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THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING IN TASMANIA MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON FRIDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2015

Dr ELIOT FORBES, CEO, TASRACING, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Ms O'Connor) - Dr Forbes, before giving your evidence I would like to ask whether you received the guide sent to you by the committee secretary?

Dr FORBES - Yes.

CHAIR - There are a few things I need to say for process. A committee is a proceeding in Parliament, which means it receives the protection of privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a committee to speak with complete freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of these proceedings.

This is a public hearing. There are members of the public and journalists present today and this means your evidence may be reported. It is important that, should you wish all or part of your evidence to be heard in private, you need to make this request and give an explanation prior to giving the relevant evidence.

Dr Forbes there is a couple of reasons we have asked you back. I will give you a broad overview of some of the subjects we would like to touch on today. One is the future of the GAP and the potential connection with the RSPCA. We would like to follow up on the issue of positive drug swabs; some data has been provided to us by the Office of Racing Integrity. There is apparent conflict between local and national rules that apply the greyhound racing industry. These are issues that have come up in evidence before the inquiry so we are following them up with you.

We will start with the future of the GAP. We have had some evidence presented to us that there is a potential relationship developing between Tasracing and the GAP and the RSPCA. We would like to know what that might mean for the GAP and how far progressed it is.

Ms RATTRAY - How it was arrived at, the new direction - I am interested in that too, Chair.

Dr FORBES - I have a few opening statements because it has been some time and a lot has happened over the course of the year.

Following the *Four Corners* program earlier in the year, the industry has faced a lot of scrutiny, both nationally and locally. I point out that the vast majority of greyhound participants are ethical, law-abiding citizens and they treat their dogs and their animals with the utmost respect and dignity.

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The *Four Corners* program triggered a cascade of events across the eastern seaboard states and that saw the removal or the resignation of chairmen, boards and CEOs of those three state where live baiting was detected. State controlling bodies and GA reacted swiftly to immediately strengthen the rules across a number of welfare dimensions and completely reassessed their resource levels and approaches to greyhound integrity. From 30 April, national rules were introduced that specifically defined types of lures, and offences relating to lures and baiting included mandatory disqualification for 10 years for breach of the rules.

The Australian Greyhound industry is also sensitive to the concerns of the community on the issue of greyhound euthanasia and has accepted responsibility for solving the problem. Industry change as part of a significant program of reform has already begun. We hope the community believes that the industry deserves an opportunity to rebuild trust.

The industry accepts that nationally too many greyhounds are euthanized every year and not enough is being done to combat the problem of over-breeding. The survival of this industry depends on it meeting community expectations on this and other welfare dimensions. The industry has been on a path to reform for more than a year. Specifically this means reducing the number of greyhounds bred, re-homing more greyhounds after their racing career, and reducing the number of greyhounds euthanized.

GAP Tasmania increased the number of adoptions last year by 80 per cent. Over the past six months the industry has reduced restricted breeding to three litters per breeding female; restricted the breeding of female greyhounds to under eight years of age; restricted breeding so that a breeding female cannot breed more than two litters over any 18-month period; registered all breeding females to better attract the breeding stage of the lifecycle; instigated mandatory training programs for all participants; and there has been a grading review which has opened up new opportunities for greyhounds of all abilities.

The GA board, to ensure that an evidence-based approach to decision-making is adhered to, has commissioned a major project from an independent consultant to model major reform decisions and the impact that these will have on national industry sustainability. This work will establish the flow of greyhounds entering and exiting the industry to gain an understanding of the number of greyhounds which are euthanized and at which stage of the lifecycle. KPMG was selected as the successful tenderer in early November, and this work has now commenced.

GA has led and promoted a new industry vision and approved a set of values that put animal welfare at the centre of everything we do. However, it is abundantly clear that greyhound owners must take lifelong responsibility for their dogs, whether they race or not, in order to meet community expectations. There remains much work to do, both nationally and locally. However, we have acknowledged these challenges. We have set our vision. We have instigated change and we are working hard to genuinely reform industry practices and culture.

CHAIR - Thank you. In your opening statement you have talked about GAP rehoming up to 80 per cent more greyhounds than previously. What sort of numbers then are we looking at if there has been an increase of 80 per cent? Roughly how many greyhounds have been homed in the last year?

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Dr FORBES - I trust the committee received our letter where we outlined that we had rehomed 63 in FY15, which is an increase of about 80 per cent. We had also indicated that we had allocated and increased the level of funding for GAP in the current year. This has been put towards increasing the human resource levels for the GAP. We have reviewed the boarding rates that we paid the GAP coordinator. We have purchased a dedicated vehicle and had that customised to transport greyhounds. We have also been, through talking to other states and their approaches, exploring a number of ideas, both on the supply and the demand side. In order to increase the number of greyhound adoptions it is important that you can supply an increased number of dogs and that you can also home those dogs with homes. That is what I call the demand side.

CHAIR - When you talk about an increased number of dogs, there is obviously no shortage of greyhounds that are surplus to requirements. So you are talking about the mechanics of making sure that the dogs that are surplus find their way into the GAP. Is that right? Rather than increasing the number of dogs?

Dr FORBES - Correct. Of the existing population of dogs, increasing the supply of dogs who are ready for adoption.

CHAIR - Okay.

Dr FORBES - When dogs finish their racing career, then they enter the GAP and they undertake a series of tests which we detailed in our submission last time. It takes about six weeks. Then at the end of that process of course it is determined whether they are ready for adoption. That is what I am referring to.

CHAIR - Do you think there is a wide endorsement within the industry, trainers and owners of the aims of the GAP and a desire to be part of it and to give greyhounds to the program in Tasmania?

Dr FORBES - There is certainly a greater level of awareness now that greyhound owners need to take responsibility for their dogs. There is a diversity of layers of engagement with that. Some take a very responsible view and others probably feel that because the live baiting issues were interstate it was not a local issue. However, as we have gone through this process, our mandate has been very clear as to raise the awareness to responsibly re-home their dogs when they have finished their career. There is a diversity of views, and unless everybody across the industry embraces that need for change, it will continue to be a challenge.

Mr GAFFNEY - Can we go back to the percentages? There were 63 in the last 12 months. How long has the GAP been going?

Dr FORBES - The GAP, in some form, has been going for some time. It started before my time originally as a volunteer program. When Tasracing was put in place in 2009, it was given the responsibility for the GAP, so at that stage it moved from a volunteer basis to being under the wing of Tasracing.

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Mr GAFFNEY - You provided \$118 000 in the last financial year for the 63 dogs, and that is an 80 per cent increase. Help me with my maths there. How many did you do in the financial year before that?

Dr FORBES - It was 35.

Mr GAFFNEY - How much funding did you allocate for the housing of 35 dogs?

Dr FORBES - I don't have that number in front of me. It was something in the order of about \$80 000, I think.

Mr GAFFNEY - So for \$80 000 you rehoused 35 dogs and in the last financial year you did 63 for \$118 000. Have you rehoused more dogs since the program went to air - when the greyhound community was under greater scrutiny - than you did in the six months previous to that? I am concerned there has been an increase of 80 per cent, which is a great number, but I am also concerned that has not just come about because of a reaction from the greyhound industry or Tasracing to make certain the money is being better spent or is reflected in the numbers. I am interested in that.

Dr FORBES - We report by quarter.

Mr GAFFNEY - So in the first six month of the last financial year, how many greyhounds?

Dr FORBES - In this quarter of the year just gone, we have done 12. In the same quarter last year, we had done 14. That is before the event.

Mr GAFFNEY - It has been suggested to us that for that number of dogs that is not good value for money. There are other organisation out there that suggest they rehouse more dogs for no financial assistance. Has the organisation looked at other means outside of its own GAP where you could get more greyhounds rehoused?

CHAIR - If you do the sums for the 63 that have been rehoused for \$118 000, it is just under \$2 000 a dog.

Dr FORBES - There is a very important delineation between what the GAP does and what a lot of charities might do. The first thing is the temperament testing, ensuring the dogs are suited to be rehoused as pets.

CHAIR - Brightside already does that; they took us through their temperament testing, so I don't think it's necessarily true to say that only GAP does that.

Dr FORBES - There might be a diversity of approaches there. GAP delivers a nationally accredited standard that all the states agreed to in relation to assessing dogs. The dogs are also desexed and vaccinated and go home with other benefits in terms bags of food and collars and things like that. We are trying to enhance the placement of the dog as much as possible.

Mr GAFFNEY - It says on the GAP website that it is still voluntary fosterers who do that home treatment before they are given to somebody.

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Dr FORBES - The way it works is that we have a paid coordinator and she now has an assistant as well. They do the first stage. The next stage is placing the dog into a home. For that we rely on foster carers, and they are volunteers. They can avail themselves of food and costs during the course of it but we find most of them don't because they are just engaged and want to donate their time and efforts to the dogs.

Mr GAFFNEY - Would it be fair to say that the greatest percentage of the funding goes towards staffing and vehicles and those things to coordinate that position?

Dr FORBES - Wages are one of the most significant parts but so is boarding and veterinary fees. They are probably the main drivers in the budget.

Mr GAFFNEY - The increase predicted for next financial year - and it is a significant jump, which is great - is \$96 000, I think. What do you envisage for that funding? Is it for the extra staff member? If at the end of next year you come back and we ask, 'How many jobs have you rehomed?', and you say 70, for an extra \$100 000 we will say, 'Is that value for money?' What would be your target or what do you hope to achieve out of that extra funding in the number of dogs that have been rehoused?

Dr FORBES - We had to address a very modest payment that was being paid to the GAP coordinator for her boarding facility because she was probably being paid below market rates. That had to be reviewed and has been remediated to a degree. That will account for some of the increase. The increased staff will be the other main driver for the budget. We still have a proportion that has been unallocated at this stage -

CHAIR - This is a proportion of GAP funding?

Dr FORBES - Of this budget, yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Of the 96 extra?

Dr FORBES - Yes. We haven't divided as to the incremental increase, we've just got a budget for FY 2016 where we have an allocation.

In terms of deliverables and outcomes, there are a couple of things that are dynamic. One is the supply of dogs suitable to be rehomed. For example, we get a number of requests for dogs that can live with a cat or a small animal, and we might have dogs ready for adoption but they are not suited to living with a small animal. There are market forces at play that will impact your impact. We have to look at trying to increase our numbers of foster carers, and that is a specific strategy. We've put together a small consultation document that we delivered to the greyhound group at the start of last week, looking at a number of the bottlenecks and opportunities we have, trying to get that together and get some industry feedback into our plan for the future.

Ms RATTRAY - Are you saying there is a shortage of fostering opportunities for the dogs?

Dr FORBES - No, I'm saying that to expand the program we'll need more foster carers.

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Ms RATTRAY - So there's not a shortage at the moment but if the potential is to increase, and obviously that's the aim, there will be a need for more fostering opportunities, more people willing to take on a greyhound and put it into their home environment.

Dr FORBES - We can always do with more volunteers. I'm reluctant to say it's a shortage but certainly one of the restrictions as to how many dogs we can put through is the availability of foster carers, as it is with the infrastructure we have as well. That's why we've tabled this consultation paper now to say these are the areas where we have some challenges and in order to address those it's going to take some more funding to do so, so they have understanding and transparency so if we do take money going forward from the code budget, it is done with the understanding as to where it needs to go.

Mr GAFFNEY - The boarding of the animals takes up quite a bit of the funding -

Dr FORBES - In terms of boarding, the budget allocation this year will be about \$68 000.

Mr GAFFNEY - The owner of the kennel who boards those dogs - the staff member you have - is that put out to tender? I am wondering about the process used to select that person to be the person who does the rehoming.

CHAIR - Is the position the GAP coordinator?

Dr FORBES - Correct. It is an employee.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, but the offshoot is you could have a GAP coordinator who did not have kennels.

Dr FORBES - Correct.

Mr GAFFNEY - That would be outsourcing.

Dr FORBES - Correct.

Mr GAFFNEY - You have said the fees have gone up. Do you as an organisation have the GAP coordinator's position and then you put out to tender the boarding kennels, or is that just one and the same?

Dr FORBES - In this process it made sense to utilise the kennels at the GAP coordinator's property. The rate at which we are paying is probably still way below commercial rates.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

Dr FORBES - It is an opportunity to avail ourselves of facilities at a cost-effective rate for the program.

Mr GAFNEY - How do you evaluate that capacity? If somebody is training a dog, or doing the re-homing or re-schooling for the dog to live with a family, and they have the boarding kennels, we have had some people sit at this table and say that a dog can be re-homed in three days or two days because of the nature and their experience with the dog. How do

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you evaluate whether the dog needs to stay with the GAP coordinator or the boarding kennel for three days or three months? There is just a question there of how that works.

Dr FORBES - Last time we had tabled this document here - and in appendix E we had the full list of the greyhound behavioural assessment. There are pages and pages of the type of tests. In answer to your question, all the data is there. It is absolutely critical that when we sign off on a dog that it is suitable to go into a home. The process is rigorous and the same as what the other states do. I would have concerns as to whether the dog is suitable if anybody else in the market is doing anything less than that.

Mr GAFFNEY - Of the 63 dogs, were any of them sent back or have you tracked the dogs to see that the re-homing was successful? Have any been returned?

Dr FORBES - Over the course of that year we had two returns. One was from somebody who had died and someone else went into a nursing home. They were not failures of the dog. They were other issues. Normally if you took a dog you are not going to just take it back to the pet store. We go further and say if there is a problem we will take the dog back and re-home it.

Mr VALENTINE - Mike's questioning has certainly answered most of mine, but there is just one that remains. What level of formal reporting back to Tasracing does the re-homing organisation do? What sort of aspects are you asking them to report back on? For the money that you provide, for this \$200,000 in the budget obviously you have the individual that is the coordinator. The coordinator works with these re-homing organisations, however many there might be.

Dr FORBES - Not quite, no.

Mr VALENTINE - No?

Dr FORBES - She is -

Mr VALENTINE - There is only one, is there?

Dr FORBES - Yes, it is one person who is our employee. Then she assesses the dogs; has them for a few days; takes them to be de-sexed if that is required; lets them recover, and then after that process and she is satisfied with the dog she places it with a foster carer and they can get a bag of dog food. At the end of that process they come back to her for re-homing or they might stay with the foster carer until we have a home available for them.

Mr VALENTINE - There is no formal reporting required because the person you are dealing with is within the organisation?

Dr FORBES - That is right.

Mr VALENTINE - Presumably they are working to organisational factors that you might set from time to time?

Dr FORBES - Yes.

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CHAIR - Dr Forbes, what is the relationship with the RSPCA and how are we likely to see this, if it is formalised, change the way the GAP operates in Tasmania?

Dr FORBES - I was not skirting around it. I originally spoke about supply and demand. When we talk about the number of outcomes we can have, it depends on the market forces, the type of dogs we have available and the demand in the community. To increase the demand and awareness for greyhounds as pets in the community, we explored an option - working with the RSPCA - to see whether they could increase the demand through their network they have through the community.

Mr BACON - Where did the idea come from to involve the RSPCA?

Dr FORBES - It was from our late chairman, who had an association with one of the RSPCA senior staff members.

CHAIR - Would the funding enable the RSPCA to become an adjunct to the GAP? Is it being proposed that they become part of extending it? If that happened, would that funding come from Tasracing or from the state?

Dr FORBES - The idea is that it would not replace the GAP, it would be another avenue to try to increase demand for dogs. The RSPCA, for example, has 55 000 Facebook likes. We at Tasracing have about 7 000. Our network on social media is much smaller than theirs. In discussions with them we thought here is an opportunity to reach a far greater audience and engage with animal welfare matters rather than engaging with the racing industry. To access that we explored a couple of models with them. People who go the shelter to get a dog may not have a greyhound in mind, they could be going there with an open mind. If you have a well behaved, house trained, desexed greyhound we are accessing somebody who would not necessarily have thought of having a greyhound.

Ms RATTRAY - Your intention is to put the dogs that have been through the program into the RSPCA? You are not asking the RSPCA to undertake the desensitisation and all that?

Dr FORBES - Correct. It would be when we have additional dogs waiting for homes. We can have so many dogs that we have prepared and we are still waiting on people to adopt them, particularly dogs that are not suited to having a cat in the house. We have dogs ready to go but we do not have a home for them yet so we are trying to find another way to expose them to people who would like to take home a dog.

We understood how they approached the care of the dogs there, how they provide stimulus while they are in the kennels and if a dog was not suited to kennel environment. It becomes very apparent after a day or two, talking to their shelter managers, they would contact us and we would take the dog back into foster care again.

It would be a very dynamic relationship and saying that it has not been settled yet. We have been in negotiations and discussions so far. The next stage is discussing it with the industry and we had our greyhound reference group meeting last Friday. We tabled the consultation paper with them there and will give them some time to digest that over the Christmas and festive period and get back to it towards the end of January.

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Ms RATTRAY - Is there any initial reaction you can share with the committee from the industry?

Dr FORBES - The industry in general have been talking about the discussions we have had, but they haven't had an understanding as to what the proposal is. We only released that paper last week.

CHAIR - Are you able to provide a copy of that paper to the committee?

Dr FORBES - Yes, I can do that.

Ms RATTRAY - Have you talked about money yet? The RSPCA are probably going to want to have funds that come along with greyhounds.

Dr FORBES - They have spoken about the cost of participation if we were to move forward. Some of the feedback I have had is that they think it is expensive. I think we are at a point of taking what has been traditionally a volunteer approach, relying on a lot of goodwill of people, into the commercial world and that comes with a cost. While we are relying on foster carers to date, that has certainly been outstanding and the people who have dedicated their time and their homes to do that, we are hugely indebted to.

Mr VALENTINE - It probably comes with a bit of angst as well, doesn't it?

Dr FORBES - I think going forward, if we want to increase the number of dogs there, it comes with a cost. The cost, as go beyond just the goodwill, moves into a commercial sector. As we start applying those sorts of numbers to our framework, you are talking much bigger numbers, which the industry is not used to seeing.

Ms RATTRAY - With the arrangements in, say, Victoria, are you across how that particular model works in the way they have a relationship with the RSPCA?

Dr FORBES - As part of this process we have been in talks with them. I'm still waiting for some more detailed information to come back from the CEO. We had a GA board meeting two weeks ago and I was talking to them about it there, and similarly with Queensland.

Ms RATTRAY - My understanding is that no money changes hands there, though. Is that true?

Dr FORBES - That's not quite correct, but I don't know the actual details to be able to furnish you with them. There is arrangements for cross-payments there of some description.

CHAIR - For costs to be covered.

Dr FORBES - Again, I don't have the details to hand.

Ms RATTRAY - Will that be part of your consultation when you look into it before you make a decision about whether you're going to head down this path?

Dr FORBES - We will look at everything on table, yes.

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CHAIR - Dr Forbes, you talked earlier about some national rules that have been prepared and set by Greyhounds Australasia following the *Four Corners* program on live baiting. Can you provide some more detail on those rules as they relate specifically to the issue of live baiting? Then can you tell the committee whether the state has adopted those national rules as they are, or will they be rewriting a set of local rules?

Dr FORBES - I will answer the second question first. We adopt the national rules as they are.

CHAIR - On the live baiting rules?

Dr FORBES - Yes. Where there are national rules for most matters, they are adopted in their whole form.

CHAIR - Well, that has actually been disputed by other people who have given evidence to the committee who are concerned that quite often what is happening is that national rules are set, and then the group you talk about here, the racing rules and policy subcommittee, then sets a local rule that is not necessarily always consistent with the national rule. That has been a point of frustration for the Office of Racing Integrity and others who have come to give evidence before the committee. If we can go back to the live baiting national rules and what they mean for the industry and then talk about how they translate locally.

Dr FORBES - Yes. There are a few things there that are not quite right, in any case. I think we had tabled the national rules in our prior submission. They were brought from 30 April and we had a definition of an approved type of lure, we had offences relating to lures and baiting, including a mandatory disqualification of 10 years for a breach of the rules, and a mandatory disqualification of five years for a person who witnesses a breach of the rules but fails to report it.

CHAIR - When you say 'mandatory', does that mean it's mandatory until it goes to appeal, because we have had evidence from the Office of Racing Integrity that penalties are imposed and then it goes to appeal and they are significantly watered down? Is that a mandatory 10-year ban, or can that go to appeal and then be changed?

Dr FORBES - I understand the appeals body can determine the penalty as it sees fit.

CHAIR - Can we talk a little more about what is in the national rules that may prevent the possibility of live baiting and how they will translate locally?

Dr FORBES - There were rules brought in on 30 April with a very clear definition of a lure. There was prohibition on the keeping of small animals if you were a registered trainer unless you had special exemption from the stewards, and as we just identified, there are very strong deterrents for anybody engaging in live baiting practices.

CHAIR - But there's no lifetime banning, is there, so if someone's found guilty of live baiting, under these rules, what's the maximum penalty they can face?

Dr FORBES - At the end of the day, if the stewards deemed an offence to be over and above what was in the rules, they have it in their power to impose additional penalties, so you'd get 10 years and then perhaps an additional penalty from the stewards. It would certainly

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be on a case-by-case basis but the stewards have that power within the rules. They can impose whatever penalty they see fit.

In terms of a 10-year penalty of disqualification, for example, a disqualification means they cannot go to a racecourse or engage with the industry in any way. At the end of those 10 years, that doesn't mean necessarily that they will become a racing participant again; they would still have to apply for a licence, so they may not ever participate in the industry again, and I'd say if it was a severe offence that licensing decision would be very considered.

CHAIR - Has the greyhound industry in Tasmania, or Tasracing, adopted those national rules that were issued in response to *Four Corners* in totality and without change?

Dr FORBES - Yes.

CHAIR - Okay, thank you. So is there not a situation that arises from time to time where national rules are set and then there is a local rule that's written that reflects those national rules to some extent but is different?

Dr FORBES - Generally not. We wrote to you when you asked the question on 27 November. We have the legislative responsibility to set the rules and those are the local rules which we write, as well as ratifying and approving the national rules. That power doesn't change whether it's by code. The purpose of having local rules is, in most cases, to strengthen or augment the national rules. On other occasions it might be to take account of local circumstances. I can give you an example of that. In the thoroughbred code the national rules don't prevent a three- or four-kilogram apprentice from riding in a feature race; however we wrote a local rule in consultation with the Tasmanian Jockeys Association banning those apprentices from riding in a feature race because we didn't feel a four-kilogram apprentices, somebody who is just starting out -

Mr VALENTINE - What's that weight relate to?

Dr FORBES - Their claim. When you are an apprentice jockey you get a weight claim. You can ride at a lighter rate to compensate for the fact that you may have lower ability.

Mr VALENTINE - I don't understand the concept. Is it over and above their weight?

Dr FORBES - The handicapper will allocate weights. Say the horse you have been given is 59 kilograms, but because you are a two-kilogram claiming apprentice, you are allowed to ride that horse at 57. So you get a weight advantage for the race to make up for the apprentice.

Mr VALENTINE - I'm with you - there are advantages.

Dr FORBES - There is no national rule that stops three- or four-kilogram apprentices from riding in feature races. However, through a local discussion with our Jockeys Association we thought that appropriate.

We also do not allow four-kilogram apprentices to ride an unraced two-year-old - a two-year-old being a young horse. However, again for safety, we have strengthened that

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safety context locally. So is that a conflict with the national rule? You could look at it that way but it is actually strengthening the safety deliverables in this state.

Mr BACON - Are there any examples where you go the other way - you reduce the rules?

Dr FORBES - No.

Mr BACON - You don't do that anywhere, it is additional rules?

Dr FORBES - We wouldn't be exposing ourselves to a worse situation, particularly with safety. In the harness code, for example, there are no local rules, but there are policies, and the policies are set by the Office of Racing Integrity. There are certain time standards for sections of a race to make sure the horse is competitive. However, the Office of Racing Integrity have exceptions to that policy in certain circumstances.

In the greyhound code - to tell you the truth I cannot recall any particular conflict or watering down of national rules. We went through a process at the GA board about this matter about nine or 10 months ago - last year - where the incoming CEO, Scott Parker, who I understand has spoken to you once before, in order to understand the national rules framework asked all states to do a review of their rules to see if there were any conflicts. At the end of the process, which was quite exhaustive, we came to the conclusion that there was no particular concern where anything we had locally would conflict. If anything it strengthens things where we feel it is appropriate to do so.

CHAIR - Did you work with the Office of the Racing Integrity to determine that? I am looking for the actual quote but we have had quite contradictory evidence to what you have stated about the connection between national and local rules. It sounds to me from what you have just said that Tasracing had a look at itself to determine whether or not it was writing rules that were inconsistent with the national standard, which is not really an independent examination of the setting of rules.

Dr FORBES - How racing works, the national rules are the heart of the code, heart of the regulatory mechanisms. The local rules are very small by comparison and they really are there to augment and strengthen where required. The setting of rules is something we take very seriously, and in order to set a rule we go through quite a rigorous process, which we outlined in the letter. Likewise, the Office of Racing Integrity is usually engaged within the development of it all.

CHAIR - The testimony, from my recall, is that when the Office of Racing Integrity is consulted on the development of a rule, quite often their input is disregarded, and that is a concern to that office.

Dr FORBES - That concern has not been put forward to us at all.

Mr GAFFNEY - You mentioned that you recently met with the Victorian CEO; I gather that was at an Australian Council gathering.

Dr FORBES - GA board meeting, correct.

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Mr GAFFNEY - October 20, the Deborah Arnold case in Queensland was overturned. What happened? What has your discussion been because it looked like she was banned and then it was overturned? The discussion around the table in light of the decision by Justice Dalton, how does the greyhound industry respond to that? What are the discussions around that situation? It seems to me a decision was made, found guilty and then it has been overturned. Where does that put the industry?

Dr FORBES - I cannot comment on what happened in Queensland or another jurisdiction at all. Likewise, the discussions we have at the board table, amongst the directors, is something which I am not at liberty to discuss.

CHAIR - Sorry, Dr Forbes, but it is a public body and the board is paid for by the public purse to a significant extent. Are you not talking about board matters because there is some confidentiality agreement or what? This is parliamentary inquiry and you are talking about a board that is a public board.

Dr FORBES - I don't know if it necessarily considered a public board.

CHAIR - It is sustained by public funding to a very significant extent.

Dr FORBES - We did not have a discussion about that matter in Queensland at the last board meeting. There is nothing to talk about.

Mr GAFFNEY - In light of the decision made by a justice about a decision the Greyhound Association made because of the wrongdoings of - I think she was president of the greyhound industry - admitting to doing the wrong thing, that decision has been defeated or it has been turned over. The industry is going to have to have some discussion about what they have to do with their regulations and rules so that does not happen again. Where do you do from there, as an industry? If, every time they catch somebody who is doing the wrong thing, you have a justice coming in and saying, I don't agree with that decision, you can't do it. If one of your stewards finds someone doing the wrong thing, gives them 10 years, they just appeal to the appeals board or the tribunal and it gets defeated. Is that a concern?

Dr FORBES - It is of great concern, absolutely, but it really is a matter for the Queensland authorities.

Mr GAFFNEY - What if it happens here?

CHAIR - If you look at appeal board decisions, it is happening here -

Dr FORBES - Within the greyhound industry?

CHAIR - Within the greyhound industry where the three-panel appeal board, the Office of Racing Integrity, will make a decision, hand down a penalty, it will be appealed and either they are overturned or substantially reduced. The same thing is happening here and that was the frustration that Tony Murray expressed to us the other day.

Dr FORBES - It is a matter for the appeals board. It is outside the scope of Tasracing.

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CHAIR - I understand why you do that because there is a separation of authority here, but can you understand why it would give the industry, that has some work to do to improve its image, a bad name when, on appeal, penalties handed down for cheating or mistreating an animal are being substantially reduced. In the community, where there is a certain expectation about animal welfare standards in the industry, there is a sense of frustration and disbelief that is shared by the Office of Racing Integrity. Does Tasracing have a role to play here?

Dr FORBES - We would like to see penalties stand up under scrutiny on every occasion. The message to people who cheat and break the rules has to be abundantly clear. However, the appeals board is acting within its statutory powers and making determinations for their own reasons, and that is within their remit.

CHAIR - But the message it sends to the industry is that if you are penalised and you go to appeal, in 100 per cent of the cases I have had a look at, the penalty is substantially reduced. The message to the industry is, go to appeal if you are being punished.

Dr FORBES - I don't disagree with you. I would like to see penalties upheld and be as strong as possible because we don't want people like that in our industry.

CHAIR - How do we do that? What is the mechanism for making sure that, on appeal - and I understand there are judicial processes here - community expectations are met as well as the work of the Office of Racing Integrity and the stewards? What is the conversation on a mechanism for doing that?

Dr FORBES - That is a matter for Tony Murray and the work he does with government there.

Mr VALENTINE - If someone is banned for 10 years, what part does Tasracing then play with respect to that individual? Is it just Racing Integrity that has the role to make sure that this person is not participating in the industry at all, or is there some collaboration between Racing Integrity and yourselves as to how that individual is monitored or otherwise?

Dr FORBES - It is an Integrity function.

Mr VALENTINE - It is totally an Integrity function and nothing to do with Tasracing? I mean, if someone registers to run in a race -

Dr FORBES - They couldn't register.

Mr VALENTINE - Can you explain that process and how that happens? Is it simply that you have a notation of the misdemeanour or crime or whatever it is that has been breached? Do you actively scrutinize your fields to make sure that those people are not -

Ms RATTRAY - I reckon word would get around pretty quick, wouldn't it?

Mr VALENTINE - It might but I just want to know what the process is.

Dr FORBES - Our statutory responsibility is to set the licensing conditions and it is up to the Office of Racing Integrity to enforce those conditions. We work together in the

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formulation of the licensing conditions, and somebody who is disqualified is not in the first instance even able to avail themselves of a licence. If they were to try to put in an application it would be very quickly picked up. Unless you are registered in the system, you cannot own an animal. You cannot race your dog or your horse.

Mr VALENTINE - But they might do it through their brother-in-law or sister-in-law or someone. There are ways around these things, I suppose. How much scrutiny occurs in this instance? You're probably talking about an individual who is maybe a trainer who has however many dogs trainers have. What happens to all of that? Does it just get dissipated however that person may want to see their dogs farmed out, or does Racing Integrity make sure they are right in there seeing that these dogs are not put through other trainers or whatever?

Mr BACON - If someone gets rubbed out for 10 years, does someone go to their property and monitor what happens with their animals?

Dr FORBES - I would have every expectation that there would be some mechanism that the Office of Racing Integrity would do to address some of the concerns that you have outlined, but I'm not party to that and that is not our responsibility.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, thank you. I am just trying to understand, that's all.

CHAIR - Dr Forbes, on that conversation we were having earlier about the conflict between the national and the local rules, this is evidence from Mr Murray. He points out that in the thoroughbred and harness racing codes, the national rules prevail over any local rules that are set, but for some reason in the greyhound racing industry, if there is a conflict between the national and the local rules, the local rules prevail. Are you able to elaborate on that? The concern is that local rules are being written that do not always necessarily reflect the intent of the national rules. I am sure this is not an issue just for Tasmania either, but there is clearly a difference in the codes on the issue of national and local rules.

Dr FORBES - In our letter we stated there is no difference between the three racing codes in relation to whether the local or national rules take precedence. The way that the legislation is written is that Tasracing makes or sets the rules of racing. If it is a local rule, we will write it, and if it is a national rule, we still need to approve it locally for it to be effective locally. It is possible that you could take a national rule and not approve it. However, we have never done that, so whether it takes precedence or not is actually a moot point. If you didn't want a rule for any particular reason from the national table you wouldn't write a rule that would override it. You would simply just not approve it. It's a bit of a moot point.

CHAIR - It's a bit of a problem for the industry really, isn't it, that there isn't a national approach, so you have all these states and territories in the greyhound code sort of doing their own thing when you compare it to the other codes. There isn't this national approach which disempowers Greyhounds Australasia somewhat.

Dr FORBES - I totally disagree.

CHAIR - Have you had this conversation with Mr Murray?

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Dr FORBES - I did read his comments and I was surprised. The three national bodies have a very robust and mature framework for the formulation of rules. It is a process that takes quite a period of time. For example, a new drug rule will go from a veterinary analysts committee to a stewards committee and then to a rules committee. From that rules committee it will go to the board, from the board it goes to the states and then you engage in your own process. In GA we had a process where we approved rules once a year but that was changed recently to at least allow for twice a year because a lot can happen in 12 months and you need to be able to respond to the market.

There is always an ability to fast-track things if you had to, and the lure rules is an example of that. However, it is generally a very measured and systematic process. You might be aware that there are some amendments coming in tomorrow in relation to the use of whips in thoroughbred racing. That has been a very long process and the Jockeys Association nationally has objected to the degree of consultation that has taken place during that process. It has gone on for six months, with multiple meetings including representations to the board. That is another example of the work that goes into getting these rules.

The operation of the greyhound code at a national level compared to the other two codes is not vastly different at all. GA has a rules committee - I think it is in the paper here - and we have a member on that committee, as does the Office of Racing Integrity. They certainly see the development of those rules. At the chairman of stewards meeting, which is the step prior to that, the Office of Racing Integrity is at that meeting as well. They are part of that rule formulation process and then it goes to the rules committee and Office of Racing Integrity are also present there. Then it goes through the subsequent processes. That is the same as what happens in the other two codes of racing.

Mr VALENTINE - So are you happy with this process or do you see that there could be ways of changing it slightly to be better? Are you happy with what is in place at the moment in terms of the rules?

Dr FORBES - There is always room for improvement. If there were concerns with it at any step of the way, I'm always open to thinking what we can do locally to improve it. If there are concerns nationally, I am happy to lobby for that as well.

CHAIR - Dr Forbes, we have some information here on the number of positive swabs that have come back in quite a finite period - 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 to date. I know some of it is detailed in the annual report but have you seen the information that was given to us by the Office of Racing Integrity?

Dr FORBES - No.

CHAIR - There was some reporting on it in the *Mercury* today because this document has been online for a week. If we look at the previous financial year, it talks about substances such as heptaminol, caffeine and its metabolites - amphetamine, hydroxyamphetamine and theobromine. Are we seeing, from your experience, a change in the rate and type of drugging of animals? Particularly 2014-15 has not been a good year for drug swabs. Has there been a change in a period of time you can identify, or is this part of the unfortunate churn of those in the industry who are doing the wrong thing, who we know are the minority?

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Dr FORBES - I haven't seen the data and it really is matter for the Office of Racing Integrity. We're not involved in that process at all.

CHAIR - You're not involved in educating trainers and owners about the rules around drug administration to dogs? Is that not part of Tasracing's work?

Dr FORBES - The training qualifications that we have in place are a nationally accredited training link to licensing. Where there is a rule change we will advertise the rule change and try to inform the industry in a timely manner. However, the mechanics of swabbing and the drugs taken are the responsibility of the Office of Racing Integrity.

CHAIR - Does it concern you though, as Director of Racing, that some trainers are administering amphetamines to their animals, particularly in the last year?

Dr FORBES - I would be surprised if amphetamine was administered to a dog. It would most probably be a contaminate from a recreational drug user. I do not know the merits of the case -

CHAIR - There were a number of cases here and we put that to Tony Murray that it was possible that the dog somehow had inhaled an amphetamine-enriched vapour. He thought the test showed that they were administered to the dog rather than the dog being near a drug user.

Dr FORBES - I really can't speculate.

CHAIR - There are a number of cases.

Dr FORBES - Anybody who administers a substance to a dog in contravention of the rules needs to be caught and not allowed to participate. The strongest possible sanctions should be brought against them.

CHAIR - Would you like to see an increase in the capacity for swabbing?

Dr FORBES - The level of swabbing is a matter for the Office of Racing Integrity. There is always a challenge from a financial perspective to spend money wisely. I worked in specific drug detection for many years before coming to Tasmania. I understand the challenges of trying to make resources stretch a long way but you have to try to be one step ahead of the cheats. Sometimes that means that you do blanket testing, sometimes you do very targeted testing but the key is that you are proactive.

Mr GAFFNEY - For the record, in 2013-14 there was one. In 2014-15 financial years there were five owners, six dogs, and so far this year there has been one. I wouldn't like anybody to think there was 30 or 40. Reflective of the amount of dogs that go to the track every week it is a miniscule percentage. Those trainers who have done the wrong thing, inadvertently or directly, need to be punished. I just wanted to put that on the record.

Mr VALENTINE - I have a question about the GAP. In your letter of 27 November that additional funding for the GAP has been generated from the introduction of a welfare levy of \$80 per race, which is provided out of stake money. Have you had any feedback from

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the industry as to whether they are concerned about that? They are paying by not getting the money when they win races.

Dr FORBES - That figure and the mechanism was arrived at through industry consultation.

Mr VALENTINE - So they are in full agreement?

Mr BACON - Did you talk about an increase in that with the RSPCA potential program?

Dr FORBES - We have tabled another consultation paper just recently in relation to our corporate plan. In that we identified the need to continually review welfare funding and open the door for discussion on the appropriate mechanism in order to raise funds from the code for welfare initiatives.

Mr BACON - So effectively there will be no change to the GAP with the new relationship? I am sorry if this was covered before I arrived. There will be no change to what happens through GAP but there will be additional expense to the RSPCA - \$30 a day - to house the dogs, then \$150 for administration and the adoption fee of \$250. All those costs will be additional costs for animal welfare. I am not saying that it is not money that should be spent but those additional costs will be borne by the industry.

Dr FORBES - We had capacity in our budget this year to fund a pilot program for six months, if we wanted to, and that would have covered those costs. It is not \$250 adoption fee, that is actually income, it is not an expense.

Mr BACON - That goes to the RSPCA?

Ms RATTRAY - Who gets that?

Dr FORBES - That is an income opportunity for the RSPCA through the initial proposal. Again, these are ideas. They are not crystallised and they are not set.

Mr BACON - In terms of the consolation around these ideas - on Friday you said you tabled the document and you would provide us with a copy of that document as well. In reality, how much notice are we taking of the industry's concerns, through the quarterly meetings with the code, or how will that play out?

Dr FORBES - In this document we ask people to get back to us by the end of January in writing. The concerns of industry around the rumour were interesting. I would be looking to find some compelling reasons if they objected to the proposal. The discussions I have to-date have been less than convincing. It seemed to be more of a personal view as to the RSPCA's prior performance in this state.

Mr BACON - I am arguing that it is a financial solution for the RSPCA rather than a welfare solution for the industry.

Dr FORBES - It is a fairly modest amount of money in the big scheme of things. It is not a solution for the RSPCA by any means. This has been driven by Tasracing, trying to increase the demand for greyhounds in the community.

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Mr VALENTINE - When you consult on rule changes in the industry, what process do you use? Do you have a public meeting or do you have a meeting with various industry bodies to explain the rules? Do you incorporate Racing Integrity at those meetings so they are across this?

Dr FORBES - We are obliged under legislation to consult and meet with industry on a quarterly basis. We have what we call consultation -

Mr VALENTINE - This is general consultation, not just about rules?

Dr FORBES - This is everything, including rules. We meet with the peak representatives from right around the state on a quarterly basis, one meeting for each code of racing. I chair those meetings and have done that for the last four years. It is also attended by the code director from the Tasracing Board. It will be either the chairman or another committee person from the clubs, the associations. Here we are talking about the Breeders Association and in thoroughbreds the Jockeys Association. There are a lot of people in the room and we table papers with them a week out. There will be real changes in some of those papers, national rules and sometimes local rules. Then we have the discussion in the meeting. If there is a complex matter we will give them a longer time to get back to us. Other times, we take the feedback in the meeting.

Mr VALENTINE - They need to consult within their own membership?

Dr FORBES - Correct. With the GAP they will need time to discuss it with their committee, so we have given them enough time to do that. In relation to the Office of Racing Integrity, they are responsible for their own consultation processes. It is separate to Tasracing. However, they are involved in the creation of rules at the national table, at the chairman of stewards level, at the rules committee level and then when it is referred to Tasracing. The subcommittee of the board is the rules and policy subcommittee and the director of racing is an attendee at that meeting and has every opportunity to provide feedback.

CHAIR - Does Greyhounds Australasia, when they have the board meeting - I think you are a member of the wider board - do any of the other states have at that meeting their integrity bodies or representatives of their integrity bodies?

Dr FORBES - No, because we are the only state that has a split.

Mr VALENTINE - It is not separated, your split.

Mr BACON - So effectively their integrity person is there?

CHAIR - What is the argument?

Dr FORBES - Some of the matters for the board at a national table relate to rules and some relate to commercial matters. Some relate to a wide range of industry factors. We have got a very broad lens. For example, there is quite a debate at the thoroughbred national board now on welfare matters and racehorse retirement. That does not fit easily into any category because it is everybody's responsibility in relation to welfare and those types of matters. The place of the integrity officer in those organisations, participating in the development of rules, takes place in the same manner it does here in that they participate

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at the subcommittee level. That is where Office of Racing Integrity officers are members of those committees across the three codes of racing. When it gets to the national board table it is up to the directors of - effectively the company - to determine whether they approve those rules.

Mr VALENTINE - When you are consulting with the key bodies in the state you are saying there should be no reason why Racing Integrity would have an interest in things at that point? That is why they are not brought into that level of consultation? Their consultation happens at a different time with the development of rules, is that what you are saying?

Dr FORBES - Correct. The rules go through a process from the chairman of stewards, where they are present, through to the rules committee, where they are present. Then it might be referred to states depending on the code, or it goes to the national board table. Then it comes to Tasracing to ratify, where they are also present. There is significant interaction all the way through.

CHAIR - On a slightly different subject, June Phillips gave evidence about the GAP and she made a statement and talked about Tasracing as having a communication problem with the industry. She says:

There is no communication between the industry and Tasracing. There is just none. I would go 12 months and you'd get no correspondence from them whatsoever. I don't believe they do anything for greyhound racing at all.

Feel free to dispute that:

I think they should be out there educating people on what a greyhound is, so that people want a greyhound as a pet. They don't do any of that. They leave it to the GAP and Facebook.

Do you have a response to that? Because that is quite a stinging criticism from an industry participant.

Dr FORBES - I met Mrs Phillips last week and she made a comment like that to me. I asked her if she was a member of a club and she said that she is a member of the Launceston Greyhound Club. It is interesting given that she lives in Hobart. She is represented at the Greyhound Reference Group by the members of the Launceston Greyhound Committee. It is up to those committee members to engage with their constituents. If there are matters that they wanted to take to them, or they might feel through normal discussions on race night that they can represent those views. We spoke to her about formal notifications of rules or policies and changes. The industry publication is called the state-wide form guide. That is the form for the races each week and it is also the primary vehicle to publish greyhound industry notices.

CHAIR - How often does that come out?

Dr FORBES - Every week. We publish all the key information there. She said, 'I do not buy this statewide form guide'. I said, 'It is also available online for free'. When you are a racing participant and a licensed person, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the rules and policies. As long as we have gone through a process of publishing and

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promulgating them in an appropriate matter. If somebody wants to put the shutters down, we cannot talk to everybody across the whole industry across the whole state. There are formal, structured consultation processes in place. If people wish to be engaged they need to talk to their representatives who attend those meetings.

Ms RATTRAY - Funding and stake money is important to the industry. It has been suggested to me that the Tasmanian format is not achieving the best return and outcome for the racing industry through their wagering tax arrangements. Do you have any view on that? Have you had a talk to your counterparts in other jurisdictions that have a better model in place and get more return for the industry?

Dr FORBES - What type of returns are you talking about?

CHAIR - There is public funding and then there is stakes money.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, it has just been suggested that Tasmania's wagering tax and levy model is not delivering the best outcome. I wondered if you had a view. Funding through the industry is very important and our Gaming Control Act prevents the release of effective tax rate that UBET pays. We only know what we get, we do not know what the rate is and it has been suggested to me that Tasmania is not getting the best return. Is that something you have discussed or you have any view you might like to share?

Dr FORBES - There are two types of revenue derived from wagering operators in most states. There is, what we call the race field fees legislation and that is in place in this state. It allows Tasracing to charge a levy on every dollar that is wagered around Australia with any operator.

The second form of income most states are able to gather is a product fee arrangement with their local TAB in their state. For example, in New South Wales Tabcorp, who are the wagering operator, in addition to race field fees they pay Racing New South Wales, Greyhound Racing New South Wales and Harness Racing New South Wales a product fee.

In Tasmania we don't have product fee arrangements from Tattersalls or UBET. In its place we have the government funding deed of approximately \$30 million per annum. On making the most of the fees we have available to us, I believe we have a very robust mechanism in place that is capturing significant value. Our racefield fee legislation allows us to charge a rate on both parimutuel bets and corporate, bookmaker bets which are fixed odds -

CHAIR - What is a parimutuel bet?

Dr FORBES - A TAB bet. We do so at a different rate and a different methodology in order to try to capture the most value. The rate at which they are set is determined by market forces. The states around Australia all have different rates. Some of them charge premiums. Some charge volume discounts. They have a floor and a ceiling. It is a very complex area.

Ms RATTRAY - I don't profess to understand it all, I want to know that we are getting the best deal we can.

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Dr FORBES - We have in place a revenue model for fixed odds. That makes us priced very effectively for fixed odds operators and we are aligned with the growth segment of the market. Fixed odds operators are the fastest growing across the wagering landscape.

Mrs RYLAH - What sort of odds?

Dr FORBES - Fixed odds. We increased our prices the year before last and in that year our race field fee revenue increased 43 per cent. In the year just gone, FY 2015, we left the prices alone because the market wasn't moving and our wagering still grew by about 6.5 per cent and our racefield fee revenue grew as a result, but that was due to organic growth of the wagering growth.

We increased our prices again in line with the market on 1 July of this year. We moved from 13 per cent of revenue for a fixed odds bet to 20 per cent of revenue and the performance to date has been very promising in terms of those revenue returns. I believe we are very competitively priced in the market and the fact that we don't have product fees mean we are able to have this split model which allows us to have a model aligned with the operators who are our customers and, hence, enhanced that value.

Ms RATTRAY - Will that mean the industry itself will generate more money to come back into the industry and higher stake money and that sort of thing? Rolling out the GAP and those sorts of things. Is the industry itself going to benefit?

Dr FORBES - Now that the current Government has placed us onto a sustainable footing, it means that for the first time ever if we are the beneficiaries of enhanced revenue returns we have the option to deliver it into stakes money or we could put it into infrastructure. It is doing more than filling a black hole than it was before.

CHAIR - When you talk about the state Government putting industry on a sustainable footing, wasn't the decision not to increase the Government's contribution relative to the CPI? I'm sorry I'm a bit vague on this, but I thought there was a concern in the industry that what had been decided by government made it somewhat more precarious financially for all the racing codes.

Dr FORBES - When Tasracing was set up in 2009 it had a \$4 million funding gap from day one. The funding deed increased at a rate of CPI of less 1 per cent yet we were obliged under the funding deed to increase funding to industry at CPI, so that \$4 million gap became bigger every year.

We went through a number of significant cost reduction exercises some time ago and have maintained those cost savings to date, however what became apparent is that no matter how robust our revenue growth was and how much we had cut our costs, the company was not able to trade its way out of the problem without intervention from the Government. That intervention could take the form of additional funding or allowing the company, through the funding deed, to reduce industry funding. The Government decided that it wasn't going to increase the funding to the industry, particularly when there were many other government priorities in other portfolios at the time, and that the race industry needed to adapt and change to the current funding level.

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CHAIR - Now what Tasracing can do is pay industry participants CPI minus 1 per cent. Is the change in payment standards from government to Tasracing now reflected in what Tasracing disburses to the industry?

Dr FORBES - Partly correct. There was \$3 million or approximately 13 per cent of the industry funding that was reduced on a full-year basis and we have the ability, if we needed to, to only increase funding at CPI minus 1 per cent or determine whatever level we wanted. The model we have put in place means that we are targeting the CPI increase going forward and with strong revenue growth we are certainly on track to do so.

CHAIR - But the most recent annual report shows that Tasracing's expenses quite significantly outstrip the revenue coming in, so you're still seeing evidence of that funding gap.

Dr FORBES - The last financial report was before the changes, so that is evidence of the funding gap and the changes were put in after that.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr GAFFNEY - In your opening statement, just to clarify, you said something about a bitch now to have three litters over eight years, except for exceptional circumstances - for example, if the dam was very good. Where does industry get that recommendation from? Is it what is happening in other states? Why has it taken that amount of time to come into Tasmania. How does that strategy come about?

Dr FORBES - That's a new rule that has been implemented in Tasmania at the same time around Australia.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. So where a national rule comes in all states would adopt that?

Dr FORBES - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - One I am interested in that was in other states and not here was that to try to lengthen the racing career of an older dog they were introducing aged races -

CHAIR - I think we're doing that here, aren't we?

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. How does industry evaluate or what is proposed to evaluate that sort of program's success or otherwise? Who follows that up? Who does all the paperwork and legwork behind that?

Dr FORBES - There is interplay between what we call the grading schedule and the race program. The grading schedule is the responsibility of the Office of Racing Integrity. They have completed the grading schedule, which now gives us the ability to write races according to that schedule. Now those races have been written and this is the first quarter where those races are able to be competed in. We are watching it very carefully. We will be seeing the different classes of races and encouraging people to participate in those races.

CHAIR - Any early signs of whether or not participants have embraced the expanded potential for older dogs or not so fast dogs?

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Dr FORBES - Some of the classes were a little bit slower than anticipated. However, it is looking like it is gathering momentum now. At the meeting we had just last Friday there was a very long discussion on programming specifically, because we now have to write the programs for the next period and we don't have the full information and performance to date. We will look to try to adapt and change that as much as possible. We have the ability to do so. This is a document we had sent out to all participants in combination with their racing calendar in the last week or so, which is just trying to highlight as a flier the opportunities that now are available to people for dogs, like you say, of all abilities.

Mr GAFFNEY - Would you table that?

Dr FORBES - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - Just on that, one of the issues that has come up through speaking with other people at hearings is about the tracking of greyhounds particularly, whether it is the tracking of litters or the tracking of race dogs or even the tracking of those who are part of the GAP. There has been some concern and it was also highlighted during one of our conversations that it is hard to get good staff or enough money to pay the staff to do the tracking required to keep the industry informed. As part of Tasracing, is that just within the greyhound code or do you find that is an issue across the other two codes? I suppose it is easy to put a horse out to pasture. It just eats and drinks compared to a dog. Is the tracking of animals something that you discuss as an industry? It has been raised on probably a couple of occasions here.

CHAIR - Yes, at least a couple.

Mr GAFFNEY - That is a concern from within the industry, I think.

Dr FORBES - It is primarily an Integrity function. The collection of data and the tracking of dogs would be a function of the Office of Racing Integrity. If there are issues or concerns the industry have with that they would need to take it up with them.

Mr GAFFNEY - If the integrity committee say, 'We're finding it difficult to do this role correctly,' do they go to Tasracing and say, 'If you want us to do this and it is important for your sector, we need more funding or support'? How does that work out? Are both bodies funded completely separately?

Dr FORBES - Correct.

Mr GAFFNEY - So if your group had a concern about the tracking of animals which is the funding responsibility of the integrity committee, how do you address that, especially with the live baiting and the draining we were told about?

Dr FORBES - Tasracing is subject to the performance of the Office of Racing Integrity, so we hope they do a good job and are funded appropriately. There is always dialogue going on in relation to a whole range of matters but at the end of the day, if they came to us and said they needed a rule that was going to enhance their local delivery services then of course we would like to implement that as soon as we could. They are the levers we have available to us under our legislative responsibilities but there is a definitive decision that

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has been made here to separate the funding between the two bodies and that's the way the budgets are approached.

Mrs RYLAH - Eliot, I'd like to go back to the question of older dogs racing. In regard to the unfortunate need to put Red Cadeaux down after he was injured in the Melbourne Cup, can you advise whether the greyhound industry or Racing Integrity - somebody - has put in place a review or analysis to monitor older dogs who are racing so they do not suffer injury or earlier death because of their extended racing careers?

Dr FORBES - There's a mature reporting framework in relation to injuries already in place and we can drill into that by race, class or age or track. We monitor that regularly in any case and if there were concerns in and around the Masters races they would become apparent and we would address them straight away. There's also a benchmark out there in relation to - many states already have these classes of races in place and there hasn't been any particularly observable trend in relation to increased injuries.

CHAIR - You were talking before about the issue of tracking dogs from birth through to death. It's pretty clear from testimony of a number of witnesses that there are huge data gaps and knowledge gaps in what happens to a significant percentage of the greyhounds born. Given that Tasracing effectively operates and funds the GAP, why wouldn't Tasracing have a role in tracking the dogs?

Dr FORBES - I think we're separating the GAP from life cycle tracking issues, so we have a very good handle on exactly the dogs that come into the program and where they've gone to. In fact, as I've mentioned before, they reach out to us if there's any issue with the dog or their circumstances, where we take the dog back. In relation to the GAP we know exactly what's going on, however the wider question of tracking greyhounds across the community is an Integrity function in that they have the animal registry, they register the animals and deal with the retirement of animals. There is a rule in place that they need to notify them when dogs retire, so they're the ones processing and handling those forms and we don't have any visibility as to that data.

Mr BACON - So do you think there's a gap in the data, as Cassy said, and that there needs to be more data provided by the integrity unit to make it clearer as to what can be done to cut down on wastage and things like that?

Dr FORBES - I think that's really a question for Tony Murray.

Mr BACON - So you don't have a lack of data at the moment? Do you think you could make better decisions on the GAP and things like that if you had more data about unnamed dogs?

Dr FORBES - I'm someone who likes as much data as I can possibly get and if someone offers me more data to help me do my job I'm willing to take it.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you for your forbearance with nearly two hours of committee questioning. Thank you for coming back for us and for your evidence.

Dr FORBES - Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you again.

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CHAIR - Don't forget you have indicated you will pass on to us the discussion paper from Tasracing on GAP.

Mr GAFFNEY - And also if there's any information that comes through about the Masters racing that you think might be good to provide, because we'll be continuing this in 2016 just for interest. If we're making a comment on it it would be good to have some stats about how that's going and whether it has been successful in your opinion. That would help us.

Dr FORBES - I'm happy to do that.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.