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THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2025.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION

The committee met at 9 a.m.

CHAIR (Ms Johnston) - Welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Thank you very much for your attendance today. I am the Chair, Kristie Johnston, independent member for Clark. With us on the committee we have the Liberal member for Clark, Marcus Vermey; we have our upper House colleague here, Tania Rattray; Dean Winter, Cassy O'Connor, and Meg Webb.

If you could please state your name, minister, and the capacity in which you appear before the committee?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you very much, Chair. Jane Howlett, Racing Minister. To my right, I have Acting Secretary, Deirdre Wilson, and also Anita Yan, Chief Operating Officer in an acting capacity also.

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

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. This hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. This protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred by you outside the parliamentary proceeding. This hearing is a public hearing and the public and media may be present. Should you wish aspects of your evidence today to be heard in private, you must make this request to the committee at the time.

Now we do statutory declarations. Minister, you don't need to make one but if Deidre and Anita could make one that would be great.

Ms DEIDRE WILSON, ACTING SECRETARY, and **Ms ANITA YAN**, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you. Minister, would you like to begin with a short opening statement?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, thank you very much, Chair.

The Tasmanian government has taken significant steps in its commitment to phase out greyhound racing in the state with the drafting and tabling of the bill yesterday [6 November 2025]. The bill outlines a staged and considered approach to ending greyhound racing in Tasmania with the code to conclude by 30 June 2029, aligning with the end of the current funding deed for the code. I understand and appreciate that there will be many in the racing industry who are upset with the decision.

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If passed, several reforms will be implemented from 1 January 2026, including an immediate ban on breeding greyhounds for racing; additional requirements for racing interstate greyhounds in Tasmania; and a prohibition on euthanasia of racing greyhounds for non-medical reasons. To facilitate the phasing out of greyhounds, the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner has been tasked by government to plan and oversee the transition to ensure a humane and structured closure of greyhound racing in Tasmania.

As we deliver a measured and sensible phase-out of greyhound racing, I want to be clear on my support for the broader racing industry, its participants and our regional communities. I know that there are many participants in the industry who care deeply for their animals, who will be extremely disappointed by this policy decision, but the reality is it's a right decision for Tasmania.

Chair, for the avoidance of any doubt, the Premier and I discussed the decision prior to the announcement. It was endorsed by Cabinet, and I fully support the decision. As members of the committee would be aware, I have a deep personal and family connection to the code, its people and its history.

To support this transition and assist in the process, a Greyhound Racing Transition Working Group has been engaged by the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner. The government is committed to ensuring a measured and compassionate transition that prioritises the welfare of both the people and animals involved. Notably, thoroughbred and harness racing will continue to receive support following the implementation of the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024*, which has resulted in the most significant reforms to industry in decades.

Chair, whilst I now welcome questions, I again want to put on record my deep and personal commitment to a compassionate and participant-focused approach to this process.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. I might lead off, if I may. This is our first hearing of this particular committee and we welcome you along today. It's important to start off by providing some context for the matters that we will be discussing. We will hopefully be meeting with you a number of times over the transition period for the next four years.

Minister, could you provide some data around the greyhound racing industry in terms of the number of participants that are involved, the number of greyhounds in the industry, and provide us some context around the people and the animals that we will be talking about over the next four years?

Ms HOWLETT - Chair, the Commissioner is currently doing an audit of greyhounds in the state. That audit is being done, and I believe he will have some information for you later on in his hearing today. The numbers are still yet to be defined, but he has started conducting the audit.

CHAIR - We are hearing from the Commissioner straight after you, so we will certainly be putting those questions to him.

Minister, you identified in your opening statement, too, that there is a staged approach in the bill. Can you expand on the reasons why there is a staged approach to that transition?

Ms HOWLETT - Absolutely. As far as having a staged approach, it's one thing that is really important to have. The first step is passing the Greyhound Racing Legislation (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025. The bill details the amendments to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, the *Dog Control Act 2000* and the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024* to phase out greyhound racing in Tasmania.

Some of these amendments will operate from 1 January 2026 if the bill passes in 2025, and others will commence from 1 July 2029. A staged approach allows sufficient time for a responsible and orderly transition. In addition, this ensures the welfare of participants and greyhounds remains a priority and gives participants, including owners, trainers and breeders, time to adjust and to plan and prepare for their future.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. I will open up for questions. Ms O'Connor has a question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair, and thank you, minister, for your opening statement, and for being part of this very significant reform. I acknowledge that it's been difficult for you, and you've come under some criticism from within the industry, but I really respect the dignity and courage with which you've taken this on.

Part of the context for this reform will be negotiations around the deed. I'm wondering if there's any update that you can provide on how that will be worked through, given that the greyhound code part of the deed will not be a feature of the deed from 2029. Could you give us an indication of timeframe around deed negotiations, and that sort of thing?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her question. The deed is incredibly important and we have been working closely with Treasury on the deed for quite some time now. Not only is the deed important for the racing industry, it's also important for the breeding industry as well, and for them having certainty into the future. We're currently working on the deed and we will have more to say.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, and it's not possible to give an indicative timeframe of when - have those negotiations started?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, negotiations have started. I'm working with the deed with Treasury and we're still working through that at the moment.

Ms O'CONNOR - Part of any transition will require a measure of support for industry participants. Is there clarity in your mind about how you will fund that support - not that you could know now what level of compensation or support will be required - but does government envisage that those transition funds would come out of deed funds, given that, from 1 January next year [2026], the greyhound racing industry will start to inevitably wind down a bit?

Ms HOWLETT - I can certainly confirm that transition funds will not be coming out of the racing deed. The Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner and the Greyhound Racing Transition Working Group are mindful of the impacts on the participants, and these will be carefully considered and will be addressed in the Transition Plan which is being developed by the Racing Integrity Commissioner with input from the working group. The Commissioner's website has a full list of support services currently available. But we certainly invite participants from the industry to have an input into that working group.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you. Just tracking back to your statement that none of the transition funding would come out of deed funds. In the last year of the current deed, the Greyhound Racing Code would have received by today's measures, if you like, around \$8 million in funding. Presumably it won't need all that funding in 2028-29 to operate as an industry in the way that it is, for example, today. Given the state of the state's finances, do you think it might be wise not to rule out funds being taken from deed funding towards the end of its life?

Ms HOWLETT - We certainly won't be taking out any funds for compensation for the phasing out of the Greyhound Code. I mentioned, we've been in discussions with Treasury on the deed and developing what the deed will look like. We know how important it is to provide certainty to the industry in relation to the deed. That's something that we are working on.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr WINTER - Minister, this is the most shocking betrayal of a group of people that I've ever seen in my political career and watching Tasmanian politics for the last 20 years. I mean, you've been the greatest champion, I would say, of this code and its people right up until you and your government wrote the letter to the Northwest Racing Club committing your long-term support. Then, on 9 August [2025], it leaked out that the Premier and yourself were going to shut down greyhound racing.

In your intro, you said 'for avoidance of any doubt', and then outlined that you had a conversation with the Premier before the announcement and then it was signed off by Cabinet. Can you confirm the date in which the Premier told you that he wanted to shut down greyhound racing? Was that 9 August [2025]?

Ms HOWLETT - Just let me confirm the date.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is this relevant to discussion of the transition?

Ms HOWLETT - I don't believe it's in the terms of reference. I don't believe that's relevant to the terms of reference, Chair. I outlined in my opening statement -

Mr WINTER - So you're refusing to tell us when the decision was made?

Ms HOWLETT - The decision was made prior to the announcement.

Mr WINTER - Obviously, that's how decisions get made. Did you become aware on 9 August [2025]?

Ms HOWLETT - Was that Saturday?

Mr WINTER - It's Saturday, 9 August [2025].

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr WINTER - Was that the first that you became aware?

Ms HOWLETT - I've made my remarks in my opening statement, honourable member.

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Mr WINTER - The 9th of August [2025], you first became aware, and was it a phone call or a meeting with the Premier? How did it come about?

Ms HOWLETT - I don't really believe that discussions I have with the Premier are relevant to you. I know exactly where you are going, and I'm not going to get involved in your grubby politics, Mr Winter. I know where you're going.

Mr WINTER - The reason that I've asked that question is because I was at the greyhounds last night and they are absolutely devastated, and they want to know what happened.

During the election campaign, two days out, you and the government wrote a letter committing your full support to the industry. In your opening statement you said, 'delivering on the government's commitment'. The government's commitment was to keep this industry going. It was only after the election, after they'd voted for you, that you changed your mind.

They want to know what happened? Why did you betray them like this? Why did you let them down like this?

Ms HOWLETT - I have told you in my opening statement, Mr Winter, and the decision has been made -

Mr WINTER - Why, though? They don't understand why. They've done everything you've asked. You've implemented new legislation, so why have you made this decision? Why has this government done this?

Ms HOWLETT - The decision has been made and we're getting on with the job.

Mr WINTER - I'm sorry, Chair, but the minister hasn't answered the question.

CHAIR - The minister has answered.

Mr WINTER - You might not like the question, Chair, but the question is, why have you made this decision? What is the rationale for it?

CHAIR - We are here to discuss the transition. The minister has answered your question. I might move - I know that there are other questions -

Mr WINTER - I'm sorry, Chair, that is not as much time as Ms O'Connor got. I've asked a very simple question.

CHAIR - The minister has answered it, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - No, she has not.

CHAIR - To the extent that she is prepared to answer it. I am mindful that we have only limited time with the minister. There will be plenty of opportunities for the minister to come before us on other days. Ms Rattray, you had a question.

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Ms RATTRAY - Thank you, and thank you, minister, for being here. I'm finding this very difficult as well, not only in my own capacity as a member who has supported the greyhound industry for a very long time, but also on behalf of many people that I represent. But please, my questions come from a genuine interest in seeing these good people have some responses, if you like.

I'm interested to understand why this particular committee is working on transition arrangements when we received yesterday a bill that actually has transition arrangements in place. They would like to understand and so would I - is the work of this committee of any value when it comes to, I suppose, being part of a transition and allowing those greyhound industry stakeholders to have some input into this when we have a piece of legislation already tabled?

I would like some understanding, and I know they would too, minister. Again, I appreciate your position and where you've come from here.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member, and I thank you for the question. I think this committee is extremely important in the transition of the phase-out of the code. I think your input is highly valued into that transition. Don't forget also that the Racing Integrity Commissioner has his working group, which I hope participants will become involved in and have their say to the Commissioner in that transition period.

Ms RATTRAY - But can I get back to why it was necessary, if you like, to table a piece of legislation that effectively deals with the transition period when the work of this committee had not even really begun? This is our first official hearing. We've had two other meetings. So, just to have some understanding of what input is there likely to be when we already have a piece of legislation before the parliament.

Ms HOWLETT - I'm unsure as to how many meetings your committee has had.

Ms RATTRAY - This is our first public hearing.

Ms HOWLETT - Right.

CHAIR - Just to be very clear to members of the community that might be listening. We are an oversight committee. Our terms of reference make it very clear that we are an oversight committee. Perhaps, minister, if you'd like to address the question.

Ms HOWLETT - Certainly, and look, the government made the decision to introduce the legislation and, as we committed, we would introduce that legislation as soon as possible. The legislation was tabled yesterday [6 November 2025]. So, we've made a commitment that we will get on with the job and that is exactly what we've done. This is about ensuring the transition and it's an oversight, and I believe you have your opportunity to discuss the transitional working group that the Commissioner has formed with him later on today.

Ms RATTRAY - My final question, if I might for this part, is when do you envisage that this will actually be dealt with in the parliament? Yes, tabled yesterday, but obviously there's quite a few processes to go through before this legislation would become law. What's your timeframe plan for that?

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Ms HOWLETT - That's right, and that's a matter for the Leader of Government Business. I know that industry wanted the legislation to be tabled prior to engaging or consulting with the Commissioner's working group as well. Now that the legislation is tabled, I'm hoping that they will commit to working with the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner's working group and have their say. As far as when the bill will be debated, that is a matter for the Leader of Government Business in the House. I imagine it will be debated as soon as practicable.

CHAIR - For the avoidance of doubt and to make it very clear to anyone watching the broadcast today, I remind members and the community of the terms of reference for our committee.

The resolution of both Houses was for a committee to oversee the phasing out of greyhound racing in Tasmania by 30 June 2029, including matters of:

- (1) Protecting the welfare of greyhounds and participants in the industry during the phase out period and following its conclusion;
- (2) Transitional arrangements for greyhound racing industry participants, including any fair and reasonable compensation requirements;
- (3) Requirements of rehoming organisations;
- (4) Legislative requirements for the transition, and;
- (5) Any other incidental matters.

Hopefully that provides a bit of context to what we're discussing today.

Mr VERMEY - Minister, greyhound racing will be phased out, and that's what we're here to support. We are not here -

Mr WINTER - Speak for yourself, mate.

Mr VERMEY - We're here to support the industry; we're not here to 'take on' the industry or anyone now. It's about offering support to those people who have the animals, and people involved in that industry. I know Ms O'Connor mentioned that there is support. But we have people who are potentially watching now; are you able to outline some of those supports that are out there and that currently have been put forward? Also, with pets, will they still be able to breed those? I know the Chair - and I met Freddie yesterday -

Ms O'CONNOR - Beautiful dog.

Mr VERMEY - Beautiful dog.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Mr Vermey.

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Mr VERMEY - A good friend of mine has an 8-year-old ex-racer. Can those dogs be bred in the future? Is there a point with those people in the industry having pets under a regulation that can be ongoing?

Ms HOWLETT - The answer to that is yes; the breeding of greyhounds for pets, absolutely, after the legislation is implemented, and after 2029, yes they can.

Mr VERMEY - So that is a possible income stream for those people? I think that perception of the dogs and how lovely they actually are is a good thing.

Ms HOWLETT - That's right. Many people absolutely love the breed and have a great love for greyhounds. Significantly, the proposed bill supports recreational ownership of greyhounds to continue. All animal welfare and safety matters will remain governed under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and the *Dog Control Act 2000*. The bill also provides for greyhounds to be bred as pets, but prohibits the breeding of greyhounds for racing.

During the transition period, greyhounds also cannot be brought into Tasmania for racing purposes without prior approval from Tasracing. This measure supports the government's commitment to a controlled and a responsible phase-out of greyhound racing in the state. While greyhound breeders may breed dogs for domestic pets, under the proposed bill greyhounds are not permitted to be bred for the purpose of racing during that transitional period, or once the transition concludes.

Mr VERMEY - Thank you, minister.

Ms RATTRAY - I have a supplementary question, if I might, Chair, in regards to that. Minister, if a person wanted to breed a litter of pups and send them to the mainland, are you saying that that's not allowed? You are not able to breed a litter of greyhound pups to race in another jurisdiction where it's legal to raise greyhounds?

Ms HOWLETT - They can be bred as a domestic pet only.

Ms RATTRAY - They can't go to another state?

Ms HOWLETT - That's right.

Ms RATTRAY - Is that not in conflict with our constitution of free trade, if you like?

Ms O'CONNOR - Trade in sentient beings, goodness me.

Ms RATTRAY - No, it's a genuine question. If you can't race them in Tasmania if that goes through, if that passes this state. But if you still want to be a greyhound breeder and live in Tasmania, you may well have strong connections in other states that still have greyhound racing as a legal sport, why would you not be able to send your greyhound to another state?

Ms HOWLETT - Would you like to add any more to that, secretary?

Ms RATTRAY - It might be a very basic question and some that might not feel relevant.

Ms HOWLETT - I think it's an important question.

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Ms WILSON - Thank you for the question. The changes to the Animal Welfare act relate to and will prohibit breeding for racing purposes. This is an animal welfare requirement, and it comes into place in 2029. There will be nothing stopping a greyhound racing participant undertaking their business in a mainland state.

Ms RATTRAY - You're very soft this morning, Deidre, and there are people in the background.

Ms WILSON - Sorry, I should say I have a bit of a sore throat.

CHAIR - Thank you. Minister, going back to the importance of the transitional arrangements, can you outline any risks your department and you might foresee if transitional arrangements aren't put in place for both industry participants and animal welfare, if we leave things as they are at the moment and go up to a hard deadline of 30 June 2029? Can you perhaps outline some of those?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. I thank you for your question. It's important that we put these safeguards in place. At the end of 2029, we don't want to end up with an enormous number of greyhounds that are just retired from racing. It's important that we put this phase-out process in place in order to have a much more controlled approach. Otherwise, there will be animal welfare issues for a start. The bill makes it clear that the destruction of a greyhound, other than by a vet in an emergency, can only be for animal welfare reasons, and that will also require the written consent of Tasracing.

CHAIR - Sorry to interrupt you, minister, but is that something you've learnt through other jurisdictions when you've seen the phasing out of greyhound racing, the importance of having these welfare provisions put in early?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and that's a good point. We engaged the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner to help write and implement the bill. That was part of his recommendations.

Mr WINTER - Minister, the bill and your policy will have a huge impact on participants - their mental health, the welfare of people, of dogs. Can you outline what consultation, specifically in relation to the bill, happened with the local industry before it was tabled yesterday?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank you for the question. There has been a lot of consultation. As the committee would be aware, the Premier and I requested that the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner develop a comprehensive plan to deliver all operational, animal welfare, and integrity components of the transition. This included comprehensive consultation with all stakeholders.

I'm advised that the Commissioner, Mr Carroll, wrote to all MPs offering them a briefing on the work that he was undertaking. He also wrote an open letter encouraging any participants to contact his office with any concerns and invited them for feedback. I'm further advised that this consultation has been significant and far-reaching and has helped inform the process to date.

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My office and I have had conversations with representatives of Greyhounds Tasmania. On Monday this week, I met with the chair and CEO of Greyhound Australasia. Whilst these conversations have been robust, they've also been very respectful, and are premised by my deep care for the participants and their families.

Mr WINTER - Sorry, the question quite specifically is: what consultation has happened with industry on this bill? Were they given a draft to look at, to provide feedback on?

Ms HOWLETT - Well, as I said -

Mr WINTER - You met with the industry on Monday - the Australasian greyhound group - did they see a copy of this? Did they provide feedback, or did any other industry group provide feedback to it?

Ms HOWLETT - The industry has been invited to provide information to the Racing Integrity Commissioner -

Mr WINTER - But on this bill specifically -

Ms HOWLETT - and they have chosen not to, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - No, they were effectively invited, as an organisation, a group, to shut themselves down, and they chose not to participate, which I fully understand. But has anyone -

Ms HOWLETT - Have you shared your concerns with the independent Racing Commissioner, Mr Winter? Have you met with him?

Mr WINTER - About this bill? I saw it less than 24 hours ago.

Ms HOWLETT - Why haven't you taken the opportunity to meet with the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner?

Mr WINTER - I have.

Ms HOWLETT - You have met with him? How many times?

Mr WINTER - Once.

Ms HOWLETT - Well, I'm glad you provided input.

Mr WINTER - Minister, we're trying to ask you questions about this bill. I still haven't got an answer to my very first question. Was any member of the industry given a copy of this bill to provide feedback to it? Was there any consultation?

Ms HOWLETT - All MPs -

Mr WINTER - No, member of the industry, not MPs. Has any member of the industry seen this bill before it was tabled?

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Ms HOWLETT - The bill has now been tabled, and the industry will have their opportunity to now provide input -

Mr WINTER - After it's been tabled?

Ms HOWLETT - to the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - This is such a huge and significant reform. I can't think of another time where there's been such a huge and significant reform and there has not been a period of public consultation, a period of talking directly to the people impacted. They haven't even seen it before it got tabled. How does that speak to respect for those participants in the industry?

Ms HOWLETT - The industry will now have the opportunity -

Mr WINTER - After it's been tabled. It shows no respect to them.

Ms HOWLETT - to provide input to what's important - the transition process.

Mr WINTER - So, will you meet with the industry about this bill to take their feedback before it's debated?

Ms HOWLETT - I will meet with the industry, as will the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner, to discuss their concerns about the phase-out transition.

Mr WINTER - I mean specifically about this bill.

Ms HOWLETT - Well, the bill is about phasing out greyhound racing.

Mr WINTER - So you are committed to meeting with them before this is debated? You will meet with the industry to discuss the bill?

Ms HOWLETT - The industry has had the opportunity to meet with the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner -

Mr WINTER - But not about this bill. They haven't seen this until yesterday.

Ms HOWLETT - The bill has now been tabled, and you will have the opportunity during the committee stage to discuss issues that you have.

Mr WINTER - So, you won't meet with them?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Mr Winter.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, just to be clear, is it your understanding that the industry broadly knew what the government's policy is, and understood the structure that's embedded in this bill; that is, that there would be a transition that required an omnibus bill? In the conversations you've had with the industry, which you detailed earlier, there would have been an understanding that the government is committed to ending greyhound racing and that that would take legislative form. So, they knew - I mean, I don't know if industry participants had

seen the details of the bill itself, but the policy and the fact there would be a transition was well understood?

Ms HOWLETT - The policy and the transition and the phasing out of the code and the ending of the code in 2029, was well known through media. The industry was very much aware of that and the Racing Integrity Commissioner has had discussions with the groups. So you will have that opportunity to discuss the conversations that the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner has had.

Ms O'CONNOR - I guess it's difficult in a way because the industry to date has refused to take the opportunity to sit at that working group table and provide input to the policy and how it would unroll.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and I understand how difficult that would have been for them. Now that the bill has been tabled, I'm really hoping that the industry does have some input because it's important that we have feedback and input from the industry in the transition phase.

Ms WEBB - Chair, this is an interesting situation for me because I'm on the public record as being very happy about the final outcome we're working towards, the ending of greyhound racing in the state. However, I'm also someone who cares a lot about good governance and good process.

Mr Winter - Hear, hear.

Ms WEBB - We are an oversight committee for this process. One of our terms of reference asks us to have attention to protecting the welfare of greyhounds and participants.

I think the lines of questioning are reasonable and it is important to get material on the public record. Much as I applaud the outcome, I recognise that the industry likely felt ambushed when the decision was announced, and likely feel ambushed again with a piece of legislation being tabled. What I'm trying to get a confirmation from you on is, it's been tabled and they hadn't seen it and hadn't directly had a chance to have input into it, specifically as a piece of legislation. Can you just confirm that on the record?

Ms HOWLETT - What I'd like to say, honourable member, is the industry has publicly stated that they would not consult until the legislation was tabled. The legislation was tabled yesterday. So, now I'm hoping that the industry will come forward and have discussions with the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner.

Ms WEBB - To tease that out a little bit - and I'm not as familiar about all the public statements made by the industry. My understanding is the industry didn't want to participate in a process that's occurring through the independent Commissioner, but that's different from being consulted on a specific piece of legislation.

Normally, when we develop legislation, part of that process is to put an exposure draft out for consultation and relevant stakeholders of all sorts would have an opportunity to have input into and comment on an exposure draft. Can you confirm that didn't occur in this instance?

Ms HOWLETT - No, the actual bill did not go out for public consultation.

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Ms WEBB - It's good to have that nice and clearly on the record. The industry, choosing not to participate in one aspect of an ongoing process under the Commissioner, shouldn't necessarily be taken as a disinterest or a disinclination to participate in other ongoing aspects. Will you be inviting the industry to participate in ongoing aspects of this as it plays out, or are you taking their initial refusal to be part of one aspect of it as a blanket no?

Ms HOWLETT - No, I absolutely hope that the industry does come forward and starts to participate in consultation with the working group -

Ms WEBB - No, not just the working group, but other sorts of opportunities for consultation. Obviously, the bill that they had no chance to have any tangible input into has been tabled, so that's already an opportunity for the industry to be directly consulted on that specific thing that has gone. We need to recognise, on the record here, that that occurred. Do you agree, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, it did occur. I'm happy to take criticism for there being a lack of consultation and lack of time for people to have an oversight of the bill. However, the government made it very clear, since we announced the decision, that we intended to introduce the legislation this year. This should come as no surprise to anyone, but we acknowledge that yesterday was an incredibly difficult day for the industry and its participants and its family, and also members of this place as well. There are significant animal welfare and integrity issues that require legislation to be tabled as soon as possible after the government announced its position.

Mr VERMEY - Minister, on that consultation just then, have you consulted with the other equine industries to make sure that they are safe as well, or being part of that racing area, to know that they're not in line for any changes, seeing that we're looking at the greyhounds, just so they know?

Ms HOWLETT - That's a really important question, honourable member. The Premier and I have made it very clear of our support for the broader racing industry as participants and, of course, our very valued regional communities.

Work has started, as I said before, on the new racing funding deed to ensure the financial sustainability of the Tasmanian racing industry. This is especially important to provide certainty to the industry following the government's announcement to phase out greyhound racing by 30 June 2029. As we know, this coincides with the expiration of the current funding deed, providing an opportunity to deliver a measured transition that focuses on funding requirements of the thoroughbred and the harness codes, to ensure Tasmanian racing can thrive into the future.

The industry funding deed was implemented from 1 July 2009. It has a term for 20 years, ending 30 June 2029; the government will continue to honour the deed. As I mentioned before, we're working very closely with the Treasurer as a shareholder minister, as well working with Tasracing. We have a very strong interest in the racing code and the need for certainty. As I said, we're getting on with the job.

A project to assess options for the next deed has commenced. It's being conducted by a new working group, overseen by the departments of Treasury and Finance and NRE

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[Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania], and work is under way. It's a complex process and we've got to make sure that we get it right.

Mr VERMEY - Chair, on that and talking about funding and with the Treasurer, with the budget just been released, there is sufficient funding allocated to the transition?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, you will see in the budget papers that were tabled yesterday, there is \$500,000 allocated for this financial year to support the phase-out and the implementation under the line item of 'greyhound racing transition'. This initiative will support the government's commitment to phase out greyhound racing by 30 June [2029]. The funding enables commencement of the transition under the oversight of the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner.

This will ensure that the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner, who is developing a comprehensive plan to deliver operational, animal welfare, and the integrity components as well of the transition, will be appropriately resourced. It's really important that he is appropriately resourced to deliver his work. Importantly, that's what the industry participants need. I am advised what this looks like is still being confirmed and determined, but it may include support services, financial, or skills and retraining, and that's currently what the Commissioner will work through.

CHAIR - Thank you. Minister, whilst you've got the budget in your hands, I understand Ms O'Connor has a quick question regarding budget, then I'll go to Ms Rattray.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Just off the back of Mr Vermey's question: as you are aware, there's more than 800 dogs in the greyhound racing industry and all of them will require rehoming at some level. Can you confirm that some of the funds that are allocated for the transition will go to rehoming organisations like the RSPCA, the Dogs' Homes, potentially Brightside and others, because it is important that they are resourced to support this process and make sure the dogs go to good homes.

Ms HOWLETT - It's really important, honourable member. I have an update on some figures that you asked for previously before I go onto the rehoming.

Ms O'CONNOR - The Chair asked.

Ms HOWLETT - Sorry. Chair, currently there are 82 registered trainers; 53 trainer-owners; 78 attendants; 74 breeders, and the number of greyhounds is over 800. I can't give you an accurate number on that, but currently over 800.

As far as rehoming is concerned, the Commissioner, supported by the Greyhound Racing Transition Working Group, will work with rehoming organisations to ensure all greyhounds are safely transitioned into homes or appropriate care.

I understand that a dedicated rehoming strategy will be developed as part of the transition plan being led by the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner. Detailed questions you can refer to him at his hearing. However, I can say that the government recognises supporting rehoming efforts will continue to be needed and remains committed to the continuation of the 'Greyhounds as Pets', the GAP program, which has been highly successful in finding permanent homes for former racing greyhound dogs. I know that GAP has been up upgraded

and will be adding an additional 30 kennels for that, and that should be complete in the next two weeks as well.

Ms RATTRAY - Following on from your information around the \$500,000 in the budget for the transitional arrangements, is it likely that the [racing] integrity Commissioner's office will virtually need that money to implement and continue the work they're doing? How much of that is likely to go to that particular office? How much might go to some of those important places that the honourable member for Hobart talked about when she asked the question? It's not a lot of money?

Ms HOWLETT - No, it's not a lot of money and the \$500,000 is allocated in the interim budget, which was delivered yesterday [6 November 2025]. The independent Racing Integrity Commissioner will put in a submission for the 2026-27 budget as well. How much will it cost? Well, that is yet to be determined. That is something that the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner will work through and have plans for in future budget submissions as well. It's really important that he has the resources that is required for this transition.

Ms RATTRAY - It's expected that a lot of that money, or quite a bit of that money, that's been allocated in this interim budget will need to go to the office of the [racing] integrity Commissioner to do his work?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and as I said, that is money that is in the interim budget that was handed down yesterday. I suspect that the independent Commissioner will put a budget submission in for the 2026-27 budget.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay. My second question is: the \$8 million that the greyhound code already receives from the deed, where's that money going to? What happens to that money from now on?

Ms HOWLETT - That money is in the deed until [greyhound] racing ceases in 2029. So that money is in the deed now.

Ms RATTRAY - Right. So none of this additional money for transition comes out of that current allocation of \$8 million -

Ms HOWLETT - No.

Mr WINTER - Minister, while we were asking, I received a text message from the greyhound industry that tells me that at 9.15 yesterday [6 November 2025], they were hauled in by the Commissioner to give them a copy of the bill. So, they did get notice, minister. You couldn't answer the question, but they were given about 45 minutes before parliament started, an hour and 45 before [it was tabled], to see a copy of the bill. So, no proper consultation on this with the committee that is supposed to oversee this, nor the industry that has to live with it. It's a shocking lack of consultation for people whose livelihoods are being lost because of this decision.

The deed is a really important part of their livelihoods, as well as the other two codes. I frankly do not believe you that you are committed to the other two codes because how could I? You were committed to greyhounds three months ago; now you're shutting them down. Has

the government done any modelling around the deed, and is the government expecting to find savings in terms of the total quantum of the deed in the long term after 2029?

Ms HOWLETT - The deed, as I mentioned before, is currently being worked through with Treasury, and we've been working on that for some time. We, as a government, are fully committed to the racing industry in Tasmania and we know the importance of the deed, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Do you understand, though, that there's going to be diseconomies of scale through Tasracing, through the loss of one code? The greyhounds are about 40 per cent of the wagering revenue taken by Tasracing. Once that's taken away, there are significant and big risks for the other two codes. Have you or the government done any modelling on the sustainability of the Tasracing model post the shutdown of greyhound racing?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, Treasury is currently working on the deed. We know the importance.

Mr WINTER - Are they doing that modelling, though, specifically around the financial impacts to the other two codes and the diseconomies of scale?

Ms HOWLETT - As far as Tasracing is concerned, and the questions that you have around modelling, you have the opportunity to ask Tasracing those questions in GBE hearings.

Mr WINTER - You just said that Treasury is doing that, though?

Ms HOWLETT - Treasury is doing the modelling on the deed, as I've mentioned multiple times.

Mr WINTER - I remember sitting here two years ago and Tasracing saying they presented a draft deed to government two years ago and that they wanted to get moving to provide the industry certainty, and here we are two years later with no draft deed, and you've had to start again. Can you outline the timing and when the industry will be able to see a deed to give them certainty for their breeding programs across the other two codes?

Ms HOWLETT - The deed ends in 2029, Mr Winter. We have been working on the deed with Treasury for quite some time. I can't give you a definite date. I know how important it is for the breeding industry, Mr Winter and I've had discussions with them about the deed. The deed is secured, and we are 100 per cent committed to the deed.

Mr WINTER - Just the date, though: when are you expecting to have a deed for the industry to see and to provide them certainty? Are we talking six months, a year?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Mr Winter. I might say that if you hadn't caused an election, Mr Winter, and your ego hadn't gotten in the way, Treasury wouldn't have been so busy working on an interim budget. You blew the budget up with your election that was unnecessary, Mr Winter. Treasury has been incredibly busy.

CHAIR - If you can answer the question, minister.

PUBLIC

Mr WINTER - The specific question is what's your expectation on timing? When will we be able to see a new deed to give certainty to the other two codes?

Ms HOWLETT - Well, now that Treasury has delivered the interim budget, obviously they'll start working on the next year 2026-27 budget, but it is a priority, and we have a team in Treasury that will go back to working on the deed.

Mr WINTER - What's your expectation on the timing of when we will see a deed to give certainty for the other two codes?

Ms HOWLETT - I have to get an answer from Treasury on that, but they're currently -

Mr WINTER - Would you be able to take it on notice, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - They're currently working on the deed, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Could you take it on notice, do you think?

Ms HOWLETT - I don't believe I need to take that on notice.

Mr WINTER - No, you don't. That's why I'm asking you if you can provide this information to the committee.

Ms HOWLETT - There is 100 per cent certainty on the deed and I give my word to that.

Mr WINTER - No, there's not. How could anyone believe anything you say about racing? No one could.

Ms HOWLETT - Well, that's a matter of your opinion, Mr Winter. The deed is currently being worked on. We're 100 per cent committed to the deed and Treasury will go back to working on the deed as they have been since the beginning of the year, Mr Winter.

Ms WEBB - When's the latest date you would understand that there has to be a deed in place.

Ms HOWLETT - 2029.

Ms WEBB - But obviously, for the industry's purpose, it needs to be ahead of the end of that.

Ms HOWLETT - Absolutely.

Ms WEBB - So I am asking you then -

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you serious? The question was 'in place', and that's an accurate answer.

Ms WEBB - That's okay, I'm just refining the question. Mr Winter is asking if there's a timeline for the deed, and you're - not unreasonably - saying that you can't give a specific

timeline. But I'm asking for something that's a bit more indicative, like, when's the absolute latest that you expect to have that deed finalised?

Ms HOWLETT - I would expect that the deed would be finalised within the next six months.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, I appreciate that.

Mr VERMEY - Just back to the 800-plus dogs - racing is still going, so there's still a few being bred going forward. Just a provision for welfare and protection in the bill going forward, can you outline that, please?

Ms HOWLETT - The welfare is absolutely paramount, and the government has committed to ensuring that no healthy greyhound is euthanised due to the phase-out. This is enforced through this proposed bill. The *Racing Regulation Integrity Act 2024* will be amended to require euthanasia of a greyhound, other than by a vet or in an emergency, to require written consent of Tasracing, and can only be for animal welfare reasons.

During the transition period, greyhounds also cannot be brought into Tasmania for racing purposes without approval from Tasracing. This is a measure that supports the government's commitment to a controlled and a really responsible phase-out of greyhound racing in the state.

While greyhound breeders may breed dogs for domestic pets under the proposed bill, greyhounds are not permitted to be bred for the purpose of racing during the transition period or once the ban is in place.

Furthermore, a registered greyhound, once it has reached the age of six-years-old, or that has not raced for a 12-month period, will be deemed retired and unregistered. Exceptions will be made for a greyhound that has not raced for 12 months due to injury, but it must be certified as 'recovered' by a veterinary surgeon.

Mr VERMEY - So you will have protections, or monitor those breeders who are potentially going to take on dogs for domestic or home use, as pets? There will definitely be safeguards to monitor and make sure that they're being kept aware, and strict codes -

Ms RATTRAY - That they're lying on the couch and they're not running?

Mr VERMEY - Just making sure that those numbers there, going forward - that they're not going outside the system and somehow being pushed through - are there ways of protecting that?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and that's something the Commissioner will be monitoring as well.

Ms RATTRAY - Following on from the breeding of greyhounds. Can I take it from the legislation that was tabled yesterday [6 November 2025], that effectively there will be no greyhound litters after 1 January 2026? According to this, on 1 January 2026, if you have a litter of greyhounds, they're okay, but anything after that is illegal. Is that correct?

Ms O'CONNOR - Except if they're bred for domestic pets.

Ms RATTRAY - They have to be bred for domestic purposes only. They're on the couch and they're not running.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, that's correct, honourable member.

Ms O'CONNOR - Sometimes they run; short bursts.

Ms RATTRAY - Right, okay. I think 1 January [2026] is probably about, I don't know, 10 weeks away.

Ms HOWLETT - The bill, obviously, must pass both Houses of parliament.

Ms RATTRAY - It says here '1 January [2026]'. What if the bill hasn't passed the parliament by 1 January [2026]? How can you backdate that? Is that a reasonable question?

Ms WILSON - In the bill -

Ms RATTRAY - I haven't read it cover to cover.

Ms WILSON - I completely understand. That's why I thought I would refer you to it, because I've noted you've got it in front of you.

Clause 2 deals with commencement. It says it will commence on 1 January [2026], or if this bill does not receive the Royal Assent on that date, on the day on which the act receives the Royal Assent.

If the bill is passed -

Ms RATTRAY - Before 1 January [2026] - if it receives Royal Assent before 1 January [2026], this all comes into play. What if that doesn't happen when it comes to the whelping?

Ms WILSON - There are provisions in the bill that allow for -

Ms RATTRAY - 'Such other circumstances as may be prescribed for the purpose of this subclause'. Is that it?

Ms WILSON - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - What date goes in there?

Ms WILSON - It would depend upon the date of the passing of the bill. It allows for some reasonable exemptions for whelping dogs.

Ms RATTRAY - My second question is, and I think the honourable member for Nelson will support me in this and probably the member of Hobart, and perhaps everyone else around here. Language is really important when it comes to - particularly legislation. The word 'destruction' of a greyhound, I actually found quite offensive, when I read it. 'Destruction' - surely there was a better word, minister, that could have been used other than the word 'destruction' of a greyhound.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's consistent with other legislation, in the *Animal Welfare Act* [1993] and other statutes.

Ms RATTRAY - Is it really?

CHAIR - It's very confronting language, but that is consistent, that is my understanding.

Ms HOWLETT - It is used in other legislation.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. Obviously, we took advice from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel in the drafting, and that's the term that they put forward for use in the bill.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, the Greyhound Adoption Program, following the arrival of Dr Martin Lenz, proposed a throughput policy, if you like, for GAP that provided for, the Greens believe, a greater potential for the euthanasia of dogs.

I will just point you to the Tasracing 2025 annual report: page 10 – 'GAP Statistics'. We've gone from periods where 22 dogs were failing assessment and being euthanised by GAP in 2012, to a high of 33 dogs being euthanised in 2015. Thankfully the numbers started to go down after that. In 2020, three dogs at GAP failed assessment and were euthanised. This year, after four years of one or zero dogs being failed assessment and put to death, we are now back up at five dogs.

Can you see that the throughput policy potentially presents a risk to the intent of the animal welfare reforms and the other provisions within this act that are intended to severely restrict the number of dogs that are being euthanised or killed?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member, I would have to seek more information from Dr Martin Lenz from Tasracing to give you an accurate answer for the latest details.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Can I ask that you do that and provide the information to the committee about how the new throughput policy aligns, if it does, with the government's stated intent in regard to the welfare of dogs currently in the industry?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and I think the independent Commissioner is also having input into that policy as well, honourable member. He may have more to say if you ask him in the hearing as well. I can certainly find out on the previous data that you stated from.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just formally, if you could, provide information from Dr Martin Lenz to the committee on the throughput policy. I'm asking you as minister, and it obviously is something that we'll raise with the Racing Integrity Commissioner, but to take a real keen interest in the throughput policy itself and whether it does align with the policy now of government in regard to the welfare of the greyhounds and the need to make sure every one of them we can is found a good home rather than euthanised.

Ms HOWLETT - Absolutely.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - We will note that that's been taken on notice.

Mr WINTER - Minister, in New Zealand, they're also shutting down this industry. There's an extraordinary policy where the government is seizing assets from race clubs and the greyhounds. Can you rule out doing anything like that in Tasmania?

I'll repeat the question, in New Zealand as part of the shutdown of greyhound racing, the government there is actually seizing assets of –

Ms O'CONNOR - Private assets?

Mr WINTER - Well, yes, assets of race clubs. Greyhound Racing New Zealand lawyers say citizens ought to be concerned about a government move to acquire the organisation's assets. I'm sure I know the answer to this, but I want to get it on record that you are not planning anything like this as part of this phase out.

Ms HOWLETT - We've tabled the bill and that is not part of the bill.

Mr WINTER - I think I know the answer. I just want to make it really clear for the industry that's asked me to ask this question, you are not considering doing anything like that?

Ms HOWLETT - No.

Mr WINTER - Thank you, I'm very pleased with that answer.

Minister, the compensation was the other issue that was raised with me last night at the greyhounds. I spoke to trainers and owners who have invested thousands of dollars of their own into infrastructure and their own training locations as recently as the last few months. Will there be compensation for trainers and owners who've invested so much into this industry believing that it would continue in the long-term?

Ms HOWLETT - I fully appreciate your question. I also appreciate and acknowledge the impact on the members of the greyhound racing community, and the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner and the Greyhound Transition Working Group are very mindful of these impacts and they will be carefully considered and addressed in the transition plan developed by the Commissioner and the input from the working group.

Nothing is set in stone. We would appreciate all feedback, and the Commissioner will develop a plan of what that looks like.

Mr WINTER - At the moment there's only half a million dollars for the current financial year - maybe it's for the next year?

Ms HOWLETT - It's in the interim budget.

Mr WINTER - In the interim budget. There's no allocation further to that, so allocations for that sort of support need to come in future budgets. Is the government open to providing that sort of funding?

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - That's something that we will take advice from the Independent Racing Commissioner and that's something that he will work on with his working group.

Ms RATTRAY - And this committee?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, absolutely.

Ms RATTRAY - Otherwise I might as well head off now.

Mr WINTER - Feels a bit like that with a bill being tabled.

Ms HOWLETT - No, absolutely advice from this committee as well. My priority is to make sure that the participants are looked after during this transition and phase out. That is my absolute priority. That is something that the Commissioner will develop with input from industry, I hope.

CHAIR - Minister, I am aware we've got five minutes remaining of this particular hearing. I know Ms Rattray has a question, and I have a question. We will have you back. I'm sure there's no doubt about that, that we will have you back fairly soon.

Ms RATTRAY - Mine's a very sharp question. The \$8 million that currently goes to the Greyhound Code post-2029, what's your plans for that, minister?

Ms O'CONNOR - You could invest it in hospitals or something like that.

Ms RATTRAY - It's a fair question.

Ms HOWLETT - That is something that Treasury is working on with the deed. That \$8 million is part of the deed funding.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - To be clear, it funds the greyhound code now.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you for coming back to us with the data around registered trainers, trainer/owners, attendants and breeders, and the number of greyhounds. Can I drill down into that data? It is important for this committee to have some context about who we're talking about, whether it be the numbers of greyhounds or the industry participants so that we can ground that in some reality. Can you give some information about the profile there? When we talk about 82 registered trainers, 53 trainer/owners, 74 breeders, are some of those people double counted? Some would be trainers for instance and others would be - can you give an idea of the number of discrete participants? I imagine that some would be trainers and also breeders, for instance. How many are we double counting there?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member, and I appreciate your question. The independent Racing Integrity Commissioner has been conducting an audit, so he will have more definite numbers.

CHAIR - Excellent. Can I also confirm that he would have or maybe you might have the number of dogs the owners and trainers each have - some participants might have one, two or, three dogs, and others we know have 90 dogs. To give us a breakdown of how many participants only have one or two dogs, how many have 20 to 30 dogs, and how many might be significantly impacted because they have 90 dogs, for instance. Is that the data that the Commissioner would have?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, that data is part of his audit.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - If you might indulge me, Chair, in relation to the development of a new funding deed, for the member for Hobart. As I stated, there's a working group developing a draft and a new funding deed and I'm expecting advice and a report from them I said in four months - six months, in terms of the latest date - I want to make it clear that I want it finalised as quickly as possible. As soon as we can and as soon as Treasury can, that's my priority to have that finalised for certainty for the industry.

CHAIR - Thank you. If I may, getting back to the transitional arrangements, minister, can you outline - we talked about it in terms of breeding and the risks around moving dogs from state to state. Can you talk about the importation and the transition arrangements around importation because that's an important aspect. Whilst we have these provisions in the bill around breeding, can you talk about importation and exporting of dogs.

Ms HOWLETT - As far importation, under the bill during the transition period, greyhounds cannot be brought into Tasmania for racing purposes without prior approval from Tasracing. This measure supports the government's commitment to have a controlled and responsible phase-out of greyhound racing in the state. We don't want to end up in 2029 with thousands of greyhounds that we cannot rehome. We do not want to have an animal welfare issue.

Clauses 6 and 8 provide circumstances necessary for Tasracing to grant consent for an interstate greyhound to race here in Tasmania, being that Tasracing is satisfied that the health and welfare of the greyhound whilst in Tasmania is appropriate, and that requirements specified in the transition plan being developed by the Commissioner and approved by me are met.

CHAIR - That's during the transitional phase, but after the ban is implemented in 2029, the importation would be banned, unless it's for breeding purposes?

Ms WILSON - To be really clear, what happens post 2029 is that greyhound racing will be prohibited. So that's how the ban is put in place, so people could bring a greyhound pet in, for example. It is about the fact that the consequential changes ban greyhound racing in Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - You will have a significant monitoring and enforcement challenge on your hands during the transition period. Is that something that both the Racing Integrity Commission and Tasracing will be part of?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, that's right, and the Commissioner will have oversight of this, yes.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - And stewards?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, correct.

Mr WINTER - On the timing of this bill; it hasn't been properly consulted, no-one's seen it, the committee hadn't seen it until yesterday. Can you commit to not trying to rush this through parliament this year, to give people adequate time to consult with this? The last day of Legislative Council is 11 December [2025]. Can you commit to not rushing this through?

Ms HOWLETT - No.

Mr WINTER - 11 December [2025] is the day of the Hobart 1000. You would shut down greyhound racing on that same day?

Ms HOWLETT - It's not shutting down greyhound racing.

Mr WINTER - That's what the bill does.

CHAIR - 30 June 2029 is the end of greyhound racing.

Mr WINTER - But that's what the bill does.

Ms HOWLETT - As I said before, the timing of what is put and tabled on the parliamentary agenda is a matter for the Leader of the House and the government.

Mr WINTER - I'd like to speak to it.

CHAIR - Our time has come to an end. Thank you very much, minister and others, for joining us today. I'm sure we will have you back a number of times to discuss the transition arrangements over the next four years, or the life of this committee, however long that might be. Thank you very much for your time.

Before you leave, I need to read a final statement. What you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege is not attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us here. Do you understand that?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you, we'll stop the broadcast.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

The committee was suspended at 10.16 a.m.

PUBLIC

THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2025.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION

The committee resumed at 10.30 a.m.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition, and thank you very much for your attendance, Commissioner. We appreciate you being here. I'll introduce members of the committee myself, Kristie Johnston as the Chair. We have down to my left: Marcus Vermey, Tania Rattray, Dean Winter, Cassy O'Connor, and Meg Webb.

Commissioner, if you could please state your name and the capacity in which you're appearing before the committee, and then I move to you, Nicole.

Mr CARROLL - My full name is Sean Michael Carroll and I'm Tasmania's independent Racing Integrity Commissioner.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms MALCHER - Nicole Malcher, the Executive Director for Legal and Policy for the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner's Office.

CHAIR - Thanks for coming today. Can I confirm that you have both received and read the guide sent to you by the committee secretary?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - As you may be aware from that guide, this hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom, without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place outside of parliament. This protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the parliamentary proceedings. This hearing is a public hearing, and we have the broadcast on at the moment. The public and media may be present. Should you wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make this request to the committee at the time. Now before you there, Commissioner, you do have a statutory declaration. Can I ask that both of you make that declaration now, please?

Mr SEAN CARROLL, RACING INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER and **Ms NICOLE MALCHER**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE TASMANIAN RACING INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Commissioner, welcome today to this hearing. This is our first lot of hearings. We just heard from the minister, and I invite you to make an opening statement to the committee.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you. On 10 August 2025, the Premier announced the Tasmanian government will phase-out greyhound racing by 30 June [2029], aligning with the expiry that

the Tasracing Proprietary Limited funding deed. Following this announcement, the Premier and the Minister for Racing have written to me requesting that I prepare a comprehensive plan to deliver all operational animal welfare and integrity components of the transition.

In order to ensure the smooth transition and to assist in the process, I've established a working group of suitably qualified industry representatives and animal welfare experts that will be engaged by myself to develop this transition plan.

The proposed bill and the Racing Regulation and Integrity Act provide a legislative pathway for me to develop and oversee the delivery of this transition plan. I will present this transition plan to the minister and this committee and provide reports quarterly, or as required. I must state that I acknowledge and appreciate that this transition will have a significant impact on the greyhound industry, their families and their communities.

The timeframe of the transition provides an opportunity to deliver a comprehensive and measured transition plan that focuses on the welfare of the participants and greyhounds, including support mechanisms for the participants and the industry, and that's my priority.

There will be appropriate safeguards and integrity measures that will be paramount to achieving these objectives while at the same time supporting the reputation of the Tasmanian racing industry and any flow-on effect to the Tasmanian community.

There are 10 objectives that I seek to establish for the transition plan.

1. The safeguarding of greyhound welfare, including the life-of-animal guarantee and continuing to enhance the animal welfare standards, through the review, update, and implementation of any new rules of racing policy and other safeguards, including any legislation introduced by the Tasmanian government.
2. Support the greyhound racing participants through the transition period and beyond through EAP and other wellbeing support programs. That will be a priority.
3. Ensuring the rehoming of greyhounds during the distribution and beyond, including ensuring the Greyhounds as Pets program and other services are fit for purpose and able to support the transition.
4. Establish an active plan for racing to be reduced and phased out over the period from 1 August 2026 through to 30 June 2029, in line with the expiry of the Tasracing funding deed and any legislation introduced by the Tasmanian parliament.
5. Conduct a feasibility study on the economic impact of the reduction of greyhound meetings during and post, the transition on the Tasmanian racing industry, with the results considered as part of the transition plan.
6. Ensure greyhound facilities, including tracks and training facilities, are repurposed with broader community benefits.

7. Determining the economic impact of the greyhound industry, in particular, individual greyhound trainers and businesses, and determine any requirements for workforce transition.
8. Establish a legacy plan for greyhound racing industry in Tasmania.
9. Maintain public trust and integrity in decision-making and implementation of the plan; and
10. Stronger and effective communication with stakeholders, in particular members of the greyhound industry, animal welfare groups and the community.

There are five key pillars to the plan that will be developed that include:

- animal welfare;
- people;
- clubs, facilities and regions;
- regulatory matters; and
- fiscal considerations.

I'm happy to take any questions.

Mr WINTER - Could you run through those five again?

Mr CARROLL -

- animal welfare;
- people;
- clubs, facilities and regions;
- regulatory matters; and
- fiscal considerations.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Commissioner. Thank you again for your time. Obviously, as you outlined in your opening statements, there is a lot of work to be conducted over the next four years, and I know that you've hit the ground running over the last few months.

Perhaps my first question, and then I will open up to other members of the committee to ask questions: can you please outline, in these last few months since the decision was announced in August this year [2025], how you've engaged with industry, with animal welfare groups, and with the community more broadly about the development of that plan, and the key pillars that you've identified, and how they've come about?

Mr CARROLL - Thank you for the question. Since the day of the announcement by the Premier, I decided that I'd reach out to as many people as possible, within parliament, the community and industry, to seek their feedback on the decision. It's fair to say that there were differing opinions from all those people, and all those issues are items that I've taken into account to determine what people are required on my working group, but also what areas that we need to consider as far as the transition plan has taken place.

We've reached out to international greyhound organisations that have gone through similar transition plans and sought feedback from them as to the methodology they've used, but also as to the issues they faced, both through an economic point of view but also participant and greyhound welfare. As some of you would know, I've reached out to a number of members on this committee to actually seek their feedback as to areas that should be covered in the transition plan.

I've reached out to members of the greyhound racing community. I've spoken to a number of them individually and had conversations both at greyhound meetings and on the telephone. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to obtain one of those people on my working group, and that is still an open invitation to a member of the greyhound community to come onto the working group.

We've spoken to members of Tasracing as to what greyhound racing will look like over the next four years.

We've spoken to business, media and other areas so we can have a whole picture as to the different areas that we need to cover off in developing this transition plan.

CHAIR - Thank you. Obviously, the working group you've highlighted is really key to developing that plan and working together. You've outlined that you've approached obviously greyhound participants to be involved. They haven't, and that's an open invitation to continue to join if they so wish. Can you outline who is on the working group at the moment, please?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. There's myself as the Chair; Nicole Malcher, who's my Executive Director of Legal and Policy; two members from Tasracing: Dave Manshanden, Chief Operating Officer and Lisa Boyd, Project Manager for the greyhound transition for Tasracing; Andrea Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer for RSPCA Tasmania; Alison Jarman, who's on the working group as a community member; and also Dr Kate Savage, independent veterinary adviser to myself.

CHAIR - So there is an absence of industry representation, but that's -

Mr CARROLL - There's a vacant spot. I think I made that clear initially from day one when I was hurriedly writing down what I thought it would look like, what I would do in the initial six months as to developing a transition plan, that the key focus would be on participants and having someone from the industry on that working group.

Mr WINTER - First I'd like to put on the record that I'm a big supporter of the legislative change and the position that has been created. Outside of this work you're doing, I really appreciate the work you've been doing, and it's been great for racing to see, particularly around harness racing.

I have some questions around the government's decision - the work you're doing here is very different from what I envisaged when we passed the bill around integrity and those sorts of things. In terms of your function as the Racing Integrity Commissioner, and they're outlined in section 9 of the *Racing Regulation Integrity Act*, can you identify what section under which you're authorised to oversee the shutdown of greyhound racing?

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Mr CARROLL - Part of my function is that I have oversight of the administration of racing within Tasmania, and clearly this is a key area of racing throughout Tasmania. When I was advised that this would potentially happen on 9 August [2025]-

Mr WINTER - That was the first you found out as well?

Mr CARROLL - Correct. I received a phone call at 10.04 a.m. on 9 August [2025]; I can still recall the time - and what considerations that I had to the phasing out of greyhound racing. After giving it some consideration throughout the period of the day, I felt that my office was the ideal area to implement a plan independent of government that is overseen by parliament. When the Premier said that he was considering developing this committee, I felt that that was ideal. I could develop the plan, operationalise it, oversee it and then report back into parliament as far as the transition plan was concerned.

Mr WINTER - In terms of the act, I know you probably don't have it in front of you -

Mr CARROLL - Don't have it in front of me.

Mr WINTER - (I) says, 'to provide oversight over Tasracing's administration and regulation of the racing industry, including Tasacing approval'; is that the area we're talking about?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. The phasing out of greyhound racing is a key component of Tasracing's business.

Mr WINTER - In terms of the preparation of the legislation, I understand that you met with Greyhounds Tasmania yesterday [6 November 2025] - correct me if I'm wrong - around 9.15 a.m. around the bill.

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - So was that your office that prepared the bill? What involvement -

Mr CARROLL - No, we didn't prepare the bill. We certainly had some consultation with the department of NRE in relation to the bill. In fairness, I've had some good communication with Luke Gatehouse from Greyhounds Tasmania, and I've also spoken to a number of participants, including a number of the chairs from the various clubs.

I've made it clear, and they've made it clear as well, that we will both respect the positions that we hold as far as developing this transition plan and the working groups concerned. They've certainly made it clear that they won't take part in any consultation until legislation is passed as far as the development of the plan, or any input into the consultation that I was having as far as any proposed bill was concerned, the feedback that we would give to NRE.

CHAIR - Sorry, Commissioner, can I just clarify that. Can you just repeat what they've made clear to you, that they won't take part in any consultation until it's passed? Not even just tabled, but passed?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct. Yes. They wouldn't take part in any consultation. That didn't prevent me from having on-course conversations with various individuals -

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Mr WINTER - Are you talking about specifically - I think you're quite right -

CHAIR - I just wanted to make sure I heard correctly.

Mr WINTER - And I want to, as well. Are you saying they won't participate in the working group, or that they were telling you that they would refuse to even look at a bill?

Mr CARROLL - Well, initially, it was part of the working group, but certainly, in response to the first question I was asked by Ms Johnston, in the period since the announcement was made, I've had hundreds of discussions with various people as to what the pathway would look like in the development of a transition plan, and that includes greyhound participants. We provided that feedback to NRE as to what our thoughts were as far as the development of the bill was concerned.

Mr WINTER - In terms of that feedback to NRE, again, correct me if I'm wrong: NRE has been preparing the bill, presumably with OPC [Office of Parliamentary Counsel], in consultation with you. In terms of that engagement with the industry, yesterday Greyhounds Tasmania agreed to meet with you to sit down presumably about the bill. Who made the decision that there wouldn't be public consultation around the bill?

Mr CARROLL - I can't answer that question.

Mr WINTER - Was your advice to them that they should undertake public consultation with an exposure draft?

Mr CARROLL - In the development of the bill, there was a decision made that I would organise a meeting with NRE and invite the clubs and Tasmanian Greyhound Racing to a meeting.

Mr WINTER - That was yesterday [6 November 2025]?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. And then we learnt, yesterday [6 November 2025] morning, that the bill was going to be introduced. This meeting had previously been organised. You know, I'd spoken to Mr Gatehouse during the weekend inviting him to this this meeting.

Mr WINTER - He accepted and was happy to be consulted on the bill.

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

Mr WINTER - To be really clear, Greyhounds Tasmania was happy and wanted to be consulted on the bill and agreed to meet with you yesterday on the bill. Then you found out after the meeting had already been set up that they were going table the bill that morning.

Mr CARROLL - Yes. I think they were happy to hear what was going to be in the bill, but they weren't going to take part in any consultation in development of feedback to myself that I could take to NRE as far as the bill was concerned.

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Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Commissioner. Just going to the bill now, it establishes a transition period, and the legislation effectively comes into place at two points - 1 January 2026 and then 1 July 2029.

Looking at this bill as it is and has been tabled, are you satisfied that it provides an appropriate and workable framework for yourself as Commissioner, but also that it provides for reasonable transition arrangements for industry and the dogs in the industry?

Mr CARROLL - The bill is a really important piece of work in development of the transition plan. Without the bill, I can't develop a transition plan, sorry without the piece of legislation when it's passed. So, that provides the framework as to the areas that will be covered off in the transition plan.

Having read the bill numerous times, I am satisfied that it provides that framework. It also provides a legislative authority that is required in the feedback that I've received from other jurisdictions internationally, that the rules of racing lose their impotence, if you like, on holding participants to account, because as time goes on the fear of any penalty under the rules of racing diminishes. Having that legislative piece there that provides some sort of penalty for breaching legislation is really important as a deterrent for some of the key areas that are covered off in the legislation.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you. Part 4 of the legislation establishes the beginning of the transition period. We heard earlier from the minister about what arrangements will be in place for monitoring and enforcement of those provisions, for example, around breeding, importing and destruction of dogs. Are you satisfied that you'll be resourced appropriately and be able to work with Tasracing on that key monitoring and enforcement responsibility that will be placed on you over the next four years?

Mr CARROLL - Thank you for the question. We're very thankful for the finance through the Budget that we've been given, the \$500,000 for this current year. That will primarily go to audit inspectors and animal welfare officers, investigators to make sure that the key areas that you've just spoken about regarding animal welfare specifically and traceability of greyhounds.

You may be aware that we've conducted a significant audit of every greyhound in Tasmania since this announcement was made. I must commend the people from Tasracing for conducting that audit so quickly. That provided us a clear indication of the number of greyhounds that were in Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you mind sharing that number?

Mr CARROLL - That was 1036.

Ms O'CONNOR - In the industry now? More than you thought.

Mr CARROLL - Yes. I think the Premier had announced there was 828 greyhounds and we've established that there are 1036 currently registered greyhounds now. That doesn't mean they're all currently racing, and that's one of the issues that we need to address moving forward as having appropriate rehoming positions available for those greyhounds as the transition program works well.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. My final question on this line of questioning. Now that we know there's almost 200 more greyhounds in the industry than we thought a short time ago, are you able to provide some clarity on what kind of resourcing might be available to rehoming organisations whose work presumably starts - well, it's already under way, but over the next four years there will be a heavy burden placed on rehoming organisations to fulfil the objectives of this policy. Is any of the extra funding you've been allocated going towards those rehoming organisations?

Mr CARROLL - We don't believe there will be significant impact on the rehoming programs in the first six to eight months up until June next year [2026]. As the transition continues towards June 2029, we will see a reduction in racing, and that's just through the necessity as far as having in the bill a reduction in breeding and the provision for interstate greyhounds to come and race in Tasmania.

From that, as those greyhounds exit the industry, we will be required to make sure that there's adequate rehoming options available. Am I confident that they're available at the moment? I can't say that I am. Even now the working group has been discussing options as to what rehoming options are available, not only in Tasmania but also interstate. Discussions have already been had with RSPCA Victoria through Andrea Dawkins as to what options we may have for rehoming options there.

As the current GAP program will have 30 more kennels available shortly, there may be a requirement to increase that. The working group will work through that process and I will make a budget submission shortly in the new year as to what finances we need to operationalise the transition plan.

Ms WEBB - I'm interested to understand from you what your role is in ensuring that information about this bill is provided in a way that's accessible and understandable to participants in the industry and to the general community who might be interested.

Legislation is complex. This is an amendment bill to at least four other pieces of legislation. On your website, I noticed that in your update published yesterday you mentioned the bill being tabled and you have a hyperlink which takes people to the parliamentary website where the bill can be accessed. The parliamentary website is fairly difficult to potentially understand in itself, and it only takes you to a PDF of the bill.

A normal person out there in the community, whether they're an industry participant or general community member, if they pick this bill up will have no idea really what they're looking at because it requires cross-referencing with at least four other pieces of primary legislation.

Is it your role to provide something that is straightforward: here's what the bill says and does for the general community? Is that your role?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

Ms WEBB - When would that be happening?

Mr CARROLL - Certainly, we will look at information regarding the bill in the next week or so, as far as information, if I can use the term, easily digestible by the community and participants.

Ms WEBB - It needs to be very accessible information provided.

Mr CARROLL - I don't want to bore you with the number of phone calls and people who I meet in the racing community on a weekly basis about a whole range of issues, but they're quite significant and discuss a whole range of issues.

Leading up to that, that certainly has been the case regarding what the transition may or may not look like and even though there's been a position that's been put forward by Greyhounds Tasmania, I've spoken to a number of greyhound participants. If there's a requirement, and I will assess this as we move along, if there's a need to and I think I flagged this early on in my open letter to the community, we will hold town hall meetings and invite people to come along and speak about that.

You may be aware, there's a Q&A section on the NRE website regarding the bill.

Ms WEBB - Again, you don't have a link to that here on this page on your site.

Mr CARROLL - Not yet, no.

Ms WEBB - What I would put to you is, I fully hear your description of the extensive consultation you're doing in that direct way, conversations, and that's excellent and I'm sure that will continue. But this bill was tabled yesterday [6 November 2025]. It is expected to be going through the parliament by early December and it comes into effect on 1 January [2026]. I would have thought it's a matter of priority, particularly for those people who are going to be impacted by it, to understand what the bill says. I would expect that they shouldn't have to ring you to ask, that they shouldn't necessarily have to try to navigate question-and-answer forms or queries pages on your website, that they should be able to access a document that tells them in an accessible, easy format what's in this bill. Is that expected to be provided at any point by you and your office?

Mr CARROLL - We will certainly work towards that. You must appreciate that we received this bill yesterday [6 November 2025] morning and our priority in the first instance was participant welfare. What I can say to that is that there's been a lot of work that's been done in the development of this of providing support services as a backup to those who need participant welfare.

I will certainly take on board your feedback as to a one-page document that we can provide.

Ms WEBB - No, not a one pager. It might be a number of pages, but a document that, in a summarised, easy to understand and access way, describes what this bill does and what it requires.

Mr CARROLL - We will certainly take it on board.

Ms WEBB - I know the compressed timeframes have made it challenging all round, and I appreciate that in your office that must be incredibly difficult, but you've also been having conversations that have led into the development of this bill. So you have had a heads-up on what's coming in this bill, so preparation work for how it would be communicated to industry and participants would presumably have been part of thinking as those conversations developing the bill have been developed.

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

Ms WEBB - I appreciate you saying you'll take this on board, because I think it's a matter of priority if I was a participant in the industry.

Again, on the record here, I'm pleased with the direction we're going here with the industry closing down in 2029. So, it's not that I'm trying to defend the industry in and of itself, but I'm defending good process here. And this is a bill that's landed on people out of the blue, really. They probably weren't expecting it quite this quickly. They didn't get consulted directly on it in a formalised way we'd normally expect to see, and it's going to be debated within a month and it's going to come into effect within two months. Information is incredibly important and a priority to be put out into the community about it, whether it's you or the government.

Ms RATTRAY - I thank the honourable member for Nelson for those questions. It's really important. I'm interested in what role you have had in with the timeframes. Obviously the government announced the phasing out of greyhound racing for the end of the deed, which is 30 June 2029. In regard to the breeding of greyhounds, what role have you had, or your office in that regard? We've talked about the tight timeframes and a piece of legislation that's been put into the parliament.

Mr CARROLL - Could you be more specific as to the timeframes you're talking about?

Ms RATTRAY - For breeding, like the end of litters, 1 January 2026. Some of the dogs are already ready to deliver in December [2025]. So how do they meet a 1 January 2026?

Mr CARROLL - They're exempt from the actual legislation itself, those dogs that are whelping at the moment.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm interested in what role you've had in that, given you've had a role in developing this legislation.

Mr CARROLL - You may or may not be aware that when this announcement was made, my priority, as I said and I'll stand by this, was the welfare of the participants and also the greyhounds.

My first thought when this was mentioned to me was, 'How many greyhounds do we need to have in Tasmania on 30 June 2029, that we can rehome adequately?' If the greyhound racing industry was to finish tomorrow, we wouldn't be able to rehome 1000 greyhounds, and so we have to reduce the number of greyhounds that we have in Tasmania by 30 June 2029 to a manageable level within the following 12 to 18 months. It's really important to focus on the fact that the end date of racing is 30 June 2029, but this program will continue for a further 12 to 18 months after it, where we actually have to rehome the greyhounds that are still racing on that last date.

Working back from that date, we had to look at how we reduce the number of racing greyhounds that we have that we can manage. In providing that information to NRE, the date of 1 January 2026 became available. I think that's quite a suitable date if you look at how we reduce the numbers, so we have good animal welfare and rehoming programs available.

Ms RATTRAY - As to the role of the Commissioner, and it might not always necessarily be yourself, what involvement did you have in that component? That was something that you had advised NRE and then they would have obviously given those instructions to OPC?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

Ms RATTRAY - So where did you take that lead from, from the New Zealand jurisdiction or some other jurisdiction?

Mr CARROLL - In the consultation that we had with a lot of organisations across the board, we spoke to a number of areas from New Zealand, including New Zealand Greyhounds. We've taken learnings from them, but also from animal welfare groups, not just here in Tasmania, but around Australia. If we are going to have a transition plan - and I will keep on saying this - the focus needs to be on animal welfare, and making sure that we maintain adequate numbers of rehoming throughout the period of transition.

Working back from 30 June 2029 and looking at the number - and at that stage, it was based on 828 racing greyhounds - that we could adequately rehome throughout the period of the next four years. If I look at what I know are the current adoption rates of greyhounds in Tasmania, we need to have between 250 and 350 racing greyhounds in the last year.

Ms O'CONNOR - One a day.

Mr CARROLL - That's quite significant.

Ms RATTRAY - Where does human welfare - animal welfare, you've said that's a priority. Where did the human welfare aspect sit when you made your consideration and input into this?

Mr CARROLL - That's been a significant piece that we've undertaken as to the impacts this will have. That's not lost on me or my office or the working group. We've seen organisations and businesses, unfortunately, that have come and gone over the years in all the areas. We need to make sure that those participants who have had generations involved in greyhound racing are looked after, not only from a welfare and mental-health point of view, but also what that business transition looks like. Do we have to provide options for them for vocational training and so forth? Do we have to look at the options if a trainer wanted to relocate to another state?

I can't sit here and tell you what they all are at this stage and what measures we will put in place through the transition plan, but they're certainly front of mind. What I can confidently say to this committee is that both animal welfare and participant welfare will remain the number-one priority for what this transition plan will look like, ensuring that, when 30 June 2029 comes, greyhound racing ceases.

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CHAIR - Thank you, Commissioner. If I can just build on Ms Rattray's question to unpick a bit more about the 1 January [2026] start for some of the provisions this bill for the transitional arrangements.

What are the risks to the industry, participants and animals, if that transition process is not undertaken in terms of 1 January [2026]. In the bill there is obviously a risk around destruction of dogs that might be unregulated, or there is a real risk that if this bill is not in place by 1 January [2026], there could be a perverse outcome where dogs are destroyed in anticipation.

I also wanted to see if you can give some information to the committee about uncertainty for industry participants and if this particular bill will provide certainty around business transition and planning. Is that what you're hoping will be achieved by the early date of 1 January [2026], for industry participants in particular?

Mr CARROLL - Thank you for the question. Our working group has provided a risk matrix regarding the greyhound transition and I'm happy to provide that to the committee.

Ms RATTRAY - I would appreciate seeing that.

CHAIR - That'd be fantastic.

Mr CARROLL - I must say, though, that's just based on the information that we have to date. That risk matrix will be an ongoing document that we will update as we go along. The risk levels may go up and down depending on the information and the situation at the time.

The key components, as you said to us, if I take what I said previously about animal welfare and participant welfare, is the certainty that the transition plan provides. I can't develop a formal transition plan until the legislation has been passed. That legislation will inform the framework for what the transition plan looks like.

CHAIR - In your current risk matrix, is it fair to say then, without having seen it, that if there's a delay in the progress of this bill through the parliament, the risk levels for participants and animals increases over that period of time because you can't address some of the other risks that you might have identified in your risk matrix, because you can't confirm the transition plan until you have that?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct. One of the key things is - and, as I said before, I have a lot of the empathy for the greyhound participants and what they're going through. But, having had this announcement, they want to know what the next four years looks like. There is a whole range of areas that will need to be discussed moving forward, as I said before, resulting from the feasibility study that's going to be conducted.

Ms O'CONNOR - Feasibility study into?

Mr CARROLL - The impact of the transition of greyhound racing out of the racing industry.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is that a social impact study?

Mr CARROLL - At this stage, we're looking at the economic impact of the transition of greyhound racing.

Mr WINTER - Who is doing that work, the economic impact study?

Mr CARROLL - That hasn't been finalised yet.

Mr WINTER - Okay. So, you're looking for someone to do the work for you.

Mr CARROLL - That's right.

Mr WINTER - Do you have an idea what the terms of reference will be?

Mr CARROLL - They haven't been developed.

Mr WINTER - Are you looking at the economic impacts on the state, or is this around the fiscal impact on the budget or the deed or what?

Mr CARROLL - No, it has nothing to do with the deed, just on the racing industry. That may have implications as far as the deed's concerned, but the impact to Tasracing, for example, as far as what their business model looks like.

Mr WINTER - What's the purpose of doing it if the government has already made a decision and it's already been legislated to shut it down?

Mr CARROLL - That may impact how Tasracing operates. If you look at the fact that - it's not as easy as just carving racing up into thirds as far as the pie is concerned. There will be a requirement for business modelling of Tasracing moving forward, as to the economic impact of the removal of greyhound racing as far as their business operations is concerned.

Mr WINTER - Will you be looking at things like the viability of the other two codes?

Mr CARROLL - That's certainly something that will be looked at.

Mr WINTER - Yes. The report, in part, will look at the viability of the two other codes as part of the transition.

Mr CARROLL - I don't know if viability is the correct word, but the economic impact of the removal on the other two codes.

Mr WINTER - Yes, the economic impact of the removal on the other two codes. When do you think that work would be finished?

Mr CARROLL - I can't give you a date at this stage.

Mr WINTER - Are we talking in the first half of next year [2026], perhaps? I'm not asking for an exact date.

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Mr CARROLL - Yes. I would hope - and there's a lot of work that needs to be done, Mr Winter, and that's just one of them. We will have to engage someone to do that piece of work. We hope that it will be finalised by 30 June next year [2026].

Mr WINTER - Okay, I understand that. You talked about the transition and from August 2026, there being a slowdown in the number of races presumably. Can you explain a little bit about how that's going to look? Is that just a reduction in -

Mr CARROLL - We think that there will be a requirement to have a reduction either in the number of races, race meetings, or the number of dogs that are entered into each race. For example, because of the reduction in breeding or the process that needs to be gone through for interstate dogs to race in Tasmania that, over the period of time, under the current racing calendar, there might not be enough dogs to fill all those races.

Mr WINTER - In terms of that process to bring dogs interstate - and I've had a look at the legislation, but I noted that in the legislation - what would be the criteria that you would assess as to when you would or wouldn't allow an interstate dog to come and race?

Mr CARROLL - That will be for Tasracing to develop in consultation with the working group.

Mr WINTER - Presumably, you've asked for this part of it, you must have some sort of idea on that.

Mr CARROLL - It may be the age of the greyhound. It may be how long it is going to spend in Tasmania. There is a whole range of areas that could be covered as far as how that criteria is met by the applicant.

Mr WINTER - Are you aware of whether this is being explored in terms of its constitutionality, in terms of Australian trade -

Mr CARROLL - We're not prohibiting any dogs coming into Tasmania. There's a process and application that they need to be applied for.

Ms RATTRAY - What about dogs going out?

Mr CARROLL - At the moment, there's no prohibition on dogs going out.

Ms RATTRAY - Until June 2029?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

Mr WINTER - In terms of the constitutionality of both those aspects, you will have the power under the act to stop a dog from coming to Tasmania to race?

Mr CARROLL - I won't.

Ms O'CONNOR - Parliament will have enacted the power.

Mr WINTER - I hope that you will all forgive me for not having had a great amount of time to read the legislation. Can you explain how that works, then?

Mr CARROLL - Mr Winter, that's something that has been put in the bill by those who have written the bill. Certainly, I won't and I can't go into the research that they've done into how that sits from a legal point of view. But what was made clear is there had to be a clear process that was put in place to authorise dogs that were coming into [the] state so Tasmania didn't end up being a state that took everyone's slow greyhounds, or there was a substitution for breeding that was made by the importation of greyhounds to race.

Ms O'CONNOR - You have referenced a risk matrix, a body of work that was undertaken by the working group and presumably any delay to the enactment of the legislation has been identified as a risk to your work going forward. Are you able to speak to the committee, in broad terms, about other risks that have been identified? We know you are going to table that document, but for the purposes of people who may be listening, and for things for us to be mindful of as we oversight this transition.

Mr CARROLL - I can highlight some key areas we looked at if you like: insufficient funding to support the transition; reduction of potential earnings by trainers and owners; the breach of Tasracing commercial and broadcast agreements that they may have in place because of the transition, we are conscious of that and the financial implications that has on Tasracing; the reduction in point of consumption tax from wagering providers; the welfare of greyhound declines due to an inability to fund, feed and accommodate or care for their greyhounds during this transition period; the capacity for rehoming is insufficient; increased rates of injury or death at tracks due to owners or trainers wanting greyhounds to race in order to increase earning potentials.

Ms O'CONNOR - Fewer greyhounds racing more.

Mr CARROLL - Correct. The lack of regulation at greyhound racing that results in the harm to participants or other greyhounds; the lack of controls for greyhounds being rehomed, posing risks to the community; high number of greyhounds requiring rehoming on 1 July 2029 once racing is ceased; poor engagement or communication with the greyhound racing community, including participants; insufficient legislation or rules of racing to support the transition.

I could keep going.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you for that, and it's good to see the working group has put so much thought into as much of the full span of risk as it's possible to do. Having worked through the process of developing the legislation and now with the legislation tabled before the parliament, do you think its structure and provisions mitigate some of those risks that you've identified, or the working group has identified?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I do.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Thank you.

Ms RATTRAY - You talked about town hall meetings to engage with the participants and stakeholders of the industry, and then also that industry is not interested in being part of

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any conversations, particularly until after the bill passes the parliament, and given that there's two sitting weeks available to the Legislative Council - I won't be speaking on behalf of the House of Assembly; completely different House - do you see that passing a piece of legislation as significant as it is with opportunity for members to have consultation is adequate, or do you see [it] going into the first part of 2026 in your view?

Mr CARROLL - In my view? I'm not one here to advise parliament as to the process of the bill itself. Let me put it this way: it's easy for me to say here that my door's always open for anyone to come and ask for advice in regard to the bill or consultation. I take the position that my role as a Racing Integrity Commissioner is to ensure that I can provide as much information about any issue regarding racing, not just this issue, but as we're talking about this issue, that it's my role to ensure that any member of the community, whether they're a racing participant or not, understands the obligations as far as the rules of racing are concerned, or this legislation.

I certainly take on board the position that was put by Ms Webb before in relation to having an easily-digestible information pack. If I think it's necessary to hold a town hall meeting or even have a meeting -

Ms RATTRAY - You will need to have three, because there are three regions, so that is three town hall meetings.

Mr CARROLL - I can assure you that we've already given consideration to that, so if we think that's necessary then we will do that.

It's important that my role in some ways is seen as a place that people can come to, to seek advice or guidance regarding any matter in racing that's going to impact integrity or animal welfare issues across the board. As I said, we will certainly make an assessment to see whether that's required, and if need be, do that.

Ms RATTRAY - With all those things in mind, and thank you for sharing those, would you consider that rushing an attempt to put a piece of legislation through to meet the 1 January 2026 timeframe in the bill would be detrimental to the industry itself, and having confidence in the transitional arrangements moving forward?

Mr CARROLL - I should say that I support the introduction of the bill. I say this is a unique bill. I'm not an expert on previous pieces of legislation that have come before.

Ms RATTRAY - I have been around here for 20-something years and I've never seen anything like this, so neither am I.

Mr CARROLL - This is a unique piece of legislation.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, it is. Absolutely.

Mr CARROLL - Consideration must be given to that, the fact that it is unique. It's an essential requirement of making sure that we have a clear pathway and transition to cease greyhound racing by 2029. The timeframes that have been developed in that are taking into account good animal welfare, rehoming programs, and ensuring that there's a clear pathway for those participants who are going to be impacted by the transition program itself.

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I can't determine the timing of the bill, but I support the introduction of the bill.

Ms O'CONNOR - You would presumably support its passage through parliament this year, preferably, in order for you to be able to get on with the work that you've been given.

Mr CARROLL - I think it's essential.

CHAIR - Can I ask, and I asked the minister this in an earlier hearing and it's really important for the committee to understand the context of the industry of which we are overseeing the transition of. Can you provide some data in relation to the participants in that particular industry? You've indicated that there are 1036 currently registered greyhounds, but I understand the minister indicated that there are 82 registered trainers, 53 trainer-owners, 78 attendants, 74 breeders; obviously a number of those people will be double counted, I would imagine, because some might be breeders and trainers for instance, or owners and trainers and breeders.

Can you provide a breakdown of how many discreet individuals we have within the industry at the moment, if you've got that data? Also, are you able to provide some context around those trainers or owners who might have one or two dogs, those who might have 10 to 20, 20 to 30? I understand that there are a number of participants who are fairly small scale in terms of they have one or two or three dogs. There are a number of participants who are large-scale who would be significantly impacted by the closure of the industry because they might have 50 or more dogs. Can you give us a breakdown of that perhaps?

Mr CARROLL - I can't give you the exact figures of the breakdowns of the number of dogs that are owned per person. What I can say, as I said, there were 1035 total greyhounds that were audited in the audit process that was undertaken last month. Of those that there's 855 active dogs that are actually racing at this stage. There are 158 retired greyhounds -

CHAIR - Does that include GAP numbers?

Mr CARROLL - No. Twenty-two non-microchipped greyhounds.

CHAIR - Just for the record, why would they be non-microchipped?

Mr CARROLL - They haven't been chipped at this stage.

CHAIR - So they are pups, yes.

Mr CARROLL - You're correct in what you said. There are 82 trainers and 53 owner-trainers. Now they are individual persons. There are 78 owners and attendants, registered attendants or handlers, and there are 43 individual attendants with a total of 256 participants, and the numbers that I had at the year ending 2024-25, and they're individuals.

CHAIR - Individuals, yes, that could be a number of things that could be trainer, owner but 256 participants.

Mr CARROLL - What I can say is that, I can't give you the number of greyhounds per individual trainer. You are right in what you say: there is a clear discrepancy, if you like, as to the top end compared to the bottom end. I can give you some idea as that might give some

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indication that 75 per cent of the total stakes won were won by 25 trainers. That is 135 trainers; 25 won 75 per cent of the stakes money.

CHAIR - Obviously, this is important in terms of context, in terms of thinking about the provision for compensation. When you have, across the industry, a spectrum of participants from those who might engage in the industry from a hobby perspective or a recreational perspective, to those who are earning an income out of that. Is that some of the work that perhaps you were indicating might be done, that feasibility economic assessment impact?

Mr CARROLL - That'll certainly be part of it.

CHAIR - That'll be part of it to understand those who might be engaging from a hobby perspective, who might not necessarily need as much compensation because it is a hobby rather than income stream for them. As opposed to those who are heavily engaged and this is their income stream?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

CHAIR - That work would be done in the next sort of six months in terms of modelling?

Mr CARROLL - That's correct.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for your time. I expect that we will have you back a number of times over the coming months and years. I'd like to acknowledge that the risk matrix will be tabled, so thank you very much for that. We appreciate your time.

Before you leave, I need to read a final statement: What you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege is not attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you have said to us today. Do you understand that?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I do.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for your time.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

The committee adjourned at 11.26 a.m.