

PUBLIC

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE B MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
HOBART, ON FRIDAY 30 JUNE 2023

SHORT INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF RACING INTEGRITY

Hon. MADELINE OGILVIE MP, MINISTER FOR RACING, WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED. **Ms DEIDRE WILSON**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT TASMANIA, **Mr ANDREW JENKINS**, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, **Mr GENE PHAIR**, CHAIRMAN, TASRACING, AND **Mr JUSTIN HELMICH**, DIRECTOR OF RACING AND GENERAL MANAGER, OFFICE OF RACING INTEGRITY, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - I welcome everyone here this morning for this hearing of the Legislative Council Inquiry into the Role and Functions of the Office of Racing Integrity. I thank everyone very much for their time. I would like to introduce the members of the Committee starting from my left: Hon. Meg Webb, Hon. Rob Valentine, Hon. Jane Howlett, myself, Tania Rattray, Hon. Rosemary Armitage and Hon. Josh Willie. We have Simon Scott, our secretary, with support from Ali Scott, and Roey on Hansard.

Minister, we would appreciate your introducing everyone at the table after everyone has taken their statutory declaration. This is a public hearing and everyone would be familiar with this process; we do not have anyone at the table that has not been before a Committee hearing before so you completely understand all the parameters around that privilege and that outside of this place it may not apply.

I very much appreciate your time and hand over to you, Minister.

I would just like to note that I received a message from Jason Jacobi last evening to say that he is unwell. His apology is noted and the message appreciated.

Ms OGILVIE - I am sorry about that, we did try to have him here. I am really pleased to be here again to talk about racing integrity, probity and animal welfare. I have a great team here today, as requested by this Committee. Along with Ms Deidre Wilson, Deputy Secretary of NRE Tasmania. I am very pleased to have Justin Helmich, Director of Racing, who was on leave at the time of the last hearing, as well as representatives from Tasracing, Mr Gene Phair, who is the Chairman, Mr Andrew Jenkins and as we have mentioned, Mr Jason Jacobi Secretary of NRE is unfortunately unwell and therefore unable to be here today. Whilst I am very pleased to have Tasracing representatives here to answer as many of your questions as they can, I note that the terms of reference for today's proceedings are specific to the Office of Racing Integrity, but, as usual, Tasracing will again present for the GBE hearing later in the year, which is the appropriate opportunity for members to scrutinise Tasracing's functions and operations more broadly.

As mentioned as part of this inquiry previously, I expect today that you may ask questions that will be specifically addressed and dealt with through Mr Murrehy's investigation, which

PUBLIC

I note is ongoing. Members may have seen my statement this week regarding the advised time frame of 31 August 2023 and Mr Murrihy to deliver his findings and recommendations.

Whilst I and the team wish to respond in detail to specific questions asked today, I am advised that there may be issues raised that could prejudice or interfere with investigations.

Much like your side, either I or the departmental officers accompanying me here today may seek liberty to take advice on how best to respond or take questions on notice.

I also appreciate the Committee may have questions in relation to specific races or allegations made about employees of the Office of Racing Integrity. Whilst I am very keen to support the Committee and provide as much information as possible, I must also respect that some of these questions may go to private matters or HR matters that are of an employment nature between the individual and the Department, and we will all take great care with that.

I will seek the advice of the secretary in relations to those matters of that nature. I hope you will also appreciate the importance of affording natural justice and managing information in a way that avoids or prevents harm or reputational damage. Having said that, I welcome questions and will provide as much detail as we can on racing matters. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Minister. We certainly listened to your introduction there. I can say that it is always a balancing act here because some of the areas do head right into Tasracing, so it is a difficult area too.

Ms OGILVIE - We are aware of that.

CHAIR - We will do our best as well. I hope you appreciate we have a job to do as well.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, let's start with the Murrihy review. In your statement you said that Mr Murrihy requested an eight-week extension a week before the due date. It is a significant extension; what is the explanation for that, and why at such short notice?

CHAIR - A couple of weeks to finish up a report, but eight weeks is significant.

Ms OGILVIE - I do have some information on that. Mr Murrihy is appointed as a steward under the Racing Regulation Act. He has all the associated powers of a steward under the Australian Harness Racing Rules.

Mr Murrihy has been provided with access to additional expertise, including betting analysts, technical advice and legal support.

The Government committed to providing further resources as required and additional time for the review if Mr Murrihy deemed it necessary. Along with reviewing written submissions, Mr Murrihy has visited Tasmania on several occasions to conduct in-person confidential interviews, to inspect animal welfare conditions at Mr Yole's Cygnet racing stables and to consult with RSPCA Tasmania, the Chief Veterinary and Animal Welfare Officer at Tasracing and the Chief Veterinary Officer in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania.

PUBLIC

Mr Murrihy's report and findings were due to be received by the Government by Friday 30 June [2023]. Mr Murrihy wrote to the Government on Friday 23 June [2023], requesting an extension of time to ensure the matters outlined in the terms of reference can be fully investigated and considered.

It is important to allow Mr Murrihy adequate time to exercise and complete his due diligence of all matters before him and to afford natural justice in relation to these matters.

Mr Murrihy's request for an extension has been granted and the revised date on which the report and findings are due to be provided to the Government is 31 August 2023.

I also reiterate my full confidence in the process established for this independent review, in Mr Murrihy's capacity to determine what is appropriate to be considered within the terms of reference and what should be referred to other appropriate investigatory bodies, the RSPCA and NRE Tasmania - to manage complaints about animal welfare and to investigate concerns accordingly. I reiterate that the Government announced its investigation to ensure Tasmanians can have faith that the welfare of animals is never compromised, and the integrity of the racing industry is above reproach. That's why it is essential to ensure a thorough and complete investigation is undertaken. As an independent investigation, the timing of requests of additional resources or other timings are completely in Mr Murrihy's remit.

Mr WILLIE - A week's notice is not a lot of time. Did he verbally update you prior to that?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Murrihy's investigation is completely independent. His request for additional time, and the timing of that, is completely in his remit.

Mr WILLIE - You said he was being supported by betting analysts and legal support. I missed the third one.

Ms OGILVIE - We have provided some additional resources, including a betting analyst, legal support and technical advice.

Mr WILLIE - Technical advice. How many FTEs are supporting Mr Murrihy?

Ms OGILVIE - I will ask the Department to give some more detail on the nature of the resources that have been deployed.

Ms WILSON - We have provided administrative support to Mr Murrihy. We've put a consultant on to assist Mr Murrihy with legal issues. All up, we've got about three people supporting the review.

Mr WILLIE - Where are they working from? Are they working from the Office of Racing Integrity?

Ms OGILVIE - What's the question?

Mr WILLIE - Where are the support staff for Mr Murrihy working from?

PUBLIC

Ms WILSON - I should add we also have contractual support through betting analysts and the consultant. This review is independent. The support is not being provided through the Office of Racing Integrity. Mr Murrihy is acting fully within his terms of reference in terms of the independent investigation.

Mr WILLIE - So, Minister, where's he working from in terms of the support being provided?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Murrihy's physical location?

Mr WILLIE - Yes.

Ms WILSON - Mr Murrihy is resident on the mainland. When he comes to Tasmania he undertakes hearings and inquiries separate from the Office of Racing Integrity.

Mr WILLIE - Separate and not in the same location. In terms of the terms of reference, I'm aware of allegations of tax evasion, wage theft and sexual harassment. I believe they're outside of Mr Murrihy's expertise. How are those matters being handled?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Willie, when it comes to allegations, allegations are just that.

Mr WILLIE - I said they were allegations, Minister.

Ms OGILVIE - And I'm concurring with you, Mr Willie. His terms of reference are broad. We do have some additional information about that. The matters in the areas that you raise are very serious and - I say this for this Committee and I have said it in other areas - I implore anybody who has evidence of wrongdoing to report it to appropriate authorities such as Tasmania Police, RSPCA and Fair Work Australia. If such matters have been brought forward to Mr Murrihy, I'm certain he will deal with those as part of his remit.

What we ought to do as good citizens of Tasmania is ensure that when these sorts of matters are raised, they go to the appropriate authorities. I have recently seen, and I have recently implored people, when it comes to animal welfare issues in particular, to make statements and complains, particularly to the RSPCA. They can be done in confidence. No-one ever ought to be scared of making a complaint to the RSPCA, and I know that they take these matters very seriously as well.

I think that does answer your question. Mr Murrihy is running an independent investigation. I don't reach into that, it's independent of myself and of ORI, and the matters that he receives for investigation are part of his remit. Again, let me emphasise, if people have concerns or courses of action or worries about animal welfare - and, you know, we come across these things - please, please report them.

Mr WILLIE - Has Mr Murrihy had to report allegations to authorities that you are aware of?

Ms OGILVIE - As I've said, I don't reach into his independent investigation, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, in terms of the delays - if we can go back to that - the new due date for Mr Murrihy's report is 31 August. Do you commit to releasing it publicly on that date,

PUBLIC

or will you need to consider it and release it after that? And what sort of expectation can the parliament and Tasmanians have in terms of the release of that report?

Ms OGILVIE - So, your question is, will it be released publicly?

Mr WILLIE - Yes, this is a matter of public interest.

Ms OGILVIE - I think we have spoken of that before, but I will just confirm with Deidre the terms of reference upon which he has been engaged in relation to that. There are confidentiality issues as well, I would assume. The intention is to release it publicly. The advice I was just receiving is about that confidentiality issue; we will deal with that. In relation to the delay, as you described it, it is in the interests of everybody in the industry, and also all of us here today, that Mr Murrihy is able to do the work that he needs to do. So, if he has asked us for more information, more time and more resources, then we are very happy to provide that, and we have said that all the way through. The Government will consider the report very carefully. I am putting that in the context of the Monteith review and the bill that we currently have in drafting, and I have provided the Committee with some information on that. There may be things, suggestions or recommendations, that come out of that report that I can then build into our law reform process. That is how we will manage it.

CHAIR - Was the time extension given to Mr Murrihy a negotiated one, or was that a request - the eight weeks?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Murrihy requested additional time-

CHAIR - Did he request eight weeks or was that a negotiated time?

Ms OGILVIE - I believe he requested eight weeks but I will just confirm that.

Ms WILSON - The discussions were held with the Secretary. I believe that was the requested time frame, but I will get that confirmed while we're in the hearing.

CHAIR - I have a couple of questions, and thank you for providing the information, even though we did have to chase it; but we understand it's a busy time -

Ms OGILVIE - I want to just underscore and thank the Department for the work that they did. It's not just a busy time, but the information was quite detailed and both my office and the Department worked very hard to do that. I wanted to get that thank you in there.

CHAIR - Sure, we absolutely appreciate that.

Ms OGILVIE - It was a lot of work.

CHAIR - I'm sure. I'm particularly interested in the information that was provided about when a complaint comes to your office and then how that is moved on. There's quite a few complaints in that one particular racing stable. Some of them are back in February and March of this year. Are those investigations ongoing at ORI, or has all of that halted or been suspended while the Murrihy report is being undertaken? We were provided with this extensive list -

Ms OGILVIE - We have a very hard-working office-

CHAIR - Or perhaps one that's not doing much at the moment. I'm just interested.

Ms OGILVIE - No, very happy to address that. You have a list of issues and complaints that have arrived in our office. We have an electronic management system for documentation -

CHAIR - And action by the Minister's office.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, MyDAS is the system that we use and it dovetails into NRE. As I've said a number of times, we manage that process very carefully and we respond and let people know that we have received information and then we pass it through to the Department for management. That is our process. So, the list you have is the records of what has come through my office and we have passed those all through to ORI. At that point, it becomes a departmental matter. The Minister's office is not in charge of completing or resolving complaints that go to the Department, so I will ask Deidre to pick up the process at that point and perhaps ask her to comment on those matters.

Ms WILSON - Whilst the Murrihy inquiry and investigation is happening and those matters that are dealt with are clearly identified in the terms of reference, you will note that they relate to from the commencement of the inquiry to the preceeding three years. Many of those matters had already been addressed or assessed. If people have concerns around the complaints management process, that is being addressed by Mr Murrihy.

In terms of complaints that have been received, where it is appropriate for them to be continued to be actioned by the Department through our external complaints process, we would continue to do so. If matters need to be referred to Tasracing, that also occurs. Similarly, if matters are of an operational nature relating to the Office of Racing Integrity and its activities, they are addressed.

Obviously, we are mindful of the Murrihy inquiry and ensuring that if there was any information that needed to be referred to Mr Murrihy, that would occur.

CHAIR - Do you have some numbers, Minister, on how many actual complaints are on foot at the moment with ORI that are outside the remit of the Murrihy report?

Ms OGILVIE - We can probably get that information for you. Just to underscore that, like any very busy politician, and you would all have the same experience, many bits of information come into our office. When it is a complaint or a concern or an issue relating to one of my five portfolio areas - and this relates to Racing, so they go through to ORI. Not all of them would comprise a formal complaint. They are all followed up by ORI but whether they then become an investigation - I just wanted to set that out about the process. I think it is important to understand that. Then I think we are able to provide you with information around complaints management within ORI.

CHAIR - My question is around the role and the function of the office right now given that we had this -

Ms OGILVIE - ORI?

CHAIR - Yes, so how that is actually being undertaken.

Ms OGILVIE - It is ongoing. Would you mind picking that up?

Mr HELMICH - Certainly, Minister. Look, indeed, as matters are being raised with the Office of Racing Integrity ongoing, we are addressing those as we need to. Things have not stopped. Indeed, there are a number of matters which are referred to within the questions on notice in the spreadsheet that has been provided. A lot of those matters have already been dealt with, as the secretary has advised. There may be a couple of matters within that cohort of information that you have which are specifically related to the matters which are subject of the Murrihy inquiry, which we have on hold at this point in time, but that is limited. We continue to address matters as they are referred to in the Office of Racing Integrity.

CHAIR - So, for example, 28 February 2023 in your data -

Ms OGILVIE - In my list?

CHAIR - In your list, yes, the action here says:

The Minister responded via correspondence, advised the matter had been referred to ORI and it was an operational matter, and that is a consistent approach. ORI have conducted inspections and the matter is still under active investigation.

So, is it under active investigation by ORI or by the Murrihy process? Or do we have the two working together at the same time?

Ms OGILVIE - ORI's investigations, where they are conducting a formal investigation, are ongoing and that is the role that they play. So nothing has ceased while the Murrihy investigation is underway. The Murrihy investigation is completely independent, it is independent of ORI and it is independent of myself; it's a fresh set of eyes across what has been a challenging topic and it is a good idea to have that fresh set of eyes. There may be issues that are both under investigation within ORI but also are touched upon by those who have submitted information to Mr Murrihy.

I hope I have explained that correctly. I am going to ask the director of Racing if he can add any additional information.

Mr HELMICH - Thank you for your question. The one you referred to, which is 28 February [2023], relates to animal welfare concerns at the Yole stable. As you can see, there are a number of those within the information that you have been provided. The circumstances that exist at the Yole stable are consistent. They have been consistent for quite an amount of time. We are very well aware of the circumstances that exist there. We have assessed those circumstances against the rules of racing and we have determined that the rules of racing are not infringed by the circumstances that exist. The RSPCA have also assessed the circumstances at the stable and they have also assessed that there is no breach of the Animal Welfare Act in relation to what occurs there.

The discussions with the Yole stable in terms of the circumstances and the conditions there are ongoing. We continue to liaise with the Yole stable and, indeed, inspect the Yole

stable on a regular basis - there was an inspection there this week to ensure that there is no further deviation from the conditions that we know exist.

The work that we have been doing in this space - I have made a recommendation to Tasracing in relation to the development of an equine code of practice. That work is still ongoing. Indeed, the draft code of practice has been released to stakeholders for consultation, as I understand. Perhaps Mr Jenkins or the Minister wants to reflect on that further, but certainly the actions in relation to animal welfare and the complaints that are raised are consistent throughout all the complaints.

CHAIR - It indicates here in this information that that particular complaint is conducted inspections and the matter is still under active investigation, so that one is still open. Yet the one underneath and the one above does not say the same thing. I am interested in how you decide which ones are still under investigation and which ones are still -

Ms OGILVIE - I can help. The information that you have in front of you, Chair, is my office records. You have asked for information around the complaints process. To clarify that again, information comes in, people might ring me, I might get a social media [posting], I might get a letter, I might get a phone call. People give me information about concerns, complaints, issues all the time. When they are formal, they go into that formal system and I try to capture them through our complaints process or our information management process. That is called MyDAS. It is important to know that that's a central piece of software that connects into the Department. So, I put the information in there, I refer things to the Department through that channel and then they go to the Department for assessment about whether ORI takes them on as a formal investigation or not.

I can tell by the information coming through my office, particularly when people are talking about similar issues, that it probably goes to one issue when it gets to ORI. So, that is the nature of the information you have there. I am not a complaints management process. The information goes through to the complaints management process.

CHAIR - So, when do you, Minister - who has taken the complaint and sent it on to the appropriate -

Ms OGILVIE - Well, concern or complaint, yes, that is right.

CHAIR - Or complaint, it says 'complaint received'. When do you follow up and assure yourself that the matter has been dealt with appropriately? That is what I am interested in because I can tell you how my office works. I get the complaint, I send it to where I need it to go and then I follow up to make sure that that has been resolved in a satisfactory manner - certainly satisfactory to the person who made the complaint and to me, who put the complaint in. So, when do you follow up?

Ms OGILVIE - I have fortnightly meetings, called RFMs, with Tasracing, the ORI and the Department. There is a huge amount of work that goes on in the information loop to make sure that things are followed through and managed appropriately.

What I don't do is engage in operational matters. Natural justice is important and it's very important that those matters are independent of the Minister's office. I think we'd all agree with that. So, at regular fortnightly meetings, we have an agenda and we run through that agenda,

PUBLIC

which includes matters that relate to complaints, management, HR issues and other issues that the Minister needs to be aware of. We talk about strategic matters; we look at law reform, we are doing a huge amount of work on law reform in racing.

CHAIR - When do you close that particular complaint? When, in your process, are you satisfied that that's been dealt with, and the appropriate action or non-action has been taken?

Ms OGILVIE - The process is, once we have written to the Department and they have gone through their triaging process about whether it's a complaint, a concern, something new or something that needs to go somewhere else, such as to the RSPCA or the police, they do their investigations. They come back to me based on the letter that I have written, give me a response and then we respond to the person. That's the letter-writing process.

CHAIR - In this extensive list, not a lot have no further action required. There are very few that say 'no further action required', so are they still open? In your office, are they still open?

Ms OGILVIE - The way it works is that we write back to the person who has written to us, or however that information has come in, with the information around how these matters have been assessed. I've got nodding on the side over here, so I'm going to ask Deidre Wilson to talk again about their process and how the resolution of that information comes back to my office and how we then convey it.

Ms WILSON - Through you, Minister, this report, as the Minister has said, is around complaints, concerns and actions by the Minister's office. In many cases, the response is a letter back to the person who has raised the complaint. You'll see that in a number of places where it says 'Minister's office responded, staff contacted the person' and there has been no further follow-up from that person requiring other actions.

In other cases, you will see that the matter was referred to, say, Tasracing, because it was, say, an operational matter or to the Office of Racing Integrity, or indeed, to our Department. We would then respond. As the Minister has clearly articulated, if it is a concern we would look into it and the response is provided directly to the person. That could be a phone call, that could be a meeting, it could be a letter or any combination of those. If it's a matter for stewards, there is obviously a process around that. If it's a complaint in the sense that it needs to go through our external complaints policy, then there is a full process - ultimately, a response to the complainant.

I would note that where we are dealing with a matter under an external complaints policy within the agency, for example, an individual also has other avenues to raise matters - to the Ombudsman. If people have particular concerns around integrity matters, they can take them to the Integrity Commission. We have a definite process around managing and responding to concerns and what we would call complaints.

Ms OGILVIE - And there's a range.

Ms WILSON - There is a range. As the Minister has also indicated, there is a reporting back process, where the matter has gone back into the agency to the Office of Racing Integrity, or to Tasracing. The Minister has explained that process.

CHAIR - I need to let other members take a turn, so I'll consider that response and come back if I need to.

Mr VALENTINE - A supplementary question on that, if we were to go to one particular matter on this list, let's say 28 February [2023], could you provide a step-by-step breakdown of exactly what's happened with that issue, if someone wanted to take it further? They might want to take it to the Integrity Commission because they think an officer has done the wrong thing. Can you provide a step-by-step breakdown as to what happened to that particular complaint?

Ms WILSON - I'll set some parameters around responding to that. We have provided a list of matters that have been raised with the Minister and the actions.

If it was a concern, there is a standard process. For example, if you chose one that had led to an active investigation by stewards or by Biosecurity Tasmania's animal welfare officers and it is an active investigation of a breach of the law, there isn't a running commentary on that. That is undertaken by independent officers. If it goes into a legal sphere, it is dealt with appropriately and at arm's length, through the courts. Within that context, it is really difficult to respond to what you are asking. We can talk about principles.

Mr VALENTINE - The question is being able to track an individual complaint right down until its resolution. Are you satisfied that that is fine-grained enough to be able to defend how a matter is being dealt with? That is the question.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Mr Valentine. Our management process is robust. I think the area that you - and perhaps the Chair also - are particularly interested in is where information comes into our office and then perhaps doesn't proceed to a full formal complaint with ORI because it may not meet the criteria or it might not be within their remit. It might be something that goes to the RSPCA or somewhere else, or is not in relation to racing. We have had ones that have been separate issues.

The information management process that we have is robust. The issues that we deal with, we deal with on a daily basis and there is a volume of those.

I have confidence in the Department and its processes. I have complete confidence in the investigatory processes that ORI takes, bearing in mind natural justice is really important and we take care around confidentiality as well.

Mr VALENTINE - I fully understand that. I just want to be assured or at least to explore, how you are identifying a particular complaint. The next step in the process is *x*. The next step after that is *y*. Simply, going right down to its resolution or non-resolution, and being able to defend it in a real way. Given the industry and the obvious concerns that seem to be out there in public, it would be important to make sure that is in place.

Ms OGILVIE - It is in place, and there is a process handoff that is between my office and the Department. The Department is charged with managing the resolution of complaints and concerns, and there's a range of those.

It is important to reiterate that a huge amount of work goes into this. It is taken very seriously. The issues that are passed through to the Department are triaged. The Department

PUBLIC

will look at where they need to go. I am happy to ask Deidre Wilson to add to that, but to be really clear again, there is a process. It is in place. It is meaningful. It manages these concerns right through to its resolution. Every inquiry that comes through in our formal process, does get a response. It may not all end up in an investigation.

Mr VALENTINE - Madam Chair, is it possible to ask for that process to be tabled at some point?

Ms OGILVIE - A process map? I think we can do that for you. I am not sure if we can do it quickly in the meeting.

CHAIR - Let's choose one - March 2023. Multiple emails. Greyhound Racing Industry. An important code for the racing industry, I contend. The Minister provided a direct response to complaints with relevant information. Does that mean that seven people got a phone call? Or a couple got an email? Minister, how do you satisfy yourself that people who take the opportunity - as you have encouraged - ring up and make a complaint, probably because they have their heart and soul in the racing industry, that this is going to make sure we have confidence in the racing industry?

That is really where I am going and I expect the member for Hobart is on my train here.

Mr VALENTINE - I am sort of on that, and I fully appreciate the Minister's role might be, and might need to be, and to explore that. But I would like to see the whole process right down through, so we can have an understanding to how each one is dealt with.

Ms OGILVIE - I think that would help. By all means, we can go through each one of these line items, it is not a problem.

CHAIR - We will not be able to do that today.

Ms OGILVIE - If we were to do that, we really need another column because you are actually asking for the detailed information in those communications and I am always very careful about confidentiality.

CHAIR - I was asking for whether you were satisfied when you received a complaint, that the process, whatever it looks like, had come back to you with a resolution and you were comfortable the integrity of the racing industry was going to be intact because of the process through your office also.

Ms OGILVIE - I am absolutely confident the processes we use are the best of breed that we have at the moment. Let me underscore and say again, I am implementing a review of the racing industry; we are developing a new bill. I have given you the drafting instructions. What I want to see is a contemporary model for racing, particularly on the integrity side, that is set up under the new TasRIC¹ model, which is completely independent of the Department.

I am looking forward to going through some of those drafting instructions with you to show you how the new model will work. It will provide a completely independent complaints process. I am leading this work and really proud of it. This team is driving this work to create

¹ Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commission

a new model for racing integrity in Tasmania for the first time in 20 years. I do not want to leave you with the impression we cannot improve. I have said that all along. Processes can be improved. Mr Valentine makes a very good point: in understanding the process, a visual of that might assist.

When it comes to this list of the work done in my office, I am confident that everything you see here has been done and delivered and where we say we have responded, we have responded appropriately. Emails come in all the time. It might be something I can deal with quickly and I respond to. I think that answers your question.

Ms HOWLETT - Minister, can you give the Committee an understanding of the role of ORI in the terms of ensuring that harness, thoroughbred and greyhound races are able to run week in, week out?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. The races continue and this is good news. For context, it is good to understand a bit about the relevant functions of the Director of Racing in maintaining that integrity function and the integrity of racing year in, year out.

The Director of Racing is a statutory role created by the *Racing Regulation Act 2004*. The Director of Racing has specific and limited functions and responsibilities under the act. By the convention, the person appointed to manage the Office of Racing Integrity has been appointed the Director of Racing.

There are two specific functions of the director described by the act. They are controlling race nominations, acceptances, field selections, handicapping, barrier draws and scratching in harness racing; and controlling race nominations, grading, field selections, box draws and scratching in greyhound racing. ORI is part of the Department; it employs staff with roles critical to the day-to-day operations of the racing industry and in support of the director's functions.

Although it is away from the public eye, these staff we have provide efficient and effective customer service directly to industry participants and just one of those areas is handicapping and grading. Our ORI staff receive and process nominations for all races in the harness and greyhound codes. Tasracing manages the same process for the thoroughbred code. This task, as you would all appreciate, has strict deadlines because we are dealing with races and processes to ensure no person or horse or dog is given favour over another and the racefields can be published on time to facilitate participation by industry members, marketing by Tasracing and race preparation for animals.

This critical process is done with reference to the rules of racing for the relevant code and the eligibility conditions for the specific race set by Tasracing. There are also numerous relevant policies and procedures stipulated by Tasracing or the Director of Racing that apply to the process.

Then there is the close analysis of records of the status and characteristics of animals and people held on national databases for the relevant code. The volume we are dealing with in the industry in 2021-22, in the harness code, was 737 races were fielded, containing 11,734 starters, a good effort; in the greyhound code, 1,539 races were fielded, containing 11,734 starters. As you would see from the NRE annual report for that year, only 2.1 per cent and 0.58 per cent of

PUBLIC

those races in their respective codes required adjustments after publication. In raw numbers, that is 15 harness races and 9 greyhound races.

Mr WILLIE - It is encouraging, Minister, hearing you say the complaints process can be improved.

Ms OGILVIE - I have said that before.

Mr WILLIE - Part of that improvement is acknowledging where there has been a breakdown in process. In relation to the BOTRA² Harness complaint, you have previously told this Committee in relation to that specific letter, which I understand was quite lengthy:

I have spoken to the author of that letter personally and I do not want to raise names in this forum, but I have walked through those issues as well. We have taken action in relation to those concerns at an operational level and I will ask the secretary to speak to that because it sits within the Department.

We have had the Director of Racing confirm he received a complaint that in part was directly about him, from your racing adviser. You left the secretary of the Department to apologise for this when it had nothing to do with the Department, and given that the secretary has made an apology, why have you not?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me be clear. The racing industry, as we have traversed this morning, and its specific legislation, are technical and complex in nature and we are dealing with volume. In September 2022, I received correspondence from the then-president of BOTRA outlining a number of concerns and allegations in regard to the Office of Racing Integrity and I acknowledge the correspondence he would have seen.

I wrote to the president of BOTRA in October, advising I had referred the correspondence to the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania for investigation through their complaints handling process. I am advised the complaint did contain a number of matters which fall within the purview of the Director of Racing to respond to as the industry regulator. I am advised the outcomes of the investigation were communicated to the complainant in December by the Secretary of NRE Tasmania.

I can confirm that the then-president of BOTRA was advised by NRE Tasmania that, should he be unsatisfied or dissatisfied with the investigation and response provided to his complaint, he may wish to make a further complaint to the Ombudsman and was provided with a link to the Ombudsman's website to do this. It is also important to note the secretary has referred the letter from BOTRA and the response provided to Mr Murrehy and has asked him specifically in accordance with his terms of reference to review each of the allegations raised and, in particular, the way in which ORI managed those complaints.

It will be open to Mr Murrehy to make findings about the complaint handling process. Now, at another layer, Mr Willie, if someone feels aggrieved by actions of either myself or my office, I will work hard to repair those relationships. I have spoken with Mr Kennedy and met with BOTRA's executive as the representative organisation in May 2023. That was with Mr Barrie Rattray and Ms Sandra Hills. My office has also been in contact with the

² Tasmanian Harness Racing Breeders, Owners, Trainers and Reinspersons Association

PUBLIC

BOTRA President as recently as last week to discuss the Murrhiy extension. I believe we are on a good footing now and we have agreed to have regular meetings, which is a step forward. The next meeting is scheduled for 23 August [2023].

If anybody else is feeling aggrieved by how this complaint or other complaints have been handled, my office door is always open. I am always happy to meet with industry. If there are issues to be remedied, I will work through them with affected individuals, including apologising. As I've said previously, it is not appropriate to be discussing private conversations in public forums.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, you've acknowledged that there's always room for improvement. There's been a clear breakdown of process in this instance. You've had the Secretary apologise for something his Department was not directly responsible for. I'm giving you the opportunity to say sorry for the breakdown in process to the affected people. Isn't that an important step in acknowledging that things can be improved and that you are taking it seriously?

Ms OGILVIE - I take all matters seriously, Mr Willie, particularly in relation to complaints, concerns and other issues that are raised with my office. As I have said in this forum previously and you have reiterated, there is always room for improvement. I have again underscored the work I am doing to lead reform in this area. We have a bill in progress. I have provided you, and hopefully you have had a chance to read it, with the drafting instructions of the bill which will provide a new model for independent complaints management.

The process we use currently is the process we use. I have no problem suggesting that processes can be improved -

Mr WILLIE - And an apology where there has been a breakdown in process, Minister?

Ms OGILVIE - I am always happy to address these issues. If somebody wishes to have a direct apology from me, I am -

Mr WILLIE - A public apology?

Ms OGILVIE - To you?

Mr WILLIE - No, to the person impacted by this particular breakdown in process. I'm giving you plenty of opportunities here.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm not sure that your characterisation of it is appropriate. I'm very happy to apologise to anybody who is aggrieved by these matters. I have met with the new president and representatives of BOTRA and I believe our relationship is on a good footing. Are you talking about Mr Kennedy?

Mr WILLIE - Yes, I am. You know full well who I'm talking about.

Ms OGILVIE - There is no need to be sharp, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - Well, don't pretend otherwise.

PUBLIC

Ms OGILVIE - I have spoken with Mr Kennedy but I'm happy to have another conversation with him.

Mr VALENTINE - During Estimates, we talked about the Greyhound Adoption Program. One area I was interested in was the number of greyhounds that exit as a result of having passed away as opposed to being euthanised. I don't think we ended up getting the figures for that and I don't think it was put on notice through the process. You talked about the number of exits and how well the program was operating. My question was in relation to how many are not exiting through adoption.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Mr Valentine. Just to be clear, this was in Estimates?

Mr VALENTINE - During Estimates we talked about the Greyhound Adoption Program because we were dealing with moneys given to those that were -

Ms OGILVIE - Brightside and others?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, well, there was a question mark over whether Brightside was being funded appropriately, but my question was to do with the number of dogs that go into the adoption program that aren't adopted out, that don't make it through the system. What happens to them?

Ms OGILVIE - That's something Tasracing might be able to assist with.

CHAIR - You always like everyone at the table to have opportunity to have input.

Mr JENKINS - To the best of my knowledge we have not had a dog euthanised in my time through the adoption program. Dogs are either going through or participating in a behavioural program toward domestic rehoming, participating in foster care to assist their acclimatisation and becoming used to a domestic environment. I would have to check detailed statistics regarding dogs that have become ill. We have not had any instances in my time of euthanasia due to behavioural concerns or being inappropriate for rehoming.

Mr VALENTINE - That means that every dog that enters the adoption program has managed to be retrained for adoption and has been adopted out appropriately?

Mr JENKINS - That is right, Mr Valentine.

Mr VALENTINE - Do we have the figures on that or is that in your annual report? The number of dogs that have gone in and the number of dogs that have gone out.

Mr JENKINS - Yes, we do. It is a matter of public record through our annual report.

Ms OGILVIE - I think I can help you with that, Mr Valentine. It is a matter of public record. There is a document I could provide you which is probably in your report in relation to those numbers. I'm happy to table that.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, please. Regarding Brightside and others, are they getting a fair access to funds to be able to carry out a greyhound adoption? The GAP seems to receive the

majority of funds. Is that equitable when you consider the number of people who are trying to do this successfully?

Ms OGILVIE - I will ask Tasracing to share the structure of how it works and why GAP is run and managed by Tasracing and the basis upon which that's done.

Mr JENKINS - Mr Valentine, as a racing industry, we see ourselves as having a primary responsibility for rehoming the majority, if possible, of greyhounds after their racing career. We also recognise the significant value and importance of alternative rehoming operators that typically operate of a private nature.

Historically, Tasracing has not engaged in a funding mechanism outside GAP. I'm pleased to share that since the recent appointment of our chief veterinary and animal welfare officer, Dr Martin Lenz, we are currently scoping rehoming grants. Based against a set of pre-agreed criteria, we will open up a public expression of interest and invite appropriate and registered entities to apply for alternative funding.

We hold primary responsibility and we recognise that, but we do balance and recognise that there are alternatives. It's what's best for the greyhounds.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that new funding?

Mr JENKINS - It will be through the existing animal welfare budget, Mr Valentine.

Ms WEBB - Are those grants what we spoke about in Estimates the Racing and Animal Welfare grants scheme, the RAW grants scheme?

Mr JENKINS - It is.

Ms WEBB - And that will provide some opportunity for private rehoming services to access funding?

Mr JENKINS - That is correct.

Ms WEBB - What would be the amount per dog that would be available to them?

Mr JENKINS - We are still in the preliminary development stage. I cannot give you a figure.

Ms WEBB - When is the time line then for the completion of development of that scheme and then its rollout?

Mr JENKINS - There isn't a specific time line. I'd expect that in the next three to six months it is something that we would be in a position to finalise and release publicly.

Ms WEBB - Within the next three to six months?

Mr JENKINS - Yes.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - There's not a requirement for a new Minister as to when this should come on board, knowing that those private rehoming services are currently struggling to provide the service, which can't be provided through GAP, because GAP can't meet the full need. We are leaving them out to dry for another three to six months, at least.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, I don't agree with the characterisation of leaving things out to dry. I don't think that's a fair summary. I will ask the CEO of Tasracing to speak further on that. From my perspective, we have a system that is doing the best it can with our current state of play. I reiterate that I am an animal lover. I'm a dog lover. I get it. I want animals to be cared for in the best possible way we can. We have responded to the request of the broader sector to work something out in relation to funding.

That's at the policy level. At the operational level, where Tasracing is charged with implementing new models, the time lines, the resourcing, the funding, the operationalising of this policy are within their remit.

Ms WEBB - Just before you move on, you don't have an expectation, as Minister, for when this grant scheme should be put in place, and therefore money available to the private rehoming services?

Ms OGILVIE - My expectation is that Tasracing will implement this with all due haste given the resources that they have to manage. I take their advice in relation to what they're able to achieve. My hope is that everybody is able to access grants and further funding and support as quickly as possible.

Ms WEBB - What's the trigger for the decision to begin establishing this grant scheme? Whose decision was that?

Ms OGILVIE - The trigger for establishing our grants scheme is because we have been listening to providers and to the industry. We take great care, as an industry, to manage animal welfare. GAP in itself is a remarkable and a good thing. I understand it was Ms O'Connor who helped kickstart this.

Ms WEBB - I don't need a history lesson on GAP, thank you, Minister. The question is about the decision to establish the grant scheme and when that occurred. Was it your decision?

Ms OGILVIE - Again, these are operational matters, so I would like to ask the CEO -

Ms WEBB - Before you move on to the operational side of it, I'm asking about, just to clarify, the decision to begin establishing the grant scheme. Did that originate from you, as Minister?

Ms OGILVIE - Whose idea was it? Is that what you're asking?

Ms WEBB - Yes; and was the direction, say, provided to Tasracing to start looking into this? I understand that they would then operationalise how that looked and the development of it. I don't need more information about that at the moment. Was it your decision and did you ask Tasracing to start that process?

PUBLIC

Ms OGILVIE - My recollection, and I would have to check, is that it's an initiative that's come from Tasracing.

Ms WEBB - So not at your request?

Ms OGILVIE - There are some things that we discuss at a strategic level that I request we do, such as reform of the act, new structures, those sorts of things. This one, my recollection is that it was a Tasracing initiative and I will ask the CEO to speak to that.

Mr JENKINS - That is correct. The initiative was driven, as I think I mentioned earlier, by Dr Martin Lenz since joining the organisation back in January. So, within a matter of 8 to 12 weeks, Dr Lenz had already touted such an initiative in recognition of the fact, as I've mentioned previously, that we recognise the importance of alternative rehoming providers.

I might also add, Ms Webb, that Tasracing already provides funding to private rehomingers. For example, we fund the Greyhound Desexing Program and we are also about to extend that funding to dental work. We do provide a level of existing funding and we're looking forward to extending that.

Ms WEBB - Another question in a similar area, picking up on a discussion we had during Estimates, about an initiative that seemed to be in train about reporting more thoroughly on greyhound deaths that occurred within 14 days of receiving injuries on the track. That wasn't something that's nationally required in terms of data reporting, but it sounded very positive that there were plans with the Chief Veterinary and Animal Welfare Officer and the Director of Racing to meet to put a plan in place to collect those data and report on them.

I believe that that was going to be progressed in the near future after we had the Estimates discussion. I am looking for an update on where that has got to.

Mr HELMICH - I have had discussions with my team in relation to that aspect and a number of other reporting criteria about greyhound welfare, and I have put together a draft template in relation to that. On 15 July 2023, I will release publicly, and on the website, the first quarterly report on it. It is a similar quarterly report that is undertaken in New South Wales and Queensland, and I have discussed that in those jurisdictions. We will be using a very similar template that is used there. It will be a consistent approach. The only difference will be the reporting of the greyhounds that have died within 14 days of receiving an injury. That will be included in our reporting, but it is not included in reporting by other jurisdictions.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, it's positive to hear that's progressing. Can I check what quarter will be reported on in that data that is released on 15 July [2023]?

Mr HELMICH - It will be the March to June quarter.

CHAIR - I believe there is a response to the eight-week extension or a clarification?

Ms OGILVIE - I have that document for tabling.

CHAIR - Thank you, Minister.

Ms WILSON - We indicated that we may come back later in the hearing around the extension and whether that was negotiated in the Murrihy extension. I have advice that the Murrihy extension was negotiated and Mr Murrihy agreed to an eight-week extension. The negotiation was at arm's length. Mr Murrihy engaged with the Secretary of NRE Tasmania and the chief operating officer. This period was negotiated and deemed as a reasonable period of time for him to consider further evidence and to conduct further interviews.

CHAIR - Thank you for that clarification. My question to you, Minister, is what discussions have you had with Tasracing - and I am hoping that there will be some comment provided by Tasracing about that extension - because while there is an inquiry being undertaken, it has to have a bit of a question mark around the industry itself. I remember hearing at the time the inquiry was announced 'this will be sharp and we will get this sorted and then we just get on with the business of racing'.

What discussions have you had with Tasracing about the negative impact that might have on the racing industry, the fact that we have another eight-week extension? Then it goes to the Government for consideration; and then, finally, the interested public get to look at what the inquiry has produced. I am interested in those conversations.

Ms OGILVIE - It is important to note that what you say is entirely correct. There are multiple pathways in progress at the moment for the industry. It is industry that we all care about deeply and is very important to Tasmania.

In broad terms, we have the Murrihy inquiry, which is independent. We have the Monteith Review that is resulting in the drafting of a new bill and new structures and legislation. Then, we have the running of the industry, which continues on whilst those things are underway.

In relation to specific negotiations and comments, both with Tasracing and also the Department, as I've said, the structure is that I have regular fortnightly meetings with everybody. They are the forums within which we discuss all of these issues. On the standing items of the agenda are the Monteith Review and the legislative agenda. Underneath, you would understand, sits a structural question and negotiations between the Department and Tasracing, about how we are going to implement those changes. That is a big piece of work that is ongoing.

In relation to the potential impact of what may or may not be found by an independent review, I cannot comment on that. It is an independent investigation and what Mr Murrihy - I will get to the answer, just bear with me.

CHAIR - I just thought you might have lost my question amongst this.

Ms OGILVIE - I haven't lost your question. Your question is about the potential for negative impact to the standing of the industry by an independent report. Now, what that independent report does is actually address that issue. There is nothing that we would want more than a resolution of the allegations that have been made. And I will say these are allegations only. It is incredibly important that we undertake a process of due diligence that is independent of the industry and the regulators, and that affords natural justice to all concerned.

PUBLIC

Mr Murrihy is doing that independently. I am not directing him to do that. That is very important, and it is my absolute hope and desire that when that report is delivered there will be recommendations that I can pick up as part of our review of the bill and the new structure going forward.

In relation to conversations about keeping racing going, keeping racing strong while all of this is happening, I think it would be helpful to hear from Tasracing about their particular experience. But, Chair, we have a situation where serious allegations have been raised. As the Minister and as the Government, we have responded with an independent review. I appreciate your concerns and we will do all we can to continue to back this industry while we await the recommendations of the Murrihy review.

CHAIR - Can I take it from that there has not been a discussion with Tasracing in regard to the extension that was provided, a negotiated extension, around any negative impact on the racing industry while we continue to wait? That was my question.

Ms OGILVIE - For the eight weeks of an extension?

CHAIR - For the eight weeks, that was my question.

Ms OGILVIE - I don't believe we have had that direct conversation, but I am happy to seek some input now.

Mr PHAIR - If you do not mind, Chair -

CHAIR - As I said, I always like everyone at the table to have input.

Mr PHAIR - I think it is entirely appropriate that we haven't had that conversation about the extension. We were informed that there was an extension that had been granted of the two months. We are running the business of racing, as we would do 12 months of the year. That does not stop. As far as talking to us about an extension and the impact on racing of that extension, it is entirely appropriately the Minister has not spoken to us about that.

CHAIR - There is no view from Tasracing whether it could have a negative impact or not?

Mr JENKINS - We are just getting on with racing, simple as that. And our key metrics are positive across the board. We recognise the serious nature of the allegations. We [will] welcome the findings of Mr Murrihy's review. But, in the meantime, my job is to run racing, grow it, run it as best I possibly can, engage our participants and put on the best sport possible. That's what we are doing.

CHAIR - Thank you. We're just here to ask the questions. My next question, then, is around the reform. You just indicated that any potential recommendations that may come from the Murrihy report will be put into the new structures, the review of the act. What discussions have been on foot with Tasracing? You named up Tasracing as being part of this reform package.

Ms OGILVIE - Absolutely. As I have said and I will reiterate, we have regular fortnightly meetings and all of this is on the agenda.

CHAIR - The new structures would flow from the Monteith report as well?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes. We can call it the Monteith report but we have actually reached a new step in the process, which is the drafting of the bill. The Committee would have received the drafting instructions and I think it is really important to show with complete transparency that that is where we are headed with the model. The new bill will be a very contemporary approach to both integrity and animal welfare, bringing the RSPCA in more funding, looking at what we do with the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) and rehoming, and the TasRIC model being a completely independent complaints management process.

As you would appreciate, that is complex work; it is a complex, big, broad industry with multiple people, three codes, many clubs, many different organisations, small businesses through to large businesses, thoroughbreds with lots of money through to the lovely greyhounds with people who are really at the grassroots. It's a big, broad -

CHAIR - Who punch above their weight, by the way.

Ms OGILVIE - I love them. A big, broad industry where there is something for everybody. It's statewide, it delivers \$185 million per annum to our regional economies, in particular. And there is no greater supporter of the industry than this Government. We are working to make sure that we deliver the best industry possible.

Having said that, I think we can talk through some of the process work that is going on in relation to the Department, because it affects them, and also Tasracing about how we do this restructure. I might start with the Department.

CHAIR - Before we do, is it somewhat premature then, if we're waiting for the Murrihy review report to be released? Or will you add that in at a later time?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm a big believer in doing things in parallel. We can parallel-process things. Tasracing is running the industry, racing is still happening, we are working on reform, that project is ongoing. The Murrihy report is happening to deal with specific allegations, serious ones, but allegations nonetheless. Wherever the good ideas and the reforms and suggestions for improvement come from, we are alive to that. I think it's important to recognise, too, that once our bill is ready for consultation it will be made publicly available and I hope to get information, ideas and feedback from the broader public.

CHAIR - Do you have a time frame in mind?

Ms OGILVIE - I would like Deidre to jump in on that because we do.

Ms WILSON - In terms of the process of engagement, if it's okay with you, I'll start with that. ORI Tasmania is working collaboratively with key stakeholders to progress the review under two dedicated workstreams: regulatory reform and people in transition. We have started targeted consultation on key provisions of the bill. I've met with Jan Davis of the TFGA³ to - I mean RSPCA.

³ Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association

PUBLIC

CHAIR - It's been quite a while since Jan was at the TFGA.

Ms WILSON - That was when I first met Jan so go there every time.

Both workstreams are well resourced by NRE Tasmania, with project oversight and governance provided by a review of the Racing Regulation Act steering Committee. Importantly, that steering Committee involves the Director of Racing and the CEO of Tasracing, both of whom are here -

CHAIR - And the Chair of Tasracing?

Ms WILSON - The steering Committee is at the CEO operational level, but we are engaging and will continue to engage with the Chair and board.

CHAIR - I hope so.

Ms WILSON - In terms of the timing for the bill, we are well progressed with the bill, and we are hopeful of tabling it in October, noting that we will be releasing the bill for public consultation to allow for feedback on the bill.

CHAIR - Aspirational, Minister? I've been around a while, so I know how long it takes and how it works here.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, it's underway.

Ms WEBB - You tabled in October that there's a consultation process on a draft that will be occurring before that. How does the time line work for the Murrihy review to complete, potentially feed into - is it expected that the bill might be affected by the outcomes of the Murrihy review?

Ms OGILVIE - I will just reiterate that things are happening in parallel. I am certainly not saying that we are waiting for the report before we progress this legislative agenda. We have been on this for two years.

Ms WEBB - I understand that, Minister, thank you, and of course that's important. But is it likely that a draft bill will go out for comment before the Murrihy review is completed now that the time frame is bumped out?

Ms OGILVIE - I will just ask Deidre Wilson about the time line.

Ms WILSON - The consultation period time for the bill will present an opportunity for the Murrihy report to feed in if appropriate. We believe that the timing will line up. The Monteith review was extensive and involved extensive consultation, public comment, consideration of best practice in other jurisdictions. We consider the broad framework based on the Monteith review and the Government's response is a very sound model for integrity and animal welfare management in the racing industry. The public consultation period with the bill will enable us to test that model with stakeholders and provide final advice to the Government before the tabling of the bill.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Thank you. The point I am trying to clarify specifically is, Minister, granted that the bill is largely based on a model that is drawn from recommendations in the Monteith review, but the Murrihy report and recommendations may well be important context for those who will be engaging in the public consultation, will the Murrihy review be out before the consultation process occurs so that people who are being involved in that consultation can also have that in mind and have that, potentially, as important information for the feedback they provide?

Ms OGILVIE - Your question is, will everybody have a copy of the Murrihy review before they get an opportunity to respond to the consultation draft of the bill?

Ms WEBB - That is right. Will the Murrihy review be public and therefore available for reference when people provide consultation input?

Ms OGILVIE - That makes sense. It's slightly different from saying that we need the Murrihy review before we progress the drafting of the bill.

Ms WEBB - I am not suggesting that I haven't suggested that.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I understand now.

Ms WILSON - Through you, Minister, we have a time line of release of the Murrihy review. We are intending to release a draft bill. We will be undertaking public consultation through that period. It is important to note that the Murrihy report does go to Government. We have indicated that the report will need to take into account if there are any sensitive personal matters being considered and whether there is anything subject to investigation. Regarding broad recommendations that come from that, the agency will be able to factor those into a consideration at that time when the draft bill is released.

Ms WEBB - I appreciate that the agency will be able to do that because it will have access to the Murrihy review. I'm not hearing confirmation that the Murrihy review will be publicly available when consultation is occurring on the draft bill. People who might wish to engage in that consultation will not have the benefit of being able to see the Murrihy review and the recommendations in it. I have asked it clearly a number of times now. An opaque answer has been given a few times. That indicates to me that the answer isn't that we can be confident that that will be the case. Can you clarify it, one way or the other, Minister?

Ms OGILVIE - I cannot clarify it. The reason is that Mr Murrihy is conducting a completely independent review. I do not control his scope, the work he is doing or his time frames. We have an existing legislative agenda underway with law reform. It is my hope that it would be available and we would work towards that. If we reach a situation where the Murrihy report is not available and we're looking at public consultation, we will have to look at that. I hear you on this. People do want to see that and make sure that they have the full picture before responding. I'm happy to take that on board as a key concern.

Regarding the public consultation period, we have a period of time in mind so that people have a good opportunity to review the bill and to provide recommendations and input to that. If it were necessary to extend that, that is open to us. My preference is to try to push things through, but not at the expense of transparency.

Ms WEBB - No, that's right, and it is within your -

Ms OGILVIE - We could add some more detail to the time line.

Ms WILSON - I was a little bit uncertain about our time frame for the release of the draft bill. I now have that information. The draft bill will be released around mid-August until mid-September. We'll make all efforts to make the recommendations from the Murrihy inquiry available in that time period so they align. As the Minister has said, the Murrihy investigation is independent. The report will go to Government, but we have an intent for this to align.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. While the independent review isn't within your control timeframe-wise, when you consult is, and when you release the report publicly, having received it and then taken whatever period of time you take to consider it, before releasing it publicly. That's in your control.

Mid-August to mid-September sounds like a one-month period of consultation. Minister, you've just said you'd give a generous time of consultation. One month isn't generous. A six-week consultation period would be the minimum to be considered reasonable and generous. Are you thinking that more -

Ms OGILVIE - I haven't had any direct feedback on that, but I'm certainly happy to take it on board if you think it needs to be a longer period.

Ms WEBB - Especially if the report is not available.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm really wanting to try to get a bill landed. It will be an improvement to industry. I am keen to make sure that we, not at the expense of conversation, minimise any potential delay because of that. There's been a two-year program of activity to get us to this point where we can implement all the things that I know we want. We want a contemporary industry. We want the new bill. We want the new structures. That work is ongoing.

There will be some management required about time frames, but I'm not wedded to a particular time frame for consultation. I want people to have the opportunity to have a good amount of time to review it. That's something I'll work with the Department on. I'm always open to conversations on that.

Mr WILLIE - I want to go back to BOTRA. It sounds like you've had some engagement, Minister, since they moved a motion of no confidence in the Director of Racing. I appreciate your providing your diaries of race meets and people you'd met with. You previously had to take on notice questions about whether you'd met with the Burnie and Launceston harness racing clubs.

Ms OGILVIE - I have a list for you if you'd like that.

Mr WILLIE - Is that the list you provided?

Ms OGILVIE - These are the events I've been at; is that what you're asking?

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - No, I'm asking about the Burnie and Launceston harness racing clubs. You previously had to take it on notice whether you attended any meets there or engaged with them.

Ms OGILVIE - Huge diary.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. You later came back to the Committee and said you hadn't. Since that revelation, have you engaged with those clubs at all?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm not sure I'd characterise anything as a revelation, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - You're the Racing Minister and you haven't engaged with some stakeholders?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Willie, I have regular meetings with organisations that represent all of these clubs. I do my best to get around them. You've seen my diary. It's a huge volume of activity. I have some notes here that I would like to share with you - in particular, the frequency of those representative meetings and with whom I meet.

Next-generation meetings - I had one recently, which is an important group of people. I meet with them quarterly; RSPCA, quarterly. Obviously, there's other information and telephone calls and as matters arise, it's not just limited to that. I meet with BOTRA quarterly. That's a new arrangement, because I think there was a gap there. I've listened. We have a meeting with them coming up. Mr Rattray is interstate and will be home soon. The Thoroughbred Advisory Network I meet with every six months. Greyhound Australasia, we meet on an ad-hoc basis. The Greyhound Rehabilitation Enthusiasts Association, again, on an ad-hoc basis. Tasmanian Turf Club, as and when they need to. Of course, we're always on the phone. Animal welfare, racing animals, the Hobart Greyhound Racing Club - we meet with them from time to time. We have had some engagement with the CPSU⁴ in relation to the new structures that we are putting in place and with the TRAB⁵ Chair, Ms Cuthbertson.

So, that is how I engage broadly across the racing sector. I have to do it that way, Mr Willie, because it is such a huge business. As you are aware, getting to every single race meet and every single club is difficult. I am always available for phone calls and other conversations. I think Ms Armitage and I spoke a little bit about the Launceston Club in relation to funding issues. I have those sorts of things coming through to me all the time.

If I haven't been able to get to a club - and I am very happy to go, but with five portfolios and the amount of work in the diary for each of them, you would see here just with Racing, it can be difficult.

Mr WILLIE - Are you confirming that you haven't engaged with Burnie and Launceston harness racing clubs?

Ms OGILVIE - I have engaged with BOTRA as the representative agent or group for harness racing.

⁴ Community and Public Sector Union Tasmania

⁵ Tasmania Racing Appeal Board

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - You're confirming that you haven't engaged with Burnie and Launceston harness racing clubs?

Ms OGILVIE - I've answered the question.

Mr WILLIE - Where I am going with this, Minister, is that the President of the Launceston Harness Racing Club, Mr Chester Bullock, was featured in the ABC story that led to the Murrhy inquiry. As Minister, wouldn't you be interested in what he has to say?

Ms OGILVIE - I do know Chester.

CHAIR - Everyone knows Chester.

Ms OGILVIE - I don't think it is appropriate to go into details of personal conversations. I will say that I do know Chester and I have had a very nice dinner, sitting next to Chester at the Launceston Club. He's got my number, I have his and we talk from time to time.

Mr WILLIE - You haven't attended any races at Launceston or Burnie Harness Racing?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Willie, you have my diary, which shows all the races I've attended. I have boiled it down to a smaller snapshot for you of the particular races that I have attended, which I am very happy to give you. But, as I said, I try to get around all the races as much as I can. I am one person, one Minister, with five portfolios, and I do business by phone when I need to.

Mr WILLIE - You've been a Minister for some time now.

Ms OGILVIE - Is that a question?

Mr WILLIE - No, I am pointing out that you have had time.

Ms OGILVIE - The Harness Awards in Launceston was a great night.

Mr VALENTINE - I want to go back to the Greyhound Adoption Program.

CHAIR - I think you might be going to adopt one.

Mr VALENTINE - No, I'm not going to adopt one. That would mean that I wouldn't be able to get away so often. I have had dogs in the past and I appreciate them.

Ms OGILVIE - Have you had greyhounds?

Mr VALENTINE - No, border collie, dalmatian crosses, but that's beside the point.

What I am interested in is that you have a relationship with the RSPCA in the memorandum of understanding. I am interested to know what sort of communication or consultation there has been in relation to the grants program that is being considered for implementation.

PUBLIC

Mr JENKINS - Through you, Minister, and thank you for the question. We are meeting with the RSPCA CEO next week and that is an agenda item.

Ms WEBB - The grants program is an area I wanted to follow up from our discussion earlier. Is the RSPCA the only stakeholder that you're consulting with in terms of the development of the grants program?

Mr JENKINS - No, I would expect not. As I mentioned earlier, we are in a preliminary development stage, but I would logically suspect that we will consult more broadly with a number of relevant stakeholders, inclusive of the RSPCA.

Ms WEBB - At this stage, do you have an idea about what the quantum of funding is or the parcel that you have to make available to the grants program?

Mr JENKINS - No, we haven't quarantined or carved off the specific amounts of funding as yet. That will be part of the consultation process. We are working within the overall animal welfare budget in excess of \$1 million. We are satisfied that we have sufficient funds available to us that we can redirect toward the grants program. We feel that, rather than make a commitment to a specific amount of funding at this point in time, all that has been informed by what the options are out there in the private rehoming space and then that can, in turn, inform the likely requirement for budget. So, it is going to depend on how many organisations want to participate, how many can meet the criteria that we establish behind the grants, and we will make funding decisions accordingly.

Ms WEBB - In terms of that, are you going through a formalised assessment process currently or an identification process about the financial support needs that are there, amongst the private providers? Is a formal assessment of that need being undertaken?

Mr JENKINS - That will be, but that is not a specific part of the development as yet. It is likely that it will be, but I would suspect that through the expressions of interest process, we will be seeking information from interested parties, to inform our likely funding.

Ms WEBB - I think you mentioned Tasracing has \$1 million, or something in the vicinity, available for animal welfare funding. Given that you have said that this grants program is going to come from that same parcel, looking ahead, can you provide us with a breakdown of how, say, in the previous financial year, that funding was allocated? And then, what that might look like going forward? If you are then reallocating some of that to the grants program, what else will potentially be funded less across that parcel of money? Are you able to give us that information?

CHAIR - Or is the point of consumption tax increasing so much that you have so much spare cash?

Ms OGILVIE - We will take that as a promise.

CHAIR - No, it is a question.

Ms OGILVIE - We are still with this one.

Ms WEBB - I am interested to know how the animal welfare funding, prior to this grant scheme being in place, that has previously been allocated and spent, knowing that it will change since the grants will be coming out of it, too.

Mr JENKINS - Annual report figures are available. There is a significant investment and funding allocation per year into the Greyhound Adoption Program, our Off the Track program and our related partnerships and sponsorships. We will be intending to develop a more detailed animal welfare strategy, inclusive of a funding plan. I am working through that process at present with our Chief Veterinary and Animal Welfare Officer. So, as part of that exercise, we will be able to make a firm set of decisions around where funding is allocated.

It would be fair to say that over the past 12 months, while we have been going through the process of appointing a Chief Veterinary and Animal Welfare Officer and wanting to have a sound strategy and programmatic sequencing to ensure the best value from every animal welfare dollar that is spent, we do have some funding that is sitting available for new and incremental programs. The RAW grants would fall squarely into that category. What I am saying is that I do not feel that we are at any risk of needing to rob Peter to pay Paul in funding the grants under our existing animal welfare funding envelope.

Ms WEBB - To better understand that, I am interested to have a breakdown of the animal welfare money allocated in your budget. How is it being spent? How is that being divvied up, because I do not think that level of detail is available in the annual report. Correct me if I am wrong, but I do not think the breakdown of the animal welfare bucket is available. Perhaps you can provide it to us later if it is not readily available.

Ms OGILVIE - I just wanted to clarify. The phrase 'animal welfare' within the budget could contain a number of line items. Specifically, I am thinking about the RSPCA money. We have given them some additional funds.

Ms WEBB - When I say 'budget', I mean the Tasracing budget, not the annual Budget.

Ms OGILVIE - Okay. I thought I would clarify what the headline items are.

Ms WEBB - I would like a full breakdown.

Mr JENKINS - That breakdown is not included. We are very happy to take that notice and provide it.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, we will write to you about that.

CHAIR - We already have that in train; you will probably receive that this afternoon.

Ms OGILVIE - Fantastic, happy to help.

Mr VALENTINE - What level of consultation has occurred with RSPCA in relation to the draft bill you are talking about? Could you walk us through that and how keenly they have been involved?

Ms OGILVIE - I am very aware as a Minister at a policy level the RSPCA does an incredible job with the resources they have. What we are asking the RSPCA to do and what

they are coming on the journey with us is having a larger and more defined role under the new act which will include additional powers. From my perspective, it would be unfair to ask the RSPCA to do more without additional funds and we have announced some additional funds already. As we implement the structural changes, the RSPCA is at the table for that.

As I have said and noted here, and you have seen in my diary, I meet regularly with Jan Davis from the RSPCA. We have each other's phone numbers and speak regularly. I have made a commitment to her and she has been great and is at the table with us as part of the review process. The Department obviously has a Committee working with those stakeholders at that operational layer, but at a political layer I also have my own conversations underway. I think it would be helpful to understand a bit more about that operational layer. We will ask the deputy secretary to add a little bit of information, if you would not mind.

Ms WILSON - As I indicated earlier, I have met with the CEO of the RSPCA and with our drafting instructor, who is helping instruct the Office of Parliamentary Counsel internal to NRE Tasmania. I met with her and then there was a follow-up meeting with the drafting instructor. We intend to go back to her because we have advanced the drafting of the bill. Our attempt would be to engage them in the near future about where we are with the drafting of the bill, because there are nuances and that happens when drafting is progressed. We do see them along with our other stakeholders as a critical entity we need to engage with, as the Minister has said, because there will be a policy role under the act for the RSPCA.

Mr VALENTINE - What level of embedding of the RSPCA is there likely to be in the bill?

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly a broader and more rigorous role. We want to make sure, as I am always very concerned with using our resources wisely if we have that perspective on what we do, then I must afford that to the RSPCA also. I understand they do their work really effectively and efficiently, but the funding issue does matter and we need to resource them to take up what will be a broader role within the act.

I think the deputy secretary has been having some of those conversations and it might be helpful if you add some more.

Ms WILSON - There has also been consultation between Biosecurity Tasmania, the Office of Racing Integrity and the RSPCA on the \$200,000 funding to help them set up for, hopefully, the passing of the bill and the new model. We have continued to engage in that process. In terms of the bill and the drafting instructions, we are looking to embed in the bill a Committee which will provide animal welfare advice to the new TasRIC to inform things like animal welfare standards and integrity standards. It is an integral part of the new model.

Mr VALENTINE - One thing that niggles me in terms of the RSPCA's involvement is that, clearly, they are very concerned as they are a lobby group on occasions and yet we are going to engage them in the legislation. How do you propose seeing that being effectively managed? If you are funding them, they do not wish to feel beholden to the Government because they are getting money and fettered in their capacity as a lobbyist.

Ms WEBB - They advocate rather than lobby.

Mr VALENTINE - Well, advocate. They might lobby, too.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - They have got the right person at the head to do both.

Mr VALENTINE - Clearly, you will still see them as an effective advocate and take on board what their concerns are. If they end up being funded, they have still have a role of advocating.

Ms OGILVIE - It is a balance many organisations have to strike between having a voice for advocacy and - those who will have new regulatory functions within the racing sector. When it comes to confidence, we could not do better than have the RSPCA at the table. It is really important. They work with us already visiting sites, Tasracing works with them, I work with them. They are the premium and best-known group for animal welfare.

Mr VALENTINE - Absolutely. I am not questioning their involvement, it is very good. I am saying as Minister -

Ms OGILVIE - Good, I am glad to have them.

Mr VALENTINE - There is no way you would be expecting them in any way to fetter their concern for animals and coming to you with concerns.

Ms OGILVIE - No, of course not and I currently believe that. I would no more try to direct the RSPCA than any other regulatory organisation. We are very grateful to the RSPCA for the work they do. I am an animal lover and have spoken at length about people who bring forward concerns about animal welfare. I always encourage them to go directly to the RSPCA. I hope the RSPCA, as part of our new organisation, will feel they can still be bold and strong about animal welfare, bring forward recommendations, help guide the future and to make sure we give everybody a true picture of the racing sector, how much people love their animals in this industry and what great care is taken by so many people who are part of this important industry. The RSPCA is an integral part of that. I have a great love of the work they do and I donate when they ring up -

Mr VALENTINE - Everybody respects the work they do, there is no question over that. I was just wanting to make sure.

Ms OGILVIE - It is a philosophical question you are asking. There will not be any fetters placed on them in that regard. I have engaged with them very early in the process of negotiation of the potential bill and their role. The resourcing issue is a real one and is something we are certainly very alive to. Whatever I can do and whatever our Government can do to make sure animals are well cared for, looked after, managed and protected - including with the RSPCA's input - but all of the other elements of what we do as part of racing integrity and animal welfare, I will do.

Mr VALENTINE - You will obviously have proper service agreements in place to be able to manage that relationship.

Ms OGILVIE - That is right. That is a good way of looking at it, but not only that, in relation to having them involved in the drafting of the bill we could not get more integrated than that.

Ms WEBB - The \$200,000 recently provided to the RSPCA for various things is not operational funding, is it? It is not core funding?

Ms OGILVIE - What do you mean by that?

Ms WEBB - Core funding? It is for particular activities.

Ms OGILVIE - Is it project-based funding? Is that what you are asking?

Ms WEBB - Does the Government fund the RSPCA in a core sense, operationally?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes.

Ms WEBB - And when you expect them to undertake, potentially, more functions under the new legislation, are you going to be increasing not just potentially project funding or task funding, but core funding to the organisation?

Ms OGILVIE - It is a good question. The RSPCA has a number of functions that sit across a number of portfolios and not just mine, so it is a larger question, but it does sit with the Department. The Department secretary would be able to give you a proper picture. Again, you are underscoring what I have said on when we change the scope and implement new models which might require more resourcing, I'm very alive to that, as I know the Department is as well.

Ms WILSON - I'll come at this from the sense of core funding first. The core funding for the RSPCA sits under another Minister's portfolio - Ms Palmer's - but I can answer the question that the core funding is for RSPCA inspectorate services and it's \$550,000 per annum. That funds the core inspectorate services.

The \$200,000 funding was for readiness for the new integrity model. It goes towards access to an investigation management system for the RSPCA animal welfare officers, to align with the Office of Racing Integrity and Biosecurity Tasmania. It was support for modernising the memorandum of understanding between the RSPCA and other relevant animal welfare regulators in Tasmania - that is what the member was going to earlier, how do we make sure we have good, strong understanding about relationships between parties. We have an existing MOU⁶ between the RSPCA and Biosecurity Tasmania which has stood the test of time. We regularly review it and we are in the process of reviewing it now.

Another arm of that funding was analysis by the RSPCA of options for lifetime traceability for greyhounds and adoption processes and linkages to local government. It was to look at options; it wouldn't necessarily be about implementing something like that, because that's a far greater exercise. That's what that project funding was for.

In terms of the role of the RSPCA under the new integrity model, obviously, we're still engaging with them. There are two aspects. One is the policy role in terms of the new Committee. The RSPCA already has a representative role on the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee for example, so there's a well-understood model about how that operates and how we support them in those roles -

⁶ memorandum of understanding

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Undertaking those sorts of roles - are we funding them to do that? For example, with the advocacy - when they're involved with you, discussing development of legislation, or when they sit on a body to provide their expert input into an advisory group, those functions take resources: people, time and more. Is that an element that's funded, and if so, how is that funded? Given that these are in the racing area, is it funded through the racing area? Or is it part of the funding they receive through the other portfolio area?

Ms WILSON - We have various boards and Committees and the remuneration depends on the particular board and Committee and the legislative framework that's set up. In the case of the welfare advisory Committee, many members are state servants and don't get any remuneration. For others -

CHAIR - I think they're being paid well.

Ms WEBB - I'm not interested in individual remuneration.

Ms WILSON - Apologies. More often than not, expenses are covered. In the case of what we're developing with this new bill, we've not got to that level of detail. But, as I say, there are standard practices across boards and Committees where remuneration of expenses to participate -

Ms WEBB - That's not what I'm asking. For example, whoever the RSPCA sends to sit on that Committee, do you pay their wage for that period of time, as an expense?

Ms OGILVIE - Like a sitting fee?

Ms WEBB - The RSPCA has to provide someone to go and sit on that Committee. 'Expenses being covered' might mean the petrol it took for them to get there; or does it mean the value of that person for the half-day it took to go and sit in that meeting? I'm pointing it out because my background is in the NGO sector. You're generally expected to do far more than you are funded to do from Government because you have to be involved in consultations, you have to go and sit on that Committee or that group. Those things, while expected by Government, aren't generally funded by Government. I'm trying to identify whether that's the case here.

Ms OGILVIE - The Deputy Secretary has advised me that sometimes there are sitting fees and sometimes there are sitting fees and travel expenses.

Ms WEBB - I'm asking about the RSPCA, in this instance.

Ms OGILVIE - That's what I'm saying.

Ms WILSON - I'm indicating that the bill is being drafted. The model that will be put in place for the Committee will be determined and guided by the bill, but the standard practice across boards and Committees is for a sitting fee with remuneration for out-of-pocket expenses; sometimes it's out-of-pocket expenses. That's the standard practice.

Ms WEBB - I'm sorry, it's awkward that I have to ask questions repeatedly to get a specific answer to the thing I'm asking. I'm not looking ahead to when the new legislation comes in. Currently, RSPCA sit on an advisory group: correct? My question is, is that funded?

PUBLIC

And I would like you to describe to me whether it is. I don't need to know the general approach about sometimes sitting fees, sometimes reimbursement. I want to know, is the position the RSPCA holds on that advisory group funded?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me see if I can get that information for you.

Ms WILSON - I'll go back a step. There are statutory roles for people appointed under the conditions of the act. In terms of funding of particular entities, we provide core funding to the RSPCA of \$550,000 per annum, which is for the inspectorate services. It is not for their advocacy services.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. That's clarified they're not funded by the Government for their advocacy services, such as sitting on that advisory group: that's not funded?

Ms WILSON - The Animal Welfare Advisory Group? Yes, that is correct.

CHAIR - We have time for probably two more questions.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, do you think whistleblowers who come forward with allegations and speak out should be financially worse off?

Ms OGILVIE - No.

Mr WILLIE - Do you think Ms Janet Ainscow has been treated fairly?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me see if I can get some information in relation to her matter. I know we did talk at some length about this. I think this is an HR issue. We'll start with the Deputy Secretary.

Ms WILSON - HR matters are a matter for the agency. In previous hearings, and for the purposes here, the secretary has indicated that he is strongly of the view that people will be treated fairly in our agency, and there will be no repercussions for when people raise a particular issue of concern.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, are you aware that, since he last appeared before this Committee, the Secretary has sent Ms Ainscow an email saying her behaviour may constitute serious or wilful misconduct, and/or a breach of the racing steward code of conduct, and that appropriate action will be taken?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll ask the Deputy Secretary to respond to that.

Ms WILSON - That's an employment matter. We cannot provide any comment on here: it would be inappropriate to do so.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, you can see how this looks. You have someone who has come forward with allegations and has spoken out, and they are now financially worse off and they're being sent emails like this from the head of your Department.

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Willie, when it comes to employment matters, and we spoke about this one at some length previously -

Mr WILLIE - And there is some new information I'm bringing forward here.

Ms OGILVIE - It's not appropriate for us to delve into individual employment matters. You have received a response from the Department. That's it.

Mr WILLIE - You're satisfied with how Ms Ainscow has been treated?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Willie, as I have said, individual employment matters are not ones that we traverse here. I have been very careful and clear about this right through all of these sessions. We have spoken on this matter recently, and it would not be appropriate for me to delve into specific HR matters.

Mr WILLIE - Under our system, Minister, the responsibility stops with you. Are you comfortable that a whistleblower has come forward with allegations, has spoken out, is now financially worse off, and has been sent emails like the one I described from the head of your Department?

Ms OGILVIE - HR matters are matters for the Department. It's not something that is not appropriate for me to traverse in this section.

CHAIR - Thank you, Minister. The final question, and it'll be from me today. Are you confident that the functions that are being carried out by the Office of Racing Integrity are adequate to underpin the integrity of the racing industry until the new model is put in place? Are you comfortable that is happening right now and into the future? The new model or new structure that you talk about could be some time away. I want to know whether you are confident in that.

Ms OGILVIE - It's fair to say it is some time away. It is a large restructure - both the bill coming forward and structural changes. The Office of Racing Integrity is a core service that provides the integrity and also work that underpins race days. What I see as I get about in racing circles and as I attend events is that racing continues, racing is well run, Tasracing does an excellent job and our Department does an excellent job.

We have had allegations raised; they are being addressed through an independent inquiry and that is the appropriate course of action. We are bringing forward a bill that is the biggest reform in racing in 20 years, and I have been leading and driving that. I am absolutely certain that we can improve what we do in racing, from an integrity, animal welfare and probity perspective, and we are working across all of those fronts.

ORI does the job that we ask them to do. From my perspective, they are doing an excellent job. Now, I have been very open and very transparent: we can all do better. I want to see Tasmanian racing have the most contemporary model for its running and management that we can have. I have reached out, and we have reached out, across the nation to look at other jurisdictions and what they do. If we are able to deliver this reform, we will have the most contemporary and best-run racing sector in the nation.

In the meantime, as I am out and about I see race day fun still being had everywhere we go.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - So, the answer is yes, you are confident?

Ms OGILVIE - I am confident that ORI will be able to do what they need to do whilst we are implementing reforms.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. On behalf of the Committee, Minister, I acknowledge and appreciate your time again today for this Committee, and all those who have provided input and have assisted in putting that together. It is very much appreciated. The Committee will continue its deliberations.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

The Committee adjourned at 11:03 am.
