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**THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING IN TASMANIA  
MET AT HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON, ON TUESDAY, 11 AUGUST 2015.**

**Mr ANTHONY BULLOCK** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Ms O'Connor) - Welcome, Mr Bullock. A committee hearing is a proceeding in Parliament and 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 outside of Parliament. It applies to ensure Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements are repeated or referred to outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing and there are members of the media present today. This means your evidence is likely to 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 to us as a committee and give an explanation prior to giving the relevant evidence.

You would be aware, Mr Bullock, that the reason this inquiry was established was after the *Four Corners* episode where we saw live baiting in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. This has led to a number of arrests and, I think, convictions. Do you believe live baiting is happening in Tasmania?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, I do not.

**CHAIR** - On what basis do you say that?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I can only talk about my own place, which is the biggest place and the most common. I can't tell you who has what or who does what but at my place it does not and will not happen.

**CHAIR** - Do you believe, though, there is any reason Tasmania would be different from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria where *Four Corners* demonstrated live baiting was a common practice in the industry?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Those sorts of places all have trial tracks. We only have race tracks, which are governed by Tasracing. I have a bullring, as has been stated. I don't know who else has a bullring. We've got straight tracks and everything is self-sufficient where we don't have to go trial tracks. It's different because you've only got a person's property where most people only have their own dogs on that property.

**CHAIR** - We've had allegations put to this committee that live baiting is in fact happening in Tasmania, so in your long experience in the industry you've never seen or heard any evidence of live baiting?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - Only the Carrick one - I think in 2008 - and she was the only one persecuted, and that was virtually the close of that track. Other than that, people have bullrings so that's where it stops and starts.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Can it only happen on a race track; it can't happen in a bullring?

**Mr BULLOCK** - It can happen in a bullring.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Lots of people have bullrings, don't they?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, but I don't know who has them. I have one but I don't know who has them, but it can happen there. I don't think it does because for most people you need more than one or two people to help you, so you need more people involved.

**Mr BACON** - Do you think if it was happening that you would know about it? You know most people in the industry.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I know everybody in the industry but I can't talk for anyone else because I don't know and I don't go to anyone else's place to do anything. I do my own thing at my own place.

**Mr BACON** - When stewards come to your place do they ring beforehand and let you know they are on the way?

**Mr BULLOCK** - They ring at the gate because I have German shepherds at the gate.

**Mr BACON** - They don't let you know the day before?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No. They always ring at the gate and we let them straight in.

**Mr BACON** - Has that always been the case?

**Mr BULLOCK** - At my place it is. I reckon I get four to six inspections a year, plus other inspections, like the day after the live baiting they lobbed there.

**CHAIR** - Was this the RSPCA or Racing Services Tasmania?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Racing Services Tasmania has been there - the day after. The Director of Racing has been there three or four weeks later. The RSPCA have never been to my place to go to my bullring.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Can you give us a three-minute snapshot of your history in it and how many dogs you have because you are the largest entity in Tasmania.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I have been involved in the industry for 40 years through my parents. I have approximately 50 race dogs. I have approximately 30 ready to race. I probably have 30 pups in the yards and I probably have 25 I have to try to fit in somewhere in the next three to four months that are booked to come.

**CHAIR** - Where are dogs to come from?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - Other owners who want to send them and I always train for them. They have 30. I have nine knocking on the door that I have no room for.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Staff?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I have nine volunteers who come daily and weekly. I have people help with every track who live in that area. I have people come four to five days a weeks for three to four hours a day, helping me break dogs in, run dogs, clean up dog yards, and maintenance of the property.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Do you send many of your dogs to the mainland?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I send them to the mainland but mainly I take them myself. It is very hard to change from trainer to trainer with a good dog. You are used to your routine. I don't walk dogs; I have yards. Some walk them, some put them on walk machines. I don't have or use any of that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Do you host any dogs from Victoria when they come over to race?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. Most of them that come stay at my place. Brett Bravo came for all three races this year with three to four dogs. He stays at my place for three to four days every time he comes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I gather it is reasonably close-knit community.

**Mr BULLOCK** - It is a very tight community Australia-wide.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - In Tasmania I was talking to a steward last night and he said he had not heard of any live baiting. He also felt that because it is such a close-knit community that if somebody was doing something untoward, it would come out fairly quickly or the whispers would get around the track.

**Mr BULLOCK** - It would be well spoken of and I don't think the percentage of the people would tolerate it. It is an unfair advantage. It is uncouth and it is barbaric. No-one needs to do it. There are other ways around it. Years ago it was very rampant but I don't think it is anymore.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Because you have been involved for 40 years and your parents and no doubt their parents as well, when did you start to see a cultural shift? It was known to have been part of the practice beforehand. When you think the watershed moments came in?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Probably 10 to 15 years ago it changed. It is very competitive race-wise. You make one mistake, you don't win a race, simple as that. You stick to what you know, stick to your same practices, doing the same things.

**Mr BACON** - You said it was rampant.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I didn't say it was rampant. I said it was known to be done years ago.

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**Mr BACON** - Other people might?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. I was well known 30 to 40 years ago; it was practice to let them go on wallabies or whatever.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You were saying earlier about German shepherds. What is the reason behind having them? To protect other people's assets or your own?

**Mr BULLOCK** - My own assets because I am at races all the time. I live in a rural area; I am not home Monday night or Thursday night or Tuesday. Therefore if you leave the property occasionally and you read it in the paper, you know where I am.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is that mainly to stop people getting at the dogs?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, it is mainly to stop people going in there because I live on a highway and a few times before we had the German shepherds the gates were left open by people. I have horses down the back, so I have to have them so that people don't enter the property and they know they are there, because I am worried about the safety of horses getting on the highway, and my other dogs getting out and ending up on the highway.

**CHAIR** - Do you want to talk us through your training methods.

**Mr BULLOCK** - How I train dogs?

**CHAIR** - Yes, because you are one of the most successful trainers, if not the most successful trainer, in Tasmania. What is it about your training techniques that sets your dogs apart?

**Mr BULLOCK** - They are a pack animal, therefore we rear them in fours and sixes. That is a big value in racing. They go in an eight-dog field. We have them in square runs all the time so that they learn to follow one another all the time. They are like sheep; one takes off down the paddock and they all take off down the paddock. When you are walking in the street all they see is cars and people and little dogs, so we try and train them that way when we take them to the track. We try and keep them in fours and sixes so that they all learn off one another - that one chases, those two don't, and you put those three together.

**CHAIR** - What material do you use in your bullring when you are training the dog?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I have big lures that have squeaky toys in them. You use that on your bullring. You start at three, four, five months old and they learn - monkey see, monkey do. When the dogs start grappling it and playing with it then you put the noise on and then they go around and learn to follow up and chase the same thing.

**CHAIR** - Can you spot the performance difference between a dog that has been trained with live baits and a dog that has been trained in the manner that you just described?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, not at all.

**CHAIR** - Before, you talked about how that method of training basically is cheating because it gives some dogs or some trainers an unfair advantage. You have acknowledged there is a difference.

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**Mr BULLOCK** - There is a difference but the dog is not stupid. The dog knows the difference between a live bait and a mechanical lure. Sweet It Is is the perfect example. She was tied up in the live bait area; she is still winning. All it does is give you that edge for one to two runs, and when you draw where you want to draw, whether you draw one or five, and in the race you want to win, because it is all the money tied up in the Pacific races that live baiting is a \$100 000, so do I or don't I. The point being, the race has changed differently in Tasmania because you have only got the three tracks. Most people know whose dog goes where, whether you have a chance of winning or not got a chance of winning, because the draw will determine most of the time whether you perform well or you perform poorly.

**CHAIR** - Would you agree, then, hypothetically, given human nature and the desire for trainers and owners to ensure that their dogs do have that competitive edge, particularly in the early part of its career, there is the potential incentive there to live bait, as we saw on the mainland states.

**Mr BULLOCK** - There would be but I really think that the dogs have changed. The dogs are hardier now chasing-wise. I think the more you educate your dog you do not need to go down that road. The more you teach them the more they learn and because there are follow-on lures everywhere in Tasmania on each track. It has probably been the last eight years that they have been introduced permanently where you can go all the time and teach your pups. The same as a bull-ring setup. You can take them to the race track and do exactly the same thing on the same design of the lure.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Can you explain the follow-on?

**Mr BULLOCK** - The race lure is normally a bar with a bunny on it. That is not a follow-on lure; that is a race lure because that would get torn to pieces if the dogs get to it. What they have now on the follow-on arm is the loop arm, which is going to be introduced shortly, with a lure on the end of it where the dogs run around, chase it, grab it and virtually get dragged around the track. It is what you have virtually seen on *Four Corners* but with a lure on it, not the real thing.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Does that give the dogs more enjoyment?

**Mr BULLOCK** - It gives them more incentive to get from point A to point B. That is what you are teaching them to do - go from point A to point B, right. Once the dog grabs that - one dog grabs that - the ones that are not really sure, will grab that with it because it has spread to them to do that.

**Mrs RYLAH** - As a pack response?

**Mr BULLOCK** - As a pack response, because that is what you are doing with eight dogs in a race. Some dogs will not go around on their own. Some dogs will just stand there and not go two steps. But with four or five others, they will all go together and one dog will learn from the others to go with them.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How many dogs would you train in a year? Roughly.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I have about 1 800 starters - probably turn over 100 dogs.

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**CHAIR** - How many of those would be euthanised in a year?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Most of my owners like their dogs to go with the GAP. I euthanise only the dogs that I don't think will make the GAP. That is because of their temperament and their outgoing skills, as in wreckers - chewing wire, wreck their beds, dirty, whatever. I recommend them not to go to the GAP. I reckon that 30 per cent would go to GAP and the rest would be put down.

**CHAIR** - Do you put them down personally, because you said, 'I euthanise'? Do you euthanise them?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No. The vet comes in and does them. They go past three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. I make the call because the owner wouldn't know whether they are a nice dog or a bad dog.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That is all recorded, isn't it?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, when all the paperwork goes in. You have three days to put it in. It is all there. If an accident happens, you have two days to put it in, and you have to notify the stewards straightaway so they can come and check, if they want to, what has happened to the dog.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - We understand the different gradings of the races now. There has been a suggestion in other states that they have some races for older dogs who may have gone past their prime, but can still compete, but they do not have so many of those here in Tasmania. Is that -

**Mrs RYLAH** - The masters.

**Mr BULLOCK** - The masters? There were ups and downs for the masters. Our grading system, which is supposed to be under review, is a step-up grading system, whereas normally when you get to between three and three-and-a-half, that is when you reach the best of your performance. Then it is a decrease. There is no rule to keep going back down the grade. Therefore, in a grade 2, which is nearly a top grade, you could have four-year-old dogs in there that are not competitive, but there is nowhere for them to go to come back down. To me, having a lot of four-year old racers is not good in theory because normally they are about 80, 90, 100 starts, and they are starting to get worn out and you're flogging a dead horse, to put it bluntly.

There is just no point because the injuries take their toll. Every time they get hurt, they are another three or four lengths slower. Two months off in a greyhound's life is a long time, even to have off racing, because they do not come back quite as good as they were. You have all these things against you. As they get older, it just becomes lower and lower. Where they could run 30 before, they can run 30, 60 now, and they still get hurt worse than they did when they were young.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - With the grading system, say if a dog has made grade 2 in the three areas - Launceston, Devonport and Hobart - if that dog had 10 races at each of those venues and did not feature at all, it still cannot go back?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - It goes back to grade 4 and that is it. One grade is all it can go back.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - How many races does it have to -

**Mr BULLOCK** - Three unplaced on each track.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Three unplaced, and then it can go back one grade?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Back one grade. Then you have the good young dog going up from grade 5.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is still going to be faster than they are -

**Mr BULLOCK** - It is still going to be under pressure.

**Mrs RYLAH** - So what would you consider would be the ideal way to have the older dogs - should they just retire from racing, or what would you suggest?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I think if it was a downgrade system where you go back to grade 5, and they could grade the dogs into a grading in a grade 5. In Victoria if you have won 10 races and you are a grade 5, you go in with the dogs that have won 10. If you have won three races and you are a grade 5, you go in with the dogs with one to three wins. The old dogs should be graded into a grade 5, where it is not a masters, but the dogs of the same amount of ability for the point of their time. If you take a dog to Hobart five weeks in a row, you are not going to take him the sixth week because you are getting past the point of, 'Where am I going?' if you keep racing them. It doesn't matter if they're old or young - you've done the best you can to there. You have to draw a line and say, 'Where do I go?'. The owner doesn't want you to keep it because he doesn't want it; you don't really want to take it, so where do you end up? With an unwanted dog. Then you have to make up your mind whether it's going to be good enough for GAP. I have eight pet dogs of my own at my place - eight greyhounds that are pets - and I don't own any of them. They're not mine; they're all owned around Australia.

**CHAIR** - What are they doing at your house then?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I either have to put them down or put them to GAP, so I keep them myself. They've been good dogs to me so I look after them, but the owner doesn't care because it's 'I'm not paying for it'.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Mr Bullock, we had a chance to have a look at the processes at the race track. Can you take us through the dog welfare processes at your place, from when you receive a dog and what you actually do with that dog over time in terms of looking after its welfare?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Either the owners send the dogs to me in pup and I whelp them down and go right through the whole lot, or I get pups at 12 or 13 months old and break them in for the owners. If they have room, I send them home for a month because they need to have a break. It's too much for them to go from home to home because they lose weight and don't adapt very well.

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**Mr VALENTINE** - What - the intensity of training?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, the intensity of training, a different routine and different running all the time, going to the track, nervousness and all that. If they have room, the owners take them home. If they don't, I try to spell them at my place. After that we start on a 13-second run and work our way back to an 18-second run and a 26-second run. Then we evaluate them on what they can do between those sectionals. There are cut-off times for pups - what they should run and what they shouldn't. If we think a dog is chasing and is not part of that group, we have to work out where we are going to go with that dog.

**CHAIR** - Does the owner make that decision?

**Mr BULLOCK** - At the end of the day I make that decision.

**CHAIR** - You make the call and you advise the owner?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, I give them their options - the dog has to leave my place, be put into GAP, or we put it down.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How do you keep them? You obviously have a whole series of kennels?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What sort of size?

**Mr BULLOCK** - They are all about 1 m by 2 m and all have 80 m runs off groups of them. We have about 10 runs for the dogs and they all go out in lots of three or four, all with American muzzles on. That's the golden rule, otherwise one gets hurt. It only takes a crow to drop a bone in the yard and you've got carnage on your hands.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In those kennels, do you have mats they sleep on or do they have their own mats that come with them?

**Mr BULLOCK** - When we start off and break them in, they sleep on boards, off the ground because of cleanliness, so you can wash out underneath them. They all sleep that far off the ground. You start off with the board straightaway because when you get them to a new place, they wreck everything - they tear the carpet up and drag jumpers around - because they are used to running free virtually for 12 months and all of a sudden you've locked them up in a 2 x 1 kennel. As they progress, they get carpet and jumpers. The good old race dogs get foam beds, doonas and so on because they don't wreck them. It's no good giving a pup a doona because two days later it's in the yard and is a mess.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They have access to water?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, 24 hours a day.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What sort of feeding regime do you do?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I feed them bread, horsemeat, beef, kibble, the whole lot.

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**Mr VALENTINE** - So they get a range of food?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. It depends on what sort of area. We cook up three times a week so they get a mixture of that as well.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Where do you get horses from?

**Mr BULLOCK** - People ring me up.

**CHAIR** - They drop them off?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Are these ex-race horses?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Everything, hacks.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They don't go through an abattoir?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No. I do it myself. The only reason I do it myself is the cost factor, plus I know what I am feeding my dog. I know where it has been and I ask them what it has had. If it is race horse is stays in the paddock for four to six weeks before it gets put down.

**CHAIR** - Why is that?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I don't know what they have given it. I am taking it on trust that they have given it nothing. I am making sure it has not had anything.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In terms of drugs?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. I am looking after my own interests.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They have plenty of feed and the horses are cared for?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. The fatter they are, the better they are.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Thanks for that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I wanted to talk a bit about the GAP program, Anthony. It appears to be something that is broadly supported by the industry and the public. They like to think the dogs go to a good home once their racing capacity has ceased. You talked a little bit about the fact there are some dogs that would never be suitable for that.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I think 50 per cent are nearly not suitable, and not because of their tendencies of racing, but the tendency of the dog. A lot of dogs are wreckers, chewers, dirty. Why would you give someone a dog which, when a hose is left in front of it you find it is in 30 pieces? Or the beds are on the floor all the time and they are torn to pieces. A lot of dogs will make it in GAP, in time. It is a long process. The good GAP dogs are not the good race dogs but the dogs that have had a lot of starts and a lot of travelling the Hobart. The longer they are in kennels, the more they settle down. They only want to be outside for 10

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minutes and then they want to be back in their bed. If you show them a couch, they will get on it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It has also been suggested in previous evidence that the greyhounds, when they are small, should be mingling with other animals to get them socialised, ready for when they have done their racing and then they are potentially ready for the GAP program. Can you walk me through how that might work?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I have a red heeler and two German shepherds. They have the front run of the property, they mingle with them. The biggest thing is, a greyhound feels predominantly, 'this is my yard, this is me' and if something new gets in there and it is a different world. Therefore, it depends where you introduce them because if a dog walks beside them they are happy to walk with the dog. If he takes off at 100 miles an hour, they want to chase him. It is as simple as that. If a car takes off, they want to chase the car. It is noise and sound which all matters to the dog. They can walk beside it. My pet dogs will not touch a thing. But I am sure if one goes down the bottom and there is 30 000 chooks from next-door running around my paddock, one dog only has to get out and my pet dogs are going to be in there too. It only takes one thing to spark it all and you have carnage.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is not necessarily that you could have them socialising at a puppy stage?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Not really because so many things go wrong all the way through their life, like a scarred muscle, and it wrecks their life, so you try to keep them in groups where they are used to greyhounds. You could rear them with Labradors, and it would not matter. When the time comes and there is something going on, they are a pack animal.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Anthony, what is your view on the suggestion that muzzles be allowed to be removed from dogs that have gone through GAP?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I think it would be good in theory. Most people's perception is that they are going to kill everything. That is the main issue with the normal run-of-the-mill person. One greyhound on its own would not cause that much damage, but if you have two or three, it is like a pack animal chasing sheep. It is the same thing, they revert back.

**CHAIR** - You don't think it depends on how they have been trained, though? I think this goes to Tania's question before about socialising dogs.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I don't think it does. It only takes one to get going and they all follow on. You can have the nicest, quietest dog in the world but it only takes one to take off and you have carnage. That's nothing to do with training. You can't stop them. I gave a dog probably 10 years ago now to my mate and it tore his niece to pieces. She was eight years old at the time and she started screaming and ran towards him. It was shocking.

**CHAIR** - That was in Victoria. But it is possible that that dog had been trained with live baits.

**Mr BULLOCK** - It is the activation, the handling of the mindset - dogs bite kids all the time. It's the same principle. If the kid is screaming, it is noise.

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**CHAIR** - I guess what Joan is asking though is, should greyhounds be treated differently from other dogs that are not muzzled?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Most people want muzzles on their dogs when they're pets because of the Rottweiler attacks and the German shepherd attacks on the street. The point being, when it becomes a pack environment, which is more dogs together, the more likely it is that something is going to go wrong.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Is the suggestion then, Anthony, that if a greyhound is on its own that has been through GAP, it is reasonable to have the muzzle off? Should it be in a space where, if there is more than one dog, it should have a muzzle on?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, it should have a muzzle on. That's the golden rule at my place. Muzzles are not safe because the racing muzzles are very flimsy and they break. We've got the big plastic American muzzles which take a fair bit more to bust. When there's more than one dog, anything can happen. They go in the same yard for six months and the next day you can get a dog torn to pieces.

**Mr BACON** - Do you think the industry is financially sustainable?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Two weeks ago I would have said yes.

**Mr BACON** - What do you think the change is going to do?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I think we've been led up the garden path in a way. If we're not sustainable, thoroughbreds and harness aren't either. I would say all three codes have to be going together, otherwise one supports the other. No-one ever gets enough stake money or funding. Our turnover is the highest of the three codes. We get less than what we put in but if we were racing for the thoroughbred money we'd have all the employment in greyhound racing. It's as simple as that. It's only that we get the lesser amount and therefore we are doing more for virtually nothing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Like your case with your volunteers?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, I would have two or three staff. It would save me going to the races - I had to get someone to come and take my dogs to Devonport because I have come here instead. I had to get a bloke to take my 17 dogs to Devonport, but if we were racing for better money we would have more staff because we could afford to pay for them. I have volunteers who like to come and pat the dogs and enjoy their day out. I also have a lot of people from Helpx - they come from China and stay at my place. They all go to the races and help me with the dogs.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - You have a big house then?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I have a big house and I have up to five people at a time from Taiwan, Hong Kong. They are all volunteers, they love the dogs. That is why we advertise the greyhound place. They go racing, look after the pups. They all come and stay and I've had probably 50 of them.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Do you give them training?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - No, they like the dogs so they come and enjoy three, or five or six weeks of looking after the greyhounds and helping with them.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So you give them accommodation and food in return for that?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, for helping me three or four hours a day and taking them to the races. They go with me to the track and the bullring. Whatever I do, they come with me.

**Mrs RYLAH** - So they are on a tourist visa?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. I think it's good for people to see greyhounds because they don't realise what a great animal they are in the environment they're in.

**Ms COURTNEY** - How long would they stay with you for?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Some of them stay for three or four months.

**CHAIR** - I am just wondering if we could go back to the terms of reference, which is more about the *Four Corners* program and the issues of live baiting and wastage.

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Given that you are out every week talking to people in the industry and across the state, what was the feeling after *Four Corners* went to air among the people that you were engaging with and the industry more broadly?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Ninety-nine per cent of the people were devastated. That's the simple word for it. What we saw on *Four Corners* was untoward because that was on the final Launceston (?) Cup night. I remember it vividly - we sat there, after looking after the dogs, and watched it. Brett Bravo was there at the time as well, and a couple of his owners. They were just in gall of all this filming that has gone on. They live in Victoria and they knew nothing of it as well because they live on the other side of town. Ninety-nine per cent of the industry was just gobsmacked.

**CHAIR** - Do you think there was a feeling among industry players that that program would change things for the industry to an unknown extent at that point?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Very much so, because it is pressure from outside, just like my bullring out at Brighton. Everyone drives past my bullring now. Everybody in Tasmania thinks I am down in the bullring doing what *Four Corners* has shown on there. Everyone - the person that is naive about racing now knows - knows where I live. Everyone knows there is a bullring down the bottom now. 'What is he doing down there?' It has opened the eyes of a lot of people. Even greyhound people were gobsmacked. The normal run-of-the-mill person would be absolutely devastated.

I think the uneducated - as in non-greyhound sort of people or racing people - now realise what is in a bullring, what is a straight, what could be happening. It becomes 'Are you doing? What are you doing?'. No one has attacked me on the street; no one has had a go at me; no one has done anything to me, and no one has attacked me personally. I think the

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general run-of-the-mill person would be more educated now than they were about what could be going on.

**CHAIR** - Do you think that the rolling consequence of the *Four Corners* program, which has - we have seen charges and convictions in the state. We have seen royal commissions, police investigations. Here we have a joint parliamentary inquiry. There has been a government review of animal welfare standards. Do you think ultimately it could be a positive for the industry, even though this is a very difficult time, because there might be systems and regulations put in place that give the community a level of confidence about what is happening in the industry?

**Mr BULLOCK** - That part I think 100 per cent of greyhound people agree with, bar the point of how it came out of Australia. That has virtually put greyhounds on the screens, no confidence in the greyhound industry at the moment because no one wants to breed. No one wants to do anything because it is overpowering because it is unforeseen territory, if you want one word -

**Mrs TAYLOR** - It has damaged your image?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Very much so. It is very disheartening to defend the undefendable. You cannot defend anybody that was seen on that TV. You don't need to defend them. They are in their own world, but the normal person cannot defend - what can I say to a person? I have no -

**Mrs TAYLOR** - It is by association?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. You are painted with the same brush. It is a bad stigma to be following because it is not good.

**CHAIR** - In in our work and as a committee, can you advise us on what you think the industry needs to do down here to restore that level of public confidence?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I think the powers that be need to make the penalties so severe that it is going to be over the top. It needs to be that way. The stewards or the welfare officers now need to have more power.

**CHAIR** - What sort of powers would you like to see them have?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I want to see powers where - most people work 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Most people work Monday to Friday. I think they should be there of a Sunday. I think they should be there - as I say, they ring my place all the time, outside the gate, but I think they need to be there at my place - instead of being there six times a year, I think they need to be there 20 times a year.

**CHAIR** - People who work in the industry are aware that at any time they could ring and speak to -

**Mr BULLOCK** - Any time, 24/7. As long as they know I'm home. That is the only downfall since this has come out. Some people think they have the right to walk all over your place

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when you're not there. Courtesy needs to be given back to the person. We go together and you look wherever you want to look, go wherever you want to go.

**CHAIR** - You have had an unannounced visit?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Mine are all unannounced.

**CHAIR** - No, you just said that you have had people walking over your property - is that just strangers or people from Racing Services Tasmania?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I do not know about strangers. The lady across the road is giving me hell. I think the stewards at some of the places have gone into people's places when they are not home and had a look about. That is a no-no. That is my own personal view. I think that you can ring the person and wait for the person - nothing is going to change - and find out where they are. I do not think anyone should be rung; I think they should be called upon.

**CHAIR** - Just turn up?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, then go forward. I think there should be a seven-day, whenever you want to be there, you be there.

**Mr BACON** - So you know that, say, on a Tuesday no stewards will be coming to your place because they are all at the races?

**Mr BULLOCK** - I am at the races too. I race three days a week everywhere. I would like to think that if the stewards want to come and see my place that they would not be there on a Tuesday. I also do not want them there at 5 o'clock on a Thursday.

**Mr BACON** - Could someone use that the other way to say, 'I know they are not going to come them so I can do whatever I want'?

**Mr BULLOCK** - The steward should know who is home and who is not home. They only have to look at the fields of today and they know who is where. This week, I think you will find that some of the stewards have turned up on race days when the person is not racing, which I think is a good thing. The more people see what is going on and the more scrutiny that you are under, it is great for the industry. I do not think there is anything to be hidden.

**CHAIR** - If you are doing the right thing.

**Mr BULLOCK** - Now you have to be seen as doing everything right because people are watching you everywhere - you have the neighbours, you have people across the road, you have people driving past. I am fearful of my neighbour having 30 chooks - more than 30 chooks, they run all over my place - because if one of my pet dogs goes down and attacks them, I am going to have 50 phone calls from the RSPCA when they drive past. I have gates locked everywhere so the dogs cannot get out down to her chooks.

**Mr BACON** - You talked before about increased penalties, were you talking about lifetime bans?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - More, full extent of the law. What is life term, it is 10 years, 15 years, it should be 30 years - it does not matter what it is, it should be full extent.

**CHAIR** - I think the maximum penalty is five to 10, and it has been increased to 10.

**Mr BULLOCK** - It should be 15; I do not care what it is.

**Ms COURTNEY** - Your suggestion that the stewards should come around more regularly and at odd hours, is that because you perceive that there are other people within the industry that have things going on outside those normal hours or is it more just for the public confidence so they can say the stewards have been around 60 times this year?

**Mr BULLOCK** - It is public confidence because I think people think that the stewards are doing nothing. What I am saying about odd hours is I think there is more to it than just bullring and straight tracks. It is welfare for dogs and everything. There is clean up, there is management, everything has to be spotless, everything has to be perfect. If it's Sunday and we'll have the day off and we will leave all that rubbish over there, no steward will be here on a Sunday - well, I think it's everything. It's not just live baiting -live baiting is 10 per cent of it as far as I am concerned. It is the rest, it is the welfare of the dog, it is where the dogs are supposed to be, whatever.

**Ms COURTNEY** - Do you have concerns about the welfare of dogs under other trainers?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, because the stewards, if they are doing their job, it is their job to make sure everything is right. The stewards have the power to deal with that. I know where most people live, but I have never been on half the people's properties. The stewards have been on everybody's property so therefore they are the regulators and they are the ones who should be putting the pressure on the person to make sure everything is correct.

**Mrs RYLAH** - I would like to go back to the earlier comment about the neighbour allowing chooks on your property. That is potentially a provocation in the sense that it is putting at risk a normal behaviour that your dogs might participate in, in chasing the chooks and killing the chooks. Have you asked your neighbour to contain their chooks?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, on numerous occasions. Occasionally a couple of my dogs have got her chooks. I used to have a chain-mesh fence across the bottom of my paddock, but I had to put a colorbond fence up because of my pups going through and trying to get over the fence and trying to dig under the fence. I put a colorbond fence right through the bottom - split my property virtually in half - because there are 30 dogs outside that could get over the fence, could dig under the fence. It's difficult for them to see anything. She also has 10 geese and a little dog that runs all over the place. They won't come to my place because they're scared of the German shepherds. I ring here and say, 'Your chooks are running all over the place'. Theoretically they are not supposed to be on my land. I have filled out the form and they ask me how my chooks I have, and I've got 30 or 50 of them but they are hers next door. It is very hard when she says they are free range and what damage they're doing.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Anthony, what legal grounds do you have to enforce to keep her chooks away from where clearly you have a greyhound training business?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - I've got nothing. If I am going to argue with all my neighbours, I'm going to end up with a headache. I keep the peace and I can change something, which I've done. I put a Colorbond fence through the middle of it down the bottom, hoping the dogs don't get out. My place is right on the highway and everyone can see down through my paddock and it's very difficult to explain to someone when there are four dogs onto a chook.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They are pretty good jumpers, aren't they?

**Mr BULLOCK** - They can dig as well as they can jump. I've done my best to keep everything at bay, but actions do happen.

**CHAIR** - When we went to the racing meet last night, which was a very interesting experience and we were treated very hospitably, it was a good opportunity to see how the industry works. One of the things I noticed as the dogs were coming in, being inspected by the vets, weighed and then put into the kennel, was that some dogs have a loss of hair around their haunches. In fact quite a significant number of them did. Do you know what that is or why that happens?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Some say it is underactive thyroid, some say it is overactive thyroid, but most of it is due to stress from racing. Once that dog retires or has three or four weeks off the hair starts to grow again. Some dogs are very nervous going to the races. Once you lay them up in the trailer they can lose a kilo; some lose nothing. It is very difficult when you go to Hobart. It's their own stress levels. Every dog is different. It is a 13-hour round trip to Hobart. You load up at half past one and we don't get home until half past two or a quarter to three.

**CHAIR** - How many dogs would you take to Hobart for a meet?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Twenty or 21.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Can we talk about the trailers you carry them in and how they are separated.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I put mine in twos only because my dogs have been in twos all their life. The same dogs go together all the time. I have four different kennel boxes and the dogs that go out together in the one yard normally double together. My personal opinion is that they travel better; they get in the trailer and lay down and go to sleep. One on their own, and they go around and around and lose more weight. They know each other and they have muzzles on, so in my opinion they travel better. I normally take them to Hobart three or four times and trial them before I race them down there due to the learning procedure. The first time they go there they don't trial very well. The second time they go better, the third time they go better again. That's just the way it is.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How do you handle that trip? Do they have water on the way down?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, they have no water from the time they leave and once they get there they race. I don't give mine much to drink because it goes straight through them and makes them stressed and they lose vital body fluids. I give mine limited. They get a massive drink of water with their tea when they get home, so they get rehydrated overnight.



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**Mr VALENTINE** - So you put them in the trailer, take them down, they race -

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes. The same as you saw last night. Then we load them back up.

**Mr VALENTINE** - They get water after the race?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, after the race. Dogs don't drink a lot of water - only after exercise. You can put water in there all day and might not touch it for a week.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Jumping back to the sustainability of the industry, it has been suggested that for most of the big races we have in Tasmania, our mainland counterparts come over and take the big dollars often and head back. Is that good to have that or should we have more general races for our own Tasmanian dogs and not as much big prize money for those key meets.

**Mr BULLOCK** - It is nice to win a \$75 000 race, but if we can't sustain it, it has to go. It is as simple as that because at the moment they are talking about eight races, one half-stake race, which is not going to help anyone because now you are going to have more dogs and less races. That is not going to help anyone either. As a part of the Launceston committee, we put a submission forward try to reduce the three biggest races in Tasmania and pull stake money back where there is a 10-event card for everyone to win three times a week, because more people are going to win more money to stay in the industry to keep going in the industry because you try to spread it out so everyone has a chance of winning something - rather than give \$140 000 to two people.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - What do you charge for agistment at your place?

**Mr BULLOCK** - A lot of dogs are at my place and only eight get paid for. There are eight pups in the yard and for the rest I cop the loss.

**CHAIR** - In order to cover the loss of feeding them, you need to win.

**Mr BULLOCK** - I need to win and turn my dogs over to keep moving on. I could have a pup there for 18 months and get nothing. I am not going keep it and he is not going to pay me. Most of the dogs I put in GAP myself, pay for it myself, if they are nice dog.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Say, if we had a dog agisted with you and it won a race, you would take your percentage cut?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, 50 per cent. Most people get first and second and the trainer keeps the rest under a broad spectrum. For some I keep seconds because they have never put in to keep the dog for six or seven months.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - What would it cost to buy a good dog in the first place, on average?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Until the live baiting hit town, a reasonable pup at four months would cost you \$4 000 to \$5 000.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And now?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - Now you can buy whatever you want for \$2 000. I try to advise my new owners, I have a lot who ring up, that instead of buying a pup for \$2 000 to \$3 000, you can buy two and it is going you \$6 000, but you have a rear them somewhere. You are better off buying a dog for \$6 000 that can earn you money tomorrow and turn your money over and go that way. The biggest problem is, you have too many owners or you don't have enough owners.

**CHAIR** - Why do you think there has been that very significant fall in the price of a dog, simply because *Four Corners* went to air? What has changed?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Because of the uncertainty of greyhound racing. A lot of places are going to be closed. Half of it is untruths that Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria are going to close. The biggest thing in Tasmania is that we are probably the weakest state in numbers of people and dogs, whereas Victoria has 30 tracks and thousands of trainers. We only have 100 trainers.

**CHAIR** - About 100 in Tasmania?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Maximum, and getting older and older. I am probably the third or fourth youngest and I am 50.

**CHAIR** - Do you think there is a generational shift in the industry in Tasmania, so you are seeing fewer people going into it, which is also another issue around its viability?

**Mr BULLOCK** - It is because the owners are not worried about the dog. The trainers are worried about the dog. The owners are only worried about a good dog. The trainer is worried about all his dogs. You have a different split. You can get 20-year-olds to buy a dog but you will not get 20-year-olds to train a dog. My partner and I spend 100 hours a week each.

**CHAIR** - I think it was Graeme Barber who said that it is not a business that you go into if you want to make a lot of money, and for some people it's a hobby. Would you agree with that?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Definitely. Probably 90 per cent of the trainers in Tasmania breed to race and to own their own dogs. There are only probably three trainers in the state that have their own dogs and take other people's dogs. I am one of them, of course. It becomes a big thing because you have had this pup all his life until he is 18 months old, and he is either no good or broken down, and you have spent all this money to get something that at the end of the day no-one wants. The other thing that is happening with the GAP thing is that 75 per cent of the dogs now are black.

**CHAIR** - Why is that?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Because they are the dominant state dogs. If you are going to have a line of pet dogs and you have 15 black ones, it is very hard to get rid of 15 black dogs when they all look the same.

**Mrs RYLAH** - What has the black dog bit got to do with anything?

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**Mr BULLOCK** - When you are trying to re-home a dog, the normal person outside doesn't want a black dog.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Don't they?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No. They want a pretty white and blue one, or a nice blue one. Most of the dogs are predominantly black. There are 30 pups in my yard. There is one fawn and the rest are black.

**CHAIR** - Black dogs actually have a bleaker outlook as greyhounds?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Yes, because they want a pretty one. They do not care whether they can run fast or not. It makes no difference.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Remember we were saying that last night ourselves.

**Mr BULLOCK** - It becomes people's perception again of what they want, because normally a greyhound in a GAP situation is the last dog in the house, not the first dog in the house. We have two cats, two canaries and two goldfish. Now we want a greyhound. It has to fit in with the others, not the others fit in with the greyhound.

**CHAIR** - Have you ever heard of vitamin P?

**Mr BULLOCK** - Only if I read it in the transcript.

**CHAIR** - No-one that you have spoken to in the industry talks about vitamin P being possum live baits?

**Mr BULLOCK** - No, never, not in my life. I laughed when I read it. If you asked 95 per cent of the people, they wouldn't even know what you're talking about, unless they read the transcript.

**CHAIR** - Mr Bullock, thank you for your testimony today.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

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**Dr KIM BARRETT**, ASSOCIATE VETERINARY SURGEON, LAUNCESTON VETERINARY CLINIC, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Dr Barrett, we have received your submission. A committee hearing is a proceeding in Parliament and 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 outside Parliament. It applies to ensure Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements are repeated or referred to outside the confines of parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing and there are members of the media present today. This means your evidence is likely to 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 to us as a committee and give an explanation prior to giving the relevant evidence.

**Dr BARRETT** - I would like to commend to you the recent Greyhound Racing New South Wales release of that landmark report which details best practice and care for education and training of racing greyhounds. Have you seen that?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Dr BARRETT** - It approaches 90 pages, and is very thought-provoking. It underpins some of the challenges facing the industry and offers some solutions and directions moving forward, as well as a lot of controversy. I also brought along, with permission from the author - Karen Dawson, who was part of it, and who presented at our Australian Greyhound Veterinary Association conference - lecture notes from that conference of 2014. It is a brief reading. Some of her opinions were different from Anthony's and mine but I think it is there.

The challenge for the industry is to identify what current industry practices need changing, and what are the standards at the moment, and how each area can be improved, as well as what is good and what does not need to be changed. Remember that, listening to Anthony, there is a huge knowledge base in the industry. Some of it is carried on through generations, other knowledge is new stuff, but it's there. I think all areas of the industry in Tasmania want to shift the average standard towards more excellence. On an individual dog basis, the individual greyhound, I think we should aspire to that and all having the best rearing, the best pre-training and post-racing life possible. I agree with Anthony that the reality for some dogs is that their inherent strong prey drive limits their ability to be re-homed in certain situations, but if you go back to that working dog alliance thing, that is trying to shift that so that more dogs will be fit to go there afterwards.

Some of the issues facing the industry are the number of dogs we need to keep the industry sustainable in Tasmania without excessive dog numbers and acknowledge there is a wide variety of dog trainers in Tasmania, some who have one or two dogs - and those dogs mean their lives - and others like Anthony who are the big trainers. Bigger kennels may have less socialised dogs due to low numbers but there are always exceptions to that generalisation.

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The other thing my boss said is that nowadays trainers aren't in the public domain as much as they were. Years ago you would see greyhound trainers walking dogs in the streets, whereas now that is a rarity rather than a common thing. Greyhounds are elite athletes. They are bred to run and chase and have their own set of problems but generally they are healthy and genetically sound.

The cost the owners and trainers put into the industry in specialised food, vitamins, shampoos, transport, kennelling, trial costs, cost of vehicles, trainers, petrol, veterinary fees, disinfectants, detergents, bedding, flea treatments, worm treatments, vaccinations, breeding straws - there is a considerable time and financial commitment and emotional commitment by people participating in the industry.

One of Tasmania's great strengths is the support shown to others within the industry. Smaller trainers help bigger trainers when they have multiple entries on race nights. As Anthony said, the smaller trainers will help him kennel his dogs and catch his dogs. Many of the successful trainers share their knowledge with people starting out in the industry and in times of crisis members of the industry are there to help. I think strong race clubs, an excellent GAP program, dedicated integrity services and everyone focused on increasing the standard in the industry and move towards best practice is something to aim for.

**CHAIR** - Are you prepared to table a copy of the brief you were speaking about - the 2014 speech?

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, I got permission from her. There is the paper on welfare and its impact on performance. There is also 'A practitioners' guide to working dog welfare', which is published in a journal. It applies to guide dogs, kelpies and dogs such as that.

**CHAIR** - We already have that, and I think the RSPCA sent us the New South Wales recommendations as well.

Kim, thank you for your presentation. You are talking about current practices that need changing. What do you think those practices are and how far is the industry from best practice?

**Dr BARRETT** - It is hard to know where to start. I suppose you could start by worming dogs regularly from that six-week period to four months and continue through. You could start by making sure poo is picked up every day in the dog yards. They are just minute things that all contribute. Socialisation, I think - whereas different trainers will disagree - so the dogs are exposed to a variety of stresses so they are more able to cope in the racing situation, that they are broken into the lead early, broken into starting boxes, having the rough and tumble in the race yards, that type of thing. Listening to some of Anthony's comments, they have to be bred to run, so they have to have a free space to run but they have to have their mates with them to learn to bump and bingle and all those things. Nutrition is another thing. There are heaps of things. Training properly, making sure they have athletic pre-training. It is like saying, how do you put an Olympic swimmer into the Olympics. There is a huge amount of background that goes on behind them.

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**CHAIR** - These are some of the things you are talking about and it is has been about how greyhounds are kept and trained, in part. You talked about the challenges facing the industry, what are they?

**Dr BARRETT** - Image is something. That *Four Corners* show has destroyed the image of the industry in the public's perception. I don't think racing turnover is down. You might have the figures for betting turnover. I don't think that is challenged and someone would know that. The other challenge is that financially, there is money for the trainers to make money and that is sustainable. The challenge is that more dogs are re-homed after their racing is finished and that it is an equal playing field to present what Tasracing called the product across the state.

**CHAIR** - How much of a challenge do you think the amount of wastage in the industry is for the industry?

**Dr BARRETT** - More so than it was five years ago because it is out there in the public domain now. There is probably less wastage in the greyhound industry than there would be in the pet dog industry.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Really?

**Dr BARRETT** - The figures from RSPCA Australia and what you see are quite concerning and if that is a societal impact of the value of pets as disposable commodities, I don't know.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is a really good point. The difference, I believe, is that many of the greyhounds that are put down are put down in a healthy condition, whereas many of the dogs in the general population that have been ill-cared-for or whatever, are put down in a poor state or are not looked after as well. To me, there is a difference. If you have a purebred pedigree animal that cannot make the grade or it is past its use-by date, it is still not damaged, it is still reasonably healthy and in good condition and looked after, until they decide to euthanase it.

I was really appreciative of how you described draining, even though you don't like the term and I understand that, but that helped me because now I understand what it was about. There is a difference between that and dogs at the RSPCA that have been abandoned and left - like the vet said last night about the labradoodles that have parvo because they have been ill-treated. It is a different -

**Dr BARRETT** - I have been practising for 34 years and I can remember a particularly horrific day in my life at the Canine Defence League in Launceston where we put down 34 dogs in one day and all of those were healthy and not ill-kempt. Society has moved on from that now, in that we are seeing less of what happened 25 or 28 years ago, so the dogs that are put down at places like the RSPCA are put down because of temperament, the fact they will not make it, the fact they are black dogs or whatever. That is what the industry has to work towards. We have seen this attitude change over 25 years.

The industry needs to be sustainable as much as it can so the dogs that have done well racing and are fit to be re-homed, should be re-homed. They have to be re-homed well because Anthony said that his niece had been injured. With re-homing, people have taken greyhounds without going through GAP and similar bad things have happened - with other

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fluff, not with people. The people who are running the GAP program have to get educated at TAFE to get their behaviour/welfare-type thing. Susan Gittus in this state is particularly excellent. So they know the dogs that are going to make it.

**Mr VALENTINE** - With respect to re-homing them, who is best placed to decide the suitability of a dog for re-homing? You are saying that the -

**Dr BARRETT** - In our state, Susan Gittus. I know she has done a TAFE course. She runs the umbrella of GAP. I guess there are finite numbers that go through that, but the dogs that come out of GAP have been assessed, they have been socialised, they have been fostered out to foster care before they actually get released to the people that have them. That is not to say that other things don't work, because we have re-homed little puppies that have had broken legs, for example, and they have been fine. Just occasionally you get dogs that are not properly assessed, with really strong prey drives that really can create some havoc in the community without being properly assessed.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How many people out there are doing re-homing, apart from Susan Gittus, that you know of?

**Dr BARRETT** - I know a few go through Brightside. Some people will re-home them themselves privately. I have one client who has been in the industry for over 30 years who will not have their dogs in GAP or anywhere because they want to know where they have gone when they have finished racing. They would rather have them put down rather than release them into the general population. They will keep some as pets.

**CHAIR** - Why do you think that is? Intuitively you would think that someone who cared about dogs and loved greyhounds would want it to go to a good home rather than end its life at the age of four.

**Dr BARRETT** - This person would be 80-plus and it's attitudinal. For them, knowing that their dog is in a safe place, albeit not here any more, makes sense.

**Mrs RYLAH** - I have had experience of that with horse owners in Tassie, where they have had a very bad experience with an animal they have cared for - giving it to somebody and then it gets abused. They will never go back there.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Just on the word 'draining', because I mentioned that it could be somewhere in our report we will mention the practice and what it is about. I noticed you said that as an officer, 'I take great offence to this description of draining because it gives the impression that it is not being euthanised. It gives the impression of a healthy dog that we take all the blood out of so it dies.' That is what it gives.

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, and I wasn't aware of that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Can you come up with a better term? If you could come up over the next two or three weeks when you are at home saying, 'That would be a better term to describe that' -

**Mrs RYLAH** - But is it a blood donation?

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**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, but the 'draining' -

**Mrs RYLAH** - But it is still a blood donation.

**CHAIR** - It's a blood donation.

**Dr BARRETT** - There is a difference. Dogs like my own pet dog that you take blood out of, he walks away. But these ones really with strong prey drives, they don't walk away.

**Mrs RYLAH** - It is still a blood donation.

**Dr BARRETT** - It is a blood donation, but it is a finite blood -

**CHAIR** - You talk about a dog with a strong prey drive, and that is one reason that they are euthanised. But you must have come across dogs that are being euthanised because they are not fast enough, or they are non-performers, or they have just got old. So it is not only because they have a strong prey drive.

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes. Sometimes people say, 'Well, I have waited to get it in the GAP program for over six months, and I cannot wait any longer.'

**CHAIR** - That comes down to the resourcing of the GAP program to take on more greyhounds.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If you have come across a better term for that, that would be helpful. When I read that, I went 'Oh ...'. You explain it really well, but I can understand why it doesn't sound good.

**Dr BARRETT** - I do not know where the origin of the term came from.

**CHAIR** - The first time I heard it used was the RSPCA nationally, I think, and Animals Australia. I think it is a term that is used by -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - But when they use it in -

**CHAIR** - They didn't use it in *Four Corners*.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, but when they used it - it was either the RSPCA or the other one - they actually used it more in a derogatory manner, I think, than in a scientific explanation, 'This is why-' and, 'This is how it's done-' sort-of-approach. It was more of an emotive term.

**Dr BARRETT** - You would expect them to.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, because that is their mandate. I would have thought a better way to explain it would be to say, 'Well, the dog is being euthanised, but its blood can be used to save other animals because it is good quality blood.'

**CHAIR** - The issue is the volume of dogs that are going to be euthanised and the opportunity to take blood from them that is later used. Isn't it the volume of dogs that are wasted rather than the practice of blood transfusions?



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**Dr BARRETT** - The percentage of dogs that are euthanised compared with the ones that are used for blood is probably very small, so you might have 10 dogs euthanised and only use one for blood.

**Mr BACON** - What drives the high euthanasia rates is not the blood?

**CHAIR** - No, that is a by-product.

**Dr BARRETT** - Traditionally years ago we used to use RSPCA dogs as blood donors that were going to be euthanased. That is going back 25 or 30 years. Similarly, when I went through vet school, there were dogs for blood donations then that would come out of the RSPCA, but as a policy they went, 'No we are not doing this anymore, we cannot condone this.' Again, that is attitudinal change.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - If we can get back to the terms of reference. Thank you for your submission - it was really good. I loved the bit at the end. You obviously love greyhounds.

**Dr BARRETT** - I don't have one. I have five free range rabbits and two unsocialised idiot kelpies, but as an employee of the club, I am not allowed to own a greyhound.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I know people can only give their own opinion from their own knowledge, but we have heard from most people that they do not believe that practice of live baiting is happening in Tasmania. Do you have any knowledge of it?

**Dr BARRETT** - I have no knowledge of live baiting happening in Tasmania. Again, as my colleague Sally Anne Rector, who was here and did the AVA line, said 'You would be naive to say I can 100 per cent say it is not happening.'

**Mrs TAYLOR** - We cannot guarantee it is not happening because we do not know.

**Dr BARRETT** - But I have no knowledge of it.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - You do not know of anybody who does have knowledge of it? Nobody has come to you and said, 'I know but I cannot give you evidence'?

**Dr BARRETT** - No, no one has said that.

**CHAIR** - Has a dog ever come into your vet, a greyhound that is exhibiting behaviour to make you suspect it has been trained like that?

**Dr BARRETT** - I do not know what would make you suspect that it has been, if that makes sense. I have been canvassing trainers, talking about bullrings. For someone like Anthony, bullrings are crucial to his training methods, yet I have had other trainers say, 'I don't need bullrings to break dogs in, you do not need it.' There are two different weightings of opinions there. In Anthony's situation, you need the enclosed bullring because he has such an open area and the dogs could just go anywhere; other trainers are more isolated and they say, 'No, we do not need a bullring. I will break my dogs in the way I break them in.'

**Mrs TAYLOR** - To some degree, the reputation of the greyhound racing industry and of trainers has been seriously damaged. I can understand that anybody who currently owns

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greyhounds or trains greyhounds or races greyhounds would be looking over their shoulders saying, 'Who is going to criticise me next?' As a society we should be fair - if it is not happening, and we have no evidence that it is, we should not denigrate the people who are doing the right thing by association.

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, but it is going to happen.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - We as politicians understand how that works. None of us actually flies in helicopters from one thing to another. It's important. As a politician, when people say that about politicians, I say, 'Hang on, I do not know any politician in the Tasmanian Parliament that does anything like that.' It needs to be about justice and fairness.

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, I agree because 99.9 per cent of the industry is so passionate about the industry, and they are aware of the implications. That *Four Corners* program was horrific, especially with those piglets. I was in Sydney at a veterinary conference at the time and it was bizarre the next day. No-one cared because they weren't involved in the industry. It was a specific medicine conference and for them greyhounds weren't on their radar at all, but for me it was so distressing. My sister is on the board of the New South Wales RSPCA and she couldn't stay in the same room.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How often in your experience do you come across a greyhound that you have concerns about with its welfare and the way it is being looked after at the trainer's or owner's property?

**Dr BARRETT** - Rarely. I would check 80 dogs on race night. There are the gold-standard dogs that you could eat your dinner off their coats, and there are others that are slightly woolly, not quite as beautiful, but they're all well fed, well cared for, flea-free, immunised.

**Mr VALENTINE** - What would you look for, the dog exhibiting stress perhaps? Is there a particular thing you look for?

**Dr BARRETT** - I suppose you would look for ribs, activity, light in their eyes.

**CHAIR** - Cowering behaviours?

**Dr BARRETT** - No, they behave happily all the time. Greyhounds are positive, happy dogs.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - It was interesting last night when we were at the race meeting. They were all wagging their tails.

**Dr BARRETT** - Some are more social than others. I had a GAP dog in last week that when you walked in the room it immediately interacted with you, but a lot of the race dogs don't do that. That is the transition you have to make from the race dogs to the pet dogs, so that you walk in a room and they come to you - though a lot of the pet dogs we see at work don't do that either. Because race dogs have to be within a kilo of their previous race weight, you don't see unkempt race dogs because they wouldn't make the grade. You can't have a dog that is down 1.1 kilos because the trainer is fined and they are scratched from the race. So it's in the trainer's best interest to present a dog within that weight range because that is its peak capacity to race.

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**Mr VALENTINE** - We were hearing earlier about greyhound pups coming into a trainer and being kept on boards rather than bedding because they wreck their bedding. Does that concern you?

**Dr BARRETT** - Those types of dogs would be coming from the rearing yards and in the rearing yards they would not necessarily have beds. They might have a shelter and they would be sleeping on grass or hay, so for them the boards wouldn't make any difference. Gradually they move up to better bedding, but not all. Anthony's practices aren't the same. If people had only raised a few dogs and had been introduced to the beds or the yards at an earlier age, they may not exhibit those behaviours towards their beddings because they would have been used to having bedding in their lives earlier. Would you bring the dogs in and out from five months of age, like bringing into a kennel area for a week and then back out to the rearing yards and then two months later back in again? They are the little things that may change that.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I guess I'm thinking of particularly cold nights with dogs in a kennel that might be tin or boards.

**Dr BARRETT** - Have you seen many kennel blocks?

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, I haven't. They are all air-conditioned, are they?

**Dr BARRETT** - Some are but a lot aren't, but they are really sheltered. Some have heaters, some have wood fires, some don't have ventilation. Others are fairly austere, but they are all fairly well insulated. Compared to a lot of working dogs on farms, their conditions are so much better.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So they wouldn't be being stressed by not having enough warmth?

**Dr BARRETT** - No, usually not. Most of the dogs that come into the kennel are rugged or double rugged. They wear these sort of beanie rugs that tie up around them.

**CHAIR** - Kim, one of the issues that has been raised with us is about the level of education and training and best practice animal welfare standards for industry participants. In your submission you say: 'Experts in greyhound behaviour and welfare should be defining best practice and that knowledge should underpin education of industry participants and regulatory authorities.' How far do you think we are from that ideal?

**Dr BARRETT** - A way, but it was starting five years ago. Greyhound Victoria put out glossy brochures on rearing, breeding and training. They were 15 to 20 pages, and that was perhaps five to six years ago.

**CHAIR** - How would that filter through down here? Was that information available to the Tasmanian industry?

**Dr BARRETT** - I don't know.

**CHAIR** - What level of engagement with the industry is there on animal welfare standards?

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**Dr BARRETT** - They are defined. Under the rules of racing there are standards and there is a publication out which you can get from the LGRC office. Now there is an audit. The trainers have to go through their training or be ticked off on what they are doing. But much more can be done. You need experts like Karen Dawson - even people like Anthony - being involved at ground roots level, and other people, to aim for best practice.

I recently was involved with a lady who is doing a research project about parasites in greyhounds in Australasia, and she had funding from Greyhounds Australia. She took 135 faecal samples from greyhounds on the north-west coast. She also did Hunter Valley and Victoria. It will take her two months to analyse the faecal samples. She did a questionnaire for all the trainers and that showed up the ignorance or misinformation on worming programs and things like that. It is little things like that that bring feedback from that knowledge that needs to be distributed to the greyhound racing industry so they can do something like improve their worming practices. Then there are things like improving nutritional practices and improving training practices. The training methods of, say, elite swimmers or elite bike riders, how much have they changed in the last five or 10 years? It is also recovery of the animals -

**CHAIR** - And handling as well.

**Dr BARRETT** - And handling, yes.

**CHAIR** - Would you like to see the Office of Racing Integrity, or Tasracing, but I am assuming it would come from what used to be Racing Services Tasmania, more actively engage with trainers and owners about animal welfare standards or best practice in the industry?

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, I think so. I was talking with one of the stewards one night - they were talking about kennel inspections, and going around at any time - and what he wanted was someone from the industry to go with them. I do not know how that would work - random trainers or random breeders going to other people's places. They would have some idea of what they were seeing.

**CHAIR** - So it is a bit like a knowledge-sharing exercise?

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, but also an audit going back to the industry.

**CHAIR** - One of the other issues you raise is about data collection, and some of the problems we have with understanding how many dogs are born, where they end up and whether they are euthanased - the whole-of-life journey of a potential racing dog or a racing dog. Can you tell us where you think the big data deficiencies are?

**Dr BARRETT** - In Tassie, specifically, it is Racing Services sharing data with Tasracing, or vice versa. Tasracing might be collecting data that is not shared with Racing Services, so that could be an issue but you would need to specifically talk to them.

**CHAIR** - We have Tony Murray coming in this afternoon.

**Dr BARRETT** - I think there was some issue about dogs coming in from interstate, like the wastage type situation from second-class interstate dogs coming in and ending their racing careers here rather than the Tasmanian-bred ones. I don't know if you could tease that data

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out. I think the losses from zero to 12 months would be negligible. The 18-month period is the key area because no-one wants to call it quits on a puppy up to 15 months of age. That is where your big investment is in money terms.

You can define which tracks the injuries are coming from and I know Tasracing is collecting a lot of data on that. Having experienced dogs racing so that young dogs are not going to the track not being prepared to go around the circle tracks or the U-turn tracks. There are many areas.

**CHAIR** - Mike might have a question here on tracks because of some of the discussion we have been having about the north-west track, the spike in numbers and I know you addressed it in your submission.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That question has been answered very well. Some statistics showed the Devonport track has more injuries - not serious ones, but the number was higher than for Launceston and Hobart. It was mentioned it might have been the course design or the track design and the guys mentioned last night there was one corner. Have you guys discussed that or has that been an issue?

**Dr BARRETT** - It is always a concern, all the time. If the camber of the track is out, it can be bad. The mixture of sand and gravel versus fats and clay can be an issue. It can be an issue when the weather is really dry and the track cannot get enough water on it. There are so many things involved in track design.

I remember the Launceston track had a few issues going back years and they had an expert over from Sandown to come through and look at things, and things improved much where the starting boxes are, and the safety rail. It is not my area of expertise but it is multifactorial.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You may not be able to answer this and it might be one for later. If a novice trainer wants to enter the industry - sometimes they buy the dog and they want to do the right thing - are there any standards they have to reach or any industry qualification they must have, or they show up and say, here is my dog. Is there any program they have to go through to become a registered trainer?

**Dr BARRETT** - Racing Services won't licence them as an owner-trainer unless they go through a certain number of hoops. Tony Murray is coming in and should be able to answer that question directly. In terms of a direct racing course or learning program, I don't know of one.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is interesting why they call them bullrings, isn't it? If they were called a puppy play pen or a training yard or something - but it is called a bullring and we know why it is called that, but it gives it a not nice connotation to start with. It is a training yard for greyhounds, to a certain extent.

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, and I was pretty naive in that I didn't really know they existed until about five years ago. It is not your area of vision. It is like with the draining - not a great image but it is the language.

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**Mr GAFFNEY** - People said it is hidden and that is to protect the dogs inside training. People immediately think there is something untoward happening behind that closed area.

**CHAIR** - I guess they think that because *Four Corners* proved that in some circumstances it is.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It then tars the whole with the same brush - and that is why the dogs have gone from \$4 000 to \$2 000.

**Dr BARRETT** - I guess in five years' time there might be CCTV in real time on every bullring in Australia.

**CHAIR** - How many bullrings have you seen in Tasmania in your time? How many are you aware that exist here?

**Dr BARRETT** - I suppose two, which is terrible really; I must have clients with them. I have been to Anthony's place many times but I've never been down to the bullring. I have one other good client and I didn't know he had a bullring. I have been to his place about 100 times over 34 years but didn't realise there was a bullring there, because it's not in your vision.

**Mrs RYLAH** - But there are also round yards for horses and that's the same thing. There would be hundreds and hundreds of them, I would imagine.

**Dr BARRETT** - For me to say I know of two bullrings is a bit naive, I suppose.

**CHAIR** - We have had evidence put to us that there are no private training tracks in Tasmania. The distinction has been made to the committee between what we are calling a bullring and the trial tracks that are at the registered sites that are monitored by Racing Services Tasmania.

We had the RSPCA present to us and prepare a submission. Mr McGinty, who is the chief inspector of the RSPCA in Tasmania, put it to us that live baiting is probably occurring in Tasmania - and I think it is just an extension of saying it is naive to think it is not happening in Tasmania. The RSPCA's issue is with the evidence test for live baiting. After *Four Corners* went to air we understand they visited nine properties and prepared files. In Mr McGinty's view it was 'possible' that live baiting was happening at those sites but the threshold for evidence was too high. Would you agree with Mr McGinty when he says live baiting is 'probably' happening in Tasmania - and that is a quote from his *Hansard*?

**Dr BARRETT** - What does he mean by 'evidence test'?

**CHAIR** - We are going to communicate with the RSPCA a bit more about what is in those files, but some materials were found that, to him, indicated the possibility of live baiting but he didn't think they would lead to a prosecution, so they wouldn't hold up in court.

**Dr BARRETT** - Materials being carcasses. All I can say is old Bill - whose name I have forgotten - had a dog called 'Sheila's Theresa' who won the national distance title. He used to feed his dogs on roadkill - and this is going back 15 years. He was an eccentric old guy from Elizabeth Town who would feed his dogs on roadkill. I imagine some of them

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probably still feed the dogs on weird things, but some of them might use carcasses to stir up the puppies. Is that evidence for live baiting or evidence of practices that don't involve live baiting?

**CHAIR** - It's impossible for us to say.

**Mr BACON** - You're not supposed to use any animal tissue now at all, are you, from 1 July.

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, as of 1 July, but frequently they would be around. Now there is a line in the sand drawn that there are no carcasses there, so there is no excuse anymore to have them on the property.

**Mr BACON** - Mr Bullock said he thought things had changed about 10 or 15 years ago and that it probably was going on at the time. Did you have the same impression?

**Dr BARRETT** - I have no direct evidence of it. If you talk to some people who have been around for 50 years, it probably would have occurred then. It was a live coursing situation then and people used to go to the greyhounds in suits. I guess all you can do is move on and from now there is no excuse, it just cannot happen because the industry will be undermined and won't exist.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I wanted to round out my own knowledge in terms of the involvement of vets in the whole process. What is the involvement of a vet in the regulatory scene and how do you avoid any conflicts of interest with regard that? Do vets not have any involvement in regulation, in having to sign off to say that dogs are well cared for before they get a licence?

**Dr BARRETT** - Zero in that. Our practice is unique in that we are ear-branding stewards - identification stewards. I don't know how that has evolved but it has always been the case. When litters are born, at around 12 to 14 weeks of age they get identified. Their colours are marked up, their toenails, testicles, mouths are identified. They are ear tattooed in one ear now -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Vets do that, or someone else?

**Dr BARRETT** - Identification stewards do the ear tattoos and then they can go to other vets to get microchipped after they have been identified. But we can do the whole thing together. Years ago puppies would just get marked up and then at 18 months of age when they are due to be raced they would get ear-branded. But now they only get ear branded in one ear and microchipped. That is the identification. Sometimes the microchips don't work. That is our involvement there.

In terms of regulations, no, we are not involved. Dogs might get scratched from racing, or unable to race, so they might present a dog to the vet and the vet might say, 'This dog has diarrhoea and is not fit to race'.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Any opportunities for conflicts of interest? An owner paying you to attend their dog -

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**Dr BARRETT** - I guess the potential is there because we have private clients and we would examine their dogs on the track. I used to like having a quadrella for a dollar - more on emotion than anything else - and the steward at the time said to me, 'Do not have that dollar bet'. That would have been 10 years ago.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Because that's a conflict of interest.

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, that's a conflict of interest. And because you are an employee of the club you cannot own an animal. Vets are not involved in making rules.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You are not on committees and those sorts of things?

**Dr BARRETT** - Not on committees.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - When a dog comes in to be euthanased, do vets mention, 'Have you tried to go out through the GAP program?'. Do you make mention of that as part of your discussion with whoever is bringing the greyhound in?

**Dr BARRETT** - I guess I don't because I know the trainers -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And they know that anyway?

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes. But when we have new graduates in, it is really quite distressing for them to put the dogs down, and they will often have that discussion with the owners to say, 'Have you tried this', 'Have you tried that', 'Why are you doing it?'. But I know the trainers and that a proportion of their dogs will go to GAP, and would probably go on trust that they know that either these dogs are not fit for GAP or they are not willing to put them into GAP for whatever reasons.

**CHAIR** - Kim, one of the things you talk about in here is that wastage starts from conception. How do we make sure as a community that, if we through public funding are supporting an industry, people can be confident that if puppies are born that we know exactly what happens to them over the course of their life? How does wastage start at conception?

**Dr BARRETT** - If you are breeding from inappropriate bitches that are not of good standard and good genetics - and I know nothing about that in terms of racing - going to a good stud dog that has raced truly throughout his career, not enhanced by any drugs. Say a mainland dog had been live-baited and reached the top-collar races, to me that dog is not a good example to be used as a stud dog because you are not breeding truly. Similarly, if drugs or cobalt or whatever had been used on that dog and then they go to stud, I don't think that is true for the industry. You want to be breeding from the best to start with, so you are hopefully improving the gene pool. Good nutrition and socialisation. The New South Wales greyhound report, that welfare report from the Working Dog Alliance, will explain it much better than I can. Socialisation, breaking in, training well, performing well, and not having heaps of dogs, so there is not more dogs than you need to sustain an industry.

**CHAIR** - Do you think that has created the higher potential for wastage because the dogs are seen as more disposable in some ways because there are so many of them being bred?



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**Dr BARRETT** - I would have to look at the figures to know. Can someone tell us what is needed to sustain the industry? In Tassie, we are not sustaining our industry because we get more in from the mainland.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Didn't you say earlier that you contend that there is perhaps less wastage in the greyhound industry than there is in pet dogs?

**Dr BARRETT** - Yes, it could well be the case.

**Mrs RYLAH** - But we do not have any data or evidence to support that because there is not the statistics on domestic dogs, pet dogs?

**Dr BARRETT** - I think there is. RSPCA euthanasia - there should be numbers you can get from that. Council-pound euthanasia - I think you can get it from there.

**CHAIR** - Isn't one of the issues why are we treating greyhounds differently from other dogs? It is one breed where we understand there is up to 10 000 a year being killed around the country. Then there is all other dogs -

**Dr BARRETT** - The same issue is also with working dogs, like sheep dogs, kelpies. One of the worst things I did was bred a litter of kelpies. One of them didn't make it as a working dog and they shot it. For me that was devastating. They are dogs bred for purpose. The same thing applies to people with show dogs that don't make it in the show ring. They might get re-homed and put in other places. I agree essentially that you have got to round the industry up and do it as best you can.

**CHAIR** - When you say 'round the industry up', what does that mean?

**Dr BARRETT** - It is what's happening at the moment. A greyhound bitch now is only allowed three litters in her life unless she can prove she needs more. They have to prove that the bitch is good enough to breed. If she has non-performing litters, they will not register the litters. If they do not register the litters, they are not going to breed from the litters. Because of the lack of confidence in the industry, I think directly stemming from the *Four Corners* report, the numbers are going to naturally drop anyway over the next two to three to four years, until things rise again. It has been a huge wake-up call and I imagine the wastage losses over the next two to three years will be much less than before. Then it has to be sustainable long term, I think.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I think that would be evident to the people who watched the crimes that came out of the *Four Corners* program across Australia. It was interesting that last night there were a few families there. It was a family night out, with little kids. There would be a lot of people that would see that program and they would immediately say, 'There is no way I am taking my family to a greyhound meet', whether it has anything to do with the greyhound or not. It is just a different mindset of the people who watched that program. When we were kids you often went to the greyhounds. That was the family night out.

**Dr BARRETT** - Since the greyhounds in Launceston moved from White City to Mowbray, the whole intimate atmosphere has been removed. Similarly with the trotting tracks I used to attend when growing up in country New South Wales. You would hang over the fence and watch the trotters going around, whereas now you are further away so you are being

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removed from the actual animals themselves so they are becoming a more of a product or a commodity and almost dehumanising them because you do not have that contact.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Do you have any concern about individual greyhounds and the number of litters they have? Do you ever see greyhounds coming in whelped, whatever the term is, that are having too many that concern you? There is no regulation around that I presume.

**Dr BARRETT** - People do not breed more than two litters from a bitch who is not producing winners.

**Mr VALENTINE** - But if they are producing winners?

**Dr BARRETT** - They will keep going.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Is there a limit you think that should be set on any particular bitch?

**Dr BARRETT** - There is three set and then you have to get a veterinary certificate of health to go to the next one. It depends at what age they breed, if they are starting breeding at five years of age after they have been racing for four years, they are not going to have that, you would be insane to have that many. Often if you have a really good bitch they might pull them out and start breeding them at three years of age then they may have the capacity to have four, it just depends.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You have to assess that?

**Dr BARRETT** - On an individual basis I should imagine.

**CHAIR** - We are running a little overtime, does anyone have any last questions for Kim. Thank you for coming in Kim, I need to read this last little bit out. As you were advised at the commencement of your evidence what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege and once you leave the table you need to be aware that 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.

**Dr BARRETT** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW**

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**Mr TONY MURRAY**, DIRECTOR OF RACING, RACING SERVICES TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Ms O'Connor) - Mr Murray, did you want to make some opening comments? It is some time since the initial submission came in and there was some follow-up material, so would you like to update the committee on some of the changes?

**Mr MURRAY** - If I may, I have a 10-minute opening statement and I think there are some important things to say.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. The *Four Corners* program has catapulted the greyhound industry into the public view. It is the outcry from the general community which has quite rightly questioned the relevance of greyhound racing in modern society and whether the industry can at any time in the future meet reasonable community expectations in relation to the welfare of the animal. I have deliberately used the terminology 'at any time in the future' because there is no doubt whatsoever that currently industry behaviour and community expectations are a considerable distance apart. It is easy to form the view that greyhound participants are to blame for the current situation. Such a conclusion is, however, flawed as participants are only part of the puzzle. As well as participants, regulators, commercial bodies, governments, wagering operators, appeal boards and courts must also shoulder some of the blame.

Greyhound racing has traditionally been viewed as the most affordable racing code with comparatively low set-up, breeding, rearing and training costs. One would think that such a model would lend itself to a high level of participation and attract the next generation of enthusiasts; however, nothing can be further from the truth. The average age of greyhound participants in Tasmania is: a public trainer, 58; an owner-trainer, 56, an attendant, 51; an owner-attendant, 47; a catcher, 45; an owner, 50; and a syndicate member, 46. These figures clearly demonstrate that the industry has not been replenishing and as such it has long-term participants, many of whom have been in the industry for decades. The majority of the participants are genuine, caring people with a love for their animals, but many of the current participants were involved in the industry at a time when animal welfare was spoken about but not necessarily acted upon. Quite rightly, general community expectations with regard to animal welfare have developed and matured. However, unfortunately, we now have an industry that due largely to its demographic is often not meeting those community expectations.

Once again it is easy to blame the participants but a look at some of the real issues would suggest there are many other factors in play. The first question that must be asked is what have regulators and governments done to educate the industry on changing animal welfare community expectations? Regulators can improve rules, governments can change legislation, but at what point, if any, was the industry provided proper education on the changes? It is easy to say they should have known, and perhaps they should have, but regulators and governments must bear some of the blame.

From a wagering perspective, the most dramatic increase in turnover over the past decade has been on greyhound racing. It has become a very popular wagering product in the modern age, with quick races and immediate outcomes that appeal to the next generation

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of punters. However, in most jurisdictions the level of funding to greyhound racing has fallen well behind the comparative level of turnover between the three codes. That is, the increase in turnover on greyhound racing has generally not been matched by increases in the greyhound industry's returns from the various funding agreements in place throughout Australia.

The implementation of race-field legislation has addressed this to a degree, as the industry is often a direct beneficiary of race-field fees; however, the flip side of this is that the greyhound industry strategy is to race more often. This is because there is a clear link between the numbers of race meetings, turnover and race-field fees. The need to race more often must be matched by a necessary supply of greyhounds to compete, hence this has contributed to unsustainable breeding levels and dramatic wastage rates. Again the question must be asked: is the industry solely to blame or is it the commercial bodies and wagering operators that have consistently encouraged more race meetings and/or more races per meeting?

We must also look at the role of judicial bodies, those being the various appeal boards and courts. When a regulator finds and proves an act detrimental to the welfare of the animal, they take action that they believe to be appropriate under the rules of racing, both in relation to the offender themselves and also as a deterrent for any others of a mind to offend. Regulators are also mindful of community expectations. If and when a decision is appealed to a judicial body, the penalty is often reduced, sometimes markedly. In such circumstances it raises the question of how the regulator got it so wrong or, alternatively, one could reasonably ask whether the judicial body actually understands the expectations of participants, regulators and, importantly, the wider community.

While the majority of jurisdictions have been reactive following the *Four Corners* program, we in Tasmania have been proactive in relation to animal welfare over a number of years. This should not be viewed as a statement of complacency as we need to get much better; however, a review of action taken over a number of years provides a very good insight into the emphasis placed on animal welfare in Tasmania well and truly prior to the airing of the *Four Corners* program.

Some of the initiatives that have been undertaken include Tasmania was the first jurisdiction to commence the tracking of all greyhounds whelped over a number of racing seasons. In 2013, I commenced the project to track each greyhound whelped from the 2011-12 season onward. The results to date, which were published in the report prepared by the chief vet and myself and updated in my submission to this inquiry, paint an exceedingly poor picture of the greyhound industry in Tasmania. That is not to say it is reflected in other jurisdictions. The wastage rates are unacceptable and must be addressed as matter of urgency. There is a clear linkage between a greyhound's ability and its longevity.

Tasmania is the only state-based racing jurisdiction whereby the integrity unit is completely separate. It is no surprise to me that the greyhound reports already handed down in Queensland and Victoria have identified separation of integrity as one of their primary recommendations. My views on the separation of integrity are well known and I formed the very strong position on the subject when I commenced as director of racing in August 2003 and immediately observed both real and potential conflicts of interest in play across the three codes.

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At the Legislative Council inquiry into the performance of Tasracing in August 2011, I reinforced this view by making the following statement in relation ongoing lobbying to bring the commercial integrity bodies together. I stated:

To put them together may create a few efficiencies but it would be at the expense of integrity, safety and welfare. I have been in the industry for 25 years and I am more than happy to put on the record that I believe if the two bodies were merged in Tasmania, there is a very real potential to compromise integrity and/or safety and/or welfare of the racing industry.

Since I made that statement there has been continual and consistent lobbying by the commercial body in Tasmania and some in the industry to respective racing ministers to merge commercial and integrity functions. I am extremely pleased that the current racing minister has formed the very strong position that integrity should be separate and also that there is now significant movement in other jurisdictions to adopt the model similar to that which exists in Tasmania.

In January 2013, Racing Services Tasmania created a new position of steward investigator and appointed a person to the role with strong animal welfare background to strengthen our regulation of non-race day activities.

In 2007, I conducted a review of greyhound hurdle racing which resulted in it being banned, primarily due to animal welfare concerns.

A system has been in place for many years whereby any new applicants for a trainer's licence must have their kennels inspected by stewards prior to being licensed. A system has also been in place for many years whereby a participant returning from a period of disqualification must be interviewed in person by the Director of Racing to ascertain whether they are a fit and proper person to be issued a licence.

The level of kennel inspections in Tasmania on a pro rata basis is higher in most years than other jurisdictions. Tasmania introduced a rule that banned the use of carcasses in 2006. Other jurisdictions have only recently implemented such a rule. Tasmania was the second jurisdiction in Australia to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Crime Commission for the sharing of information.

In addition to the above initiatives, when I was given the opportunity to provide a briefing for the racing industry working group, as established by the current racing minister, I provided a number of recommendations in relation to the structure and strategic direction of the industry, including the following. I stated to the working group:

Re-align the current focus on wagering; turnover must be balanced with other key objectives such as future participation, community engagement and the profiling of people and animals that are the core of a successful industry.

I went on to say:

Engage the next generation of participants and racegoers; target university and TAFE students; make it popular to attend race meets; organise syndications;

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encourage studies on the race animal and person; have communications stewards prepare the marketing material et cetera.

Those submissions were made in August 2014.

To sum up: the greyhound industry is very much at the crossroads. It should be given the opportunity to refresh and revitalise its approach in a number of areas. That process must be accompanied by support and education from regulators, commercial bodies, governments and the judicial system. Any breakdown in the will and intent of participants to understand the current problems, to meet the ongoing challenges and to work closely with regulators and government will most likely result in the demise of greyhound racing as we know it today. I hope it never comes to that.

Thank you for the opportunity for the opening statement.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Mr Murray. I am sure we will all have questions for you shortly. Are you confident, given those changes that have been made in Tasmania, that we have created a strong enough regulatory legislative environment to be sure that live baiting is not happening in Tasmania?

**Mr MURRAY** - I am confident we are well in front of other jurisdictions with our structure within the legislative framework in Tasmania. I cannot sit here today and say that I can be sure that live baiting has not occurred in Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - In the report tabled in Parliament in March this year, the opening line in 5.1 is there has been no evidence identified that could result in a prosecution for live baiting in Tasmania. That is an appropriately qualified statement, isn't it, but it is about being able to reach prosecution or having enough hard evidence where authorities can be sure of a prosecution.

**Mr MURRAY** - The difficult part is establishing the burden of proof where we can prosecute somebody under the rules in relation to our role and other regulatory bodies under appropriate legislation. There has been one case in Tasmania in 2008 at the trial track in Carrick where stewards were close to laying a charge for live baiting. Again, there was not the necessary evidence to enable them to do so. There was a strong circumstantial case but it was not backed by forensic analysis to take it to the next level.

That is the difficulty: you can have circumstantial evidence, you can have a whole range of hearsay, you can have your own views on what is happening, but to take it to that level you must be satisfied with the evidence before you that you can proceed to conviction. That is, I will not say impossible, but highly difficult unless you actually observe the act.

**CHAIR** - The act as it is happening, which is why *Four Corners* was effective at one level because there were recordings of live baiting. One of the future possibilities is CCTV monitoring 24/7 on all training tracks. How is that progressing?

**Mr MURRAY** - We have not gone down that path yet. The first thing that I have done in relation to that recommendation is to do an audit of all bullrings and trial tracks on private property, and that has shown some interesting figures and in some ways some surprising figures. We have identified 28 bullrings and 31 trial tracks throughout the state, although

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some of those 31 are just small runs which are fenced. The prevalence of bullrings being 28, that is broken down to six in the north-west, 10 in the north and 12 in the south. We have undertaken an inspection of about 95 per cent of them.

**Mr VALENTINE** - This is from people in the industry telling you that they have a bullring as opposed to public submission?

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes, we sent out a survey in response to the recommendations by the chief vet and me, asking them to identify domestic pets and bullrings. It was interesting and surprising because quite often we can go to a property, and we have in the past, and not even know that the bullring was there. It might seem strange for me to be saying that but the locations of the bullrings are far away from where the kennels are, quite in the distance, quite often covered by foliage and the landscape. The number of bullrings existing in Tasmania has been quite surprising.

**CHAIR** - Are you prepared to draw any conclusions from that? We have had evidence put to us that there are no private tracks in Tasmania and I know they are separating bullrings and private tracks but now we are told there are 31 private trial tracks.

**Mr BACON** - Can I ask then about the Carrick track that was closed down? That is not the same as the 31 cases you are talking about?

**Mr MURRAY** - The distinction is very important. What we have seen interstate is what you see as a commercial trial track, which attracts people to that facility because they believe it is going to benefit their greyhound. The Carrick track was the only similar trial track that we had in Tasmania which was not based on a registered race track, and that is where we found the main problem that we have come across. We immediately closed down that track and there should not be any real correlation between a public trial track such as that and a bullring, which is in the back of somebody's yard, primarily used by the owner of the property.

**Mr BACON** - Do stewards go to trials at the Tasracing tracks?

**Mr MURRAY** - Generally not. On occasions we will.

**Mr BACON** - Why would that be?

**Mr MURRAY** - We go to harness and thoroughbred trials on the basis that they are official trials. The horses must be nominated. The horses must be identified. They are subject to swabbing. They are subject to basically the rules of racing. They are official trials, and we go to thoroughbred and harness trials. With greyhounds they are unofficial trials. Greyhounds are not identified. They are there for education -

**Mr BACON** - It is just training, really, rather than trials.

**Mr MURRAY** - Basically it is training. It comes down to resources. We allocate stewards to race meetings to official trials. We get to some greyhound trial tracks, but not too many.

**Mr BACON** - If there was funding available, would that improve animal welfare of the greyhound industry if stewards were at every greyhound trial, do you think?

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**Mr MURRAY** - It would only improve it if you were of a mind that something untoward is happening in the absence of a steward being there. It is hard to say. We must remember that currently the trial tracks are under the supervision of the clubs and Tasracing representatives. They are quite well experienced people within the industry. I have no reason to doubt that they would do the right thing by it. Of course, if you had a steward everywhere, that would up the regulation of the industry, but it is not physically possible to do it.

**Mr BACON** - Do you think funding is an issue for racing services?

**Mr MURRAY** - If you ask any regulator whether they are resourced sufficiently, the answer will always be the same.

**Mr BACON** - What is that answer?

**Mr MURRAY** - The answer is you would always like more money for swabbing. You would always like more money for stewards. You would always like more money for surveillance. But you also have to operate within a budget and you have a fiscal responsibility within the government budget. I accept that. We have been very fortunate with the Government in the last Budget providing funding for an additional steward investigator and also a racing integrity manager. Those two new positions obviously will assist us in the regulation of the industry.

**Mrs RYLAH** - I would like to go back to some of the things you said earlier. You said that the difficulty is in the burden of proof in Tasmania. Do you think the other changes we introduced in the Animal Welfare Act that passed the House have improved the position in the burden of proof, or have they made no difference?

**Mr MURRAY** - I am not really in a position to say too much about that because that obviously comes under other officers rather than someone like me who is responsible for the rules of racing. I had a meeting with the, with the CEO and the chief investigator of the RSPCA last week, and we acknowledged that we need to get together and understand more the responsibilities of the stewards and of the RSPCA officers. It is important for us to understand the roles of each body and what they can and cannot do on a property. To be honest, I cannot make a comment on the impact of the changes to the Animal Welfare Act because it is not something over which I have jurisdiction.

**Mrs RYLAH** - I have a question in regard to the comment that you made and that I have also heard, that the stewards do a job and may find that someone is at fault according to the rules of racing. They go to the judiciary and then I think the words that were said to me were, 'The person ends up with a slap on the hand'. There is a breakdown between the racing regulations and the judiciary in terms of the significance of the penalty that is applied. Can you just confirm that that is what you are saying or do you have a different interpretation perhaps?

**Mr MURRAY** - That is basically what I was saying. In my opening statement I said, 'In such circumstances it does raise the question of how the regulator got it so wrong. Alternatively, one could reasonably ask whether the judicial body actually understands the expectations



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of participants, regulators and importantly, the wider community.' If I could take the committee through a couple of major welfare decisions in recent times. Stewards disqualified trainer Ricki Donaldson for seven years. That got reduced to two years on appeal. The current trial track -

**Mr BACON** - What was the offence there?

**Mr MURRAY** - The offence was 'an act detrimental to the industry'. The reasons for the decision are out, they are on the public record. I am a little bit hesitant because the matter is still before the courts. I don't want to go into it other than to get the outcome.

In the matter of the Carrick trial track stewards, disqualified the owner of the property for two-and-a-half years. That was reduced to one year.

In the matter of Ted Medhurst, one of our leading trainers, in terms of shooting 11 greyhounds and falsifying records, stewards disqualified him for eight years and it was reduced to three years on appeal.

**CHAIR** - It is interesting because when you have a look at the court judgements, without exception, from the research my office did, on appeal all the sentences were significantly reduced.

**Mr MURRAY** - They are the cases that have been serious welfare issues in greyhound racing. I go back to my opening statement. Either we, as stewards, regulators, did get it wrong or one might say there is a lack of understanding at that level of welfare issues. The appeal board must be independent. They are a statutory board and I ought not and I will not publicly criticise them or try to influence them. However, the facts are there in terms of the major welfare matters that have come before them over the last years.

**Mrs RYLAH** - We have heard that education is perhaps needed in a number of areas for the owners, the trainers and for all sections of the industry. Would you contend that there is education required for the judiciary or some greater understanding of the rules of racing and that implication?

**Mr MURRAY** - That is a really good question because we, as regulators, are required to go out and consult with the industry. We are mindful of community expectations. Under the legislation the appeal board must consult with the industry twice yearly; that is mandatory. You would hope that consultation at least gives them an understanding of the views of the industry. I have been to a couple of those sessions and the industries, to their credit, backed our role and indicated to the appeal board that they support us catching the cheats. They support us taking action against those who are not acting within the rules. That message is made clear. That has been a really interesting change from the industry in the last five to 10 years where, in some ways, we, as the regulators, were seen as the enemy, for want of a better word, but now we get a lot of support from the wider industry across the three codes, remembering that the majority of industry do the right thing. The majority of the industry want a level playing field. They support us in taking strong action when we find somebody who is not working within the rules.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - I take you back to the training rings. I don't like the 'bullring' term at all. How were the 28 identified? Did your guys have a bit of walk around or did people voluntarily -

**Mr MURRAY** - It was a survey, so voluntarily. We knew some of them. I asked the chairman of stewards this morning, 'If I had asked you before all this started how many bull rings we had in Tasmania'. He said, 'Maybe eight to 10'. It gives you a bit of an idea. It was an interesting process. If you went and saw the location of some of these training rings, you would be surprised at some of the locations. If you get out a Google map and have a look, you can identify them in that way as well.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is there any reasons why it would not be appropriate to register them?

**Mr MURRAY** - We have done the inspection of 95 per cent of them. That inspection has been identifying the location of them, taking photos and making notes about them. That is the first step, which will then proceed to a registration of them, which will then proceed to at least a quarterly inspection of them. The first part of the process was to identify them, gain a profile on each of them, and establish a database on each of them. That is our starting point and then we will move forward with proper registration.

**Ms RATTRAY** - My understanding is that the participants who have these facilities are really keen to have them registered and have it out there. They have nothing to hide, in their view. The way they have approached the survey request is an indication they have nothing to hide.

**Mr MURRAY** - I can say the industry has been most cooperative when we have gone out to source that information.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Would it be advertised that you were looking for these sorts of things, that the public might have input to that?

**Mr MURRAY** - No, we haven't. The public generally is not shy in bringing information to either us or the RSPCA and, given the publicity around the *Four Corners* program, I was expecting to be inundated with a whole range of allegations. The RSPCA has given evidence previously that what they received after the program was very minimal, which was quite surprising. That would indicate that the general public didn't have too much information to give to us.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It was mentioned before there were probably 100 people involved with the industry as trainer-owners or as owning and training greyhounds. The 28 bullrings, are they used for a training methodology? Some people say they are important for their young dogs; others say they aren't. Because a lot of the people who are now current owners or trainers have had parents or family members involved, that's just passing down knowledge of training practices, so it's not any surprise that the 28 exist. What would be a surprise is if they were placed in a position that was a long way from their kennels or were surrounded by bush and whatever - concealed. That would raise some concerns, unless it's like the wife doesn't want it where she is looking out over the valley.

**Mr MURRAY** - First of all, we have 209 trainers registered at the moment so we are looking at 28 bullrings out of 209. I have asked the question of trainers, 'Why is your bullring

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where it is?'. A lot of the answers are they want a separation from where the kennels are because the use of a squeaky toy and the noise can excite the other dogs and they are worried that they might do damage to themselves within their kennel environment by getting too excited. I think it is a quite reasonable view that they are looking after the welfare of the rest of the animals by having a bullring further away from the kennels.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Are you confident you have heard about all of the bullrings? Did everybody respond to the survey?

**Mr MURRAY** - We had 100 per cent response from the survey.

**CHAIR** - Was it compulsory?

**Mr MURRAY** - It was compulsory, and we only had to chase up a few at the end. Everyone was very good with it. Are we confident we have identified them all? Yes, we are reasonably confident. What will happen now is that every time we go onto a property we will do those checks and balances to make sure.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Round yards are also used with horse training and can be enclosed on the sides, although less so these days. One would have to be careful you didn't miscue and suggest, if you are doing it from photography, that it is a horse area.

**Mr BACON** - When stewards go to someone's property to inspect it, do they give prior notice?

**Mr MURRAY** - We have two types of inspection: announced and unannounced. It can vary. We have a program in place where we try to get to each kennel at least once a year. To be able to do a proper inspection of the property we require the person to be home so we can have them take us through the whole area. That is one part of it but clearly the other side of it is the unannounced inspections where we will just turn up at random. If somebody is not there we will still proceed to undertake an inspection. The one I spoke about, Mr Donaldson, with the disqualification was an unannounced inspection; no-one was home. Stewards saw a retired greyhound and they were concerned about its wellbeing. They contacted me and I contacted the RSPCA and a local vet to attend.

**Mr BACON** - How many would be announced and how many would be unannounced?

**Mr MURRAY** - I don't have the figures with me, but I think we are trending towards probably 50:50 at this stage.

**Mr BACON** - Is it similar in the other codes?

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes. One of the difficulties is, as I said before, it lessens some of the value of the inspection if you turn up and nobody is there. If somebody is there, you could reasonably say to them, 'Open that cupboard' and go through that. Stewards have the powers to do that, but you are hesitant, without somebody being around, to go to that level of detail. An unannounced inspection with the person home is your best case scenario, but it does cause difficulty when you turn up and there is nobody home.

**Mr BACON** - Do you think before the *Four Corners* program you had a bit enough focus on live baiting and welfare issues in the greyhound industry, or has that focused your mind?

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**Mr MURRAY** - The issues I stated in my opening statement meant that we were far greater focused on animal welfare than any other jurisdiction.

**Mr BACON** - Is it fair to assume that those issues aren't going to be as prevalent in Tasmania because of that focus?

**Mr MURRAY** - I would think so. I think the Carrick trial track and the decision handed down by stewards sent a strong message to the industry. I think the Ted Medhurst matter, where stewards disqualified our leading trainer for eight years, sent a strong message to the industry. We have a track record of identifying these issues and taking very affirmative action. I think the industry understands that and respects the role we play in that.

**Ms COURTNEY** - When your stewards go for unannounced visits or announced visits and have interaction with trainers, what type of reception do they get? We get the general impression from people that they open their arms to stewards as they arrive, but is that the impression you get from your stewards as to the attitude of trainers when they turn up?

**Mr MURRAY** - Ninety per cent of the time I would say the participants aren't unhappy to see the stewards. I can't give too many indications where they are invited in for tea and scones, but in all honesty I think the industry across the three codes respects the role of the stewards. They understand why they are there. Of course those with nothing to hide should welcome them to come in and undertake inspections.

**Ms COURTNEY** - Do your unannounced visits only occur 9 to 5 weekdays?

**Mr MURRAY** - No. Stewards can turn up at a property at any time.

**Ms COURTNEY** - Do they, though, in practice?

**Mr MURRAY** - They certainly do. More and more we are doing more unannounced inspections on weekends, on race day. We are going to stables and kennels on race day to ensure the animal is there and that there has been no treatment given to the animals at that time. We don't work 9 to 5. Stewards can and have turned up at properties at night. We have undertaken inspections at six o'clock in the morning quite regularly in recent times.

**CHAIR** - Greyhounds Australasia made a submission and presented to us. Its spokesperson, Scott Parker, acknowledged the level of wastage in the industry across the country and acknowledged that was presenting an image problem, apart from the ethics of it, for the industry. Greyhounds Australasia, we were told, is moving towards a policy of zero euthanasia in the industry. Do you think that is achievable for the greyhound racing industry? There will always be reasons that dogs are euthanised but we are talking about the wastage of dogs.

**Mr MURRAY** - It's an excellent goal to aim for. One would hope it is, but a realist would say 'You have a lot of work to do before you get there.' Greyhounds Australasia has introduced some breeding initiatives as at 1 August, which is what it calls a 'pink card', where a greyhound bitch can't breed any more than three litters, or a greyhound over eight years old can't breed unless they meet certain criteria. That is a substantive move forward on the breeding side of things. When I did a report for the chief vet - and previously I had

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started the tracking of greyhounds because I was concerned about the results I was going to find - I found that the wastage is something that must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The ability of the greyhound is absolutely linked to its longevity and, unfortunately, we have to move on from that.

**CHAIR** - This might be an opportunity to talk about the grading issue and how it might be possible to set up structures so that older dogs are given another run at life.

**Mr MURRAY** - Not just older dogs, but, importantly, the dogs with lesser ability. I am not going to name names, but I will give the committee an example of some of the challenges which I face with doing the changes to the greyhound schedule. I started this again before the *Four Corners* program, so I started it in November last year, mindful of animal welfare before it became public. This is to answer the question about what we had been doing previously.

One of the suggestions I put out to the industry was the occasional grading of races from the bottom up. That is, the greyhounds with the least ability get selected first. When I went out into the industry, these are some of the comments I got:

The occasional grading of races from the bottom up is strongly opposed and would create confusion and poor turnover.

Somebody else said:

This would be the most ridiculous suggestion I have ever heard, and I have heard some beauties over the years. Perhaps you could tell whoever made this nonsensical suggestion that the only time it will ever be considered is when Christmas Day falls on April 1.

This is well-respected people in the industry who are making these comments:

Grading from the bottom up was suggested by a previous chief steward who is still in your employ. There is no room for mediocrity in any racing or any other part of life.

These are the types of comments I got from the industry back in November before all this happened, about giving dogs with less ability an opportunity to race.

**CHAIR** - It happens interstate, doesn't it?

**Mr MURRAY** - They certainly have races for older greyhounds, and they have what they call 'penalty-free races', which are for those with lesser ability. When I came to some findings and I went out to the industry again after the *Four Corners* program, and I said that I -

**CHAIR** - Were they a bit more receptive at that point?

**Mr MURRAY** - A bit more receptive. There was still some push-back. Again we have got to go back to the wagering side of it. Wagering has become far too important. It is easy for me as a regulator to say that because I am not the one reliant on race field fees. To me, the emphasis on wagering has caused a lot of the issues because people are just focused on

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more races, more turnover, more revenue, which is really important. But you cannot do that at the expense of serious issues such as the welfare of the industry and the longevity of a greyhound being able to race.

You have to get that balance right. My view is that nationwide in greyhound racing that balance has not been right, and that is what has caused quite a few of the problems. To answer your question, there has certainly been some push-back. I am moving and I will be going public with my final decisions about the grading schedule, and that will be one of them. Having said that, this is where it cuts over to Tasracing because Tasracing is responsible for programming races. It would have to be prepared to program races for greyhounds of lesser ability. I will make that recommendation to Tasracing.

**CHAIR** - Ultimately isn't it the minister who could direct Tasracing to program those races for dogs of lesser ability or older dogs?

**Mr MURRAY** - I am not sure whether the minister would -

**CHAIR** - Would involve himself at that level or -

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes, I would have thought that Tasracing has acted very responsibly since the *Four Corners* program and it understands the issues. I know it is looking at races for older greyhounds and some penalty-free races. I don't think it will require that. I think Tasracing will be receptive to that.

**CHAIR** - When were you going to release the new grading recommendations?

**Mr MURRAY** - I started it in November. It got delayed because of the greyhound inquiry that the chief vet and I undertook. I came back to it after that. I put out some recommendations to the industry. I got its responses. Some of the changes I am recommending, or will be introducing, will require the software changes. The greyhound software system is run by New South Wales and Western Australia. They hold the licence. I think two weeks ago, I wrote to the joint body and said, 'These are the changes I want to implement. What is the timeframe and what is the cost, if any, to implement those changes?'

I got a response yesterday with them asking a couple more questions. In terms of the grading schedule, I should be in a position to finalise my position in the next fortnight and then I am just waiting for the timeframe to be able to advise the industry when I can roll it out. It is one thing to say we are going to do this, but it is the next thing to be able to tell them when I will be able to do it from a computer system viewpoint.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In relation to the greyhound industry and the quantum of funds they get back into their code, it appears to me that the greyhound industry continues to get the short end of the stick. It puts pressure on all of their ability to make ends meet and not continue to have to have this wastage issue. If you are not getting any return for your animal and they can't get it back through the stake money and through their industry, even though they are contributing considerably - and you mentioned that again and we have heard that they generate a high wagering turnover. Their return is so poor that it is affecting how they can put dogs into the GAP program, because you have to fund it, and why there is a considerable wastage.

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**Mr MURRAY** - The biggest single issue in greyhound racing nationally is that they continue to perform from a wagering prospective. They have far exceeded increases in thoroughbred and harness but they are not getting rewarded. I said that in my opening statement that increases in turnover in greyhound racing has generally not matched by increases in the greyhound industry's returns.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yet they have had a 13 per cent decrease -

**Mr MURRAY** - Interstate, for example, they have fixed percentages. When I was in New South Wales there was something set up for 20 years where greyhounds were getting a small percentage. Since then their turnover has just gone through the roof but they are still getting that small percentage with a few add-ons.

The greyhound industry in Tasmania constantly asks, 'When are we going to get rewarded for our performance?'. The split-up between the three codes is purely Tasracing's determination. I cannot comment on that because I don't know the background of it. Your observation is entirely correct that the industry themselves feel they are hard done by in terms of returns.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is impacting, I believe, their ability to run a more efficient and effective GAP program. What they do is fantastic but they need more opportunity to be able to work with the animals.

**Mr MURRAY** - Any additional funding would assist in that way, but any additional funding would reasonably have to come from one of the other two codes, which could proffer a similar outcome, impact on the animals or participation rates in their codes as well. It is a finely tuned balancing act for Tasracing or any commercial body to get the split-up right.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There doesn't seem to be as much community outcry about what happens to the surplus in the other two codes.

**CHAIR** - Because there hasn't been a *Four Corners* program that horrified the country like it did over the greyhound industry.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There isn't or there does not appear to be outcry over what happens to their surplus requirement, whereas this code takes the full brunt of it because dogs seem to resonate a little bit more generally with the majority of the public. Would that be fair to say?

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes. When I said before that regulators can always look forward to additional funding to do their job better, your comment about whether the greyhound industry could address the welfare issue more effectively if they had additional funding, is a reasonable comment.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You would expect they get rewarded for effort.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - When you talked about the 28 bullrings, you mentioned registration of the bullrings, so there would be a greater chance that stewards will go out and check on those. Does that mean they may have to pay a registration fee for the bullring, because that is a choice a training method, or would that be across the board?

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**Mr MURRAY** - No, I do not envisage any registration fee for it. The location of these bullrings makes it difficult for stewards to inspect them. Quite often we will turn up to a property and you might have the front gates padlocked. You might find that there are domestic animals and lots of kennels, so by the time we arrive at a property and find our way through to a bullring, if someone was a mind not to be doing the right thing they have had a fair bit of time to do something about it. I am not saying that happens. We talked earlier about obtaining evidence to proceed to prosecution. If we can turn up in real time and get real-time access to a bullring, for example, we have a better opportunity to get the evidence we require. If there is a gap in time when we turn up until we can actually get to the spot that compromises our ability to gather that evidence.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You mentioned in 2008 there was the Carrick issue. The response from the fraternity after that issue and the closing down of the track, was that positive in a self-regulatory way? It seemed to me that would be a bit of wake-up call if anyone was involved in a carcass, more so than live baiting. What was the response?

**Mr MURRAY** - The response was positive from the industry. Again, as I said before, the industry generally wants us to make sure the rules are being enforced properly and that owners not doing the right thing are brought to justice. The general view was positive. I think it was a bit of wake-up call for the industry that this sort of thing was going on - the use of carcasses in a public arena such as that. The swift action that the stewards took at the time sent out a clear message to the industry.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That regulation only came in in 2006, so it was two years after that. So it was the first case -

**Mr MURRAY** - I was doing a bit of research and I think it was 2006. It was certainly in place because a person was convicted under a rule in 2008. Surprisingly, most of the other jurisdictions still had it in place. You could use a carcass up until recent times.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You alluded to the concern of a determination the stewards and the regulatory body made about somebody who may contravene the rules and regulations - like eight years, and it got dropped down to three years by the justice. So every time it was appealed there has been a substantive decrease in the penalty. Surely that is a discussion that your group must have with justice about how you feel. If you guys are setting the standard at eight years, and then it is appealed and gets downgraded to three years, that is not a reflection on your industry; it is a reflection on the justice. To me that is not your concern unless you want to approach them and say, 'We do all this work and it is perceived that you are being a bit soft'. But that happens, as Cassy said before, nearly every time someone has appealed. What is your organisation going to do to chat to the justice about that area?

**Mr MURRAY** - There is the mandatory consultation with the appeal board - six monthly. I have raised it. At one stage I probably went too far because I said to the chairman, 'Do you see your role to tinker with penalties?', because there seemed to be more and more of that happening. It was probably inappropriate for me to say it and I backtracked a little when I said that. We have to be very careful to maintain that separation. There was a recent one which was well publicised in relation to cobalt. I was absolutely concerned about the welfare of particular horses under the care of the trainer and jockeys against whom those horses would be competing. I took the strongest action only to have it overturned by the



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appeal board. This is not to say they got it wrong; maybe I got it wrong. But I and our stewards will continue to send a clear message about where we believe welfare should sit and where we believe that the penalty should sit for those who offend. We are not going to be changing our decision or penalties based on what might happen in another arena. We will continue to send a message on what we believe is the penalty that fits the crime.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I think both groups could have got it right. Your group could have got it right on the way you perceived the information that came across, and when it was appealed the justice could have also, in their view, got it right.

**CHAIR** - It is instructive to have a look at the decisions because they are all nearly halved, very significantly altered.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - But they are justice decisions.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I understand that. There has already been a decision.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It might be a comparison with other penalties provisions.

**CHAIR** - Mr Murray, we have had testimony before us about the relationship between Racing Services Tasmania, or the Office of Racing Integrity as it became on 1 July, and Tasracing - without verballing someone, there have been some awkwardness and tensions between Racing Services Tasmania and Tasracing. Do you think the level of communication between the two entities is as robust as it could be? If not, where could it improve so we have animal welfare embedded throughout the sector, not just being implemented by the Office of Racing Integrity?

**Mr MURRAY** - The relationship can certainly be improved but it doesn't compromise an issue such as animal welfare. As soon as this occurred with the *Four Corners* program, the two organisations have worked very closely. I keep referring to my opening statement but I tried to cover as much as I could. If you recall in my opening statement, after I appeared before the parliamentary committee in 2011, I said there has been consistent lobbying by the commercial body and some in the industry to respective racing ministers to merge commercial and integrity functions. This has been an ongoing issue between the two organisations, where I have been very definite that integrity should remain separate, for all the reasons I have stated. The commercial body - and it is their right to form an opinion - was of the view that due to economies of scale and other efficiencies that the two bodies could be -

**CHAIR** - Less of a thorn in their side potentially, too.

**Mr MURRAY** - That in itself - and you must understand and hopefully it is clear - would cause some discontent between the two bodies. It was an overarching position of complete difference between the two bodies. I for one was never going to waver away from a position that integrity had to be separate. The people around me, whether it be my wife or my workmates or friends, got sick of me talking about it because I was nearly obsessed by it, such was my overall desire to make sure we had the best model here in Tasmania. As I said earlier, now other jurisdictions are looking at our model. Yesterday I was in Victoria talking to the person who is making recommendations to the minister and he wanted to

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know about our model. I am not saying they are going to go with our model but they are obviously seeing what happens here.

It has created some discontent between the two bodies but I can assure you that when the big issues are here we work well together. My hope and my desire - and I am confident - now that the minister has openly said that integrity will stay separate I think we can put the other issues to one side and reset the relationship and move forward with both of us working very closely together, whilst respecting the boundaries of our individual statutory responsibilities. You can't have it all where we are all going to get on well and agree on everything. We have our respective statutory boundaries, which is absolutely imperative, but the relationship can improve and I am confident it will improve.

**CHAIR** - There has been a lot of discussion at this table - and you raised it in your opening statement - about the level of education and training of industry participants and the role regulatory authorities and governments have played in ensuring the industry is keeping pace, at least to the greatest extent possible, with community expectations. Do you think the Office of Racing Integrity now play a more proactive role in education and training and ensuring best practice in the industry?

**Mr MURRAY** - One of the discussions I had with the RSPCA last week was about educating the industry in relation to what their role is and what the responsibilities are under the Animal Welfare Act, as well as educating the industry about the roles - which they generally have a good understanding of. The RSPCA and we agree we need to get together to educate each other on our various roles. I think it is important for us to provide the best leadership for the industry. Together we need to understand each other's responsibilities and then we move that forward to help educate the industry as well. That is critical to moving forward.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Also, educating the judiciary on the regulation and what you are seeing in trends and issues, I think it an important part of that. I know that is a new and controversial area, but I think there is clear evidence we have an issue there.

**Mr MURRAY** - When the judiciary makes its decisions, it is very mindful of the various legislation and rules, and as I said before, precedents. Its decisions are always based on facts. People have to form their own opinion about some of the decisions.

**Mr BACON** - Coming back to Cassy's question earlier about the relationship with Tasracing, someone mentioned earlier sharing data with Tasracing and whether that is working as well as it could be.

**Mr MURRAY** - The separation of Racing Integrity means that from time to time you will have information that must remain within a very confined environment. It is important that we differentiate between information that can be shared and information that ought not to be shared. Whilst it is in our organisation and within our purview, we can control that information. The minute we release it to a third party, then we lose control over it.

**Mr BACON** - Would there be any data that you don't release at the moment to Tasracing that could have an impact on greyhound welfare?

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**Mr MURRAY** - I can give you an example. When I first started the tracking of greyhounds I met with the CEO and I told him I was doing it and I gave him some interim figures as we were moving along. I said we have the general publication because it was in its infancy and we needed to progress the project to get some real understanding of it. That is an example of where I did share some information along the way.

**Mr BACON** - I suppose my question is, is there more that you could possibly do in that area or is there -

**Mr MURRAY** - It is difficult -

**Ms COURTNEY** - Is there information that you want to go the other way? Is there information that you seek that you don't have access to?

**Mr MURRAY** - One of the issues I see and that has been identified with the greyhound issues is that the national body, Greyhounds Australasia, is now making a whole range of decisions about rules and policies. Tasracing is on Greyhounds Australasia, but we are not. There is a requirement that -

**Ms COURTNEY** - You find out second-hand.

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes. There is a requirement that Tasracing seeks my recommendations on any rule changes, but often it can come further down the line. If we were involved in the discussions at the national level, we could value-add it. At the moment we rely on them to provide us with information about what has been discussed. If we have an issue, we rely on them to take it back to the national body.

Our main mechanism is the chairman of stewards conference. There is an integrity group and the chairman of stewards is in there, but the decisions are made at the Greyhounds Australasia board meeting. Harness Racing Australia long ago recognised the separation of commercial and integrity in Tasmania. They allow a board member from each body, whereas Greyhounds Australasia just has one board member. At the moment it is Tasracing.

**Mr BACON** - Have you sought to change that or asked for a seat at the table?

**Mr MURRAY** - Prior to the implementation of Tasracing or in the early days, I was an alternative director. They had a director and I was the alternative director. They formed the view and said they believed that they should have both the director and the alternative director.

**Mr BACON** - Tasracing or greyhound racing?

**Mr MURRAY** - Tasracing. In the spirit of cooperation I was willing to agree to that on the basis that the communication was there. I think what has happened nationally with greyhound racing would suggest that maybe there needs to be greater involvement of the regulator. It is important we understand that with other jurisdictions likely to have separate integrity bodies as we move forward, the national bodies are going to have to address this. Even the thoroughbreds are going to have to address this at some stage. I do not think we

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need to promote any changes at this stage because I think they will be brought upon the national bodies.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Recommendation 24 in your submission - I want to understand a little bit more about this. You say:

Make it a requirement that any greyhound that travels interstate while still under the care and control of a Tasmanian licensed person, must be notified in advance to stewards (except in the case of a greyhound travelling to fulfil an interstate racing commitment).

Why is that put out to the side?

**Mr MURRAY** - Clearly there were facilities interstate where people would send their greyhounds to be afforded live baiting. We in Tasmania would not know how many greyhounds domiciled in Tasmania were sent to those trial tracks, if any. That recommendation is: we need to know if a greyhound is being sent interstate because we will ask the question about why are you sending it there.

Quite often our greyhounds are of good quality and quite often a trainer will take it over to race on a Saturday night. We know the fields are there. We know the greyhound's gone there; the system will tell us it's gone there. We don't need to track those greyhounds.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Wouldn't that be the occasion where they would want to go via a live baiting site - prior to racing?

**Mr MURRAY** - Generally greyhounds are flown and flown straight back out within a 24-hour period when they race interstate. It is more about -

**Mr VALENTINE** - There is no opportunity to be able to do that?

**Mr MURRAY** - There is always opportunity, but the trial tracks that were seen on *Four Corners* were more educational tracks so I would be more concerned about a younger greyhound being educated being sent to one of those tracks. We haven't proceeded. I have spoken to Tasracing about it and it has asked me to clarify why we need a rule such as that. I still think it is something we need to look at, to be able to identify the location of a greyhound at any stage.

**CHAIR** - Isn't it the case that these recommendations have been endorsed by government?

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes, they have. But after that we can then consult with the key stakeholders. Because they have been endorsed does not mean we do not undertake all that and give people the opportunity to state their case. We are working through those at the moment.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You made some comment on attachment B, the breeding data. It seemed you found some of the figures in that attachment alarming. I was wondering if you might point out which ones were the main concern to you.

**Mr MURRAY** - It is the relationship between the greyhounds that are registered through to the greyhounds that are named. That is where the main wastage occurs, and that is why I

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say that the ability of the greyhound is linked to its longevity. You have a significant breakdown from the time a greyhound is registered, which is at four months, through when a greyhound is named, which is generally 12 months. That is the main area. If you looked at the unnamed deceased greyhounds, that means people register their greyhounds; they then assess their ability; if their ability is not significant enough for them, quite often the greyhounds are euthanised before they are named.

**Mr VALENTINE** - There seems to be some really dramatic differences from one year to the other in percentage terms. I did the percentages of some of these. With regard to greyhounds named, raced greyhounds and other, the percentage is 94.7 per cent in 2013-14, and in 2012 was 51.6 per cent. I am trying to understand -.

**Mr MURRAY** - It is just the age of the greyhounds. When you are tracking them through, the first year and now, coming up to four years old, whereas the last year is considerably younger so they have not had the chance to assess their ability yet. It is basically a -

**Mrs RYLAH** - A time issue.

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Litter registrations seem to be quite dramatically different. With named and unnamed litter registrations in 2011-12, the unnamed were 46.8 per cent. In 2013-14, it is 90.9 per cent. Was is the reasoning behind that?

**Mr MURRAY** - Again that is a timing issue.

**CHAIR** - How sure can we be in Tasmania, given the systems that are in place and the data collection that is happening, that we know what happens to a greyhound pup from the moment it is born through to the end of its life? How much track do we have of that animal? The RSPCA has raised the concern that we don't know what happens to a lot of these animals.

**Mr MURRAY** - The grey area - or the black hole, if you like - is from the time they are registered at four months to the time they are named at 12 months. That is the area we need to be addressing. Quite often people might give their greyhound to a friend to rear them in their backyard or on their property, or whatever. We need to be able to track where those greyhounds are at all times. That is the one area we have to concentrate on.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do we know how many greyhounds end up in Tasmania from the mainland with no potential home? Vice versa, do we know how many we put into the mainland states that are also the responsibility of somebody at the end of their potential racing career? Do we have those figures?

**Mr MURRAY** - Somebody who brings a greyhound into Tasmania to train has to put in a kennel notification. We get notified about that. I don't have the figures of how many come across. Generally people will send greyhounds across to Tasmania to increase their racing opportunities - they may not be competitive on the mainland.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So we've got good trainers?

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**Mr MURRAY** - Yes. I can't give you any figures but they have to formally notify us and put in a kennel notification if they are bringing a greyhound across here.

**Ms RATTRAY** - If somebody went through all the documentation, we could find out how many we have and somehow you would track down how many were still around?

**Mr MURRAY** - Yes, we can do that. We do go out and do an audit - and we have started this - of all greyhound properties. The system will say a certain number of greyhounds should be there and we go and do an audit. The first part is to cleanse our data because we have been across three greyhound systems in the last eight years and a lot of the data goes missing. At the moment we are in a process of going out and doing inspections, matching our records to what greyhounds are on the property. Once we do that, we will have more of a process of audit.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am particularly interested in how much responsibility the Tasmanian greyhound industry itself has in looking after non-performing dogs from the mainland. If we have an issue of our own, I am happy to try to address but I don't think we need to be addressing somebody else's as well with no funds to go with them. We might work on that.

**CHAIR** - But once an animal is here, presumably it is covered by our Animal Welfare Act.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, but I am just saying if it has to stay here and there is an obligation and it no longer has a racing life, perhaps the owner from somewhere else needs some obligation to that animal.

**Mrs RYLAH** - In regard to greyhounds that are born and raised here that may be sent overseas, do we have any evidence of that and how are they treated in this data?

**Mr MURRAY** - I don't know of any that have gone overseas. Greyhounds Australasia brought in a passport system a number of years ago where they have to be cleared to go overseas to race. There was a big issue with some greyhounds being exported to parts of Asia -

**Mrs RYLAH** - Macau.

**Mr MURRAY** - My understanding from Greyhounds Australasia is that that has been addressed primarily with the introduction of that system.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Mr Murray. Before you leave the chair, I need to give a short statement for procedure. As we advised you at the commencement of the hearing, what you have said to us today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you have said to us. Thank you very much for coming along to talk to us today. It was very interesting.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**