



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Hon. Jane Howlett MP

Monday 23 November 2020

MEMBERS

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC
Hon Ivan Dean MLC
Hon Jo Palmer MLC
Hon Tania Rattray MLC (Chair)
Hon Jo Siejka MLC
Hon Josh Willie MLC

WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Helen Langenberg, Manager - Sport and Recreation, Department of Communities Tasmania

Mr John King, General Manager, Office of Racing Integrity

Mr Paul Austen, Director - Tasmanian Institute of Sport

Ms Kate Kent, Deputy Secretary, Communities, Sport and Recreation, Department of Communities Tasmania

The Committee commenced at 2.31 p.m.

DIVISION 2

(Department of Communities Tasmania)

Output group 4

Disability Services and Community Development

4.7 Sport and recreation -

CHAIR - Thank you. The time being 2.30, I'm ready to broadcast. Thank you very much Lynne.

Minister Howlett, Minister for Sport and Recreation, I welcome you to the committee for your first time as a minister appearing before it. We wish you all the best. It would be taking up time that we don't need to take up if I introduce your colleagues from the Legislative Council to you. But I will invite you to introduce your team to members. I invite you to provide an overview which is something that we do through that, and you'll know that from your time on the committee. So please, start.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. To my right I have Professor Michael Pervan, secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania. To my left, I have Kate Kent, deputy secretary, and then at the end I have Helen Langenberg, the manager at Sport and Recreation. Behind me I have my chief of staff, Richard Wilson, and Sport and Rec advisor, Laura Eaton.

Despite a tumultuous year it's been a great honour to be appointed Minister for Sport and Recreation. I greatly look forward to continuing in this role over the 2020-21 year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a major strain on the many community sport and recreation organisations across Tasmania, particularly through the loss of revenue from competitions which were either shortened or cancelled altogether. It was the impact of the pandemic on grassroots sports that preoccupied me as minister and led to the government's response, which continues with measures contained in the 2020-21 budget. I am proud that Tasmania was the first state to act in order to keep local community sport alive and to maintain participation levels when it was safe to resume competition.

As part of the Government's response on 27 March, we allocated just over \$1.9 million to state sporting organisations under tranche 1, to keep 186 Tasmanians employed in the sport and recreation sector during the period 1 March to 31 August 2020, which ensured their continuity throughout the disruption. Tranche 2 had a focus on sporting grassroots clubs return to play in accordance with public health requirements. Providing small grants of up to \$3000 to purchase items such as hygiene supplies and additional equipment. Through tranche 2 more than \$900 000 was granted to 431 clubs across more than 40 sports to support their return to play.

Looking back on the implementation of the support packages, I'm very proud at how they were created without a template to fall back on. They were the very first in this country and implemented at such a speed which exceeded the expectations of all involved. In addition to the services and programs provided each year we have boosted funding to sport and recreation organisations and facilities throughout the state. In 2020-21 we committed \$10 million over

two years in 2020-21 and 2021-22 to improve the playing fields, a grants program to upgrade amenities at sporting facilities around the state allowing them to cater to all participants.

I was pleased to recently announce that applicants under the small grant stream of this program have been assessed by the division of the sport and recreation and 30 projects around Tasmania are set to benefit from funding of \$1.2 million for projects with a value up to \$50 000. As part of the \$1.2 million being provided, \$515 000 will be made available in the northern region and more than \$340 000 for projects each of the north-west and southern regions of the state. The program would not only greatly assist the sport and recreation sector recover from COVID-19, but it will also boost the local economy for the local tradespeople and suppliers who will be engaged to undertake these projects.

We've also extended Ticket to Play, a sports voucher program, by allocating funding for the next four years 2020 to 21 to 2023-24. In 2020 to 21 a response to the postponement and cancellations of sporting rosters, we have boosted the program to allocate two vouchers for each eligible child aged five to 18. The Tasmanian Government is committed to every aspect of the sport and recreation portfolio to ensure as many Tasmanians as possible can participate in and enjoy the benefits of an active sport and recreation lifestyle.

Last week I undertook to provide the member for Elwick the detail of interactions with the Northern Tasmanian Netball Association (NTNA) in relation to a matter undergoing investigation around the activities of a former volunteer at the earliest opportunity once I had checked my diary. This is a very serious and potentially upsetting matter for netballers past, present and their families, and officials of the NTNA and, in fact, the entire northern Tasmanian community. If the opposition's objective is to ensure that any victims of this volunteer have been provided care and support, then I'm please to advise that all possible support has been offered.

Chair, rather than wait for the next sitting session, I'm happy to lay out a comprehensive list of interactions with the NTNA, now on overview if the committee pleases.

Mr WILLIE - I'm happy for the minister to provide that.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you.

Mr WILLIE - I might still have some questions.

CHAIR - That's true, you will.

Ms HOWLETT - That's fine, thank you.

Chair, I'm pleased to advise Netball Tasmania is in regular contact with community sport and recreation about this matter and is taking the appropriate legal advice and action to ensure the matter is investigated thoroughly. Netball Tasmania is also supporting its members' bodies, including the Northern Tasmania Netball Association and clubs throughout the process and has been in very regular contact with the NTNA.

I also undertook to check in with the chair of the NTNA on 19 November to confirm that the support already offered to the association by the government was adequate. I am pleased to advise the committee that the NTNA were satisfied with the support that it had been

provided. The chair of the NTNA confirmed with me that the association had extended free counselling to all associated netball clubs including past players. She also confirmed that so far there had been no take up on this offer. As minister, I reaffirm the government's ongoing support to the association and the lines of communication remain open between the NTNA, Netball Tasmania and the government. I don't believe it's in anybody's interest to turn this sensitive issue into creating more than it should be, as many people are extremely concerned about it.

This morning the premier announced a commission of inquiry to investigate the response of Tasmanian government agencies in relation to the management of historical allegations of child sexual abuse. This inquiry has the power to compel witnesses to provide evidence. While the terms of reference for the inquiry are still being developed, I expect that it will be wide in scope, and I'm hopeful that if there is any complaints made in relation to the Northern Tasmanian Netball Association, that they would be included in the inquiry.

I cannot speak any further about the Tasmanian police investigation, nor any other investigation into this matter. However, the premier has announced a commission of inquiry which has been welcomed. The premier today confirmed that as part of the inquiry there would be an opportunity for survivors and others to come forward.

Just in relation to communication as well, the CEO of Netball Tasmania and the division of sport and recreation discussed the issue on 25 October 2020. At that stage, Netball Tasmania's board was seeking legal advice on whether to issue a statement. The Department was advised the person concerned had had volunteer roles with the Northern Tasmanian Netball Association, Devon Netball Association, and two State league clubs. The CEO had sought advice from the NTNA on whether there had been any complaints lodged or raised.

On 29 October 2020, the CEO advised the department that the Netball Tasmania board's legal advice was not to issue a statement given the Tasmanian government's investigation. He advised he had liaised with the Northern Tasmanian Netball Association and the three State league clubs - Devon, Hawks, and the Cavaliers - about the matter and of its and Netball Tasmania's assistance to communicate and manage the matter on their behalf. This was contingent on receiving confirmation that there had been no complaints lodged. The NTNA and the three clubs advised that none had been.

I'm sure the committee will agree that this is very welcome news. However, I cannot discount that complaints may arise in the future. My department sent the CEO of netball Tasmania the Tasmanian government media release about the independent investigation into this matter on 3 November 2020. Chair, separate and prior to these interactions between the NTNA and my department, my office contacted Netball Tasmania on Hobart Show Day public holiday on 22 October in order to reach out to the NTNA. The CEO of Netball Tasmania and the division of sport and recreation discussed the issue on 25 October.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. In light of that statement that you've provided around a question that was asked in the House, I'll head straight to Mr Willie, who may like to follow up on that.

Mr WILLIE - Thanks, Chair. I agree with the minister. It is a sensitive matter, but you are the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and allegations about James Griffin have come to light, and his long association with the NTNA. Can you confirm that the first time you

personally contacted the NTNA was on 19 November after question time when it was raised in the House?

Ms HOWLETT - Myself personally, or my office?

Mr WILLIE - Yourself personally.

Ms HOWLETT - Myself personally was on - you're correct, on that date.

Mr WILLIE - Okay. What else have you done in regards to child safety measures in sporting organisations? Have you had any communication with other peak associations around the vigilance that they should maintain around child safety measures? Has there been any action from your office in that regard?

Ms HOWLETT - When I heard of these allegations, I asked my office to make contact, as I said, with Netball Tasmania on that public holiday in order that the Government could reach out to the NTNA. I've detailed a range of interactions which I went through with you before.

As far as what measures are in place to protect vulnerable people in sport, the Tasmanian Government is committed to providing a safe, fair, and inclusive opportunities for all Tasmanians, and particularly for children to participate in sport, recreation and physical activities of their choice. There are a range of mechanisms by which we can do this, and I'll ask the department to provide you with some more information on that.

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. Community sport and recreation maintains regular contact and communication with all the state sporting organisations, and has done a great deal of work in past years around encouraging safe, fair and inclusive environments. We do this through promoting child-safe sport environments. As you already know, all those volunteers who can build a relationship with children within sport as a sector are required to have Working with Vulnerable People checks to ensure that they are fit and proper persons, but this of itself is not sufficient to give an assurance to a sporting organisation as it really only picks up convictions.

We encourage the sporting organisations at all levels from their state bodies down to their member clubs to institute cultures of openness and transparency, to make sure that all of their members are well aware of member protection policies, and also the procedures to follow in which to record either incidences or concerns about practices that might seem inappropriate or just not attune to what would be desirable for a safe environment for children. We encourage those sports to be very open, very transparent, to make very clear to all of their members about how people can deal with an issue should it arise or, more importantly, who they should go to and how they should flag that issue or raise that concern, or indeed make a complaint should an issue arise.

We also promote very strongly Play by the Rules, which is a national program of resources between Sport Australia, state and federal human rights bodies, and state and territory agencies of sport and recreation. Play by the Rules' website provides a great deal of information, and is a key reference point for child safety information and online training in child-related matters in sport for everybody in the community, so it has sections that are relevant to coaches and administrators, sections that are relevant to parents or even just to

children themselves where they can go through online training, scenarios, ask questions, look up frequently asked question sheets or get tips on information.

We promote Play by the Rules to the sector both through the State's sporting organisations, but also regularly in our monthly free electronic newsletter to the sector, and we occasionally pop in questions and answers, so just scenario-based questions - if you have a concern about this, what do you do? We also raise it in our face-to-face meetings with sporting organisations. Before we fund any of our state sporting organisations, we also require them to have in place current up-to-date policies on things like member protection and child safety. But not only to have them in place, but also to give us information on how they as a sport are implementing those policies within their environments within the State.

Mr WILLIE - Thanks, Chair. That's really useful information. It's surprising the minister couldn't provide that the other day in light of what's happening in the public discourse. Does the department ever audit clubs to ensure that people who are working with children have working with vulnerable children checks?

Ms HOWLETT - That's the question.

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. The department doesn't do an audit of the organisations, but the department asked the state sporting organisations to provide us with advice on how they have in place a tracking mechanism to ensure that all those people who are working with children, or as I said are in a position to develop a relationship of trust with a child, how they're ensuring that those people actually have current working with children checks.

Mr WILLIE - There's a reporting mechanism?

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister, there's a reporting mechanism, but it's attuned to the sport. With most of the sports, it's actually aligned to their registration processes so it will be timed at the start of a season, or in that pre-season time, to check around currency. The checks are valid for three years, so there is a need to check on them annually, but more importantly to check on them to see that they're current.

Mr WILLIE - Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR - My question is, minister, do I understand from what's been provided that unless you receive funding from sport and rec, then there's no real check on a sporting organisation? You said that when funding is provided, then they have to - like Play by the Rules - you've got to provide some documentation. Is it only when you receive funding that there's checks and balances in place?

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. Most of the state's State Sport and Recreation organisations receive annual funding from Community Sport and Recreation through our Sport and Recreation State Grants program and that is funding to that - for example, Basketball Tasmania, Swimming Tasmania, the state body for the sport. It's a precondition of being eligible for that funding which to be fair most of the state's sport and recreation organisations rely on. It's a precondition that they have in place member protection policies and child safety policies and procedures.

As I mentioned earlier, we also promote it through our Actively In Touch newsletter which goes out much more broadly to the sector. There are some small organisations that may not be eligible for funding or might be fledgling state sporting organisations. An example might be Windsurfing Tasmania, for example, which isn't developed enough as a body to be considered a state sporting organisation in terms of eligibility of our funding. However, most of those even smaller organisations belong to a national counterpart for their own sport and similarly at a national level, their members - state members are required to have these sorts of policies and procedures in place. We promote it more broadly, but our relationship effectively is with most of them, through the funding.

CHAIR - Minister, would you agree that all sporting clubs should be audited at some stage, regardless of funding or otherwise, particularly in light of the situation that has come before the community, if you like? Are you concerned that that doesn't take place, an automatic audit of all sporting organisations?

Ms HOWLETT - I'm certainly very concerned about the allegations of what's been brought to our attention recently. These are really serious allegations and there are so many.

CHAIR - I agree and that's why I'm surprised that there's not a schedule of audits for all sporting clubs regardless of whether they're funded or otherwise.

Ms HOWLETT - That's something that we could look into. No, I agree, I think that's something we could certainly look into, Madam Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Armitage?

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. I will go onto a different area, minister. My first question is regarding the Ticket to Play initiative. Are you able to tell me what the uptake has been on that to date? I know there's a \$1 million per year over the next four years. I'm wondering whether \$1 million per year is adequate. Has there been a large uptake? I'm just wondering if it's been oversubscribed or under subscribed?

Ms HOWLETT - Very proud of Ticket to Play. One moment and I'll have those figures for you.

Ms SIEJKA - Can I add to that question? I was also interested in a breakdown of the various sports and codes for Ticket to Play. Being efficient.

CHAIR - That's team work on this side of the table, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - It is, it is. Very much so. In 2021, all eligible children can receive two Ticket to Play vouchers worth up to \$100 each as a COVID-19 stimulus. We extended the program also to include two - from 17-year olds to 18-year olds. As of the 3 November 2020, a total of 3087 participants have been registered. That is equivalent to 6174 vouchers, and 2341 vouchers have been redeemed so far. So that's 37.9 per cent. There are 843 sporting organisations and clubs as well as scouts, girl guides and cadet organisations registered as approved activity providers. It's interesting because most vouchers that have been redeemed, have been for the top 10 activities, for football, AFL, Auskick, football, soccer, little athletics, gymnastics, cricket, Scouts, basketball, netball, pony club, and hockey.

PUBLIC

As far as a breakdown, as well, from the data, the data for Ticket to Play 2019 shows that the program was most popular with children between 10 and 14 years old who were issued 45 per cent of total vouchers. Children between 15 and 17 were issued with 14 per cent of total vouchers and 41 per cent went to children aged between five and 19 years. Data from 2019, show that 41 per cent of vouchers were issued to females, and 59 per cent to male participants.

The top five postcodes for Ticket to Play vouchers were Devonport and East Devonport, postcode 7310. Postcode 7250, Launceston, Riverside, Prospect and Ravenswood. Postcode 7030, Bridgewater, Brighton and Gagebrook. Postcode 7248, Invermay, Mowbray, Rocherlea, Mayfield. And postcode, 7315, Ulverstone, Turners Beach and Ulverstone West, as well.

I thought those breakdowns were really interesting with a top 10 and also the breakdown around the state and also the gender. Yes, we can table this for you, the full complete breakdown.

CHAIR - Thank you. That would be useful.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, it's really interesting.

Ms ARMITAGE - Can we have a little more information with regard to the vouchers. So it was 3087? Is that the number of people that subscribed? Because it was page 2 -

Ms HOWLETT - The difference would be -

Ms ARMITAGE - It was over 6000 vouchers, wasn't it?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, but it's also what's been redeemed as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - It is, but I was wondering if we know how many people, because each child can access up to two vouchers.

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. As at 3 November 2020, a total of 3087 participants had been registered; 6174 vouchers.

Ms ARMITAGE - So a lot had actually claimed the two vouchers.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. But only 2341 vouchers have been redeemed so far.

Ms ARMITAGE - My question is, as it's only - that was of 3 November and there's only \$1 million a year. If they were all redeemed, that would come to over \$600 000 and we still go to next June. Should it be, do you think, minister, that perhaps only one voucher at a time? It's just that you're going to run out of your \$1 million in, not necessarily redemptions, but ones that have been claimed. So once your \$1 million dollars comes, even though they're not redeemed, are you going to issue more? Obviously, you're only allowed in the budget \$1 million dollars. What's the situation there? If, as it is at the moment, you've got up to two vouchers of \$100 each for the children, a lot of them have been claimed. They haven't been redeemed. You've run out of your \$1 million and you've got deserving children still putting in

applications because we've still got a long way to go. What is the situation? What will you do?

Ms HOWLETT - You have to remember that we did have three months of no sport as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - I understand that. But I'm thinking with redemption, even if they haven't redeemed and we know that everyone doesn't redeem. You can't actually take for granted that they won't redeem and then issue more, because you only have the funding of \$1 million.

Ms HOWLETT - I'll seek some advice on that. I know that we did bring forward funds from the previous year.

Ms LANGENBERG - Yes, minister, certainly. In terms of the issuing of vouchers, most of it is based on the seasons as to when sports actually start. We've been tracking a progress of the vouchers. As you know, the scheme was first introduced in 2018-19 and was introduced for a calendar year. So effectively ran for 2019 as a calendar year. We then started the scheme again at the start of 2020 only to have the disruption that hit everyone in March.

Ms ARMITAGE - Then more people start to know about it though, the longer it's out there.

Ms LANGENBERG - Absolutely. Which is the intent to actually get the take up for all those who are eligible. But we took the opportunity for the break whilst the COVID-19 was cancelling and postponing all of the sporting activities, to change it from a calendar year program to a financial year program, so restarted it again, effective as at 1 July.

Ms ARMITAGE - I appreciate that. That's what I'm saying: you still go to June next year?

Ms LANGENBERG - We are still going to June next year, but most of the peak for the summer sports has already been and in fact some of the peak for the winter sports has been as well. What we're trying to do is track when people and how people are actually using their vouchers, so some parents are using the vouchers - the two vouchers for one sport. Some are using the two vouchers for two separate sports. Some might use them for Little Athletics, for example, in the summer and then football in the winter. Some are actually saving them to use later.

Ms ARMITAGE - That doesn't answer my question though, about what's going to happen if your \$1 million is expended, basically, even though it hasn't been redeemed, and you have - soccer have a huge amount of people, you've got football. You've got a fair few different sports still coming up. What actually happens if they're not redeemed, and you haven't got any more money, will there be extra funding put into that?

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. There is a carry-over of some funding from the previous financial year, but we are also not envisaging that that will actually totally exhaust the funding. Based on the current usage and current redemption, we don't actually think that we will. However, it will be a matter of then using some of the carry-over funds.

Ms ARMITAGE - So no children will miss out.

Ms LANGENBERG - And potentially also then using other funds that we may be able to source for doing so.

Ms HOWLETT - It would be a really good situation to be in if we had so many redeemed vouchers.

Ms ARMITAGE - They might be redeemed, but they might have been actually claimed and that's the issue. You might have other people wanting to claim them unless you've got - if you got \$1 million out even though they're not redeemed.

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister, we do have a close off period. The vouchers are issued but we do have a close-off period before the end of the financial year - the redemption is via the club by the provider. There is a close-off period that the clubs and the activity providers are well aware of. If the voucher is used at an activity provider or at a club, what we find is most of the clubs or activity providers put in a monthly reconciliation claim through to us for the funding. Parents and those who have the vouchers know that they have to use them within this financial year and the activity providers similarly are well aware that they have to be redeemed before the end of the financial year. If they're out there and not being redeemed or not being used, they effectively become worthless if not done within time.

Ms HOWLETT - We didn't reach our target last year. This year I'm very -

Ms ARMITAGE - But we did have COVID-19.

Ms HOWLETT - We did, we did.

Ms ARMITAGE - So is there anything else about putting money into Ticket to Play that you're looking at to encourage children and young people to engage more with sport and recreation? Do you have any other areas that you are looking at?

Ms HOWLETT - At the moment our focus has been completely on the return to sport since COVID-19, and we've been -

Ms ARMITAGE - That's what I wondered, whether there's anything else you're actually doing to encourage people back into sport.

Ms HOWLETT - We've been focusing on them utilising their Ticket to Play in order to get back into a sport of their liking.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, that's for people with a Healthcare card, but there are a lot of other children in situations.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and it's funny, there's a huge increase in female participation which you would have seen throughout particularly soccer, football and women's cricket now. A lot of younger females are doing cricket in the summer and football or soccer in the winter.

Ms ARMITAGE - Not to forget softball which I think is the forgotten sport in the summer as well.

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - I agree with you totally. We need to somehow get engaged within the Education department and try to encourage those sports.

Ms ARMITAGE - Softball used to be played in the schools and I'm not sure that it is anymore. It used to be girls played softball and boys played cricket.

Ms HOWLETT - Softball was certainly played when I was at school, but I don't believe it is anymore.

Mr WILLIE - On that - I don't know whether you can answer it, can I jump in there?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, sure.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, and I'll come back in a minute.

Mr WILLIE - There's people looking down this end. I'm just interested as the minister for sport whether you have anything to do with the three regions sports coordinators in schools?

Ms HOWLETT - That's interesting.

Mr WILLIE - How that's progressing.

Ms HOWLETT - I was talking about that before.

CHAIR - You need to declare an interest, honourable member. The member is the new patron of the Northern Tasmanian Softball Association. I just declared her interest for her.

Ms HOWLETT - Right.

Ms ARMITAGE - They tell me it's the forgotten sport.

CHAIR - Minister, are you providing an answer through somebody else?

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Thank you, Helen.

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. Certainly, Community Sport and Recreation works closely with the Department of Education. We convene quarterly meetings of our sport and recreation in Tasmanian schools working group which involves representatives from the Department of Health, the University of Tasmania. Also, the Department of Education and ourselves were heavily involved with the redraw of sport coordinators roles and, in fact, represented on the selection panel, recruitment panel, for those positions and meet regularly with them and certainly provide them with any assistance we can with sporting contacts.

The work they did was impacted by COVID-19, and we're looking to establish ways that we can target approaches geographically and site based around areas of unrepresented participation in sport and recreation, ways to work both with the schools and also community organisations in those areas to increase participation in sport. From our perspective, we work

with the state sporting organisations to identify again, those areas where the opportunities for people to participate might be limited, whether that's based on not having a club, not having an appropriate facility or not having, I guess, the people to lead and offer those opportunities. We're working with the sporting organisations at a state level to target those areas that they might be interested in growing their participation base and focusing our energies collectively.

Mr WILLIE - So because of COVID-19 it's too hard to tell whether those sports coordinator roles are facilitating more sport in schools or more diverse sports like softball and others, as the members were talking about?

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. It was certainly difficult for the people recruited. They were recruited at the end of January, in effect, into those positions.

Mr WILLIE - Yes.

Ms LANGENBERG - Then hit, as we all were, in early March with a cessation of activity, and certainly it impacted on not only on them but also on development officers and the staff from sporting organisations and their abilities to go into schools and offer opportunities. We're really aware that it is about providing ways to promote the - I'd hate to say less popular, but those sports with less profile in Tasmania.

The reality is that some sports get a lot of media coverage and are quite prominent, so AFL football, cricket, basketball, for example. Whereas other sports are less well known, and we certainly work with those sporting organisations to promote what it is that they do using the theory that if children aren't playing those known sports, they might be more attracted to one of the other sports instead. We've certainly focused our Active in Touch monthly newsletter on highlighting stories of these other less profiled sports, so that people know they exist. It's an opportunity.

CHAIR - Through the minister and to the minister.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, through the minister and to the minister. How are those roles interfacing with existing regional sports associations? I'm aware Andrew McCarthy in the north works a lot with schools and facilitates inter-school sport, does a good job, is now a northern sport coordinator in the department. Are they working together or are they working separately, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - Through you, Helen.

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. Certainly, the area of the regional school sports association and the regional sports coordinators, the three regional sports coordinators are working to be a collaborative approach. So not to duplicate things that are already being provided but rather to build on them. We are starting a process of working with the Department of Education in a review in the expenditure and the type of resources that are being allocated to junior sport, because as you say, there's a number of them. Whether it is the Northern High School Sports Association funding which we administer or the funding to the Tasmanian State Schools Sport Association, that's regionally based that the Department of Education administers. There's a way to bring that together so we can ensure the Tasmanian Government

is getting good value for the funding expended in this way. That it's actually being targeted towards children at a participation level.

Ms PALMER - My question is on a slightly different topic. I wanted to turn the minister's attention to cricket and ask if she could tell the committee more about the upcoming Big Bash matches that we have in Tasmania?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her question. The Tasmanian Government is excited and extremely pleased to have recently joined with Cricket Tasmania in announcing that Tasmania will be one of four states which will be co-hosting the KFC BBL 10 competition. It's a massive coup for Tasmania and the local economy. The state will host the opening stretch of Big Bash matches with the season opener between the Hobart Hurricanes and defending champions the Sydney Sixers to be played at Hobart's Blundstone Arena on December 10. Cricket fans in Launceston won't be missing out on the action, with matches also to be played at Launceston's University of Tasmania Stadium.

Just today Cricket Australia has announced that an additional two matches of the KFC BBL 10 will be played at Blundstone Arena. Ten matches of this season's competition will be played in Hobart and Launceston, of which the Hurricanes will play six. The Hurricanes will play the Melbourne Stars on both 2 and 4 January: a home match on the 2nd and an away match on the 4th.

Our Government, along with Cricket Tasmania, has been working hard to secure these matches, and we're delighted that the spectacular Big Bash Cricket is returning to our cricket-loving state. This is an amazing opportunity for all Tasmanians to experience some world class matches, boasting some of the world's best talent competing on the national stage this summer, and I look forward to getting to a match next month.

CHAIR - Can we have the split between the south and the north then? You said there was one played at UTAS Stadium.

Mr DEAN - Five and five.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and the two additional matches today, they are played in Hobart, not in Launceston, the two additional games that have been announced.

Mr DEAN - Minister, is it five and five?

CHAIR - So what's the split, please, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - I'll have to confirm that.

CHAIR - You did say one was to be played in Launceston. I'm just interested in -

Ms ARMITAGE - I think we've got two.

Ms HOWLETT - No, there's more than one. There's definitely more than one. I will give you the exact -

Ms ARMITAGE - But not as many as eight.

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - No, there was eight, and now there's 10 with those two additional games today.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, I mean not as many as eight. Hobart has eight, we have two.

CHAIR - Is that correct? Eight and two?

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. There are two games to be played in Launceston.

CHAIR - Thank you. Before we leave the cooperative approach with the Education department, the Learn To Swim, is that part of your remit?

Ms HOWLETT - No. Education department, I'm sorry.

CHAIR - It's not. There's no communication or cooperation between your department and Learn to Swim?

Ms HOWLETT - It's part of the education program that would -

Mr WILLIE - It's federally funded too, I think.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Very important program.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. Now, the minister might tell me if this no longer is funded with the NDIS, I'm not sure. But can you expand on the performance of this Sporting Competition Access Funds, SCAF, an initiative to assist athletes with a disability to compete in national and international sporting competitions. As I couldn't find any mention in this year's budget. It may be there, maybe I've just missed it. So can you tell me about SCAF and whether it's ongoing? I noticed I think in 2021, there was \$100 000, but nothing that I could find ongoing. Maybe I'm just not looking in the right place.

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the honourable member for her question. Through the assistance and support provided by community sport and recreation, we're increasing the number of opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport and recreation at the level of their choice. The Tasmanian government committed \$50 000 per year over four years from 2019-20 to 2022-23 to establish the sporting competition's access fund. The purpose of the fund is to help offset additional cost to athletes with a disability when attending national or international sporting competitions interstate and overseas.

Grants are available to support Tasmanian athletes with a disability and their coaches and/or carers competing at national or international level competitions held in Australia or overseas, and the fund was expected to be launched in early 2020, but was not offered in 2019-20 due to the COVID-19 disruption to national and international sports. The allocated funding was carried over to 2020-21, so that now makes \$100 000 available in 2020-21, and the fund was launched on 16 September 2020, and will remain open until 31 May 2021, or until available funds are expended.

Ms ARMITAGE - How much can be accessed by athletes?

Ms HOWLETT - I believe it's up to \$3000.

Ms ARMITAGE - Up to \$3000.

Ms HOWLETT - Correct, yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Dean in this area.

Mr DEAN - Just in relation to the split of the cricket games, the Big Bash games, who determines where the games have been played? Who was it?

Ms HOWLETT - Mr Dean, the answer to that question is Cricket Australia actually has those discussions with Cricket Tasmania, so Cricket Australia determines the locations of those games with Cricket Tas.

Mr DEAN - So the Government doesn't get any say in that at all?

Ms HOWLETT - Not really.

Ms ARMITAGE - In other words, Mr Dean's asking who do we lobby?

Mr DEAN - No, I'm not. I'm just asking whether they do determine any say in it. If I can just move on. In relation to the ticket to buy and the disability issues that the member of Launceston's just raised, if we look at New Horizons, and for the number of disabled people or people with challenges that they are supporting, what support do they get for these people playing sport to New Horizons organise and arrange?

Ms HOWLETT - I'll just find my information for state funding. I thank the member for his question. New Horizons is funded through Sport and Recreation's state grants program as a state sector service provided for disability sport and recreation. New Horizons received \$60 000 through the 2020 state grants program to support inclusive sport provision. In 2018-19, the Tasmanian Government provided \$58 000 to New Horizons Club to replace the club's database and contract a specific safety officer. New Horizons has formed the Tasmanian Inclusive Sport Alliance to promote collaboration and information sharing on inclusive sport in Tasmania.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that. That's good.

CHAIR - Given that it's such an important avenue for people living with a disability, wanting to interact in sporting activities, why don't they have an ongoing funding stream? Why do they have to come cap-in-hand, minister, every year to source funding given that you've acknowledged the work that they do?

Ms HOWLETT - Just to clarify that they do get funds from a number of sources, and they also receive federal funding as well.

CHAIR - But there's nothing ongoing in the Tasmanian Budget. Is that correct? At the moment, they're waiting to see if they have been allocated some funding.

PUBLIC

Mr DEAN - The federal funding's been cut off as well. Federal funding is an issue as well because they don't fit under the NDIS scheme. They can't attract the funding there.

Ms SIEJKA - It's the core funding that's the issue.

Ms HOWLETT - I know, and they do such amazing work throughout the community.

Mr DEAN - They do.

Ms ARMITAGE - But they're very short on funds.

Mr DEAN - They need state funding, as I said in my budget speech. They're absolutely in a situation of possible closure.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, there's quite a few of those organisations around there as well. That is something that -

Ms ARMITAGE - There are, but people with a disability are vulnerable, and we should be looking after our vulnerable people first.

Ms HOWLETT - I totally agree with you, and New Horizons plays a very important part in the community. I will engage to reach out to them in the coming weeks and see what we can do moving forward.

CHAIR - How much funding does the Tasmanian Government through this department put into the 10 cricket games that are coming to Tasmania?

Ms HOWLETT - If we're going to be fair and equitable. In the 2020-21 budget the Tasmanian government has committed \$1.040 million over four years, \$260,000 per year to confirm the total funding for cricket Tasmania, \$1 million per year up to 2020-23. This will enable the consolidation of funding into one agreement, lessening the administrative burden on Cricket Tasmania and the Department of Communities.

CHAIR - So they don't have to come cap in hand each year, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - They certainly still do have to come and approach us. Helen, would you like to add anything to that?

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister, I think it's going to be hard to explain this one. Community Sport and Recreation administers sport and recreation funding to various organisations in the sector. There are some organisations that have ongoing Tasmanian Government funding commitments which some have existed for many years, and some are reissued every three or four years, so some organisations like AFL Tasmania, Cricket Tasmania, Netball Tasmania, Football Tasmania, and Surf Lifesaving Tasmania -

CHAIR - Who all should be able to generate a lot of their own funds.

Ms LANGENBERG - Have ongoing funding commitments. Every other organised sport and recreation organisation that we administer funding to is on an annual basis. So those organisations, if they're state sport and recreation organisations apply through our Sport and

Recreation State Grants program. This year as a response to COVID-19 we made the process easier for those organisations. So rather than go through a full application process, we guaranteed to fund them at the same rate as last year on the basis of them effectively completing a checklist to confirm that they were still eligible. The funding will be directed towards them providing assistance to their member organisations to be able to recover from and offer opportunities so that Tasmanians can return to play in their activity.

When the funding for New Horizons who were not eligible under the NDIS - Community Sport and Recreation reached out to New Horizons, did work with them on strategic planning, provided advice on positioning and ways that they could improve their eligibility under the NDIS and its differing levels of assistance. I guess as a way of supporting the work that they do in the Sport and Recreation Sense, encourage them to apply through our Sport and Recreation State Grants program for assistance and they received \$60 000 last year and will receive that same funding again which is the maximum payable under our Sport and Recreation State Grants program for the work that they do in the Sport Recreation Space.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Helen, for that. My question is, is that why some sports are treated differently? Why are some sports given four years of funding and why do some have to apply every year?

Ms HOWLETT - To add to that, Chair, some sports actually come under Events Tasmania, not necessarily Sport and Rec, under my portfolio. So some are negotiated with Events and Tourism as well. Like with cricket and AFL.

CHAIR - But under your area of responsibility, why are some sports treated differently? Why doesn't everyone have to bring their proposal forward each year for the budget's submission?

Ms HOWLETT - You'll find that they certainly all do - quite a few of them do come when they're -

CHAIR - You've just told me Cricket Australia - Cricket Tasmania -

Ms HOWLETT - No, but when their funding is up, whether it's me who is in charge of their funding or, in this case it happens to be Events Tasmania, they certainly do come and ask for more funding when they realise that their funding is running out.

Mr DEAN - Can I go back to Ticket to Play?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr DEAN - How can I get information on, say, the number of kids in Rocherlea and the number of kids in Ravenswood who have received these vouchers?

Ms ARMITAGE - Or applied.

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member and that's a really good question. We've got the breakdown of postcodes which I read out to you before.

PUBLIC

Mr DEAN - The breakdown of postcodes doesn't help. You can't break it down any further? Is that what you're saying?

Ms HOWLETT - I'm not sure. I'll have to ask. Helen, can we break down those figures anymore?

Mr DEAN - Yes, there's 7250, I think? No. 7250 is the Newstead area so -

Ms LANGENBERG - That's Launceston.

Mr DEAN - So they would be 7250? They might be 7250?

CHAIR - Which covers a lot of different areas.

Mr DEAN - Yes, it does. It covers more fluid areas as well, unfortunately, and I'm just looking at those areas that are doing it tough.

Ms HOWLETT - I'm aware that we can only break it down via postcode. I'm not sure that we can break it down any more than that.

Mr DEAN - It is those kids we should be targeting. In fact I do it as you know. You're aware of that. I sponsor kids.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, I know.

Mr DEAN - I shouldn't have to. It should be Sport and Recreation or others, but anyway, I do it and I'm happy to do it.

Ms HOWLETT - I think we all do it through various ways of sponsorship.

Mr DEAN - Is there something that can be done moving forward with this to ensure that these vouchers are really getting to the kids that they should be getting to?

Ms HOWLETT - What we've personally done, and I'm sure Helen will speak more to this, but we've written to all principals and sporting teachers in all the schools around Tasmania and asked them to promote it, as well as local councils throughout the state. Also, directly to sporting codes, asking them to promote it. Helen, are there any other event news that I've forgotten about.

Ms LANGENBERG - We've encouraged and provided promotional materials to neighbourhood houses, through to organisations like Reclink, and other organisations that work in communities with the most disadvantaged areas. We've certainly written to all of the mayors or you, minister, have written to all of the mayors of each of the municipalities and encouraged them to promote it as well, and we regularly promote the activity. In fact, you may have some of our promotional material, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - I have. I'll get Laura to hand this out.

CHAIR - Show and tell.

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - It's such an excellent initiative and it's one that I would like to see fully subscribed. Even in my local regional papers, going back a couple of months, I have put in Ticket to Play. We've doubled the voucher plea support in all the regional little papers. It's something I'm passionate about, seeing it being fully subscribed.

Ms ARMITAGE - The Tasmania Institute of Sport, I note that in the annual report of the CSR, the TIS will help athletes reset, refresh and commence their preparation for the key selection events in 2021. Can you advise the assistance that CSR will provide to the TIS regarding athlete selection to represent Australia at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her question. I have Paul Austin here who's driven down from the TIS.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, I'm pleased I asked a question for him.

Ms HOWLETT - I'm very pleased you did, too. Paul, would you like to come to the table?

CHAIR - Thanks, Paul. We don't like to see anyone travel that highway without getting a guernsey on this committee.

Mr AUSTIN - Particularly now with all the roadworks.

Ms HOWLETT - Paul, would you like me to speak more or will you just -

Mr AUSTIN - If you'd like to continue on for the first half, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - The TIS is very important. In 2019-20, the TIS supported 170 athletes through various levels of targeted assistance. The headline key performance indicator for TIS is the number of TIS athletes that achieve finals and all top eight results or better at benchmark international sporting events. So whilst on track to achieve the headline KPI, the final year result was impacted obviously due to cessation of competition in March, caused by COVID-19. The target in 2019-20 for athletes achieving finals and/or top eight results was 19, and that was the result at the end of June 2020.

A total of 16 TIS athletes have achieved top eight results or better. Three of the 16 athletes achieved multiple top eight or better performances resulting in a total of 21 finals or top eight performances. The TIS was on track to reach the benchmark, obviously until COVID-19 saw the cancellation. One thing that's interesting is the breakdown of scholarships which I was looking at previously, over region and location in 2019-20 is south 69, north 20 and north-west, eight. Paul, would you like to speak more to this?

CHAIR - That it's southern based or focused?

Ms HOWLETT - The facilities are pretty amazing in Launceston, Madam Chair, compared to Hobart.

Ms ARMITAGE - But Hobart has more scholarships.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. 69 as opposed to 20 and eight.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Have you got a breakdown of the individual sports, minister, that go with that?

Ms HOWLETT - We do have a breakdown. I'll see if Paul would like to add anything before we give the breakdown.

Mr AUSTEN - Thank you, minister, but you're doing a fine job as far as providing the answers. My question through the minister was the question around funding to individual athlete support or the budget for the institute?

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, probably both. That was provided to the institute and also was provided to individual athletes.

Mr AUSTEN - Our budget from the state government for 2021 was \$2.782 million and we have an operating budget of \$3.215 million. The rest of that's made up from the funding we get from national sporting organisations where we operate with partners. It's not possible to directly provide funding that goes to each athlete specifically because athletes are predominantly supported through programs and the cost each year depends on the activities, competitions and the number of services that we would provide, and so we don't specifically allocate funding directly.

Ms ARMITAGE - And different services cost different budgets.

Mr AUSTEN - Different programs have different needs. We do run an individual scholarship program where we will provide direct funding to a small number of athletes who have no other form of support, but that's the only program where an athlete directly gets given a set funding amount.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is one sport costlier to assist on than another because the TIS?

Mr AUSTEN - They can invent many creative ways to be costlier. Rowing is very expensive to travel round the country from the point of view of shifting boats and crews and support staff. Cycling will either be an unending budget from the point of view of technology and wind tunnels and every other toy they can think of.

Ms ARMITAGE - So cycling and rowing?

Mr AUSTEN - Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - To add to what Paul was saying, he's developed a wonderful yearbook of 2019-20 and all the athletes at the TIS - and I'm happy to have that sent around to all members if they would like.

Ms ARMITAGE - Can we have a number of how many athletes are at the TIS?

Ms HOWLETT - The number right now.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is the breakdown in that brochure?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - In different disciplines or different sports? For example, 12 rowers or 10 cyclists.

Ms HOWLETT - One of us will find it. That's assessments.

Ms ARMITAGE - Paul is finding his notes.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you.

Ms KENT - You've got a breakdown of 61 male, 36 female and four athletes with a disability. Athletes range in age from 16 to 60, and the yearbook will list them all by their sports. As Paul has explained, there's a large range of sports as well as the ones that we focus on.

Ms HOWLETT - The range of sports we have athletics, canoeing, cycling, hockey, rowing, archery, lawn bowls, skateboarding, swimming, triathlon, weightlifting, athletics, cycling. Did I mention hockey before? Hockey and rowing.

Ms SIEJKA - My question is about AFL Tasmania. The budget hasn't allocated money across the forward Estimates for any potential AFL deal with Hawthorn for games in Tasmania. Can you update us on where negotiations are at with Hawthorn? Given no games have been played in Tasmania this year, how much has been saved, and have any payments been made to Hawthorn this year, and if any money has been saved, where has it been allocated?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her question. The Premier has said savings totalling \$2 million as a result of no Hawthorn games being played in Tasmania. Funding will be redistributed to other sport and recreation commitments as part of the upcoming 2020-21 budget. The 2020-21 budget includes well in excess of \$2 million of additional investment in sport and recreation, including \$1 million into Basketball Tasmania to deliver NBL1 school clinics across Tasmania. These clinics have provided a fantastic opportunity for students to learn from some of the stars of the NBL1 competition and get a glimpse of the pathway from grassroots competition all the way through to elite level.

Football Tasmania has received an extra \$300 000, so that funding is to increase growth and boost the profile of women and girls participating in football in the state.

Silverdome operating costs - the funding will allow the facility to continue hosting numerous local, national and international sporting events, including NBL matches. The savings from the \$1.5 million for Collingwood Magpies to support the teams to play in the National Netball League games into Tasmania. It will also provide broad development opportunities for access to coaching and official clinics in the state. We also had support for cricket development and the hosting of Big Bash League and Women's Big Bash League matches as well throughout the state. The \$250 000 is for development of a state-wide strategy to inform future sport and recreation facilities investment decisions to support the opportunity for Tasmanians to engage in physical activity. We've developed well over \$2 million in this budget for sport and recreation commitments so far.

PUBLIC

Ms SIEJKA - Where they're at with Hawthorn have any payments been made to them this year.

Ms HOWLETT - No payment has been made to Hawthorn Football Club in the 2020-21 financial year. A payment of \$1 023 046 would have been due in August 2020, but it was not paid due to Hawthorn Football Club not playing matches in the 2020 season.

Ms SIEJKA - That's then gone in to be redistributed to the other groups that you mentioned?

Ms HOWLETT - That's correct.

Ms SIEJKA - Thank you.

CHAIR - The basketball clinics that you talked you. You said there's about \$1 million allocated to basketball. Will those clinics be regional, throughout all of Tasmania?

Ms HOWLETT - I can give you an update on how many they have so far.

CHAIR - I expect they'll go to every small town for a million dollars.

Ms HOWLETT - Well, there's north-west. There's the three different NBL1 clubs that provide training. We have the north-west, the northern club and the southern club, and I can give you a breakdown of that. Just one second. They've actually reached a lot of people, even due to the fact of COVID-19.

CHAIR - Just really interested if they'd been evenly dispersed right through the state.

Ms HOWLETT - As in the funding or the clinics?

CHAIR - The clinics.

Ms HOWLETT - The clinics. Between January 2020 and the onset of COVID-19, restrictions in March, the Hobart Chargers had delivered two clinics to 85 participants; the Launceston Tornadoes: eight clinics to 794 participants; and the North-West Thunder delivered four clinics to 463 participants.

CHAIR - That's 14 clinics.

Ms HOWLETT - That's right. Since September 2020 the Hobart Chargers have been delivering clinics to an average of 915 participants per month. That's huge. It's actually higher than the average of 670 per month. The clinics are a fantastic opportunity for students to learn from some of the stars of the NBL1 competition and get a glimpse of the pathway from grassroots competition to the elite level. In 2019-20 Basketball Tasmania received funding of \$60 000 through community sport and recreation to support participation activities and coaching in official development programs. The Tasmanian Government has committed \$20 million towards a new indoor multi-sports facility in Glenorchy. This will cater for a wide variety of sports, including basketball, and the \$2.5 million towards a new \$9 million indoor facility at Pembroke Park in Sorell. Do we have a breakdown? Helen, would you like to add

anymore to those regional areas - the northwest?

CHAIR - Does it go out into the regions, or is it just Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport or Burnie? Through you, minister.

Ms LANGENBERG - The funding is distributed by Basketball Tasmania to the three NBL1 clubs as the minister referred to, so the funding is dispersed to the Hobart charges who offer clinics for the entire southern region.

CHAIR - I'm interested in the clinics.

Ms LANGENBERG - To the Launceston Tornadoes, who offer the clinics across the northern region of the state and also to the North-West Thunder across the north-west of the state. Effectively it's the club members of each of those three NBL1 teams who deliver the clinics. My understanding is that they get out far and wide into their regions. I know the Thunder have certainly had a presence in circular head and down the west coast. The Tornadoes they've focused on the greater Launceston area and done regional work even as far afield as Scottsdale.

Ms HOWLETT - They've had a fantastic reach particularly considering COVID-19 restrictions.

CHAIR - Thank you. AFL?

Ms SIEJKA - Yes. To finish on the AFL, the Tassie AFL team, can you update us when was the last time you had discussions with the task force chair and where those discussions are at?

Ms HOWLETT - Obviously our main focus is to have a team that we can get behind and call our own in Tasmania. I noticed the Premier was asked the same question earlier today. The Premier stated today that conversations and discussions are ongoing between the Government and the AFL.

Mr DEAN - What's the negotiations then with North Melbourne? Where are they at, do we know? What's happening there?

CHAIR - Just lost their best player to Melbourne, Tasmanian, Ben Brown.

Ms HOWLETT - I actually can't comment on that because it's a contract between, as you stated before, the TT-Line, and it's commercially in-confidence.

Mr DEAN - I would have thought that the Government would have had an involvement here in AFL football and the state, and with North Melbourne playing in the south of the state. They - I use the word 'prompted' - TT-Line to sponsor them in the first place. Surely the Government must be somehow involved in the further negotiations with North Melbourne in the south?

Ms HOWLETT - I would like to give you a definite response that that's certainly occurring at the moment, and I would say that it is. I will take that on notice and get that from the correct minister and provide you with those details.

Mr DEAN - An AFL team for Tasmania. Where are we with that? Has that progressed at all?

Ms HOWLETT - As the Premier stated, discussions are ongoing, and that is our vision to have a team of our own. That's what we have been working towards, and that's what we will continue to work towards.

Mr DEAN - It's not changed at this stage?

Ms HOWLETT - No.

CHAIR - Thank you. The member for Launceston, last question before we go to 9.8. I had to work out which one I'll do then, if it's my last. As I say to most, pick your favourite, the most pressing.

Ms ARMITAGE - Probably a little bit different one we'll go to this time, minister. In the 2019-20 Department of Communities Tasmania annual report it says that CSR will continue development of a state-wide strategy for sport and recreation infrastructure during 2021. Can the minister advise why this is a continuing process given the Government's suite of announcements in this budget regarding the construction blitz? Do you consider this as a missed opportunity for sporting infrastructure given that finalised priorities might have resulted in actual funding and construction?

Ms HOWLETT - The 2020-21 budget includes \$250 000 to develop a state-wide sports facility strategy to support the Government in making considerate and informed decisions about the future of investment in major stadia infrastructure. Community Sport and Recreation in the Department of Communities Tasmania will work with events in the Department of State Growth in the development of this strategy. Helen or Kate, would you like to speak to this in any more detail?

Ms KENT - Sure, minister. Thank you for the question. The budget this year includes the \$250 000 for a strategy around the larger sports stadia infrastructure. We continue to always look at the issues around sporting infrastructure, and as you know in about 2018, we did a study of northern facilities, and we're very keen to progress that work. This year we were a little bit more delayed in getting to that because of our focus on COVID-19 and on all of the other grant programs we've had.

Ms ARMITAGE - The DEC.

Ms KENT - And the DEC, and the indoor multi-sport facility. We know there's a number of sporting facilities that we work with, and we work really closely with local government and state sporting organisations to look at their infrastructure needs. We're continuing to do that, and we'll do that as part of -

Ms ARMITAGE - As mentioned, it's such a construction blitz I thought that some might have seen fruition.

Ms KENT - There is a large number of infrastructure projects under way that have been committed to and have been funded in budgets prior to this one and continue to do so. So you're right.

CHAIR - Question, Mr Dean? I've said it was the last one, but I've said that about 10 times today.

Mr DEAN - I have two, if I could. One was alcohol and tobacco and smoking in sport. What's sport and recreation doing promoting that and giving clubs money and so on? Are there any attachments to that, connections to these clubs promoting no smoking, and drinking only in reasonable quantities and so on, and gambling, I suppose? The other question comes from last Estimates hearings. Last year there was mention made of outsourcing to SGS Consulting to do work in getting people into sport in the north. The minister at the time, Jacquie Petrusma, said in 2019, 'Estimates of the project plan were still to be worked out'. So where is it at now, and what is it?

Ms KENT - I can answer two parts. I'll answer the second part of your question, Mr Dean, and then hand over to Helen to answer the first bit about alcohol. As really a follow on from the response I provided to Mrs Armitage, the funding to SGS was the funding for the northern facilities study that we did in 2018. We are planning to do further work around a State-wide strategy internally in the division. We're also working closely with Events TAS who will get the funding in this year's budget for looking at broader stadia strategy, so we're coalescing that work together. I'll pass to Helen in terms of the Good Sports.

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister, and thanks for the question. In terms of making sporting clubs safe, fair and inclusive, we encourage a healthy environment for people to participate in. We provide funding to the alcohol and drug foundation who deliver their Good Sports program throughout the state, and we work closely with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation in promoting the services that they provide, which includes assisting clubs to develop plans to reduce the reliance on the sale of alcohol, and to reduce problem drinking and binge drinking amongst their club members. We go through their accreditation process, which involves a tiered system for each of the clubs to go through. That funding's administered annually, again through our sport and recreation state grants program, but we also work to promote the programs that they offer. The system, although it's slightly unrelated, we promote with the program that focuses on mental health amongst club members as well.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that, and I won't ask you a question on the \$500 000 grant to TFL Tasmania. I think you're providing a report to me on that.

Ms HOWLETT - I am.

Mr DEAN - So, I'll leave that.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Output Group 90 - COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.8 Sport and recreation support -

CHAIR - Moving now to 90.8, which is the COVID-19 sport and recreation sport funding of \$2.332 million. I know you have touched on that, minister, and you gave us a list of the Ticket to Play areas. Do you have the same sort of list of clubs who benefitted from the support that's been provided so far and what are your plans for the future for this funding?

PUBLIC

Ms SEIJKA - Chair, I'd like to add to your question and ask about the criteria applied to the funding decisions?

Ms HOWLETT - I have the list of successful applicants from tranche 1 and tranche 2.

CHAIR - You might like to table that; I don't expect you to read it.

Ms HOWLETT - I can table the information.

CHAIR - Is there a list of criteria?

Ms HOWLETT - I wasn't involved in the grant process, but I can hand you over to Helen to speak to that.

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister, and thank you for the question. The first tranche of funding was to state sporting organisations to help them keep people employed through the period 1 March through to 31 August. To be eligible, they had to have people employed and they had to then have had a loss in revenue which meant they would have struggled to pay their salaries. This grant program was in addition to but didn't duplicate any funding they may have received through the Australia Government's JobKeeper payments. It assisted in keeping 186 people employed in the sport sector through that six-month period.

The second tranche of funding was grants of up to \$3000 for sport and recreation clubs around the state. To be eligible, clubs had to be incorporated, that is, a legal entity in their own right, and they had to identify the hygiene equipment they were going to purchase, such as hand sanitiser or additional equipment that COVID-19 required them to have. For example, additional helmets, rather than sharing them, or other additional equipment they needed in order to be able to return to play.

CHAIR - Of the \$2.332 million that's allocated in this Budget, how much of that has already been expended, and how much is still left to be expended, given it's the 2020-21 Budget allocation of \$2.332 million?

Ms HOWLETT - We had \$5 million allocated this financial year and we also had \$5 million allocated for next financial year.

CHAIR - Is that for Improving the Playing Field? This is actually 90.8 on page 52 of Communities Tasmania. Am I reading it wrong?

Ms HOWLETT - There's \$5 million available next year for that, for Improving the Playing Field, that's right.

CHAIR - The playing field, and \$5 million for this year, that's 90.17.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

CHAIR - We're not there yet.

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - We had our small grants which are now closed; those have been distributed. Our larger grants have now closed and we'll be announcing those in the coming weeks.

CHAIR - We don't have a list of those at this point in time?

Ms HOWLETT - The larger grants haven't been announced yet. The smaller grants have been, and we announced those last week in parliament.

CHAIR - Can we have a copy of those, please?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, absolutely. I'll table those.

CHAIR - Thank you. For those clubs that missed out, is there going to be any top up, given that we didn't pay AFL this year? There will be clubs that have missed out.

Ms HOWLETT - There are clubs that have missed out.

CHAIR - What happens with those, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - I'm not sure. I haven't seen the successful applicants for the larger grants, but I'm sure that's been very oversubscribed as well. As far as the organisations and clubs that have missed out, I'm sure they can reapply next financial year when the second lot of funding, the other \$5 million, is available in the budget.

CHAIR - What happens to those clubs in the meantime if they can't be COVID-19 compliant and undertake their sporting organisations and their events? How do they continue without any funding? Is it all left to their own devices?

Ms LANGENBERG - Through you, minister. I'm potentially getting a little confused between the Return to Play grants and the COVID-19 grants and Improving the Playing Field. The funding for \$2.8 million has effectively all been fully committed at this stage, and the outcome of those funding programs, which shows the expenditure, is available on our website; and I think has been circulated. Approximately \$1.9 million was tranche 1, and just over \$900 000 was allocated in tranche 2, which was the \$3000 grants.

For 2020-21 we have held on to our minor grants program, which we usually provide for through the Community Support Levy funding we receive. We're reviewing what you've touched on, regarding the need of the sector in terms of Return to Play. Like you, we think some clubs have perhaps underestimated what those costs might be and some of the others may have missed out. Normally those small grants go towards minor facility upgrades, the grants of up to \$10 000, but we've decided not to offer those given the duplication with Improving the Playing Field. Instead we'll undertake a review of exactly what the current and ongoing need is for this financial year for the sport and recreation sector, and put a proposal through to the minister to rework the minor grants into something that can respond to sector needs.

CHAIR - Thank you, that was all I needed.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair.

90.17 Improving the playing field -

CHAIR - If there are no further questions in that area I'll move now to 90.17 which is COVID-19 Improving the Playing Field, and invite the honourable member for Rosevears to ask the lead question.

Ms PALMER - Minister, can you explain to the committee the Improving the Playing Field grants program - which of course appears for the first time in this budget - the value of the program and what type of projects are eligible?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her question. As a Government we are very committed to increasing opportunities for women and girls to participate in all levels of sport. We are aware that many of the state's sport and recreation facilities either do not or are inadequate to cater for women and girls. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to a number of sectors of the Tasmanian community. On 11 July 2020 I was pleased to announce the \$10 million Improving the Playing Field over two years, 2020-21 and 2021-22, which will provide grants to local councils and sporting organisations to improve playing facilities across Tasmania to build and maintain participation following the pandemic.

Improving the Playing Field has the dual purpose of upgrading sporting facilities to allow them to cater for all participants, and also stimulating the local building and construction sector. The grants opened on 13 July 2020 with \$5 million available each year. The program offers grants between \$25 000 and \$250 000. While there is no requirement that the applicants provide match funding, priority must be given to projects that demonstrate contributing funding from their own or other sources.

Applications for funding under the smaller grant stream for grants between \$25 and \$50 000 closed on 4 September, and we have 74 applications lodged. Thirty-one organisations will receive funding of \$1 208 477 under the small grant stream in 2020-21. Applications under the larger grant stream, for grants over 50 000 and up to 250 000, closed on 23 October 2020, and received 138 responses. Assessments of applicants under the large grant stream for Improving the Playing Field 2020-21 are under way, and applicants will be advised of the outcome in due course. Chair, would you like me to table the successful applicants for the small grants?

Ms HOWLETT - Excellent.

Ms SIEJKA - Chair, that was my question; but I am also interested in the amounts for the recipients.

CHAIR - The amount appears to be included.

Ms HOWLETT - Can I table that for you?

Ms SIEJKA - Thank you.

CHAIR - Any other question, honourable member? No? Thank you. Ms Armitage?

PUBLIC

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. A quick question regarding the Derwent Entertainment Centre. Given the significant financial undertaking involved in the Derwent Entertainment Centre upgrades, what checks does the department have in place to ensure this project will be delivered on time?

CHAIR - I'd say they're probably getting very nervous. It hasn't even gone through the Public Works Committee yet.

Ms ARMITAGE - And I have a follow up.

Ms HOWLETT - I assume you're talking about the DEC, not the multisport facility?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Ms HOWLETT - A very important question, Madam Chair.

CHAIR - They're all important, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - They are. The Tasmanian Government has secured a Tasmanian team, the JackJumpers, in the National Basketball League (NBL) for the first time in 25 years through sponsorship of \$10 million plus indexation over five years, with a team to commence playing in the 2021-22 season. The Derwent Entertainment Centre (DEC) and surrounding land has returned to state ownership under an agreement with the Glenorchy City Council. The Tasmanian Government has committed \$41 million to upgrade the venue into a premium, contemporary sport and entertainment venue for commercial and community use and to be the home to the new Tasmanian NBL team.

State ownership of the land will also facilitate the construction of an indoor, four court, multisport facility on that site during 2021-22, delivering a 2018 election commitment. The agreement between the Tasmanian Government and the LK Group also paved the way for developments of the Wilkinson Point Precinct in accordance with the new master plan for the site that has been approved by the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

The Government completed the purchase of the DEC from the Glenorchy City Council on 4 November 2020. This allowed related agreements with the LK Group to facilitate the development of the DEC, and the future operations and management of the DEC to be finalised as well. Local company, Vos Construction commenced preliminary works on site at the DEC on Monday 9 November and it's expected these works will be completed by Christmas. The major redevelopment works will be subject of a separate tender process that is under way, and will occur in parallel to early works over the remainder of 2020 with a contract to be awarded in the New Year. The time frame for the redevelopment is ambitious.

The completion is targeted for the end of September in time for the 2021-22 NBL season. A planning permit application to progress the upgrades to the deck was submitted to the Glenorchy City Council at the end of September 2020 and is being assessed in accordance with the usual statutory process. If there's one thing I can say, Madam Chair, the developer, LK Group - he knows his project and he will be determined to finish this project on time.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - That may well be the case, minister, but he obviously doesn't know that there's a process that's attached to it and it's called a Parliamentary Committee of Public Works. That needs to be considered, in my view.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Would you like to add to that, Kate, sorry?

Ms KENT - Through you, minister, I understand that it's due to come to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Monday 7 December. I think there's a hearing for it then.

CHAIR - But no decision is made on Monday 7 December. There's a time frame after that for the committee to consider.

Ms KENT - That's right. So that hearing will go through and provide you with more detail.

Ms ARMITAGE - I have a further question about capital investment. What other facilities were considered for upgrades under capital investment in this year's budget? Were any facilities in the north or north-west considered? If not - why? If so, what was the deciding factor to channel funding into upgrading the Derwent Entertainment Centre and not any others?

CHAIR - When the minister's finished answering those questions, then we'll have a cup of tea. So whatever time it takes, minister, the cup of tea will be waiting.

Ms HOWLETT - I might need to - just give me a moment to seek some information on those multiple questions related to northern Tasmania.

Ms ARMITAGE - Would you like the sheet to make it easier?

CHAIR - We'll have to go to supplementaries.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, just one quick question.

CHAIR - While the answers are coming for those?

Mr WILLIE - Yes. Talking about the JackJumpers - have you signed up to the team, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - I haven't yet, I do have all my apparel but I have to sign up.

CHAIR - I saw a photo opportunity with a jumper. Was it for that?

Ms HOWLETT - I need to sign up my whole family, actually.

Mr WILLIE - I have.

Ms HOWLETT - Excellent.

Mr DEAN - I've signed up and I didn't get my things.

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - I also signed up my entire office as well. It's a very exciting time. And I think we had an update on members; Simon mentioned to me last week over 2000 members had signed up so far. It's great. I think it's an excellent Christmas present for kids.

CHAIR - So at that rate the Government won't have to put in as much money for their ongoing needs.

Ms ARMITAGE - Just to recap. What other facilities were considered for upgrades under capital investment in this year's budget? Were any facilities in the north or north-west considered? If not - why? If so, what was the deciding factor to channel funding into upgrading the Derwent Entertainment Centre and not any others?

CHAIR - We're not parochial, are we.

Ms HOWLETT - Over recent years, the Government has allocated funding to a range of major sport and recreation infrastructure projects including Oatlands, Hobart, and Scottsdale Swimming Pools; Devonport Country Club; Dial Regional Sport Complex in Penguin; Circular Head Community Well-being Centre in Smithton; Northern Tasmanian Tennis Centre in Launceston; Pembroke Park in Sorell; Elphin Sports Centre, Launceston; and Moonah and Clarence Sports Centres. These other government funding initiatives have supported facility upgrades across a wide variety of sports including AFL, cricket, football - as in soccer - golf, hockey, bowls, rugby, mountain-biking, hiking, surf life-saving, sailing, athletics, netball, gymnastics, rowing, canoeing, swimming, the PCYC and tennis.

Mr DEAN - And no softball.

CHAIR - That'll be on next year.

Ms HOWLETT - Would you like to add anything to that, Kate?

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, minister.

CHAIR - Thank you. Member, does that finish your questions? Thank you.

We always need more, but we're also mindful of people needing to have a break. Minister, on behalf of the committee, I thank you very much for your attention to detail in this particular portfolio area of sport and recreation. I also thank the people you have with you supporting you. I know they have put in a mighty amount of work to pull all that information together.

Ms HOWLETT - They certainly have.

CHAIR - We shall stop the broadcast and have a break and return at 25 past 4, for Racing.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you. Madam Chair, I thank you and the committee very much and I thank my department and my staff as well. You're right, there's an enormous amount of effort that goes into preparation for Estimates. So thank you very much.

The Committee suspended from 4.09 pm until 4.24 p.m.

DIVISION 10

CHAIR - So ready to broadcast for the final session this afternoon for committee B. We welcome you back to the table in your capacity as the Minister for Racing. Please introduce the people at the table with you. Would you like to identify others who might come to the table to assist you? I won't introduce the committee because you are well versed with who the members of the committee are. I feel sure that the people at the table with you can all recognise the members of the Legislative Council as well who make up committee B. I invite you to provide your overview. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Madam Chair. I welcome to the table Deidre Wilson, deputy security DPIPWE; and to my left I have John King, general manager of the Office of Racing Integrity; and Adrian Pearce behind me who is the manager of finance, if he needs to be called to the table.

Tasmania's racing industry injects around \$103 million a year into the Tasmanian economy, including in rural and regional areas. This year's State Budget recognises its importance through further support and investment. There is no doubt COVID-19 provided a great challenge for all three racing codes in Tasmania, but industry participants rose to the challenge and we can now look forward to a period of growth. From this year's budget, a total of \$42.2 million will be invested into the state's racing industry with a further \$8 million to be provided over the next two years to underpin the relocation of the Davenport greyhound and harness tracks.

This amount includes funding related to the deed with Tasracing, revenue from the point of consumption tax committed to Tasracing, and funding for the Office of Racing Integrity which is administered through DPIPWE. The Office of Racing Integrity, or ORI as it's known, is responsible for maintaining the probity and integrity of the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing in Tasmania. ORI contributes to a healthy, growing and competitive racing and breeding industry by ensuring that it is safe, fair and credible. John King is the general manager of ORI and is appointed in the statutory role of director of racing. I thank Mr King and Tony Latham and their team of stewards and other ORI staff for their work they have carried out this year, particularly with the challenges of COVID-19.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. On page 273 of the Budget Papers we have a performance information table 10.7 and it certainly gives those reading the budget papers a good account of the work of ORI and what they undertake during the year. I'm interested - obviously the drug detection swabs taken by stewards has reduced quite significantly, and it goes without saying that that's due to the lack of racing from - given that we've had - I think - what was it? How many weeks were we out of racing? Just remind me.

Ms HOWLETT - Seventy-two days.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. All over it. It probably felt like 173 to some in the industry, including yourself.

Ms HOWLETT - It certainly did, I can assure you.

CHAIR - I wanted to have a bit of a focus on that because it's still with those 73 days, 3070 actual swabs - it shows that there's quite a bit of activity within ORI in regard to this drug

detection area. Obviously there's a concern, or is it that when the swabs are taken, they're not doing it just because they feel like it, or is it that there is a focus on how many swabs need to be taken at any given meet? I'm interested in some background behind that.

Ms HOWLETT - Madam Chair, I'll make some comments before I pass over to Mr King.

ORI is committed to maintaining appropriate levels of testing to ensure there is confidence that prohibited substances are not being used. The two performance measures for drug detection are swabs taken by stewards, and positive swabs taken. ORI was on track to meet its drug detection target for 2019-20; however, due to racing being suspended as a result of COVID-19, less testing was required. In the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, 3070 racing animals and human participants across the three racing codes were swabbed for prohibited substances. The 2019-20 target was 3500 swabs. You certainly did a good job, didn't you?

CHAIR - Albeit 73 days less.

Ms HOWLETT - Albeit. The second measures related to the proportion of positive swabs taken. ORI recorded 13 positive swabs: 12 positive animal swabs, and one positive human swab, which is equivalent to 0.42 per cent, and the target is 0.30 per cent. The 13 positive swabs for 2019-20 have the following code breakdown: thoroughbred, four; harness, three; greyhound, five; and human, one. Would you like to add anything else to that, John?

Mr KING - It might interest some people how we go about our drug testing and where and when it's done.

CHAIR - But it is an increase on last year of the positive swabs?

Mr KING - Yes, that's correct. We have a very slight increase on the number of positive results. The main change for this year, and we do try to mix this up a little bit, is our drug swabbing policy. In previous years, it's been more of a random approach. This year, particularly in the equine code, we've moved to a minimum of swabbing winners - at least winners in every race as well as a proportion of random tests as well, so that's on race day. On race day, swabs can be taken before the race or after the race.

CHAIR - I was going to say, you won't know who's the winner until after, will you?

Mr KING - Yes, but we also do random ones as well, not just the winners.

Ms SIEJKA - Can I just clarify, so the swabs that you're taking on the race, given there's been more positive tests, is that additional to what has been previously -

Mr KING - No, our numbers are roughly the same, just the approach is slightly different this year.

Ms SIEJKA - Thank you.

Mr KING - It depends on what you're testing for. On some occasions, you're better off taking your swab before the race, and sometimes it's several hours after the horse or animal has exerted themselves. It depends on whether it's a urine swab or a blood swab, and which particular drug it is.

Ms SIEJKA - Okay.

Mr KING - That's probably the main thing I wanted to point out there. We also base our random ones on - it can be a range of things. It can be some intelligence we've received. It could be the actions of a particular participant on the day which may cause us to initiate a drug sample. It could also be past swabbing results, or it could also be just completely random.

CHAIR - Minister, I note that there has been an increase in persons licensed or registered from last 2018-19, 1295 to 1334. Can you give the committee some indication of whether that's spread across the codes or whether it's more specific to one code?

Ms HOWLETT - I'm certain I've got the breakdown of the code on that. In relation to the breakdown of the code of licensed or registered, would you like me to go back to 2015-16, or just this 2019-20?

CHAIR - No, just the last ones that are listed here, 2017-18, 2018-19. There was a drop in 2018-19 from 1369, and then now there's an increase back up in 2019-20, even though we've had 73 days of non-racing.

Ms HOWLETT - True.

CHAIR - I'm wondering what code they relate to?

Ms HOWLETT - In the code breakup, we have: thoroughbred, 506; harness, 309; and greyhound, 519.

CHAIR - Is that similar to last year?

Ms HOWLETT - Last year, there's been an increase on last year. 2018-2019 in thoroughbred, we had 490 in comparison to 506 this year; harness, 298 and 309 this year; greyhounds, 507, and this year it's 519.

CHAIR - Okay. It's similar in those areas. I note under racing regulation policy, it talks about undertaking, 'High-level research and analysis on a range of issues relating to the Tasmanian racing industry'. Can I have some indication of is that like a review, or who's doing it? Is it being done by ORI themselves? I'm just interested in what - when and where and what that refers to.

Ms HOWLETT - No, that's a really good question. I'll get John to see to that.

Mr KING - I suppose the best way to answer that is that does form a significant part of my role. I participate in many national bodies that are researching all manner of issues - whether they be licensing manners, welfare matters in relation to the racing code. An example I could use for the last 12 months would be pretty much a complete rewrite of the harness rating system. I'm involved on that as a State representative to work through how we can evenly handicap harness horses to ensure that racing is even, so it's those sorts of racing topics that I'm involved in on the research on a national level.

CHAIR - What sort of relationship or communication do you have, or does ORI have, minister, with the codes? Does ORI attend their code meetings?

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - ORI attends code meetings, race meetings, and ORI also does farm and kennel visit, onsite visits very regularly.

CHAIR - In regard to the GAP program, we finally have a designated facility. Is ORI involved in providing oversight in that area.

Ms HOWLETT - The GAP program is actually run by Tasracing, but ORI do have for welfare, essentially, as a whole.

CHAIR - A regulation role.

Mr KING - Yes, so our immediate involvement with GAP is essentially an audit role. On a yearly basis we look at all the animals that are rehomed, and we have a shared responsibility with Tasracing in relation to all welfare matters. We're always looking at their program, and auditing their numbers. My office is also responsible for accrediting their rehoming process to ensure that greyhounds can be in the community without a muzzle, so we've had quite an involvement in their process as well.

CHAIR - Does that include Brightside, who also receive funding to rehome greyhounds?

Mr KING - That's correct, yes. We have audited their books in the past. We're actually still waiting on their figures for this year to conduct an audit of their rehoming numbers. We have our own figures. It has each greyhound is registered in the national databases, but we also like to do a secondary audit process to ensure that that's correct, particularly with agencies that have people who aren't participants in the racing industry and aren't bound by the same rules. And like GAP, Brightside was accredited by Racing Integrity for their rehoming process.

CHAIR - My final question is around the registering and regulating oncourse bookmakers and their agents. Have we got any left?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr KING - I'll just check. Six or eight, I can't -

Ms HOWLETT - Six.

Mr KING - It's six. Yes, six oncourse bookmakers. My office is responsible for registering those. They also have to nominate with my office which course they're going to field at. At the moment, they can also apply for off-course licences for particular events. This year I think we've only had one, so most of the time they're just fielding at the race meets.

CHAIR - Thank you. The member for Launceston has some questions around stewards.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. How many racing stewards do we now have? Bearing in mind, we had a shortage, I think, last year.

Ms HOWLETT - We did. Last year there was a shortage.

Ms ARMITAGE - Also, whether we had any interstate stewards before COVID-19 coming in, if we still had a shortage.

Ms HOWLETT - In the 2017-18 financial year, ORI engaged the services of mainland stewards to boost both race day services and long-term ongoing investigations. Mainland support has not been required in the last two years as local stewards have been recruited and trained. The Government has also committed an additional \$550 000 over four years to creating two new steward cadetship positions. These positions are strengthening integrity functions and encourage cadets to consider stewarding as a long-term career. I am pleased to advise one cadet has taken advantage of the training provided during the program and has been appointed to a fulltime contract position as a stipendiary steward.

Additional recruiting measures have also seen the recent appointments of two new cadet stewards, which will further enhance the capacity of ORI and has the potential to kick start a long career in the racing industry.

Turning to the breakdown of stewards - we have three fulltime chairmen of stewards; six fulltime stipendiary stewards; two fulltime steward investigators; three fulltime cadet stewards; and 18 casual stipendiary stewards. Would you like to add any more to that, Mr King?

Mr KING - Minister, you covered it pretty well. Our casuals supplement our full-timers. Our full-time stewards probably have the more significant roles on race day, as they're in the stewarding room making decisions about racing rules and those sorts of things, and we supplement in each area of our state with casuals. We employ casuals on the North West Coast, in Launceston and also in Hobart. That helps reduce our travel time as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - You managed to keep them all occupied during COVID when there was no racing occurring?

Ms HOWLETT - I think they were busier than ever. I'll let Mr King explain, but it was because of the animal welfare package we put in.

Mr KING - Not so much, of course, for the casuals because they're predominantly employed during race day activity. However, our full-time stewards were full-time at work conducting additional inspections. Very early on in the piece we determined that animal welfare was an absolute priority during COVID-19, and that inspections of racing properties, stables and kennels had to continue through the COVID-19 lockdown period. We had precautions in place to be sure not only the safety of our staff, but also to ensure we weren't actively spreading a virus between properties. We were very conscious of that issue.

We basically disbanded our office and we had stewards team up. They worked from home in single vehicles so they didn't cross-pollinate between our staff. We had appropriate PPE for our staff and they had strict requirements about social contact when they went to each of the stables and kennels. I think we about tripled our standard numbers. In an average year we would do between 200 to 250 inspections a year, and in the last financial year we did 684.

Ms ARMITAGE - So they were busy.

Mr KING - Yes. We took that time to continue to really increase those inspections and ensure those high levels of welfare, and also to remain in contact with our participants, to ensure they were coping.

PUBLIC

Ms PALMER - Chair, while we're on stewards, thank you for those numbers on those visits. That was part of my question. I was also wondering if the minister could outline how many race meetings are attended by stewards?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her question. In the past financial year stewards oversaw 256 race meetings, including 58 thoroughbred race meetings, 58 harness race meetings and 138 greyhound race meetings. They also oversaw the conduct of trials across the three codes. In addition to race day duties stewards also undertake visits to stables and kennels and, as we've stated before, this past financial year included 408 stable visits and 276 kennel visits. As we said, that's a significant increase from past years. They are out there working hard, ensuring that animal welfare is priority.

Mr DEAN - Yes, thank you. I have a question to ask about the cadet program. How successful has that program been? I think \$550 000 was provided to that program, over a four-year period. I wasn't quite sure the last question covered that.

Mr KING - Five people have been through that program since it started. Three of those people are still current cadets. Of the other two, we have one moving to a full-time position as a full-time steward and the other person has moved into a full-time position in racing administration within ORI as well. We believe the program has been very successful.

Mr DEAN - Is that the sort of numbers you were looking at when the program commenced?

Mr KING - We offer a 12-month contract that can be extended for a second year. That's essentially what's been happening.

Mr DEAN - Right. Did you ask the question on the suspensions and so on?

CHAIR - No, I did drug detection and I'm going to grading shortly. But I don't want to take all the questions, Mr Dean.

Mr DEAN - I want to go to suspensions, disqualifications and fines imposed. This year we've had an increase from 385 to 423 in 2019-20, so what specifically do they relate to in the main, and is there any pattern developing?

Ms HOWLETT - In the period July 2019 to 30 June 2020, 423 fines, suspensions and disqualifications were issued by stewards, with the target being 450. A further 142 reprimands were issued by the stewards during this period. Breaches of the racing rules vary from year to year and can be influenced by factors such as the number of races held, detections, education and contemporary interpretation of the rules.

In 2019-20, 17 decisions by ORI stewards were appealed to the Tasmanian Racing Appeals Board (TRAB). Of these 17 decisions appealed, four convictions imposed by the stewards were quashed - 23 per cent - and six penalties were buried - 35 per cent. The target for suspensions, disqualification fines and appeals are difficult to forecast and are largely beyond the control of ORI. ORI continues to focus on continued improvement, and the Director of Racing actively reviews all appeals to determine if compliance practices need to be improved. Would you like to add anything to that, John?

Mr KING - To clarify, we have a target of 450; however, we're mainly looking at racing rules breaches. It does include some things like drug positives as well, but they're obviously very low numbers as we previously discussed. The majority of what we're talking about might be, for example, a whip offence or someone cutting someone off or not giving their horse the best chance to win in a race - those sorts of racing charges.

Mr DEAN - Right. I notice that of those going to TRAB, 40 per cent were successful in having reductions in their fines. What does that indicate? I guess the fine is imposed as a set thing in each breach, so what happens there with TRAB? What do they look at when they reduce the fines? Because it's just a bit less than a half.

Mr KING - Yes, I suppose we do need to go back one step. Only 17 out of 450 actually reached TRAB. That's a very small number. Of the number that have gone there, you are correct, it's 35 per cent or on six occasions we've had our penalties varied. I'd like to think that that's a really good success rate, that we don't get many appeals in the first place. Those that we do get, we've had six varied.

The second part of your question was about what guides the penalties. It's really dependent on each code. Each code has developed throughout history independently, albeit we do have a tricode regulatory body in Tasracing and ORI at the moment. Each code has developed throughout history on its own, so they do approach penalties slightly differently, and there are guidelines in certain codes.

However, the appeals board has the autonomy to disregard any penalty guidelines and they can do as they see fit. Overall, having some decisions go to appeal and some changed, means we have a really active system. Participants have that ability to appeal and sometimes we're found to be a little bit harsh in our penalties. On four occasions, the decision was quashed entirely.

Mr DEAN - The race meeting in Launceston that was recently called off, with calls for heads to roll; I noticed ORI had a part to play in that, minister. What is the position and where does ORI fit? It's obviously a race track problem. Can you please explain exactly what happened and what ORI will do, how they fit into this and where we're going with it?

CHAIR - Somebody didn't fill in the holes.

Ms HOWLETT - Quite correct, Madam Chair. What happened at Mowbray causing the late notice cancellation of races last week -

Mr DEAN - This is a big issue to people involved in racing.

Ms HOWLETT - I totally agree. It was simply not satisfactory, and I've sought advice from racing authorities so we can determine how it occurred. Approximately half an hour prior to the scheduled first race, it was found that following the running rail being moved last week, the holes around the track associated with the rail uprights had not been filled in. Jockeys and stewards walked the track and a meeting was held. At that stage, the jockeys were unhappy to ride after remedial work on the track was completed. After remedial work was completed, the stewards walked from the finishing line to the 600-metre mark and located three holes that had still not been filled in.

Mr DEAN - Is that where the posts were removed?

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. Other holes which were filled, weren't sufficiently compacted in. A further meeting was held and at 6.17 pm, the acting chairman of thoroughbreds from the Office of Racing Integrity made the decision to cancel the race due to ongoing safety concerns. Jockey and horse safety is the ultimate priority in these decisions. Tasracing will be compensating trainers and owners under the existing postponed and abandoned races policy.

Mr DEAN - And at what cost? Sorry, you might cover the cost of that in a minute, when you get a chance?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. It will be increasing the applicable rates and jockeys will also be compensated under this policy. We quickly rescheduled the race meet to Saturday - we managed to get a Sky One slot because Adelaide didn't have their races. Most importantly, an immediate investigation is being conducted by Tasracing and ORI to determine how this situation occurred in the first place and to ensure it cannot occur again. What happened had the potential to put horses and jockeys at great risk and had significantly inconvenienced trainers, strappers and owners.

Mr DEAN - Who's responsible for it, for goodness sake? The posts were moved and there's holes in the ground, so who's responsibility was it?

CHAIR - Whose head rolled, minister?

Mr DEAN - That's straight out negligence and a terrible situation. Who was responsible?

Ms HOWLETT - I can't tell you who's responsible until the investigation is concluded.

Mr DEAN - So that's under way?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, that's under way. That's happening.

Mr DEAN - At what cost was the postponement of this meeting?

Ms HOWLETT - I don't know that we'll ever find out the true cost of the postponement of the meeting with race field fees and wagering.

Mr DEAN - What's it going to cost Tasracing to pay and compensate all of these people, the jockeys, the trainers and owners and everybody else?

Ms HOWLETT - That's a really good question and they're assessing each individual on an individual basis, so it won't be one cost covers everyone. Someone may have attended from Southern Tasmania with one staff member, they may have had two, or three staff members.

Mr DEAN - So when will the costs be known?

Ms HOWLETT - That's something you can ask Tasracing in the coming weeks.

PUBLIC

Mr DEAN - You are the authority involved in this, I would have thought you would have been watching this fairly closely as well.

Ms HOWLETT - Absolutely.

Mr KING - To answer your question from earlier, about who's responsible. Without talking about this immediate incident, I can talk in general terms. Tasracing track staff maintain the track. However, because we're independent of Tasracing and we're not racing participants, we have the role of ticking off the track for safety on race day. So when the minister referred to walking the track that happens before all race meetings, it's a really important part of our duties, because an event is not called off lightly. We have between 50 and 70 thoroughbred meetings a year and this is not something that happens all the time. I wanted to point out, it's because of our independence that we are involved, that last minute check of the track to ensure that safety is the absolute priority for animals and jockeys.

Mr DEAN - So, it would have been ORI that called off the meeting?

Ms HOWLETT - The head steward at the race meet that evening, yes.

Mr DEAN - They made the decision.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. And rightly so.

CHAIR - Minister, turning to the grading in the performance information. I'm particularly interested that there's been a decline in greyhound numbers through the breeding. I note that the target for 2021 is 1650, and actual for 2019-20 is 1252. It looks as though there's going to be a decrease in races. Is that what we're looking at here? Races graded because back in 2017-18, there was 1783 actual races graded. Can I have your view on that? I know we've been short on races for this - in this number, in the 1252, but the target is also short on numbers - 133 races less than 2017-18. Is that to do with the grading and lack of numbers?

Ms HOWLETT - Madam Chair, the number of greyhound races conducted each year is determined by Tasracing. The performance target is based upon the numbers of races run in previous years. The 2019-20 target was 1650, however a percentage of races selected and graded more accurately, reflects ORI's performance in this area. ORI has graded or selected 100 per cent of all races set by Tasracing this year. Do you have any more to add to that, John?

CHAIR - However, the reduction from 2017-18 to the 2020-21 target is 133 races. I'm interested in whether that's a lack of greyhounds to run or - or what? I need some explanation around why that target is set lower than it was in 2018-19 which was 1660? So that's 10 fewer meets and 10 fewer races graded.

Mr KING - Yes, so the only thing I can add there is that we select fields and grade -

CHAIR - But you just said you grade all races?

Mr KING - Yes, we grade all the races and we would have had a reduction in races this year due to -

CHAIR - Yes, which is 1252.

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Mr KING - Yes. Albeit there is a target there of 1650, the real target for us, being ORI, is grading every single race -

CHAIR - Every race?

Mr KING - That Tasracing set, which we have done. Tasracing has had a reduction in the number of races that have been run.

CHAIR - Because lack of numbers?

Mr KING - No, because of the shutdown in racing.

CHAIR - Yes, but generally they have reduced anyway. You said that you grade every race, so that's less than we used to have in 2017-18.

Ms HOWLETT - It's a new target though.

CHAIR - No, that's actuals.

Mr KING - I see what you're saying, 2017-18, 2018-19.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. We might just take that on notice, Chair, why the reduction is there between 2017-18 and 2018-19.

CHAIR - Given that ORI grades every race that is run by Tasracing when it comes to greyhounds, so I'm trying to explore why that is the reduction in numbers of races that are graded.

Ms HOWLETT - We'll take that on notice. We can see with the 2019-20 actual, I mean, three greyhound meets a week and 72 days of no racing would have certainly contributed -

CHAIR - I've already indicated that I understand that, but the target is still less for the next year - 2020-21 is still less. There's obviously fewer races if you grade every race.

Ms HOWLETT - We'll take that on notice, and we'll get you that information.

CHAIR - All right, thank you. Further questions? Thank you, Mr Dean.

Mr DEAN - Oripavine, what's the position with that, minister? Has that been sorted out. Are there any convictions still standing in relation to this matter? We've raised it over a long period of time. We're good people involved in this industry. We're really maligned as a result of what happened here. So where is it at now? Has it sorted itself out? Where does ORI sit?

Ms HOWLETT - I'll find that information for you.

Mr DEAN - How many trainers, if there were numbers, got caught up in it?

Ms HOWLETT - Is it just the oripavine that you would like information on?

Mr DEAN - On any drug or - it's a so-called drug being used. I guess a trainer could be subject to where they have little control over it.

Ms HOWLETT - Sure. Well, that really is the only one apart from Regu-Mate. That is the other one which you really -

Mr DEAN - Yes. Let me see if I can get some detail on that one as well.

Ms HOWLETT - And obviously bicarb soda, but owners and trainers would certainly have control over the use of that one. With Regumate, it's a hormone control used in mares to suppress or synchronise them coming into heat. Regumate and other similar products contain altrenogest that can, under certain circumstances, metabolise into anabolic steroids, which are considered prohibited substance under the Australian Racing Rules. Racing New South Wales allows a threshold. However, Racing Australia along with other states believe having a threshold for anabolic steroid may result in additional non-compliance issues.

With oripavine, as you said it originates from thebaine in poppies, and is regarded by veterinarian officers as a performance enhancing or toxic at various levels. It is a prohibited substance in horses presented for racing in Australia. If it is found to be present horses must be disqualified from any race in which it's participated on the day the substance was detected.

John, I know you're continuing to work with Poppy Growers Tasmania and AgriGrowth and the racing industry to develop and implement educational strategies that alert the racing industry to the risk of feeding contaminated feeds to horses. I don't believe we've had any positives on this issue.

Mr KING - If you're happy for me to expand on that.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr KING - In relation to the oripavine - it gets pronounced a number of different ways -we have had one positive in the last year. The horse was disqualified and the trainer was issued with a fine. That was one of the cases appealed to the Appeals Board, and the finding of the appeals - this is one of the ones where the penalty was varied, so the penalty was completely withdrawn on that one. However, the disqualification of the horse was maintained.

So the way ORI's approaching oripavine at the moment is essentially around the culpability level of the trainer. If we believe through our investigation that there is some culpability for the trainer, if we can assess some sort of process that we believe they could have done differently, we believe that a fine is still relevant. In this particular case, without talking about names, this particular trainer was also a poppy grower and the horses were allowed into the paddocks after there had been a crop, so we believe that that was probably not the best process, and they had some culpability.

However, the TRAB disagreed and said that the poppy grower had followed all processes that you are required as a farmer of poppies with the raking and burning and all those sorts of things that they do, and believe that that person had done the appropriate level of prevention, so they removed the penalty on that one.

So moving forward, that still will be a case-by-case proposition for whether there will be a penalty applied over and above the horse being disqualified from the race, because it is still a prohibited substance.

Mr DEAN - So a person buying, I guess, horse feed, there is no way that they know or can with or without a guess having it tested, is there?

Mr KING - That's correct.

Mr DEAN - Because the part they get tested probably won't be positive anyway. It could be somewhere else within the feed life.

Mr KING - That's right. Testing is a real challenge. When we go to a property and they've got a great big thing full of feed, we take a small sample to test. Often it's not there, but it could depend on what the horse has actually eaten. At the moment, I'm not aware of any program in the state or feed supplier in the state that will guarantee their products. It's obviously a very hard thing to guarantee.

CHAIR - A lot of it comes from interstate.

Mr KING - That's right. I mean, we're the big poppy growers. They are being grown elsewhere now, but it's very hard to test all your feed and provide that guarantee. The Racing Appeals Board, in one of their decisions, suggested that a program should be explored. We have considered it in our office, and we're still considering it, but we don't know how it could possibly work at the moment.

Mr DEAN - It's a real issue, and one person who originally got caught up within this, and her husband now sadly is deceased as you'll be aware of. So yes, it's an area, and I think the conviction still stands in her name, and she is still haunted to this day.

Mr KING - I've got a little bit more on Regumate too. New South Wales has gone out on their own and put in a certain level for this one.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think you answered this last year too, didn't you? We had a question on notice.

Mr KING - I didn't know as much about it last year, Rosemary. I think you asked the question.

CHAIR - Yes, I had a question on notice last year.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think we got it in the realm of five minutes, from memory.

Mr KING - A little bit longer, but -

Ms ARMITAGE - So he's looked it up now.

Mr KING - Yes.

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Ms ARMITAGE - Less than a year is five minutes here. Ivan jumped into my question before I got to it.

Mr KING - Would you believe it's now two and a half years? How time flies, doesn't it? So there are alternatives to Regumate.

Ms ARMITAGE - Apart from bicarb soda.

Mr KING - Yes, that doesn't do the same thing. So there are alternatives. Some trainers would prefer to use Regumate, but there are alternatives. So at this current time, we're following the lead of Racing Australia, which is the national body. So we are consistent with the majority of other states in how we are approaching that one.

Ms ARMITAGE - What is the alternative?

Mr KING - It's another injectable or progesterone, of a certain level at a certain time.

Ms ARMITAGE - So it doesn't have the anabolic steroid?

Mr KING - No, it doesn't metabolise into an anabolic steroid that can be detected on the prohibited list.

Mr DEAN - Can I go to one further question on the oripavine? In as much as these poppies now are being grown pretty well around Australia, around the country, is it an issue that's arisen elsewhere? They're grown in the Northern Territory and in Queensland and Victoria. So has it arisen elsewhere? Is it being considered and looked at across the country?

Mr KING - There has been positives in other states, however, because we had a bit of a run on them a couple of years ago. There hasn't been as many in the other states, but it is something that I am watching and have spoken to other racing administrators about. As the crops get larger in some of the other states I expect that they may experience some positives into their feed.

Mr DEAN - And they are taking similar actions that you're taking here? That are seen as essentially an enhancing drug. It enhances a horse's performance but, I don't think there's evidence to show that it doesn't.

Mr KING - My advice is it depends on the level. At certain levels it can be quite toxic and absolutely would not help your horse whatsoever. But in a very small window, it is an opiate and it can be a pain killer, therefore, a performance enhancer. The reason it's not used in humans is because that window is so small that it's viewed as toxic at a higher level and only really beneficiary in such a small window dosage. It's very, very hard to control in a safe manner. But that's why it's seen as a performance enhancer.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that.

Ms HOWLETT - Madam Chair, I have some information if I can provide to the member in relation to his question on compensation for the abandoned race meet.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Just for some clarification into the formula for compensation under Tasracing's postponement and abandonment race policy. Compensation to trainers and jockeys is based on Tasracing's postponement and abandonment race policy. For jockeys, compensation is based on the number of rides they would have had at that meet, while for trainers, compensation is based on which region they come from and how many horses they have entered at that race meet, that evening as well.

Mr DEAN - And you'll know quantum?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. By the time.

Mr DEAN - Has been worked through now.

Ms HOWLETT - When Tasracing sit before you, you'll be able to ask them that question.

Mr DEAN - I see, the GBE will answer that question. Right. I will.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - How many horses were put to death in the last financial year? Harness races, harness horses and thoroughbreds that were killed last year; if you could give me the figure, please?

Ms HOWLETT - I can. That we euthanised?

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, they were made into pet food, I believe. I suppose that's euthanasia. I think it was because they didn't run fast enough as opposed to any other reason. That's my understanding. You might sort of clarify that, minister. The reason they were euthanised.

Ms HOWLETT - I don't have a reason around these figures.

Ms ARMITAGE - I thought they might actually have - right.

Ms HOWLETT - As far as euthanasia facts, it is legal for retired race horses to be euthanised in Tasmania which is the case for any animal as long as it is performed humanely. This is part of the government Animal Welfare Act 1993. If there is a need for race horses to be euthanised in Tasmania, then it must be undertaken in a way that prevents unnecessary injury, pain and suffering to the animal.

Now, as far as the numbers. In the thoroughbred statistics, 2019-20 is 59.

Ms ARMITAGE - That was thoroughbreds?

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. In the harness, we have 2019-20, 51. John would you like to add anything to that?

Mr KING - So harness is 73 euthanised in total. Which is a slight correction on an ABC interview I did last week where I slightly enhanced those figures incorrectly.

Ms ARMITAGE - And I was just reading that ABC interview.

Mr KING - Were you?

Ms ARMITAGE - I was, with regard to a comment that you may have made that there should be a rule to require an owner to take all responsible or reasonable steps to find horses a good home and that a lot of the euthanised horses were two-, three-, and four-year-old racehorses. It may or may not be correct.

Mr KING - Can I address that, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - You can address that.

Ms ARMITAGE - It would be good to put it on the record.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, let's clarify that.

CHAIR - There is a policy for greyhounds.

Ms HOWLETT - There is.

Mr KING - That's correct.

Ms ARMITAGE - There's double-standards in the racing industry.

Mr KING - Can I address the ABC interview, please?

Ms ARMITAGE - That would be good, because then they could actually clarify what's the numbers claimed.

Mr KING - Yes, so my comments were taken out of context in relation to that number of two-, three-, and four-year-old horses.

CHAIR - Within the media? Really?

Mr KING - It's extraordinary, isn't it?

Ms ARMITAGE - I think it's got 123 harness and 59 thoroughbreds in the ABC article.

Mr KING - Yes, so the 123 was an error on my behalf. I looked at the wrong column when I was parked on the side of the road, travelling to Hobart.

Ms ARMITAGE - Easy to happen.

Mr KING - So it is actually just 73 in the harness at the time of retirement. My reference was not to all those numbers being euthanised because they don't run fast enough.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think that comment was attributed to Mr Wilkie.

Mr KING - Yes. My comment there was that those numbers were horses that were euthanised in the industry through injury or illness. In fact, two-, three-, and four-year olds, that's just not the case. There were very, very few horses at that age and it was sort of like count on one hand in each category that would be euthanised at that age. It just does not happen.

Ms HOWLETT - Can I just add to that, John? As Madam Chair pointed out previously, we have seen extensive reforms in the retirement processes in greyhound racing and now we can report that racing regulators are focussing on the retirement processes in both harness and thoroughbred codes. Tasracing and ORI are working with national racing bodies to fully review these processes to ensure conformity across jurisdictions and provide the transparency required to maintain the social licensing of racing.

Racing Australia, the thoroughbred code, has recently appointed Karen Day as the new National Equine Welfare and Traceability Executive. Ms Day will liaise with each of the states including Tasmania to help coordinate and promote best practice equine welfare standards.

Racing Australia has also recently announced a broad set of rules aimed at improving traceability of thoroughbreds during breeding, racing and retirement. Tasmanian regulators are currently assessing the new rule. Also, a national horse traceability working group has been established to guide the design of a national traceability register aimed at improving security and tracking for all horses across Australia. This group has representatives of national racing codes, government agricultural leaders and participants for many horse related activity groups.

Tasmanian Racing officials will take part in that as well. The harness industry is actually leading the way, it's been extremely active engaging consultants to review the entire licensing registration and retirement processes currently associated with harness racing code. I'm advised a draft report has been received, recommending large scale changes in the way horses and racing participants are managed and tracked during their racing careers. Tasracing and ORI have been heavily involved in this review process as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, minister.

Ms PALMER - Minister, I understand that there have been outbreaks of African Horse Sickness in parts of South-East Asia in recent months. Are you able to outline the possible impact of this exotic disease on horses and also what are authorities doing to ensure it doesn't enter into Australia?

CHAIR - I hope it's banning horse imports from those areas?

Ms HOWLETT - African Horse Sickness (AHS) was reported for the first time in Thailand in March 2020. There was speculation that imported zebras may have been responsible for the first outbreak in Asia. AHS has since been reported in Malaysia through the World Organisation for Animal Health on 2 September 2020. There would likely be severe animal health and welfare impacts including high mortality rates, should an outbreak occur here in Australia.

The importation of horses and their genetic materials or zoo equines for example, zebras, to Australia, can only occur from selected approved countries. Imports from Thailand, Malaysia, are not permitted and the importation of equine fluids and tissues are also not

permitted. Virus security, racing administration staff, will continue to monitor the national situation extremely closely as they have been doing. Mr King, have you got anything that you would like to add?

Mr KING - We're really fortunate that it's not in our country at the moment. My office in conjunction with the Chief Vet, we keep a very close eye on the national advisories. If there's a sniff of it at all we'll be providing additional information to our participants to ensure they know what's going and what sort of efforts they can take to prevent the spread of it.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Dean, before we go to grants and subsidies.

Mr DEAN - Yes, just a question in relation to wagering on course, and jockey wagering. Is that an issue, minister? It was raised with me that it was a concern, so I wanted to put the question to you as to whether you're satisfied that that is not happening, or if it is happening it's been policed by the stewards.

Mr KING - Our office has the ability to check all betting accounts. So it doesn't matter what corporate bookmaker you sign up to, they agree that they will release information to integrity units throughout the country.

Mr DEAN - That's the on-course bookmakers?

Mr KING - No, so I was getting to that. That's how we do the corporates. We can do checks on all the bets. On-course is particularly difficult. We once again have the ability to check all their data. Much like the corporates, we don't have names, who is placing what bet, it's essentially a card written out. There is a real difficulty in policing that. Obviously, a jockey is not going to go up to an on-course bookmaker, put 100 bucks on himself.

Mr DEAN - No, no. Done electronically as I'm told.

Mr KING - Well, no, the on-course bookmakers, as in the people that we licence, the six people we licence, they don't take phone bets. You have to be on course and walk up to them to put a bet on.

Mr DEAN - I suppose they bet off course, do they, through other outlets. I don't know.

Mr KING - That's right. In that instance, if it was on course, you would have to get someone else to place a bet for you, so you'd have a bit of conspiracy going on. If it was with a corporate bookmaker, we would have to receive information that that was occurring and then we can subsequently check up on betting accounts, which we have done for riders and drivers, and then we look to see if those accounts have been active. They can have active accounts as long as they're not betting on the races that they're involved in.

Mr DEAN - I see. A jockey can wager as long as it's not in a race that they are involved with themselves, is that it?

Mr KING - Yes.

Mr DEAN - That's it.

Grants and Subsidies

CHAIR - Thank you. I invite members to address their minds to grants and subsidies, \$31 825 000 is allocated in this budget. Are there any questions, members, in regard to those grants and subsidies?

Minister, is there anything that you would like to provide to the committee? Yes, this is the money provided to Tasracing. It's a meagre - I think the industry would say - increase.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. The Government separately funds the Tasmanian racing industry under a deed, which provides secure funding and creates certainty for the industry. The annual funding allocation allows Tasracing Pty Ltd to facilitate key administration roles and functions including the responsibility for the corporate governance, strategic direction and funding of the Tasmanian racing industry as well as ratification of national rules, the making of local rules and the setting of licences standard criteria.

CHAIR - Every year we need to ask what happens when the deed expires. Look, you'll need to remind me when that expiry is, and it's certainly not before 2023-24 because there's still an allocation of \$34 000 477. But we know that the industry is advancing their self to be self-funded, but it's difficult to see how that's going to be. Do you have anything to share with the committee in regard to when that deed expires?

Ms HOWLETT - The deed expires in 2029.

CHAIR - Which is just around the corner, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - It certainly is.

CHAIR - What are you as minister doing to advance the industry's non-reliance on that grant post the expiry of the deed?

Ms HOWLETT - I guess we already have the Tas Breeders bonus in place, so that is to encourage people to purchase horses that have been Tas bred and that's working incredibly well. I've been out and visited a lot of trainers and owners and jockeys and looking at how we can further build confidence within the industry. It's my aim to have a couple of very significant mainland investors that continue to support our racing industry here in Tasmania, and we obviously need to have more of those. We've have confidence in the industry by increasing stakes by 6 per cent, and I look forward to making another stake increase in the next calendar year to put in place for the next financial year.

It's all about getting confidence back in the industry. Obviously, the participants had a really difficult time throughout the 72 days of no racing, and us being the only jurisdiction to have shut racing down. It certainly wasn't easy, but I'm very fortunate that Tasmanian people are incredibly resilient. We're back on our feet, back on the track. Our field sizes are really good and we have our Magic Millions sales coming up in February in Launceston. I'll certainly be encouraging people to invest at the sales and purchase horses here.

CHAIR - Minister, when do you envisage that you will need, or any other minister will need, to start having a conversation with the industry around that funding deed arrangement. Do you think it'll be five years out from the expiry?

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Ms HOWLETT - I don't think conversations need to be had at the moment. Right now, we're just focused on the recovery and building confidence back in the industry, and we really haven't had 12 months yet of point of consumption tax. We need to look at that very closely and see how that's tracking and then we can certainly analyse - once we've got more data to - from the point of consumption tax, then we'll be able to sit down.

CHAIR - So do you see the point of consumption tax being able to fill a void in regard to that grant?

Ms HOWLETT - \$31 million, I certainly wouldn't think so, no. The deed is very important to the Tasmanian racing industry.

CHAIR - My point exactly. Members, any other questions in regard to the grants and subsidies? All right. Minister, that brings out questions to a conclusion.

Ms HOWLETT - Really?

CHAIR - It does. That's the only area that we have racing, regulation and policy. Look, if you want to give us some heads up on something else, we're happy to take it. Given that we don't always get -

Ms HOWLETT - I've actually got a fantastic announcement that I would love to share with you but I can't. It's one that I've been working towards for some time.

CHAIR - So why did you mention it?

Ms HOWLETT - Because it's brilliant, it's great.

Ms ARMITAGE - We won't tell anyone else, minister.

CHAIR - Minister, on behalf of the committee, thank you very much for your time, not only in your portfolio as Minister for Racing, but also in your previous portfolio as the Minister for Sport and Recreation. We very much appreciate the work that not only you have done but also your team beside you and behind you, and they've supported you elsewhere and obviously possibly been listening in. It is very much appreciated and we sincerely wish you all the best for Thursday's round 2 of the Estimates process in another place.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you.

CHAIR - I feel sure that you'll look forward to that. I thank Lynne from Hansard and our secretariat and all the members who ably assist in making this the most streamlined process that we possibly can manage. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. I take this opportunity to thank Patrick Clancy, my racing advisor, my chief of staff behind me, Richard, and Laura here as well. John King and Tony Latham and Deidre, it has been an incredibly challenging year, and thank you so much for the support which you've provided me. Thank you, and thank you to the committee.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Very much appreciated, and particularly your continued support for the racing industry, because I know they very much value it and I know that the Greyhound Association is looking forward to you coming to a meet, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Greyhounds, I'm there on the 17th. I've been to many greyhound meets.

CHAIR - In Launceston?

Ms HOWLETT - No, the 17th is their Hobart 1000, it's their big night. The night of all nights.

CHAIR - Very good. We shall stop the broadcast thank you, Lynne. Thank you, members.

The Committee adjourned at 5.30 p.m.