



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Hon. Jane Howlett MP

Tuesday 2 June 2026

MEMBERS

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC (Chair)

Hon Luke Edmunds MLC

Hon Mike Gaffney MLC

Hon Casey Hiscutt MLC

Hon Meg Webb MLC

OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE

HON. JANE HOWLETT MP

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events; Minister for Racing; Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence.

Tourism, Hospitality and Events Portfolio

Shane Gregory

A/Secretary, Department of State Growth

Brett Stewart

Deputy Secretary, Creative Industries, Sport and Visitor Economy, Department of State Growth

Andrew Johnson

Director Office of the Secretary

Calen Jeffrey

Director Events Tasmania

Katrina Birchmeier

Manager, Tourism and Hospitality

Danielle Harris

A/Deputy Secretary, Business Services

Women and the Prevention of Family Violence

Courtney Hurworth

Chief Reform Lead, Keeping Children Safe Reform Group, DPAC

Tegan Dwyer

Assistant Director, Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence, DPAC

(in the room)

Pip Hankin

Assistant Director, Women's Portfolio, DPAC

Minister for Racing portfolio

Deirdre Wilson

Deputy Secretary Primary Industries and Water, NRE Tas

Sean Carrol

Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner

Nicole Malcher

Executive Director, Legal & Policy, Office of the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commission

Anita Yan

Deputy Chief Operations Officer Finance

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Toursim, Hospitality and Events

The Committee resumed at 2.15 p.m.

DIVISION 12 Tourism Tasmania

CHAIR - Thank you, and thank you very much, minister, for joining us this afternoon. If I could introduce the people on my side of the table, we have the Honourable Luke Edmunds, Member for Pembroke; the Honourable Meg Webb, Member for Nelson; myself, Rosemary Armitage, Member for Launceston; the Honourable Mike Gaffney, Member for Mersey; and the Honourable Casey Hiscutt, Member for Montgomery.

We have Julie and James assisting us in our secretariat, and we have Gaye on Hansard. Minister, if there are questions, obviously, that are put to you that perhaps you can't answer, we'll provide them to you in writing and you can provide them to us maybe in a timely manner. That would be wonderful.

Ms HOWLETT - Certainly.

CHAIR - If you'd like to introduce your people at the table and also give a short overview?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you very much, Chair. At the table to my right is the Deputy Secretary for Creativity, Industry, Sport and Visitor Economy, Brett Stewart; and also next to me is Tourism Tasmania Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Kingston Clark; and to my left is my chief of staff, Luke Gaetani.

Thank you, Chair, and thank you to members of the committee for your time. Tasmania's tourism industry is world-class and world-renowned. It supports 1 in 6 Tasmanian jobs, with visitors injecting \$3.7 billion into our economy each year, helping fund our hospitals, schools, and roads. Tasmania welcomed a record 1.38 million visitors in 2025, which is a 5.8 per cent increase year on year. Recent modelling undertaken by Treasury indicates there is a return on \$5.91 in government revenue for every dollar invested by government in tourism.

Guided by our 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy, the 2026-27 Budget continues to provide support to sustainably grow the sector through destination marketing as well as by strategically investing in events, infrastructure, and workforce capability. The Budget includes \$82 million for tourism marketing over the next 4 years. Our highly successful off-season and Come Down for Air campaign helped bring visitors around the world to Tasmania. Since Come Down for Air first launched in 2019, awareness of Tasmania as a holiday destination has risen by 12 per cent.

The Budget also includes ongoing support for Hospitality Tasmania and the hard-working hospitality business operators across our state. The government continues to support Hospitality Tasmania through initiatives, including Hospitality 2030, Great Customer Experience, Clubs Tasmania, and industry wellbeing programs. We're also investing \$2.55 million to support industry-led workforce training through the Tasmanian Hospitality & Tourism Training Academy.

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Chair, the Budget continues to back Tasmania as a year-round destination. Major events supported through the budget include Dark Mofo, Festivale, Taste of Summer, The Unconformity, ECHO Festival, and Supercars. We're also investing \$10 million in a new convention centre in Launceston to support future growth in the business event sector. The new convention centre is expected to generate significant additional visitor nights and support hotels, hospitality, retail, and tourism operators.

Chair, I do want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the announcement this morning from Lion regarding the historic James Boag brewery in Launceston as well, and my heart goes out to the affected workers and their families. Our immediate priority is the wellbeing of the workforce, and we will engage closely with Lion, the union, workers, and the hospitality industry to support those impacted. Chair, I now welcome questions from the committee.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. I'll just ask you one question. You've mentioned Boags and that the government will be working closely. Has the government been in touch? Have they made some appointments already or been in touch with Boags or with the unions or Hospitality Tasmania to actually support these workers?

Ms HOWLETT - Firstly, can I say, I know that this is very concerning for the broader northern Tasmanian community, and we're extremely disappointed with the Lion's decision. The government has been a strong supporter of the business over a number of years, and our immediate priority is the wellbeing of the workforce. We will engage closely with Lion, the union, the workers, and the hospitality industry to support those who have been impacted.

We welcome Lion's commitment to honouring employee benefits, delivering a \$500,000 reskilling fund for the workers, and we also acknowledge Lion's commitment, including community funding, continued operation of the Boag Brewhouse, and the repayment of the government grant. Brett, would you like to add any further to that?

CHAIR - Sorry, Brett, but what I was asking: has contact been made with Lion to actually have any appointments put in place to start the dialogue?

Mr STEWART - Thanks, minister. The department, through our economic development area, which is a separate area, including Business Tasmania, Jobs Tasmania, Skills Tasmania, we'll definitely be reaching out to Lion, if they haven't already. I'm not certain if they've done that already. I suspect, if not, they'll be doing it very soon to outline what types of assistance can be provided by the department. We do that whenever this type of situation occurs, and I'm sure there'll be ongoing discussions at a more senior level with Lion's management around the proposed decision.

CHAIR - Thank you. Thank you, minister. Do we have questions on the overview, members, before we go into Tourism?

Ms WEBB - Yes, I wouldn't mind asking a couple of questions of Tourism Tasmania.

CHAIR - Before we go into 1.1, do we have any overview questions, was what I was asking, because Mr Gaffney has the first question on Tourism.

Mr EDMUNDS - I do. Just to follow up on the Boags question, if that's okay, I assume that's for the workforce, that outreach, though, not for the business, but in terms of reaching

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out to Lion, when you said that, do you mean you reaching out to support the workforce, not the business itself? Is that what you meant?

Mr STEWART - Again, sorry, through you, minister, that's not part of my responsibility. That's in the economic development part of the department, but the focus is clearly on the workforce.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Great. Sorry, I'm a bit behind the 8-ball. Has there been any commentary from the government about what's happened, and to follow up, probably, on the Chair's question, what real actions actually occurred today from the government?

Ms HOWLETT - The Premier has put out a statement. I think it was around lunchtime today. I can table that statement for you, honourable member, if you would like.

Ms WEBB - It's in the public domain.

Mr EDMUNDS - I'm not in his list.

Ms WEBB - I can forward it to you, if you like.

Ms HOWLETT - I can table that for you before the end of this session. Thank you. I'll table that. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister.

Mr EDMUNDS - Anything aside from the media release from the government today?

Ms HOWLETT - It's all very new at this point, honourable member, but we will do our absolute best. It's our priority to support the workforce.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. Mr Gaffney, if you'd like to lead off the questions for -

Mr GAFFNEY - You had overview?

Ms WEBB - I did have some overview questions, if I could.

CHAIR - Well, I did ask if you had overview questions.

Ms WEBB - I said 'yes'.

Mr GAFFNEY - I think she indicated that she did.

Ms WEBB - That's right. We've got in front of us people from that area. This portfolio is what I'm talking about.

CHAIR - Mr Gaffney was the lead questioner, but that's all right.

Ms WEBB - It's not questions on the line item; it's overview questions. The first one I've been asking each of the departments or agencies that have sat down with a minister in front of us is around the use of external consultancies and whether you could, please, provide a

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breakdown of the total number of external consultancies used in 2025-26, this current year, including any still under way, and the quantum of costs for those consultancies.

After that, I'm interested to know about any consultancies planned for the 2026-27 year and onwards. Are they going to be subject to operational efficiencies? Have you needed to change plans around use of external consultancies to accommodate operational efficiencies?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you very much, honourable member, and I will ask the CEO, Sarah Kingston Clark to provide some information on that for you.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Thank you. Through you, minister. I'll answer that in two parts. First, just in attributing to our retained agencies - and I think that's maybe along the lines of what you're asking. We do have a creative agency that we use externally, a media agency, a PR agency, digital and research agencies, and we work with them to help deliver our program.

So, they're all partner agencies that have gone out to tender and are chosen on their skills, credentials and capability. In 2025-26, Tourism Tasmania spent a total of \$3.3 million on retained agency fees. And this is broken down by BMF, our lead creative agency, at 617; Starcom, who's our media buying agency, at 630; HAVAS Red at 900,000; Orchard at 712; Kantar at 359. And so, I just wanted to talk to the efficiencies part of your question.

Ms WEBB - Yes. So, looking ahead, more operational efficiencies come into play in terms of engagement of those external consultants.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes. So we are actually reducing our digital agency fees by in-housing some of our team and upskilling from a tech perspective, because we are seeing the landscape move away from heavy tech - where you used to need a very heavy skill set in that area - to more light, agile technology that we can get more freely in an open environment. And so, we're shifting our focus to save money in that area, which means we retain the skills within our agency, and we don't need to pay those vendor fees.

So, we're constantly looking at that from a savings perspective. I might just also add, when you look at the likes of, for example, Starcom, our media buying agency, we do save money in media fees by buying through an agency as well. So, there may be a cost for having that agency, but we will save money by buying through them also.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Deputy secretary.

Mr STEWART - Thanks, minister, and through you. For the Department of State Growth, for our consultancies in the tourism, hospitality and events portfolio for the 2025-26 financial year up until 31 March 2026, obviously, because we're not quite finished it yet for consultancies over 50,000, our total is \$185,000. In answer to your second question, every expense that we incur will be part of our consideration in terms of our budget efficiencies moving forward.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Appreciate that.

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CHAIR - Minister Edmunds, you have a couple in overview.

Mr EDMUNDS - Minister, are you currently a party to a matter before the Supreme Court?

Ms HOWLETT - These are complex matters, particularly given confidentiality requirements, and I won't be commenting any further.

Mr EDMUNDS - Okay. But your legal fees have cost taxpayers more than \$300,000, I believe. Do those fees relate to a matter you initiated?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, these are complex matters, particularly given confidentiality requirements, and I will not be commenting any further.

Mr EDMUNDS - Do those fees relate to an Integrity Commission process, report, finding or proposed finding?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, these are very complex matters, and particularly given confidentiality requirements, I won't be commenting any further, Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Have you initiated legal proceedings against the Integrity Commission or in relation to any Integrity Commission matter?

Ms HOWLETT - I won't be commenting any further, Mr Edmunds.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister.

Mr EDMUNDS - I think we know where the rest are going to go. Yes.

CHAIR - Any other questions in overview, Mr Gaffney?

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you. I realise that most members on this side of the bench will have some questions to ask on tourism, so I'm just going to ask the four - a variety of - and then open it up to others.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - You mentioned in your opening, \$82 million for tourism marketing over four years. It would be great if you could table what that breakdown of the \$82 million is for us, for the marketing, instead of going through it list by list because I know you mentioned some of those, so I think that would save time.

The one I'm interested in, I suppose - and you've touched on it as well - can you give us a breakdown of the \$13 million in operational efficiencies, where that sum comes from through operational efficiency? I'm fine to get the tabled paper for the \$82 million over four years, but for the efficiencies I think that would be well worth us hearing.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, sure. Certainly. Funding through the 2026-27 Budget will enable the organisation to continue to deliver industry-led training, particularly in our regions, which

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will grow workforce attraction and build the profile of the industry. And we know that Tasmania is a must-visit destination and we're letting the world know. Our highly successful off-season and Come Down for Air campaigns help bring visitors around the world.

Mr GAFFNEY - Excuse me, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - Just for brevity, I'm quite happy for you to table that of the \$82 million for us, but I want to hear from the \$13 million efficiencies, if that's okay.

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

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thanks, minister.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Sure. Through you, minister. We are obviously very focused on ensuring that we are creating operational efficiencies, and our core purpose of driving demand and supporting the visitor economy remains our key focus and we'll continue to commit to that. The operational efficiencies over the next three years do equate to 4.5 million in the final year. Our focus for next year is on an agency transformation which we have already started, and I'll just talk very quickly to that.

We're seeing a change in the landscape of the operating environment for tourism. We're seeing tech and AI really take over how people plan and book, and we're also seeing the growth for the future being in our international markets, and so we have restructured our team to be able to deal with what the next five years will bring us. We're going through that transformation at the moment while making sure that we are looking at every role delivering to the purpose and the strategy.

We are also, as I mentioned before, looking to in-house some of our technology focus, which means we will reduce our costs on vendor relationships, and so you will see efficiency savings there. We also have a reduction in some of our grant funding over the next few years, which we have been in discussions with the visitor information centres and the RTOs on, and obviously they need efficiencies throughout those grant fundings as well.

The final one will be on how we can use AI through some of our marketing. An example would be when we produce ads, we have thousands of different shapes and sizes of our ads for billboards and digital, and so we're looking at how we can streamline resizing and positioning them in the right way, so we don't have to pay huge amounts of money for that. And so, we're looking at reducing costs through efficiencies in marketing.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. And redundancies or vacancies.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - We're going through our agency transformation at the moment.

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Mr GAFFNEY - Like everybody else.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes. Absolutely.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Okay. My second question is, with the ongoing Middle East conflict, we have increasingly volatile and expensive airfares and TT-Line ferry prices. How have these changes affected the number of incoming visitors, both domestic and overseas, when compared to the same period last year? Now, I know it won't be a complete set, but it'd be interesting to know what the numbers have been and whether there's been a change in the market.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. I thank the honourable member for his question. I think we all know that the best thing that can happen for our visitor economy is for the war in the Middle East to end. In the meantime, we're not just protecting our tourism sector, we are looking for opportunities as well during the crisis.

We've allocated significant funding to the visitor economy in this Budget, and as we said, this includes \$82 million for tourism. Last month I attended the tourism ministers' meeting in Sydney and what I can say is that Tasmania is extremely well placed as we work through the current situation.

Hobart topped the nation for hotel occupancy for the third month in a row and the sector is performing well across the state. We are prepared and we're taking action, and we've implemented a five-point plan for our tourism and hospitality industry. Would you like to add any more to that?

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes. Thank you, minister. I can say we don't have the figures because it's lagged by a few months.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - But what we have been tracking is our occupancy with hotels, and April data is out and it is looking like we were pretty similar to the previous year. What we've seen in our forwards - we've been tracking our forward bookings as well. When the Middle East impact started happening and the fuel prices were increasing, we did see people hold back and not book, but we are now seeing people re-engage and book their travel.

And so, we have been hosting industry roundtables - and I had one on Monday actually - and everyone's feeling very comfortable with where we're sitting at the moment. I was in China last week and I've also been in Singapore, and the international market, and the confidence in the market, is a lot higher than the rest of Australia

And so, people are absolutely still travelling. You're right in your comment that the fuel prices are increasing - sorry, the ticket prices are increasing due to fuel - and that is a conscious barrier that we need to get over, but people are still travelling.

Mr GAFFNEY - A follow-on for that is, does that mean you have to sort of investigate what market possibilities there are, both internationally and within Australia, to try and attract that group down?

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Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - Because whilst Trump might have said six weeks for the war, that's not exactly correct.

Ms HOWLETT - No.

Mr GAFFNEY - So I'm just wondering, through you, minister, have you looked at other bigger markets and what processes do you do to find that?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. We certainly are, and we're very lucky that Tasmania is seen as a very safe destination to travel to. Sarah, would you like to add any more about the Asian market?

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes, absolutely. Thank you, minister. Tourism Australia we work very closely with, and they're obviously - got a very much larger budget in the international markets, and so we've been partnering with them to invest more in the Asian markets because there's travel closer to home - they're not having to go over the conflict area.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - So we are definitely monitoring all of our key customer markets, looking at what the sentiment is there and making sure that we've got the right message for that market. And then we're also partnering with the likes of our airlines and online travel agents and travel agents to get tactical marketing in place to drive visitation.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thanks. Two more questions, then open it up. I'm pleased to mention the air - we've also seen cancelled services such as Qantas slots and Rex's decision to cancel its King Island services from Burnie and abandon its Devonport to Melbourne service. What can you do to support the north-west airline services and the visitors who use them, or what is tourism doing?

Ms HOWLETT - Obviously we're very disappointed with that decision, and we're constantly in communications with the airlines. Sarah, would you like to speak more to that?

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes. We are seeing obviously increased costs with businesses right around the world, and airlines are no different to that, and so we have seen a reduction in the anticipated capacity that we saw for this year. However, we've been working with Qantas, with Virgin, with Jetstar, with all of the airlines to ensure that Tasmania isn't impacted negatively and we are happy to say that our capacity year on year is on par with what we had last year.

We did have a little bit more inventory in there that has been reduced - it's less than 5 per cent. It has impacted some of our airports more than others, and Devonport is one that has been impacted a little bit more - a little bit more than 5 per cent - and so we are, as I mentioned before, partnering with those airlines to try and fill the capacity on the seats so that they don't see that as a route that may not be profitable. So, it's about driving the demand and balancing that.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

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Ms HOWLETT - Yes, I mean, any loss of air connectivity is felt very strongly across regional areas, and we understand the concern this decision will create. Rex has advised that these changes are being driven by low demand and significant increase in operating costs, particularly in jet fuel, which is affecting airlines right across Australia.

But adjustments are being made across the aviation sector, particularly on smaller regional routes where services are more vulnerable to cost pressures and, while the withdrawal of Rex from Devonport was disappointing, Devonport will continue to be serviced by Qantas.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. My last one is a little bit left of centre, but I think it highlights how, when different agencies are looking for efficiencies, possibly the least important from that agency gets taken away or deleted and that impacts others. A good example was the Discovery Ranger Program, which was cancelled in 2025.

Now, for some of us adults that's not a big thing, but for the young kids and families that used to go to Narawntapu Park and out to Port Sorell, it was a very important part of the visitor experience and to learn about Tasmania's natural environment: those groups that go camping and that sort of thing.

Now, it's obviously not in your portfolio, I wouldn't think, but as minister for tourism, do you have the opportunity to advocate for the restoration of programs like that? And we've heard recently from the fishing group that - Frombergs Dam, which was a big tourist or a - for that immediate community was a tourist - and we're losing others.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - So my concern about finding efficiencies - we're actually cutting those programs that may not be big things, but they are the ones that draw people to Tasmania, to the unique experience. Otherwise, people are just going to travel to Sydney and Melbourne.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, look, I thank you for that really important question and I understand that program has been well received by many people, and it's a discussion that I'm happy to have with the Minister for Parks.

Mr GAFFNEY - I think that would be good. That's my final question.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Just looking at budget paper 4, the performance information, page 89. I've just done a little bit of maths on that, and in 2023-24 the visitors to Tasmania were 1,302,000 and the expenditure was \$3,478 million. I won't ask you to do the maths as well, but the total expenditure per person visiting was about \$2,671.

But in the target for 2026-27, doing the same calculation, that drops a little bit. I'm just not sure if that's a conscious decision - it drops to about \$2,500 per person. Within those targets, was that taken into consideration, that people would spend less when they travel to Tasmania in the future? Or what's your understanding on that?

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Ms HOWLETT - I'll just get that correct figure. Do you have that? I wasn't sure that it had actually dropped.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - No, that's not our intention.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, so the numbers do have it at about \$100 per - or 5 per cent less.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Sorry, through you, minister. I know we are re-looking at these forecasted numbers, for they were done a number of years ago and we are reviewing and updating those.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - But it is definitely our intention to increase the spend per person coming, and we do track that very closely.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - And you can see that in our quarterly snapshot report that we release. We have a tracking of the per visitor spend from our visitor survey. But it's not the intention.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, perfect. So not an intention there.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - No.

Mr HISCUTT - Just needs to be a re-look at those targets.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Minister, can you advise me how you're working with businesses, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors in the state's north, given the ending of the Hawthorn games in Launceston after 2027?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Thank you, Chair. I thank you for that question. We've been in communication with a few businesses in northern Tasmania around this.

CHAIR - Perhaps you could give me the feedback that you've received from the northern business community as well regarding the ending of the Hawthorn deal.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. There's no doubt that Hawthorn have certainly been wonderful for our state over the 25 years, and we've certainly appreciated their partnership, and we've also been very good to them. What I can say is that our investment is most certainly with the Devils moving forward, as it should be.

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I'm aware that the Launceston hospitality and small business owners have questioned the future for Launceston, with Hawthorn not playing games beyond 2027. Devils games in Launceston from 2028 will see our own Tasmanian team potentially take on some of the biggest drawing clubs in the AFL, including the traditional Victorian powerhouses such as Collingwood, Carlton, Essendon and Richmond.

The opportunity to host clubs with the largest membership base and enormous drawing power presents Launceston with an unprecedented opportunity, delivering a calibre of AFL content and visitation to UTAS Stadium that has not previously been experienced before.

CHAIR - Can you advise, though, minister, what's the transition plan for when the Devils start playing games in Hobart after the Macquarie Point stadium is built? I'm assuming that Launceston then won't be getting Collingwood and Richmond and that they will be played at the new Macquarie Point stadium.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, from 2028, UTAS Stadium will host a minimum of six AFL games each season, and this represents more AFL content than currently delivered in Launceston. Additional games will increase visitation, spending and economic activity across Northern Tasmania. The Devils will also create opportunities to host major Victorian clubs, as I stated before but we will continue working collaboratively with all parties on the future of the AFL content beyond 2027. I might ask the deputy secretary to add some more content around this.

Mr STEWART - Thanks, minister, and through you. So, we've had an incredible relationship with Hawthorn - no doubt about that - over 25 years.

CHAIR - The north has, particularly. Yes.

Mr STEWART - Yes, I'd probably argue that it's been statewide, those benefits. There's been a lot of people in the south who've travelled north and who are members of the Hawthorn Football Club as well, so we sort of take a statewide view on that. Clearly the landscape's changing. We have our own team. They'll be playing 11 home games in the state.

Just doing the sort of basic maths on that, with 11 home games, with a commitment of six in Launceston, it's fair to expect that with the way that the AFL is fixtured, that there will be more games involving the larger clubs, both in Launceston and in Hobart, moving forward because we will have 11 games, not four, and we will have more games in Launceston.

CHAIR - We'll see.

Ms HOWLETT - No, that's been a commitment.

CHAIR - We've seen commitments before, minister, with respect.

Mr STEWART - So I guess from that perspective, the transition plan is the Devils.

CHAIR - Yes. Just one final question that I would ask in this area: would there be any consideration given to reinstating a deal with Hawthorn to start playing home games in Launceston after the Macquarie Point Stadium is built?

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Ms HOWLETT - That's a matter for the AFL, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any further questions from members in tourism? Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Did you say Carlton was a powerhouse?

Ms HOWLETT - To some people. To some people. I'm sure they'll get back there.

CHAIR - Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Never know how things might go if you sack the coach, hey. I've got a question about advertising and the reduction in spending. Minister, over the years you've done a great job of bringing in key stakeholders to talk to the entire Parliament.

I've sat in the long room with members from both houses and heard directly from industry peaks about the importance of advertising, and indeed the clear feedback we got from them that that's an area they didn't want to see reduced because they know how fragile that is - was it one in six Tasmanian jobs, \$4.4 billion to our economy. Has any modelling been done on: A, to back up those statements; and B, on what these reductions in marketing spend might mean for our visitor economy?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, thank you, honourable member. That's a really important question. We will continue to invest significantly in the tourism industry to continue sustainable growth, while also making sensible savings as well across the government. We do this with having families and people like that visit the state and we promote our state significantly worldwide.

Also, we have various social media platforms that we're also advertising, as well as our Come Down for Air and those stakeholder meetings that we've held before, previously - are really important. They're important so that other members in both houses actually realise the significant importance of our visitor economy and our tourism sector. I'll hand over to the CEO to speak more about that.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes, thank you, minister. Through you. You will see the commitment on the top line from a marketing perspective is very, very strong and still continues to allow us to deliver the long-term partnerships that we need, considering we're focused on the brand-building side of things as well as tactical. So, it will provide us with the certainty to plan and invest and continue to do the work that we're doing, while, of course, playing our part on ensuring that we're looking for efficiencies through tech, through AI and some changes that we're making.

Mr EDMUNDS - Maybe it's too early to ask this question, but if you are to cut the marketing budget, would you cut the advertising to Tasmanians? Would it be the advertising to the mainland, or would it be the overseas, or would it be an across-the-board reduction?

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Through you, minister. I would not want to cut any of those.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

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Ms KINGSTON CLARK - However, if we did need to look at things, then we'd need to make choices on whether we invest in certain markets or not. If we decided, for example, to remove investment from a market like China, then that will hit us in the long term in a few years' time. So, it's really important that we have consistency and that we continue to build on the work that we have done, to continue to invest.

Ms HOWLETT - And those interstate and overseas markets are critically important for our visitor economy.

Mr EDMUNDS - I mean, I know I see a lot of Come Down for Air ads so maybe it's the Tasmanian ads that'll go. Is that what you're suggesting?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, those interstate and overseas markets are critically important for our visitor economy.

Mr EDMUNDS - When would you expect the decision on which markets to reduce advertising in to be made?

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - May I just add a comment on your intrastate into Tasmanians. We only spend a small amount of money on the off-season campaign during winter, and so it's about - obviously that's our lowest period and it's about trying to get Tasmanians to travel around at that time where our businesses need it the most. For example, that's \$300,000 of our total budget, so it is a very small portion.

Mr EDMUNDS - What's been the feedback from those same groups that have told us how important it is, since they've seen the budget papers?

Ms HOWLETT - We're also investing amounts in events and business events as well. We've seen the success of our business events sector, and we've got a strong pipeline for business events moving forward as well but also in our events sector, such as Foo Fighters and Dark Mofo - I mean, Hobart will be absolutely buzzing come next weekend. Those kinds of events are very, very important to our visitor economy as well. I think the deputy secretary would like to add to my comments.

Mr STEWART - Yes, through you, minister. The budget line obviously with the tourism output is important - very important - but there are other levers that the government has in the events budget - in the business events budget - that are really, really important to driving that demand -and if I can just take the opportunity, I just need to correct the record on an answer I provided earlier on our consultancies. I used the date 31 March - it's actually to the current date, but it's the same amount. Apologies for that.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Can I also add to the honourable member's question that the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania backed the Budget by saying confirmation of destination marketing funds for Tourism Tasmania over the next four years is welcome and a big improvement on last year's interim budget.

CHAIR - Thank you. And if I could just ask you, minister, you did make a commitment earlier about the list for the \$82 million marketing - the breakdown - do you want to table the

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list, or would you prefer we send it as a question? You can either table it or we can send you it. If you've got it there available.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, I think the CEO would like to speak to it.

CHAIR - Yes, that's fine.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes. Sure. So, we have \$82 million over four years, which is \$12 million base, \$10 million next year, and then it's \$8 million, \$8 million, \$8 million. So, for example, the \$24 million - or sorry, excuse me, that was this year - \$22 million in the marketing area is broken down by brand partnerships; we're hosting an event for ATEC, the Australian Tourism Export Council; PR content; digital and interactive marketing; tech, data, strategy and experience; we have a marketing our regions program; research and insights; as well as a general marketing line item.

CHAIR - Thank you. And you're happy to table that document?

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - This is probably a working document, just with my notes on it, but we can definitely provide you the breakdown.

CHAIR - That's all right.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes.

CHAIR - So would you like us to put something in writing for you to confirm - to send back - or are you just happy to - during the afternoon- table a document if you've got -

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, the process is you either table it or you can send it to us later.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Yes, it's probably best to send it.

CHAIR - No, that's fine.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. On notice.

CHAIR - That's all right. We'll put a question on notice requesting it.

Ms KINGSTON CLARK - Thank you.

CHAIR - No. Thank you very much.

DIVISION 11 Department of State Growth

Output Group 5.4 Events

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CHAIR - If we have no further questions on tourism, we could move to 5.4, Events. The first question is Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Just finding my way to the right page. I just wanted to ask: in the estimated outcomes for 2025-26, it was budgeted for \$31 million to be spent, but it looks as though the estimated outcome is only going to be \$26 million to be spent. I just wanted to see what the shortfall was in that area. What we didn't get done.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Sure. Thank you very much for your question, honourable member. The deputy secretary would like to add some comments.

Mr STEWART - Thanks, minister, and through you. I don't have a list of specific events that either didn't take place or - but the general answer to that question is, each year, for every event that we fund, we have a payment schedule, and that's based on milestones.

So, we might make four payments over a financial year, for example. Now, for example, if an event doesn't meet one of those milestones - you know, it doesn't provide us with planning approval, or it doesn't provide us with permits or a report - then we may withhold a payment or more payments, and then they will flow through once they meet those commitments. So, there'll be a proportion of money that's not spent as a result of that, and generally that's rolled forward, unless we terminate a deed, which is very rare.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr STEWART - The other explanation for a lower spend is when events are cancelled, and if an event's cancelled, we cease to fund it.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. So, were there any events cancelled last year?

Mr STEWART - I'd have to take that one on notice. I might be able to answer it in session, but I don't have that in my head right now.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. See how you go.

Mr STEWART - But I think we'd probably be able to provide that quite easily.

Mr HISCUTT - No worries at all. Thank you for that.

Mr STEWART - Sorry, through you, minister, that was.

Mr HISCUTT - And then, continuing along the line item - massive increase the year after, which is explained with the key outputs, though it does drop substantially and at the end only remains a little bit above what was budgeted in 2025-26. I just wanted to understand how this key deliverable of events is different to just core funding.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. Deputy secretary.

Mr STEWART - There's an element of that output which is core funding to run the team and to run programs that are recurrent. Some of our programs are recurrent. The variation you see, though, is because we have contracts with, in particular, our major events over multiple

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years. The way that we work through this with Treasury when we're developing a budget submission is we provide them with a list of all of the events that we have contracted, and they budget for that in addition to the base funding I mentioned.

Then we provide them with a list of events that we would likely be looking to re-contract, but we can't be definite about that because it's a competitive market. We want to maintain variation and competition, we want to be able to consider new events, et cetera.

So typically, what you see is a drop-off in that future funding. What's pleasing in this Budget is that the drop-off isn't as significant as in previous budgets, and that's because we've worked with Treasury, with the minister's advocacy, to be really rigorous about including all of those events that are contracted and then events that are likely to be re-contracted.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. So with that key funding - key deliverable - that implies that there are more and new events to come to Tasmania in your expectations into the future. Is that how you'd interpret that?

Mr STEWART - Through you, minister. We would certainly be expecting to continue to support our iconic events.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr STEWART - We would also be very keen to explore options with new events, and that works - we work very closely with Tourism Tasmania, Stadiums Tasmania and Brand Tasmania on that combined approach, because those big events really do drive demand.

I think that's probably reflected in the machinery of government changes to a degree, that we've been grouped together. We do, however, need to maintain some competitive tension in this because we don't want to be signalling to every event and every possible event that all they've got to do is roll up and they'll be funded.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr STEWART - We do want to maintain competitive tension. This is public money and it's a significant amount of money, but we really do see the importance of that return on investment. On average it's about 5 to 1.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. No. I appreciate the clarification at the end there and the answer to the question, and it's great to see an uplift in that because we know the importance of tourism to Tasmania. But I'd just like to see if the minister could assure me that our regional areas will be considered in part of that uplift as well.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and thank you, honourable member. Being from the north-west coast, you would have seen that we were very - I was so fortunate that we managed to get the national rowing championships two years in a row at Barrington, and what a unique location that is. Having that broadcast right around the country was just incredible and we saw that bed nights were booked out from Launceston right through to Burnie.

Mr HISCUTT - I was about to say, you couldn't get any accommodation. Yes.

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Ms HOWLETT - And the average stay - and the families that actually came to Tasmania with the students and with their children who were rowing. Those kinds of events aren't necessarily major events - certainly contribute to our visitor economy. Also, with the international hockey championships that we had earlier in the year, those regional events are critically important to our visitor economy.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. And one last before I throw it open.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - This isn't within your area, but I just want to know how the government works enter relations here. Obviously, we're expecting more people to come. The visitor numbers in the performance information are great.

However, I noticed in the performance information for parks that the visitor numbers to our major parks is actually - that the target actually declines from the actuals from 2023-24. This is on page 66 of budget paper 4. That seems like a disconnect to me. If we're getting more people to Tasmania because they're coming for events, they should then be going out to the parks. As I said, I know this isn't your area, but can I get some understanding of why that's not being spread across departments, that we should expect more people to be coming to our regions?

Ms HOWLETT - I'll have to seek some information from the minister for parks, but our whole aim is to get visitors out into our regions and exploring our regions, and we've got some of the best parks in the world.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. That's just concerning that that's not reflected in the government's numbers in that space.

Ms HOWLETT - I can seek some information on that for you.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. Do we have any further questions on events before we move? No.

Output Group 5.5 Visitor Economy Support

CHAIR - If we could just go on to 5.5, visitor economy support. Realistically, I think we've pretty well covered that, apart from one question I would ask - and others may have some other questions. Minister, with regard to the investment being made to trial the SkyBus trips between Launceston Airport and the CBD, were you aware - I know the Premier wasn't when I asked previously - that a small local business bought the previous shuttle service when it ceased a couple of years ago?

When I say the Premier wasn't - this was back in 2025 when I asked the question - or I appeared to ask the question. So, were you aware that a small local business had actually bought the previous shuttle service when it ceased a couple of years ago? The announcement was made

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at the time that SkyBus were operating not long after a local company had just purchased a shuttle bus from Launceston to the airport.

My question really with that: have you worked with that local business at all to ensure that they can redirect those transport services elsewhere within the visitor economy and receive income for their investment?

Because it would be very hard to actually purchase a business - which they had done at the time - and it came to my attention because I had sent them a congratulations letter in June that they'd taken over a service that had ceased, only a few weeks later for the government came out with the SkyBus at Launceston Airport. So, I'm just wondering, are you aware of that business that's there?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you for your question, honourable member. I'll have to have a discussion with the minister for Transport about that.

CHAIR - It is a tourism - is it economy support because it actually supports the visitors coming from the airport, obviously.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. It does actually fall under the Minister for Transport, and I'll have to have a discussion with him.

CHAIR - If you could, because I believe that - you know, obviously, the business that's there currently, perhaps, could - it could be very helpful for them to have some other support if a SkyBus was actually coming in.

Ms HOWLETT - Certainly happy to have that discussion.

CHAIR - Thank you. Do we have any other questions on visitor economy? If not, minister, we could move a little earlier - we do have capital investment. Does anyone have any questions on the capital investment program to do with tourism? No? Then, thank you, minister. We will move onto minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence.

Ms HOWLETT - Could I just have two minutes?

CHAIR - Absolutely. And we will stop the broadcast. Thank you.

The committee suspended from 3.06 p.m. to 3.14 p.m.

DIVISION 10

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Output Group 1.4

Women and the Prevention of Family Violence

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. We will now go to item 1.4 Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, and I will ask Ms Webb to start the questioning.

Ms WEBB - Thanks very much.

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - Would you like me to introduce who I have at the table?

CHAIR - Sorry. Yes. Of course. You've got a new group at the table. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - I do.

CHAIR - One job and I messed up.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. And at the table with me, to my right I have Courtney Hurworth, Chief Reform Lead, Keeping Children Safe Reform Group, DPAC; and Teegan Dwyer, Assistant Director, Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence, DPAC. To my left I have my Chief of Staff, Luke Gaetani.

Thank you, Chair. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the deep history and culture of this island and pay my respects to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the past and present custodians on the land on which we meet today. In this portfolio, I acknowledge the profound and unequal impacts of family and sexual violence across our community. Women are disproportionately affected and Aboriginal women and children face particularly higher rates of violence alongside additional barriers to accessing support.

I recognise the leadership of Aboriginal communities in addressing these issues and reaffirm our commitment to supporting Aboriginal-led, culturally safe responses. I also acknowledge the courage and resilience of victim/survivors and those who have lost their lives to family violence, and the lasting impacts of violence on individuals, families and communities. As Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, this work brings together our commitment to advancing gender equality and preventing violence.

We know these priorities are intrinsically linked, improving gender equity essential to safety, wellbeing and long-term prevention. Over the past year, we've made strong progress. We continue to support women's leadership and recognise their contributions, including the opening of nominations for the 2027 Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women and Inspiring Young Women's award. We've also expanded community participation, doubling funding for International Women's Day events, and supporting initiatives across our state.

We are strengthening pathways into leadership through the enhanced Tasmanian Women's Leaderships Scholarship Program, which will deliver 80 scholarships across 2026 and 2027, with a focus on women in traditionally male-dominated industries. Our government continues to deliver Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022 to 2027. Thirty-two of 38 actions are complete, with the remainder underway. This work is supported by more than \$45 million in Australian Government funding alongside over \$140 million in state investment.

Looking ahead, we've begun planning for the next phase, including a system-wide evaluation of the past decade to inform future reform and strengthen outcomes. Preventing family and sexual violence and advancing gender equality requires a whole-of-community effort. Together we remain committed to building a safer Tasmania for women and children. Thank you, Chair. I welcome the committee's questions.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. We could start the questioning with Ms Webb.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Chair. Much appreciated. Minister, there are just a few areas to go through because this is an area - a portfolio of responsibility that touches into other spaces so sometimes it can be hard to track where the money's coming from and going to. Some of my questions are going to relate to that.

The first one is around the fact that the Tasmanian Government and the Commonwealth Government together announced \$15.73 million of matched investments under the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2025-30 Federation Funding Agreement from July 2025.

And so the question around that is: can you reconcile that Commonwealth and Tasmanian FDSV FFA funding with this 2026-27 state Budget by identifying the total funding that's expected to be received in the 2026-27 financial year via that agreement, where those receipts are recognised in the Budget and the outputs initiatives and further streams funded from those amounts?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. I thank you for the question. Commonwealth funding through the Federation Funding Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Response 2021 to 30 supports key priorities such as services for victim/survivors, increasing sector workforce, early intervention support for cohorts with additional vulnerabilities and perpetrator responses. Our focus is on ensuring investment is directed to where it will have the greatest impact across the systems.

Key investment in this area includes over \$140 million over five years committed under the third action plan, Commonwealth funding of over \$40 million through the FFA, which includes recent additional national investment to continue the 500 Worker Initiative.

This reflects a shared responsibility, as I said before, between the state and the Commonwealth to address family and sexual violence. Funding is distributed across multiple agencies, including: Department of Premier and Cabinet, the policy development cross-jurisdiction and cross-agency coordination service provision for victim survivors; Department of Justice, legal and service systems responses; Tasmanian Police, operational response and enforcement; Department of Health, counselling and clinical services; Department for Education, Children and Young People, early intervention and prevention; and also Department of State Growth for housing. Courtney, would you like to add some further comments to that?

Ms WEBB - Just I'm particularly interested in breaking out so we can see where the money's flowing in and where it's flowing out in a bit more detail.

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. Just to clarify, there are four schedules under the National Partnership Agreement, soon to be five. So, the schedule you're referring to is Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses. Then there's 500 Workers, innovative perpetrator programs, innovative perpetrator boost, and then there's going to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Responses. So, I'll go with FDSV because that is the funding that is currently reflected in the Budget.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Ms HURWORTH - Under the new Federation Funding Agreement there's one and a half - I've got to make sure I'm reading the spreadsheet properly.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - The zeros correctly.

Ms HURWORTH - Yes. \$1.5 million in 2026-27, \$1.5 million in 2027-28, \$1.6 million in 2028-29 and \$1.6 million in 2029-30.

Ms WEBB - Just to clarify, is there somewhere in the budget paper where I can see those numbers?

Ms HURWORTH - They're not reflected in the budget papers individually.

Ms WEBB - Are they included in any line items?

Ms HURWORTH - Yes. They're included in table 10.3, total expenses by output.

Ms WEBB - And the amounts that you just read out, are they the Commonwealth money that's coming in, into that line?

Ms HURWORTH - Yes. For that schedule. Yes.

Ms WEBB - So 10.3, I see. In 1.4 in table 10.3.

Ms HURWORTH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes. Thank you. Thank you for clarifying that. And so that tranche that's Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses and those other tranches you mentioned, they're not funded in this Budget?

Ms HURWORTH - This is where we start to get very, very complicated. The FDSV funding agreement pre-2025 also has one year of funding in 2025-26 because of when the agreement was executed. Innovative perpetrator responses has had two years of funding and has a further two years over the forwards.

The boost for perpetrator responses has had - it was allocated last year by the feds, but the agreement will be executed next year, also to continue the year after. And 500 Workers is not reflected in the Budget at all, because the agreement was signed after the Budget was finalised.

Ms WEBB - So the line item we spoke about in table 10.3, line item 1.4, Women and Prevention of Family Violence, does that amount include funding for the ones that you just listed that have received some funding in this financial year in this Budget?

Ms HURWORTH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes. It does. Thank you. Yes. Thank you for clarity on that. And so, in terms of what we're funding, then, with that money, can you help me understand - now that I've got a better clarity about where it's coming in - where it's going out.

PUBLIC

Ms HURWORTH - As I mentioned, there's funding from the pre-2025 project plan that we're still distributing this year. The funding for that project plan or that funding stream has gone to a number of services.

Ms WEBB - While you're looking at that, minister, can I just double check. When we talk about the Third Family Violence Action Plan having \$100 million worth of funding behind it, which is what's on the website and what was, I think, referred to by you, are we including all these maps we're speaking of now in that \$100 million when we talk about what's being invested for that action plan?

Ms HURWORTH - Yes. That initial \$100 million included federal funding.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Thank you. I'll come back to that. Thank you for clarifying.

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. The programs that we funded - and I just want to clarify; this is what we funded under the pre-25.

Ms WEBB - Yes. That still has a year to run.

Ms HURWORTH - Yes. Funding for 2025-30 hasn't been approved by the Commonwealth yet. So, we've put the initiatives to the Commonwealth that we want funding under that, or the minister has, and we're waiting for their approval.

Ms WEBB - So we have the money here in the Budget in that line item, but we haven't allocated it yet so it is until it's approved by the feds.

Ms HURWORTH - That's right.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Ms HURWORTH - What we funded previously was the Step Up Adolescent Early Intervention Program, Keeping Women Safe In Their Homes, which was a boost, Safe Beds for Pets Program, delivered by RSPCA, Mothers Circle program, delivered by the Migrant Resource Centre, Tasmanian funding to do the scoping and establishment of the Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance, and we also delivered two rounds of a diverse community small grant program. And we allocated \$625,000 to Aboriginal programs, and that funding is going to the TAC to assist in implementing Nukara and providing wrap around and preventative supports for Aboriginal families.

Ms WEBB - Great. Is there any chance that we could have that list you've just given us but with the funding amounts attached in a table or something like that provided to us?

Ms HURWORTH - We can do that. Yes.

Ms WEBB - Either today while we're here or we can write to you to get it after if that's necessary. We can pop it into a question no notice and get it from you later if that's possible.

Ms HURWORTH - That would be great. Yes. That's fine. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Appreciate that.

PUBLIC

Ms HURWORTH - We do report against these publicly through the Australian Government, so we'll include that too.

Ms WEBB - That'd be great. I appreciate that. All right. Moving on, then. I was asking about the \$100 million that was mentioned about over five years across 38 actions under the Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan Survivors at the Centre, which is the 2022-27 action plan, and you've clarified that that \$100 million includes both the state and federal money that was anticipated to be spent across the time of the action plan? Or was the \$100 million for particular years of the action plan, or what did it cover?

Ms HOWLETT - That funding is allocated to be spent over that action, over the period of the action plan.

Ms WEBB - Okay. And that's what's been reported on that you'll be able to provide us with some information about?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Excuse me while I just quickly scan my questions to see what we've already covered. And then in terms of the fact that that's a 2022-2027 action plan, are we expecting in this coming financial year of 2026-27 to be developing the next iteration of the action plan, and is that a process that's already begun or where are we thinking on that?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. That process has begun.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Is it anticipated that - is it a mid-2027 new iteration that comes out or is it end of 2027, or how does it work in terms of timing for the next -

Ms HOWLETT - I have to get the timeline as to when that work will be completed with the action plan. It will be the end of 2027, but we will require a little bit of flexibility there.

Ms WEBB - Sure. That's the plan at this point in time. Yes.

CHAIR - Ms Hurworth, would you like to add some more?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. The current plan was launched in November 2022, if I'm remembering correctly. So, our aim would be to launch a new plan toward the end of 2027, but we are aware that our community sector is being engaged in a lot of consultation, including through the federal government and so, we're just trying to be aware of consultation fatigue and engage them in a timeline that they're happy with.

Ms WEBB - Sure. That makes sense. Having looked at the progress report that is available publicly on the action plan for July 2025 through to December 2025, so the second half of last year, you can see that you're having a status update for each of those actions.

There are some, for example, number 25, which is at risk. Is it that you are proactively, then, looking to address any issues that are contributing to these actions being, say, at risk? I presume it means at risk of not meeting the outcomes or the deadline or whatever that might be relevant for that action?

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. We certainly are.

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. In terms of that specific action, that's around ensuring that the Step Up program is statewide, and we are actively addressing that risk through looking at future funding allocations to make sure that it can be delivered statewide.

Ms WEBB - Great. I'm happy to go to anybody else and then come back, so is there anyone else?

CHAIR - Mr Gaffney?

Mr GAFFNEY - I've got one for you. Received comment that, minister, family violence is impacting older Tasmanians, and it was previously referred to as elder abuse.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - And they do not believe it's still adequately recognised in Tasmania's family violence prevention framework, with older women being further disadvantaged and vulnerable. So, there's a comment that there's not enough in the framework focusing on the older person.

The question is: what work is your department doing to support the development of a robust and effective family violence prevention framework that specifically addresses abuse by adult children, grandchildren, siblings and other family members. That's the comment I've received.

Ms HOWLETT - It's certainly a comment that I've had communicated with me as well, honourable member, and we know that it comes in, in many, many forms and we're very, very happy to also have a diverse range of inputs into any work that we do and we're very happy to have a conversation with KOTA, as well, to see how we can better address these issues.

Mr GAFFNEY - That's fine. That's good. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. Minister, have you ever lied to Parliament?

CHAIR - We're actually on family violence.

Mr EDMUNDS - I didn't get the lead, and I didn't get the chance to ask a question in overview. I didn't want to jump in front.

Ms HOWLETT - Not to my knowledge.

Ms WEBB - I think, technically, you don't have to confine it to a line item, anyway.

Mr EDMUNDS - Have you ever had to correct the parliamentary record because an answer you gave was incomplete, inaccurate or misleading?

PUBLIC

Ms HOWLETT - I think I have corrected the record before.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. When did you become aware that Madam Ogilvie was party to a Supreme Court matter?

Ms HOWLETT - As I've said before, these are very complex matters and particularly given confidentiality requirements, I won't be commenting any further on this matter.

Mr EDMUNDS - Were you aware that Madam Ogilvie was party to a Supreme Court matter prior to 17 November 2025?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, Mr Edmunds, these are complex matters particularly given confidentiality requirement, and I won't be commenting any further.

Mr EDMUNDS - And just one more. Minister, this morning the Premier confirmed to this committee that cabinet approves all legal fees for government ministers. That means cabinet knew Ms Ogilvie was party to a legal matter, and it means when she misleadingly told the parliament otherwise, you would have been aware that wasn't true. Did you know Ms Ogilvie's answer was false at the time she gave it, and if so, why didn't you act to ensure the record was corrected?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, Mr Edmunds, these are complex matters, particularly given confidentiality requirements, and I will not be commenting any further.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. Ms Webb, you have some further questions.

Ms WEBB - Yes. I'll keep going if you like. I'm just looking at the line item in table 10.2, revenue from appropriation for this Output 1.4, Women and Prevention of Family Violence, and so just some questions so we understand the movements there, because there is a bit of movement.

Firstly, in the year 2025-26 you had the budgeted outcome and the estimated outcome fairly different. The explanation around that was to do with transfer of appropriation to other departments, to Department of Justice, DPFEM, Department of Health and also DECIP.

Because it doesn't give the detail here, can you - just as it's related to implementing actions associated with the Third Family Sexual Violence Action Plan, so we understand this drop from \$17.468 million down to \$13.780 million, can you lay out those transfers that were made and the amounts associated with them and what they were for in terms of the action plan?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, certainly. Thank you, honourable member, and I will pass you over to Ms Hurworth to explain that. Just give us a moment and we'll find the exact table.

Ms WEBB - You're all right. It's fine.

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. I'm just going to work through this from a table I've got, so I'm hoping it makes sense. We transferred \$1.98 million to DPFEM for the Safe Families Coordination Unit. We transferred \$135,000 to the Department of Justice for legislative family violence reform. We transferred \$330,000 to the Department of Justice to continue flexible support packages.

PUBLIC

We then transferred funding for nine different programs to the Department of Justice. I can read them all individually, but they are primarily perpetrator programs run in the prison; men's behaviour change programs and specialist legal services for victim/survivors of family violence, including Women's Legal.

Ms WEBB - What was the total amount for those nine programs that was transferred?

Ms HURWORTH - Just one moment. I'll get my calculator.

Ms WEBB - Would it be better for you to provide this as a table to us on notice?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, we'd have to separate it all out.

Ms WEBB - Can we make a request for that information on notice?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, I can do that. Yes, that's fine.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. That will be a bit of time-saver for us, I reckon.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - I have a follow-up to that one.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - I'm just interested to know that you've provided this money. Do you get requests from the organisation to provide funding, or do you offer - you see what I mean? You said you give \$330,000 or nine payments to different groups, so how does that process work?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. The funding is allocated through the Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. All of these programs relate to actions in the action plan, and there's a process at the time that the plan is developed where proposals for funding are considered through governance structures and then approved by cabinet for that purpose.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Ms HURWORTH - This is funding related to the action plan, so funding that was allocated in 2022 and has been delivered each year of the action plan. There's then additional funding on top of that that's been allocated.

Mr GAFFNEY - You're the holder of the funds and you pass those on to these other groups?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. DPAC has the budget allocation in this output group.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Yes.

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Ms HURWORTH - And there is a whole-of-government governance structure that provides advice to cabinet about how that allocation for the action plan should be distributed. Some of these programs are very long-standing programs that have been funded under previous actions plans like the SFCU.

Mr GAFFNEY - The feedback from the success of those programs, do they have to come back through to you because you're providing the funding source? So, you ask for evaluation and that sort of thing, so there's a requirement there for that to occur?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. That's correct, and so part of the evaluation that the minister referred to earlier is looking at all of the investment into these programs over the life of this action plan, but also the previous two, and that will inform the next action plan and the budget allocations under that.

Mr GAFFNEY - Is it very often that you find funding going into programs that do not meet your expectation or that you find are wanting and they have to have improvements for the next tranche of money, yes?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. A really good example is that the Department of Justice reviewed its perpetrator programs recently and has implemented some new programs because the review found that they were not meeting what we would consider good practice today. The Australian government is working with all states and territories to come up with principles and a framework around what good behaviour change programs look like. When that's completed, we'll then use that and evaluate against those programs. So, we do that in a range of areas.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Ms HURWORTH - And we do make adjustments based on outcomes in terms of what's being funded.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Sorry. To your point, honourable member, that's a really good question. One thing that was important to me when I took over this portfolio was having a look at Tasmania as a whole, and the department has done a lot of work on mapping, so we could see where there were gaps across the state or any duplication as well, and now we're just going to overlay that with the federal programs as well so we can really drill down and see where there are gaps across the state and if there is any duplication as well.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you. Thank you, minister.

CHAIR - Thank you. If I could just ask a question with regard to the Victim/Survivor Advisory Council. If you could give us an update, perhaps how many are now on the council.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Yes.

CHAIR - How many times have they met?

Ms HOWLETT - I'll just find that information for you, honourable member.

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CHAIR - No, thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. Currently there are eight members. Seven members are in the south, and one member is from the north-west. The age range of members is estimated to span from 20 to 80 years of age. Current member terms conclude on 28 November, so we will then be going out for recruitment.

Members are drawn from diverse communities and priority groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, people from LGTIQA+ communities and people living in regional and rural remote locations.

For the 2026 meetings, on 12 February we had a meeting online. There is one due on 2 July and on 5 November. Gender Equality were engaged to facilitate meetings in 2024 and 2025. In 2026, meetings will be facilitated by Jane Austin Consulting. It's expected that from 2027 the chairs will assume responsibility for leading the meetings.

And as far as recruitment is concerned, it's very targeted, transparent and trauma-informed recruitment, and that will be undertaken in 2026 to fill vacancies. All stages of recruitment will be delivered in a trauma-informed, culturally safe and accessible manner, including responsible adjustments and clear applicant support pathways, and selection criteria will explicitly reflect, identify gaps in current membership and support balanced advisory council composition, reflecting the diversity of the Tasmanian community. Would you like to add some more to that, Ms Hurworth?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. That was very thorough.

CHAIR - Who do they report to?

Ms HURWORTH - They report to the minister, and the minister is meeting with them on 2 July. The other thing I wanted to mention was the Alliance will be on the recruitment panel for members.

CHAIR - We only have eight members currently, so we're hoping to actually, when it goes out for recruitment, to have 12.

Ms HOWLETT - Ideally.

CHAIR - Is that because we're not having a very big take-up from people in the community who want to be part of the committee? Is that the reason we only have eight, that's all, rather than 12? Do we need to put it out further so that we get more representation?

Ms HOWLETT - I'd certainly like to see a full allocation of 12.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms HOWLETT - And I'd certainly like to see more members across regional Tasmania as well. As I said, predominantly they are from the south and one member is from the north-west, so I'd like to see a better distribution of members throughout the state.

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CHAIR - So meetings are online always or -

Ms HOWLETT - No, not always.

CHAIR - I'm just wondering whether - that's the difficulty of actually having meetings. Would meetings be spread around the state if there were members from other areas?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. And if people can't attend or get to that region, they would have the option of attending the meeting online.

CHAIR - No, thank you. Do you have a follow-up?

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, just a supp to that.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Sorry.

CHAIR - No, no.

Ms HOWLETT - Sorry, chair. We also pay for travel and for accommodation as well for those members but as I said, if they can't attend in-person, they can attend online.

CHAIR - No, thank you. Mr Gaffney.

Mr GAFFNEY - I'm interested to know, what is the gender make-up of the board of the group?

Ms HOWLETT - There is one man, honourable member. I'm not sure if he is located in southern Tasmania.

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. There is one man on the council, but we're careful about releasing too much information about the individuals, because they have joined the group on condition that their identities are not known.

CHAIR - Anonymity.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - No, that's fine. Yes. I think the strength of one of the groups that I'm involved with, MRT, is that on that board there are - of Men's Resources Tasmania - there are five women on that board and six men, and I think that's a very good gender balance for our organisation, so I'm just making that as a comment.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. No, thank you for that comment.

Ms WEBB - Though this group isn't a governance group, though, is it? It's a reference group to provide advice to the minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

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Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. Yes, it's an advisory council.

Ms WEBB - Yes, of victim/survivors.

Ms HURWORTH - Correct.

Ms WEBB - And in terms of what we know about statistics, it probably makes sense that it would be predominantly women on the group.

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister, the other thing is that in order for it to be trauma-informed, the members go through a relatively rigorous process that includes personal reflection of their own readiness to be engaged in the group, and that's because, based on trauma-informed principles, people need to understand the environment that they're coming into, the levels of control that they're going to have, and whether they are ready to participate in that. We actually had nine members, but one person chose to step off.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Webb, if you have more questions.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. In the session we had earlier today with DPAC and the Premier, and then I think mentioned also in your opening remarks, minister, we spoke about the process that's being undertaken at the moment apparently around sort of evaluation and planning, looking ahead for future provision of services and support in the areas of family and sexual violence and prevention of violence against women.

I'd like to understand a bit more about that process that's being undertaken, because it was used as an explanation for why in some areas there's a drop away, it looks like, in these budget papers about funding, and the suggestion was that we might be informed by this evaluation and planning process in terms of what to fund in those outyears and that's why it's not there yet. I'm pretty keen to know what kind of robust process we're undertaking to inform us for future budget allocations.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you for your question, honourable member. I will say that we know that there's a lot of work to be done, and this evaluation will provide a system-level picture of what is working over that period, where outcomes for women and children can be strengthened and how investment can be better targeted over time. Our focus is on improving outcomes, particularly reducing violence and improving safety for women and children.

We all know that this work is complex and outcomes are not always immediately visible, particularly in prevention, and we're seeing increased reporting and help-seeking, which can reflect greater awareness of family and sexual violence and confidence in the system.

In the short to medium term, increased reporting is an expected and important part of strengthening prevention and early intervention and response, and we recognise that measuring long-term outcomes, particularly behavioural change and prevention, certainly remains a challenge. Ms Hurworth, would you like to add to that?

Ms WEBB - I'm particularly interested to know about the process that's being undertaken to do this -

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Ms HOWLETT - Yes, that evaluation.

Ms WEBB - - evaluation and then planning ahead about what comes next.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. We did a tender for an external organisation to do the evaluation, and that tender was awarded to Equality Institute, who also has evaluated some elements of the national plan. The scope of that evaluation covers a number of areas. It looks at the three plans that the government has released since 2015 and the investment that has accompanied those plans.

Ms WEBB - Is there a term of reference or something like that for this evaluation that could be released or provided to us?

Ms HOWLETT - We can table a scoping document.

Ms WEBB - Will you be able to table that today or do you want me to put it on notice to you? You'll take that on notice?

Ms HOWLETT - On notice, if you wouldn't mind.

Ms WEBB - Okay. We'll put that through as a question on notice.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I didn't mean to interrupt you describing it.

Ms HOWLETT - No, no.

Ms WEBB - I am interested to hear about it here, because I'd like to ask some more questions around things like timeline and what to expect from the process, so please continue.

Ms HURWORTH - There are multiple streams - through you, minister - to the evaluation. It's going to look at effectiveness over time. It's going to have a focus on therapeutic services and the service system as a whole, and partly that's because it addresses a number of commission of inquiry recommendations around reviewing the sexual violence service system.

It's going to look at service accessibility, timeliness, equity, service capability and capacity, the coherence of the system and how it integrates together, how the system has evolved and whether it's got capacity for the future at this stage. We're looking at key systemic barriers and strengths and we're looking at how the system has moved and changed and integrated over time.

The third stream is financial sustainability and investment, looking at providing future considerations around where investment should be placed. We're expecting an evaluation plan and approach which is currently being finalised, and a report from the evaluator later in the year. We have a sector forum on the 16th -

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Ms WEBB - Of this month?

Ms HURWORTH - - of this month, where we'll be talking more with our community sector partners about their engagement in the process, and the intention would be that the report forms the basis of the new action plan.

Ms WEBB - The next iteration of the action plan?

Ms HURWORTH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes, that makes sense. Thank you, I appreciate that. Then from the next iteration of the action plan, once that's drawn up and developed, we'll then be able to make funding decisions for future budget years is our anticipation? Yes. Thank you. I'm getting nods. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. The other thing that was touched on earlier today in our session with DPAC and the Premier and that is relevant into this area, minister, so I held questions about it until now, was around - it was mentioned that there's a toolkit for gender analysis in policy development that's been developed and will be expected to be rolled out later in the year, and I'm just interested in some more information around that toolkit, if I may have some clarity on it.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Certainly. I shall just get that information for you.

Ms WEBB - Which is great. It sounds like it's going to be very positive, especially if it's based at the policy development end of things so that they can have that gender lens coming in at the earliest opportunity, not just as - say, we do have a gender budget impact statement, which is fine and improving and looking good. This is a really good addition at the front end.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. A gender impact assessment toolkit is a practical tool used to assess how policies, programs and initiative may impact people of different genders. It supports more inclusive and evidence-based decision making, and the toolkit helps ensure government actions consider and respond to gender inequality.

The original gender impact assessment tool was developed by an external provider, Seer Data, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet is now developing a government posted version. This new version will be on the new DPAC website, and it's expected to be completed by September 2026. We look forward to that being implemented and completed in September. Ms Hurworth, would you like to add any more to that?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. We had originally looked at a Victorian Government toolkit, which is a static PDF which runs you through a sort of - it's more sophisticated than a checklist, but, essentially, a checklist of factors to consider when developing policy. What we've developed is much more comprehensive than that, and it means that you can click through and you'll be given suggested data sets you might want to consider and other things like that in the development of policy.

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Ms WEBB - That sounds really positive. So, what I'm interested in, then, if it's coming out in September, how will it then be used; what's going to be the expectation that government agencies and departments use that toolkit during policy development processes?

Ms HOWLETT - It will ensure that government actions consider and respond to gender inequality. That will be its major -

Ms WEBB - It's our expectation it will be required to be used?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. We have a group of representatives from each agency who are like a community of practice who will be supporting the roll out and some of the original platform was tested through that group. And then before we finalise it, we'll be taking a paper to Secretaries Board around what it is and gaining secretary support for its use in their policy development processes.

Ms WEBB - From the conversation earlier today when we had the head of DPAC here, it sounded like there was an intention, then, to be fairly closely expecting that that potentially becomes standard practice to utilise the tool, which is the toolkit. Is this something that's going to be able to be shared publicly, to be publicly visible so that people outside of government agencies can also, essentially, benefit from it in terms of understanding how it works, understanding how it might be applied in other settings? It could become quite a good resource, I would have thought, broadly. In what way will it be publicly accessible or publicly be able to be understood and utilised?

Ms HOWLETT - So from September, on completion it will be publicly available on the DPAC website.

Ms WEBB - Right. So, anyone will be able to, sort of, work their way through it.

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. Yes.

Ms WEBB - Get to understand it. The utility of that is that if there are other outside of government organisations or even political parties or whoever it might be who are developing policies, they could put it through this system and have that analysis done alongside what they're developing, which is great. Congratulations, minister. That sounds really positive. I look forward to seeing it in September.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - I'm happy to go to others if there's others.

CHAIR - Yes. No. We don't have any further questions.

Ms WEBB - I'll get to another area. One of the things that I think is really interesting is that I see in the budget statement alongside - the budget is coming along well. It has developed each year into a more robust document and so that's really positive to see.

And it is useful, but it's also, of course, as soon as it begins to work effectively and put its analysis across different policy areas and we can then see some gender effects and

disparities, as well, which then prompts us to have to ask ourselves what action will be taken and how will the government address those things. It's just how the cycle of that should work.

One of the things I just wanted to pick up on, because it's quite topical, I think, that was highlighted in this year's gender budget statement and we know it sits in an area of urgent need in the community and touches into this prevention of family violence space, minister, is around the impact of the housing crisis and how that is impacting on women and children escaping domestic violence. We've got in the budget statement highlighting worsening housing outcomes for women and women with children, including those experiencing family and domestic violence.

I'm interested in what that then means for you in your role and how we make plans in these areas. How will these worsening housing outcomes that are identified through the gender budget statement be addressed through, say, the Tasmanian Women's Strategy, particularly when you're looking to be developing the next Women's Strategy for after 2027?

Are there any specific actions within the current strategy responding to the housing needs and homelessness needs, and at what scale and resourcing are we allocating - or what scale of resourcing are we allocating towards those actions?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. It's a really, really important question and it's one that I discuss with Minister Vincent constantly, and I also had a meeting earlier this week with Chris from Anglicare. It's essential that we do as much as we possibly can to find women and children suitable housing.

As I said, this does fall under Minister Vincent's portfolio, but it is something that I take incredibly seriously. As we know, the former Bethlehem House site in Hobart has been repurposed to provide transitional accommodation for around 40 women at risk of homelessness, with a further 38 beds becoming available once construction of Emily House on Argyle Street is completed.

Through the Australian Government Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program, 2.25 million in funding has been secured towards seven dwellings in the north and north-west for transitional accommodation for women and children escaping family violence. These initiatives, along with rapid rehousing programs, deliver more safe and affordable housing options for women in need across all regions of Tasmania.

But as I said, there's a lot of work to be done, and I'm in constant communication with Minister Vincent. This is something that we need to push, and the Women's Council also has a specific focus on this as well.

Ms WEBB - In what sense does the Women's Council have a specific focus on it?

Ms HOWLETT - It was brought up in our last meeting that we had and it's at the forefront of their minds, and -

Ms WEBB - In what way can that council assist into this space?

Ms HOWLETT - Through you, Courtney.

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Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. They had a dedicated meeting just on housing and they met with the then CEO of Homes Tasmania along with a number of housing providers and shelter and they -

Ms WEBB - They're informing themselves of the issue, but then what can they do?

Ms HURWORTH - They're informing themselves of the issue, but they're also informing government agencies, like Homes Tasmania, of their perspectives on the issue and what they're seeing.

Ms WEBB - Okay. That's great. Anybody discussing the issue and informing themselves is useful because, clearly, we're not doing enough. The data's still going in the wrong direction in terms of women being turned away from crisis accommodation services; women and children. It's eight in 10, typically. I think it's gone up to as absolutely horrifically bad as nine in 10 being turned away in recent years. There's certainly more to be done there.

The Women's Strategy doesn't specifically go to this area or are there funded initiatives under the Women's Strategy in this space?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. There are funding initiatives under the Family Violence Action Plan, but not specifically through the Women's Council.

Ms WEBB - Yes. It may come up, then, during the development process for the next iteration, maybe, if it remains this much of an urgent issue, because despite - I'm not taking away from any of the initiatives that are being done, some of which you've just mentioned, minister, in your answers, which are laudable in and of themselves but clearly, we're not addressing the issue or solving the problem. So, more is needed. I think that's nearly the end of my list of questions. Let me just check my notes.

The key deliverable that's here - and I had brought it up in a session earlier with DPAC, because I was thinking it was related to the Premier's responsibilities, but actually, more closely reading, I've now realised it's related to your portfolio areas, minister, and that's around the therapeutic services in Arch centres, and the key deliverable there that is the \$900,000 each year across two years and then nothing in the forward Estimates after that. So just to be very clear, given that apparently you can confirm it is your portfolio responsibility, I think, that key deliverable.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, it gets a bit complicated here because - and the attorney. Yes. It does fall under Minister Palmer, me, the attorney and the police minister.

Ms WEBB - Okay. That's fine. So in terms of adding to the conversation we had already, there may not be anything further you can add from your portfolio perspective on this, other than clearly, it's only funded for two years and we're going to be expecting those models to continue past that time. So, it's your expectation that our pre-planning it, looking ahead to those out-years budgets, we will be filling in funding amounts there for therapeutic services in Arch centres?

Ms HOWLETT - I will certainly be advocating for that, and we know the incredible work that the three Arch centres do and just recently, obviously, we opened the one on the north-west coast, and having that full wraparound service is - I can't tell you how critical that

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is for a woman who is experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence, say. Those Arch centres are critically important: the integrated services and the response for those who are requiring it. They're absolutely critical.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. One final question, maybe, in this portfolio area is the prevention of family violence. How are we going to measure how well we're doing in delivering the outcome that we're all hoping for here? How exactly are you measuring that, other than measuring what we fund and the activities they do? How do we measure progress on the outcome?

Ms HOWLETT - That's a very, very good question. We recognise that we've not yet had a complete picture of the outcomes across the system. I have far too many women reach out to me - far too many - and there's always a lot more work that can be done on how we measure those outcomes.

Ms WEBB - Because, of course, we've seen horrific homicides in this state just in recent weeks in terms of family violence. It's just been atrocious, actually. So, I'm just interested, are we just measuring activity, or are we able to actually measure tangible progress?

Ms HOWLETT - Any death is one too many, honourable member, and I take this very seriously, and there's a considerable amount that we need to do better.

CHAIR - Just a follow-up question with regard to the Arch. Is there a waiting list for people turning up for the specialised counselling or the family violence workers? So, if a woman was to turn up today, is there someone there to actually see them then, or is it a week, two weeks? Is there a wait?

Ms HOWLETT - I'll just get some information.

CHAIR - Just wondering, because obviously, with the three regions that you've got and how difficult it often is for specialist counsellors for many other areas, I'm just wondering, is there a waiting list?

Ms HOWLETT - I'll just get you that information for the waiting list on the Arch, honourable member.

CHAIR - Thank you. Yes, on the counsellors, the family violence workers, the child safety officers, the people who are relevant that they would need to see, whether they do need to come back, make an appointment to see them, or whether they can actually just go in and see someone.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. Unfortunately, we do know that there has been an increase on the north-west coast as well on those services.

CHAIR - Yes, exactly.

Ms HOWLETT - I have waitlist information for the Arch centres. I'll pass you over to Ms Hurworth.

CHAIR - Thank you.

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Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. We collect waitlist information by organisation. So we have waitlist information, for example, for SASS and Laurel House in the south and in the north and north-west, but it's not broken down by whether that is - they're seeing that person in an Arch centre or in their own location or through outreach services, because a number of our providers provide outreach services.

So, I can't give you the data for Arch specifically, but the minister does have it for the organisations that provide those services in Arch. In terms of your question about whether someone can just walk in off the street and see someone - yes, you can walk in off the street. You will be met at the front desk by an intake person who is employed by the community services organisations that work in those centres. They will meet with you and talk to you and work out who you want to see.

CHAIR - Who you need to see and when.

Ms HURWORTH - Yes, yes.

CHAIR - If I could, minister, take on notice the waiting list through the organisations, because I think that's really important. If someone's in need now, how long do they actually have to wait to see someone, and does it become critical in time?

Ms WEBB - You'll be able to ask the police tomorrow about the Arch data as well, and also DECYP on Thursday. So, we might be able to triangulate some things here, because the data you've got could be too broad to give us an Arch picture.

CHAIR - Well, not necessarily, but right across the whole spectrum of the different groups that provide the counselling and the services.

Ms HOWLETT - Will we take that on notice, or would you like -

CHAIR - If you can provide some information now, that would be fine.

Ms HOWLETT - Okay. Laurel House - and this information is from 31 March 2026.

CHAIR - No, that's fine.

Ms HOWLETT - So Laurel House current clients, including new clients, are 638. People waiting for their first appointment is 347.

CHAIR - Do we know how long it will be before they see someone from that service?

Ms HOWLETT - In the north it is 46 working days.

CHAIR - Forty-six. Yes.

Ms HOWLETT - And on the northwest it's 222.50 working days. Yes. And SASS doesn't count those numbers because they have - well, their current new clients are 833 and there's 499 waiting for their first appointment.

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CHAIR - So we don't know how long they're waiting. Did you say they don't actually - or they don't?

Ms HURWORTH - Through you, minister. They've implemented a new model in terms of how they manage their waitlist, which is a stepped care model and so those clients may see a number of different service providers while they're waiting to see a therapeutic specialist.

CHAIR - So they're not just left - they're actually seeing someone in the meantime.

Ms HURWORTH - Yes. Through you, minister. A number of our funded services are trialling innovative models like that in order to make sure they're seeing clients.

Ms WEBB - I'd say out of sheer desperation, because the waiting list is so long in some cases.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

CHAIR - No. Thank you. Thank you, minister. It just gives a little bit of an understanding of the numbers around the state. So no, thank you. If there are no further questions, we will break until - you've got an answer?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, sorry, Chair. I'm able to provide a response to a question taken on notice as part of the tourism, events and hospitality portfolio. I'm advised that the following events were supported, subsequently cancelled in 2025-26: Ironman 70.3, \$250,000; and Bangor Music in the Vines, that was \$20,000.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. So, we'll stop the broadcast and we'll be back at 4.30. So, we'll have a 15-minute break.

The Committee suspended from 4.13 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

DIVISION 8

Racing

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister, for being here this afternoon in your capacity as Minister for Racing. Would you like to introduce the people at your table and also then give a short overview before we launch into questions?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. To my right I have the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner, Mr Sean Carroll. And then I have deputy secretary Deidre Wilson from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and also Ms Anita Yan. To my left I have my chief of staff, Luke Gaetani.

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Chair, we are delivering for Tasmania. We're getting on with the job, building a strong economy and a caring community. We continue to raise the bar when it comes to integrity and animal welfare in Tasmanian racing. Integrity and animal welfare will be the bedrock on which the Tasmanian racing industry will grow and continue to make a positive contribution to the Tasmanian community.

The 2026-27 Budget supports this through \$6.8 million in funding to support racing regulation and policy to support the function and operation of the Tasmanian Independent Racing Commissioner and his office. The Commissioner has powers and functions that help the Tasmanian government and broader racing industry improve standards and behaviours relating to animal welfare.

I thank Mr Carroll, who is at the table with me today, for the significant work he and his team have done since starting in the role. The reforms build a strong platform to build the confidence of participants and the community in the Tasmanian racing industry and to support the long-term prosperity of this industry for the people of Tasmania.

In relation to greyhound racing, the government's position has been clear and consistent. The Budget supports the government's commitment to phase out greyhound racing by 30 June 2029, including support for the commissioner, industry participants and animal welfare. As announced this week, we are developing a new support scheme to provide financial assistance and practical support for those participants who want to leave the industry now.

The scheme will be developed in consultation with the stakeholders over the coming weeks to ensure it meets the needs of participants and supports the best outcomes for greyhounds. A funding package of \$4.8 million is budgeted, supporting a careful and measured exit from greyhound racing. This is an initial appropriation to provide a level of certainty but the need for a clear legislative framework to manage the transition remains.

\$38.4 million is allocated in the Budget under the existing 20-year funding deed to Tasracing. Work has started on a new racing industry funding deed to ensure the financial sustainability of the Tasmanian racing industry. I know this is the industry's number one priority and the industry needs clarity and we will deliver that. Chair, I now open for questions.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you, Chair. Thank you, minister. I'll start with the \$4.8 million figure that you talked about. How is that figure in the Budget calculated?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Mr Edmunds, for that question. That \$4.8 million in the Budget - Chair, the compensation has been outlined and a funding package of the \$4.8 million will be in this year's Budget as it is, supporting a careful and measured exit from greyhound racing in Tasmania.

This is an initial appropriation to provide a level of certainty but the government is cognisant of the fact that the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition has within its terms of reference the following transitional arrangements for greyhound racing industry participants, including any fair and reasonable compensation requirements and requirements of rehoming organisations, and I'll pass over to the commissioner to add more comments to that.

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Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister, and thank you for the question. Earlier this year my office made a budget submission to operationalise the transition plan that we're developing through to 30 June 2029. As a result of that submission an initial \$4.8 has been allocated in the Budget.

At a high level, this budget submission covers the working group, the feasibility study, workforce to support the transition, veterinary care, emergency kennelling and rehoming, compensation including via Tasracing, quarantining, race day expenses from the reduced racing schedule. The Budget covers participant welfare and rehoming compensation considerations. Once the compensation model has been established in the transition plan, there will be further budget applications.

I should say the submission was based on - was developed earlier this year and was developed on the bill being debated and resolved in March, and therefore, this Budget is subject to change over the course of the transition period. If and when the bill is passed and any amendments are required to the transition plan that require additional investment or funding, a further budget application will be made through my office through the various stakeholders who are involved in the phase out.

Mr EDMUNDS - Minister, has the government done any work estimating potential compensation costs that government will be liable for?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member, for your question. That consultation will form part of our transition plan. Commissioner, would you like to add to that?

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister. Thank you. The compensation plan is part of the - sorry, the compensation model is part of the transition plan that currently is under development. As I've said to numerous committees so far, the transition plan is being developed by a working group of suitably qualified experts both within the industry and within the community. The compensation plan will be developed after a period of consultation with various participants who essentially wish to exit the industry at an early stage.

That will take place up until December 31. Post that there will be a compensation model that will look at the dependency levels of participants who are required within the industry. I can't give you the calculations at this stage because I don't know the guidelines from which the transition plan we worked in. As we know, the proposed bill hasn't gone through yet. So, the transition plan will reflect that, as will the compensation model.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. With regard to the new support scheme, as you talked about in your opening statement - and it's the initial information provided yesterday about, like, a carrot for participants to exit the industry - is that money that was spoken about yesterday, is that extra to the \$4.8 million or is that new money?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the honourable member for his question, and at this stage it is included in the money that's allocated in the Budget until we seek some more advice. But I can confirm to the committee, as announced yesterday by the Premier, I requested in writing the commissioner to develop an initial scheme in consultation with stakeholders and the Greyhound Racing Transitional Working Group and that work will be undertaken.

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Mr EDMUNDS - When was the request made to the commissioner to develop that scheme?

Ms HOWLETT - I wrote to the commissioner today.

Mr EDMUNDS - Today. Right. So, who was consulted about the announcement made by the Premier?

Ms HOWLETT - The announcement was a decision by the government, Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Did you talk to the Premier about it before he announced it?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, this was a decision made by the government.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Did you know he was going to announce it yesterday?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, I did. Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - And then you wrote to the commissioner today, this morning?

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. This morning. Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - Right. So, you talked about, in your opening statements, an exit, a phase out or a reduced racing schedule. Is the plan to reduce - I assume that means, when you say 'phase out', it's like in a budget, if there's funding for something it phases out. So are we going to see less greyhound racing meetings per year in the lead-up to the cut-off date of government policy?

Ms HOWLETT - I guess it would - I'll hand you over to the commissioner to comment on that.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you. And through you, minister, and thank you for the question. I think from the day on which the announcement was made by the Premier and the government, there'll be a greyhound transition. The focus of everything that I've done to date in gathering information, and certainly through the working group and members of the working group, has been focused on ensuring a high standard of animal welfare. And at the pointy end of that will be the number of greyhounds that are required to be rehomed in the final year ending in June 30 2029.

I think I've also been on record - in fact, I'm sure I've been on record - to say that the rehoming program won't cease on June 30, 2029 but will continue post-June 30, 2029 to do that. As you'd be aware, that is in the bill before parliament at the moment.

There is scope for a prohibition on breeding and an authorisational level of greyhounds coming to compete into Tasmania. What that will do is, effectively, reduce the number of greyhounds that are racing in Tasmania over the period of the next three years to a manageable level.

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Now, what we don't want to do is have racing cease within 12 months or two years but have a gradual decline of the racing greyhounds through retirements and rehoming, that we have continued racing up until June 30, 2029.

I think, once again, I've been on record that we would look at all various modelling as far as greyhound racing is concerned. I am working on a number of models at this stage, depending on what occurs and what date, if at all, the bill is passed and what that looks like from a transition period.

It's a very long answer to say yes, we are looking at reduced greyhound meetings. I've had those discussions with Tasracing. Part of that quarantining of that cost recovery of the operational costs - not the prize money because that's covered by raising of fees, but the operational costs - will be quarantined and go back into the compensation package.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. And with the new package announcement made yesterday and the letter this morning, commissioner, were you consulted or did you know that that package was going to be announced yesterday?

Mr CARROLL - I was advised yesterday that it was under consideration, or there were certainly discussions. It's not my point to be involved in those conversations as far as that's concerned. I was written to appropriately by -

Mr EDMUNDS - So, you weren't consulted about the development of it?

Mr CARROLL - No. I've certainly spoken to the minister, as I have for every committee that I've been to, about potential compensation packages and what that would look like. I've certainly been on the record to say that the model that I'm developing in the working group will look at the dependency of participants from the income to greyhound racing. But certainly the package that was spoken to or is written about today, that was a decision for the government, not for my office.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Okay. Sorry, to just recircle back. With the reduced racing schedule, will there be less greyhound racing in Tasmania next year?

Mr CARROLL - That's certainly an option at this stage. I'm meeting with the working group tomorrow to discuss all options. And there's certainly been some modelling going on various levels and various reduction levels. Once again, that will be dependent if and when the bill is passed and what is in the bill, if it is finally passed through to legislation, with regards to the prohibition on breeding and the requirement to get approval for bringing greyhounds into the state to race.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - Just on that, I'm interested to know, the current deed runs through to 2029 for the three codes. Therefore, in that deed or that arrangement, are you able to change the percentage of races and prize money to the different codes, because wouldn't that be part of the deed until 2029? Isn't that part of the legal responsibilities of the racing organisation to make sure that each of the codes gets a percentage of funds available, or how does that work?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member.

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Mr GAFFNEY- Sorry, through you, minister. I was just interested how that works.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. That's right. And operations for the deed are a matter for Tasracing.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. If that's a matter for Tasracing, I'm just interested to know, what is the relationship between - if there is no change, if there is no legislation that goes through, how can there be changes to the percentage of prize money allocated for each of the three codes if that can't, in fact, occur because of the deed?

Ms HOWLETT - It's my understanding that the deed doesn't specify per code.

Mr GAFFNEY - There's no relationship between yearly prize money for the three codes?

Ms HOWLETT - I believe that level of detail is an operational matter for Tasracing, and Tasracing are just paid the deed from Treasury.

Mr GAFFNEY - Interesting. Thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. You said the working group is meeting tomorrow, is that correct? Minister, do you know if the working group was consulted about - or did you consult with the working group about yesterday's announcement?

Ms HOWLETT - No. I didn't consult the working group yesterday about the announcement.

Mr EDMUNDS - They were just informed the same way others were in terms of announcement of estimates and -

Ms HOWLETT - I believe the commissioner has said to you that he has organised a meeting with the working group for tomorrow, Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - And are there any participants on the working group? Through the minister.

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister. As I've said on a number of appearances before various committees, there's been an open invitation to members of the greyhound industry. I've been in constant communication with their representative, Mr Luke Gatehouse, and as you'd be aware where I appeared before your chamber previously, there was a further invitation extended to members. I think the request was that two members of the greyhound community be appointed to the working group.

That was taken to the working group and it was agreed that those members be provided the opportunity to join the working group along the same terms of reference of all government members of the working group. I wrote to Mr Gatehouse informing him of that and asked him to identify potential members that could apply to join the working group. He provided some names of potential applicants, however said that nobody would be joining the working group from the greyhound industry until the bill was passed.

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Mr EDMUNDS - And, perhaps, you could see why they aren't finding out these things or being consulted when they're announced.

Back to the question about the future of greyhound racing. You said that it's unclear whether there'll be less or more greyhound racing in Tasmania next year. Minister, what about harness racing and thoroughbred racing? Is the plan that those will be maintained at current levels?

Ms HOWLETT - I believe there has been some work commissioned by Tasracing, Ben Sellenger has done some work, and that matter relates to operational aspects of the portfolio, and it's a question more appropriately asked to Tasracing at GBE scrutiny later on this year. But what I can say is I'm advised that Tasracing has released the proposed calendar to clubs and industry bodies as part of a consultation process prior to finalisation.

I think there may have been a working group today. Importantly, the calendar remains a draft document and stakeholder feedback will play a critical role in informing the final version. And as I said, Tasracing is also currently undertaking a review of broader industry planning and sustainability initiatives, and the work is being progressed with the objectives of ensuring the long-term strength, viability and support of the Tasmanian racing industry. I'd also note that race dates for King Island are still being finalised as well and have therefore not been included within the draft calendar at this time.

Mr EDMUNDS - Is the draft calendar, minister, something you'd consider tabling for the committee today?

Ms HOWLETT - I have not seen the draft calendar yet.

Mr EDMUNDS - I have a copy of it right here.

Ms HOWLETT - Good.

Mr EDMUNDS - In this draft consultation it maintains greyhound racing at current levels and reduces the number of harness and thoroughbred meetings. Is that really the case, that the government's trying to phase out the one code that isn't going to be maintained at similar levels?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, this is Tasracing consulting with industry participants, and participants and Tasracing, well, that's whatever - I have not seen the draft plan, and it is a draft plan, and that will be up to industry participants to work with Tasracing and come to an agreement. What that agreement is, it's up to industry participants.

Mr EDMUNDS - Given previous comments by both yourself and the Premier about social licence with greyhound racing, would you as minister consider it appropriate, if we go into next year, that the only code that doesn't see a reduction in races is the code that you say has no social licence?

Ms HOWLETT - Thanks, Mr Edmunds. I'm not going to reach into that space. The transition and working group is a matter for the commissioner to work through with that working group, and it's also an operational decision for Tasracing.

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Mr EDMUNDS - Will you provide any feedback to this consultation draft yourself?

Ms HOWLETT - It's not really my expertise.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Ms HOWLETT - That's a matter for Tasracing and industry participants to work through.

Mr EDMUNDS - I guess what I'm asking is that there's been so many statements made about the ethics of one code by government, who essentially runs the state. As minister, would you provide any feedback to say that perhaps if there's allegedly going to be a phase-out, that perhaps the code that the government is going to phase out would be the one?

I guess it's just a little perplexing to me seeing this draft, that greyhound racing is maintained and the two codes that are being reduced are the two that the government says it supports into the future. I'm interested in your comments on that, because those codes must be looking at that and wondering where their future is at, considering previous letters and statements made prior to the election last year.

Ms HOWLETT - I believe I've answered your question, and that is a matter for the working group. I'm not sure if you'd like to add to that, commissioner.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you, and through you, minister, and thank you for the question. What I can add to that - and might provide some clarity - is that the conversations that I've had with Tasracing have been that because of the uncertainty as to what was occurring within the greyhound industry at the moment, that decision has been made - in the conversations I've had - that the current scheduling should remain in place until it is known as to what the transition plan will contain.

I've been advised by Tasracing that there can be amendments to that calendar on short notice and that changes can be made within a period of the scheduling of three months to ensure that they meet the needs of the transition plan. That probably reflects the conversations that I've had with Tasracing at this stage, that there's been no change to the greyhound scheduling. They're waiting, and quite rightly so, for the transition plan to be developed.

You know, whilst I'm unaware of the exact details of the amendments to the other two codes' scheduling, I don't think that they're relevant to the social licence position of those two codes. They may be more in relation to the budgetary requirements of the operational costs.

Mr EDMUNDS - I'm aware I've monopolised this time, so, Chair, you might want to -

CHAIR - No.

Mr EDMUNDS - You can come back, though.

CHAIR - Okay. We'll come back to you. Mr Hiscutt.

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Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Just following up on one of the earlier questions from Mr Edmunds regarding the \$4.8 million, the question was, you know, how was that figure arrived at? At the time you sort of deferred, and the commissioner answered with some things that it might entail. In any conversation or discussions, did that entail what those figures were attached to, each of those items, or how was that number actually arrived at?

Ms HOWLETT - It was a budget submission, yes.

Mr HISCUTT - The commissioner produced what the compensation at this stage looked like? Are the working groups still coming up with that plan, but this was just a preliminary expectation of where that sat?

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister. Yes, there was a detailed budget submission that was applied to Treasury, and as I said, it covered off all those areas. The issue of compensation wasn't a definitive figure because, as I said earlier, we're not aware of the guardrails that we have as to what the compensation model would look like and what that will cover off. But there are some key areas there that I said that we would look at, and a budget application was made for those areas.

Mr HISCUTT - This was announced well before the Budget came out. Can I just confirm the timeline there, that it was after the budget submission that the announcement was made?

Mr CARROLL - Sorry?

Mr HISCUTT - Just that the budget submission - because this was announced quite before the Budget - was the budget submission made -

Mr CARROLL - I think we made a budget submission around this year.

Mr HISCUTT - And the announcement was made after that?

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Just confirming the timelines. Thank you. Just a question to the minister. With, you know, the announcement yesterday regarding the compensation claims, I would've supposed that the joint standing committee, you know, was set up to try to establish a lot of these things. Is this presupposing a committee of parliament as to where this should go by making that announcement before they've come to any sort of conclusion?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank you for the question, and look, the scheme can operate in parallel with the work of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. That's an interim step, and we'll work through this, and if any participants wish to take up the offer, well, then they will, I guess, have conversations with the racing commissioner.

Mr HISCUTT - I guess my point would be, what happens if the joint standing committee comes up with recommendations that are completely different to what's been announced by the government?

Ms HOWLETT - Commissioner?

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Ms WEBB - An oversight committee, for a start.

Mr CARROLL - What I would say to that - and through you, minister - is that, as you'd be aware, there is a process for the transition plan to be approved, and that will go to the minister's office and then also to the joint standing committee, and appropriately so, you know. And I will be asked a range of questions -

Mr HISCUTT - No doubt.

Mr CARROLL - as to what is contained in the transition plan along with the compensation model. In relation to the letter that I received today, my understanding is that it is a consultation program with participants who may wish to seek early voluntary exit.

Certainly what I would say - and not that I've had the discussions with the minister - is that having attended at various greyhound meetings over the past few weeks, you know, certainly there have been those discussions as to, you know, what that may or may not look like moving forward if greyhound participants want to leave the industry earlier.

Mr HISCUTT - If a greyhound participant, you know, came in tomorrow and gave you a call and said, 'Yes, I'm happy to leave the industry early', what advice would we be giving them to how much they would receive? Is it per dog, is it per their equipment they've purchased? Do we have an understanding, or when will that be developed by?

Mr CARROLL - We're working through that at the moment.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr CARROLL - As I said, I think that I mentioned before this particular group that we would have a very early draft by June 30 this year, which would potentially contain a compensation model. We're still working towards that date, albeit that the transition plan at this stage will be focused - I think as I said last time before this chamber that it would be focused on what is contained in the bill.

Leading back to the question before as to the reduction in greyhound racing, that can't be confirmed or otherwise until we actually know what's contained in the bill and when that passes, and that's the same with the compensation model.

Mr HISCUTT - Compensation currently isn't in the bill before the upper House at the moment. I know there's amendments to it.

Mr CARROLL - Correct. There are amendments, yes.

Mr HISCUTT - But I'm just saying, if we're talking about that's before us, it's not even mentioned in the current bill.

Mr CARROLL - I take it very serious, the fact that the proposed voluntary exit scheme, if you like, that is being put forward by the government is a period of consultation. If someone was to walk in the door and say that they wanted to leave the industry today, 'How much am I going to get?', I'm not in a position to say that at the moment.

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Mr HISCUTT - This is an announcement that it will happen.

Mr CARROLL - This will be through a period of consultation and discussions that will be held, and certainly, I'm not the arbitrator as to how much is going to be - as far as a compensation package is concerned, there are a whole raft of approvals that I would have to go through before it was deemed suitable that any compensation payment would be made.

Mr HISCUTT - The concern is you've got the joint standing committee; you've got your working group; you've got the minister making announcements; and for lack of a better pun, we don't want to go before the horse has bolted on these things. It's just a concern for me, and I'm just raising that.

Ms WEBB - I've got some follow-up.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you. I have a follow-up. Just looking, minister, at the announcement, it does say 'immediate'. Now, the word 'immediate' to me means now, 'immediate support scheme to assist greyhound racing', yet Mr Carroll mentioned that it's still all working out and still looking at figures. Would you consider that perhaps the wording's not quite correct, because it does say 'immediate support scheme to assist greyhound racing' and 'looking at it in the next few weeks'?

If I was a participant, I would be confused because I'm confused. I look at this, and I hear that we have no idea how much anyone will be getting yet, yet we say that if you want to leave the industry now, there'd be immediate support. 'Immediate support' would mean to me that I would get an understanding within the next few weeks of how much I'm going to get, because otherwise how do I know if I want to leave the industry if I have absolutely no idea of how much I'm going to receive for my dog, how much I'm going to receive for anything that I've got?

Can you explain to me the difference? Obviously, I understand what Mr Carroll's looking at in the long term - meetings, going through, working out compensation - but it doesn't gel with the 'immediate support'. Can you just explain how they fit together, because to me, I'm totally confused, and I assume participants would be also.

Ms HOWLETT - It's immediate in relation to the bill and the figure that was proposed, but that will need to be participant-led and worked through with the commissioner.

CHAIR - Sorry, I don't quite understand what you mean. Can you explain 'immediate' with respect to the bill? We don't know when the bill's coming up, but it's not up to us to put the bill up. The government haven't sent it back to us.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, and the compensation scheme or the early exit transitional scheme would be developed over the coming weeks, as the commissioner has stated, and he will engage with industry -

CHAIR - The commissioner was talking about later in the year. My understanding is working out figures, so an explanation, if I could.

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister, if I can assist.

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CHAIR - Absolutely.

Mr CARROLL - What's been said so far is that there's no definitive amount that is going to be paid to any particular person. However, this is an opportunity, as I understand, that participants may wish to come forward and say that they wish to exit the greyhound industry and give them an opportunity.

CHAIR - And I'm just trying to get a clear understanding.

Mr CARROLL - For example, someone may say, 'I wish to relocate to another jurisdiction to race my greyhounds in an area'. We would then go away and look at what that potentially may cost, and we'd have to do costings associated with that. At this stage, and quite rightly so, there isn't a figure x in relation to what that looks like, but it is immediate compared to what the overall compensation model may look through the transition plan.

I would have thought that having a period of consultation which provides participants almost a six-month window, or seven months if you take it up to the end of the year, to come forward and seek what an immediate compensation package looks like is certainly 'immediate' compared to what the overall compensation package may look like leading to June 30.

There's certainly parameters, and what I should say is that regardless of what a compensation model may look like in the final transition plan, I need to make this very clear that there'll be certain parameters regardless of what the actual model then looks like as to what the final package will be, but the end result will make sure that there will be adequate animal welfare and rehoming of those greyhounds if the person chooses to leave the industry altogether, and that no compensation will be paid until all those animals are actually adequately cared for.

CHAIR - How would you determine the price of the greyhound? Because one participant has told me recently that they sold a greyhound last year for six figures. I'm just wondering how you determine the amount. You've got \$4.8 million. How do you work out what you compensate someone for? I assume it's very difficult and they'd all be very different.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, absolutely. It could well be, honourable member, if someone's bought a breeding bitch or if they've -

CHAIR - Or they have the straws.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, that's right, or if they've upgraded their infrastructure, facilities, their van, it could incorporate various elements.

Ms WEBB - The model's going to deal with them all in -

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr CARROLL - Yes. Through you, minister, and thank you again for raising the question. We're looking at a compensation model that will mitigate the financial impact on participants to start with. It'll support participants' transition to alternative employment. It will

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support the mental health and wellbeing of participants and, as I said, ensure the humane rehoming of greyhounds.

Whilst we haven't worked the parameters of that, the model will deliver a balanced physical, responsible approach that prioritises high dependency, and that has been the focus right from the start. For those who depend more on their income from the greyhound industry, the compensation model will focus on that key area and their wellbeing, but more importantly ensure strong animal welfare outcomes before any compensation is paid out as far as that's concerned.

CHAIR - A little confusing, isn't it?

Mr CARROLL - We will consider compensation models, once again, that have been put in place in other jurisdictions to see the effectiveness of that, but first and foremost -

CHAIR - Hobbyists will be included, because my understanding is the person who told me they sold the dog for six figures would be considered a hobbyist because it's not their main occupation.

Mr CARROLL - All participants will be considered for compensation.

CHAIR - Evenly?

Mr CARROLL - What I can say is that there will be a panel that will be set up to assess all compensation claims, and they will assess, essentially, the level of where that person fits within the compensation scheme and then determine what the outcome is.

CHAIR - Regardless of whether they're a hobbyist or whether it's their main occupation?

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

CHAIR - Just one question before I go to Ms Webb: do you, minister, have any idea when the bill will be coming back before the upper House? Because I'm continuing to hear it depends on whether it's passed or not, and it's out of our hands whether it's passed or not because it hasn't come back to us. Do you have any idea when it might be coming back before the upper House?

Ms HOWLETT - I can't see the bill being back in the upper House until the government is assured that it has the numbers.

CHAIR - Can you actually advise me how the government will determine that? Ringing members and meeting with members?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, honourable member and Chair, we won't progress the bill until we know that it will pass.

CHAIR - The bill may never come back because I'm not prepared to say whether I'm voting for or against it at this stage.

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Ms HOWLETT - We will continue to work with members of the upper House to address their concerns.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Webb, and then Mr -

Mr HISCUTT - After, yes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Just a couple of follow-up questions from some of the earlier questioning. Certainly, in respect to the announcement made for the opportunity for people to come forward for consideration for compensation and exiting the industry now and the use of the word 'immediate', would it be fair to say that the use of the word 'immediate' is a relative term, compared to either when a transition plan might be finalised and completed, which could be much later this year or even later, and compared to 2029, which is clearly a long time away?

In the sense of offering 'immediate' access to discussions about compensation and exiting, that's to show that there's an opportunity there potentially to reduce uncertainty for participants in the immediate sense of the near future, rather than at some distant date that might cause consternation and stress.

Ms HOWLETT - I think you're absolutely right, honourable member.

Ms WEBB - It's a fair way to characterise the use of the word 'immediate' comparative to a potential transition plan date or an end date to the phase-out.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. And then, the other thing I wanted to check in about - because the committee has been mentioned and somehow introduced as a wildcard here that could disrupt things - that given the committee produced a report when it examined the bill, which explicitly supported passage of the bill and provided a series of amendments to that bill which didn't change any of the fundamental characteristics of the bill but added some more detail, some more certainty, some more specificity around some things, would it be fair to say that you're not expecting necessarily the work of the committee to be at odds with this potential early compensation opportunity? We can't pre-empt the work of the committee, but on all indications to date, has anything the committee's produced been at odds with this early opportunity for people, participants, to access the compensation on exiting of the industry?

Ms HOWLETT - No, I don't believe so.

Ms WEBB - And I'd be interested whether there's any view on that from the commissioner, in terms of the recommendations from the committee on the bill that were made, with amendments adding in further detail and specificity, whether he would see that as being at odds with this opportunity that the government's now offering people.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, commissioner.

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister, and thank you for the question. It shouldn't be for me to speak on behalf of the committee and where they're at, but to date, what I have observed is that, as you quite rightly said, the committee, in their initial response, was

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supportive of the bill, albeit with some amendments, and the conversations that I've had in various committees and presentations to this date, nothing has changed that.

What I would say, and as I said earlier, is that I'm aware of the concern that the uncertainty brings to the participant base, and that has certainly been the focus of my office and Tasracing over the past few weeks in relation to participant welfare, and there are a range of measures that we've put in place to do that.

If indeed this particular voluntary exit scheme relieves some of that stress or pressure for those participants, then that's a good thing. Now, once again, it is a voluntary scheme, so no-one is forcing anyone to come and actually submit themselves to part of the scheme. But, more importantly, as I said before, if that assists in the welfare of the participants, then I see that only as a good thing.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I've probably got some more, but if you want to keep moving around.

CHAIR - No. Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - Did Luke have -

CHAIR - Yes, yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, I've got a couple. Following up from the conversation about the potential votes of the Legislative Council, but given the Premier said that he intends to defund greyhound racing regardless of a decision of parliament, have you sought legal advice regarding if this can be done?

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the honourable member for his question, and I'll just seek some clarification.

Mr EDMUNDS - And perhaps while you're seeking that, I can ask a second question. Has the department sought any legal advice about what that means - as in, if the legislation wasn't supported or didn't go through - about what that means in terms of the requirement to meet and fund the existing responsibilities for greyhound racing under the law?

Ms HOWLETT - It's not for me to comment on whether legal advice has been sought or not, honourable member.

Mr EDMUNDS - So, if I was to ask you, have you sought legal advice from the Solicitor-General on these or any other matters to do with this bill, what would your answer be?

Ms HOWLETT - It's not appropriate for me to comment.

Mr EDMUNDS - So, you wouldn't be able to - you won't confirm or deny whether the government has sought legal advice on its legislation?

Ms HOWLETT - I can't comment on the legal advice that was given.

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Mr EDMUNDS - Is it pretty par for the course when there's complex legislation that you would seek legal advice? Because certainly that is what will help inform members' decisions, I would have thought, to your earlier point.

Ms HOWLETT - As I said again, it's not appropriate for me to comment on whether legal advice is sought or not.

CHAIR - Any further questions? Or we might go to Mr -

Mr EDMUNDS - What about the answer to my question?

Mr HISCUTT - If you want to follow up, go for it.

CHAIR - That was your question?

Mr HISCUTT - I have a question similar in nature.

CHAIR - Do you have more questions of that, Mr Edmunds?

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, I can move on to another topic, but if there's any follow-up on the legal stuff I'd be very happy to let other members.

CHAIR - Any more questions of the greyhounds? Ms Webb, did you have a question? Or Mr Hiscutt or -

Mr HISCUTT - No, I think Luke's got more questions on greyhounds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, yes, yes, just on that specific topic. I'm just conscious of the -

CHAIR - No, that's fine if you'd like to continue.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Has the government sought advice from Tasracing about what the implications are for Tasracing if they persist with defunding greyhound racing?

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member. The commissioner has been doing a body of work around that and I'll hand over to the commissioner to speak more on that.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you, and through you, minister, and thank you for the question. I think it has been well documented that Tasracing is represented on the working group and has two members on the working group. They also have their own internal working group.

Tasracing are well aware that the working group is developing a transition plan to phase out greyhound racing. As has been spoken about ad nauseam at the moment, we are unaware as to if and when the bill will be passed and what that transition will look like. I think it would be inappropriate to actually have in concrete those discussions as to the impact of that until we are certain as to what the impact of transition will look like to Tasracing. But, certainly, I've had those discussions with Tasracing as to what they potentially will look like.

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Mr EDMUNDS - Well, given the broad reach of services that Tasracing provides - or in providing to all three codes - has that been considered when estimating what funding Tasracing would require going forward, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, work has started on a new racing industry funding deed to ensure the financial sustainability of the racing industry and it's especially important to provide certainty to the industry following the government's announcement. And a project to assess options for the next deed has commenced, being conducted by a working group overseen by the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

And, importantly, this is not a review into whether there will be a funding deed. It's a review of what the funding model looks like beyond 2029 for the thoroughbred and harness codes. And I think the deputy secretary might like to add some more to that.

Ms WILSON - In terms of the funding deed, there's a working group that has been established with Treasury and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. We're continuing to work through the analysis of that information with a view to providing reports to the government, and we're aiming for that information to be provided for government no later than 31 August 2026.

Mr EDMUNDS - Okay. So, has Tasracing received any legal advice regarding these matters or is it just the advice that's been provided by the department?

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. I don't think we can speak for Tasracing.

Ms HOWLETT - No.

Mr EDMUNDS - But you've just talked about what you've provided to them. Have you sought legal advice that you've provided to Tasracing through that process?

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. I can't speak for Tasracing.

Mr EDMUNDS - But at the last question you talked about the information that you were providing to Tasracing through the working group - unless I misheard. It was very difficult to hear, I have to say.

Ms WILSON - Yes.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. I was talking in general terms around our working group and the establishment of the working group and that we're working with Treasury. I wasn't making any specific comments around advice that Tasracing may or may not have sought. We will be consulting with Tasracing in terms of the work we're doing, in terms of that review of the deed, but I cannot comment on advice that they may or not seek themselves.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you.

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Mr GAFFNEY - Just a question, then. Just an observation. If in 2028 the Liberal Party don't get re-elected and the Labor Party get in, and the Labor Party's stance is, obviously, they support the three codes of racing, then they would have to come up with a deed for 2029 that would allow all three codes of racing.

CHAIR - The term is 2029.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. The full term is 2029, so I think that the year 2028 is still included in this funding - current funding deed. The deed stands as it is until 2029.

Mr GAFFNEY - Let's go that the election's in March 2029 and the Liberal Party lose and the Labor Party get in, then it's within their right to say, 'Game on, three codes.' It becomes an election issue.

Ms HOWLETT - I'm not going to comment on what the Labor Party policy may be at that time. Sorry, Mr Gaffney.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you.

Ms HOWLETT - It is so important for the industry, and particularly the breeding industry in both equine codes, that there is a funding deed sorted well before then.

Mr GAFFNEY - If it was so important, the Premier would have announced this before the last election instead of after it. If it was so important, there wouldn't have been a letter going to the greyhound industry saying that we support you past the election. And so, that's a concern that I have.

It's all very well to come out and say - and we know what the situation was. The Premier was in a situation where he didn't have the numbers. The Premier has made an arrangement with certain members in the lower House, and that's why we're in this position we're in today. If it had gone to as an election issue, this wouldn't be a problem.

Ms HOWLETT - With all respect, honourable member, we've been working with Treasury on the funding deed for quite some time. And the funding deed, it's very important that that is announced as soon as possible to give assurance. If you're breeding a thoroughbred or if you're breeding a standard bred -

Mr GAFFNEY - A question there. You've said you've been working on the deed for quite some time. So, were you working on the deed before the Premier sent the letter to the greyhound community saying that he was very supportive of the greyhound community?

Ms HOWLETT - Deirdre, do you have the dates where NRE and Treasury began working on the deed? I don't have those. I'm not part of that.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. The shareholding ministers wrote to Tasracing in March 2025 to advise that they approved that Treasury will engage with NRE - us - to identify options to progress a review of the future funding model for the Tasmanian racing industry, including the funding deeds. So, that commenced a process of review of the funding

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deed. That included proposed terms of reference and that advice would be provided to Tasracing on the next steps.

That process was commenced. It was commenced with respect to the deed because of the fact that the deed expires and that there was a requirement to provide certainty to industry, and that's what the shareholder ministers asked of Treasury and NRE, to do work to provide advice to government on the deed.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Through you, minister. Does that mean that they were asked to provide a deed that would take out a third of the racing component of the greyhound industry?

Ms HOWLETT - [inaudible] the deputy secretary had given you.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Hiscutt?

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Do you, minister, agree with the statement that the consultation with the industry up until the bill was announced was insufficient?

Ms HOWLETT - Can you repeat the question?

Mr HISCUTT - Sorry. Do you agree with the statement that the consultation with the industry leading up to the bill and its announcement was insufficient?

Ms HOWLETT - There's no doubt it was certainly very difficult. Consultations have been incredibly difficult and the commissioner's done a lot of that consultation. It's been an incredibly difficult time.

Mr HISCUTT - Since the bill was announced, but I'm saying leading up to. Do you agree that it was insufficient leading up to the bill being announced?

Ms HOWLETT - Things can always be done - consultation can always be done better in hindsight. Would you like to add any more, commissioner?

Mr CARROLL - What I would say is that what I've seen in other jurisdictions in other countries, we've had legislation that's been passed on the day in which the announcement of the phase-out of greyhounds has been made by certain governments around the world. This is - and I've been on record to say - a difficult situation in that you're passing legislation that is putting a prohibition and a restriction that is against the wishes of the group that you're putting that restriction in.

And as we've seen, the minister's correct in that the level of engagement as far as consultation is concerned, even with the transition plan, has been quite difficult because of the position that the greyhound industry takes. Whilst I can't sit here and say for certain as to what that consultation would have looked like, given the reaction that, certainly, you've had as far as the consultation in relation to the transition plan, I'm not sure we would have got anything different had there been a period of consultation leading to the development of the bill given the fact that where the bill sits and where the industry sits are at polar opposites.

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I certainly acknowledge what you say, but as I said before, I don't take a stance on the policy position of the government as far as it's concerned. What I found in other jurisdictions is that that bill has, in some circumstances, been announced because of the animal welfare concerns that have been put in place.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Thank you for the answer.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - A question I have.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - I hope the people listening understand what position we were put in. We started the second reading speeches and four members, honourable members Vincent, Rattray, Hiscutt and Forrest, presented their second reading speeches. We stopped at a quarter past eleven that night. We actually started parliament earlier the next day at 10 o'clock because we knew we were going to have a long day. And I think the honourable member -

Mr HISCUTT - I adjourned the date.

Mr GAFFNEY - Adjourned the date, so we had to call. We didn't find out until we got to the Chamber the next day that the government had withdrawn, from the orders of the day, the debate on the greyhounds.

And so, we found out through a media outlet that that had occurred. The Premier said that there were some questions raised by members that needed to be addressed by the committee. The committee, and rightly so, have come back and said, 'Government, we're not answering those' - and I'm not trying to verbal. But they said, 'These are the tasks we're going to do. You answer the questions.'

If the leader or if the government had allowed all members the opportunity to stand up and speak and put their questions on the table, then all of the questions would be out there. What we've done at the moment is the Premier's gone and said, 'No. We'll answer the questions.' He doesn't know all of the questions and the concerns because he hasn't listened to all the second reading speeches.

Now we're stuck in a situation where we're getting emails from lots of people on both sides, directing us or asking us or imploring us, and I understand that. And we are in limbo because we don't know what the government is going to do.

And we still don't know, other than now the government have chosen the pathway to say to the people in the industry, 'Well, if you want out because we have \$4.8 million, which is a limited amount, then let us know and we'll work on some compensation.' So, that's putting that industry in an even more delicate situation because they are trying to encourage people, 'Look, you'd better get in first if you want any compensation,' because we don't know what the model is.

Mr HISCUTT - Especially in a December finish.

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Mr GAFFNEY - And whilst I appreciate, minister, a lot of that's to do with Tasracing, I just want people to understand how we feel about this at the moment, that we didn't get our chance to have our second reading speech and we weren't informed.

That was very disrespectful of us as a group, and so the angst you're hearing in my voice is because that's the pressure we're under, and so therefore when we're asking these questions to the people here, it's because we're frustrated that we haven't been given an honest line of thought or direction from the Premier, because the committee has chosen not to answer the questions that were put on the Floor of the House. I think the member for Murchison echoed those words in her second reading speech. I have no question, sorry.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member.

Mr EDMUNDS - I have a follow-up on that too, yes.

Ms HOWLETT - I acknowledge how you feel and I thank you for your input. Thank you.

CHAIR - But also, I think one thing worth adding is those who have spoken will now not have an opportunity to actually speak again for any changes that occur, because they've already spoken, and I know that's of concern as well.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

CHAIR - Ms Webb, you have questions?

Ms WEBB - No. I was just going to follow up on that comment, actually. It's a delicate matter and, I think, to be clear, there are mixed feelings in the upper House about it for sure, so I completely respect the member for Mersey expressing what he just expressed.

But there are mixed feelings, and for clarity, too, particularly for those watching - and minister, you can confirm potentially what I'm saying, in terms of a question - the reality is, if the government felt that it didn't have the numbers to pass the bill at that stage and the bill had been voted down, that bill could not be brought back to our Chamber during this term of government.

The chance to have an orderly phase-out of this industry to give effect to the policy in the most careful way for participants and for animals is via this bill, and if it got voted down, that opportunity would be lost forever to us, and the policy would have to be given effect to through other means which would be less orderly and at greater detriment to animals and people, is my understanding of that.

CHAIR - And the question is?

Ms WEBB - Sorry, sorry.

Mr GAFFNEY - No, no.

CHAIR - That's fine. That's fine.

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Mr GAFFNEY - I spoke a long time, though.

CHAIR - Okay. I'm just saying that you could say, 'Is that correct?' to the minister, yes.

Ms WEBB - I have put it to her that she might like to clarify or confirm what I'm saying, but I think I can add a couple more things, if that's all right.

CHAIR - Yes, that's fine.

Ms WEBB - For clarity, regardless of what came before it, this bill lays out - and as a member of the committee, I would make the assertion that with the amendments suggested by the committee, it provides for greater certainty and clarity around the mechanisms for the phase-out and provides for there to be that transition, which can happen through other means that aren't related to this bill, but they will not be governed in an orderly way by the provisions of the bill and therefore put at risk animals and people in the transition.

Presumably the government, if it wishes to engage with upper House members - and perhaps you can comment on this, minister - as the member for Mersey said, not all members have spoken on the bill, and so the government hasn't necessarily heard all the questions or issues that might normally be put during second reading speeches that the government could respond to.

The government, if it wants to bring the bill back at some stage, would presumably be reaching out to members to say, 'What are the questions you need to have answered? What's the best way for us to provide you with answers ahead of bringing this bill back?' And we could get to that end point at some point when the government feels that it has the support for the bill.

That might never be the point, and perhaps you could comment or the commissioner could comment on what happens if the bill never gets passed, because presumably we still proceed; the committee still proceeds with its work, the commissioner still proceeds with his work; government policy still stands. It might be useful to have that comment made.

But just because members haven't made second reading speeches and raised all their questions or concerns doesn't mean they can't bring those out, or the government can't seek them out. Given the Tasmanian community's out there waiting for this to proceed one way or the other, perhaps people could get past being frustrated about it and at loggerheads, and think about how we can actually engage productively around addressing concerns, issues, questions, and do it in a way that's dispassionate and not going to be causing more stress and angst to people out there.

Ms HOWLETT - I thank you very much for your comments, honourable member. We are very happy to continue to work with members of the upper House to address any concerns that you may have.

CHAIR - Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - That was essentially the same question I was going to ask, and probably put better. Has there been outreach to members who haven't spoken about what their

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questions might be, and sort of part (b) to that question, what is your understanding of the questions already put on the record by the four members who've spoken?

Ms HOWLETT - I am unsure if the commissioner has spoken to any members of -

Mr EDMUNDS - By the government, I'm more interested in.

Ms HOWLETT - the Legislative Council of late.

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister, and -

Mr EDMUNDS - Sorry, I don't mean to be rude, but I was more interested in the government. Because, with respect, it wasn't the commissioner who took it off the Notice Paper; it was the government, so I'm interested in the government's outreach to those members -

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, I -

Mr EDMUNDS - and the government's understanding of the questions already put on the record.

Ms HOWLETT - I'm very happy to continue to work with members of the upper House and here and address their concerns.

Mr EDMUNDS - So, it has been occurring. I guess the word 'continue' implies that it has been occurring, yes.

Ms HOWLETT - The Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition on 25 May resolved to pursue the following work plan over the coming months in line with the terms of reference of the group: an examination of other jurisdictions, including any parliamentary or statutory inquiries; decisions to phase out the industry; transition frameworks implemented; animal welfare issue support for participants; compensation arrangements; timelines followed; and social and economic impacts; financial, economic and animal welfare impacts of the proposed phase-out of greyhound racing in Tasmania; and also the future of the Tasmanian racing deed. The government will engage with the committee in providing clarity on these important matters.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, but further to that, it also said, 'The committee is of the belief that it is not for the committee to answer the questions raised by the Legislative Council members in the debate. Answers to these questions are for the government to provide.' Whilst I understand the terms of reference at what the committee are looking at, and that's fine, that was their response to the Premier saying that 'We're not going to find the answers to the questions that may or may not have been asked on the Floor of the House'.

Ms WEBB - May I just speak on that? I'm a member of the committee; I'm not a spokesperson for the committee, so I can't speak on behalf of the committee. But what I would point to is that while it's not the committee's job to answer questions on behalf of the government -

Ms HOWLETT - No.

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Ms WEBB - the committee has clearly framed a framework, a work plan for its next piece of work as a committee, and if anyone were to look to that work plan, I think you would see fairly clearly that it covers many matters that have come up in the debate in the Chamber, in correspondence that we're seeing from the community, in general community conversation around this.

The committee has mapped out a work plan that hopefully, when it reports on it, will be very informative to everybody in the space, whether that's the parliamentarians, whether it's the community, whether it's the participants, whoever it might be. That work plan is fairly clearly framed up in that way. It's not our job to answer questions on behalf of the government; it's its job to do its term of reference. But you only have to put two and two together to see what that work plan is endeavouring to do in terms of the provision of information into the space.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Just to follow up on that first, I mean, the official response does say, though, that it's not the committee's job to answer those questions, and, I mean [inaudible] -

Ms WEBB - To answer questions on behalf of the government.

Mr HISCUTT - Exactly, yes, yes. I also would like to refer to Mr Edmunds's question of, have members of the upper House been consulted regarding that question? I can say I haven't. Have any members been consulted in relation to their questions in relation to this bill?

Ms HOWLETT - My office will absolutely work with any member of the upper House that has any concerns.

Mr HISCUTT - Presumably the answer is no, that you haven't actively consulted with -

Ms HOWLETT - We certainly -

Ms WEBB - Minister, would you like to make a commitment to reach out to members of the upper House to invite them to come to you with questions and concerns?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, absolutely, absolutely, yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. I have a second question.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - I just wanted to know would the -

CHAIR - Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you, Chair. Understanding that prohibition is, you know, the extreme end of legislation that can be made, would you think, in an ideal world that this would have been better done after a mandate had been received at an election?

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Ms HOWLETT - I'm not answering that question, honourable member. That's not up to me to say.

Mr HISCUTT - That's all. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - I've just got a quick one about the working group. Are you on the working group, minister?

Ms HOWLETT - No.

Mr EDMUNDS - No. Did you think that you maybe, could or should be?

Ms HOWLETT - No. I believe I shouldn't be part of that working group.

Ms WEBB - Sorry, just to clarify, did you mean the working group that's working on the deed in the department, or the working group that the commissioner has about the transition?

Mr EDMUNDS - The latter.

Ms WEBB - The transition one.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Ms HOWLETT - No.

Mr EDMUNDS - I'm interested in your engagement with the greyhound participants since the announcement. What has that looked like?

Ms HOWLETT - I think you actually know the answer to the question that you're asking, Mr Edmunds, and with all respect, you know it has been extremely difficult for me, and you are well aware of the threats and the abuse that I've had. No, I have not been to the races. I have certainly -

Mr EDMUNDS - Sorry, just to be clear, my question was not about whether or not you'd attended meetings; it was about engagement, which can happen in a meeting room or a -

Ms HOWLETT - Yes, I've had engagement with industry. Yes.

CHAIR - Do you have any further questions, Mr Edmunds or Ms Webb?

Mr EDMUNDS - I've got one about the deed, if we want to circle back to that. Are you working on two deeds, one with into greyhound racing and one without?

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, NRE and Treasury are currently working on the deed, and work commenced on - did you say 25 March? I'll ask the deputy secretary to speak to that.

Ms WILSON - Minister, we've been tasked with an assessment of the future funding model for Tas Racing beyond the current funding deed, and as we've said, it's been led by the

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Department of Treasury and Finance with input from NRE Tas, and we're on the steering committee. The terms of reference make it clear that we'll put up options for assessment to identify and evaluate funding options; provide economic analysis undertaken by Treasury, including the economic benefits of the government's funding to Tas Racing; the funding model and benchmarking.

What it will do is it will take into account the government's policy position regarding the phaseout of greyhound racing, noting that that is the policy position of government, but the advice would then go to government, and the government will consider that report.

Mr EDMUNDS - As part of that, have you received advice if the phaseout can be done without a bill as part of that work?

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. We're doing an analysis of the funding options in relation to the deed, and that's what we're doing.

Mr EDMUNDS - So that's one of the things that you've considered: that option that if the phaseout's done by the government without a bill? You've looked at that?

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. I believe that we're operating under the fact that there is a bill before the parliament and that that bill provides an indication of the framework that would apply. We're operating under that.

Mr EDMUNDS - But we have had a premier say that if he doesn't get the bill, he'll find a way to do it anyway. I was just interested if you'd had advice on that.

Ms HOWLETT - I think the deputy secretary's answered your question about work has been undertaken on the funding deed, which is incredibly important.

CHAIR - I noticed yesterday, minister, that the treasurer confirmed in the other committee that the government will continue to collect point-of-consumption tax from Tasmanians betting on greyhound racing if there's no longer greyhound racing in Tasmania. Would you be of the opinion that any moneys collected should actually go towards compensation for greyhound participants in this state?

Ms HOWLETT - The point-of-consumption tax is not something that I can comment -

CHAIR - If it's raised on greyhound racing interstate after it's phased out in this state, I was just wondering if you would be prepared to give an opinion.

Ms HOWLETT - Well, the committee could certainly consider that, but point-of-consumption tax is a matter for treasury.

CHAIR - It is, but it's just interesting that they would continue to collect it on Tasmanians betting on greyhound racing interstate. I notice in New Zealand, my understanding is that money was going towards compensation, from memory.

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister. At this stage, there's no compensation package in New Zealand.

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CHAIR - They've put a certain amount of money up, though, haven't they, from memory?

Mr CARROLL - My understanding is there's a buyback of all greyhounds, essentially.

CHAIR - Buyback. Right. Thank you for the information. Do we have any further questions? Yes, Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. There's been a considerable amount of media and conversations around the welfare for the animals in this space. I'd just like to hear your views on the human welfare - I'm sure you've heard many of those stories - and what you think can be done or what can be done further for people who are suffering considerably due to the nature of how this has come about.

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the honourable member for his question. Participant welfare has always been paramount in my mind, and again, I reiterate my personal support and that of the government for participants throughout this transition. I acknowledge the social and emotional impact it's had on many members of the greyhound racing community.

Upon the delay of legislation, I had a meeting with the commissioner - I think it was last week - and reiterated my concern about the participants and then had a meeting with Tasracing, and I requested this at our regular monthly meeting with Tasracing on 14 May that we were to implement counsellors at race meetings, and I'm advised that Tasracing and the commissioner have organised for counsellors at all greyhound meetings for the next 4 weeks, and these sessions commenced on 26 May. I actually thought that they were commencing a little bit earlier, but there were a few issues that arose into getting a provider to do so.

Private counselling rooms are available now at the track and also a pamphlet provided to all participants on arrival, advising them of the services. Also, I wanted to make sure that the EAP phone number was sent direct as a text message as well regularly, and the counselling sessions be present as well. I'll hand you over to the commissioner to provide some more information.

Mr CARROLL - Thank you, minister, and through you, minister. Thank you for that question. As I said from the very first day when this was announced, participant and animal welfare was going to be priority of my office, and I want to state that I acknowledge and I understand that the government's decision to phase out greyhound racing creates an extremely difficult period for Tasmanian greyhound racing and its participants.

My office has already commenced the process of identifying and sourcing well-resourced support services for participants over the coming period in addition to Tas Racing's EAP service provider. In January this year, given some of the issues that were raised, we made a commitment through my office that we would extend the amount of free counselling sessions through EAP from 2 to 6 for each racing participant.

As I said before the upper house members, we were well down the path through procuring face-to-face services both in the north and south. That's still continuing and even receiving feedback as of yesterday as other preferred providers that we could source that members of the greyhound community would feel welcome for, and we're exploring those avenues as we speak as far as that's concerned.

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As far as the minister is concerned, she's correct in what she has said, that in responding to some concerns that were raised by participants within the industry in discussions that the minister held with my office and Tasracing, that immediate on-track counsellors were provided for a four-week period, both at Mowbray and Hobart. Minister's correct in that she was insistent they start at a certain date.

We couldn't get counsellors in that week because, obviously, the short notice, and so they commenced on the 26th. So, counsellors are there providing confidential services to greyhound participants in a private room. Having been present when the pamphlets the minister refers to have been handed out, there has been some uptake of those counsellors, which is a good thing.

I'll continue to monitor the uptake of those services. I don't want to know the details because they're fully confidential, and we'll assess the uptake of that, of having those face to face. The reason that we've done that is, and certainly on provided feedback from Mr Gatehouse from Greyhounds, who's representing Greyhounds Tasmania, that he felt that there would be limited uptake of either EAP services on the phone or counsellors who were not at the racetrack and suggested to us that the counselling sessions should be at the racetrack.

So, we've taken on board that feedback and, as I said, we'll assess the uptake of that after a four-week period and determine whether that's an ongoing process or not. But I can assure you and everyone else within this committee that it's a priority of my office, and certainly the minister's made sure that that's a priority moving forward and it will be a priority of the transition plan.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Well, just in relation to that, that segues well because the proposed amendments to the bill include a level of compensation in them, but it does appear to be compensation to ensure that the animals are - their welfare is maintained. I'm going off memory; I don't have that in front of me. I know the bill was also non-exhaustive in that. However, it didn't explicitly state that compensation for anything other than maintaining animal welfare was stated in that bill.

Mr CARROLL - Yes, as I mentioned earlier, the compensation model that will look like - will essentially deliver support to businesses in transition for alternative employment. We're looking at options. I've spoken to various groups as to what opportunities are available for further education as far as participants are concerned.

Certainly, we'll support the mental health and wellbeing of participants moving forward, and we're well aware of the financial hardship that may cause. Part of the transition plan will be having a hardship fund, not just a compensation model, and so there can be application. Once again, we're working through what that will look like, where those participants who are in financial hardship because of reduction in greyhound racing that Mr Edmunds spoke about, they can make application for hardship.

Mr HISCUTT - So you're saying hardship is different to compensation, but you didn't mention in compensation things like kennels, potential future earnings, values of the dogs. Are they not included in the - are you admitting they're in -

Mr CARROLL - They're something that needs to be addressed and considered. There is a whole raft of issues that we need to take into consideration. Certainly, a lot of - or some of

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these people will be businesses, and whether they've made claims through taxation returns and so forth in the past in relation to that investment in the greyhound industry, we need to take into consideration. So, it's not just a case of saying there's going to be X amount of dollars for capital investment to kennels or trailers or so forth. We need to make sure that it's meeting the requirements of what's required by law.

Mr HISCUTT - But you won't rule out that they may be included. Do you say that's a fair statement?

Mr CARROLL - I'm not ruling anything out at this stage.

Mr HISCUTT - No. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Gaffney.

Mr GAFFNEY - Through you, minister. It sounds as though that, regardless of where the legislation's at, the working group's still working through their bit. Looking at the lease for - or the deed for 2029 is still continuing and the greyhound select committee is still undertaking the tasks they want to do.

And I just want to put it on the record out there that it's not just the financial hardship that I'm hearing most from, it's the emotional hardship. And that's the aspect, and I want people who are listening to this conversation to think, a lot of the people out there don't want - they don't need - well, they probably need, but they don't want the money.

They just want to continue with their lifestyle and what they've been doing for a long time. That's where I think that when the actual debate was stopped, it's put those people, both for and against the legislation - so I'm getting equally from both sides - it's put them in a period of more uncertainty and so hopefully, there'll be something that will happen which will decide this either for or against fairly quickly, I would think.

Ms HOWLETT - I thank you and I appreciate your comments.

CHAIR - If I could just have a question. I'm not sure how many more that we might have. I've been told by quite a few people actually, in the racing and greyhound codes, that there are people working in those codes who would really struggle to actually find employment somewhere else, and more often than not, not only do they have a job that they can actually do every day, but they get accommodation.

What's been told to me - and I'm just wondering about assistance and compensation when we talk about the participants, but the people like that, what I've been told from - and the ones that were actually told were from horse owners, but they said they see it in the whole three codes - that some of these people will not only be unemployed, they'll also be homeless.

So, if they've got accommodation where they're actually working, whether it be stables or whether it be greyhounds or whatever they're doing, some of them will struggle to find employment somewhere else. The accommodation is obviously because they're actually working, whether it be horses or whether it be greyhounds.

PUBLIC

So, are we looking at, apart from compensation and education and things that we're talking about, but what about those people who seemingly could fall through the cracks? To me, that is a concern as well. We can't forget the people who work in the industry who perhaps would struggle to find employment somewhere else. There are always going to be people like that. So, I'm just wondering, is there going to be some form of assistance for people in those circumstances?

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. I totally accept and am very heartfelt by your comments.

CHAIR - It's awful, the stories you hear.

Ms HOWLETT - Those people would be taken into consideration under our hardship grants.

Mr CARROLL - So through you, minister.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr CARROLL - And as I mentioned earlier that the compensation model that we looked at - and I think I went through four key criteria.

CHAIR - Yes, you did.

Mr CARROLL - One of them is support participants in transition to alternate employment.

CHAIR - That's participants. I'm just wondering about people who actually work for somewhere they might get paid cash, and they might get accommodation and some food, and they do some work around the place.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

CHAIR - I'm just thinking there are other people who maybe we haven't actually looked at, that their welfare is of concern to all of us.

Mr CARROLL - As was said earlier, there'll be a hardship fund that will be established and that will sit outside the compensation model for those people that find themselves in financial difficulty. And certainly, there'll be a framework around that as to who can apply and for what reasons. But we're well aware that there are people out there who will face difficult times ahead and we'll be addressing those.

CHAIR - No. Thank you. Thank you, minister. Do we have any final questions, Mr Hiscutt?

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you, Chair. With that hardship fund, is that - we're in a budget Estimates period - where is that outlined in the -

Mr CARROLL - So we're looking at, as I said earlier, when we become aware of what that will look like, there'll either be further budget application or we'll quarantine that through a reduction of race meetings.

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Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Good to know the second option there.

Mr GAFFNEY - Just a question there, because I found it really interesting. In your opinion, do you think that would need to be amended in the legislation so that that was front and centre there, or how would you see that working? Would it need to be in the legislation so that that gave some direction to the government, or is it - or regulations, I'm not sure.

And you may not have an answer to that, but that would be - from my point of view, that what you've just said made sense. I would want to know, from my point of view, what legislative responsibilities I would need to have amendment to make sure it's addressed in the bill or addressed in regulations or -

Mr CARROLL - Through you, minister. I can't speak to what proposed amendments are going to be made as far as the bill's concerned. And clearly, there are some proposed amendments that are going to be occurring.

What I would say is that the bill is quite clear, and very early on I was invited by the Premier and the minister to develop a transition plan that will address those particular areas. That has an approval process that will go through the minister and then through to the committee for final approval as far as that's concerned.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you.

Mr CARROLL - I think that's a fairly robust process that I have to go through.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you. Thank you, minister.

Ms WEBB - And if the committee's amendments do come to pass in parliament in that bill, it would also be tabled in parliament as well, so there's a lot of openness about that.

Ms HOWLETT - Yes. That's correct.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. And if we have no further questions, thank you very much, minister, and for your team all afternoon, the team that you've had with you today. It's been very enlightening and we really appreciate the time that you've all spent here and the answers you've given. Thank you. Can I also thank my team and the secretariat and Gaye on Hansard for all the work that they've undertaken. If we could stop the broadcast, please. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 6.00 p.m.