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THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING IN TASMANIA MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2015

Mr RICK CAMPBELL, CHAIR, ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WAS CALLED VIA TELEPHONE LINK, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED

CHAIR (Ms O'Connor) - Thank you for taking our call, Rick.

Mr CAMPBELL - Thank you for doing it this way because it saves me a seven-hour drive, which is good.

CHAIR - Absolute pleasure, very pleased to do that. Sorry about the muck-up last time but it has all come good.

Before we start, there are few things I need to say for formalities. Have you received and read the guide sent to you by the committee secretary?

Mr CAMPBELL - Yes to both.

CHAIR - I need to reiterate some important aspects of the document. A committee hearing is a proceeding of Parliament which means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege and that legal protection allows individuals like yourself giving evidence to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in court or place outside of Parliament. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory or repeated or referred to you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing but you will be pleased to know that we inadvertently did not let the media know, so there is no media here today. It was not deliberate. Members of the public and journalists may be present - but they are not - and this means your evidence may be reported - but it won't.

It is important that should you wish all or part of your evidence to be heard in private you need to make this request and give an explanation prior to giving the relevant evidence. Does that sound all good to you?

Mr CAMPBELL - Yes, thank you. I don't think there is anything I am going to say that would need to be private anyway.

CHAIR - Rick, perhaps you could take us through as a member of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee your experience and any insights you might have into the greyhound racing industry in Tasmania.

Mr CAMPBELL - I do not have any direct experience with the greyhound industry in Tasmania. We have someone representing greyhound and horse racing on the committee. The discussion we had at our meeting on 27 May was in conjunction with the discussion we have been having about amendments for the Animal Welfare Act, issues around dog ownership and dog control. Ownership as much as anything, but control is not actually within the scope of the animal welfare legislation. Dog management and the welfare

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aspect come into that, so that is the context in which the discussions in relation to the greyhound industry came up, in conjunction with the revelations of some really unsavoury practices that have been occurring in that industry particularly. That formed the basis of the discussion.

CHAIR - Rick, apart from those discussions that you were talking about, has the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee ever heard of live baiting of greyhounds in the greyhound racing industry in Tasmania? Has it every been raised as an issue with the committee to your knowledge?

Mr CAMPBELL - Not that I am aware of in the time I have been chairman of the committee. The short answer is no.

Mr CAMPBELL - No. The short answer is no.

CHAIR - The Animal Welfare Amendment Bill went through the Parliament a couple of months ago now and you would be aware that it provides some strength and powers to inspectors. Did you want to talk about the committee's position on the powers that inspectors have?

Mr CAMPBELL - We had a fair bit of discussion on those sorts of issues. I guess the Animal Welfare Act review has taken up a fair proportion of the committee's time over the last 12 or 18 months. There has been a bit of a hiatus with the change of government but prior to that we certainly put a lot of time into discussing changes to the Animal Welfare Act and reading through a large number of submissions on those changes. The issue of powers of inspectors was something that was pretty closely examined, particularly by members of the committee representing farming and animal industries. People were concerned about potential for invasion of privacy and things like that that some of the powers suggested would provide. We had a fair discussion on it and we were fairly happy with the suggestions we put forward in relation to the powers of inspectors.

CHAIR - The review certainly recommends strengthened powers for inspectors and some of those recommendations have made it into the first tranche of amendments to the act.

Mr CAMPBELL - Yes.

CHAIR - We have evidence put to us by the RSPCA about some of the difficulties they have in obtaining evidence of live baiting. Do you think the strengthened powers under the amended act will deal with that concern, not just on the part of the RSPCA but also Racing Services Tas or DPIPWE if it is happening in a rural and regional area?

Mr CAMPBELL - Harking back to my experience when I was working with DPI, one of the things I was involved with was the investigation of animal welfare cruelty claims. I found that, to a large extent, there have been improvements made which should make it easier. Situations are always going to arise that you can't provide for in legislation, so there will always be those sorts of challenges. It was the committee's view that it becomes a balancing act in providing RSPCA inspectors with sufficient powers to do their job and to investigate complaints while also allowing for the protection of individuals so they don't feel persecuted as well.

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You could sit down and write some amendments to the legislation which would give the inspectors more powers but it may not actually achieve a great deal in the area of improving animal welfare because it becomes a bit impractical to implement.

CHAIR - What do you think are the best mechanisms for improving animal welfare standards in the greyhound racing industry in Tasmania? There is a suite of them. Help us write our recommendations.

Mr CAMPBELL - The recommendations we came up with following the discussions we had at our meeting in May probably give as good a degree of control as you're ever going to be able to get onto these sorts of things. If you have registered breeders and an authority that is diligent, I think these sorts of things should be able to achieve the outcomes of improving or maintaining the welfare of greyhounds.

CHAIR - Yes. Would you agree there is also a need for education, training and engagement of greyhound owners and trainers?

Mr CAMPBELL - Absolutely. My feeling - again harking back to when I was working and trying to investigate animal cruelty issues - always was that if we had to prosecute someone we had failed because we hadn't been able to educate them prior to that point that what they were doing was inappropriate and not what the community expected. I think education is paramount and there should be programs to achieve that. This is not only in relation to greyhounds, it applies throughout the animal welfare debate.

Mr VALENTINE - On that aspect, without putting words into your mouth, do you think when a person is registered as a racing greyhound owner they should have to undertake a mandatory education process as to what is expected? Is that the way to go, so that you know everyone in the industry has that level of understanding as to what is reasonable and what is not?

Mr CAMPBELL - Absolutely, Rob, I think that sort of thing is what should apply. There is information available. It's not rocket science, is it? It's pretty basic stuff that people need to be aware of. I don't think it does any harm for someone starting out in the industry, or even on a routine basis every few years or something like that, that they be reminded of their obligations in relation to animal welfare.

Mr VALENTINE - My main question was going to be with respect to the way greyhounds are housed. One thing that came to light through evidence was that with young greyhounds, enthusiastic pups or just past the puppy stage, in some cases they don't give them blankets to sleep on because they rip them up and take them all over the yard. They basically sleep on boards. It is a simple thing but I wondered whether that is a welfare issue or not, in your opinion.

Mr CAMPBELL - Certainly those sort of things need to be considered. Some of the recommendations the committee made in relation to commercial dog breeders could quite easily be extended. There is no reason greyhounds shouldn't be considered in the same light. You have to consider the housing of dogs in general. We don't have to single out greyhounds, we need to consider them all. If you apply a standard to dog breeders who are breeding poodles or labradors it's just another breed of dog, isn't it? The way they're managed and housed should be the same for them as any other breed of dog.

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Mr VALENTINE - Fair comment, thank you.

Mrs RYLAH - Hi Rick.

Mr CAMPBELL - Hi Joan, it has been a long time since I have spoken to you.

Mrs RYLAH - It has. The question I have is somewhat of a proposition I would like you to comment on. Is it reasonable to contend that with more understanding of the very important role of positive reinforcement for animal training we could gain a significant benefit in that people learn that that is the natural way animals learn? I believe and have always had a sense that there still seems to be an element in our society, and certainly in information we've heard at this hearing, that negative reinforcement is the way to train, except you are going to use bits of another animal as the only positive way to teach an animal to race. You and I know there are many other ways but I'm interested in the promotion of positive reinforcement and giving it a different name and getting out there and going hard on how powerful that can be for animals.

Mr CAMPBELL - I quite agree, you're going to get a much better response in any animal training through a positive reinforcement approach rather than beating them over the head with a piece of pipe. That is probably the sort of thing you would need to include in the training program Rob alluded to earlier. There should be some sort of requirement for people who have racing greyhound stables that this be part of the process they go through before they get a licence. Going back to what I was saying before, it's for all animals; I don't think you need to single out greyhounds. It's probably something that's encouraging for all dogs.

Mr VALENTINE - Breeders per se.

Mr CAMPBELL - Yes, absolutely.

Mrs RYLAH - In what you see in the broader context of animal welfare, how predominant is the teaching of positive reinforcement, how much air space are we giving that?

Mr CAMPBELL - In my experience of dog trainers, certainly the ones I'm aware of and have had some dealings with, that is the approach they use. Most trainers would do that. That could well be part of an education program surrounding the recommendations we suggest in relations to guidelines for dog breeding - that this method will achieve better results than a negative reinforcement role. The other thing is if you're using negative methods there is the potential that that individual exposes themselves to animal welfare charges because it can be considered cruel.

CHAIR - One of the recommendations from AWAC was for there to be acknowledgment of the mental distress animals can experience if they're abused, mistreated or neglected. It didn't make it into this tranche of amendments, but the minister didn't rule out at a future date it possibly being incorporated into the act. I understand your role as a member of AWAC and an advisory body to the minister and I don't want to put you in a difficult situation here, but do you think if we had in the act an acknowledgement that animals suffer mental distress it might help in some instances to deal with some practices that are

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alleged to be happening in the greyhound racing industry, or even some practices we have had evidence of happening around the treatment of greyhounds?

Mr CAMPBELL - Yes, I think it would. Certainly in our deliberations in relation to the changes to the Animal Welfare Act, the issue of mental stress and trauma was raised. It is a difficult one to prove in people and far more in animals but there is certainly evidence of behavioural changes with things like pacing and that sort of thing. There are some things you can use. I think it was generally agreed by the committee that that was an issue and probably something we should endeavour to - it was one of our recommendations. We are having a meeting in a couple of weeks' time in October, at which some further amendments are going to be discussed and I'm sure that is one of the things that will be raised at that time.

CHAIR - That is good to hear, Rick.

Mr GAFFNEY - Rick, in the submission we received there was a section where you said - and I apologise if you have answered this before - 'It may also be appropriate to consider prohibiting ownership of any animals which could be considered prey animals, cats, rabbits, small dogs et cetera.'

Mr CAMPBELL - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - You also said, 'This requires some consideration as to the animals covered and the method of exemption.' As an individual I would find that one very swampy ground to touch base on because whilst there are some professional greyhound owners, a lot of the part-time owners are family people who might have a farm with chickens and cats and dogs and other animals. To say if you are a greyhound owner you would not be able to have your children experience other animals would be a fair stretch, I think. How would you see that working? How do you think the community would respond to something such as that?

Mr CAMPBELL - Mike, I think in this situation it was a case of floating an idea as a way to deal with this particular issue. One of the major concerns was the use of animals of all sorts, smaller animals that the greyhounds would chase and inevitably usually kill as a way of training them to race properly. It was suggested that this might be an approach you could take, but the issues you have just raised were raised quite strongly around the table. It was thought that it is as well to put this idea out there to get some consideration of it and thought about it, but I agree there was general consensus about the sort of scenario you outlined with someone who trains a few greyhounds and it is not their total livelihood. It's something they do as a hobby for enjoyment, the way a lot of people have bits of racehorses and a partnership arrangement where each person owns a leg. To say that because you've got a greyhound you can't have any other pets is fairly draconian. The idea was floated but it was acknowledged that it's not without problems.

Mr GAFFNEY - I was wondering whether AWAC at your next meeting would consider if they could develop that idea a bit further, something along the lines of perhaps a recommendation that if you own a greyhound or greyhounds that are in work they must be totally segregated from any other smaller animal to avoid any thought that there may be something untoward happening. I understand the idea and you acknowledge the difficulty, but a new greyhound owner might not have even thought of the fact that they have two

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little Pekingese pups that run around the backyard, that sort of thing. I think it has some validity in an educative sense - not to have the greyhounds housed next to the chicken coop, that sort of thing.

Mr CAMPBELL - That's right. I think a better way to deal with that sort of situation would be in guidelines and the education program rather than to try to put it into legislation. To word it in legislation in a way that's going to be acceptable and enforceable, I can see no point in having legislation that can't or will not ever be enforced. It's pointless, so we're better off to step back from the legislation and acknowledge this is a real issue and come at it from the point of view of Rob's pre-registration training program he alluded to and incorporate those sorts of ideas into that sort of program rather than trying to legislate to say, 'Because you have a greyhound you cannot have a canary'. Where do you stop? Which animals do you have to specify? All of the animals, breeds, birds and everything else? Looking at it from a guideline and training program, if somebody has a small number of dogs as a part-time interest they're still going to have to be registered with a racing authority. Once they apply for registration they go through this other program of training and awareness so you can pick up the aspect of pets and things like that at that point.

Mr GAFFNEY - Because we are coming out with a report about what this committee investigates we could highlight or recommend as a finding or something along that line. It is not a legislative requirement, it is just a comment from us that this was presented to us.

Mr CAMPBELL - Absolutely, but I was thinking if you take it the next step and say, 'Okay, what are we going to do about this? How are we going to progress this idea?', my personal opinion is we do that through an education and training program rather than try to enshrine something like that in legislation that would end up having so many holes in it it would be valueless anyway.

CHAIR - It is probably important, isn't it Rick, that we don't legislate to make a different class of dogs out of greyhounds.

Mr CAMPBELL - Absolutely, they are dogs. There are so many issues. You maybe could apply some of the things we have talked about with training greyhounds to training hounds to hunt. What happens there, I don't know. Greyhounds are a breed of dog and the sort of things you would do for them is not dramatically different from what you would do with any other breed of dog.

Ms COURTNEY - I think it is also important not to unnecessarily penalise people who do the right thing, who have really good welfare standards and all of a sudden they have a legislative stranglehold on how they continue with their lives on their property.

CHAIR - We also heard evidence that greyhounds who are not blooded and are well trained can be quite fine around small animals, including cats and chickens.

Mr CAMPBELL - They're gentle natured, beautiful dogs. It's like any breed of dog, really - most of the problems with dog breeds are the owners.

Mr VALENTINE - That's right; you've got it right there.

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CHAIR - Is there anything else you would like to say, Rick, before we sign off?

Mr CAMPBELL - I don't think so, thanks Cassy. That was the main thing. We've made some recommendations and I think there was reasonable discussion about it.

CHAIR - It has been a very good conversation. As I advised you at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said here today is protected by privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said to us. We are very thankful for you making yourself available this morning.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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Mr JOHN NEWSON, CHAIRMAN, AND Ms KARLENE CUTHBERTSON, MEMBER, LAUNCESTON GREYHOUND RACING CLUB, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Ms O'Connor) - John and Karlene, thanks for travelling down from Launceston to speak with us today. Before we begin, there are a few things I need to say for the purposes of this committee. A committee hearing is a proceeding of parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to any statements that may be defamatory that are repeated or referred to outside the confines of this place. This is a public hearing and there are members of the media present today and that means your evidence may be reported. It is important that should you wish all or part of your evidence to be heard in private you need to make this request and give an explanation prior to giving the relevant evidence.

Is there anything you want to say as an opening statement, given you know what the terms of reference of the inquiry are? We are specifically looking at the issue of the practice of live baiting in the industry in the state and inquiring as to whether it is happening here and, if so, to what extent.

Mr NEWSON - Regarding the live baiting, there has been an inquiry by Mr Murray and Dr Andrewartha and they have found no evidence of it occurring. There have been subsequent reports and the RSPCA has inspected some properties previous and there has been no evidence of it occurring in the state. Maybe it could have occurred but I have been involved in this industry as a trainer since 1972, which is over a long period, and who knows what goes on behind closed doors. We have only ever had one public trialling facility in this state which was registered with the appropriate authorities. That place was closed in 1998. That was due there - as we all know, they were not caught for live bait. They were caught for having a carcass on the arm. There was never any proof that there was live baiting that happened there. That place subsequently closed.

Now all public training facilities in this state are now run under supervision of Tasracing, owned and run under the supervision of Tasracing and members of the local clubs. In Launceston we have a straight track, of which I am the chairman. I run that track on specific days. It is on Tasracing property. We can only get in there on specific days. It is the same as the one in Brighton. It is run by the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association. As far as public training facilities, I could say there is no live baiting that goes on in there. But what goes on in people's private properties, who knows?

CHAIR - We had evidence put to us by Tony Murray, who is the head of Racing Services Tasmania, that recently an audit was undertaken of facilities on the properties of owners and trainers, and to Racing Services Tasmania's surprise, they found there were 28 bull rings and 31 private trial facilities on properties in Tasmania. Does that surprise you?

Mr NEWSON - Most trainers have those facilities to educate pups from an early age. If you have a litter of pups, it is a bit of a drama to take them to a public trialling facility to break

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them in. It is a long process. It could take you up to six months to get a pup ready to race. If you have got to go to a public trialling facility when it is only open on certain days - it is convenience. Some of our trainers might have 100 greyhounds. You might be breaking 20 dogs in. How are you going to cart 20 dogs to a public trialling facility? A lot of it is convenience.

CHAIR - What we saw in *Four Corners*, the report that went to air in February this year, was that the live baiting was happening at those sorts of facilities and they were out of sight and largely out of mind until surveillance came with the evidence.

Mr NEWSON - Yes, but those ones on *Four Corners*, those places, they would have been open to the public, whereas the rules of racing say that unless you have a registered trial track, members of the public are not allowed to use your facilities. Where the problem has fallen there is that it should have been up to the local authorities to inspect those properties and make sure that these people that are using - was a registered place.

CHAIR - It is a bit hard to inspect a property if you don't know that it is there.

Mr NEWSON - But a lot of those places were advertised in the appropriate magazines, that they are breaking-in facilities and trialling facilities. A lot of those places weren't registered.

CHAIR - Does it surprise you that Racing Services Tasmania - because we have had submissions that said there are no private trial tracks in Tasmania, and then RST comes to us and says, 'Well, actually there are 28 bull rings and 31 private trial tracks.'

Mr NEWSON - Yes, but they are people's private properties. By rights they are not open to the public. I, under the rules of racing, can't go and trial my greyhounds on someone's private track. That track has to be registered. That person has to have comprehensive insurance and they have to be registered with Racing Services to operate that as a public trial track. A private trial track here should really only be solely for the use of the person who owns that property.

CHAIR - Do you think those facilities should be registered - the bull rings and the private trial tracks?

Mr NEWSON - I believe that they should be registered. That is my own personal opinion. They should be registered.

CHAIR - Just the last question for now, and then I will move around the table. We have a brief here from the RSPCA. It talks about allegations that were made to the RSPCA after the *Four Corners* report went to air. There is a case that has come to light recently where inspectors found a number of dead chickens in a greyhound pen, a possum skin and a horse tail tied to a bull ring lure. They also found that water for the dogs in the pens was dirty and smelly. This caused some concern and ultimately, as I understand it, charges. Do you agree there are issues with animal welfare standard amongst some sectors of the greyhound racing industry?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - I don't think we can comment on that because it is under appeal.

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Mr NEWSON - Those people have appealed and it's before the stewards so we can't comment.

CHAIR - If we talk more broadly, would you agree there are some issues with animal welfare standards amongst some of the players in the greyhound industry in Tasmania?

Mr NEWSON - I don't think so, no. It would be very minimal if there is. People have invested a lot of money to breed a litter of pups. Before you get the pups on the ground it's probably going to cost you up to \$5 000 and it's a lot of money to waste if you're not going to look after them properly. Maybe some of these people might want more education in animal welfare, but that's my personal opinion.

CHAIR - We have had it put to us by a number of witnesses that a more integrated and widespread animal welfare education and training program could be useful for the industry.

Mr NEWSON - One of the problems is that a lot of elderly people involved in the industry and a lot of them don't like change, and that is across a lot of other aspects too. I'd say that most people treat their greyhounds better than they treat themselves.

CHAIR - Would you agree there's an issue once the dogs reach their use-by date as racers? We have heard testimony from a number of witnesses and have received submissions about the level of wastage in the industry, that because there are limited lines of access to adoption there is a very high percentage of dogs that are euthanased before their life would lead to its natural end.

Mr NEWSON - In that respect there probably are dogs put down that shouldn't be.

CHAIR - There probably are or there are?

Mr NEWSON - Probably are. Some dogs are not suitable to be re-housed - and that is like with any breed, you can get bad dogs. I would say that this year there have been a lot more greyhounds gone through the GAP. We are taking steps to make sure this problem goes away and we can help alleviate some of the wastage. The litters registered this year are down 50 per cent, so I would say maybe not next year but the year after, the life span of these dogs will be continued because they will need the dogs to keep on racing.

CHAIR - So there was a bit of overbreeding happening before?

Mr NEWSON - Probably. Not so much here in Tasmania because most people would only breed three or four litters a year, or two or three - that is probably the most people would breed here.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that driven by the cost?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Yes, cost and facilities.

Mr VALENTINE - What is the cost, roughly, per litter?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - I would say it would cost me \$20 000 to get a litter to racing.

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Mr VALENTINE - What do you think of the idea that education is mandated at the time of people being registered as breeders? I am not just talking about greyhounds here, I am talking about any dog breeders, that there is a mandatory education program they have to go through, to make sure they understand community expectation on what is reasonable with dog welfare.

Mr NEWSON - I would probably agree with that. At the moment, with general trainers or any person to be licensed in the greyhound industry, there is now a prescribed TAFE course. 75 per cent content of that is animal welfare.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that mandatory?

Mr NEWSON - It is mandatory now to get your licence renewed, and to be licensed as a trainer, an attendant, and a catcher. An owner has to have a licence, but he does not have to do the course. There is now a TAFE course you have to do and you have to pass it before they will renew your licence.

Mr VALENTINE - Does that course deal with things such as housing of greyhounds, comfort, and all the rest of it?

Mr NEWSON - It is a lot of welfare issues. There are standards set now for kennels - the size of the kennels et cetera. There is a standard now.

Mr VALENTINE - Including comfort issues such as blankets?

Mr NEWSON - Yes, bedding. You give some dogs a blanket and they will tear it up. Most people will rug their dogs at night if it is cold. There are a few trainers around who have air conditioners and heaters in their kennels. It is like being inside.

A greyhound is a hunting dog. He is the oldest breed of dog in the world and has been a hunting dog, lived outside and done it tough all his life. That is what he bred for. That is what he was used for. Now we have started making it a bit soft. Those dogs used to do it tough. That is what they were bred for. The Egyptians had them. They were sporting dogs. I think you will find most greyhounds now are well looked after, a lot of them probably more than most domestic dogs.

CHAIR - Even if they do have shorter lives?

Mr NEWSON - How many domestic dogs are put down? You would not know. How many people have litters of pups in their backyard and then drown them? Just because our dogs are registered, we get picked on.

A greyhound is a very social dog. A greyhound pup will live with other dogs until he is probably 11 or 12 months old, but you go to other facilities that breed domestic dogs and they are gone from their mothers at six weeks old. Greyhounds are together until 11 or 12 months old, socialising with other members of their family.

Our industry is taking a lot of flack for things. People have the wrong idea about the dogs.

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CHAIR - Do you think people have got the wrong idea about the dogs, or do you think there have been a few bad players in your industry that have given the industry a bad name? It has flowed from interstate but we have some material here from the RSPCA that acknowledges live baiting has happened in Tasmania.

Mr NEWSON - Where is the proof? Where are the people who have been charged?

CHAIR - It has been put to us by the RSPCA that obtaining enough material evidence to get a conviction is one of the problems we have.

Mr NEWSON - You are not guilty until you are convicted, are you?

CHAIR - I understand that.

Mr NEWSON - That is the problem. Everyone is being tarred with the same brush. It might only be one per cent.

CHAIR - It could only be one per cent.

Mr NEWSON - It could be 0.5 per cent, who knows?

CHAIR - In Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria, the industry was adamant there was no live baiting happening, until the cameras from which *Four Corners* had the material proved that it was happening. Subsequently, charges have been laid. To say there is not a problem with the industries is probably not true, or not quite accurate.

Mr NEWSON - Probably not accurate. You could say it might be not quite accurate, but what goes on, who knows?

CHAIR - This is what we are trying to find out.

Mr NEWSON - I know where you are coming from, but who knows? There have been accusations, but there has been no true, hard evidence.

CHAIR - You would agree it is very hard when you have private bull rings and private trial tracks, out of sight and mind. It is very hard to obtain that evidence.

Mr NEWSON - It is like anything. It is like any other racing. You have the other forms of racing. People are getting convicted for things every day. How does it go?

Ms COURTNEY - John, if we presume for a moment that there was a person doing the wrong thing and performing illegal activity, what would you recommend the industry do to stamp it out? First of all to discover it, and then to stamp it out? We have this area of not really having the information and not knowing. What could the industry do to give the public and us confidence that it is not happening, going forward?

Mr NEWSON - It is hard to say.

Ms COURTNEY - It is tricky.

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Mr NEWSON - It is a very tricky question. I know with ourselves, most people would now say if anyone gets caught doing it, it is a mandatory life ban. If you get caught, you are gone. You are not going to be back into the industry again. It would not matter how many times you appealed, you are gone.

The only other thing, the way you said before, maybe all these people have their own trials. They should be reached and be open to scrutiny from the relevant authorities to be able to have checks on these properties.

Mr VALENTINE - On a random basis.

Mr NEWSON - Yes, on a random basis. Maybe random, or turn up to people's places. Maybe not walk straight on to their property, but to turn up and ring on their gate and say, 'We are here to inspect your facilities, can we come in and have a look?'

Maybe that is another way. People will at least know they are under scrutiny. If anything untoward is going to happen, they must do it at their own peril. There could be someone around, who knows?

Ms COURTNEY - Another question for either of you to answer, or for both of you to answer, is do you think there is a culture with participants within the industry, that if somebody knew of somebody else performing something illegal, they would be reported? Or do you think the industry has a mentality that we have to protect ourselves? Therefore, even if we think something dodgy is going on, we don't want to raise a red flag, because it could impact the rest of the industry. That is difficult sometimes, to pin down a culture. Could you both comment on how you see the culture of the industry?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - For me, most greyhound trainers stick to their own little patch. It could happen that you might go to somebody's place and you may see a dog that has got dirty water in its whatever, but most people stick to their own little patch and do their own little thing. It would be more likely if anything was reported, for it to come from other people. It is so easy to take a photo now with a mobile phone. It is not an issue. It is only a phone call away.

Mr VALENTINE - Or a video for that matter.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Exactly. The opportunity is there for anybody to report anything. It is so easy now that I don't really think that it is an issue. It is an issue if something happens, but it is so easy for that to happen, that really, it is not hard.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you.

Mr NEWSON - A lot of trainers, they stick to themselves. You will have little groups and they stick to themselves.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - A lot of them have their own bull rings and that is what they use, they use their own. They are not going to somebody else's.

Mr NEWSON - I was surprised as to how many there were.

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CHAIR - I think Tony Murray was surprised.

Mr NEWSON - I was surprised with that number, because I was trying to think in our area and I could only think of two or three. I know one fellow who has a straight track and a bullring, but I don't think he has greyhounds at the moment.

Mrs RYLAH - He indicated there are 10 in the north.

Mr NEWSON - Things have changed. Demographics have changed. When I first started, everybody in our area either had a pigeon loft in their backyard, or greyhounds. In our area where we lived, my father trained greyhounds from 1940. Every second house had pigeons or greyhounds. Those fellows were all quite close, but now you have the larger kennels where most people have 20, 30, 40, or 50 dogs, and they stick to themselves. They are all individual little groups, whereas before in our area, they would all get out and walk their dogs up the road in the morning. At 5:30 in the morning, there would be half a dozen fellows and 30 greyhounds walking up the round. They used to stick together, but now those communities have gone to individual people's properties.

Mr GAFFNEY - Because there has been bad press, mainly because of the *Four Corners* program, have you thought about doing some sort of media marketing campaign to show what your property is like with the dogs you have, and how the industry runs? That it is family friendly? It might be too soon. Have you discussed how you can get out there and market greyhound racing?

Mr NEWSON - We were advised by Tasracing's media people to not say anything. We were expecting them to support the industry and they have not said a word.

CHAIR - Why do you think that is?

Mr NEWSON - They must have had some media consultant advising them. I don't know. I cannot comment on that. We were expecting them to come out and publicly support our industry, especially when the first inquiry was held. We were expecting them to make some comment on that, but we never heard anything. I don't know what goes on there. The industry has a lot of issues with Tasracing.

Mr GAFFNEY - I think Tasracing would more than likely say there is this inquiry going on and they may be wise to wait until they get the report of this inquiry.

Mr NEWSON - We were told not to make any comment.

Mr GAFFNEY - I would think within the greyhound fraternity it would be well worth considering doing something. I am not saying a marketing exercise. I am saying having a double-page spread in the *Advocate* on a Saturday. You see it with horse racing, poultry, and a lot of other things. Because there has been some questions about your industry, I would think some positive information out there would be helpful. People would be most surprised about how the greyhounds are looked after, what the life of a normal greyhound would be.

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Mr NEWSON - I totally agree with you. As an industry now, we are struggling to get anything in the paper. We used to have something in the paper every Monday, but since these inquiries, we are battling to get anything in the paper.

CHAIR - Do you think it is important to get the question marks cleared up in order to function as an industry that people can have faith that animal welfare standards are being applied? Do you think an inquiry such as this might be helpful in some ways, because it can find out what is happening to the best extent possible, provide some recommendations, and the industry may be able to move forward?

Mr NEWSON - I totally agree with that. You must be able to come to some conclusions and recommendations. It only has to help the industry. We have noticed it really has not affected our activities very much but it might have affected some sponsorships.

Mr VALENTINE - And people going to the races?

Mr NEWSON - No, it hasn't really made much difference. Our industries these days rely on off-course patronage. It is all off-course. That is what it is all geared for. It has not made a lot of difference to that side of it. Our betting turnover is still pretty good. We are still functioning pretty well in that respect.

I suppose there are lot of people who do not care really what happens as long as the races are on, as long as there is something there for them to bet on. A lot of those punters are probably not that interested. There probably are people out there that are interested in the welfare of the dogs.

CHAIR - There are, and we have heard from quite a few of them.

Mr NEWSON - I am interested in the welfare of the dogs myself. I have greyhounds and I breed kelpies. I am interested in the welfare of those animals. That's a part of my life.

Mrs RYLAH - In the evidence we heard from Racing Services, there are 28 bull rings. There are 31 trial tracks in the state. How do you think, from your experience and noting your previous comment you do not visit every individual person, what is the break-up of those trial tracks? Can you describe how you think they would be, in type?

Mr NEWSON - I think at a lot of those trial tracks, a lot of these trainers now work their greyhounds in work runs which are only 100 metres long. I think they put a lot of those work runs down as a trial track.

I would call it a trial track myself, something which is probably 250-300 metres long. I think they have taken it in the context of these work runs. They will have probably three runs between 50 and 100 metres long. They will put their dogs in these runs and they will work themselves up and down the runs. For that amount of trial tracks to be there, I would say they have added those work runs in and classed them as trial tracks.

From people I know, I can't really think where there would be that many straight tracks which are 300 metres long.

Mrs RYLAH - How many that you know of are in that 250-300-metre category, do you think?

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Mr NEWSON - For up around where we are I would say - Richard Stamford has one; Anthony Bullock has one; Lawrence Mulligan has one; that is three. David Crosswell, that is four. Around the immediate area of Launceston I can only think of around four, plus the race course at Mowbray. That is five.

Mrs RYLAH - There is one down here, isn't there, at least.

Mr NEWSON - The straight track here is at Brighton. There would be other trainers down here who would have longer tracks. I know Ted Medhurst has a long track. I think a lot of these others take -

Mrs RYLAH - Ten, maybe? You think the majority are these small work runs?

Mr NEWSON - Yes, the majority, I would say, are those small work runs.

Mrs RYLAH - Thank you.

Mr VALENTINE - It is about bull rings and tracks, and both of you might want to comment. In terms of where these bull rings or training tracks are, are they out in the scrub - out of sight, out of mind? Are they all close to the premises of the owners?

Mr NEWSON - A lot depends on the size of the property. If you could have a track you would want to keep it away a bit from your main kennelling complex. If you put these dogs on a run, it excites and sets them all off. If they see a dog running over there and they are locked up they think they want to get out and have a go at it too.

Mr VALENTINE - They are a pack animal.

Mr NEWSON - Yes, they are a pack animal.

Mrs RYLAH - They can hear it as well.

Mr NEWSON - They can hear it. They think they should be out there too chasing their bit of some teddy fur.

Mr VALENTINE - So, the ones you know about, would they be further out and out of earshot of where the greyhounds are kept?

Mr NEWSON - Most of these facilities are on five- or 10-acre blocks. That is probably the biggest areas these fellows have.

Mr VALENTINE - Not on larger holdings?

Mr NEWSON - No, most of them are only five or 10 acres these fellows would have. I would say 10 acres would be around the biggest. Rick Stamford has 20 but they have other boarding kennels. He has a bull ring there but that is right near where he houses all his dogs.

Mr VALENTINE - So that is a different scenario.

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Mr NEWSON - I would say most of them are pretty remote. Some of them are away a little bit from their main kennel block because once the dogs can hear this thing going, others barking upsets the whole lot of them.

Mrs RYLAH - So do these 250-300-metre-long trial tracks have lures in them?

Mr NEWSON - Most of them are hand-wound. You have a winder with a string on it and you tie something from the chase.

Mr VALENTINE - You wouldn't be able to wind fast enough the way they can go.

Mr NEWSON - No, I have got one made up out of a set of horse clippers, the old hand-wound horse clippers. I can wind that sufficiently enough to keep it in front of the dog. Pull up whatever they want to chase.

Mr VALENTINE - Good exercise, by the sound of it.

Mr NEWSON - Pull up a bit of rag or anything. Dogs will chase it, I can tell you. I have actually tied pine cones on it and they have chased the pine cones.

Mr VALENTINE - The what?

Ms COURTNEY - Pine coneys.

Mr NEWSON - A pine coney. Pine cones.

Mr VALENTINE - Oh yes.

Mr NEWSON - I actually tie that on it and they will chase that. A dog will chase anything. He will chase anything.

Mrs RYLAH - John, in the work runs, are there lures of any sort?

Mr NEWSON - No.

Mrs RYLAH - Okay, that is the difference.

Mr NEWSON - Yes. There are no lures of any sort. They usually put the dog in, the dog will run up and down himself all day. The person might walk up the side and call them up the other end, and they will run up and back.

Mrs RYLAH - It is just a fence?

Mr NEWSON - Yes, it is just a fence. A fenced-off area, probably could be up to 100 metres long, probably five metres wide.

CHAIR - John, you have been in the industry since 1972. In your view, is a dog that hasn't been live-baited as fast as a dog that has been?

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Mr NEWSON - Some dogs are faster than others. There is no proof that says that live baiting is going to make the dog run faster. I don't think there is any proof.

How can I say this? I don't think there is any proof of it. A dog can either run fast or he can't. It is like humans. You get 20 people and line them up; you are going to get some faster than others.

I did see in one of those submissions there that someone said, 'I know these dogs have been live-baited', because if they see something furry or another small dog they'll go mad and they'll want to tear it apart. That is totally untrue. They are a hunting animal. Anything that moves, they will want to chase it, live-baited or not.

CHAIR - It is interesting though. We have had testimony from people who have had adopted greyhounds who say that the dog they have is completely fine around the cat, that there is no issue with them wanting to chase the small animals. In fact, from Emma Haswell from Brightside who takes in a lot of dogs, she said you can tell the difference.

Mr NEWSON - No, that is rubbish. I have got kelpies at home and they are the biggest killers of anything. They will kill. They have not been live-baited. They are fearless. They are sheep working dogs. If they have got the opportunity to chase something, a rabbit or something out in the paddock, or a wombat, they will go after it. Native hens.

Mr VALENTINE - How do you breed that instinct out of a kelpie if it is supposed to be a sheep dog?

Mr NEWSON - Well, you can't.

Mr VALENTINE - You wouldn't want it killing your sheep.

Mr NEWSON - That is the strain of them. That is how they are. Those dogs are hunters. Some of those dogs like to hunt, they like to work. If I let them off, they will chase it. They are off, they are after it.

I have three gallop greyhounds in paddocks on my farm. It is the same. If something does happen to get up, you could be in a five-acre paddock, if they see a bird flutter up or something, they will want to go after it. It is natural instinct.

I used to gallop my dogs a lot on the beach. The same thing. You run the dog and there might be a few seagulls there and they will flutter up in the air. The next minute the dog will see them and they will be off. The bird will be up in the air, the dog will be running along with his head up, trying to chase the bird. It is natural instinct for them to chase. I cannot really say. It is natural instinct.

CHAIR - Chihuahuas are the same. I can tell you that.

Mr NEWSON - I know. Look at a Jack Russell. They will chase. They will want to kill and chase.

CHAIR - John, if I could ask. We have some material here from the RSPCA and there is one case where a racing steward has got in touch with the RSPCA in March this year concerned

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about something that they have seen on a property that there was a bull ring with a lure arm attached with a buckle and an amount of fur at the scene. The fur looked to be from a possum or kangaroo. When the RSPCA attended, the person of interest never tried to deny he used to live bait. Do you think that was a common practice in the industry until relatively recently?

Mr NEWSON - I cannot comment on that.

CHAIR - For someone who has been in the industry since 1972, you must have some thoughts on that.

Mr NEWSON - I know what we used to do. We would use animal skins. We would go shooting, shoot a kangaroo, skin it, and use a green skin. We were allowed to use green skins. Then it became legislation that you could not use a green skin. You could only use a dry skin. We would use a dry skin. You could once use a carcass off the road.

CHAIR - Why do you think the carcass potentially improved the animal's performance over a squeaky toy?

Mr NEWSON - Maybe that is how a lot of people would break in dogs in those days, using green skins. I have noticed on a trial track, we now have some synthetic lures and the dogs now being educated on those lures are going better than when we used dry skins. It is what they have been educated on.

Mr VALENTINE - Do they ever use any perfumes on skins - odour meat?

Mr NEWSON - There is something now that says you are not allowed to scent the skins. You cannot get a skin and pour some blood on it, or something that smells relevant to an animal. There is a report from America saying they have come up with a scent, to put a scent on the skin. A lot of times, a greyhound was taken to chase as per sight or movement, and not really smell. If you take a dog out and he can smell something, he will sniff the ground. That is where they have come up with this thinking, that they put a scent on the skins.

Mr VALENTINE - But doesn't that indicate that if it is emulating a live bait that it does have an effect on the performance of the dog?

Mr NEWSON - It could affect some. It could be psychological to the person who has the dog.

Mr GAFFNEY - In Scotland they have drag races for hounds and they use aniseed. They drag it across the ground.

Mr NEWSON - It is the same with the hunt clubs here, they use the aniseed skin. They drag it and the hounds will chase the aniseed.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - This industry is evolving. It is growing, and has changed over the last two or three decades to what it is today. That is society in general. How many decades it ago was it that the women got the vote? We are evolving. Hopefully not too far down the track gay marriage will be legalised. This industry is evolving, it is changing all the time. It is natural progression.

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CHAIR - To expand on that, Karlene, because you and I have had a conversation about your dogs. It is clear you love your dogs, and love doing what you do. How did it make you feel as a breeder when you heard about the *Four Corners* report, and it sank in that this would have ramifications for the industry?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - I was devastated. You wanted to crawl in a hole. Every participant wanted to crawl in a hole. You would walk down the street and some people would say, 'How are you going with the inquiry?' You can't go into too much depth otherwise you would be there for six months.

99 per cent of people in this industry are good people and they do the right thing. I do not care what industry you are talking about, or what sporting occupation you are talking about, there is always an element of people trying to get an edge and -

CHAIR - Cheat.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Cheat. There has been so many regulations been brought into us in the last six months. There is a GAG meeting today. That is why some other members could not come, because some had to be there.

CHAIR - Is that the Greyhound Racing Group?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - The state group.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Yes. I forgot what I was going to say now.

CHAIR - All the regulations that have come in in the last six months -

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Yes. What has been happening with the breeding regulations just for one, I mean, the numbers are down 50 per cent. In two years' time that is going to be a real problem.

Mr NEWSON - There might not be an industry.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Yes, you might not have to worry about it because there won't be one.

Mr NEWSON - There might not be an industry because there will be no dogs to race.

CHAIR - Is that a serious concern of the industry in relation to breeding rules?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Yes.

CHAIR - What is the issue there? The information that we received from Tasracing was that there is a certain number of dogs that needed to be bred in order for the industry to be self sustaining. I thought, correct me if I am wrong, it was about 500 a year. What was it?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - No, it was 1 000, was it not?

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CHAIR - Was it 1 000?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - It was 1 000, and we only breed 600.

CHAIR - We only breed 600 now, you are saying?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - In the last year it was 600.

Mr VALENTINE - In Tasmania?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - In Tasmania.

CHAIR - Are you saying that is not enough to sustain the industry?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - That is what he is saying. I do not know. That is what -

CHAIR - Who is saying?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Elliot.

CHAIR - Elliot Forbes.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - That was his numbers. I did not know that before then.

CHAIR - Prior to *Four Corners* there were about 1 000 dogs a year being bred to racing age. Is that right?

Ms CUTHBERTSON - No.

Mr GAFFNEY - That cannot be ascertained, because it was only in March this year that *Four Corners* came out.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - Did he not say we need 1 000 dogs to have a racing industry in Tasmania? We only breed 600, so the rest come from the mainland.

CHAIR - Even with 600, it does seem like a lot of dogs being bred each year. Can you explain why that might lead to industry decline?

Mr NEWSON - One of those dogs might not make it. There is a lot of natural wastage along the way. Dogs die. Dogs get injured, break legs. They are euthanised for those reasons. Some dogs do not make the grade. It always used to be said, one in 10 would win a race. What is probably going to happen now with these declining numbers being bred - one of these dogs where a lot of people will say, 'I will not have that dog because it is not to a certain standard' - those dogs now will get a chance.

We had a meeting with Mr Murray last week, and he has put forward a new grading schedule. We have been waiting for this for 18 months. We are quite pleased with what he has come up with. This will make quite a bit of difference to the longevity of a dog's racing life. There is only one problem. As a dog gets older, he is more susceptible to injury. It is like with humans. Your recovery is not as good as a young person. That could

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only be one of the downfalls. You might find some of these dogs now might end up with injuries. They could be life threatening. Who knows? This will definitely increase the life of the greyhound. It will definitely make a difference. This has been something we have been after for 18 months.

Mr GAFFNEY - On that, it is not only the supply of the pup. It is the demand from people who may have put shares in a greyhound. With the bad publicity that has happened, do you have any indication that people are now getting away from this? Is it too soon to know that? Are your owner numbers going down? Have you done any research on that? Is that easy to do? -

Mr NEWSON - We can find out how many people are registered. I know a particular person who has bred a litter of pups. He has advertised and hasn't been able to sell any.

Mr GAFFNEY - I think that would be good.

Mr NEWSON - That is the thing. He would never have trouble selling. He has recently bred a litter and hasn't been able to sell them.

Mr GAFFNEY - That would be interesting to know, for the industry, about the numbers of owners you had in the last three years and measure that. If you can see that there has been a decrease in the owners because of this, that will have an impact. To me it makes sense that might occur.

People do not want to be associated with an industry if there are some questions about the industry, whether it is true or false.

Mr NEWSON - There is a lot of perception in a lot of different areas.

Mr GAFFNEY - But Tasracing would have those numbers.

CHAIR - It is a few bad eggs giving everyone a bad name.

Mr NEWSON - Look at the Catholic church.

Mr GAFFNEY - Let's not go there.

Mr VALENTINE - It's an analogy.

CHAIR - That is not a bad analogy.

Mr NEWSON - It's an analogy. It is ongoing. I know at our club since this report has come out, we have spent a lot of money and time this year trying to lift the perception and get through to people that we want to keep this industry and clean it up. We have to keep it going because it is an important industry. It is the flow-on effects too, out in the general public.

Mr VALENTINE - Tasracing would be in a bit of a problem. You have to give them 40 per cent of everything that comes in.

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Mr NEWSON - I would say, if Greyhounds go, Tasracing would not be sustainable.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - It is also a good social outlet, particularly for a lot of older people. It keeps them fit, gives them a reason to get out of bed. They love their dogs, they love the racing.

Mr GAFFNEY - When we went on that Monday night, there were some families with young kids. There is a story and some articles there about the family, the history, the traditions, the community aspects.

Mr NEWSON - I agree with you, Mike, it is a good idea. We really need to get the perception out there.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - I think we need to finish this first, get a result, whatever it is going to be. Then maybe we can move forward.

Mr NEWSON - I would hate to see this industry fail. It is something I have been involved in for quite a while.

CHAIR - Do you think there really is a risk of the industry failing?

Mr NEWSON - All these new regulations that have come in have turned a lot of people off it. People who are participating now are saying, 'Why do we have to do this? Why do we have to have this done?' In years gone by it wasn't as regulated but now it is becoming very regulated.

CHAIR - Which is in line with community expectations. It is the evolution.

Mr NEWSON - I work in the construction industry. I know what has happened. I have worked for myself for 35 years. I know what I have had to go through with OH&S and workplace safety. I go to some jobs now to work on something and say, 'Is it really worth coming to do this job?' For what you have to go through to get started, is it really worth it?

That is what some of these participants are saying now: 'Is it really worth it? I might finish now with what I've got. I won't bother buying any more pups. I won't bother breeding any more litters. I do not know what the future is going to be like.' That is the expectation now, from the general public. That is how things are done now. They have to be done to the letter. That is life now, isn't it?

CHAIR - John and Karlene, thank you very much for travelling down here to talk with us.

Mr NEWSON - There was just little thing. I was reading about the draining of greyhounds. I wouldn't really call it draining, I would call it blood collection. It is not really draining. It does give people there is the perception the dog is on a drip and his blood is taken out until he falls onto the ground. It is not that.

Ms CUTHBERTSON - That was something else that did not help when the community got away with that little trade. That was very unfair the way that was done.

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Mr NEWSON - That was a very unfair statement. People did not realise the greyhound's blood is compatible to about 95 per cent of any other dog.

Mr VALENTINE - It is benefiting non-greyhounds.

CHAIR - We had testimony from a veterinary operator in Launceston who talked about how important that blood collection is to veterinary practices. It does save other dogs' lives.

Mr NEWSON - That drainage did not really come across well. It is another issue we have to work through.

CHAIR - John and Karlene, thank you again. Before you rise from the table, for formalities I need to say, as you were advised at the commencement at your evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us.

Mr NEWSON - Thanks very much.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.