

**THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION
MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON FRIDAY 28
AUGUST 2026.**

The Committee met at 2.03 p.m.

██████████ - I did, thank you.

██████████ - I do.

██████████ - That's fine. I'm ██████████ and I'm ██████████ ██████████ and work heavily in advocacy for greyhounds here in Western Australia.

CHAIR - Thank you, [REDACTED]. Do we need to get the statutory declaration? No, we don't, we are just checking to make sure but because you are on the other side of the country you don't need to swear in. Would you like to make an opening statement?

██████████ - Yes, if you don't mind, because I do get quite nervous.

CHAIR - That's okay. We are very casual and relaxed here so don't feel nervous at all.

██████████ - Would you like me to start then?

CHAIR - That would be lovely, thank you [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] - Thank you, Chair and Committee Members for the opportunity to appear today. As I've said, my name is [REDACTED] and I'm the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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██████. We are a fully volunteer-run greyhound advocacy organisation based in Western Australia. I come to this hearing with a perspective shaped very much by what we are experiencing in Western Australia. We have our own parliamentary inquiry into racing, and I've spent a great deal of time documenting injuries, deaths, rehoming outcomes and the experiences of the people trying to help these dogs when racing is finished with them. More than 5000 submissions were made to our inquiry, and throughout the process we have heard many of the same arguments being made in Tasmania: that racing provides jobs, that the code is highly regulated, that welfare is improving, that most participants love their dogs, and that further reform should be given more time to work.

But what our experience in Western Australia has taught me is that while those arguments continue, so do the injuries and deaths. This year alone in WA we have recorded 20 greyhounds suffering the same right-leg fracture - four of those are now dead. There have been a further 17 fracture types, resulting in another 10 greyhounds dead. These are only those that have occurred on the track. The most recent being Fletcher Keeping, on 19 August [2026] at Cannington. Horrifically, off track, Marathon was strangled to death while being exercised behind a quad bike and Rocksmith was left without veterinary intervention overnight after a long bone fracture and was killed the next morning. These have both occurred in the last four months. This is why I no longer believe this is simply a question of whether regulations can be improved. You can improve reporting, you can change track preparation, you can fund veterinary treatment, you can introduce welfare policies; but you cannot regulate away the fundamental risk of asking dogs to race at high speed around curved tracks for gambling.

There is another lesson from our experience in WA that I believe is particularly important for this Committee. When Government talk about the economic impact of ending greyhound racing, they count the people who earn money from it, but they rarely count the people who work for free because of it and the community that take in the greyhounds to be part of their family. I see those people constantly. I am one of those people. They are the rescuers who collect dogs, transport them, foster them, adopt them, socialise them, pay veterinary bills, raise funds and awareness - all this directly helps the racing code. They use their own cars, their own homes, their own time and their own money. When a greyhound comes out of racing, very often injured, frightened, poorly socialised or simply unprepared for pet life, it is this unpaid workforce that takes responsibility.

The evidence given in Tasmania shows the exact same thing. The Dogs' Home of Tasmania told this Committee that it has been rehoming greyhounds with no funding and that the average cost of rehoming one greyhound is approximately \$3500. That is not charity work created by chance; it is a cost created by dog racing.

Yet you are now discussing individual transition arrangements, counselling, compensation and voluntary exit packages for racing participants. I would argue where have these been for decades for the volunteer greyhound rescue organisations? How would these dogs have been rehomed without them? I support people being treated fairly, but fairness cannot stop with the humans who participate in racing. Where is the equivalent guarantee for the organisations that would be asked to take responsibility for these dogs?

The Racing Integrity Commissioner identified more than 1000 registered greyhounds in Tasmania; every one of those dogs will eventually need an outcome. Some will remain with their connections, others will sadly be moved to mainland Australia to continue racing, while others will need rehab and rehoming, and some will require significant veterinary support.

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RSPCA Australia has also now told this Committee that serious injuries in Tasmania increased from 20 in 2024 to 35 in 2025. That's a 75 per cent increase. It has warned that welfare risks may increase during transition if declining dog numbers result in animals racing more frequently or remaining in racing for longer. This is why transition cannot simply mean choosing a date for the final race; it must mean protecting every greyhound all the way through.

From what I've experienced through the WA inquiry, I would urge Tasmania not to spend the next few years repeatedly asking whether another reform might finally fix this code. Use that time instead to make the transition the best it can possibly be: reduce breeding; allow older dogs or those raced heavily to retire earlier; maintain independent oversight; ensure genuine, whole-of-life traceability; fund reputable independent rescue organisations for the actual cost of the work they perform; and make sure responsibility does not disappear simply because a greyhound has been labelled retired or racing has ended.

One of the things I personally find most difficult in WA is watching dogs continue to be seriously injured while governments debate whether racing can be made safer. I ask you: how many deaths and injuries are you prepared to state as acceptable if it continues? Tasmania has already taken a different path. You now have an opportunity that we are still fighting for in Western Australia; an opportunity to say that compassion for industry participants and compassion for greyhounds are not competing ideas. Support people through the transition but please recognise the rescuers as part of that workforce, too. Their labour has value, their time has value and the dogs they are being asked to save have value beyond what they have ever earned on the racetrack.

The success of this transition should ultimately be measured by something very simple; not whether the last race ends successfully, but whether the last greyhound leaves this industry safely. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thanks very much, [REDACTED] I appreciate your opening statement. If I could just begin, perhaps, by asking you to explain a bit more about the parliamentary inquiry process in WA, where that's at and the terms of reference for that inquiry.

[REDACTED] - Sure. It was basically anything that people wanted to talk about. It was what the oversight was from Racing and Wagering (RAWA), anybody that had any information on the economic viability of it, any of the welfare issues it started. We've been petitioning for - this is probably the fourth petition we've tabled, the third since I've been [REDACTED] and every sort of two years it gets more and more. We had 26,500 signatures on the last one.

So, when we tabled that, in conjunction with that, we actually looked at the economics of it and we found some discrepancies. So, we had put in a note and a request to the Estimates Committee to also have a look at it, which they did independently at a different inquiry. After they looked at that, in 2024, they then reported that there should be a full inquiry and so that's when our petition was re-tabled again, in the new Parliament, and then it's gone to this stage, along with the 26,500 signatures that we had. The hearings have all been finalised and we're just waiting on a report to come out. We were hoping that it would be out by now, but yeah, it's hard to get a firm answer from anybody at the moment as they're just working through it - 5000 submissions, as you can imagine, is a lot to go through. I mean, our submission alone was over 300 pages, so there's a lot of work to cover.

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CHAIR - There is a lot of work, absolutely. Can I just confirm that the parliamentary inquiry that was initially established, the Estimates Inquiry was also referred back to the parliamentary inquiry or were there two separate inquiries to report back on?

██████████ - Two separate inquiries to report back on. The Estimates Committee, they reported back in 2024 and their review was to have a full inquiry into racing, which then the environments committee - it's an odd name here - but the Environment and Public Affairs Committee where all our petitions get tabled, they then decided to go ahead with it after we'd tabled the submissions again in this new Parliament.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thanks ██████████, and for all the work you do for the dogs. Have you got an eye to what the legal status of greyhounds is in WA? Here, they're sort of treated as livestock and until we had new dog regulations come in, for example, just in the last week or so, the RSPCA had no jurisdiction and now they're captured by the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* [Tas] more fully. What's the legal status of greyhounds in WA?

██████████ - You're ahead of us. Good old 'Wait Awhile'. Our *Animal Welfare Act 2002* [WA] is actually 20 years old now. We've been fighting this Labor [Government] to try to move somewhere forward on that for several years. They're still listed as livestock because Racing and Wagering still also falls under part of agriculture. So, the RSPCA, again, don't have jurisdiction unless they're asked for by Racing and Wagering. But Racing and Wagering, as we heard in the big parliamentary hearings, they've never gone to the RSPCA for help. That last - I don't know whether you heard - but Marathon, the dog, was being exercised behind a quad bike with a few other dogs, which is actually against the rules of racing, but it was occurring and he was strangled to death. We only found out through it being reported on Racing and Wagering's website. We went to the RSPCA, who we have a good working relationship with, and they didn't know about it, they were actually told the day that it came out in the media. It was then too late for them to be able to look into it. We're trying to put pressure on them to do so. The latest one of Rocksmith, he was left overnight without any veterinary intervention and his owner didn't realise but he'd broken the long bone in his foreleg so he had to be put to sleep. Again, they haven't reported that to the RSPCA

Ms O'CONNOR - Was there any sanction for the person who dragged Marathon behind the quad bike?

██████████ - Yes, he's been disqualified for two years and the gentleman for Rocksmith has been disqualified for one year. If a regular person within the community did that, there would be public outrage. I think a lot of these participants feel that they're unfairly regulated, however, things still happen and they do get protection from that regulation, which isn't right. It has to work both ways.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. What are the public funding arrangements for the industry in WA? We have a racing deed that provides an allocation of funds to each of the codes, that deed is about to be rewritten. What's the story in WA with the money?

██████████ This is very highly contested. I can send you the report that Animals Australia just had. They've had an economic study done, an independent and economic study. I'm happy to send you that and they will be too, just on Western Australia, as I believe you had one done a few years ago over there. Greyhound racing, the actual club of greyhound racing

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[Greyhounds WA], sits within Government here. It actually sits directly under the Minister, so, at the first hearing we attended with them, they told us how the finance person was on secondment from the mental health department. I just couldn't believe that he said that, like mental health doesn't need all the help it needs right now and she was seconded to go and work in the finance area of dog racing.

In all effects, public servants work throughout the club, unlike harness and thoroughbred, they sit outside - they are independently run and financed on what they do as well. Because the TAB is also owned by the Government here, funding is - all of the gambling revenue gets poured through Racing and Wagering (RAWA), then they pay funds to the state, then the state pays a whole chunk of it back because it's the money that they have earned from racing. We technically say it is taxpayer funded. They don't like that because it's comes from revenue that they've raised. We would argue that if they weren't requiring that money and they were making a profit, which we know they're not, then those funds could be filtered to other areas like all public funds are but for some reason the code of racing gets to keep - particularly greyhound racing, I don't know enough about thoroughbred and harness, so I don't comment on those - but it gets put straight back into the pot. For all intents and purposes to us it is all state money for greyhound racing.

Ms O'CONNOR - Here we've got a direct subsidy through the deed. Have you got a feeling for how the inquiry might play out? It's possibly a political question for you, but I'm curious to know what your feeling is.

[REDACTED] - To be honest, I think a lot of people are looking at you guys - not, like, giving you some pressure. I think New Zealand and WA are almost the same in the size and scope. We have almost the same field of greyhounds. So that is going to be a really good litmus test for us. Though I will say that we have asked in ours that not all dogs get shipped over to the east coast, so you guys have to worry about rehoming all of our dogs. We have sort of put very specific things in place, or ideas, of how you can regulate where the dogs go post racing because we don't see that making it an issue for some other state is any more helpful than it is to continue racing. So, apart from what New Zealand are doing, with sending all the dogs up to Queensland, we're watching that closely, I guess, and I believe the Government here would be, too, and what you guys are doing. I think after what happened to Mike Baird, all politicians are afraid of what's going to happen.

There is also the fact that, in conjunction, on New Year's Eve last year [2025], the WA government decided to do its own independent audit of the scope and whether or not it's going to be financially viable - the viability of the racing industry as a whole, alongside our inquiry. So, I would imagine that they are also waiting to see what happens there. Is it sustainable? Is it not? I don't know. Sometimes we feel great about it, other times we don't. I mean, legislation that's just come through that was trying to be changed, we know racing codes are not going to fall under the legislation to ban ads. So, I can sort of see any political party that is getting funding from gambling companies are not going to want those ads to stop running on greyhound racing, horse racing and harness racing because they're not sports. So, if it's not a sport now, I don't know what we can call it anymore. I think there's a lot more at play than just the welfare of the dogs - that's human nature, though, isn't it, really? Very sadly. We just need a few politicians to say 'Look, this isn't any good'.

We can all spend all this time on it, but we know that in five years or 10 years, greyhound racing is not going to be something that's occurring in this country. I wholeheartedly - sorry,

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Mr Winter, you might disagree with me - but I just think the next generations don't have the same concern, they don't have the same regard for it. It's definitely sort of an old-timers' - I hate, I'm older, to use that term. I don't think it is anything like thoroughbred or harness racing. We're not getting asked to take a horse into our backyard or into our home every day; we are by greyhound racing. That's the fact of it. There's always 'Please, can you foster a dog? We need this dog looked after'. The injuries that they sustain, I mean, they're not comparative. I just don't think they're going to continue, so I don't see why we have to watch more and more be injured in the meantime.

It's also the mental health that it has, not only on the volunteers and the other people that are involved but having listened and heard a lot of the participants speak at the hearings, they are suffering and they've stated it themselves; they suffer from post-traumatic stress. Looking at your hearings, there's people with mental health issues and people that are going to need help getting through this. It's almost like the lower - and we know it, it's a fact, it's written everywhere in our history - is that this class of people are from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds, and they are the people that we should be encouraging not to participate in these kinds of things to try and help them build better futures and not continue this cycle of the same thing. I mean, maybe I'm speaking out of turn, but I think it's a much bigger picture than just animal welfare.

I didn't come in from a perspective of 'I want to change animals' - I love animals, I actually came from the financial background. I had lived overseas for eight years and I came back and [REDACTED] never sort of had a family pet, and [REDACTED] saw this beautiful greyhound, a rescue, on television and she said [REDACTED] can we get one of them?' and me being me, I said 'Yeah, sure', and that's how I got involved in it. I became the treasurer for a greyhound rescue and then I looked at the price that we were spending - our fundraising needed to raise in order to cover these dogs that were in an industry that they're not paying tax, most of them are hobbyists, a lot of these people were on pensions as well. They were people that really shouldn't be gambling or shouldn't be involved in this kind of thing, weren't looking after these dogs properly, and I'm thinking, 'Our government can't know about this, surely'. So, I went to Racing and Wagering and I asked for my own meeting with them because I wanted to know and I couldn't believe that this was occurring in that day and age and they knew it. I was just the gobsmacked that our Government, Labor Government, were happy with it. It wasn't until we started calling them out and going over and over and over all these things and making it more obvious to the public that people started going, 'Hey, this is really wrong', and talking to politicians that I did, we've got some really great people within the Labor Party, the Greens, some Independents, they didn't know it was going on either and that was one of the things I always say is that I don't believe the Government even really knows how this is working or what it's costing them or anything that's going on within this industry because nobody's looked.

That's what I think everybody needs to take a harder look at is, is it worth it? Is it worth the damage that it's doing to so many different groups of people when it could be easily fixed? Tasmania is not going to fall apart because there's no more dog racing. You will survive. There are other things and not only are you going to help a bunch of people and a bunch of dogs, but what about the other dogs that miss out on homes because they've got to get a greyhound into them, or they need to be rehomed? We have a huge issue here in WA with the Bull Arab breeds and Dogs' Refuge Home and all of these people and the RSPCA not being able to rehome dogs. Here we are fighting against them and the Government's throwing money at GAP [Greyhounds as Pets] and trying to make these brilliant rehoming kind of ads and things to get greyhounds

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into them but then you're putting other dogs at risk as well. I know if I didn't have a foster greyhound at home, I would have another breed, fostering and helping and so would all of the people that I am friends with in [REDACTED] or that we know.

I'm sorry, I'm going off now.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it's good.

[REDACTED] - I'm very passionate. Can I ask Dean, I feel, it's very strange because I've just got a DW and I don't know whether he's there.

Mr WINTER - I'm here. I'm listening, yes.

[REDACTED] - It's very hard when I can't see your face. I can't read your -

Mr WINTER - Yes, apologies. I've actually been called by my wife to pick up my son.

[REDACTED] - Oh okay, got you.

Mr WINTER - I'm listening, but I'm in the car on my own listening in.

[REDACTED] - No worries. Sorry. Okay. Yeah, no problem.

CHAIR - [REDACTED], in your introductory statements you talked about the cost to the community in terms of the industry and that's not recorded in terms, or documented, in terms of the cost to labour and rehoming and fostering and vet bills and all those things. You made the interesting observation that in Tasmania we've got approximately 1000 dogs that will need an outcome. Those dogs will need an outcome, even if the industry doesn't end, won't it? Because the result is that they've got to exit the industry at some point anyway, even if the industry is continuing on -

[REDACTED] - Correct.

CHAIR - so that's a cost both now and immediate, but also in any kind of transition plan. Am I kind of correct in saying that?

[REDACTED] - Absolutely.

CHAIR - It hadn't occurred to me now that we talk about cost of transition, but this is a cost that's already being incurred by the community anyway at the moment.

[REDACTED] - That's right, absolutely. It's whether it's 1000 dogs that they're going to incur the cost of or 2000 or 3000 or 4000, depending on how many years you want to continue it for. You can cut it off now so this is the end. That's it.

CHAIR - Or you can just keep doing it forever.

[REDACTED] - This is the thing, the industry and the people involved know that the community will always pick up the pieces. I feel like the biggest hypocrite because I say I don't want greyhound racing to continue, but I lost two of my greyhounds in the last six months and

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I've got another one at home already because I just love the breed so much but I'm helping them. What do I do? I cannot turn my back on it. To be honest, I wish I could. I wish I had never fallen down this rabbit hole. I honestly do because in WA it is not my job to bring these things to light. It is the Government's job and it is Racing and Wagering's job to have done that, but they weren't doing it. None of these things, none of these things would be occurring had advocates not shown racing for what it was back in 2015. Let's be honest, if that had never happened, you guys wouldn't be aware of this and it would just be going.

Trainers didn't wake up one day, I know it's so heavily regulated and everything's getting better, it is, credit where credit's due but that did not happen because they all woke up and said together, 'We're going to do better today, we're going to make sure that our dogs have the best care and the best outcomes'. No, they were forced into it. Kicking and screaming by you guys, by people calling them out, and having more regulation isn't going to make, as I've said before, the injuries on track just stop - they don't. Unfortunately, you find creative ways of people hiding the figures because then everybody gets so scared of admitting that anything's going wrong because it puts the industry in more pressure that there's more issues going on because people can't handle it. It just heightens all of that mental load that participants have. A lot of these people are struggling people that can't meet the requirements of a kennel inspection as it is, but they don't have any other alternative because they're caught in this cycle right now. But the Government doesn't say, or Racing and Wagering don't say, 'Okay, I don't think you are fit for purpose anymore as a trainer'. Kids under 18, until last week, were able to be owners of greyhounds here in Western Australia. How a child - you can't drive a car but you can own and race a dog - beyond me - involved in gambling of all things.

The racing industry should be calling out these participants and saying, 'Okay, you're not fit for purpose' - I know fit for purpose is the wrong analogy - but 'you can't look after these dogs well enough, you can't ensure that you are comfortably looking after yourselves looking after the dogs, so you are no longer allowed to be a participant'. But if they do that, they cut down their field sizes, they don't have as many races going, they don't have as many dogs for the punters to punt on, so they don't give a damn about what this person might be going through emotionally or mentally at home. We've had people say to us - participants say to us: 'We feed our dogs better than we feed ourselves'. Well, that's wrong. Nobody should be - I mean, I love it, my dog's the same, but I do have an option; some of these participants don't. I just don't understand it. Sorry, I get really -

CHAIR - That's all right, [REDACTED]. That's okay.

[REDACTED] - I say that a lot, 'I don't understand it', because I don't, and that's exactly where I sit at. I look at you guys and the Government, and I think I did to give me the answers, to say, 'Well, what are you doing?' They all sort of looked like, 'We don't know either'. I think it's time we just make the right decision and be good humans. Just end it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Hear, hear.

CHAIR - Couldn't agree more, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - Sorry, no disrespect to those people that do believe that it's okay, but I just ask you to really think of it as a really big picture and definitely take into account the people that are on the ground, that aren't actually necessarily directly involved in racing. We are, like it or not, we're there because we take on the dogs.

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Ms WEBB - Thanks, [REDACTED]. It's been really interesting listening to you and you've covered off on some areas I had questions about but you've naturally covered them already. One of the things I just thought I might get you to reflect on for us - and it touches into things you've said but perhaps we can flesh it out a bit more - here, for example, when we look at participants in industry, you've got people who might be at the hobbyists end of things, but then you've also got some very large operators and it's really, in terms of filling enough numbers into races to make them viable, it's the very large operators that tend to put in multiple dogs and really fill the races out. When we talk about animal welfare standards and whether they're met well or not, what we'll often see as presented to us, as a face of the industry, is the hobbyists' end of things, who you can feel very empathetic towards and who clearly love their dogs and, as you've just described, sometimes maybe feed their dogs and look after them better than themselves. But perhaps the reality, and the larger number of dogs in the industry, sit with some of those larger owners and trainers of dogs. So, do you have the same duality in the industry in Western Australia, in that sense? Do you see it quite distinctly as sort of very different faces of the industry? That's just my personal observation that I see presented to us - one face of the industry but it's not representative of perhaps another very distinct face.

[REDACTED] - We have approximately 50 participants and they go across trainer, owner, breeder - they hold various licences - but the best that we can get it down to is there's about 50 individuals of about 380-something that actively either own, breed or sit across one of those licencing areas. There's about 50 of those that say that they are not hobbyists, and some of those might be syndicates, so we can't be exactly sure, but that means that they hold an ABN. All the rest are hobbyists. What we find is the larger kennels, we're a little bit different in that the larger kennels actually have better kennelling facilities, better training systems, better food but definitely have less issues than some of the other dogs.

The socialisation can often be poorer because obviously it's much harder to get around a kennel that might have 300 dogs at it and have any kind of relationship with each dog, but some do. We find the smaller breeders or the smaller participants, the hobbyists, and they're definitely in the older sphere, are the ones that have the most injured dogs - they will race them, getting up to the 100 [races] mark, four years old. I think people that are just set in that industry and have been in that cycle for a long time - we suspect that Racing and Wagering are trying to move those little players out and just keep the bigger players in because obviously it causes them a lot less problems. Because we've noticed that since we've been highlighting some of the issues the penalties have gotten stronger for the smaller ones, yet the bigger ones seem to get away. There's been some doping recently where the bigger participants haven't, they've copped a fine and that's it, whereas something similar for one of the smaller guys has been suspended. When they get suspended, smaller people generally don't come back.

I think here Racing and Wagering would be quite happy with just a few large kennels running because they would still make their money from being able to broadcast. This again, it becomes all about the commercialisation and, and the hold that gambling companies have rather than the welfare of the dogs because it doesn't matter what kennel you come from, you're still going to be put on a track that you've got to run a circular track. Even if you put straight tracks in most of these properties have all bull rings on them and that's how the dogs are trained, on bull ring. That's what I was saying about those 20 greyhounds that suffered the rear right leg injury, that's because it was the shape of the track.

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Ms WEBB - Can I ask another question just to follow on from that because you did mention that there was a turning point in 2015 with awareness of welfare standards being very poor and then improvements made since, not out of the goodness of people's hearts but because it was being imposed on them and improvements. Have you seen distinctive improvements in outcomes and in terms of welfare standards? I think you referred to this in your opening statement and it's something I've put to industry here too during hearings is, if we were to accept an industry argument that things are improving and we should allow more time for them to improve, to me, the obvious question is, well, what's the level at which it's acceptable then? What's the level of injury and death that's acceptable that we are aiming to reach in order to deem this to be an appropriate sport to continue? Has that been a matter of discussion in WA? Is that being looked at in this inquiry for example? Are you mapping what improvement there has been and what trajectory is expected in terms of improvement?

[REDACTED] - We have and we see that there is. I think there's one step back further to go to is the way that they report injuries. You'll find that we look at it very differently. They look at per thousand starters. We look at injuries per dog. We say that because they can't speak for themselves, because they can't say, 'Oh no, I'm too hurt today I can't go and race'. It should be looked at on an individual dog, and it's only looked at on-track. That's all that we're told is the small, tiny statistic that they're giving is per thousand starts on-track. It's not all these subsequent injuries.

What [REDACTED] did probably four years ago was set up a database where we tracked all of the injuries and we then also recorded it by the time that the dog actually returned to racing because, again, if the dog's given a 14-day standdown one night by their vet, because the injury hasn't really shown itself - I mean the dog's full of adrenaline, they're warm - it might be at the very end of the night, they don't have the time to hang around and see how it pans out, then the next day it shows up and it's actually fractured something. That isn't reported on and that is not reported in the annual report. We looked at the actual date that the dog returned, and even in the no-apparent-injury range where the dog will have a horrible fall and then the dog gets retired. So, it actually wasn't no apparent injury; it may well have had a broken leg, but that doesn't get reported in the statistics. We maintain that the statistics that the industry is putting out are incorrect anyway.

The improvements, while good, you can't just have welfare improvements without also changing or being very transparent with the reporting. You need to be able to put all of that out there in order for anybody to actually look at. If the Government wants to see the actual outcomes, Racing and Wagering would need to be more transparent in its reporting and start collecting the data differently because -

Ms WEBB - Yeah, we have the same issue here, where, in discussion, we weren't able to get that data statistically speaking, based on current data, how likely is it a dog finishes its racing career dead, how likely is it that it finishes its racing career having sustained serious injury, how likely is it to get rehomed? We can't get that data for cohorts.

CHAIR - Or missing.

Ms WEBB - Yeah, or missing somewhere in the system. It's problematic.

[REDACTED] - I can share the report that we put -

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Ms WEBB - That would be great.

██████████ - you're welcome to all 300 pages of it if you want, but I can give you the section that we did on what we extracted from our database.

Ms WEBB - Could you please send us the whole report?

CHAIR - The whole report would be fantastic, if that's possible, ██████████

██████████ - Yeah. It's on the website anyway - the Government website, where the inquiry is.

Ms O'CONNOR - I've just got two more questions. As you said, there was some change after *Four Corners* in 2015, and we had an inquiry here and one of the outcomes of the inquiry was to expose the extraordinarily high euthanasia rate and start the industry on a - even though I wanted there to be a ban, just for the record - the consensus in the inquiry was that they had to work hard to reduce euthanasia rates. It does look in the data like euthanasia rates here have gone down and it is harder for trainers and owners simply to euthanise their dogs. What's the euthanasia policy in WA?

██████████ - I believe we have pretty much the same, and these are, again, all new and particularly that came out after several inquiries - the Estimates Inquiry and then our latest one - we found that there have been changes, too. But originally, you could euthanise a dog on-track due to an injury. Then Racing and Wagering brought in what was called the 'Greyhound Welfare Injury Recovery Scheme', which was a really, really positive step forward, where RAWA would take on the dog after the incident and it would be transported to their vet or a vet that worked with Racing and Wagering. The work would be done that night or the very next morning and then the dog would rehabilitate within the GAP kennels. But what they found, over the I think it was two and a half years that it went for, there was some 283 dogs that went through that program - that's how many of them were being injured.

Of course, GAP couldn't look after them anymore; we don't have the kennel facilities, there's no space, the cost was - I've got all of this data, we've got it all under FOI, so I'm not saying anything that's not available to you in this report. They then cut it back in early 2024, somewhere around there, and it became that the participants had to - Racing and Wagering still paid for it, they paid for it both ways, but then the participants had to kennel the dogs for 14 weeks; they got funded then by Racing and Wagering for 14 weeks to care for the dog. We found, and it was during the Estimates Inquiry, the euthanasia rate just soared straight back up again because individuals will not have a dog that has no earning capacity in their kennels. Racing and Wagering put it as the participants should be made to take care of their dogs and it's their responsibility. But this is what I was alluding to earlier: they are putting that onto people that they know don't have the ability to do that. Their kennels are not big enough, their livelihoods, they're on pensions. You can't just put a blanket rule like that all of a sudden without any kind of industry consultation and expect the animals to be okay, because we saw the euthanasia rates spike again. It hasn't gone back, they haven't changed the way that the program works, but now they brought in another rule that you cannot just euthanise dog; you have to take it to the vet, you have to get a veterinary certificate to say that the dog is beyond repair, basically.

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So, euthanasia has dropped off a bit, but we were finding, though, that then the dogs were not being euthanised on-track, they were being moved off-track and then it was being called an off-track death. So, again, they dropped. But we got, under Freedom of Information, all the actual euthanasia dates. We found that they were within 24 hours, some were the same day, some were a few days later, so it was all for that same injury.

CHAIR - Sounds familiar.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, we've gathered some data, too, and there's the off-track deaths, the multiple snake bites and spider bites.

██████████ - Spider bites.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yeah. The other thing I wanted to talk about was the fact that you've requested to give evidence in camera. I know that you must have, because of the work that you've done, faced enormous pressure from within the industry. Are you able to talk about that a little bit? Why you've come to the point, after doing so much public advocacy, where you feel like this now?

██████████ - To be quite honest, I see a lot of the posts on Facebook of the Tasmanian, I'm sorry, participants and some of them have been really nasty. We haven't experienced it quite as nasty over here. As I said, I'm a mum on my own ██████████, and we were threatened by a participant. He's now been suspended, but he rang me on my personal phone and said if you don't do this, I'm going to be over there and we're going to have a discussion. It just gets too much; I'm literally burnt out.

Since our inquiry, it's just horrific; I get called the C word, I get called a bitch, 'you dog, you this, you that, you don't know anything, you shouldn't have been born,' I'm some hippie that doesn't have a job. I'm none of that. I'm none of that. I'm just somebody that fell into this rabbit hole and didn't understand and wanted to understand and then found that what we're doing is wrong, and a mum that won't look away. I'm not going to teach my children when they find out things that aren't right that they should just sit back. Am I doing that in this case? Yes, by doing it in camera, but I just don't have the mental capacity to take on more hate from other people right now.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yeah, that's so fair. Empathy comes at a cost.

██████████ - It does. It absolutely does. That's what I just wish that some people would think a bit more on. It's not about having a soft cohort of people or that some particular people are this way and particular people are that way, or that we're all a bunch of numpties. Maybe it's the other side that needs to get a bit more empathy or need to be cared for a little bit better so they are more mentally able to look after themselves - the pro racers - because I've met them, they talk to me. We've got a lot that will come forward and talk to us and share things with us - and a vet nurse that was working at the track and she was ready to kill herself because of what she'd been put through and she's been open about that. She was on radio once and her car got egged. I don't think any of us want to hurt the people. It's just something that's not right. There's things in life that you know are right and things that you know are wrong, and I think this is just one of them. Like horses, I don't agree with it, but there's people that put their whole lives - apprentice jockeys. There are towns here in Western Australia that do survive off of that funding and the sense of community. But here, we've got three dog tracks that barely anybody

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goes to that - it's just for gambling and for the gambling corporations - most of which are offshore now anyway.

CHAIR - Thank you so much, [REDACTED] Unfortunately, we've run out of time.

[REDACTED] - Yes, sorry, I've stopped talking.

Ms O'CONNOR - You were great.

CHAIR - Your evidence has been really valuable. Thank you for everything that you do for the hounds in WA.

[REDACTED] - No worries.

CHAIR - Just before we finish, I need to advise you, as I did at the commencement hearing, that what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware, or the Zoom maybe I should say, you need to be aware that the privilege is not attached to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us here today. Do you understand that?

[REDACTED] - Absolutely.

CHAIR - Excellent. Thank you so much, [REDACTED], for your time. We really do appreciate it.

[REDACTED] - No worries, Thank you guys.

CHAIR - If you can send through that link to the document, that would be fantastic. We would certainly be interested in seeing that.

[REDACTED] - I will.

Ms O'CONNOR - Look after yourself.

CHAIR - Excellent, take care.

[REDACTED] - You too, guys. Thank you so much.

CHAIR - Thank you, [REDACTED]

The witness withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 2.50 p.m.