers might particularly earn a year?

Mr JAENSCH - I've seen some broad breakdowns, but they're not - once you start getting into this, you start to identify people. I don't want to do that here. I don't have identities of individuals. I don't want to stumble into identifying people and their winnings in this context because that's not what it's about. But, as I said, we've identified there's a diversity of participants and circumstances, we need to ensure that our transition plan caters for all of them.

CHAIR - I certainly don't want you to disclose names of participants and their earnings, but it'd be fair to say that there are a very small, concentrated number of participants who earn a significant amount of money from a Government-funded racing code?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, industry representatives and, in fact, Mr Winter, have made a fanciful scare claim about the cost of rehoming greyhounds. I think I saw a number that came out of Mr Winter's mouth of something like \$40 million - correct me if I'm wrong. So, Mr Winter thinks it would cost about \$40,000 a dog to rehome an ex-racing greyhound. Do you have any information that's been provided to you by the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner, the RSPCA, the Dogs' Home or NRE about what the rehoming costs might be? Just so we can get some honesty and clarity about what those costs might be.

Mr JAENSCH - I've seen various bits of information in the briefing material that's come through to me. I understand that some of this is subject to work that the Commissioner has also got some independent advice on, which will inform the transition plan. The most important thing is that we manage the process so that we don't have 1000 dogs all at once requiring rehoming and that we have capacity to deal with them, and lots of options that are safe and good for dogs as well, and acceptable also to owners who want the best for their dogs. The comments of owners who are prepared to contemplate their dogs moving out of the industry and their questions about how they will be dealt with - I'm welcoming those conversations with owners because I'm glad that they're thinking through to those steps and I'm keen to hear what works for them, because it will in itself be something which will help those people to make a decision to participate in the transition early - confidence in what happens to their dogs.

Some of the costs of these programs are fixed costs that come down when there is a larger number of animals participating in them. Sometimes, historical costs per animal for services that are currently operating will seem high per animal, but may come down if there are a large number of animals going through them. But we also need to break down that total number first by assisting some people to take an early exit, which may involve some of the people with large numbers of dogs. If they want to continue their business elsewhere, it would be reasonable to think that that would be people with a larger holding of greyhounds.

We also need to accept that we're not going to be recruiting dogs to our greyhound population over the next three years.

Ms O'CONNOR - Through breeding and imports?

Mr JAENSCH - That's right. We also know that, year on year, a certain number of dogs leave the industry because they retire. I think on the Bill's passing there is a stipulation in there that any dog that's six years old or that is a registered greyhound that hasn't been racing for 12 months, unless it's for medical recovery reasons, also exits the industry. So, between those various options, we should be able to break those big numbers down into smaller numbers on an ongoing basis across the transition and ensure that we don't have a sudden significant balloon problem and cost at the end to deal with.

After funding the continuation of racing up to that point, my hope is that in the - and some of the projections and the assumptions that I've seen built into the transition plan are that as racing winds down and the costs of providing for racing meetings, and oversight and governance wind down, that that generates savings in the system that we currently fund, which can assist with the costs of the rehoming and the exit strategies for people that we support.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you for your answer.

Mr JAENSCH - Managing it all through, it's important.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, I don't think we've got any real clarity on the cost of rehoming an individual dog, but \$40,000 just seems fanciful.

Mr JAENSCH - That is far higher than I've seen but it all depends on how early we start and how many animals we're dealing with at a point in time, because it does change the range of options that are available to us.

Ms O'CONNOR - Of course, yes. Thank you.

Mr WINTER - The \$40,000 number comes from what's happening in New Zealand, \$60 million fund for 1400 dogs, which is over \$40,000 per dog, but that's not my question. The question -

Mr JAENSCH - You were able to get that in, though.

Mr WINTER - Minister, you talked about - you've been met with the participants, and you've talked about certainty and I think you agree with me there needs to be certainty for participants. What can you tell us about when this bill will finally come on in the Legislative Council? Can you guarantee it will be dealt with in the 2026 calendar year?

Mr JAENSCH - For the reasons that I've outlined in a couple of answers recently, we need to get this transition underway as soon as possible. That means time is important. This gets more expensive and more difficult to do the longer we leave it, and it provides fewer options for participants in particular to make an orderly exit from the sector. That being said, I know that this will only pass Parliament if we can answer the questions and the concerns of the people who are yet to vote on it. So, my job at the moment, is to understand what their needs are for more information, answers to their questions, to provide as much of that as I can so that we can be confident we go back into Parliament - that this that this Bill is - this debate is resumed in a room full of people who have the answers they need. Some of the contributions from the Legislative Councillors that I've read through have a lot of question marks in them - what happens to so and so, what about this, why not that? I would like to be in a position with the transition report, the supporting information that comes with that, the analysis regarding the future of Tasracing -

Ms O'CONNOR - This Committee's work

Mr JAENSCH - This Committee's continuing work and reports - I would like to see that that provides the evidence base, the answers to the questions for those who have yet to state their position on the Bill, and if we've done that job well, and that information is compelling, I believe that we'll have grounds for support for the legislation, we can get into the transition period -

Mr WINTER - The question was can you guarantee you'll deal with this, this year?

Mr JAENSCH - and for anybody watching and taking interest, and expressing their views to their Members of Parliament the same.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Minister. We have gone a little bit over time. I appreciate your time with us here today and just remind you again, what you've said to us

PUBLIC

here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privileges are attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said to us here today. I'm sure you understand that. Thank you for your time Minister, I'm sure we'll see you again.

The witnesses withdrew.

The Committee suspended at 11.06 a.m.

PUBLIC

The Committee resumed at 11.15 a.m.

RSPCA Australia

CHAIR - Thank you very much for appearing at today's hearing, the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. If you could please state your name and capacity in which you're appearing before the Committee.

Mr MUSSELL - Sure. My name is Richard Mussell, I'm the CEO of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Australia and I'm appearing today as a witness.

Dr STEWART - My name is Dr Mairi Stewart. I'm here on behalf of RSPCA Australia and also as a witness.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, and can I please confirm that you've received and read the guide sent to you by the Committee?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - As you would be aware from that guide, the pertinent points are that this hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament. This protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the parliamentary proceedings. Today's hearing is a public hearing and that means that members of the public and the media may be present or watching online, and should you wish any aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make this request to the Committee at the time.

You are joining us from Western Australia and I appreciate that, so that means that we don't require you to swear the statutory declaration, but I would like to invite you to make an opening statement if you'd like to.

Mr MUSSELL - Yes, I will. Just a correction: I'm coming in from South Australia.

CHAIR - South Australia, sorry. It's not in Tasmania, though.

Mr MUSSELL - No, correct. Thank you, Chair and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear today on behalf of RSPCA Australia and RSPCA Tasmania. RSPCA support the Government's decision to phase out greyhound racing in Tasmania and welcome the opportunity to assist the Committee in its consideration of the transition process. As outlined in our submission, our primary interest is ensuring that the welfare of greyhounds remains the central consideration throughout the transition period and beyond. The introduction of legislation, accompanied by a well-planned and adequately-resourced transition framework, is essential to achieving that objective.

Greyhound racing in Tasmania has been subject to numerous inquiries, reviews and investigations over many years. Many of these have identified persistent concerns relating to animal welfare, transparency, accountability and lifetime traceability of greyhounds. These

concerns are well documented and have contributed to a loss of public confidence in the industry.

RSPCA consider the greyhound racing industry in Tasmania to be beyond reform and believe the only way to adequately protect greyhound welfare is through the proposed legislation to end greyhound racing in Tasmania. However, the benefits of the phase-out will only be realised if the transition is carefully managed. Without a structured and legislated transition, there is a significant risk of welfare harms, reduced accountability and unmanaged outcomes as the industry declines. With strengthened protections, independence and transparency, the Committee's work plan can ensure that no greyhound is left unprotected as the industry winds down.

For the transition to be successful and maintain the confidence of the Tasmanian community, several risks must be addressed: a robust, well-considered and adequately-resourced rehoming program; independent monitoring and enforcement of animal welfare standards, policies and rules; accurate data collection and timely, transparent public reporting; effective traceability systems capable of tracking greyhounds throughout the transition period; appropriate exercise, socialisation and enrichment standards; a strong kennel auditing and compliance program; and ensuring the Commissioner has sufficient powers to oversee the performance of the integrity function in safeguarding greyhound welfare.

A significant risk identified in our submission is the potential withdrawal of government funding before the phase-out legislation is passed. If funding ceases without an alternative legislative framework in place, greyhound racing may not automatically end. Instead, there is a risk the industry could continue operating with reduced regulatory oversight. Tasracing's ability to conduct kennel audits, oversee compliance, maintain traceability systems and enforce welfare requirements currently depends on the existing regulatory framework. The Committee's work plan should therefore ensure that a regulator with clear jurisdiction, powers and responsibilities remains in place throughout the transition period to prevent gaps in welfare protection.

The Committee's work plan, together with the associated welfare, traceability and rehoming safeguards, should not automatically cease on 1 July 2029. It is likely that some greyhounds will remain in rehabilitation, foster care, rehoming pathways or other transitional arrangements beyond the closure date. Continued independent oversight will therefore be necessary until every suitable greyhound has been accounted for and successfully rehomed.

Given the substantial welfare risks associated with greyhound racing and the likelihood that some of those risks may increase during the transition period, RSPCA support the establishment of an independent Animal Welfare advisory panel. Such a panel could play an important role in reviewing the effectiveness of transition measures, identifying emerging welfare issues and providing independent advice to Government and the Committee. Rehoming will be one of the most important determinants of whether the transition is ultimately successful from a welfare perspective. As closure approaches, independent verification will become increasingly important to ensure transparency, maintain confidence in reported outcomes and confirm compliance with rehoming and euthanasia requirements. There should also be mechanisms to ensure greyhounds entering rehoming pathways have undergone appropriate behavioural assessments and veterinary checks and are well matched to their new homes.

The Committee should also carefully consider risks relating to injuries and racing intensity during the transition period. Serious injuries in Tasmania increased by 75 per cent, from 20 in 2024 to 35 in 2025. As the racing population declines, there is a risk that greyhounds may race more frequently, continue racing beyond the point at which they would ordinarily have been retired, or be returned from rehoming pathways to racing. Reduced industry investment may also affect track safety, infrastructure maintenance and welfare programs. These risks reinforce the need for strong oversight, transparent reporting and proactive welfare monitoring throughout the phase-out period.

Finally, the transition plan must ensure that greyhounds are genuinely transitioned out of the racing industry and not simply relocated to continue racing, breeding or training elsewhere. Inadequate oversight of exports creates risks that greyhounds may be transferred to jurisdictions with poor animal welfare protections or become involved in unregulated racing activities. Effective traceability and monitoring systems are therefore critical to ensuring that phase-out objectives are achieved and that greyhound welfare remains protected beyond Tasmania's borders.

Ultimately, the success of the transition should not be measured simply by whether greyhound racing ceases in Tasmania, but by whether every greyhound affected by the phase-out is protected, accounted for and given the opportunity for a good life beyond racing. RSPCA appreciate the Committee's work on this important issue, and we look forward to assisting the Committee with any questions that you may have.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Richard. Mairi, did you want to add anything before we start with some questions?

Dr STEWART - Not for now.

CHAIR - Thank you, and thank you very much for your joint submission with RSPCA Tasmania here. I want to begin by acknowledging that you've provided 26 recommendations in that submission. Very detailed recommendations in relation to the mechanisms particularly around transition, but I want to zoom out to start with in terms of the RSPCA's national position around greyhound racing and your stance around the welfare of greyhounds in the racing industry. It's been put to us that we're quite unique in Tasmania, that somehow our welfare standards are different and the outcomes for greyhounds within the racing industry are different here in Tasmania than they are in other jurisdictions, and that we can improve welfare to make greyhound racing safe for greyhounds. You've obviously had a national approach, you understand the international context of that. Could you perhaps provide some commentary? Are we unique here in Tasmania, or are what we're seeing in terms of injuries and deaths on track nothing unique and what we see elsewhere?

Mr MUSSELL - The latter really, in that from an RSPCA perspective we do hold a national position in relation to greyhound racing and that is that there are systemic animal welfare issues that persist across the greyhound racing industry globally and still in Australia. In general, what is consistent is limited transparency and inconsistent oversight across jurisdictions. The general position is that the key issues are around transparency, national consistency around publication of life-cycle reporting, complete and transparent public reporting on track-related injuries and deaths, end-of-career decisions and demonstrating priorities for the greyhound welfare through independent verification. That's all very consistent and regular independent welfare audits of the industry. But where we feel that, over many

years, the welfare of the greyhounds has not been demonstrably improved in any given jurisdiction, then it comes a time for us to support a well-planned transition away from the industry and that's where we feel we've got to in Tasmania. But the key points I made earlier are across the whole country.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you very much, Richard. So, to confirm, on your assessment, looking around the country at other jurisdictions, greyhound welfare in Tasmania has not demonstrably improved. Is that a correct assessment of what you've said?

Mr MUSSELL - Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. We've had it claimed by some industry representatives and their political backers that there's no animal welfare issues with greyhound racing. And again, we're sort of zooming out a bit here to the rationale for the government's policy. What's your response to a claim that there's no animal welfare issues with this industry?

Mr MUSSELL - I'll give a broad statement about animal welfare, but then I might hand to Dr Stewart on some of the more particular issues. But animal welfare is a complex matter that can't be measured purely around outcomes like death or euthanasia. It's a complex matter where animals' whole life in relation to their nutrition, their behaviour, their environment in which they are living have to be considered, and greyhound racing is not consistent with that, in general. So, there are inherent issues in animal welfare for animals used in this environment. So, it's a complex matter. There are animal welfare concerns around greyhound racing generally, and those remain specifically in Tasmania. Mairi, did you want to add some specifics to that?

Dr STEWART - I think, as Richard said, there's often a focus on euthanasia numbers, injuries, but more widely there's longstanding issues with rehoming. There's a lot of pressure on the rehoming programs with inherited problems from the racing industry - puts a lot of pressure on them. There's concerns around some of the rehabilitation programs; that the industry provide financial support for serious injuries and rehabilitation. Often that leads to multiple surgeries and unknown outcomes for those greyhounds and what their rehoming outcomes, again, a bit of a lack of transparency around that. If we go back to the submission, we've highlighted some of the issues around private rehoming and participants rehoming greyhounds to third parties or keeping them themselves and there seems to be, from the data, a significant number that are rehomed by participants. So, there's a whole raft of issues that, apart from the transparency and all the other issues, are not just sort of injury- and euthanasia-related.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Mairi. Some of the community concern, as we've learned through this Committee, but also as we just know, is about how greyhounds are kept during their racing lives. So, we have here, for the first time, Tasracing, our GBE for racing, has put out a code of practice for greyhound welfare. Going to those sort of whole-of-life animal welfare issues that you were talking about before, Richard, a minimum requirement, for example, for the industry, which is the same size as the kennels are basically now, is that these dogs are housed for 23.5 hours a day, because they're allowed out for 30 minutes of exercise, in a kennel that's 1.2 metres wide by 1.8 metres high with a total area of 3.5 square metres. It would be fair to say, wouldn't it, Richard or Mairi, that keeping dogs like that in those conditions, all day every day, does not meet community expectations, does it?

Mr MUSSELL - No, and it doesn't meet the animal's behavioural needs, either.

Ms O'CONNOR - No.

Mr MUSSELL - As sentient beings that have emotions and feelings like us, they would experience that by living in those conditions, and we know from temporary kennelling for just a few weeks, it's very difficult, and a lot of time is required by volunteers and socialisation programs, getting dogs out of kennels and working with them; which is why, in many of the RSPCA facilities, the process leading up to adoption is best facilitated in foster programs, where dogs are actually kept with people, and in families, so they can actually get an understanding of what life is like beyond a racing career, for example. So, not only is it bad for them during that time, but also when the time to transition into being into a home, where they're used to the familiar sounds that we're used to, in a home or being around people, is new to them and they have to learn that that's a good thing as well. So yes, you're correct, it's not a great environment for an animal to express its normal behaviours, and it's equally challenging to transition them into a home environment following that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Because it would be fair to say, wouldn't it, Richard, that a lot of these dogs - and, you know, I have a rescue greyhound who is a traumatised animal, and a lot of them are quite traumatised. I mean, this is a dog that's spent four-and-a-half years of its life in a kennel, and been taken off to the races one or twice a week - hopeless racer, I might say. But the RSPCA, Dogs' Homes of Tasmania, for example, our Greyhound Adoption Program, are often dealing with animals that are traumatised, aren't they, and that takes quite a bit of work to make sure they're suitable for rehoming, and the life they deserve.

Mr MUSSELL - Correct. Yes, and that time and dedication is with dedicated, trained volunteers and paid staff across animal shelters across the country and rehoming organisations that spend a lot of time working on both the physical health and mental health of animals to get them ready for rehoming, and if they come from an environment where they've been, as you've just described, in racing, that is made all the worse for them, and if they're stressed and distressed, it creates behavioural issues that are that much harder to assess and make sure that they're suitable for rehoming and they're going to be safe in the community. So, it's not their fault that they're in that situation, but it takes time, energy, and a lot of dedicated work by many people to get them to a point where they can get into a home.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, thank you. I've just got a last question on this line of questioning: the industry, going back to our first inquiry here, sort of 11 years ago, had what was called a 'toward zero euthanasia policy'. Now, before that inquiry, euthanasia rates here was more than 600 euthanised in that year of 2015-16, and on the data that's available to us, euthanasia rates here have declined, but of course, now there's more dogs that need homes. Are you able to share with the Committee your understanding of the different euthanasia policies between different jurisdictions? Because we've had here, for example, a dog called Memphis Rain that fractured its right hock in January this year, that was had a 90 days stand down, then it was sent back to Victoria with an injured ankle and euthanised. So, there must be a somewhat different euthanasia policy between here and there, but an understanding of euthanasia policy, I think Australia-wide, I think would be helpful to us.

Mr MUSSELL - I'd have to take that on notice, personally, unless, Mairi, you have any response to that one?

Dr STEWART - Yes, I just think it also comes back to some of the issues around self-reporting. So, for example, in Tasmania they use OzChase, so often those animals are reported as retired, but we're not sure if they've been euthanised, and/or the reasons for that. So, some of it stems back to that lack of transparency and the reliance on self-reporting and the data systems.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, we have a couple of big gaps in that whole-of-life tracking here: one is third-party pet, when the greyhound goes to third-party pet, and the other one is when the greyhound is marked as retired. It's very difficult to obtain from Tasracing any of that information about the fate of those dogs. Would you agree that that's a significant whole-of-life data problem?

Mr MUSSELL - Yes, it is, and just on the policy on euthanasia, I don't have a specific answer to that question for the Committee, but it is important that there is consistency across those policies to ensure that a decision made in one jurisdiction is not then different, or assessed differently, in another.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, which clearly at the moment they are being - anyway.

Mr MUSSELL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - Thanks for your submission and for being with us today. I want to ask about recommendations 11 and 21, which is around the Animal Welfare Advisory Panel. Just trying to get an understanding of what the difference between what you're proposing is versus what the Racing Integrity Commission here in Tasmania set up with the Integrity and Animal Welfare Advisory Committee; is there something specific that you're looking for to happen that isn't currently happening through that existing committee?

Dr STEWART - I think just any kind of committee like that, there needs to be assurance that there's independent advice and that may be from various skills, also some oversight around euthanasia decisions. That may be an independent vet required on that panel. Also, going back to the rehabilitation scheme, so some oversight around the way those animals are being managed, rehabilitated and their outcomes and rehoming pathways. There's a lot of different parts to what that committee - what their role might be, but the key thing is that it's independent from the industry.

Mr WINTER - You're talking about this committee would have input into - I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, but are you saying this committee would have input into the day-to-day euthanasia or rehoming decisions about particular dogs?

Dr STEWART - Correct.

Mr WINTER - If so, what do you see as the current issues as to how that process works in Tasmania?

Dr STEWART - At the moment, for example, euthanising an animal, you have to give a certain amount of notice, but who actually has oversight over that? Once again, it's a self-reporting system and there needs to be more independent verification of whether animals are being euthanised or rehabilitated.

Mr WINTER - Sure. So, currently my understanding is, in Tasmania, a vet needs to sign off on euthanising a dog, or greyhound; is that consistent with other jurisdictions and what, in particular, is your concern with a vet being able to authorise it as it stands?

Dr STEWART - Currently, yes, they would have to have a vet certificate. Not all the information is there transparently to say what the reasons are behind, or the causes of the euthanasia, but this panel, what we're proposing, would just have some oversight. I guess the way I would see it is they are advising the transition committee themselves, providing independent advice across everything, like the animal welfare standards, euthanasia decisions and across all the animal welfare policies.

Mr WINTER - Okay. So this would be more associated with their transition rather than associated with the day-to-day racing.

Dr STEWART - Correct.

Mr WINTER - When I was reading your submission, I was thinking about in terms of - you would know better than me - that often with dogs, conditions like twisted bowel and that sort of thing can happen pretty quickly, and you wouldn't want to have to convene a committee with a risk like that. Is this quite specific to the transition rather than the day-to-day racing?

Dr STEWART - Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - There is another cohort of dogs, though, isn't there? The ones who aren't taken to the vet to be euthanised, who here because we've got self-reporting and this is information that we've obtained through stewards' reports and right to information, where dogs are dying. For example, two of Anthony Bullock's dogs have died from snake bite which was reported to the Chief Racing Integrity Officer after the fact. We've got multiple examples here of reason for death unknown, reason for death unknown. So, it comes back, doesn't it, to that problem with self-reporting, the lack of oversight and enforcement within the industry where dogs are dying. The integrity officers have no known cause of the dog's death and a trainer's story, or assessment of that dog's death, is taken on trust.

Mr MUSSELL - Yes, you've hit the nail on the head there, really, in terms of the issue and it's around the reporting and transparency. We say transparency a lot for the reason you've just explained, and it's just having the full suite of data. And I think that is generally the issue we're seeing across the industry and in particular in Tasmania is that consistent reporting on the reasons for euthanasia, obviously always under veterinary advice and veterinary direction. But then it's a reporting of why that's occurred and what the reasons for the injury are and what the reasons for the death and where the animals have gone to.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. It's not always under advice or veterinary direction. According to the data that we have, there's a dog called Devils Gate that died in November last year, for example, and it was subject to emergency euthanasia by owner.

It's more of a comment than a question, and it comes back to that problem with traceability of these animals, doesn't it?

Mr MUSSELL - It does. My understanding is that euthanasia has to be either done by a vet or under the direction of the veterinarian.

Ms WEBB - You probably covered a bit of what I'm about to ask you, but I'm looking for some succinct reflections, because one of the main assertions that we hear from the industry - and I'm looking at submissions that we've received from Greyhounds Australasia and also Greyhounds Tasmania as the subpart of that organisation - in relation to animal welfare, they make typical comments along the lines of:

The modern greyhound racing sector operates under a comprehensive welfare first framework where sustained improvements are continuously codified, monitored and enforced.

It sounds all very good. Another one here from the Greyhounds Australasia where it says:

Welfare outcomes in Tasmanian greyhound racing have improved consistently. Their financial year 2025 total injury incidence rate 23.39 per 1000 starters is the lowest in a decade.

So, these assertions about 'we're doing much better now, our injury rates are improving'. These are the things that are made consistently or put to us consistently. When I asked the sector, 'Are they able to define the acceptable rate of injury and death?' They weren't able to provide an answer to that. I presume that you wouldn't have an answer to that either, necessarily. Could you reflect on, is it acceptable to say we're getting better and to point to an improvement in some of these metrics as an indication of the standard of animal welfare in the greyhound racing industry?

Mr MUSSELL - No, generally. I think that the issue is around the embedded animal welfare issue is that it's intrinsic to the actual racing industry itself. And so, yes, if there are improvements of course in injuries, that is still a good thing. However, the issue seems to be back around the reporting and the complete transparency of the information to be clear that it can be verified. And I think that's where you're probably found through this inquiry, and what we found through our own investigations and over time, is the general oversight of the data and the information, has been the issue for it to be verified. Consistently, the stress and the injuries that animals are put through to race in greyhound racing is an issue in itself, and then the reporting of that continues to be a concern. Mairi, did you want to add to that?

Ms WEBB - Before Mairi chimes in, because perhaps Mairi could reflect on this, the thing I'm interested in is - the more we get distracted quibbling about whose data is right or whose data is wrong, if we get distracted by that, then we can potentially lose sight of the overarching question we're asking ourselves here. I'm interested in - even if we accept the best data provided by the industry - puts it in the best light - does that indicate an acceptable animal welfare standard in the industry if they can point to improvements or to a lowest ever rate of injury and death?

Mr MUSSELL - Well, generally not, no, I would say, because of the inherent issues in, like we said before, around the cumulative animal welfare issues from the housing, the training and then the racing itself. So, you combine all of that and there are those cumulative animal welfare concerns. As I said before, the measure of animal welfare is quite complex, so it is an animal welfare concern. While we want to see improvements, unless we were satisfied that

those were completely covered, we can't see how it could continue on animal welfare grounds alone.

Dr STEWART - Possibly New Zealand's a good example of that. They made improvements also in their injury rates and standards and, as we know, still lost their social licence. Your question about what is acceptable is a tricky one.

Ms O'CONNOR - There's quite a lot of movement on this industry, we've seen New Zealand, Scotland and Wales end the industry. We've had the Drake inquiry in New South Wales - and Dr Alex Brittan, former chief vet at Greyhounds Racing New South Wales, gave us evidence last week, a number of metrics and recommendations in Drake have just been ignored. There's also been, as I understand it, some further inquiries into the industry in other Australian jurisdictions. Has the RSPCA been a part of those inquiries? I think it has given evidence in Western Australia. Are you able to talk us through some of those jurisdictional shifts, potentially, that we're seeing?

Mr MUSSELL - Broadly speaking, I haven't been directly involved. RSPCA WA provided a submission and detailed evidence to that inquiry a couple of months ago, and I believe they're waiting for the outcome of that still. So, there is active work in Western Australia. I know in South Australia, as a result of an inquiry I believe three years ago, there were 87 recommendations put to the industry and they had until July this year to provide the responses, which they say they have and the government in South Australia is reviewing that currently. But RSPCA South Australia is actively pushing for a phase-out of the industry in South Australia because they haven't been assured that those recommendations have been covered so far. There seems to be a growing momentum in other jurisdictions as well, I believe in Queensland, too, around similar concerns and inquiries on similar matters that you are facing today.

Ms O'CONNOR - And that goes back to the issue of a loss of public support because of what the Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand described as an unacceptably high rate of injuries and deaths, which was foundational to New Zealand's decision to end greyhound racing. It fundamentally comes back to community understanding of the enormous animal welfare cost to dogs of this industry.

Mr MUSSELL - That's right.

Ms O'CONNOR - Would you agree greyhound racing is simply not safe for dogs?

Mr MUSSELL - Under many of the conditions that they're put under, it puts them under an immense amount of stress and training. So, I would believe that's a fair assessment.

Ms O'CONNOR - In the evidence that he gave to us, Dr Alex Brittan talked about what happens to each cohort of dogs in any given year. He basically said if three dogs enter the industry in a year, one dies, one is rehomed, and one ends up in this backlog. Does the RSPCA have any picture of what happens in the cohorts? Because we've had Greyhounds Australasia dispute Dr Brittan's evidence and, in fact, devote a lot of time to writing a whole report in response to evidence that he gave to the Drake inquiry. He's given us some quite confronting numbers. Has the RSPCA looked at his evidence, or does it have an understanding of what happens to the numbers of greyhounds who come in in each year's intake?

Mr MUSSELL - I don't have a response specifically to his evidence but, in relation to the data, Mairi, did we have -

Dr STEWART - It's really difficult to extract utilisation rates from most jurisdictions, including Tasmania, so it's difficult to get that cohort-based data. They may sometimes provide number of puppies, number bred and some of that raw data, but it's really difficult to get that cohort data. So, I'm not sure where he got that from, but it's something we would like to see reported more transparently.

Ms O'CONNOR - What about the cost of rehoming greyhounds? We've had some quite extreme numbers put to us by Greyhounds Australasia and a member of this Committee. What's RSPCA's understanding of on-average costs to rehome an ex-racing greyhound?

Mr MUSSELL - Well, because every animal is going to be slightly different, the time it would take would have to be taken into consideration. I think, just a broad statement, we would not want to see potential cost be a reason for this not to continue because what the animal welfare industry needs is time and planning and because they're generally run from and operated by donations and with volunteers, and where there is a problem, usually, is when large amounts of dogs need to be rehomed in one hit. So, transition and planning is essential and that's why an orderly phase out and planning.

Essentially, what is needed from a rehoming perspective are the veterinary costs covered, of course, and the time it takes to rehabilitate that dog and get it to a position, like we said earlier, into a home. So, I saw something in the media this morning applying figures to the New Zealand model and figures around multiple millions of dollars for rehoming. I wouldn't expect that to be the case in Tasmania because, as long as your veterinary costs are covered and the costs are covered for the rehoming time, I could imagine \$1000 per dog, for example, just speaking off the top, without any thorough assessment, would be a reasonable amount. And even at 1000 dogs, that's \$1 million, not \$40 million.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

Mr WINTER - The Dogs' Home of Tasmania, if I recall correctly, gave us a quote of around \$3500 per dog to rehome them.

Mr MUSSELL - Right.

Mr WINTER - Is that your argument -

Ms O'CONNOR - But, that's if they have to cover vet fees.

Mr WINTER - Right. So, the number you're quoting, \$1000, is without vet fees?

Mr MUSSELL - I would say that every situation is going to be different. So, I can't speak on behalf of Dogs' Homes of Tasmania, of course. If they've given you that, it's because they've fully analysed their costs, including veterinary costs. I just gave you a figure without any validation, so to speak, but I wouldn't dispute their figures, no.

CHAIR - One of the challenges that we have is that greyhounds aren't treated like dogs in a regulatory and legislative sense. They're a commodity for industry purposes, for gambling

purposes, and not seen as sentient beings. Our *Animal Welfare Act* is deficient in that, it doesn't recognise the sentience of animals full stop, let alone greyhounds. But, how does that present a challenge, I suppose, in the rehoming process? I know that RSPCA Tasmania here, along with Dogs' Homes and other animal welfare organisations find it very difficult in the community conversation to talk about greyhounds. People assume that they're dogs and they're treated like dogs, but they're not. That presents a challenge for rehoming organisations in terms of preparing dogs for rehoming, but also in terms of raising funds for efforts such as RSPCA.

Mr MUSSELL - I think, generally, when there is a coordinated action required to rehome large numbers of dogs and the rehoming groups usually work collaboratively together, they get a lot of community support to do so. And, as long as the people looking to rehome greyhounds understand that it's an ongoing role, as one of your Committee members said earlier, in terms of accepting their history and that they're going to need ongoing care because of their background. I think there is a huge amount of people, as we know through the adoption programs already in existence, whether it be Greyhounds as Pets, or previously GAP, or through any other rehoming group, get a huge amount of support from the community to adopt them, but they are, at the end of the day, dogs, and they should be afforded the same care and protection in relation to their life and also their ability to be rehomed like any other dog. But, it's the background that they've been subjected to if they've been in the racing industry that just makes that that much longer and harder to work through. But, they're beautiful, caring and docile dogs as anyone would know that has one and make great pets.

CHAIR - A rescue greyhound mum here and it seems to be an absurd kind of distinction we make between greyhounds and any other dog. I think we can collectively agree that if there was a government proposal to introduce chihuahua racing there would be public outcry about that or poodle racing or whatever it might be, but for whatever reason we still accept - I shouldn't say we, large numbers in the community don't accept anymore but Australia still allows greyhound racing.

Thank you very much for your time and appearance here today. We do appreciate you Zooming in for our Committee to provide evidence. Just to remind you that what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said to us here today. Do you understand that?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you so much for your time. I really do appreciate it.

The witnesses withdrew.

The Committee suspended at 11.58 a.m.

PUBLIC

The Committee resumed at 1.00 p.m.

Tasracing

CHAIR - Thank you very much and welcome to today's hearing on the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Thank you very much for your attendance to our inquiry today. As you'd be aware, we have four members of the Committee here today. We do have apologies from Mr Vermey and Ms Rattray, and we have Mr Dean Winter, Ms Meg Webb, Ms Cassy O'Connor, and myself, Kristie Johnston as the Chair. If you could please state your name and capacity in which you're appearing before the Committee today.

Mr JENKINS - Andrew Jenkins, CEO of Tasracing.

Mr HEALD - Daron Heald, CFO of Tasracing.

Mr LENZ - Martin Lenz, CV and Animal Welfare Officer of Tasracing.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, and can I confirm that you've received and read the guide sent to you by the Committee Secretary?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, yes.

CHAIR - Excellent. The pertinent part for those, as you'd be aware, is that the 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 of parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing today and the public and media may be present, or indeed watching online. Should you wish any aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make this request to the Committee at the time. Now, before you, you have some statutory declarations, if I can ask you to make those statutory declarations now, please?

Mr ANDREW JOHN JENKINS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER; **Mr DARON ROBIN HEALD**, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER; AND **Dr MARTIN FREDERICK LENZ**, CHIEF VETERINARY & ANIMAL WELFARE OFFICER, TASRACING, WERE CALLED, TOOK THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED

CHAIR - Thank you very much, and if you'd like to begin by making a short opening statement, you're welcome to.

Mr JENKINS - Thank you Chair, not specifically other than to thank yourself and the Committee once again for the opportunity to provide a submission and also appear today and participate constructively in the Committee and the process as related to the pending phase-out of greyhound racing. So, we welcome the opportunity to participate, so thank you Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and thank you for your submission. It's quite detailed, with a lot of figures and data contained in it. I suppose I want to start very broadly. We've already made a finding as a Committee in relation to data collection, and Tasracing's data collection, and there has been significant differences in data represented by Tasracing, other entities, indeed the audit that the Racing Integrity Commissioner has done himself. Can I just

check to see where the data is coming from that's informing this particular submission, because we've obviously got a number of datasets that are disputed.

In particular, I'm interested in, on page 5 of your submission, you talk about participants and people, and you talk about 915 individuals involved in Tasmanian greyhound racing. The data that we've received from the Racing Integrity Commissioner suggests it's significantly less there and that, in fact, some of those people who might be also owners, breeders, trainers, volunteers, racing club participants, all those kind of things, might be counted more than once. So, can I just confirm, when you say 915 individuals, they are not discrete, unique individuals. Are they, for instance, it's possible to be a breeder, an owner, and a trainer? So, we've counted them separately, so there are, indeed, 85 breeders, but some of those breeders might also be trainers, which is counted as 287. Can I just confirm that?

Mr HEALD - There is a possibility of that. There are a few, a number who we think would be both, not a significant number, but a number.

CHAIR - So, certainly, for instance, when we're looking at owners, trainers, and breeders, the number is significantly less than has been provided to us by the Racing Integrity Commissioner. How are you calculating them? I suppose, on this particular graph I'm looking at, and right throughout your submission, there are a number of sort of asterisks or notations that haven't been referenced anywhere in terms of a footnote. Can you explain what those numbers or the asterisks particularly means in that table?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, thank you, Chair. I would agree with the comment that you've made that, yes, there can be an individual status, or role, within the industry can populate more than one category. In the case of owners and trainers, the footnote does indicate there, that they are updated from our end of season data from 2024-25. The rest of the data that's contained in that category is drawn from our most recent IER study that relates to the 2021-22 season and was completed in 2023.

CHAIR - What does the asterisk mean within that data? Sorry. I can see footnote 3 of page 5. It's just there's a number of tables in here that have asterisks and things, which aren't a footnote. I can certainly see the footnotes, it's clear where that comes from, but just in terms of the data itself? Just trying to get a picture that's, you know - representation. What does the asterisk mean?

Mr JENKINS - Sure. So, in that case, my interpretation of that asterisk is a reference to, as I've mentioned, Chair, the bottom of that page, which if I blow it up - bear with me, Chair.

CHAIR - That's all right. So, the table's referenced, it's got a footnote for 3:

Please note, save for our Owner and Trainer numbers which have been updated for the 2024-25 Season, this data -

So, okay -

Mr HEALD - The asterisk just refers back to that -

CHAIR - That data is different.

PUBLIC

Mr JENKINS - There probably should be an asterisk at the bottom of - there should either be a 3 that we're looking at in the table or an asterisk.

Ms WEBB - That's footnoted in the title of the table, that's footnoted as 3. So that's fine. It just didn't explain the asterisk. So that explains it now that we've talked it through.

CHAIR - So, everything in the data for table A.2.3 is from the IER with the exception of those two asterisked items, which come from the 2024/25 season.

Mr JENKINS - That's right. Yes.

Ms WEBB - Just in terms of - you agree that we've probably got some doubling up, double counting there. Are you able to give us an accurate number in terms of discrete individuals?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, we can, Ms Webb. We would need to take that on notice and split out and give the Committee a view as to where the crossover is occurring but, yes, we can certainly provide the discrete breakdown of the categories. Yes.

Ms WEBB - Well, I don't even - I mean, the issue is you've given us a breakdown of the categories, but what we don't have with the data you've given us is where there's a crossover where somebody might fit into more than one category. So, can you present us with a number that is -

Mr JENKINS - Sorry. That's what I'm saying. Yes, we can certainly undertake to do that analysis and present it back to the Committee. That's understood.

CHAIR - And just further on the data about participants and understanding the number of participants in the industry, do you have data on newly registered participants - whether it be owner, trader, breeder - in the industry who haven't registered previously for the last financial year? So completely new people to the industry, I suppose.

Mr JENKINS - Yes, we would, Chair. Every participant has a date stamp, so to speak, that they entered into. Once again, if, with your endorsement, to take on notice, we can definitely provide an indication.

CHAIR - Certainly. And you can do that by breakdown, in terms of classifications, so trainer, breeder -

Mr JENKINS - All categories.

CHAIR - All categories. Beautiful, thank you.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask another follow-up question on the data that's here about participants in this table? Are you able to indicate which of these - like, for example, in each category, I'm wondering are these currently active in this category? Because we know that say, for example, when it comes to owners, we've got 287 as the number there. In other data we've been presented with a whole range of those owners don't have an active or registered greyhound for racing at this present time. So, are you able to give us an indication in this data of people

who are active, current participants versus potentially historic participants or who just signed up, but are not active participants?

Mr JENKINS - We can, Ms Webb. That's a breakdown that we can provide quite simply, because as you would hope and expect, each greyhound is aligned or registered to an owner and/or trainer. Therefore, we're able to provide information as to an owner, trainer or both who may be registered but not currently active. So, yes. Once again, yes is the answer. We can certainly provide that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you engaged with the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner on your data on page 5 of your submission to this Committee? That's the data relating to the number of industry participants.

Mr JENKINS - Not specifically that I'm aware of, Ms O'Connor. As we've indicated, the owner and trainer numbers are drawn directly from the national OzChase system and the remaining categories that we've tabled are drawn from, as we've stated, the 2023 IER study.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, the IER work has been questioned, because it is the consultancy of choice for the industry, and it has been, for example, referenced by economist Saul Eslake as work that inflates economic contribution. It's your contention that this figure, which is actually stated in your submission as fact, that there are approximately 915 individuals involved in Tasmanian greyhound racing, we've established through questions that they may not be individuals and in all likelihood are not all individuals. Was there any reference to ABS data or to the work of Saul Eslake on industry participants numbers in formulating this table?

Mr JENKINS - There wasn't, to my knowledge, Ms O'Connor. Again, the data relates to the report that was completed in 2023. We could take on notice and review the IER methodology. As to the extent, Mr Hill, that ABS or other information -

Ms O'CONNOR - I don't know that we need to see that. What we'd like, or I think we should see, is an analysis of that number, 915, relative to Australian Bureau of Statistics data, Treasury and Finance report from 2021, Saul Eslake's work.

Mr HEALD - It's a matter of classification more than anything else, for some of these.

Ms O'CONNOR - Sure, but the submission describes it as individuals.

Mr HEALD - For example, somebody who works in a restaurant on a racecourse, are they classed as a restaurant employee or are they classed as a racing employee? They're the types of classifications that come into question with these types of things, especially with the ABS sort of classification, if you're going strictly on that. A lot of these studies were done with direct surveys and relates back to information such as workers' compensation information provided to us for the insurance purposes and those types of things. A lot of this is direct information which IER has sourced directly themselves.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, okay, thank you, and this is a question to Mr Jenkins, I guess, as the CEO: Mr Jenkins, you would agree, given that we have a Government policy that seeks to end greyhound racing and there will be a transition process and compensation, I'm sure you would agree it's really important that we have a really clear understanding of the number of participants in the industry and that Tasracing is part of forming that clear understanding?

Mr JENKINS - I would agree.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Thank you, because they're very different individual numbers from what I have seen. So, would it be possible now to -

CHAIR - Have you got a follow up question on the numbers, just a follow-up question on the numbers before we move onto another topic?

Ms WEBB - It's a really quick one, just out of his answer there -

Ms O'CONNOR - Sure, I mean, you've had two follow-up questions. I just asked a question, but go for it.

Ms WEBB - It's just a really quick follow-up question to clarify something from the answer: when you mentioned before, staff in a restaurant, say, at the racing club, have you counted them, for example, in the 75 people specified there for racing club and industry staff?

Mr HEALD - Not so much the hospitality staff for race days, no, most of those will actually be club staff, but that was an example of the type of issue that arises with classification versus direct inquiry.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I wanted to clarify whether that was included.

Ms O'CONNOR - We have had information from Tasracing relating to breeding data, and the latest information that we have is for financial year 2025, where the number of pups was 155; does Tasracing have data for financial year 2026?

Dr LENZ - The last quarter has just been published, so that is part of our quarterly reporting on the website.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Dr Lenz, so what is the total number of pups whelped in financial year 2026?

Dr LENZ - I have the quarterly reports here. We can draw a number from each one of those reports and get you that total number.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's just adding up the four quarters?

Dr LENZ - Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you want to give me those numbers now and we can add them up as we go?

Dr LENZ - Yes. Quarter April to June, the greyhounds whelped was 65; January to March, 65 again; October to December 2025 was 17; and July to September 2025, 17 again.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, 164, so we have actually seen an increase in this financial year in the number of pups bred, in an industry that has been told by Government it's going to be phased out. Fair assessment, isn't it, increase in whelping?

Dr LENZ - Each quarter can be quite variable, as you can see in the four that we just looked at, you know, 17 versus 65. It very much depends on individual decision-making and the number can blow out and can be quite reduced, as it was for the two quarters where it was 17. That would be below average; 65 is obviously higher than those.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Can we ask about the code of practice for animal welfare that has just been released by Tasracing? What's the status of this code of practice, noting that it has been put out for public comment and people are invited to comment within less than 500 words?

Mr JENKINS - I'm happy to take that, Dr Lenz. Thank you, Ms O'Connor. As you quite rightly assert, the greyhound code of practice was released for public consultation once again. There have been multiple rounds of consultation. The most recent round concluded in June, and we are pleased to advise that at its 29 July board meeting the Tasracing board endorsed the code of practice for effect and implementation immediately or as soon as is practical. We have, subject to requirements under the Act, immediately referred the code of practice to the Racing Integrity Committee for their priority consideration, with a view to implementation as soon as possible.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Given that the board made the decision to implement the code of welfare, is it the board's contention that this is a best-practice code of welfare?

Mr JENKINS - I can't comment.

Ms O'CONNOR - Dr Lenz would like to; he's gesticulating at you.

Mr JENKINS - Are you, doctor? I will hand to you, Dr Lenz.

Dr LENZ - Thank you, and through you, Chair, so the code of practice, it's listed in the back of the document, the source documentation that it was based on, I did - anticipating a similar question, I have those source documents here. As far as is it a best-practice document, it is closely based on existing documentation from other jurisdictions and other states. Where there was a level of discrepancy, we have tended to err on the side of higher welfare. From that point of view, I'm happy to say that, as an Australasian standard, yes, it is up there with the best of them.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. It doesn't incorporate the five domains of animal welfare; are you going to dispute that?

Dr LENZ - I am, absolutely.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. How does it improve a greyhound's social and mental wellbeing to be kept in a kennel that is 1.2 metres wide by 1.8 metres high, to a total area of 3.5 square metres, for 23-and-a-half hours a day?

Dr LENZ - We have a full chapter on socialisation and enrichment, which is part of the total document. If we're looking at - and obviously, having listened to some of the previous interviews here with other invited guests. The dimensions of the kennels. Once again, it's

looked at all the existing documents, and we've pitched it at the higher end of those. I did note your comment that there was only a requirement for 30 minutes of free exercise, correct?

Ms O'CONNOR - For a racing dog. 7.10, page 19.

Dr LENZ - Yes. Thirty minutes of free exercise. That sits outside of all the racing-related training preparation that occurs, and it also sits very much outside of the, as I refer to that chapter on enrichment and socialisation. All of those activities are additional requirements to the accommodation chapter.

Ms O'CONNOR - Right, okay. The assertion is that they should all be read together, and that it is not reasonable to suggest that these dogs are spending more than 23 hours a day on average in their kennels.

Dr LENZ - Not if the code of practice is followed in its entirety.

Ms O'CONNOR - Who's overseeing and monitoring that?

Dr LENZ - That will be part of the work that the TIU is charged with and obviously there will be some assistance and guidance from a veterinary and animal welfare part of Tasracing with that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. How do you engage with industry participants? It's one thing to have a code of practice and it's another thing to be understood that there's a code of practice. It is a question of industry engagement that is the question. Also, the prescriptions for kennels here basically fit the kennels now, don't they? I mean, no trainer or owner is going to have to rebuild their kennels on the basis of the code of practice.

Dr LENZ - As I said, it's drawn from other codes of practice that are in force in other jurisdictions. As I said, I don't want to repeat that, but where there was discrepancy, we've erred on the side of higher dimensions, greater welfare. Where the industry sits at the moment, it is obviously something that will be explored and experienced by the people that are doing the kennel checks from here on based on the document.

Ms O'CONNOR - Are the kennel checks being done by the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner or Tasracing's Racing Integrity Unit?

Dr LENZ - Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - Also, the RSPCA may have jurisdiction at some point soon. Is that correct?

Dr LENZ - Obviously, under the rules of racing, which is what this document is based on or where it draws its jurisdiction from, there is not direct oversight, but certainly if there are any compliance issues that go beyond the realm of the racing rules, then that is the natural next port of call and the first part of the document actually lists that as also applying to participants in the sport.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. I am happy to move on for now.

CHAIR - To page 7 of your submission. We've had Treasury in today to give us evidence in relation to the deed and outline that there are the three separate deed arrangements. One main deed, which obviously expires 30 June 2029, the point of consumption tax deed, the sharing arrangements around that which is due to expire 30 June 2027. And then, of course, implementation of racing integrity functions deed, which expires 30 June 2029, is my understanding. Within that framework, in regard to table A 3.1. I just want to understand clearly, when we are talking about Government grants here \$36.8 million, we are talking about funding that is received from the main deed, and then also from the racing integrity functions deed as well. Is that correct?

And then, the point of consumption tax funding of \$7.3 million would be that that's provided for under that separate deed which expires June 2027. Is that correct, is my understanding? Just to try and understand a picture of the industry and the contribution, the point of consumption tax you've outlined is around - 80 per cent is provided to Tasracing, that's with indexation, is that correct?

Mr HEALD - That's correct.

CHAIR - So, we can assume - and my math is not my strong point, so I will caveat that - that there's a point of consumption tax of about \$9.12 million in order to return \$7.3 million to Tasracing. Is that a fair assessment of the situation?

Mr HEALD - It's actually more than that. In terms of the total receipts: we, Tasracing, gets 80 per cent of the net benefit of the -

CHAIR - The net benefit, right.

Mr HEALD - There is some deductions from that, relating to other fees paid by wagering licences, which are offset.

CHAIR - Okay, I'm just trying to understand -

Mr HEALD - It's not really our bailiwick, we just get what we're given out of the balance.

CHAIR - I understand that, what I'm trying to understand is the figures, and where they're coming from, so that we get an indication, because obviously we go move into the next part of that table, where we talk about the expenditure side of things, Tasracing is suggesting that the code requires \$3.21 million, which I understand is less than the other codes in order to break even, would be a fair -

Mr HEALD - Yes.

CHAIR - I'm just trying to understand how you've extracted greyhound code funding revenue and expenditure, as opposed to others, and where those funding arrangements, and that information is coming from. So, I suppose I invite you to speak a bit more about that particular table, and how you've extracted greyhound code, because we've heard obviously from Treasury this morning that it's quite opaque to try and understand a code-by-code distinction in terms of funding, revenue and expenditure.

Mr HEALD - The expenses that we put down here in the revenues and expenses are really the are direct expenses and revenues. So, greyhound racing generates turnover, for which we get paid race field fees; that is the strict revenues that we've got there. We do pick up some international revenue as well, a fairly small amount, but it is there that we get, and that's directly calculated from the returns that we get from our agent for those international fees, which is Sky Channel. There are other small revenues. So, those revenues are strictly the commercial revenues which are generated by the code itself.

The expenditure is - obviously code funding is in there, that includes the likes of the stakes paid and the - we pay subsidies for injections, and other bits and pieces. The labour cost in there are those costs - some of those costs are directly attributable. We have code-related staff who administer the codes, organise a race starting, and items like that. Others are estimates based on, for example track staff; we have estimates of 1.5 FTE's per track site, in order to look after the tracks on-site. Those individuals may work across various components on our race sites, but in general we are pretty confident that those numbers stack up. Other expenses include anything directly related to the actual code itself.

CHAIR - So, we've got COM, greyhound GAP, integrity, unallocated government funding -

Mr HEALD - Yes.

CHAIR - In the expenditure, and obviously under code funding, as you said, you've got \$7.48 million of code funding, exclusively for greyhounds, which is prize money, all that kind of thing that's going in that. GAP there's nothing, but there's labour and other expenses, and integrity unallocated. So, are you unable to allocate an expense for greyhound racing, assuming we're talking integrity here, we're talking about regulatory functions here?

Mr HEALD - Yes.

CHAIR - You're unable to allocate specifically what is dedicated to greyhound within that, or?

Mr HEALD - At the time of doing this, not really. We have done further analysis, and analytical work, and we can probably identify a couple of positions in particular. We have a Greyhound Code Chief of Stewards related when we have a couple of stewards who are specifically related working on greyhounds as well. So, they are cost savings that we've identified that we would probably save at the end, but very limited for the rest of the cost structure of -

CHAIR - And so unallocated, so - yes.

Mr JENKINS - Thanks Daron, thank you, Chair, through you, perhaps the easiest way, or the way that I tend to explain these numbers are that at a gross profit line, the greyhound industry generates - it does pay for itself in the sense that the race field fees generated by the greyhound code exceeds the prize money that is paid out to the industry. However, when you add into that the other costs, as we have in the bottom of the table, the net impact for the industry and Tasracing as the principal racing authority, having allocated to the fullest extent we think we reasonably can costs that can be specifically attributed to the greyhound code, that the true net cost of running the greyhound code is the \$3.2 million figure that you're seeing there.

Ms O'CONNOR - But how can you say that, when there's an \$864,000 cost of the GAP, because without the greyhound industry, that money wouldn't be presumably required, because we wouldn't be dealing with the waste product of this industry and trying to rehome it. So really, it's closer to \$4 million.

Mr JENKINS - Well, that's - it's a reasonable case in terms of how GAP was classified. Yes, costs associated with GAP would be in addition to that number. We've simply separated them out for the purpose of clarity in reporting racing versus post-racing.

Mr HEALD - In particular, this is important because, while greyhound racing may cease in 2029, for example -

Ms O'CONNOR - Hear, hear.

Mr HEALD - We would save, we expect, around about that \$3.2 million. However, we would expect GAP to continue for a few years after that. So we wouldn't see that saving immediately happen.

CHAIR - So, in terms of trying to analyse it for the members of the public who are thinking about this as a business entity: it wouldn't be fair to say that greyhound racing pays for itself if you just look at race field fees and code funding, because obviously there's about almost a million dollars difference there in terms of race field fees achieved, revenue and expenditure and code funding, so it would be a bit like saying that your cost of coffee as opposed to the price you sell your coffee for is your profit; it's not. There's a significant amount of other things that go into your profitability. So we're talking about labour depreciation, other expenses. What kind of things are we talking about in the other expenses category there?

Mr JENKINS - Have you got a breakdown there, Daron, that we can -

Ms O'CONNOR - Could that be where you count marketing, for example?

Mr HEALD - Yes, Some. A lot of the marketing actually is in the unallocated because it's - like we're promoting Tasracing globally, but anything specific to promoting a greyhound race meeting or an event or something like that would be in there.

Mr JENKINS - Excuse me: specific charges that can be attributed to a greyhound facility or part of the track. As I mentioned earlier, wherever it's our view that we can reasonably draw a specific line and allocate a cost to a code, we've endeavoured to include that in the breakdown.

Mr HEALD - And that will include even like portions of electricity for a particular venue, for example, will be split by the three codes because they're both using it, and if there's no racing, we expect to use a little less power at that site and water; and greyhound sand is quite specific in its technical requirements, so they're easy to identify. So all of those types of costs will be included in that \$2.5 million.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is there a travel subsidy cost from the north-west?

Mr HEALD - Yes.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - So that would be included; so, again, that's money that's needed to support the greyhound racing industry?

Mr HEALD - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - It should be really counted as part of its costs.

Mr HEALD - Yes, absolutely.

Ms O'CONNOR - And so the unallocated column is generally Tasracing's administration that can't be attributed to either harness, thoroughbred or greyhound; it's an umbrella?

Mr JENKINS - Yes.

CHAIR - But subsidies are included in that? Or is that -

Ms O'CONNOR - Travel subsidies would be in there, wouldn't it?

Mr JENKINS - No.

Ms O'CONNOR - Where are those?

CHAIR - Other expenses.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh, that's in the other expenses. Okay.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr JENKINS - Because obviously they're very specific to a code, so it's easy to say, right, whatever we spent that year should be attributed to greyhounds or harness as the case may be. That's right.

CHAIR - Thank you. I'm happy to - I've got lots of questions, but I'm happy to keep going. Moving through the submission, so now on page 10, where we talk about the economic impact of Tasmanian greyhound racing by category, and you've sort of articulated a range of impacts, and then further on you talk about whether they could be positive, adverse, neutral, et cetera; you haven't included here the economic impact of rehoming. Is that something that Tasracing has taken into consideration around that? Again, whilst we are on that particular table, could someone please explain to me what NR asterisk means, that would be helpful. Page 10, I couldn't find a reference to what that might be in the table. No return, not recorded? Page 10, table A.3.4.

Mr JENKINS - I'm saying not recorded.

CHAIR - Not recorded?

Mr JENKINS - Or not reported as well. I can confirm, if you wish.

Ms WEBB - We are only guessing, so it would be good to confirm.

CHAIR - Yes. There is a reason I was unsure about whether it was not recorded - was because it does talk about expenditure, so that would be a defined number. That's why I wasn't really sure what NR meant. I would expect a dollar figure, some description.

Mr JENKINS - We will need to confirm. Happy to do so.

CHAIR - Sorry, back to my original part of that question: you've obviously talked about the economic impact of breeding, training, participants and suppliers, and then racing and wagering, but you haven't talked about the economic impact of rehoming, which has an economic impact, certainly in terms of you've provided significant funding to GAP as indicated and it's not just GAP, obviously, that does the rehoming.

Mr JENKINS - No, that's quite right. There are a number of ancillary providers and no, the IER study as it was conducted, and Daron, please correct me if I'm wrong, didn't specifically carve out a line item, so to speak, for rehoming.

CHAIR - Is that because the terms of reference or the study only looked at the racing industry up until a point in time, so up until a dog's racing career ended, and did not look beyond that in terms of the economic impact or the cost of the industry after that? Is that one of the reasons why it wasn't included, because obviously, Tasracing, as I said, pay significant amounts of money to GAP, so that's an impact on Tasracing's business unit?

Mr JENKINS - That's exactly right, Chair. So whilst we – sorry Daron.

Mr HEALD - It does mention that it's included in the training and preparation costs in there.

CHAIR - In preparation? Yes. Sorry, it is there. Do you have a breakdown of that thing?

Mr HEALD - This will be based around a number of source information. This was generated by IER and their economist and economic work that they did on that, and that will include reference to Tasracing's annual report and financials that we provided to them, as well as survey data, conducted on a cost basis for individual trainers and breeders and the like, and aggregated those up into these types of numbers. We could have a discussion with IER to identify and confirm that for you, if you like.

CHAIR - Thank you. That would be useful.

Mr HEALD - If they based it using Tasracing's annual report figures, then obviously the rehoming cost in terms of Tasracing's cost contribution to the rehoming would be included in that. I doubt whether we would have gone much further than that, for example, other rehoming or other sources.

Dr LENZ - But if I may, Chairperson: I do have a specific figure for last financial year. All of our greyhounds, regardless of who ends up doing the rehoming - and the majority of the rehoming is shared between industry participants and the GAP program, there are, however, as the CEO mentioned, other important components of that - for every greyhound that is retired from the industry, we provide funding to enable those greyhounds to be desexed, have their teeth attended to, and be vaccinated if they need a top-up vaccination. The total figure for that for the last financial year came to \$145,000, a little bit more, but \$145,000. That's a direct cost

that Tasracing and, through it, the industry, puts into dogs. And, as I said, regardless of whether they end up at GAP or at the Dogs' Home or one of the other -

Ms WEBB - How many dogs was that \$145,000 for?

Dr LENZ - I have got that total figure, excuse me -

Ms WEBB - I was interested in a per dog figure and whether you had that as an understood amount.

Dr LENZ - I'm sorry, I was in the wrong part of the document here.

Mr JENKINS - We'll correct that figure for you.

Dr LENZ - The figures are similar. The figure for the greyhound retirement preparation scheme - thank you Andrew for pointing that out - was \$184,000 plus a few. The total number of dogs that went through that scheme was 224, last financial year.

Ms WEBB - Thanks. Can I double-check around that: did you allocate that amount of money, the \$184,000, to the scheme, and then however many dogs came through in that year or that period, so be it, or was that the amount that was arrived at once the relevant dogs that year had come through the scheme?

Dr LENZ - It's a running tally, so however many dogs are retired and prepared for retirement, whatever invoices come in, that is the total at the end of the financial year for that.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Is it mandatory that they come through that scheme and have whatever particular treatments are required to be had?

Ms O'CONNOR - No, ask the Dogs' Homes, it's not.

Dr LENZ - It's mandatory for every dog to be sterilised when they come out of racing, but we recognise that another big cost is dental, so we expanded the scheme. It was originally just covering the very basic necessity, under the rules, of having dogs sterilised. But we know that there is significant money that goes into dentistry, so we incorporated that probably two and half years ago. We actually have recently increased the amount that we rebate on dentistry, once again in recognition of the fact that there is a significant cost there. We've basically doubled the rebate.

Ms WEBB - It's positive that that's included, but just so I fully understand, you have a capped amount of dental provided, that you rebate?

Dr LENZ - No, sorry. I'll just make that clear. We don't cap the amount. We say there is money -

Ms WEBB - Whatever is needed to be spent?

Dr LENZ - we can make available. If there are 500 dogs retiring, then there is money to pay.

Ms WEBB - Yes, but in terms of each individual dog, is there a cap on how much you will rebate that owner in order for dental treatment before rehoming?

Dr LENZ - Oh, okay, sorry, I misunderstood. Yes, the total rebate is capped for this scheme. When we look at the invoices that are coming in, we're pretty much on mark for the cost of most of the practices for desexing and we have recently increased the amount of dental rebate in recognition of the fact that we were seeing invoices that were exceeding the amount - I hope that makes it clear.

Ms WEBB - Just to be clear, if I had a dog that retired and was going to be rehomed and I was accessing this scheme to help with payments for sterilising and dental, I still could well be out of pocket for each of those activities based on the caps you put on in your scheme, and it's not mandatory for me to bring them through your scheme?

Dr LENZ - Okay, no it's not mandatory to go through the scheme. It is mandatory to have dogs -

Ms WEBB - Sterilised, sure.

Dr LENZ - sterilised. We don't see very many people not take advantage of the scheme because it is a rebate that's available. We also purposefully - you have to be careful with a rebate. If you set it too high, you get inflation. All the prices just meet the rebate. So -

Ms O'CONNOR - Or overservicing, almost, potentially.

Dr LENZ - Well, sometimes overservicing, sometimes under-servicing to meet the rebate. So, it is a matter of fine balance and we do that. This data is analysed by my team every month. We look at data as it comes in, and we also listen to - we get feedback from participants, we also get feedback from the veterinary practices, and we also get feedback from some of the ancillary rehomingers. So, we do take an approach that we want welfare outcomes. They are going to come at a cost, but we also need to be aware that we're not fuelling price inflation. So, we have to manage that.

Ms WEBB - Sure. Are you able then to provide information, for example, would you be able to provide a list of dogs that were retired last year and whether or not they were sterilised - we'd assume they all are because it's mandatory, but for sure confirm that they were - and then, of them, which ones received dental care as part of their exit from the industry, and which were funded by your program or otherwise?

Dr LENZ - Yes, so we do have data to that level of detail.

Ms WEBB - How is it then that we hear from rehoming agencies that dogs arrive at their care with significant dental issues? So, given that process is available and you keep data about it, how does that occur?

Dr LENZ - There can be a number of reasons, but just at the outset, what I'd like to state for the Committee is that if there are issues that occur and dogs are not getting what they should get under the scheme or under the rules, we have a whole team that sits slightly to the side of Tasracing, which is the TIU, that are empowered to make inquiry into those circumstances, and deal with issues as they find them. So, that's the first thing -

Ms WEBB - So, it would require a complaint to be made, though, to you essentially -

Dr LENZ - How do we know about it if we're not told, but we -

Ms WEBB - Well if you don't check.

Dr LENZ - Well, we can only gather information that we're provided with. So, when we have invoices coming in, we can see okay, the work has been done and it is a legitimate rebate claim, and we can pay out on it. If there are dogs that bypass that system, by whatever means, people might say no, we don't want to be part of Tasracing's scheme, we're going to fund the work ourselves, which, as I said earlier, we haven't come across a lot of that, but if that's going on, and then if there are standards that aren't being met that need to be met through the rules of racing, then there is a mechanism -

Ms WEBB - The dental thing doesn't have to be met.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's not part of the standard.

Ms WEBB - Yes, the dental thing doesn't have to be met through the rules of racing, does it? Because you've said that the mandatory part is sterilisation, dental care is not mandatory.

Dr LENZ - Under the rules, but the code of practice also has a section on dental treatment that is required. We recognise that dentistry is all about prevention, rather than treatment. Same as it is in humans.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask you a question then, Dr Lenz, if that's part of the code, and it's a requirement that dental care is provided, how come so many racing dogs get to the end of their career retirement and require significant dental care? Because if they had been having that code met during their racing career, that wouldn't be the case. So, do you not check that compliance is occurring, or is your checking not effective, or what's the situation?

Dr LENZ - So, two parts to that answer. One is the code is not yet in full force.

Ms WEBB - Right, so we don't require it now then, and check on it.

Dr LENZ - The code is not yet in full force -

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Dr LENZ - so, we're not talking, at this stage, about enforcing the code on that front. What we are talking about is the rules, and the rules require, as a minimum, the dogs to be sterilised.

Ms WEBB - Back to my question. At the moment we don't have anything that requires dental care during a racing dog's life that is enforceable, and is that your explanation for why so many dogs are reported to arrive at their retirement situation for rehoming with significant dental issues? Is that the reason. We don't require it, so they don't do it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Because they love their dogs. This is what we keep getting told.

Dr LENZ - No, we also see the same occur on occasion with dogs that arrive at GAP, and we know that greyhounds, be it through genetics or dietary-related, they do have a higher rate of dental work being required. When we have a long lag period, so if somebody were to retire a dog today, it goes on a waitlist. If it's six months, three months, sometimes teeth do need redoing and we do that at GAP with those dogs that need redoing. There is a perfectly plausible explanation for some of those dogs, right?

Ms WEBB - But it still would mean they have arrived at their retirement point with poor dental health, whether they've just had it done, or they've had it done three months ago, but now we'll have to do it again - if that's the case. But clearly they've arrived there with poor dental health through their racing life.

Dr LENZ - Certainly not when they come through GAP because we will pick up those dogs and send them for another dental.

Ms WEBB - Yes, but that's the point at which retirement is occurring. What I'm talking about is, clearly, they've been neglected in their dental care throughout their racing life to arrive there at the point of retirement with poor dental health, and nothing in our system has picked that up or required otherwise.

Dr LENZ - We have to retain perspective on the size of the problem and, as I said earlier, we can only appreciate issues if we are told about them.

Ms WEBB - Or we could monitor for them, correct? And we currently don't, or owners could care enough to do it, and they're currently don't.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are doing exactly what you pulled me up for at the table earlier.

Ms WEBB - Well, I am not interrupting other people, Cassy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, yes, you were.

CHAIR - I might let Dr Lenz answer that question. It is an important question.

Dr LENZ - I think it's important not to generalise. We get plenty of dogs that dentistry has been performed to the required level. There will be some and, as I said, some of them is simply a matter that if you do dentistry today, every day that goes on, the state of the teeth worsens, so, by the time they might get to that new place where they're being rehomed to, there may have been some time since the most recent dental treatment, but if dogs are arriving in numbers, then we need to know about it.

Ms WEBB - My question is, why on earth wouldn't you already know about it if you had been monitoring that situation while they were in their racing life and requiring a certain standard of care, which currently doesn't happen?

Dr LENZ - As I said, the code of practice isn't yet in force. Once it is in force, we do talk about preventative measures.

Ms WEBB - It's a shame that care for dogs doesn't kick in as a matter of just humanity and animal welfare rather than just a rule that is required, but that is a comment, not a question.

Mr JENKINS - Chair, if I might, I might be able to add to the response points. We should note a couple of things. Firstly, that a dog that might be presenting to another rehoming facility may not necessarily be presenting directly after it's been retired, so the dog could be retired through this scheme or otherwise appropriately to a third party. It's a private dog. They are then subject to jurisdiction of the *Animal Welfare Act* as many domestic animals, and its owner's circumstances might change and they may have not held the dog into care that we would all expect that they would. And yes, that dog may present to another rehomer, but that isn't necessarily attributable directly to this dog was in poor care through its racing and retirement careers. I think it's important to make that distinction that there are multiple cohorts of greyhounds to be considered here.

Ms WEBB - Because, just to be clear, we don't check at the point of retirement on the health, for example, of their dental health. We don't check at the point to make sure what's happened during the racing career and what we're about to embark on in a retirement career in terms of dental health. We don't check.

Dr LENZ - It just depends on which pathway of retirement that dog has. If it comes through GAP, you know, we're asking - so, through the scheme now we've also introduced a requirement for the vets who are performing the dental work to provide us with before and after photographs of the dental arcades on both sides.

So we're doing what we can with the resourcing and the facilities that we have, where we don't know about it until somebody tells us. How do we possibly act on it -

Ms O'CONNOR - If you don't have the resources to monitor in an ongoing way.

Mr JENKINS - Look, I think very, very briefly if I can, Chair. For example, in June, the Tasracing Integrity Unit animal welfare officers conducted kennel inspections of 23 greyhound facilities. That would ordinarily be the opportune time where, if the body of the dog or if there were significant dental issues that were evident, the inspector could take appropriate action then to issue an order, or in a severe case, refer the matter on via the *Animal Welfare Act*.

What I would suggest, Ms Webb, is that we're continuing to invest in our animal welfare proactive inspection and review resources and making sure that we minimise - and continue to reduce and minimise occurrences where dogs aren't in the state that we would all want them to be in.

Ms WEBB - I appreciate that. Of those 23 you just mentioned, just to follow up on that number you've just provided, how many identified dental issues in the dogs and were dental checks conducted in each of those 23 inspections?

Mr JENKINS - I would need to take that on notice.

Ms WEBB - That would be great, if you could check that for us so we get a snapshot indication of what those inspections brought to light. But particularly important to note, did they check in the first instance?

PUBLIC

Mr JENKINS - Sure.

CHAIR - I know Cassy has another area of minor inquiry.

Dr LENZ - Just a very quick comment too, and it's something I have mentioned previously, but we are endeavouring to cover those dogs that don't go through our channels, and we have approached some of the larger ancillary rehomingers directly because we do run \$100,000 racing animal welfare grant scheme, which we've run again just in the last year.

So, as I said, we're aware and we are attempting to address a problem. If it is there, we just need some level of cooperation from others to be able to build -

Ms O'CONNOR - Hang on a second, while we talk about cooperation, just quickly, Chair. I want to raise with you the dog Dexter, who ended up at Dogs' Homes of Tasmania minus an ear and with an open wound. The Dogs' Homes of Tasmania was posting on their social media channels that they were trying to obtain information from Tasracing about how this dog came to be with them minus an ear and with an open wound, and they weren't getting answers from Tasracing. So, I don't know if you've got any light to shed on that.

I will say that Dexter is now a very happy dog, and well-homed and a friend of mine saw him on the weekend. But that is emblematic, isn't it, of how some of these dogs are turning up to rehoming organisations, North East Animal Sanctuary, RSPCA, Dogs' Home, Brightside before they decided it was too much for them; these dogs are turning up with rotten teeth, skinny, parasites and, in the case of Dexter, an absolute mystery about how they came to be in that state when they were surrendered.

Dr LENZ - One of the issues, and it was communicated to Dogs' Homes, one of the issues we have is simply that is information between a veterinary surgeon and an owner, which there is a relationship there that - we don't actually have the ability to provide information unless we have the owner's permission to do so.

Our communication back with the Dogs' Homes about that was that you guys have - the owner has dropped the dog off with you. You have a relationship with them. Why don't you obtain that information directly from that owner?

CHAIR - To be fair to the Dogs' Homes, though, they don't regulate the industry, whereas Tasracing has regulatory ability and a regulatory relationship with the owner.

Dr LENZ - But this is outside of racing. This is a -

CHAIR - It's still a product of racing.

Dr LENZ - veterinary-patient confidentiality that we're actually not in a position to breach.

Ms WEBB - But they were in your system; you could have required proof of whatever, at any point in time.

Dr LENZ - There's one thing about us accessing information; there's a big step in providing information to another party, which then puts us in conflict with that confidentiality

relationship. We have to be careful; we have to stay within the law when we're dealing with these things.

Ms WEBB - If you required the information and identified a problem, then the situation that Ms O'Connor has described wouldn't have transpired.

Dr LENZ - As I said, we're restricted in - we can obtain information under the rules, but what we pass on to a third party, we're subject to normal requirements and, as I said, the easiest solution in that particular instance would have been for Dogs' Homes to speak to their client directly and request that information.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. Thank you, Dr Lenz. I guess the bottom line is, because you were talking earlier about this funding that helps participants get their dogs ready for their post-racing career, but what we've heard from rehoming organisations is that these dogs are turning up in poor condition, with poor teeth and often, as in the case of Dexter, with quite mysterious backstories. The problem that Dexter had, or the Dogs' Homes of Tasmania had, was that they had so little information, they didn't even know if he was vaccinated, so they had to vaccinate him again. There were people queuing up to foster and give this dog the home he needed, so it's not - I'm just challenging the sort of imputation that most industry participants will access this money before they dispose of their dogs.

Dr LENZ - I think in answer to that question, through you, Chair, there was a lot of information put on a public website which was quite defamatory to some of the Tasracing staff members who had done some work with this dog; but I will come back to - there are restrictions. We're a body that is linked to government and we can't be contravening -

Ms O'CONNOR - Everywhere, all the time.

Dr LENZ - Well, no, we can't be contravening simple rules and laws that exist, including, that relationship between a veterinary surgeon and their client. We might be able to access the information, but the passing on of it is not simply allowed under law.

CHAIR - I suppose that goes to my next question, related both to dental and record-keeping: the code of practice, obviously, outlines a number of expectations around how dogs are kept, the way they're presented. You indicated that dental is a component of that code of practice. Is the opportunity, then, in the implementation of the code of practice, for Tasracing through - whenever a dog is presented for a race and there's a pre-race veterinary check - to tick off and audit every dog, beyond just a brief inspection of the dog, but to check teeth, check wellbeing, parasites? We know from the stewards' reports that numerous dogs are being presented with parasites, presence of worms, all those kind of things. To have, independent of any veterinary records that an owner might have about a dog, but Tasracing to also have, this dog was presented on Monday, it passed a dental check, a weight check, coat check, or the whole broad range of checks that might be done to satisfy Tasracing that that dog is in a good state before racing, not just in terms of can it race, but in terms of its actual welfare, in terms of the code of practice. Is that an opportunity for Tasracing to do that?

Dr LENZ - It is something that has actually been discussed. I'm trying to recall exactly which committee it was, either the veterinary analysis committee or the welfare committee. So it is an ongoing area, understanding that it may not be the ideal place to necessarily look at every issue that a dog may present with when they come across the table, because there is some

PUBLIC

time pressure on everybody, kennelling those animals for the impending races. It is something that has been considered and is still being considered. We haven't got a firm outcome.

CHAIR - At least Tasracing would have a record. With Dexter, for instance, you could go back to its latest race and say, at this particular point in time, Dexter presented with two ears and no flesh wounds, and so we would have some ability to understand, well whose responsibility is it to provide that information.

Dr LENZ - Yes. Just a minor thing: the skin wound was - the photo I saw was a tiny wound. Not to say - obviously it got into the dog somehow, but we weren't dealing with a large defect or anything like that. The other thing to note, too, is by the time the Dogs' Homes was chasing us via their online portal for information, I believe the dog already had a home. We just have to keep a little bit of perspective here.

Ms O'CONNOR - It had been fostered.

Dr LENZ - My information is that it was already rehomed. I just want to be clear: that if people are willing to engage with us in good faith, we will provide them with all the information and all the assistance that we can muster, but it has to be a good faith transaction.

Ms O'CONNOR - I have some GAP questions: the Greyhound Adoption Program is obviously a really important and necessary facility. What's the population currently at the Greyhound Adoption Program? Just noting there are some dogs who I know who have been on the website waiting for homes for four and five months. What's the current population of GAP? Do you have line of sight to the waitlist?

Dr LENZ - Yes. Sorry, I haven't got the latest, but at the end of June there were a total of 42 dogs on the program, and that includes dogs in foster care.

Ms O'CONNOR - Forty-two in the GAP facility, but every now and again will spend some time in foster care?

Dr LENZ - Yes, within the GAP system. Total in kennels at the time were 40, and two were out in foster care at that time. I'm afraid I don't have the - sorry, that is the most up to date, because we're looking at end of financial year.

Ms O'CONNOR - I want to let you know that the Greens have helped you bring your numbers down. We've adopted two GAP dogs in the Green family in the last four months.

CHAIR - Waiting lists, sorry, the second part of your question was the waitlist, yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - The second part of the question was the waitlist.

Dr LENZ - That is also something we track. This is for the financial year. We started earlier in the year with 84, 95, 97 and 89; we're now hovering somewhere between - and it varies, obviously - somewhere between the 55, 65 and the 76 mark.

Ms O'CONNOR - Between 55 and 76.

Dr LENZ - There is a consistent trend downwards.

Ms O'CONNOR - Sorry to cut you off, Dr Lenz. I know other people will have questions. That's the current list of dogs or trainers or owners that are waiting to get their dogs into GAP, so, they're post-racing, presumably. What sort of oversight is there of those dogs?

Dr LENZ - Coming into the GAP?

Ms O'CONNOR - That are sitting there waiting.

Dr LENZ - Once again, with the TIU and their inspection schedule, they would certainly be auditing every dog on a property, including the active race dog, but also the ones that were waitlisted. That's the level of oversight. They are all included. It's not a case of they turn up and say, just show us your racing dogs. It's a case of, you know, we need a complete list of dogs on this property.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Is there numbers - and I'm sure you have this - of dogs that have been euthanised at GAP because they were considered unsuitable for rehoming in the last two financial years.

Dr LENZ - I've got last year's figures - and we can certainly find the previous financial year. Just making sure I've got the right column here. So, unsuitable for behaviour we had a total of four -

Ms O'CONNOR - That's the 20 -

Dr LENZ - No, I'm sorry, three earlier in the year. So, a total of seven.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, seven dogs euthanised through GAP - this is just the last year, or the year before?

Dr LENZ - No, that's last financial year.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, the 2025-26 financial year, seven dogs?

Dr LENZ - Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - You couldn't do anything with those poor dogs discarded by the industry, and what was the euthanasia number for the 2024-25 year?

Mr WINTER - Sorry, I just want to confirm. I think Dr Lenz might have accidentally said 2025-26 then, when he meant - I think he's talking about the last financial year, 2024-25, is that right?

Dr LENZ - No, 2025 to - the one that's just gone.

Mr WINTER - Oh, these are the ones we just finished?

Dr LENZ - Correct, yes.

Mr WINTER - Okay, thank you, sorry.

Dr LENZ - I might have to, I'm sorry, I might have to take that one on notice.

Ms O'CONNOR - Has there been an increase, or a decrease, in the number of dogs that have been killed because they can't be rehomed by your assessment?

Dr LENZ - The number is similar, and we have set ourselves a limit that's based on the number of adoptions, and the limit is not to exceed 8 per cent of adoptions, and we're well below that number, which is what we're aiming to do. But, let's just - once again, we need to keep perspective here because Tasracing, the GAP program, we have a policy of responsible rehoming, okay, and what that means is that we don't rehome dogs that are either behaviourally unsuitable, or have a chronic medical issue, and there are some, obviously. There were a total of three medical euthanasia's amongst the figures as well. The reason we don't do that, is we adopt what we assume in most cases are lay dog owners, laypeople that might not know a lot about dogs, and certainly might not know a lot about greyhounds. So, we have to make sure that the type of dog we present for rehoming, we can put our hand on our heart and say in good faith, we have done what we can to ensure that this is going to be a successful long-term rehoming, okay. And we don't want to send out dogs willy-nilly to people that we know are not able to deal with the types of issues that they might do if we send the wrong type of dog out. And that has been something that we have introduced since I've been there -

Ms O'CONNOR - It's called the throughput policy, isn't it?

Dr LENZ - It's not called the throughput policy.

Ms O'CONNOR - What's it called?

Dr LENZ - It's called responsible rehoming policy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. So, 8 per cent of presumably 200 dogs or so that were rehomed last year, if you've set yourself a cap of 8 per cent of rehoming for all dogs that come into the program, is that correct? So, that's like, you could euthanise sort of 15-18 dogs in a year?

Dr LENZ - So, we are well below that limit -

Ms O'CONNOR - Mm.

Dr LENZ - And we're also well below -

Ms O'CONNOR - Set yourself a pretty high bar.

Dr LENZ - Well, not really because when we compare that to -

Ms O'CONNOR - I meant a low bar, really, sorry.

Dr LENZ - Dogs' Home, RSPCA and once again, interstate GAP programs, we're sitting below the Dogs' Home, we're sitting below the RSPCA, and the interstate programs vary, but they're all - it isn't an area we monitor closely, but it is also something that I feel very strongly, and the team feels very strongly, we don't want to send unsuitable dogs out into the community because that ends up in disaster, potentially.

Mr WINTER - Thanks for being here, I want to ask about, particularly Dr Lenz, he was able to answer some of the –

CHAIR - Apologies for the noise.

Mr WINTER - There's a bit of work going on upstairs.

Around Dr Brittan's evidence that he's given to this committee, did you see or consume the evidence here and also on ABC Radio, Dr Lenz?

Dr LENZ - I did view the footage that was available from this hearing, yes.

Mr WINTER - So, he made similar claims across both an ABC Radio interview and in his hearing. One of them, he said, 'in Tasmania, the mortality rate is about 30 per cent, which means that for every three dogs that are presented each year, one will die.' Is that correct as far as your information?

Dr LENZ - It doesn't correspond to our figures and I think the statement that he made, to my recollection, was bereft of any definition of what he was referring to when he said 30 per cent, so I'm at a loss, but they're certainly not representative of the race day mortality figures that we look at, which is once again an area we look at very, very closely.

Mr WINTER - Can you speak to that a little more for the Committee because this is a big component of the public discussion around this and certainly had some headlines with that claim? Can you explain to the Committee from your perspective - you might not call it a mortality rate, but injury data and the number of dogs that are dying on track and how that's trending over time?

Dr LENZ - Look, once again, as I said, I am at a loss. I have to be quite upfront. I'm not sure how that figure was defined by Dr Brittan.

Mr WINTER - With cups, I think.

Dr LENZ - We do keep a very tight tab on serious race day injuries and the trend that those figures present and, once again, we do benchmark ourselves against other jurisdictions, and back in 2023 Tasmania had been trending higher than the national average and 2003, during that financial year, we crossed under the national average. We have remained under that national average up until this financial year where we have continued to trend down, but the other states have also come down, okay. So, we're now basically neck and neck, but the overall trend and I have the numbers and the graph and I'm happy to provide those.

Mr WINTER - Yes, are you able to provide that to the Committee?

Dr LENZ - Absolutely.

Mr WINTER - Thank you. One of the other comments Dr Brittan made, and this was on the ABC interview, he said, 'the numbers don't lie. If these dogs are well cared for, why are they presenting to GAP and rehoming facilities? Between 60 and 70 per cent of them are not fit to rehome.'

Ms O'CONNOR - When they get there.

Mr WINTER - Does that accord with the information that you've seen as the chief vet for Tasracing?

Dr LENZ - No, look, once again, and I can obviously most confidently speak about the GAP picture that we see, and our rate of euthanasia for dogs that are unsuitable to rehome is what we stated earlier.

Mr WINTER - He talked about them being unfit to rehome. He said they come bearing medical and significant psychological injuries. How does that align with - you talked about GAP quite a bit, how does that align with GAP in particular? In the annual report data, I can see the number of dogs that are entering GAP and the number of dogs that are coming out and, if I recall correctly, over the last few years there's been more dogs coming out of GAP than going in, which is a good sign. But how do we - how do you, or can you talk to whether there are dogs that are staying in GAP for a significant period of time? I think he sort of talked about these dogs being stuck there for a long period of time. Are you able to speak to that practice and how many dogs end up in GAP and what's the maximum time that a dog would be in GAP for?

Dr LENZ - Once again, the trend over the past three financial years has been very favourable in terms of the average time a dog is on the program. The waiting lists are down as well over that time span. And a lot of that waiting list and adoption success that we see is due to the fact that we have actually introduced an express entry system for GAP whereby if the trainers and owners of those greyhounds undertake fostering of their own account, and they are able to pass an entry examination, they can actually bypass that GAP waiting list. So we've provided a good incentive for people to do the type of work that's going to be - or is already in the CoP when it becomes active, in terms of making the animals more rehomingable.

So, I have to say that is industry doing their bit to help GAP rehome their dogs. So that's a really good result. We've had that in play since the beginning of the financial year, and we're seeing reduced times that dogs spend with us, because those dogs that have been fostered, they fly out the door because the biggest part of the time it takes for GAP is getting that domestication, that exposure to domestic environments. So the ones that have already got that, they're much easier to -

Mr WINTER - Do you have any - if it exists, I haven't seen it - is there any data that you're either able to provide to the committee or point us to that shows the average time that a dog might stay in GAP?

Dr LENZ - It is something we - it's quite a laborious thing, because you literally have to track every dog when it first arrives to when it rehomes and then add that up and, you know, divide by the time.

But it is something we are keeping an eye on and we could provide. It's not something I have here because it changes on a weekly basis.

Mr WINTER - I think that would be interesting. Dr Brittan also said, and I quote, this is to the ABC:

The numbers don't lie. A number of dogs that aren't rehomed are classified as backlog and they tend to live out their lives in commercial kennels, akin to being in solitary confinement with no hope of ever being rehomed.

Is that a practice you're aware of occurring in Tasmania?

Dr LENZ - No, certainly not. Not that I'm aware of. And look -

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you saying there's no backlog of ex-racing greyhounds waiting for a home?

Dr LENZ - Could you requote the?

Mr WINTER - It did talk about commercial kennels, which is I think what you're talking about.

The quote was:

A number of dogs that aren't rehomed are classified as backlog and they tend to live out their lives in commercial kennels, akin to being in solitary confinement with no hope of ever being rehomed.

Dr LENZ - Look, I suppose without being able to get him to exactly define what he's talking about there - but we have a waiting list. When they come into GAP, they are assessed. When they become suitable for responsible rehoming, we don't hang onto them, right? They go out the door, because there are, obviously, other dogs ready to come in.

I'm not sure whether, perhaps - and I don't even want to put it out there - but whether that is something that he was exposed to in New South Wales or whether - I don't know where that's come from.

CHAIR - It's referring to those dogs on the GAP waiting list for instance.

Mr WINTER - Which is why I sort of - the prelude to my question, sort of around, you know, how many dogs are there for a prolonged period of time? In that quote he talks about them having no hope of being rehomed, but, I can't imagine why you would be keeping dogs that have no hope of being rehomed -

Ms O'CONNOR - But it's up to people to come in and choose those dogs that they want. So some of them - I encourage you to look at the GAP website - some of them have been there since February this year at least. That is the backlog.

Ms WEBB - I had a follow-up question on that.

CHAIR - Just a clarification question.

Ms WEBB - Mr Winter asked a question about average length of time in GAP. Whereas I take that quote that you've just provided to be talking about the dogs on the waiting list that

PUBLIC

essentially aren't in GAP yet, are they? They haven't arrived to GAP yet, so are you able to provide data for the average length of time dogs spend in that state of being?

Dr LENZ - Yes.

Ms WEBB - And the quick follow-up question about that was: do you also record deaths of dogs during that period and cause of death of dogs during that period? Are you able to provide data on that?

Dr LENZ - There is a list that is publicly available, of basically the wait list for GAP. That lists each individual animal. When that animal gets to the top of the list, if there's space on the program, we take them off the list.

I'm not sure where is the opportunity there for dogs to fall off the list.

Ms WEBB - That is what I'm trying to establish. For a start, on average how long they spend on the list. Secondly, dogs that may die while on the list and where that data is recorded, including cause of death for any that die while on that list.

Dr LENZ - A dog that is retired is still subject to the rules of racing, and there is still a need to report mortality within a given timeframe.

Ms O'CONNOR - We will have a chat about that in a minute - those retired dogs.

Dr LENZ - They're still under obligation to report.

Ms WEBB - Could you provide data then about that?

Dr LENZ - Yes. If it's reported, it's recorded.

Ms WEBB - Could you break out that data for us? For example, for the last five years, each year a figure of how many dogs died while on that waiting list and what the causes of death were of the dogs that died while on the waiting list?

Dr LENZ - I don't have it right here, but I'm sure we can get a breakdown.

Mr WINTER - I've got a new line of questioning.

CHAIR - I still have a few questions around GAP. Just noting that the GAP waiting list online, Roxy has been on the waiting list since 17 October 2025.

Ms WEBB - Can I have one more question on the waiting list? In relation to the dogs on the waiting list, you identify that they're still in the system then. So, when the code of practice does eventually, one day - and I'll come to that in a minute - come into play officially, it will apply to the dogs on the waiting list. Currently, there's nothing that mandates their standard of care while they're on that waiting list.

Dr LENZ - No, we do have some other documentation that's been in place for - it certainly precedes my time, and there are care guides that are -

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Is that publicly available - the care guides - for the dogs on the waiting list?

Mr JENKINS - I don't believe they're published. They're typically made available by the GAP to the trainer or owner, but I don't believe they're public.

Ms WEBB - Could you provide those perhaps to the committee, subsequent to this?

Mr JENKINS - Yes.

Ms WEBB - How is it monitored that those standards of care are being met for the dogs on the waiting list?

Dr LENZ - Once again, each trainer has a list of dogs that is assigned to them in that phase of life, and even if it's a dog that is retired from racing, it would perhaps go back to the owner, but those dogs are still in the system. They don't disappear, so when there isn't a visit of a kennels, as I stated earlier, there's -

Ms WEBB - Our spot checks would cover those.

Dr LENZ - Yes, there's a regular round of kennel inspections that is conducted across Tasmania and they would be captured in that inspection schedule.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you inspected Anthony Bullock's kennels lately?

Dr LENZ - Personally, not for some time, but I believe that -

Ms O'CONNOR - Has Tasracing?

Dr LENZ - I believe they have quite recently, but there is a degree of separation, but I believe there has been some inspection activity going.

Mr JENKINS - Through you, Chair. Ms O'Connor, the Tasracing Integrity Unit has attended Mr Bullock's kennels at least twice in the last 10 or 11 months or two years.

Ms O'CONNOR - You always give him advanced notice, don't you? You've never had an unannounced visit to Anthony Bullock's premises?

Mr JENKINS - I don't know, except that's a matter for the integrity unit. What I'm saying is that I can state that our animal welfare officers have attended the kennel premises twice recently.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. As you would know, Mr Jenkins, the Greens work with animal welfare advocates to collate information from stewards' reports, FastTrack, from Tasracing, we get some material from OzChase. Seven of the dead dogs in this list of 30-odd dead dogs, mostly this year, were in the custody of Mr Bullock when they died. Two of them died from snakebite. I don't know if anyone's been up to his property and just checked how many snakes are on that property, but within this list of deaths, particularly, that we've collated, numerous of them: two dead from Anthony Bullock estate. Numerous of them: reason for death, unknown; reason for death, unknown; reason for death, unknown. That was the three Danger dogs, Curly, Coco and Sassy Danger.

There's a lot that Tasracing doesn't know about the fate of racing dogs once they've died. It's in the spreadsheet, the reasons that we've got through RTI for those dogs being dead, and isn't it true to say that once a dog becomes retired to a third party as a pet or retired, and we've found this through going to FastTrack, dogs that are listed as retired, we find out not long after are actually dead. And so, the whole-of-life tracking of this industry is deficient because there are dogs that disappear from view to third-party pet, there are dogs languishing with trainers waiting to get into a rehoming facility that there's no apparent line of sight to, there are dogs that are retired that we find out through further inquiry are actually dead. So there's a problem with the whole-of-life tracking for these dogs, isn't there? I mean we keep RTI-ing you. You must really dislike us by now, but that's okay. We are trying to get to the bottom of what's happening to these dogs, and it is very difficult with retired and third-party pet dogs.

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Ms O'Connor. Our commitment is to trying to ensure the best possible traceability practices that we can implement. What I would say specifically is - and I mentioned earlier, and I would acknowledge that historically and certainly taking over the former Office of Racing Integrity, records were not up to a reasonable standard. Since the Tasracing Integrity Unit has been created under the new act, our investment has continued to increase toward traceability and enhancing animal welfare outcomes for greyhounds. Again, as I mentioned earlier, we've conducted two whole-of-state greyhound audits. That proactive activity, again, I acknowledge evidence that certainly during the first audit the records that we were handed over were substandard.

Ms O'CONNOR - Was that the racing integrity unit's fault?

Mr JENKINS - No, absolutely not. They were picking up from a baseline that was, as it turned out - and hence validated the investment in and the need for, certainly, the initial audit, because it did identify that what was on paper, so to speak, was not the reality of what was happening on the ground, and we acknowledge that. What I can say, with a high degree of confidence is, on the back of that first audit, and certainly the second audit or the repeat audit, is that the information that we have on paper is reflective of what is happening on the ground. So we know where the dogs - where the dogs are.

Ms O'CONNOR - You're not there yet though, are you, because we had to have a finding in our first report that your data is unreliable, unfortunately, and we've been going down data rabbit holes on and off in this Committee ever since. Tasracing's data is not yet robust, is it?

Mr JENKINS - I wouldn't say that that's the case. As I say, in terms of the audit data that we're working with and we generate, I'm very confident that that is reflective of the physical status of kennels and dogs.

Ms O'CONNOR - But you can't say that you're doing whole-of-life tracking.

Mr JENKINS - I would acknowledge that one of the things that we're continuing to work through, Ms O'Connor, is working even more closely with our industry participants to impart on them the importance of updated record-keeping, so that if a dog is moved or retired or otherwise, that there is a requirement for the status to be appropriately updated in the system.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I just on that - sorry, have you got more to -

Mr JENKINS - Sorry, just briefly, Ms Connor: in terms of whole-of-life tracking, we would acknowledge that once a greyhound enters private life as a domestic animal, no, as the principal racing authority, we don't have jurisdiction over that greyhound. It becomes a private or domestic dog. It's another dog.

Ms O'CONNOR - Or it just disappears

Mr JENKINS - With that said, the *Animal Welfare Act* kicks in, so to speak, and continues to guard that dog as it would any other breed or domestic pet.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. I have a question for Dr Lenz. Dr Lenz, we had a month off from racing this year due to kennel cough and in a briefing, as I understand it, that you gave to interested parties, you acknowledged that dogs that are kept in kennels in close circumstances can be stressed and that that stress can exacerbate issues like kennel cough, which isn't usually fatal for a dog; is that something you stand by, that they're stressed?

Dr LENZ - Look, the name kennel cough was coined because these things happen where dogs of any breed, any type of dog, congregate. It can happen in veterinary clinics; it can happen in commercial holiday kennels. There can be outbreaks propagating in dog parks, anywhere where dogs are closely associated with each other. It is a highly infective disease complex, so anywhere where distance between dogs is minimal, transfer has a much higher chance of occurring.

Ms O'CONNOR - The point you are making, I think in your answer, though, was about the stress that the dogs experience and so that can exacerbate these conditions.

Dr LENZ - I think in my original answer, if I recall it, I indicated that stress plays a part. There is a component there of simply being closely associated and stress can take many forms, but stress can have the effect of lowering the immune status of an animal, of a person, and obviously, then, it can swing the balance towards an organism or a complex of organisms. In terms of the so-called lethal outbreak or deadly outbreak, I also provided relevant background in that briefing to advise that the disease that was causing fatalities, which is a recognised disease and occurs sporadically in all types of dogs across most of the world, had preceded the onset of the kennel cough outbreak, and we know that because when we first had an indication that there was a kennel cough outbreak, we actually went out to industry and did a survey to ascertain when did industry see the first signs of the outbreak; and I can say quite confidently, because we have laboratory data that we followed up these dogs that were dying and to find out what they were dying from, that those dogs preceded the outbreak of kennel cough by a significant period of time. Is it possible that kennel cough, when it occurred after the outbreak of the haemorrhagic disease, may have contributed? Of course. When there's a combination of disease states in the same animal, the immune system is going to obviously be affected by that.

Mr WINTER - I wanted to get onto the deed, but just before I do, is anyone - do you guys have anything else?

CHAIR - If there's any more animal welfare questions, we might do those, Dean -

Mr WINTER - Sure. That's fine.

Ms WEBB - Mostly, they're following up on things that have come up. For a start, I just wanted to go back to the questions Ms O'Connor was asking around the data she had there about dogs' deaths and a number of them having 'unknown' next to it. I didn't hear you provide an explanation for why that might be the case and why we can't categorise them, in terms of a death.

Dr LENZ - Look, we take - many of those dogs are, go all the way through to an independent postmortem. For some of those dogs that have the postmortem performed, we still end up with an open diagnosis. Okay, so that's for some of those, where, as I said, we provide the carcass to the government lab and they provide or perform testing, and then provide us with that information. Some of those we'd never get to the actual cause of death, even having taken them to that.

Ms WEBB - What's the data on that, then? Are you able to provide breakdowns of data about how many are examined in that way?

Dr LENZ - We definitely have data on which dogs were postmortem-ed, absolutely.

Ms WEBB - It's just one of those interesting - and it comes back to the follow-up I want to ask about the questions Mr Winter was asking, around the comments from Dr Brittan and - I can only interpret the comments as I heard them and understood them - around the outcomes for greyhounds, in terms of, for example, any cohort, an annual cohort of greyhounds coming through. My interpretation of Dr Brittan's comments were that if we looked at them over the course of their racing life, the outcome of their racing life - so, not only any one given year, but as a racing life outcome, one-third of them rehomed, one-third of them dead and one-third of them somewhere unknown, potentially on these waiting lists, or in unmonitored areas, in that sense, in the data. So, I'm just wondering about that - what your data would say about outcomes and proportions of outcomes with that understanding of, we're talking about any given cohort, annual cohort coming through, what their outcomes would be from their racing life - deaths, unknown or drifting, or rehomed?

Dr LENZ - Well, okay, once again, difficult without being able to ask specific questions of Dr Brittan as to where he derives these numbers. But if we look at -

Ms WEBB - So, I'm not really asking you to comment on his numbers. I am providing my understanding of the context of his numbers and asking you for your numbers on that description I've provided.

Dr LENZ - If he's looking at specific cohorts, i. e., we have a, let's say, this financial year's dogs that have maybe just been named, and we follow those through for a year.

Ms WEBB - No, no, that's not what I'm asking you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Lifetime.

Ms WEBB - So, put aside Dr Brittan's comments, and listen to my question, phrased just as my question, separate to his comments or his claims about numbers. We don't have to think about it as a cohort of dogs, in terms of dogs coming through their racing life currently, what are the proportionate, in terms of their likely outcomes, proportionately, how likely are they to be rehomed, how likely are they to be dead, at the close of or fairly soon after their racing life,

how likely are they to be floating in some space, like the waiting list or a sort of unallocated space?

Mr JENKINS - Well, they're not floating, sorry, just to be clear, Ms Webb, they're accounted for, and they're on our waiting list, and they're still subject to the rules.

Ms WEBB - Well, not many rules, really, at that point. But I'll come to that as my next question.

Mr JENKINS - They're still subject to the rules.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Dr LENZ - Look, maybe I need to zoom out a bit, and come back. So, I guess if you look at a population of dogs in their whole lifecycle, you're going to have some young dogs that are in training and racing, you're going to have some dogs that get to the end of that phase and retire, and you're going to have some dogs that get to 10, 12, 13, and be in that senescence stage.

Ms WEBB - I'm trying to find out, proportionately, like on the data, what's the likelihood of what will happen to a dog coming in, say, now, five years down the track, so at the close-ish of their racing life, let's say. But, for that dog, when they close, what's the proportionate likelihood they'll be dead? What's the proportionate likelihood they'll get rehomed? What's the proportionate likelihood they'll hover in the waiting space?

Mr JENKINS - Yep, and I might make some comments, Dr Lenz, if you don't mind and then feel free to add. Much of that information, Ms Webb, is disclosed on a five-year rolling basis in our annual report. If you use the rehoming numbers as a reasonable guide, we know that, in any given year, how many dogs were rehomed of that cohort, how many were deceased, euthanised, moved into breeding, et cetera.

Ms WEBB - It doesn't answer my question though, does it?

Mr JENKINS - Well, I'm not sure how we would track it over -

Ms WEBB - No, it doesn't. You're not able to tell me, as a dog coming in, what's the likely outcome?

Mr JENKINS - We can tell you about an individual dog.

Ms WEBB - No, no, I'm just talking broadly. On the data, on what we know to be outcomes that we collect data about, what likelihood have I got, as a dog coming in now, as I come to the close of my racing career, that I'll be dead, that I'll be rehomed or that I'll be, for a period time, in this waiting space?

Dr LENZ - So, the numbers are a snapshot because they're reported on an annual basis. So, in those numbers you'll have - it's not really cohort tracking as such, it's a snapshot. This financial year, we had this many dogs be bred, we had this many dogs be -

Ms WEBB - I know, it's convenient just to be able to present it that way because we don't get a true picture then of how risky is this activity for dogs. You know, what proportion are likely to be dead by the time they come to the end of the racing career?

Dr LENZ - But you've got the total numbers reported for that snapshot, so you can make -

Ms WEBB - Yeah, but it'd be more interesting to know as a percentage because that would be the meaningful thing, in terms of social licence. If what Dr Brittan said was true and 30 per cent are dead, that's quite compelling and interesting as a likely risk for a racing career.

Dr LENZ - On an annual basis, you can easily derive that proportion from the numbers because you'll have total numbers in the pool for that year, you'll have this many dogs retired, you'll have this many dogs that were euthanised or had mortality events.

Ms WEBB - We're not coming from the same way.

CHAIR - It's a challenge for the data, I think. I just wanted to pick up on that data because it is a challenge and I think this is the problem that the industry is facing. Even on page 13 of your submission, you talk about the total registered population of 1052 dogs as at 1 March 2026, of which 893 are active racing greyhounds. That leaves 159 registered greyhounds that aren't active racing greyhounds. Does Tasracing have eyes on every one of those 159 greyhounds and could, hand on heart, say, 'We know where every one of those 159 greyhounds are kept and the condition that they are in and where they are at, either in their rehoming, retirement or death stages'?

Dr LENZ - So, at the conclusion of that audit, absolutely. Right. Following the audit, we do rely on notification from industry.

CHAIR - Self-reporting?

Dr LENZ - Yes, but at that point of the audit, and the audit obviously might take a couple of weeks, but at that time, that's as good a figure as we can derive and as any industry can derive.

CHAIR - So, the critical point there, Dr Lenz, is that you only know when it's audited. That's the only way you can guarantee that that's the case, where you have actual eyes on those dogs at a point of audit, and I take your point, Mr Jenkins, earlier, that this has been a recent thing, to clarify the data, so it hasn't historically happened. So, we wouldn't know -

Ms WEBB - You couldn't answer my question, could you? No.

CHAIR - At any time, it'd be impossible to provide an answer to that question because there's no eyes on that and then, now moving on from audits, and I'm assuming we're not auditing monthly or it's something that we would be doing on a relatively rare occasion, I would imagine.

Mr JENKINS - Biannually is the intention.

CHAIR - Biannually. You rely heavily on self-reporting from an industry who has operated in a sphere of secrecy right up unto the point of auditing those records.

Mr JENKINS - Well, I don't agree with the assertion that the industry is operated in the sphere of secrecy. What I would suggest further is that, as we touched on earlier, Chair, that Tasracing, via its integrity unit, does have a regular and rolling program of kennel inspections. So, it's not accurate to say that the only touchpoint that the governing body has with kennels and constituent dogs is during the audit process. Again, there is a level of reliance on industry participant to update status? Yes, absolutely, but we do need to factor in that third and important aspect there of the proactive, rolling kennel inspection program.

Dr LENZ - And just to be clear: when the inspectors arrive on the property, they will have a list of all the dogs that are on the system for that property. And if there is a discrepancy, either there's a dog on the property that's not on the list, or there is a dog that should be there because it's on the list but it's not there; questions are asked.

CHAIR - I mean, it's fair to say that it's not uncommon for community members to report that they have a greyhound and go to find information, only to find the greyhound's still registered for racing. I believe we have - and it's sitting on the couch somewhere.

Dr LENZ - Well, I think - and I wanted to come in, if I may, Chairperson, the - so FastTrack is only used by one state, and it relies on data being exchanged between OzChase, which is the system that all the other states use, and FastTrack so, to make the point there, I wouldn't say that FastTrack is necessarily the source of truth.

Ms O'CONNOR - No. Totally agree with you. We cross-reference. Dr Lenz, I hear you.

CHAIR - I'm very mindful that we have only another nine minutes with you and we have barely touched on the racing deed. Is there any further questions around welfare, I know we can talk about this for a very long time.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, I know Dean has got some. I mean, we could be here all day.

Ms WEBB - Quick explanation for why the code of practice is still draft after two years, and when is it going to be live and enforced?

Dr LENZ - We've kind of completed our bit of work for the moment. So it's gone through the board, the board has endorsed; it's now with the integrity committee. As soon as we get the go-ahead from them, it will be enacted. It is recognised - and the question you had was why does it take so long: the first draft of the document I've got actually here because I thought the question might come up, but it's a live document.

Ms WEBB - Yes, but it's not enforced. So it's meaningless on one hand as well.

Dr LENZ - Well, it's going to be in force. We can't determine the exact start date; it's not in our hands to do that, but what we've done is - you know, done the work to put together the code. We've consulted with industry and the community. No doubt there's going to be further feedback comes in. The good thing about this code of practice is that it's a flexible instrument. It can be adjusted as the need comes in. If something happens in the legislative -

Ms WEBB - We can sing its praises until the cows come home; the fact is, for two years it's been sitting there as an unenforced idea, so I'm just interested to know when's it going to be enforced? That's the question, really.

Mr JENKINS - So I touched on earlier, through you, Chair, Ms Webb, that the Tasracing board approved the document on 29 July at its monthly board meeting, and as Dr Lenz indicated, it has been referred to the Racing Integrity Committee. I understand that their next meeting is in late August, and subject to their approval, we would intend that the date of effect for the code of practice would be 1 September.

Ms WEBB - Great.

CHAIR - Thank you. If I may go to the deed, and I guess we've only got a short amount of time. We may need to have you back, if the Committee has further questions. The upshot of your submission is that you are requesting a funding deed of 20 years, commencing 1 July 2023, with a total funding contribution from the state government ending financial year 2049 of just shy of \$73.5 million. That's an extraordinary claim to make, and I think it was noted in earlier hearings today that in terms of deed arrangements, community organisations would give their left arm and kidney to have anything remarkably close to even a two-year funding deed agreement in place. Can you talk us through about why a 20-year agreement is essential for your industry, in your view?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Chair. A number of considerations: firstly, as regards the racing industry, itself, it's important to be able to provide certainty to its participants, trainers, owners, breeders in particular, many of whom are running either full-time, or professional, or semi-professional operations. There are significant lead times associated with - if we use breeding as an example: if an owner or prospective owner was intending to breed, say, a thoroughbred to enter the industry in a year's time, there's a breeding - reproductive activity towards the end of a given year, you have another year until the horse is ready, potentially, for a yearling sale. It may race at earliest when it's two, and that's only around about 10 per cent of the yearling population coming through. More than likely, using this equine example, a horse isn't going to race from day dot for three years' time. In in terms of providing that certainty to those stakeholders, they're significant investments. Without certainty of funding, in line with what has been provided previously, it does create difficulties in terms of decisions that are being made commercially for those people involved in the industry.

We also note, and it's evident in our submission, Chair, but more broadly the benefits to the Tasmanian community, we state that the economic contribution across the state exceeds \$200 million a year from the racing industry. There are over 6000 Tasmanians directly and indirectly involved on a paid and/or volunteer basis in the industry; much of that economic contribution, much of that employment, much of that volunteer community is social activity. This industry is Tasmanian people's lives, and it occurs in the regions where that type of connectivity is particularly important. The likes of the Longford Cup, the likes of the St Marys Cup, all have significant social and family, indeed, cross-generation engagements via the racing industry as we know it in Tasmania. In order to ensure that people are going to continue to invest in the industry and that they are going to continue to bring in their kids and get involved in the industry, it becomes less certain if there isn't certainty of funding for the industry.

CHAIR - Thank you [inaudible 1.57.40] which organisations would think about that too.

Ms O'CONNOR - I just want to understand why the same amount of money is requested, essentially, for the next deed, for only two codes; it seems like an ambit claim to me.

Mr JENKINS - Again, it's intended to be evident in our submission, and we have touched on it earlier in terms of the removal of a code, and if we use the case study, of course, of greyhounds on the table, that any reduction in funding for the remaining two codes beyond order of magnitude numbers, the \$3.5 million that we've stated in our analysis would be an impact on the industry, on Tasracing and its ability to fund and govern the industry appropriately.

Ms O'CONNOR - The other codes you are talking about, aren't you?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, I am, thanks, Ms O'Connor. The equine codes.

Mr WINTER - The chart that I thought helped the most was page 42 with the waterfall chart showing the potential changes and the greyhound racing cessation you've listed there at \$3.36 million. Just to confirm your methodology: what you've done over the 20-year period is you've indexed both the savings from the greyhound code as well as all of these other numbers and just extrapolated that out over 20 years; is that basically it?

Mr JENKINS - Yes.

Mr WINTER - What we can see here is that ending greyhound racing only saves \$3.35-6 million.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's not true.

Mr WINTER - According to the data that I'm reading, but the problem is going to be in you've just spoken about all the economic activity, Mr Jenkins, and I appreciate your passion for it, but the government is also ceasing, depending on how you cut it, 40 per cent of the activity. If you look at revenue from wagering, how do you make this argument of receiving this funding, if Tasmanians are only seeing 60 per cent of the benefit in the regions?

Ms O'CONNOR - You pulled those numbers out of your backside.

Mr JENKINS - It's not quite as simple to undertake that breakdown on that basis, Mr Winter, in that the, with the greatest of respect to the greyhound industry, the economic contribution is heavily skewed towards the equine codes. From a community and social perspective, probably a different story because of the tight-knit nature of the greyhound industry.

Mr WINTER - Do you have a figure then? If it's not 40 per cent, do you have a figure on the economic benefit that's being taken away by greyhound racing being ended?

Mr JENKINS - Yes, it's on a raw basis, i.e., not value-added; it's around about \$51 million based on our most recent IER study.

Mr WINTER - So that's out of 208. So it's more like, what's that, around a quarter.

Ms O'CONNOR - Hand-picked industry consultant: IER.

Mr WINTER - I note Ms O'Connor has mentioned that Saul Eslake was commissioned by the RSPCA.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you for agreeing with me, Mr Jenkins. Irrelevant. He's an independent economic expert.

Mr WINTER - Oh, that's irrelevant?

Ms O'CONNOR - You can play dumb, Dean.

Mr JENKINS - For the record, I didn't agree with Ms O'Connor's assertion.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well it's well understood that IER will give you the answers you're seeking.

Mr JENKINS - I would contend that that is not the case.

Ms O'CONNOR - Knock yourself out.

Mr WINTER - I guess I was trying to get into it with Mr Jenkins a little. The problem is you've just outlined what's called - say 25 per cent of the benefit is being withdrawn from racing overall. But we're seeing a tiny fraction of your total spending. So the benefit - we've got a major reduction in benefits from racing, but not a very large decrease in the amount of spending. How do you go about arguing this? The second part of this question -

Ms O'CONNOR - Animal welfare?

Mr WINTER - For components around, for example, you're going to have a magic million sale in February next year. The horses that are up for sale by the time they have their first race start, that will be after the next deed. When does this industry need a deed signed off so that we can actually have a strong breeding, we can have confidence for our trainers. I know that you've been working on this since 2023, what's the D-Day for the industry and when we need a final deed signed?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Mr Winter, and through you, Chair. Two-part question. On the initial query set, in terms of justifying the finances of the industry and the request that they're making, that's entirely incumbent upon Tasracing with the support of our industry participants and supportive members of the Tasmanian community. We're entirely looking to be increasingly accountable for increasing it to the fullest extent possible. Our commercial revenue, whether it be through race field fees, sponsorship, partnership fees, media rights and other arrangements. But the reality is that the nature of the structure of the industry since the sale of the TOTE, some nearly 20 years ago, means that the racing industry in Tasmania cannot survive at a tier one metro level, so to speak, operation without government support. That's the simple reality. We don't contend that. What we do contend is that that is justified given the impact and benefits delivered to the Tasmanian community.

In terms of the second question, when would the deed, what's the deadline so to speak. It depends who you ask, I suppose, given stakeholders. But as I've outlined, and you've articulated, as well Mr Winter, the breeding is a really good example because you are talking four-year cycles typically as a minimum. I would be suggesting that it would be problematic if we were to go beyond the end of this breeding season without certainty.

Mr WINTER - So you're talking about March next year?

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - That's a matter for the government though, isn't it really?

CHAIR - We have come to our end of our hearing today. There was a little bit of overtime. Thank you very much for your appearance here today. I'm sure we still have more questions which we might seek another opportunity to perhaps go a little bit deeper into the finances of what you're expecting.

To reiterate, 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're just repeating what you said to us here today. Do you understand that?

Mr JENKINS - Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Excellent. Thank you very much for your time today.

The witnesses withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 3.05 p.m.