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THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING IN TASMANIA MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2015.

Ms JUNE PHILLIPS WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Ms O'Connor) - Good morning, June. Thank you for presenting a submission to the committee and coming to speak us today. Before you begin giving your evidence, I would like to ask whether you received and read the guide sent to you by the committee secretary?

Ms PHILLIPS - I did, thank you.

CHAIR - There are a couple of things I need reiterate from that guide for the purposes of our proceedings today. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it received the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individual giving evidence to parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court of place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware this protection is not accorded to you if statement that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceeding.

This is a public hearing, as you can see. Members of the public and media are present and this means your evidence may be report. 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. Would you like to make an opening statement and then we can ask some questions?

Ms PHILLIPS - I have been in greyhound racing for over 40 years. When I first started I was a PR consultant with a little poodle and met someone who had a greyhound, and today I have eight old GAP dogs. My husband races dogs, we have a stud dog and we breed greyhounds. I have been chairman of greyhounds; I have been chairman of the Hobart club. I started GAP in this state and I thought with my background I would know as much as anyone about greyhounds.

CHAIR - June, you know the terms of reference relate to animal welfare practices within the greyhound industry, specifically in response to the *Four Corners* episode, to investigate allegations of live baiting. In your 40 years' experience in the industry in Tasmania, have you seen evidence of live baiting?

Ms PHILLIPS - No, never once. We never did it ourselves and I have never heard about anyone doing it. When I was chairman there were instances where people would say, 'So-and-so gave them something', but no substances, names or anything. We are going back 50 and 60 years where someone knew someone who used something, and we're still dealing with that today. I don't believe you have to do that. We don't have the private tracks in Tasmania that they have in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

CHAIR - But there are some small private tracks on private properties, aren't there?

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Ms PHILLIPS - No, I don't believe so. We had one trial track at Carrick and when I was chairman of greyhounds we shut it down because they were charged with having a carcass on a lure.

Mrs RYLAH - What year was that, June?

Ms PHILLIPS - About 2008. I have read in some reports that they were charged with live baiting but that's not the case. If you read the report I think it was a carcass from a road kill, but it still gives the wrong perception of greyhound racing. We never gave her her licence back. People have bullrings.

CHAIR - There is a difference between a bullring and a private track. Correct me if this is the wrong understanding. Before strong animal welfare standards came into place and rules of racing, was it not a relatively usual practice in decades past for greyhound trainers to use some form of live bait or blood animal to train their dogs?

Ms PHILLIPS - In my 40 years, no. When we breed a litter I get fluffy toys from the Reject Shop or the Salvos and disinfect them. I buy squeaky toys. I cut the toys open, put the squeaky toy inside, sew them up and throw them to the pups to play with. My poodle would play with it just the same as a greyhound pup. Greyhounds are a prey animal and they love to run and chase. You only have to watch them at six months old and they will compete. Where we've got into trouble over the years is people who have greyhounds may get one or two out of a litter that don't want to do anything so they go into GAP or you keep them.

CHAIR - Or you euthanase them.

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes. In my 40 years we have never put a dog down, other than for cancer or old age. I have eight old greyhounds at home now, up to 15 years. I believe that if you can't look after that dog you shouldn't have it. A lot of people in the industry will euthanase their dogs but I believe you have a responsibility.

Mrs RYLAH - How many dogs would you have bred, June?

Ms PHILLIPS - We usually breed one litter about every two years.

Mrs RYLAH - About 120?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, possibly 120.

Mrs RYLAH - Do you sell the dogs?

Ms PHILLIPS - No, we keep and race our own and then we put them into GAP. I started GAP in Australia, with my husband and VIP Pet Foods, and half a dozen vets gave me money to insure it. I think I was paying \$100 to have the dogs desexed. This is while I was still chairman of greyhounds because I was also deputy chair of Greyhounds Australasia and I would get up and start talking about animal welfare and there were 15 men and me.

CHAIR - Good on you, June.

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Ms PHILLIPS - I would start talking about welfare and they would put it to the bottom of the agenda every single time, every year. In the end I got really angry one day. I can still remember it. I stood up and screamed at them all and they listened and started talking about welfare because this was always going to happen.

Mrs RYLAH - When was that? When did that occur?

Ms PHILLIPS - This was about 2002 or 2003 that we started changing things.

CHAIR - What were some of your animal welfare issues at the time that made you feel so passionately about change?

Ms PHILLIPS - I have always felt passionately about greyhounds. A percentage of people don't feel they're a pet as well. To me you can have a greyhound get off the couch and go out to the track and win a race, but you get a lot of the older generation who believe that you don't pat them, but gradually that is changing and it has to change. There has to be the care of the greyhound first. It has to be paramount.

CHAIR - Are you prepared to go into some detail about the specific animal welfare concerns you had at the time you started advocating for change in the industry?

Ms PHILLIPS - As I said, I started GAP to find homes and to know that the dogs were placed correctly. That was the main thing. A lot of the information I got from GAPs in America and they let me use all their work so I didn't have to reinvent the wheel. People didn't believe a greyhound made a good pet. I fought 15 years ago for muzzles to be taken off greyhounds when they went into GAP because the perception is, 'It's a nasty dog, come away from it.' My concern really was that we needed to get it out there that greyhounds make great pets and therefore more would go into GAP than euthanased. That was really the main concern.

CHAIR - I am not going to put words into your mouth, but you must have been very concerned about the levels of euthanasia in the industry. We have heard that in 2013-14 close to 500 greyhounds in Tasmania were euthanased.

Ms PHILLIPS - No, that's not correct.

CHAIR - I think it was 496.

Ms PHILLIPS - No, 319 were euthanased.

CHAIR - We've had updated figures, I think, from Racing Services Tasmania.

Ms PHILLIPS - Sorry, I took that from their submission

CHAIR - Yes, it is close to 500. You must be concerned about the high level of wastage.

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, it's a horrible word, but that is exactly what it is, wastage. To me there has to be a better way of doing it. There has to be more put into greyhound adoption. I

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don't think that Tasracing does enough. Actually, I think they just sit on their arses and do nothing. I hope they don't put that on there.

CHAIR - There is a fair chance they will.

Ms RATTRAY - We can have it amended if you like.

Ms PHILLIPS - I would like that, thank you. I didn't mean to say that.

Mr GAFFNEY - It is nice to hear somebody who has experience in the industry talk to us from both an administrative role and a breeder-owner role. I am interested in your comment regarding muzzling for greyhounds. It is part of the Dog Management Act and there is a move afoot to have a discussion about how that could be changed, although we did have a vet yesterday and somebody within the industry who believed for a variety of reasons that the muzzle part in the act should stay. However, we have also heard that those dogs that have been through the GAP program or through a re-socialisation program and that exhibit no sign of aggressive tendencies should be able to be led without having a muzzle on.

Ms PHILLIPS - They are the only ones that I believe should not have a muzzle.

Mr GAFFNEY - If there were a change or an amendment to the act to identify those dogs, who would be the responsible person to sign off on the form to say that this dog should now be able to be led, because it has gone through the program and has no signs of being aggressive? Should it be the vet or the person who runs the GAP program? Somebody at the end of the day has to have responsibility over that permission for that dog to be unmuzzled because of the act. Who would you recommend would be the best person placed?

Ms PHILLIPS - To me, it would have to be Greyhound Adoption Program. They are the ones that assess the dogs, so therefore they are the ones that should be signing off. Maybe the integrity unit could co-sign it.

Mr GAFFNEY - Would it be the chair or the president?

Ms PHILLIPS - It would have to be the co-ordinator of that program because they are the ones that assess the dogs. They would have to have a collar on with a tag to say that they are Greyhound Adoption Program.

Mr VALENTINE - It is a red collar, is it?

Ms PHILLIPS - A green collar.

Mr GAFFNEY - It had been suggested that another dog might have been through a similar program with Brightside. My concern is that once you start getting too many people playing in that space it becomes unwieldy. A person could take a greyhound that might have been through the Brightside work to the co-ordinator of GAP and say, 'Could you please assess the dog?'. I think we need to fine-tune it somehow. GAP are the right people to be actually signing off?

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Ms PHILLIPS - I would think so. When I was doing the Greyhound Adoption Program we had a litter of puppies that were at the RSPCA. I think they were nine or ten months old and they re-educated them. Then they had me to vet the people and the dogs prior to them going out. There isn't a problem with that.

Mr GAFFNEY - That is good because I think the integrity of the Dog Management Act has to be maintained - the Control Act. To have something placed on record will be really good along that line.

Ms PHILLIPS - It has worked very well in other states and there haven't been any problems with it.

Ms RATTRAY - Following on from the GAP program, we heard quite a bit yesterday about socialising the dogs when they are puppies so that when potentially they get to the GAP program at the end of their racing career, then they are easily integrated back into a family environment. I have also had it put to me if they are taught to race and to catch, and you have them playing with a little fluffy white doggy thing at home, then you send them to get trained and then they come back and you tell them, 'No, you can't play with that fluffy thing again,' the dog is thinking, 'What do you want me to do?'. Do you have a comment about that because I am just not quite sure how that socialising aspect at a young age is really going to help with their racing? I just want to try to get it clear in my mind. Do you have a view?

Ms PHILLIPS - I don't believe that there is a problem; I think it is individual dogs.

Ms RATTRAY - You think one could come off the family couch, go and race, and then get back in its kennels?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, and you can give it a fluffy toy there. I have a greyhound inside that was a top-grade dog named Charles. He has a lamb and it has two squeaks. It is my grandson's pyjama bag. It is a New Zealand lambswool sheep with a zip in the top and two squeaky toys in it. He knows that that is the only thing he is allowed to touch. He is not allowed to touch the poodle. He is only allowed to touch his squeaky toy. You can say to him, 'Go and get lambsy'. That is a racing greyhound that has just finished racing.

Ms RATTRAY - You were doing that while he was racing?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes. They are more intelligent that you give them credit for. They know like a child knows what he can do and what he can't do, and they learn that.

CHAIR - We had Emma Haswell from Brightside in yesterday who talked about the different characters of greyhounds that come to Brightside. We asked her if she could tell the difference between a dog that had been blooded here or sent to Victoria - and I take onboard what you said about not knowing anyone who practised live baiting here. She said there is a very distinct temperamental and behavioural difference between a dog that has been blooded and a dog that has been trained with soft toys and balls under the rules of racing.

Ms PHILLIPS - No.

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CHAIR - You have never had a dog come through GAP that displayed frantic play instinct?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes. I have taken a dog that was given to me for GAP to the vet the next morning and had it put down because it had such a strong prey drive. I always had a little fluffy dog that I educated the dogs with. That is nothing to do with live baiting; that is the nature of the dog. You can have 10 litters of perfectly happy, contented puppies and in the next litter you can have one that will run around and the rip the other puppies at four or five months old. That is in all breeds of dogs, not just greyhounds. They have a very strong prey drive and you can't put a dog into GAP that is like that; it can't be done; it has to be euthanased.

Mrs RYLAH - June, yesterday we received some evidence about how quickly a dog can progress through a re-homing program. What do you think is the minimum time a dog can safely go from full-on racing to being suitable and safe, having been desexed and wormed and checked and the paper signed off and all the things that it requires before they can go out into the public space?

Ms PHILLIPS - I would think on an average, a minimum of three weeks. They have to learn the lot. Besides that side of it, they have to learn about glass doors. The majority of these dogs have come out of kennels. They do not know what stairs are. Having said that, I placed one in a house that was two storeys. I told them it would not go up stairs and it went straight up the stairs and straight onto a white bedspread. You cannot always control situations. It is normally three to four weeks. You know in the first few days whether the dog is going to make it through GAP or not.

Mrs RYLAH - Is two days a reasonable time for a dog to come into the program and then be housed out?

Ms PHILLIPS - No, definitely not. I wouldn't take responsibility for doing that. You have to have situations where, if a child jumps on the dog, to know that it would not snap when it wakes up. I have an old one at home now and you have to gently touch her bum otherwise she will wake up snappy, but she would never do anything else. But she didn't go into the program for that reason. It would be three weeks, I would think, at a minimum.

I had one that was six months old and I was just about to give up on him. He had broken my wrist and he was full-on. I thought, 'I am not going to give up on you' because he was a beautiful dog, just too strong on the lead for anyone to have. He ended up dying of old age at 14 last year. That is why we should have a Greyhound Adoption Program so they do have a home. You are doing a disservice if you are putting a dog out there in three days. I am horrified to think GAP would do that.

Mrs RYLAH - It wasn't GAP.

Mr GAFFNEY - On that point, have you had dogs come to you that had not been raced and had been at somebody's place but you could see within two or three days that this dog was not a worry; it was placid and whatever? If a dog came from racing and came to you, you would say it would need at least three weeks before it can socialise. If a dog came from a racing kennel that had not been racing but had been there for a couple of years just in the kennel, it might have been playing with the kids, you could tell within two or three days whether it was going to be able to be socialised.

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Ms PHILLIPS - No, I still wouldn't have thought so. I would have thought you would need longer to make sure it could do all the things. When you take that dog to someone you need to know that you could place it with the kids inside the house, it is house-trained, it is socialised with other dogs. You have to make sure that you're 100 per cent sure.

Mr VALENTINE - June, I have a question around kennel notifications and inspections by Racing Services. You say in your submission that they play a very positive role. I am interested in your experience of inspections they may have done over time. Do you think they're effective? Do they always inform you that they're coming or are they random inspections from your perspective?

Ms PHILLIPS - They are random inspections, although if I upset anyone I know I'm going to get one.

Mr VALENTINE - The nature of them? Can you explain what they do?

Ms PHILLIPS - They check everything out in your kennels. They go through all your medicines to see if anything is out of date. They check all the bedding. They check the dogs to see that the dogs are okay. They do a very good job.

Ms RATTRAY - Do they offer any suggestions, June, about what might be improved if there is a need?

Ms PHILLIPS - I don't think they do that to me.

Ms RATTRAY - Obviously you have top-class facilities.

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, we have.

Mr VALENTINE - You talk about mandatory and regular checks as if they are two different types of inspections. Do you want to expand on that?

Ms PHILLIPS - No, I think they just check everyone out about twice a year. We have been checked out last racing year twice. I think they should be able to walk in anytime they like and check your kennels. If it is two weeks after the last time, if it is ten times a year, whatever they can afford to do I think they should do.

Mr VALENTINE - In your experience and with the people you know, do you think they are doing that enough or not doing it enough? Have you got a comment on that?

Ms PHILLIPS - In the last 12 months Racing Services have been doing a very good job. I am not sure that they did enough follow-up in years gone by. It's pretty hard if you've got a litter of eight pups and it's a really wet, horrible day and you've got to get in there and check them all.

Mr VALENTINE - Do they question you about your exercise regimes and things like that?

Ms PHILLIPS - No, they haven't with us. We have a 100-metre run and all our dogs go in it twice a day. I invite you all to come down and have a look. These dogs love to run. They

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compete and they love to run. You just open the gate, throw a fluffy toy and they will go up and down, up and down, up and down and then stand at the gate to go back to their kennel.

CHAIR - June, we heard yesterday from the Australian Veterinary Association of Tasmania and also RSPCA and in their submissions that given the evidence uncovered by *Four Corners* of endemic live baiting practices in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria it would be 'naive' to believe it was not happening in Tasmania. Can you explain why you think it is not happening here when it clearly is happening on mainland states and was only exposed as a result of covert surveillance? Prior to that, the industry had been saying it is not happening here.

Ms PHILLIPS - Mainly because we are so small. Everyone has a phone now that can take photos and I think the first time someone beat them they would expose them and we do not have private trial tracks. We don't know what someone with a bullring is doing on their own property. We had the greyhound of the year, and in my opinion the best greyhound ever bred in Tasmania, Damek. We raised him and raced him and he won 51 races. He won 11 in a row and 10 in a row and was an absolute champion, but he grew up with squeaky toys. Why would someone else have to do any more than that?

CHAIR - The *Four Corners* program revealed there was a view amongst some trainers that blooding the dog and using live baits leads to better performance.

Ms PHILLIPS - I don't believe that.

CHAIR - Do you acknowledge that in Tasmania some trainers may believe it leads to better performance?

Ms PHILLIPS - I don't know, because they're not going to tell you they've done that. Maybe I'm naive but it's not going to make a greyhound go any quicker. Nothing is going to make a greyhound go any quicker. Perhaps if they have a greyhound that shouldn't be racing because it is not keen enough, but I don't know whether anyone would do that. I can honestly say I have never heard of anyone or done it or known of anyone who has had to live bait. It is horrific and there is no place for it.

CHAIR - After *Four Corners* went to air all members of parliament received many emails and letters. Some of them were expressing their concern and horror but I received three or four pieces of quite detailed correspondence written anonymously from people who provided a level of detail about alleged live baiting, for example, in the Derwent Valley and at Campania.

Ms PHILLIPS - If they haven't put their name to it and if they saw it or know of the person who did it, aren't they just as responsible?

CHAIR - I would love to show you one of the letters, which was written by an older lady who was the wife of someone connected to the industry. She was obviously fearful and her handwriting was quite frail-looking. She describes the situation where a pony had been taken into an abattoir, had its leg broken and then the dogs were let in as part of their training. I hear what you say about anonymity, but at the same time when you have this

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on lavender paper written by an older lady who sounds distressed by what she was writing, it is at some level something you have to take seriously.

Mr GAFFNEY - Chair, I think June has answered the question. She said she has no knowledge of it.

Ms PHILLIPS - To me it is an anonymous letter and I don't know how you can take any notice of it if you can't put your name to something.

Ms RATTRAY - If it is reported anonymously, what value is it? None.

CHAIR - I think it was certainly of value to the person who wrote it because they felt a need to express something of concern to them.

Mr VALENTINE - But it can't be used as evidence.

CHAIR - Yes, that's the problem.

Mrs RYLAH - June, we had some questions yesterday and some discussion regarding the standard of kennels. There were some suggestions that a concrete-based small area is where many greyhounds are housed. Could you compare how greyhounds are usually housed to pounds and other places where dogs are kept en masse for long periods? Is it as good as or poorer than?

Ms PHILLIPS - I have two views on this. To me, you can have all the beautiful kennels in the world, but if your dogs are not happy and socialised - they can have coats on and everything is clean and they're fed properly, but I would rather see them in an old kennel with a bed and a coat and happy and contented and warm. It would be nice if they were all in couches but that is not how it is ever going to be with racing greyhounds. It is how well they are looked after more than what their facilities are. You can have the nicest facilities and have them filthy dirty; or you can have the oldest in the world and have them clean and tidy and everything nice.

Mr VALENTINE - I think the observation is about bare concrete as opposed to a bed or -

Ms PHILLIPS - Well, they all have to have beds.

Mrs RYLAH - Do they?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes. They do not sleep on cement. They have a bed up off the ground.

Mrs RYLAH - What does the bed consist of?

Ms PHILLIPS - Ours are all the hammock beds and then they have a sponge on top of that. When they tear that up, they get another one.

Mr VALENTINE - Which they do often, or not?

Ms PHILLIPS - Some do. Some don't.

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Mr VALENTINE - It varies with the temperament of the dog.

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, it certainly does. They have a half sleeping bag on top of that. That is only because it is easy to wash, put in the dryer and give back to the dogs. They have clean coats on once a week and they have new bedding when they need it.

CHAIR - That is for your dogs, June. Is that standard, do you think?

Ms PHILLIPS - I think it is standard. You go to someone's greyhound place and you are ducking under blankets and dog coats and -

Mr VALENTINE - It was indicated yesterday that they were -

Mrs RYLAH - Getting out of the way of wood heaters, June?

Mr VALENTINE - Some may have that but I think it was indicated yesterday that there may be just wooden platforms.

Ms PHILLIPS - No. The stewards would pick that up, if they did not have proper bedding.

Mr VALENTINE - That is something that Racing Services would -

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, they would pick that up straight away if they did not have proper bedding.

CHAIR - The Tasracing rules of racing on kennels says, 'The objective of this policy is to outline the recommended standards for kennels for greyhounds' - so it talks about locating the kennels away from excessive noise or pollution. It does not set a particular minimum size for a kennel, and talks about the ease of cleaning, feeding and watering. It does not actually prescribe a particular type of bedding for the dogs, as far as I can see. I do not know if you -

Ms PHILLIPS - I have never given that any thought because I do not know of anyone that does not have proper bedding and coats for their greyhounds. You are not going to put a dog on bare boards and then get up and expect it to win a race. That is what they want it to do - win a race. They want it to be comfortable.

Mr GAFFNEY - Most animals peak for certain races and they have a program that leads into it. How many races can a greyhound have in a row? Do you race them weekly or once a fortnight? Does it just depend on how they are performing? How do you manage that? We have heard about hypoxia and things like that with greyhounds.

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes. The majority of greyhounds would race once a week, some of them twice a week. You have got different distances, so therefore if you have got what you call a short race - 298 to 320 race - they do that every day in their run. They can race twice a week doing that.

Mr VALENTINE - When you say race twice a week, do you mean two meetings where they race several times during a meeting?

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Ms PHILLIPS - No, they only race once during a meeting. They might race at Launceston and at Hobart or Devonport.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I just wanted to clarify that.

Ms PHILLIPS - No, they are -

Mr GAFFNEY - Would that be for 52 weeks a year if they could?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, they could. As I said, we had Damek -

Ms RATTRAY - You would want to race her a couple of times a week, if she was doing so well.

Ms PHILLIPS - No, 'he'. He was a dog that raced his best just once a week.

Mr GAFFNEY - When you have a dog, I will say 'in work', in racing, would that be the same kennel that you would have if the dog was not being raced at the moment? If a dog is racing, you would be training that dog daily. How many times a week would they be actually out exercising?

Ms PHILLIPS - Twice a day, yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - If a dog was not in racing form and you were not entering it in a race, would it still get a chance to exercise on a daily basis?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, all dogs. We have big areas as well with kennels. We only have one stud dog now and he lies around in the sun all day. When the racing dogs go up and down he is about 300 metres away, but he will go up and down as well.

Ms RATTRAY - Have a run with them.

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, he will have a bit of a run with them.

Mr GAFFNEY - We have heard that there are some breeders or owner-trainers in the state who have a number of dogs. They might have 40 or 50 dogs in their kennel, would they have to exercise those dogs every day? It would be very time-consuming.

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, it is a full-time job. That is twice a day and you will find anyone with in excess of 20 or 30 dogs has helpers; there is someone else helping them do it. A lot of them have exercise machines for them as well.

Mrs RYLAH - I note in your submission that you see the positive role that Racing Services have provided to the industry over the last 10 years. We have heard the very positive impact that this lady, Sara Richards, has had. She is the steward investigator who comes in and inspects and talks to breeders, trainers or whoever. Would you see that increasing the number of those people - that is the steward investigators and we have doubled them in the last budget - will have a beneficial effect on the animal welfare outcomes for the greyhound industry?

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Ms PHILLIPS - It can't hurt. It is certainly a step in the right direction. The more controlled it is, the better it is going to be.

Mrs RYLAH - In terms of educating people? In terms of lifting standards and getting better animal welfare outcomes, do you think that those people help?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes. Any of the young ones know all about greyhounds. I think we have gone past the stage where they think they can just get a greyhound, feed it and race it. I think the education on the whole aspect of greyhound racing is a prerequisite to getting a licence. I don't have any problems with that at all.

Ms COURTNEY - Where does that education come from? When you talk about young people is that because they have been involved in training with more senior trainers? Or does it come from the stewards?

Ms PHILLIPS - I think it comes because they are interested and they learn. Today you can go on the Internet and find out anything you want about anything. I think the kids of today ask a lot more questions than we ever did. They learn from all avenues. It is a necessity that they know all about the welfare of the animal, the breeding of it and the whole aspect of it.

Mr VALENTINE - In your submission you talk about what you want to address regarding Tasracing. Do you have something that you need to say about that?

Ms PHILLIPS - I do inasmuch as there is no communication between the industry and Tasracing. There is just none. I would go 12 months and you would get no correspondence - nothing from them whatsoever. I do not believe they do anything for greyhound racing at all. I think they should be out there educating people on what a greyhound is so that people want a greyhound as a pet, and they don't do any of that. They leave it to the GAP program and Facebook and -

CHAIR - And Brightside.

Mr VALENTINE - You also mention data collection as being something you have concerns around. You are concerned to see an improvement with data collection on pups born?

Ms PHILLIPS - In the last 12 months things have got better with the data collection.

Mr VALENTINE - Is Tasracing doing that?

Ms PHILLIPS - No, that is RST.

Mr VALENTINE - Racing Services Tasmania.

Ms PHILLIPS - All Tasracing do is make the rules and the integrity arm implement them. There is no communication between them making the rules and discussion with the industry. That is from the entire industry; the majority of them feel that way. You would have that by now, I would think.

Mrs RYLAH - We have several times.

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Ms PHILLIPS - It is frustrating.

CHAIR - June, we heard from the chief vet, Dr Andrewartha, who said that during the process of undertaking the review the minister had commissioned after the *Four Corners* program went to air, they visited a number of kennels. I hear what you are saying about the excellence of the standard that you operate, and as a founder of GAP and where your heart is for animal welfare and the greyhound as an animal, as a racer and a pet, but Dr Andrewartha was telling us that one of the kennels they visited did concern him and it did not have those attributes that you describe of a good kennel. Would you be prepared to concede that not all breeders, trainers and owners apply the same sense of duty of care and responsibility as you do, that you are one player in a much larger industry and there is a reasonable likelihood that there are animal welfare issues outside your sphere?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes, I am prepared, but I believe the responsibility is for the integrity unit to make sure there is a standard that is met and, if not, they don't have a licence. That is easy to do. That should be the minute they walk on there. I would have thought the vet would have said this is not up to standard, this is not acceptable, and that integrity say, right.

Ms RATTRAY - In all fairness, Chair, Rod Andrewartha did say that Racing Services Tasmania were working with that.

CHAIR - He definitely said they didn't leave it hanging; they followed through on it.

Ms PHILLIPS - That is your answer.

CHAIR - The reason I asked that question is because you described practices in the industry that were from your point of view and your experience, whereas we have heard other evidence from other people who have come before the committee who said that there are animal welfare concerns in the way the industry has or is conducting itself in Tasmania.

Ms PHILLIPS - That is in everything. It doesn't matter what it is, there is always some that don't do it correctly, and you have an integrity unit to cover that.

CHAIR - Those very few can give the whole industry a bad name.

Ms PHILLIPS - That is why I am sitting here. I am answering something for my grandchildren at school. One day they are really happy and contented and talking about their grandparents racing greyhounds, and the next day they are having to justify it. I have been spat on walking a GAP dog.

CHAIR - Since *Four Corners* went to air?

Ms PHILLIPS - Yes. No-one sees that side of it. We have an instance in New South Wales that is documented where they went in and let all their puppies out and one broke its leg and they turned all their water tanks on. I believe it has gone to the police because they have the car number and a photo of the woman. I think her photo has gone down now off Facebook. There is that other side of it. We are having to justify something we haven't done.

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CHAIR - Yes, and you can speak for yourself in saying that. I understand that, but the allegations have been made and that is why we are here. It is happening here. We have heard from the vets, we have heard from the RSPCA.

Ms PHILLIPS - No, you haven't heard that it is happening here.

CHAIR - No, I said the allegation is that it is happening here. I haven't stated it as fact.

Ms PHILLIPS - There is allegations that there is, yes, definitely, but I don't believe it is. The same as Western Australia; in 1975 they came into greyhound racing and they came into a different culture. They didn't have to deal with people who worked at zinc works who had two dogs in a shed in the backyard. Most of the things you are hearing are 50 and 60 years ago. We still get that, and no-one has to justify anything. People can say whatever they like, the media pick up on it. No-one says give me the facts on anything. None of that happens.

CHAIR - That is what we are providing an opportunity to do. Paul McGinty, who is the chief inspectorate officer of the RSPCA said that after *Four Corners* went to air they had information provided to them that led to them visiting nine properties in Tasmania and that at a number of those properties they found evidence of animals, carcasses and skins but it was not enough to pass the evidentiary test in a court. In his experienced view after many years working in the RSPCA here in Tasmania, the industry or some elements of the industry after *Four Corners* went to air changed their practices. He thought it was very likely that live baiting had been happening here in Tasmania until February this year.

Ms PHILLIPS - And just as likely that they got road kills and gave to their animals, and don't do since that happened. That is what they were doing at that private trial track - taking road kills. Whether they did that and that was the reason for finding skins, I do not know. I have no knowledge of it so I do not know.

Ms RATTRAY - I would like to give you the opportunity to address (c) of your submission where you talk about the concern of animal liberationists making, or able to make, unsubstantiated claims.

Evidence taken in camera.

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DISCUSSION WITH **Mr SCOTT PARKER**, CEO, GREYHOUNDS AUSTRALASIA, VIA TELEPHONE.

CHAIR (Ms O'Connor) - Good morning, Scott. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court of place out of the Parliament. It applies to ensure Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary process. I need to warn you, Scott, that this is a public hearing. There are members of the public here and representatives from the Tasmanian media and this means your evidence may be reported. In fact, in all likelihood it will be, so it is important should you wish all or part of your evidence to be heard in private you need to make a request to us and give an explanation prior to giving the relevant evidence. We don't need to swear you in because you are over Bass Strait and outside our jurisdiction. Could you explain your position with Greyhounds Australasia and then perhaps speak to your submission?

Mr PARKER - I am the chief executive officer of Greyhounds Australasia Limited. GA, as I will refer to it, is a not-for-profit public company and our constitution says:

The object of the company is to provide an efficient forum to facilitate a uniform, responsive and binding decision-making process that maximises returns to the industry and ensures the integrity and fair conduct of greyhound racing throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The members of GA are the eight Australian states and territories and New Zealand. It is important the committee understands that GA is not a controlling authority; it has no regulatory power. It facilitates national agreement wherever it can, most notably on the national rules of greyhound racing - the GARs or Greyhounds Australasia Rules. It undertakes the process of naming greyhounds on behalf of all its members. It manages a frozen insemination database on behalf of all its members. It makes up and distributes DNA kits which is a requirement of stages of a greyhound's life to be DNAed in the industry and produces an annual stud book to the record of pedigree and other race-related information.

While I have been CEO, since March 2014, 15 months ago, it has very much turned its attention to issues of industry sustainability, where we facilitate national agreement historically in those core service areas. When I came on I made it my business and also a direction of my board that GA needed to become a national facilitator of discussion on issues that would affect and were affecting the future of the sport.

Our submission talks for itself. I will point out a couple of things. You would understand that each of the greyhound racing industries run by the nine members of GA are independently run. We have no statutory authority over any of them, so when we talk about a national industry it is really just a conglomeration of independent controlling authority-managed industries. Generally, the national industry accepts that it has not met community expectations on the key issue of animal welfare, despite efforts over many years to improve welfare performance. Notably, since 1975, the number of greyhounds

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whelped has reduced substantially by 50 per cent, from over 36 000 to about 18 000 currently. Starting with Victoria in 1998, the Greyhound Adoption Program is now in all states and territories bar the ACT, which has formally undertaken re-homing activities.

Despite those efforts and the efforts as recently as last May where the GA board, on behalf of all controlling authorities, adopted a national greyhound welfare strategy, implementing eight key strategies over three years, each to contribute to a further national improvement in greyhound welfare outcomes, and despite a significant research study into what the industry needed to do to build its social licence to operate, it still accepts there is a dilemma in both achieving welfare outcomes that are acceptable to the community and an industry that meets its wagering commitments and its commitments to all other stakeholder. It has accepted that challenge both before and particularly after the *Four Corners* episode that is the cause of us meeting here today.

Mr VALENTINE - Would you consider the introduction of the new rules and the like that are about to happen or are happening today in most place, but in Tasmania on 1 August, to be greatest revamp of the code over decades?

Mr PARKER - No, I don't. Improved vaccination is quite clearly targeted towards the health of pups and the breeding female, but pups in particular, and that is great. Improving vaccination from C3 to C5 and ensuring that pups are not moved from the grounds where they were whelped is a good advancement in the care and welfare of young greyhounds and breeding females.

The restriction on breeding is really a first stab at sending a significant message to the industry that all breeding decisions must be properly considered. The facts are that there are around 3 800 people engaged in breeding actively around the country today, defined as any person that has bred at least one litter in the past three years, and 80 per cent of those 3 800 have only bred one or two litters, so the vast majority of breeding activity is going on in a manner that the industry will find very hard to put a cap on. In other words, the restriction we brought in to say no more than three litters before a controlling body and veterinary approval is much more about sending a signal at the start of the breeding process that you had better be careful who and what you're breeding with rather than getting to a stage where, 'I'd really like to have another go with X and Y but now I need to fill in some paperwork and get controlling body approval and get a vet certificate to say it is a healthy thing or not to be doing.'

It is really about sending a signal now, today, that you had better be careful who you are mating with because under-performing greyhounds are quite clearly contributing to the challenge of reducing unnecessary euthanasia, and that is the benefit as much as anything of introducing those rules. The thinking behind those rule changes goes back to May/June/July/August/September last year, so well in advance of the *Four Corners* program and any suggestion, certainly at controlling body level, that live baiting was an issue in the industry. It goes back well and truly before that. More recent thinking has been about how we drastically reduce the numbers of greyhounds bred that don't make it to the racetrack and how we drastically improve the number of greyhounds being adopted out through official channels such as the GAPs.

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Mr VALENTINE - It is basically putting into play measures that will see the pendulum swing further towards animal welfare as opposed to the generation of dollars. Is it fair to say that?

Mr PARKER - Absolutely. There are 17 levers the controlling bodies have identified as being available to them. They will not all be used in all circumstances. Clearly some states have a breeding volume that they do not require. Other states do not have an over-breeding problem perhaps in the same way as some of the larger states do and need to fill their own race cards and would probably prefer those greyhounds to be bred at volumes suitable for filling race cards by their own means rather than importing from New South Wales and Victoria in the case of Tasmania.

Mr VALENTINE - So the development of the rules commenced before the exposure on *Four Corners*?

Mr PARKER - They were approved by the GA board on 21 November 2014 - correct.

Ms RATTRAY - Can you go back a step when you talked about the breeding by Tasmanian breeders with semen from Victoria and New South Wales? Are you saying we should not be breeding from New South Wales and Victoria?

Mr PARKER - I wouldn't like to speak on any individual controlling body's behalf, it is really not my role, but I can talk generally and say that the greatest volume of breeding, and frankly over-breeding, comes out of the larger states. That is where the vast majority of activity is being undertaken. Whether it be artificial or natural, that is where the dogs are being bred.

Ms RATTRAY - And Tasmania doesn't fit into that category in your view - is that correct?

Mr PARKER - No. We're breeding across the country 18 000 greyhounds a year and around about 11 000 greyhounds are required for racing every year.

Ms RATTRAY - Is it correct that there is a reduction already?

Mr PARKER - There is, absolutely.

Ms RATTRAY - I watched a little snippet of a greyhound program last week and it said there was potentially a reduction by 50 per cent this current year.

Mr PARKER - No, that wouldn't be correct.

Ms RATTRAY - What is your assessment?

Mr PARKER - It has been 50 per cent since 1975, so 36 000 greyhounds were whelped then and 18 000 last year, but we still need to do more to reduce the volume because it's the number-one issue contributing to what we call unnecessary euthanasia. For all those greyhounds that can't find a home despite everybody's genuine best attempts, or those in a minority of cases that are unsuitable for re-homing, we need to get that figure down to zero. GA and its member controlling authorities have committed to reducing unnecessary euthanasia to zero by the middle of 2020, so within the next five years. The biggest

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contributor to that will be reducing the number of greyhounds whelped from 18 000 to around 11 000 by the middle of 2018.

Ms RATTRAY - Scott, we have heard this morning that there are greyhounds that will never be suitable for a GAP program to go out into a normal family situation, so how are you ever going to achieve zero?

Mr PARKER - I would be fairly confident in saying there wouldn't be any greyhounds unsuitable for re-homing being re-homed through an official GAP program. There are at least 30 rescue-type groups around the country that undertake that work and it may be that in some instances some of those greyhounds are being re-homed that probably shouldn't that haven't gone through the rigorous testing process that a Tasracing GAP, for example, would ensure.

Ms RATTRAY - Do you have any estimates on what the whelping numbers will be for the coming year? The number of litters or the number of pups?

Mr PARKER - Nationally we are probably in the vicinity of low 17 000s. What we look at every other day, because it is a GA income line, is the number of greyhounds we name and that is the key indicator for us of the volume of breeding activity.

Ms RATTRAY - That is fine, but the naming will not happen until the next year, so it is about the number of litters that are potentially being bred.

Mr PARKER - Correct. It is the naming figure that we can probably estimate better than the number of greyhounds whelped.

Ms RATTRAY - Sp you can't give me what you think might be happening on the ground?

Mr PARKER - I would say there would be a moderate reduction over the last months.

Ms RATTRAY - In your submission on page 8 you say:

Tasracing understands the importance of generating participant support to achieve industry alignment within change ... the participant consultation model is one of the best in Australia.

We have heard to the contrary from industry players regarding that. Where did you get that information from? Is that just Tasracing telling you they are doing a good job? Where did you actually get that feedback?

Mr PARKER - I have been to one of the consultation meetings and I was impressed with the way Dr Forbes chaired it and Mr Wesley co-chaired it on that occasion, so I have seen it -

Ms RATTRAY - With what code, Scott? With what code was that one that you attended?

Mr PARKER - The greyhound.

Ms RATTRAY - The greyhound code. Just an estimated date? I will just do a little bit of research after you give me the dates.

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Mr PARKER - Late last year, perhaps October, November last year.

Ms RATTRAY - Were you at all interested or wondered why Racing Services as the integrity arm were not part of that consultation meeting, given that they have such a key role with the industry?

Mr PARKER - That was a determination of Dr Forbes and his team. No doubt the consultation with Racing Services Tasmania is occurring in other forums as required, but I could not really speak to that. From what I saw, there was a good level of engagement around the table. I understand it happens, from memory, monthly, if not -

Ms RATTRAY - It is four times a year by legislative requirement, actually.

Mr PARKER - It occurs in the middle of the state where everybody is reasonably accessible. The agenda was full. The manner that everybody undertook the discussions and the representative nature of those attending was good. I cannot speak for the veracity of all controlling bodies' consultation programs to any great extent. To an extent, I relied upon Dr Forbes' description to me of his best efforts in that regard.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. Obviously, you have not been a lot around the country yet because you have not been in the job that long.

Mr PARKER - It has been reasonably consuming over the last three or four months on one particular issue, but -

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you for that. That is my question.

CHAIR - Can you explain to the committee the relationship between Greyhounds Australasia and Tasracing? Is Tasracing a member of Greyhounds Australasia?

Mr PARKER - Yes, we recognise it as the controlling authority. It is the only one that has the sort of split responsibility, if you like. For example, our Rules and Integrity Committee has a Tasracing and an RST member on it. Tasracing has representatives around the GA board table; Dr Forbes is a director of GA. Mr Wesley is a member of the GA Welfare Working Party.

On occasion they cannot commit, particularly when it is a matter relating to human resources or funding for a specific action, direction or resolution until they have been able to get approval or otherwise from Racing Services. It does complicate matters somewhat, but not necessarily in the circumstances.

CHAIR - What do you believe Tasracing's animal welfare responsibilities are in relation to the greyhound industry in Tasmania?

Mr PARKER - Well, as I understand it, they don't employ the stewards. Clearly, they are the policemen on the beat. If they are not responsible to Tasracing currently, it is hard for Tasracing and therefore GA to enforce standards of welfare through those people active on the ground under the current structure.

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Dr Forbes punches above his weight, if you like, in terms of his contribution to all matters of welfare and integrity. He sits on our veterinary and analyst committee and is always considering the welfare of the greyhound first. We have got great confidence in him and therefore, by extension, in his team and his processes. As a member of GA, and given that GA has prioritised animal welfare - not just greyhound welfare - Tasracing is as responsible as any other controlling authority to do what it needs to do to ensure satisfactory greyhound welfare outcomes.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr PARKER - It might need to do that through a different structural arrangement but it still needs to be doing it as far as GA is concerned.

CHAIR - Is animal welfare mentioned in the charter of Greyhounds Australasia?

Mr PARKER - I would have to check the constitution for you.

CHAIR - Can you confirm to the Committee that of the 18 000 estimated pups born nationally last year, if 11 000 then go on to race, what happens to the 7 000 pups who do not go on to race?

Mr PARKER - I would love to know. It is a significant challenge for the industry that it does not know. A significant contributor to the challenge we are facing is a matter of culture and that through history participants have not respected the role of controlling authorities in things such as generating data from the participants to ensure it has enough information at hand to make good decisions. It is a significant failing from the industry that across the country we only know the destination of 40 per cent of greyhounds that are unnamed - the 7 000 - and the up to 11 000 greyhounds that retire every year. We don't know where 60 per cent of them end up; we can only guess. We know that about 700-odd go into a breeding program. We know this year for example there is likely to be around 1 300 adopted out through controlling body GAP programs. We know that plenty of others reside on the properties of trainers, owners, friends of trainers and owners, and many others are adopted out through unaffiliated programs. However, it is a significant industry failing that it does not know individually where either unnamed or retired greyhounds end up. It is a significant failing and one the industry must get on top of as soon as possible.

CHAIR - When you say an animal has been unnamed, does that mean not only does it not race but it is not registered anywhere?

Mr PARKER - It can't be registered to race unless it is named.

CHAIR - Is it more likely that an unnamed greyhound would have been euthanased somewhere along its life course from whelping through to whenever it meets its end?

Mr PARKER - I think the unfortunate reality is that when the greyhound reaches the age of about 12 months, it has gone through enough hands for a decision to be made as to whether this greyhound is capable of having a racing career. At that stage, it either needs to be named as one of the preparatory stages of racing - and that incurs some costs - or it isn't named and it has an uncertain future.

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CHAIR - Can you confirm that the understanding of Greyhounds Australasia is that - and it is difficult because there is no tracking of these dogs with any consistency - unnamed dogs are more likely to be euthanased?

Mr PARKER - It is hard to say when it is more likely. If it is, it would be marginal because there are so many being retired every year. Unfortunately, that is a larger group but still a significant number of unnecessary euthanasias are coming out of that group as well.

CHAIR - Animals Australia estimates that each year in the country around 10 000 greyhounds are euthanased? What is Greyhounds Australasia's estimates given we know 7 000 pups are unnamed and that you don't know where 60 per cent of greyhounds end up?

Mr PARKER - Did you say Animals Australia said 10 000 per year?

CHAIR - Their estimate is 10 000 - and I think that has been supported broadly by the RSPCA. I have had other higher estimates put to me but they are the official ones.

Mr PARKER - I have certainly heard a lot higher than that from other animal welfare rights groups. The figure of 20 000 greyhounds is not right; there are 18 000 or less being whelped every year for a start. I think 10 000 sounds like a reasonable estimate.

CHAIR - Of euthanasias each year?

Mr PARKER - Correct.

Mrs RYLAH - The information you are giving us is really interesting, in particular some of the stuff I have been reading in the submission you have put in. I would like to go directly to the strategy you have following on from the Zero Euthanasia paper that you have, and I congratulate Greyhounds Australasia on creating that paper because I think it is clear that there is a community desire to get to that point. I would like to know specifically what progress you have made on the star rating of breeding facilities, in particular, or when do you think you will have that if you do not know?

Mr PARKER - Not any. The first thing to do if that is a lever that we need to pull, and I think everybody has agreed that we need to better track the whereabouts of greyhounds from whelping to final destination, and hopefully that is on a rural property somewhere, we need to know how many, who and where all these properties are that undertake a greyhound racing service. The rearers, the breakers, the educators or pre-trainers and the people engaged in that activity are almost certainly unregistered, unlicensed and unknown to the controlling authorities. Victoria has been the first controlling authority that has started an audit to find out exactly who is engaging in that activity and where that activity is being engaged in because obviously you cannot seek to licence somebody you don't know exists, let alone educate them, which is also a fundamental requirement under the National Greyhound Welfare Strategy and Zero Euthanasia, let alone engage them in a way that is going to over time change the culture of the industry and help to ensure compliance with the policy and/or the rule.

There is no property yet that I am aware of that has been star-rated around the country, but that is the obvious and natural extension from undertaking the audit process which feeds

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into the registration and licence process, which then says we can get out there and star-rate a rearer's property that is currently unknown to us.

Mrs RYLAH - Do you know what the progress is in Tasmania? We did hear something about an audit yesterday, but do you know where we are at in Tasmania?

Mr PARKER - No, that is certainly a question that Dr Forbes will have a far better idea of than I. I would be surprised if the audit has started in Tasmania because I had not heard that it had but they may well have, so please check that out.

CHAIR - Going back to the numbers we have been provided on unnamed greyhounds in Tasmania, of 694 whelpings in 2013-14 the list details 577 unnamed greyhounds. That seems like a huge number of greyhounds that have an uncertain future.

Mr PARKER - If that is a same-year comparison I think all that's saying is that most of those greyhounds are yet to reach 12 months of age so aren't eligible for naming.

Mrs RYLAH - When I asked that question that was the explanation I was given.

Mr PARKER - I can't speak specifically to Tasmania, but nationally around 60 per cent of greyhounds are being named, which is nowhere near sufficient. Our 1 July 2015 rules should go some way towards improving that balance, and it has been improving over time. I think in Victoria they're looking at something in the order of a 13 per cent increase since 2008 when they did some responsible breeding work specifically in Victoria. I can't speak specifically for Tasmania but 60 per cent, albeit on the improve, is nowhere near what the community expects of us and hence the work we are doing now on reducing breeding volume and that has to be by reducing the number of people engaged in breeding activity. Introducing a cap is unlikely to have the effect we all want.

We need to introduce barriers that have not existed in the past that allow people to engage in this activity in the hope that they might have something that is successful or in the expectation that it is going to be a fun activity but ends up not being all they hoped it would be and the culture, historically, has not been that the owner of the greyhound needs to be responsible for its entire life cycle, including the decision about its final destination. I don't mean to be euphemistic about that; I include whether the greyhound is euthanased or not. The culture has not been there to ensure the right criteria is before a person making that decision and making it a requirement of greyhound ownership that they must undertake several significant steps towards successful re-homing than has been the case in the past.

Mr GAFFNEY - Your submission is very good and talks about a dog's welfare from birth to its racing career. I am interested about the safety of racing tracks and the impacts they have on the welfare of the dogs. We have three tracks in Tasmania and, per dog per meet, one of the tracks had 1.49 injuries, one had 1.50, but the other had 2.28. Are there national standards that would say that would create a concern to your committee or board that is looking at racing or is that not something you have statistics for or that amount of injury would not cause you any concern? If you don't have that information, are you able to provide that to us?

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Mr PARKER - I don't have the information and, historically, one of the challenges for this organisation was and is that there have been different methods of data collection. To get like-for-like comparisons from one state to the other, one jurisdiction from the other, has been difficult. Some obtain records better than others, some keep their records better than others, and it has not been a priority of this organisation to collate information that might have some like-for-like dubiousness about it.

Mr GAFFNEY - The racing committee you have that is responsible for advising the GA board on all matters including the race calendar, prize money and funding policies, a parameter of that committee is not the actual safety and security of tracks across the states. If you are trying to have a national approach to an industry - and you have mentioned that it is different data collection - is there an aim to have states consistently use a similar approach to the measurement of that so you have some across-the-board national indicators?

Mr PARKER - There has been on the radar since before I came a national injury database objective but it has not seen the light of day, given the other priorities that have emerged since I have taken over. The answer to that is absolutely yes, it is one of the fundamental aspects of national unity that we need to get right. Sometimes you are talking about ensuring you have the right qualifications on course in a minority of cases to take the data. In other cases we have two systems operating out there and getting those systems to talk appropriately nationally has been something of a challenge and has been on the backburner as we have been tackling non-injury type issues. Having said that, our work to the end of last year identified that injuries to greyhounds was the equal second highest risk to us in so far as external stakeholders were concerned - at least, animal rights groups and social welfare groups. In November and December we were told through our research that that was a risk. Of course, along came allegations and evidence of live baiting and we have subsequently been focused on it.

Mr GAFFNEY - I am not sure if you have mentioned this, but in your paper you said animal rights and welfare groups identified four key issues. They did not bring up live baiting as an issue. When you say 'highly involved external stakeholders', was that after you contacted the national bodies, or was it a state-by-state body? How did you come up with those four priorities or key issues?

Mr PARKER - They were national bodies and those that were most active in the area - Animals Australia, RSPCA National, R2K USA, Brotherhood of St Laurence and one other social welfare group that just escapes me at the moment. Those were the ones that we have dealt with. We are a four-person organisation here. We have three full-time and two part-time staff members, and a million dollar budget. We are very small in comparison to what a national body ordinarily would be. That is probably a point worth noting. We found some funds through the grace of our membership to undertake this work so we were limited in the number of external stakeholders that we could choose. We are interested in the views of those most active in this space and they are the ones that we went to.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thanks, Scott. That is very good.

Mr VALENTINE - Scott, firstly let me commend Greyhounds Australasia for what seems to me to be quite a comprehensive set of issues to be focused on in regard to licensing - whelpers, rearers, breakers, educators, properties and all of those sorts of things, including full education for all players in the industry.

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Given the aim that you have to reduce breeding from 18 000 down to 11 000 which you consider to be the number of dogs that are needed in the racing industry, do you think it is sustainable for 11 000 dogs to be rehomed each year? Do you see that as something that is achievable?

Mr PARKER - I think it is going to be about 8 000, because what we are doing is taking 7 000 out of the pre-race population that do not make it to the track and adding it to the about 1 000 last year that were rehomed. We need to rehome 7 000 more than 1 000 if you like. We need to find 8 000. We have got five years to do it. Take Victoria for example, they are the leading rehoming controlling body at the moment. They did 500 last year. They are going to do in the vicinity of 800 this year under the same circumstances as they had last year notwithstanding the heightened attention to greyhounds as a breed since mid-February this year.

We are talking about rolling out a national program. A proposal for that idea was accepted by my board on Thursday week ago when last the GA board met on 18 June. A more comprehensive proposal needs to go together. I think that has the opportunity of improving awareness of the opportunity of the greyhound breed. I think numbers have been subdued for some time because of a poor awareness of the viability of greyhounds as a breed, whether you live on a vast rural property or in the middle of the city in a two-bedroom apartment. There are advantages to the breed that people don't understand. There has not been the sort of focus there needs to be on it. The programs have been run centrally in each controlling authority and the proposal before us is to decentralise the program. Even in the larger states you are not too far away from submitting a greyhound to the program with an opportunity to along and assess a greyhound for your own needs. That is going to be a significant advancement on the centralised program we have at the moment. At the end of the day, if we fail to meet that challenge and we have been held accountable for failing to meet that challenge, we will tackle that as it comes. What we don't want to be is in two years' time failing to meet a target we set ourselves for today because we did not do absolutely everything we could to obtain it. If we don't obtain it only for the reason we have exhausted the total demand for greyhounds as pets, then so be it, unfortunately. At the same time we will have drastically reduced the volume being bred, that do not need to be bred, and improving the rehoming the rates at the moment. At the moment that is what stakeholders, including the public, would demand of us.

Mr VALENTINE - So those numbers we are dealing with, is that for Australasia or just Australia?

Mr PARKER - Australia.

CHAIR - A final question, and it comes back to the reason we have established this inquiry, how catalytic do you think the *Four Corners* program has been for driving some of the changes we are seeing in the industry now and some of the work Greyhounds Australasia has been doing to affect that cultural change? I take on board that you said some of this work has been happening previously, but what changed on 14 February for greyhound racing in Australia and Tasmania?

Mr PARKER - I think it was 16 February. You would be aware that I was identified as a suitable spokesperson on behalf of the industry because it was considered at the time a

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national issue, which it ended up being. When I was interviewed for *Four Corners* I wasn't aware of the footage. I had seen or heard no allegations. One of our controlling authorities had asked for footage of live baiting from the program and they said, 'We've got no footage you would be interested in or need to know about'. So until I was interviewed on the Thursday before the program went to air on the Monday it was only on the Wednesday when the RSPCA and state police raided the three different properties that we understood the program was significantly about live baiting. To that point and beyond, I have been assured that none of the controlling bodies of GA had any evidence whatsoever that that existed and that was the message they felt comfortable in delivering through me.

Back to your question, when I arrived I put a paper together that there was every likelihood this industry's sustainability was under threat in much the same way as the live cattle export industry was in 2011 for failure to build this social licence to operate. The industry has said and done some good things. It has said welfare is its number one priority and has done some good things to that effect but it really did rely on its legal licence and regulatory framework supporting it to undertake the work it was primarily responsible for, and that was putting on a good show and maximising wagering returns to the government. I think I brought to their attention, and the research study supported it by the end of last year that building this social licence to operate was at least as important an objective of all our controlling bodies and it became my number one objective in my role. Lo and behold, this broke earlier in the year and we have been managing the crisis, and now we are managing a crisis recovery program particularly around zero euthanasia reducing over-breeding and vastly improving our re-homing efforts through these 17 levers that we have identified.

There is absolutely no doubt that the program, with its shocking images, and not just the images but the callous attitude of some of those depicted, meant we had to sit back and say if this is representative of what is going on out there it's a disgrace and we've clearly not met the expectations of not just the public but of each other and those who were doing the right thing and sought entry into the industry. They would look at that and say, 'If that's evidence of what is going on out there, I don't want to be part of it', and the industry would be the loser for not having them involved now and in the future. It has absolutely heightened awareness on welfare generally, but more particularly getting down to the tin tacks of what the problems are, acknowledging them publicly and privately, and going about improvement in a systematic way. Everyone would love to say that within three months the problems will be solved but unfortunately that is just not achievable. Some of these things are ingrained culturally, some require inquiries such as this to run its course and recommend change that Tasracing or Racing Services Tasmania will be receptive to and accept.

The same problem has existed in Queensland and Victoria where they have only just had recommendations released and in part are still waiting on government responses, and then there is the New South Wales situation where an inquiry has only just started. We have been working around those impediments to urgent change, but I set out on page 7 of my submission that 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 is a systematic way of going about a crisis recovery effort focused primarily around reducing over-breeding and improving re-homing performance while at the same time ensuring we are absolutely transparent in what we are trying to achieve and how we are going about achieving it.

Having groups such as Animals Australia keeps us honest. We are duty bound to publish the results of our efforts at regular intervals and have groups such as Animals Australia

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comment on it as part of hopefully an agreement we can reach with them on what are satisfactory achievements towards zero euthanasia over the next five years.

CHAIR - Thank you, that was very good to hear. I think we have exhausted all questions to you. Maybe just to follow up the last question I asked you, you could send through the charter for Greyhounds Australasia when you get your hands on it.

Mr PARKER - Will do.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We will be reporting on this committee at some point towards the end of this year; the due reporting date is 30 October at this stage.

Mr PARKER - Thanks, and good luck with the rest of your hearing.

DISCUSSION CONCLUDED.

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

CHAIR - Dr Forbes, thank you for your submission and for appearing before the committee today. A committee hearing is a proceeding of Parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary 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 that Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to statements that may be defamatory, are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. As you can see, this is a public hearing and members of public and media are present, which means that your evidence in all likelihood will be reported. It is important that should you wish all or part of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make this request and give an explanation prior to giving the relevant evidence.

Dr FORBES - we have tried to be as comprehensive as possible in preparing the information for the submission and, importantly, to illustrate behind some of the words that we use in front of the document that there is very substantial documentary evidence behind that as to the work that Tasracing has undertaken in partnership with both Racing Services Tasmania and Greyhounds Australasia. I hope that was of use to the committee in understanding that there is a wealth of activity that goes on behind the scenes and also that there is still a lot more to do.

CHAIR - Dr Forbes, can you describe the working relationship but also the statutory relationship between Tasracing and Racing Services Tasmania?

Dr FORBES - It is addressed in the very first pages of our submission where we outline the legislative responsibilities of both organisations. Tasracing primarily has the commercial responsibilities for the industry, and included in that is the responsibility for all of the assets and training centres around the state as well. We receive approximately \$30 million from the state Government in funding. The majority of our cost base is prize money for the three codes of racing and the balance of that goes towards the operation of the venues and the administration of racing. It is our statutory responsibility to set the rules of racing with regard to the recommendations of the Director of Racing from Racing Services Tasmania. We also represent the state on the national bodies as well. Racing Services Tasmania has the responsibility for the implementation of those rules which we set, and hence there is a principle whereby there is a division between the legislative side and the police, so to speak.

CHAIR - I note in the submission that Tasracing talks about not having responsibility for animal welfare in Tasmania and that that is the responsibility of Racing Services Tasmania, but given that Tasracing sets the rules, do you agree that while it doesn't have the integrity oversight role and doesn't include the stewards, it does have animal welfare obligations because of the kind of work you are in, but also under the Animal Welfare Act?

Dr FORBES - Absolutely. We don't claim that we don't have responsibility for animal welfare. I think the fact that we have an animal welfare manual which is included in the appendix illustrates that, in addition to the rules, some of which are local but the majority of our

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rules are national, there is a whole framework of policies and guidelines that sit behind and fortify the rules with a particular focus on animal welfare.

CHAIR - In the opening of your submission, in the preamble, you talk about Tasracing being responsible for the following specific activities: provision of stakes; promoting and development of the industry; funding of clubs; media rights; management of the racing and training venues; thoroughbred handicapping; allocation of race dates and programming; industry training; making rules and policies, and national representation on peak controlling bodies. There is no mention of animal welfare responsibilities within that framework you have set out, or a corporate duty of care to be part of upholding animal welfare standards in Tasmania.

Dr FORBES - That is an extract and a paraphrasing from the legislation, in which the subsections go up to (u), and I am not sure it specifically references welfare in relation to RST because welfare is overlaid across both organisations. Within our own corporate plan we reference welfare multiple times because it is inherent to our responsibilities in operating any type of animal sport.

CHAIR - It has been put to us in submissions and by people who have come to present to us that the key responsibility of Tasracing, which is to maximise the profits of the industry, does not sit that comfortably with animal welfare and in part that has been recognised by government which has separated the integrity function here. Do you accept that maximising profits and upholding best practice in animal welfare standards are not necessarily a great fit?

Dr FORBES - No, that is a suggestion I don't accept for the simple fact that in order to perform well, whether they are dogs or horses, they have to be well cared for. It is self-fortifying in relation to the requirement for welfare to be taken account of, both at an administrative level as well as at a participant level. If you wanted to have a look at it from a purely harsh commercial reality, you couldn't get the best from your animals if they're not cared for, but beyond that, I think you will find that the whole reason people are involved in racing, irrespective of which code of racing and likewise for administrators as well, is because we have an overarching love of the animals we are associated with.

CHAIR - That might be the case for the majority of people working in any particular industry but you could not say that about all people who work in the industry, otherwise the arrests and convictions as a result of *Four Corners* would not have happened.

Dr FORBES - But you are talking about a minority of people who have broken the law, so to say that is representative of the industry is incorrect.

CHAIR - When you talk about a minority of people who have broken the law, in Victoria particularly the arrests were of some of the most senior people working in the industry, highly respected trainers, breeders and owners who have been charged and in some cases convicted and disqualified from the industry for life, so we are not just talking about a very small minority at the lowest levels of the industry. In Victoria it was at the highest levels of the industry and key characters who had been working in the industry for a very long time.

Dr FORBES - That is an absolute fact and that is the focus in Victoria.

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CHAIR - We have had it put to us by the Australian Veterinary Association, the RSPCA and others that it would be naive to think that live baiting was not happening here in Tasmania, given how significant the problem was on the three eastern seaboard states.

Dr FORBES - For the record, live baiting, as we have outlined in our submission and I have said publicly in the media before, is disgusting, illegal and certainly has no place in the sport of greyhound racing. Within our framework in this state, Racing Services Tasmania is the body responsible for the detection of live baiting and we can only rely on the advice they provide us. For our part, the rules are in place in relation to live baiting and they were further strengthened through Greyhounds Australasia after the *Four Corners* program. If anybody in the community has information that this practice is going on, they need to come forward and if they don't want to talk to the stewards, they can talk to the RSPCA or the police. The perpetrators have to feel the full force of the law.

Mr GAFFNEY - In your submission on page 8 about draining and the GAP, it says that this is a matter for individual veterinarians though Tasracing clearly maintains that no greyhounds under the control of GAP are involved in the practice of draining. It was clearly pointed out to us yesterday by veterinarians that the draining only ever takes place when the dog is being euthanased and so the dog is in no discomfort, is unaware of what is happening and they take a small vial or two of blood. I find it interesting that you mention it in there. Why don't you allow dogs in the GAP to be involved in that draining practice, because it is not harmful? To me it would be like any other greyhound going to the vet to be euthanased because of old age or whatever. I am interested why you have that comment there.

Dr FORBES - What you have presented is a very rational and reasonable understanding of the situation. Unfortunately not everybody across the community can take such a mature outlook. It is very easy to present the collection of blood for effectively saving lives in a very negative way and from a perception of managing public relations we made a decision that that was not something we chose to be involved with. However I can certainly see why the veterinarians who do the practice require it and likewise people across the community, whether they are greyhounds or any other dog for that matter, allowing the veterinarians to use the blood for that purpose. Certainly we have no objection to that.

Mr BACON - Do you know if it happens in other states or has the same PR decision been made across states as well?

Dr FORBES - I think it is similar around the country. I don't know for sure but my suspicion is that it is.

Mr GAFFNEY - I suppose it comes down to if the community was better informed there would be no need to have that restriction, but for the sake of the GAP you are better off to have it in there from a PR exercise.

Dr FORBES - I think it is about managing community expectations as to how the dogs are handled once they are into the GAP.

Mr GAFFNEY - My second question is to do with injury statistics. I am not sure if you know about Devonport. It says that RST reported race injuries at race meetings and Tasracing

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monitors these reports to ensure it is aware of any unusual incidents and to assist in the detection of any underlying trends and incident rates. I am wondering whether the rate of 2.28 dogs, which percentage-wise is markedly higher than both Launceston and Hobart per injury per meet, is consistent over a number of years or it was just, I am going to say a bad year, a year that the statistics were higher. Is that an issue with the Devonport track on injuries per dog or is it something that you have been monitoring that you could inform the committee about?

Dr FORBES - There is an on-course veterinarian to address any dog that suffers an injury during a race day and a race meeting can't take place unless the veterinarian is there. The responsibility for reporting to the industry sits with stewards and they collate the data at Racing Services Tasmania. We are aware that this has been reported in that way but you need to go deeper into the data to understand the drivers behind that. We classify injuries in three ways and if a dog is injured they get a stand-down period that is determined by the veterinarian at the time. That stand-down period can be less than 10 days, 10-30 days or greater than 30 days. Hence, we look at the injuries as being minor, medium and major. The injuries that are higher at Devonport are in the minor category, not in the medium or major category. The reasons for that I am not sure right now but it could be something as innocuous as the on-course veterinarian tending to report more minor scratches than the veterinarians at the other tracks do. There could be some human factors and reporting approaches as well as a consideration as to what the infrastructure is doing.

If it was in the major injuries it would be more of a concern. The information I have is that there were no major injuries at Devonport in 2013-14, the year before there were four and the year before that there were three. It bounces up and down. However, there is not a massive increase of major injuries and that would be something that would be of concern.

Mr GAFFNEY - From the bare statistics, we have a 33 per cent increase. There have been suggestions that the track at Devonport may be substandard or the lighting may not be the best - that is why they have gone to daytime meets and that sort of thing. Is it part of your regulatory role to make sure that all the tracks are up to standard, whether it is harness racing, thoroughbred or whatever? If that was a concern, how do you assess that to see whether it is the track itself that could be the problem? You say they are only minor, but percentage-wise it is still quite high.

Dr FORBES - As a percentage, it is not high. We are talking about having nearly 4 000 starters at that track in the course of any one year. When you have no injuries, it is not very high. In answer to your question, there are a few things you have raised. The reason why the Devonport track races during the day is simply a broadcast agreement. In terms of fitting every race meeting across Australia across three codes of racing around a week, that is the slot that Sky Channel has made available to us. It has been that way for many years. That is the reason why those meetings are conducted during the day.

In terms of the track surface itself, we race at the Devonport Showgrounds. The responsibility for preparing that track sits with the Devonport Racing Club. However, we do communicate with them. We assist them and provide expert advice.

CHAIR - Can I get some verification there? The responsibility for preparing the track is one thing, but isn't the maintenance of the asset Tasracing's responsibility?

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Dr FORBES - At most venues, except for the Devonport Showgrounds. That is both for the Devonport Harness Club as well as for the Greyhound Club. We provide a maintenance grant to both of those clubs and they run the tractors; they do the maintenance and they do the preparation.

CHAIR - It is their asset and they own the asset?

Mrs RYLAH - It is privately owned?

Dr FORBES - It is actually owned by the Devonport Show Society. It is leased by ourselves and we provide it to the clubs to run their meets. Then we provide a maintenance grant to them. If they need assistance in any regard, we provide that. We have also taken their track curator and we send our track curators away to national conferences from time to time in order to keep up with best standards. We have included the Devonport curator in that as well.

Ms RATTRAY - The committee has heard about how positive the GAP program is in Tasmania. I have also heard that it is one person doing the job, trying to undertake the program without a contract, and without any support on their own property. Can you tell me how we are going to achieve the aspirations of owners retiring greyhounds as pets and transfer them to the Tasracing GAP program for rehabilitation and assessment without some proper funding? That is the best question you have had all day, I reckon.

Dr FORBES - Number one, I am uncomfortable talking about contractual conditions for an employee because that information is clearly wrong. The person best placed to speak about that is the individual involved or ourselves.

Ms RATTRAY - Take that out of the equation, then.

Dr FORBES - For external people to make comment on that, they are making comment on areas that they don't understand.

Ms RATTRAY - Right, well take that out of the equation. How is Tasracing for the good of the industry going to achieve the aspiration in the report without proper funding, regardless of all the other aspects that I know about? I do my homework.

Dr FORBES - I think the GAP program is very important.

Ms RATTRAY - We have heard that it's fantastic.

Dr FORBES - We increased the funding to it last year. The number of dogs that were rehomed in FY 2014 was 35; that increased with funding to 56 in the year just gone. I don't have the last month's data. As to the funding going forward, we are looking to double that funding in the coming year. That is what we have budgeted for, in order to try to increase what we are achieving to date. There is an important context here - and I think Scott from GA touched on it just before - what is the demand for greyhounds in the community? There will come a point where the demand for greyhounds as pets may begin to be reached. In saying that, we have to try to improve that demand and drive it forward. We have also been engaged with some other third parties looking at ways we can increase both capacity and demand.

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Ms RATTRAY - Have you had those conversations with the industry?

Dr FORBES - We meet with the industry every 12 weeks and have a very structured consultation framework. I chair the meetings personally and I have that meeting with the greyhound group, the harness group, and then the thoroughbred group separately. I would hazard a guess that we do more consultation in this state than any other racing authority right across Australia.

Ms RATTRAY - What are the outcomes from that consultation? I have heard since I have been in this place - and it is a fair while now - that there is a lot of consultation, but it is the outcomes, it is what hits the ground after the consultations that interests me. I am more interested in that than I am in the process around consultation.

Dr FORBES - The process then leads to the outcomes and the outcomes are documented in the minutes. There is usually a big long list of action items for ourselves and sometimes the clubs and the attendees at the meetings to move towards.

Ms RATTRAY - Is it possible to get a copy of one of those minutes so we can see as a committee what is spoken about and then actioned?

Dr FORBES - We have provided documents like that to various committees beforehand and we would be happy to do so. Within that, you will see among the agenda items there is a recurrent agenda item on GAP and one on safety and welfare.

CHAIR - Do you think it would be possible to have the minutes of your last two meetings with the greyhound industry?

Dr FORBES - Absolutely.

Mrs RYLAH - I want to go in a slightly different direction. I am still learning about the industry and I understand from your documents you are saying one of the reasons it is unlikely there is live baiting in our state is because of the control of mechanical lures by Tasracing. Yesterday, we heard evidence of straight tracks and a description of a drag lure where there is a wire down a straight track with a piece of towelling on it. Can you tell me the difference and where Tasracing's responsibility comes in?

Dr FORBES - There are a number of ways to train a greyhound. Some of them are on circle tracks and some are on straight tracks. The circle tracks are all Tasracing venues and we have security measures in place at each of those venues. For somebody to misuse those venues, they would need to break in and break into the lure control, activate it and drive it; so it is highly unlikely.

Mr BACON - Have there been any allegations, at Elwick in particular, that that occurred? We have heard allegations that there were some concerns around people breaking into Elwick and using the track.

Dr FORBES - Absolutely not.

Mr BACON - It has never been raised with Tasracing as an allegation?

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Dr FORBES - We have not detected any evidence of a break-in on the track and anyone trying to drive the lure. It would become very obvious. The tracks are inspected first thing every morning when the staff arrive and we have had other break-ins where people have pinched TVs and do other manner of things, but to access the lure driving box is something very specific and that would raise alarm bells.

At the straight tracks where they train, there is one at the Brighton training centre and that is part of the Tasracing venue and is subject to security controls and the controlling box there is all locked up and policed. There is a straight track in the centre of the race track in Launceston that is in full view of the site and there could be no unauthorised access there at all. There is a straight track that is administered by the Devonport Racing Club in the Penguin area and that is soon to be shut down because the council is reclaiming the land and using it for a residential development. I have not been there myself, but I understand it is not far from the road, so the likelihood of anybody conducting an illegal activity there would be quite low. The club is responsible in that instance for the security of the venue. We are working with that club to identify a new venue for people in the north-west to train their dogs and we have some plans before the Ulverstone Council now. When and if that is approved, we will be putting in place security measures that are appropriate for that site when the time comes.

Mrs RYLAH - I understand there are private, straight, fenced-off paddocks that may have drag lures. Does Tasracing have any supervision over those or are you aware of any of those on private land?

Dr FORBES - Tasracing doesn't have any responsibility for private properties, that is the responsibility of Racing Services Tasmania. We are responsible for our sites.

Mrs RYLAH - Let me take it further. Is Racing Services Tasmania aware of private straight tracks with drag lures on them in this state?

Dr FORBES - You would have to direct that question to Racing Services Tasmania; I don't know.

Mr VALENTINE - My question was along similar lines. If those straight tracks did exist on private property, would you put regulations in place to control what they do on those sites? As the regulator, is that what you would do with any straight tracks that exist out there?

Dr FORBES - I would have a reasonable expectation they would be monitored and policed appropriately, but that is clearly the responsibility of Racing Services Tasmania. There is already sufficient capacity within their powers to conduct inspections and police those facilities. If they needed anything over and above that in order to specifically address a concern, we would be happy to work with them to put in place whatever local rules were needed to support them in their activities.

Mr VALENTINE - You talk about two trainers being disqualified for using carcasses on lures in 2008. Can you tell us how that scene has changed over the years? How many private tracks that you are aware of prior to 2008 - these were private tracks, I am assuming, where these carcasses were found on lures - is that right?

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Dr FORBES - That is correct. It is the responsibility of Racing Services Tasmania. We don't have the responsibility for monitoring, licensing or registering private venues.

Mr VALENTINE - You only have anecdotal information about would have existed five or 10 years ago as compared to today?

Dr FORBES - We rely on the advice of Racing Services Tasmania.

Mr VALENTINE - Those two disqualified trainers back in 2008, did they belong to the Greyhound Racing and Trainers Association?

Dr FORBES - I don't know, it was before my time.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay. You are not aware through any other information that has come along your way as to whether they were or not?

Dr FORBES - No.

Ms RATTRAY - They took away their licences.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, they did, but I was just wondering whether they were members of the association or not, that's all.

CHAIR - Dr Forbes, why were CCTV monitoring cameras installed at Elwick in recent years in and around the greyhound preparation area? Was that in response to concerns that had been raised?

Dr FORBES - I am not aware of the cameras you are referring to. It might have been, again, before my time of working with the organisation.

CHAIR - How long have you been with Tasracing?

Dr FORBES - Five years.

CHAIR - I will have to check that but my understanding is it is has been relatively recent. Are you saying that in your time there has not been increased CCTV monitoring of the greyhound preparation area of the track at Elwick?

Dr FORBES - Not that I'm aware of.

CHAIR - But would you be aware as the Director of Tasracing?

Dr FORBES - The wide-ranging powers of the stewards mean that they can implement whatever measures they need to and they may or may not inform us of some of their surveillance activities.

CHAIR - But if you're meeting quarterly with greyhound industry participants and presumably you're in contact with stewards and the Chief Steward on a semi-regular basis, is that not the kind of change that would be raised with you?

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Dr FORBES - There has been a lot said about having the separation of the integrity division from the commercial side and the importance of the independence of that integrity side. Where they have an activity base of surveillance if there is something they need from us in assistance we will provide it, but we certainly respect the fact that they have to carry on their job and if it is has to be in an independent fashion, they do so.

Mr BACON - So they could have established cameras at Elwick without your knowledge or the knowledge of Tasracing that would operate 24 hours a day to monitor what is happening on the track?

Dr FORBES - Again, it is possible, but we are dealing in hypotheticals here. I would verify the facts myself if that was the case. Again, if there was a need for us to provide assistance we would be more than willing to.

CHAIR - What is the communication like between Tasracing and Racing Services Tasmania, because we have it put to us that it is poor at best?

Dr FORBES - There are multiple levels of communication.

CHAIR - Can we talk specifically on animal welfare issues, just sticking to the terms of reference?

Dr FORBES - The animal welfare manual is provided as an appendix and you will notice right through that document that some are Tasracing policies and some are Racing Services Tasmania policies. We worked together extensively trying to pull all the policies we had between our two organisations into one booklet - one, as an audit exercise to make sure we have coverage; two, to make sure there is no duplication; and three, to make it accessible to users of the book. There was significant work that went into that at multiple levels through the organisation to agree to the project.

CHAIR - But is there regular high level discussion between yourself, for example, and the Director of Racing Services Tasmania senior people within the two bodies?

Dr FORBES - There is very frequent communication across a whole range of topics right through the organisation. Just through the pure creation of a race day field, for example, for any of the three codes of racing there is regular interplay between both of our staff and the creation of that day for any race day. Then on the actual race day itself there is usually interaction between both sides in an operational sense, and moving forward through to a policy and strategic view, for example, where in the legislation we are required to make the rules with regard to the recommendations of the Director of Racing, the director sits as an observer on the board's subcommittee so that he is across all matters of changes that relate to racing rules and policy.

CHAIR - If we can go to the specific issue of live baiting, have you in your five years at Tasracing ever had information come to you or an allegation put to you that there is a trainer, owner or breeder operating in Tasmania who is practising live baiting?

Dr FORBES - In my five years it has never been suggested to me that live baiting takes place in this state. When the *Four Corners* show went to air, I was shocked. I was appalled and I could not believe my eyes that this barbarity could take place in the modern world.

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CHAIR - Do you believe it is not happening in Tasmania?

Dr FORBES - I can only rely on the advice that is providing to me by Racing Services Tasmania. They have the responsibility for the detection of live baiting and they provided a report of which everyone is familiar with. We have to rely on that advice.

CHAIR - We have had some concerns raised with us about how greyhounds are kept and there is a rule of racing around kennels, which is at the back of your submission. I note that the objective of the policy is to outline the recommended standard for kennels for greyhounds, but there is nothing in here that talks about a minimum size of a kennel, or bedding or some of those more animal welfare comfort issues about animal husbandry. I was wondering if you could talk about, first of all, why there is no minimum size for greyhound cages?

Dr FORBES - There is a further document that sits behind the policy, which is a guidelines document. It states that portable crates and cages are not acceptable; there are minimum kennel areas; whelping areas should be of six metres square with a minimum width of a metre and a minimum kennel height of 1.5 metres. We have categorisations for whelping pups, young dogs and then for rearing and boarding kennels as well; so there are minimum standards there.

Mr VALENTINE - Do they need bedding as well?

Dr FORBES - I do not have the full guidelines with me, but there are quite weighty documents behind that. However, there are two aspects to this as well. The community's expectation may be that dogs are kept in conditions like the family pet. However, these are working dogs and many working dogs, whether they are police dogs, military dogs, or -

Mr VALENTINE - Farm dogs.

Dr FORBES - Yes, farm dogs or hunting hounds in some states; they are all kept in very different conditions. They are not exactly aligned with how people perceive a family poodle might be sitting next to the fire. That said, coming back to my earlier point, dogs are athletes and they need to perform an athletic function on the track and if they are not kept in appropriate conditions, then they will not be able to do that job.

CHAIR - Is there anything then in the rules of racing or the guidelines that are attached to it that prescribe a certain amount of daily exercise for a racing greyhound or a greyhound that has been trained to race?

Dr FORBES - I think we specify that they have to have appropriate exercise within the guidelines.

CHAIR - What would that be on a daily basis?

Dr FORBES - I don't have that to hand right now, but there is an expectation there that it will be appropriate for the dog, for its age, for its level of activity and probably its personality as well. However, at the end of the day, the policing and inspection of kennels is a function of Racing Services Tasmania.

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CHAIR - I understand that, but Tasracing writes the rules. At some level, Tasracing is responsible for ensuring that the rules are followed.

Dr FORBES - There is a family of policies and guidelines; some of them are from Racing Services and some are Tasracing's. So there is a cooperative arrangement between that. Again, how they choose to implement a rule or interpret a rule may be the way that they have their own internal policy. Whether they view appropriate exercise as being an hour or two hours, I do not know.

CHAIR - Would you be able to provide to the committee the rules of racing and the guidelines that are attached to them as they relate to the greyhound industry in full?

Dr FORBES - I think we provided the link in the submission. On page 8, there is a link to the local rules, the local policies and the local guidelines.

CHAIR - The funding allocated to Tasracing each year is the \$27 million from the 20-year deed agreement. Then I understand there is a sort of a top-up annual fund that comes in from the state of somewhere between \$3 million and \$5 million. Can you explain to the committee as precisely as possible how that money is disbursed?

Dr FORBES - The funding for Tasracing is governed by the funding deed which was put in place in 2009. It was at \$27 million at that stage and indexed at CPI minus 1 per cent. The funding deed requires Tasracing to maintain prize money, which is the main funding for the industry in real terms. Where our own funding goes down at CPI less one -

Mrs RYLAH - How can you do it in real terms if you are minus 1 per cent for a kick-off?

Dr FORBES - That is our challenge. That is what has led to some of the financial pressure on Tasracing.

Mrs RYLAH - That is bizarre.

Dr FORBES - We maintain stakes in real terms. We have done so since our inception in 2009. As you can imagine, it is a challenge to take that funding and share it amongst the three codes of racing in a manner which is both fair and equitable and incentivises those codes of racing to perform in a commercial manner. We have in place what we call a 'code allocation model'. That model was approved by the board last year. It was put in place for three years. What that model did at that stage was that it took the funding of last year and said that no code will go backwards in their funding, so we will maintain that. That way we will protect and preserve the economic contribution of each code of racing at that stage. Then moving forward, we take the increment, which is the CPI component, and we divided that according to a fixed basis and also a variable component, which is related to four KPIs. Those KPIs relate to wagering turnovers, the number of starters and I think the average starters per race. They are actually competing against themselves, their own performance from the year prior, rather than competing between codes. They have all got very different drivers. They have got different positioning on Sky. They have got different commercial opportunity. This provided

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approximately a CPI increase for each code last year. That was the model that was approved for three years.

Mrs RYLAH - Is that CPI minus 1 or is it CPI?

Dr FORBES - We are obliged to provide CPI to the industry.

Mr BACON - Is that in total what it has got to go up by CPI? But the way you divide it does not have to go up for each code by CPI. Is that -

Dr FORBES - That is correct. The funding deed doesn't direct us at the code level. However, the outcome of this code allocation model sum last year was that each code got effectively a CPI increase.

CHAIR - How much went to the greyhound racing industry of the total allocation to Tasracing?

Dr FORBES - The prize money and industry funding component is approximately \$21 million. The greyhound stakes money is about four and a half million; the harness is about six, and the thoroughbred is about \$11 million.

CHAIR - So the committee can be really clear about how the dollars move here, the greyhound racing component of Tasracing's funding is \$4.5 million in total, or are there other administrative costs or programs that are funded out of that pool as well?

Dr FORBES - I am only talking about the prize money. In terms of our allocation of nearly \$30 million last year, the balance of that we used to administer the industry. We provide for and run every training and racing venue right across the whole state, and that is probably the next most significant cost and the labour associated with doing so. A big proportion of that is aligned to each code on a proportional basis to prepare their infrastructure.

CHAIR - What percentage is administrative costs and what are maintenance costs of Tasracing's funding? There is the administration of Tasracing and the codes and then there is the maintenance of facilities.

Dr FORBES - You can look at our annual report. It is fairly plain what is in the documents and it gives you an overview of our expenditure and movement. Last year prize money and industry funding - there is an industry funding component on top of the prize money, and that relates predominantly to funding for the clubs - was \$23.1 million; race day and racing expenses - the operations of the race day - were \$5.35 million. Last year there was a depreciation expense of \$3.6 million.

CHAIR - Is that depreciation on assets owned by Tasracing?

Dr FORBES - Yes, because we have long leaseholds the assets are recognised on our balance sheet and we depreciate them.

Mrs RYLAH - So you are putting that \$3.6 million into a fund?

Dr FORBES - No, that is depreciation.

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CHAIR - So that is a write-off.

Mrs RYLAH - I know it's a write-off, but you are distributing \$23.1 million here. I thought you were describing \$23.1 million as the amount of cash you have that is distributed.

Dr FORBES - I am reading through the expense line because you asked how Tasracing spent its money. You are referring to capital expenditure, which is recognised on the balance sheet.

CHAIR - What is the maintenance cost?

Mrs RYLAH - You said 'depreciation'. Depreciation is on an asset, it is a write-back for tax purposes.

Dr FORBES - It is an expense item on the P&L statement.

Mrs RYLAH - Where is the cash going? You are saying you have \$23.1 million - it is a non-cash item.

Dr FORBES - It is a non-cash item but it is an expense item on the profit and loss. The employees were \$5.6 million, finance and leasing costs were \$1.1 million, and other expenses were \$1.3 million. Our total expenses last year were \$40.9 million.

CHAIR - Where does the gap between the \$32 million in state funding and the other \$8 million come in? Is that in licence fees and that sort of payment?

Dr FORBES - Yes, that is very important. The bulk of that comes from our racefield fees. That is the commercial mechanism by which we earn a percentage from every bet that is wagered in Australia. Our racing revenue was \$9 million last year, our government grant was \$30.1 million, interest revenue was about \$680 000, and last year we had to recognise an impairment reversal of about \$1 million.

CHAIR - What is the capex spending on maintenance?

Dr FORBES - Last year it was \$634 000.

CHAIR - What would that have been spent on?

Dr FORBES - Capital expenditure projects. We have a strategic asset management system that identifies every asset across the state for which we are responsible. We condition-score those assets and if they are fit for purposes they are 3, 4 or 5; if they are breaking or need to be replaced there is condition 1 or 2. That guides our budgeting process. If it is a condition 1 or 2, that is what this money is directed towards. The Auditor-General has already identified in previous years that there is an investment gap between our capex spend and our depreciation write-off. That is at the heart of our industry funding sustainability challenge, which we document very plainly in our annual report and we dissect that out at the end of my CEO report explaining the funding gap in the business model of Tasracing.

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Mr VALENTINE - Presumably there are those occasions where infrastructure might fail and you have to come in a fix it straight away, as opposed to having it on a program. You must have funds set aside for that.

Dr FORBES - The job of managing the business is that we have to keep cash reserves to account for risks, one of which is infrastructure risk. Our biggest risk that we carry as an organisation is from workers compensation obligations for jockeys.

Ms RATTRAY - Where does the redevelopment of the Elwick track sit on your maintenance schedule?

Dr FORBES - There are no plans right now to redevelop the Elwick track.

Ms RATTRAY - Even though it needed doing four years ago?

Dr FORBES - We spoke about this last year at the scrutiny hearing.

Ms RATTRAY - And the year before.

Dr FORBES - We explained there was a ramped-up and expanded maintenance program and the track is performing reasonably well.

Ms RATTRAY - Can I take you back to the split for the codes and the 19 per cent or thereabouts, I think that has been the figures the greyhounds receive, and you talked about incentivising the codes. My understanding is that last year the greyhound turnover increased by 14 per cent and is on track for 10 per cent this year. If the code continues to get the same amount each year, where is the incentive for that code to do more, particularly when there is this expectation that they need to look after the welfare of the animals? Where is there incentive in that split?

Dr FORBES - That goes right to the heart of one of our biggest challenges, which is dividing up the money. As you can imagine, as we allocate the money across three codes of racing, everybody feels they need some more. You go back to the principles of why we are in this industry and what we are we doing. We have demonstrated in our economic impact study that the racing industry provides \$103 million of gross value-add to the Tasmanian economy -

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, and 998 FTE employment and household income. They are significant figures, we have those and we have seen them for years. My question is, how do we encourage this code, which has animal welfare concerns on their agenda, but they are still not being rewarded for effort?

Dr FORBES - The point I was trying to make is that there is an equally strong lobby across the industry that they need to be recognised for the economic contribution they make and that is not always aligned with the financial return they make. It is a balance between the jobs and the economic contribution they make and their commercial return. The first code allocation model that Tasracing put in place four years ago was much more strongly aligned to performance and that resulted in a redistribution of the funding from the other two codes of racing to the greyhound code, so they received an extra \$425 000.

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Ms RATTRAY - But they were starting on a pretty low base, with all due respect.

Dr FORBES - That is why the board at the time recognised their performance and increased their funding by nearly half a million dollars. In terms of the obligations of animal welfare, it goes to the heart of responsible dog ownership. If somebody is taking on a racing animal they must be prepared to look after it and they cannot use an excuse that they do not have enough money to do so because they are knowingly taking on that obligation.

CHAIR - Doesn't that in part come down to training, education and standards that are in place for participants in the industry that are promoted by Tasracing and Racing Services Tasmania potentially as well? The theme that has come up in evidence before us is that some participants in the industry over a long time feel there is not enough support there to ensure they are up to date with best practice and are feeling supported in the way they manage their animals.

Dr FORBES - There is an industry skills plan that Tasracing embarked upon when it was formed and there wasn't anything formal prior to the formation of Tasracing. We have linked minimum training standards through to licensing standards and we had a plan to roll that out progressively across industry. We started with the thoroughbred code; then the next year we did the harness code and then the next year we were supported with some Federal funding which ran out. Then we had to delay it until we tried to find some more funding for that. In the end, that did not eventuate with the change of Federal Government so Tasracing itself decided to fund the greyhound code and subsidise their costs of participation in the industry funding themselves.

CHAIR - Is this going through TasTAFE? What is the training mechanism? RTOs and TasTAFE.

Dr FORBES - I think there is another point here and that is the training is important. People do not like change particularly if they have then engaged in a practice for most of their adult life and then all of a sudden you knock on a door and say, 'You need to be accredited to do this'. Some people do not like that and they do not like that scrutiny. However, guiding an industry across the three codes through this change - and very confronting change for a lot of the older participants in our sport - is something that we have taken very seriously. We are also very cognisant of our responsibilities of trying to drive that change. The heart of this comes down to cultural change of responsible ownership of dogs or horses and making sure that the people have got the skills and the aptitude to behave in a responsible manner.

Ms RATTRAY - Dr Forbes, a lot of the issues that we have heard over the last day and then again from you today about the challenges in the industry, I feel sure would be in a racing review report that is sitting on a minister's desk. Were you expecting that review to become public so that we could have a broader conversation as a Tasmanian community about what is in it? Or did you think it was going to sit and be unavailable to anybody, least of all the codes?

Dr FORBES - Are you talking in a financial context?

Ms RATTRAY - In anything. We are talking about the future of racing, and greyhound racing is one of those three key planks that hold the racing industry together in Tasmania. Would

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you expect that that would have been available, or did you think that you were providing input into that and it was going to sit?

Dr FORBES - We have been working very closely with the shareholder ministers towards addressing a whole range of issues. The key amongst them is that sustainability challenge which I outlined.

Ms RATTRAY - So you have seen the report?

Dr FORBES - No I have not seen the report. However, the issues of sustainability for Tasracing are no secret and we have been open and transparent about those for about four years.

Ms RATTRAY - Wouldn't you expect that there are some elements in that review - given that they had had key stakeholder input - that maybe useful for the future of Tasracing and the whole of the industry that we need to have a discussion about?

Dr FORBES - It is clearly a matter for the Racing minister.

Ms RATTRAY - But isn't it your concern as the head of Tasracing as well?

Dr FORBES - Absolutely, and that is why we were so plain and transparent in our annual report, dissecting the noise out from the finances in relation to asset impairment and reversal. We put it in a table to show the underlying loss of Tasracing and the fact that we are exposed to risks. We are committed to fixing this and that is why we have spent considerable time and resources working with the shareholding ministers to find a solution.

Mr BACON - You said you had not seen the report, but has the minister discussed any of the recommendations with you in terms of changes to the Tasracing business model that have been suggested in the report? Or has he not discussed the report with you at all?

Dr FORBES - We have had ongoing dialogue with the minister on a regular basis and we are very keen to find a solution to address this problem. As an industry, we need to move on from the challenges in relation to funding and move into a phase of investment and growth; that is where we need to be.

Mr BACON - The biggest issue I suppose is that the funding is CPI minus one. The stakes money is just CPI. That creates an ever-growing issue for the organisation.

Dr FORBES - There is that, and in the initial funding for Tasracing in 2009 there was a funding gap of \$4 million. There was a gap at the start and we engaged with the then government at that stage identifying that and saying that that wasn't going to work. Then, as you quite rightly point out, the gap is widening on an annual basis due to this funding obligation. To date, Tasracing has soaked up all of those losses on behalf of industry because industry has always had a CPI applied to their funding.

Mr BACON - When does that capacity for Tasracing to be able to cover that gap run out?

Dr FORBES - It is very much dependent upon the risks that materialise. As I mentioned before, the biggest risk we face is in relation to workers' compensation in terms of a cash

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outflow. We would like to think that we could have zero injuries for jockeys, but we could have two in a day. It is a fairly random-type factor. It is hard to put a time line on it; however, we do have cash reserves of about \$8 million at the time come year-end.

CHAIR - What is Tasracing's level of debt?

Dr FORBES - We have two loans. One is a \$3 million loan. A big proportion of that was inherited and given to us by TOTE Tasmania. The second loan is about \$10 million and relates to the building of the Spreyton racetrack. There is a capacity for that in the funding deed.

Mr VALENTINE - How is that being addressed over time? Do you see that being paid down? What sort of rate are you going to pay that down - that \$10 million?

Dr FORBES - The funding deed allows for the government to provide principal and interest support while Tasracing is not able to pay the loans.

Mr VALENTINE - How long have they been doing that, so far? When was that loan taken out?

Dr FORBES - It was 2011, I believe. Going forward, if we find a substantive resolution to sustainability in partnership with the shareholders, there is no reason why we can't begin to start managing our debt in an appropriate manner.

Mr VALENTINE - I am interested in the Greyhound Adoption Program and how you regulate in that space. We have heard during this set of hearings of individuals who are taking in greyhounds and putting them out for adoption. We have heard about the GAP program and the like. How do you regulate outside of the GAP program? Do you set any standards that individuals or organisations have to follow - some of the welfare groups that are out there? How do you manage that space?

Dr FORBES - This is a very important point and it is that anybody can set themselves up as a welfare agency or a rehoming agency and behave in an irresponsible manner if they choose to. We don't have an ability to regulate entities outside our statutory responsibilities.

Mr VALENTINE - You cannot set rules for those people to follow?

Dr FORBES - No.

CHAIR - Do you think Racing Services Tas could?

Dr FORBES - No, because they are not licensed participants.

Mr VALENTINE - That is limited by what is in the act.

Dr FORBES - It is governed by legislation. From time to time we hear very concerning stories about dogs that are surrendered to so-called sanctuaries where they are rehomed with the community but where they may not be suitable to go into a family home, or where they have been told that they have been de-sexed and in fact they are not. That is why our positive engagement with our racing participants is that the only appropriate place to place

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your greyhounds for adoption is with the official GAP program. I hope that the appendices make it very clear that we go through a very thorough process. The documentation we place with them is of a high calibre in terms of educating the person who is taking the dog on, and beyond that also. We almost have an ongoing and enduring helpline if those people that we place a dog with have any questions or concerns with that dog; we are there to answer the phone and help them.

Mr VALENTINE - We heard from Greyhounds Australia that there are 18 000 pups being born - 11 000 required by the industry, so obviously a very significant gap there and the issue with demand and the higher rates of euthanasia as a result. How does that sit in Tasmania? What is our demand for the numbers of dogs required for racing as opposed to the number born in the state? I am sure it sits somewhere, and we have probably even heard it, but I would like to get your perspective on what that balance is and how possible it is to get to that ideal zero euthanasia?

Dr FORBES - There are approximately 600 dogs bred in the state. There is a racing population of approximately 1 000 at any one time, so you can see we are a net importer of dogs in this state.

Mr BACON - Is it 1 000 you need every year?

Dr FORBES - Yes, 1 000 that would participate in the races we have scheduled. We have 157 race meetings per annum and those dogs would then compete about 12 000 times - so there are 12 000 starters during the course of the year. We are net importer of dogs. In terms of overbreeding, that is not a challenge we have in Tasmania.

Mr VALENTINE - If they are ending up here, they are our problem.

CHAIR - There is still a wastage issue here, though.

Dr FORBES - The question is how effectively we are using the dogs that are bred to race. I suppose that is the biggest challenge we have an industry. The actual numbers bred have been relatively static over the last five years. There has not been any tremendous increase or decrease in that regard. One of the challenges we have is trying to ensure we have enough racing opportunities for dogs of all ability. Dogs who may at the present time be deemed too slow by their owners, we have to try to create opportunities for those dogs to participate.

Mr VALENTINE - Are you talking about different classes of racing?

Dr FORBES - That is right. The grading falls under Racing Services Tasmania. The Director of Racing has undertaken a review in that regard. When he has finished his review we will be working with him and the grading schedule he devises in order to program the races. The programming is our responsibility, trying to cater for those needs of the dogs.

Mr VALENTINE - You talk about 12 336 starts, so the 14 dogs that happen to be humanely euthanased at the track is 14 out of 1 000 dogs.

Dr FORBES - Yes, there are about 1 000 dogs in the racing pool.

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Ms RATTRAY - In regard to the large commitment you would need to give to adopting a greyhound, would you believe it would be absolutely necessary that everyone who puts a greyhound out for adoption, whether it be through Brightside, the RSPCA or GAP - which I know is the preference of Tasracing - would need to have the same paperwork and requirements undertaken?

Dr FORBES - Even from some of the submissions I have read there are complaints about some of the people operating in this space, so maybe it is worthy of regulation and investigation. I was very concerned there are claims that dogs were desexed, for example, and they hadn't been done.

CHAIR - That was one single dog, but it hasn't been reinforced by anyone else. It has been acknowledged at the table here by the person the claim was made about.

Dr FORBES - One of the other aspects is we have very stringent behavioural requirements to ensure that the dogs are suitable to go to the community. It takes some weeks to do that. I have heard certain claims whereby dogs go into some sanctuaries and they are out within the community within three days. There is no way you could properly assess a dog within that time, hence I believe that is irresponsible behaviour.

Ms RATTRAY - In your paperwork it states that there should be no assessment until they have at least been in the facility for 48 hours, before even an assessment is done.

Dr FORBES - Correct. I have concerns in that area and would welcome regulation in that space.

CHAIR - Dr Forbes, thank you for coming to give evidence to us today. You are going to send through two sets of minutes. We look forward to receiving them.

Dr FORBES - Thank you very much for the opportunity.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.